

Jeremiah 30:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child?
wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a
woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

Analysis

Whether a man doth travail with child? (נִילָד יָכָר)—This shocking rhetorical question uses impossible imagery to describe unprecedented anguish. Men (zakar, male) experiencing childbirth (yalad, to bear) violates nature, emphasizing the unnaturalness of 'Jacob's trouble.' Warriors, trained for battle, reduced to birth-labor posture—hands on loins, faces pale—depicts total helplessness.

All faces are turned into paleness—(וְנִזְהָפְכוּ כָל-פָנִים לִיבְקוֹן) The Hebrew yeraqon (pallor, greenish-yellow) describes the color of mortal terror. This isn't ordinary fear but existential dread before inescapable judgment. Yet Jeremiah frames catastrophe in birth imagery—pain with purpose, labor that produces life. The 'trouble' (צָרָה, tsarah, v. 7) isn't merely punitive but productive, birthpangs of national restoration.

Historical Context

Jeremiah prophesied during Jerusalem's death throes—siege, starvation, cannibalism (Lamentations 2:20, 4:10). The image captures warriors and nobles reduced to helpless terror. This became paradigmatic for describing end-time tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does reframing catastrophe as birthpangs change your perspective on suffering with purpose?
2. What impossible situations in your life might be labor pains of something new God is birthing?
3. How do you maintain hope when faced with fears that reduce you to complete helplessness?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁא	לִידָה	רָא	שָׁאָל	אָמַר	בָּאָיִתִי	אָמַר	לִידָה	רָא	שָׁאָל
Ask	wherefore do I see			as a woman in travail		whether a man			
H4994		H518		H3205					H2145
H7592		H7200							H2504
מִדְעָה	בָּאָיִתִי	כָּל	בָּרָה	בָּרָה	בָּרָה	בָּרָה	עַל	עַל	עַל
H4069	wherefore do I see	H3605	every man	with his hands		H3027	on his loins		
		H7200		H1397		H5921			
לִיבָּקָוֹן	פָּנִים	כָּל	וְנַפְּכָא	וְנַפְּכָא	וְנַפְּכָא	וְנַפְּכָא	לִיבָּקָוֹן	לִיבָּקָוֹן	לִיבָּקָוֹן
as a woman in travail	are turned	H3605	and all faces	into paleness					
		H2015		H6440		H3420			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:31 (Parallel theme): For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

Nahum 2:10 (Parallel theme): She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.

Joel 2:6 (Parallel theme): Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

Isaiah 21:3 (Parallel theme): Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

Psalms 48:6 (Parallel theme): Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

Jeremiah 22:23 (Parallel theme): O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!

Jeremiah 6:24 (Parallel theme): We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 (Parallel theme): For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Hosea 13:13 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

Isaiah 29:22 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.