

Jeremiah 47:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה) —The mayim olim (rising waters) metaphor depicts Babylonian invasion as an unstoppable flood. **And shall be an overflowing flood** (וְהָיָה לְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף) uses nachal shotef (torrential stream), evoking the destructive power of flash floods in desert wadis. The imagery contrasts with the "north" motif—Babylon approaches from arid regions but comes like overwhelming waters.

Then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl (וְזָעַקוּ) —zaaq (cry out) and heilil (howl/wail) denote desperate lamentation. The comprehensive kol yoshev ha'arets (all inhabitants of the land) leaves no one untouched by judgment.

Historical Context

Mesopotamian armies were often compared to floods in ancient Near Eastern literature. The Babylonian Chronicle confirms Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns along the Mediterranean coast (c. 604-603 BC), fulfilling this prophecy. Philistine cities like Ashkelon were destroyed during these invasions.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture use water imagery (usually associated with blessing) to describe judgment?
2. How does the "north" consistently represent threat throughout Jeremiah's prophecies?
3. What does universal crying and howling teach about the comprehensive nature of divine judgment?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה הֵאָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה מַיִם עֹלֵי יָם מִצָּפוֹן	H3541	Thus saith	H559	the LORD	H3068	H2009	Behold waters	H4325	rise up	H5927	out of the north	H6828
וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם	H1961	flood	H5158	and shall be an overflowing	H7857	and shall be an overflowing	H7857	of the land	H776			
וּמְלֹאָהּ הִיא עִיר יוֹשֵׁב בָּהּ וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם		and all that is therein	H4393	the city	H5892	and all the inhabitants	H3427	H0	shall cry	H2199		
וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם וְהָיוּ לִבַּיִם		therein then the men	H120	shall howl	H3213	H3605	and all the inhabitants	H3427	of the land	H776		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:14 (References Lord): Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

Jeremiah 46:20 (Parallel theme): Egypt is like a very fair heifer, but destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north.

Jeremiah 8:16 (Parallel theme): The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

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