

Jeremiah 48:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?

Analysis

O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy (יִשְׁכֹּת עַרְוֶעַר עַמְדֵי־דָרֶךְ וְצִפִּי)—Aroer, on the Arnon River gorge, commanded the main southern route into Moab. Jeremiah tells residents to stand (imdi) and watch (tsapi, keep vigil). **Ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?** (שְׁאַלִי גַם וְנִמְלֹטָה אֶמְרִי מַה־) (נְהַיְתָה)—Survivors streaming past will report the catastrophe.

The scene evokes refugees fleeing disaster, their testimony confirming prophetic warnings. This pattern appears when Lot's family fled Sodom (Genesis 19), when Israel fled Egypt (Exodus 14), and when disciples will flee end-times judgment (Matthew 24:16-20). The question 'What is done?' acknowledges the incomprehensible scale of destruction—events so catastrophic they require eyewitness testimony to believe.

Historical Context

Aroer (modern Arair) sat on the northern rim of the Arnon gorge, the natural border between Moab and Israel (Deuteronomy 2:36). As a border fortress on the major north-south trade route, Aroer would be among the first cities to witness refugees fleeing Babylon's invasion from the north. The city's strategic location made it an ideal observation point for the unfolding catastrophe.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When have you witnessed or heard testimony about God's judgment that initially seemed unbelievable?
2. How should hearing others' 'escape stories' from sin's consequences affect your own responsiveness to warning?
3. What is our responsibility as 'watchers' to warn others of coming judgment while there is still time to flee?

Interlinear Text

אֶל H413	בְּדֶרֶךְ by the way H1870	עֹמֵד י stand H5975	וְצֹפֶה י and espy H6822	יוֹשֵׁב בְּת O inhabitant H3427	עֲרוֹרַע ר of Aroer H6177	שֶׁאֵלִי ask H7592
נָס H5127	הֵמָּה him that fleeth H5127	וְנִמְלָה טָה and her that escapeth H4422	אָמַר י and say H559	מָה H4100	נְהַיְתָה: What is done H1961	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 2:36 (Parallel theme): From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us:

1 Samuel 4:16 (Parallel theme): And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

