

Jeremiah 48:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,

Analysis

Moab is confounded; for it is broken down—(הָבֵשׂ מוֹאָב פִּרְמַתָּה) —The verb hovish (put to shame/confounded) pairs with chattah (shattered/dismayed). **Howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled** (הַיְלִילוּ וַיַּעֲלֻהּ הַגִּידוּ בְּאַרְנוֹן כִּי שָׁׁדֵד מוֹאָב) —The imperative verbs heylilu (wail/howl) and za'aqu (cry out) demand public lamentation. Proclaiming at the Arnon River, Moab's geographic heart, ensures the news spreads throughout the nation.

The language echoes Joel's call to national mourning (Joel 1:5-13). Public confession of judgment serves multiple purposes: acknowledging God's justice, warning others, and potentially moving toward repentance. The repetition of 'spoiled' (shuddad) from v. 15 emphasizes complete devastation—military, economic, and psychological collapse.

Historical Context

The Arnon River (modern Wadi Mujib) formed Moab's central artery, a dramatic canyon cutting east-west through the plateau to the Dead Sea. Cities lined its banks, and the valley served as a communication corridor. Proclaiming Moab's fall 'in Arnon' ensured the message reached from the eastern desert to the Dead Sea coast, covering the nation's breadth.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture sometimes command public proclamation of judgment rather than private mourning?
2. How do shame and brokenness serve as prerequisites for genuine repentance and restoration?
3. In what contexts should Christians today 'proclaim' warnings about divine judgment, and how should this be done faithfully?

Interlinear Text

הָגֵדְךָ וְעַזְעַקְתָּי הַיְלִילִי
is confounded Moab H3588 for it is broken down howl H3213 and cry H2199 tell H5046

מִזְאָבָה שְׁאַלְכָה בְּאַרְנוֹן
ye it in Arnon H3588 is spoiled Moab H703 H4124

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 16:2 (Parallel theme): For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.