

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 (הִבִּישׁ מוֹאָב כִּי־חָתָה)—The verb hovich (put to shame/confounded) pairs with chattah (shattered/dismayed). **Howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled** (הִלִּילוּ וַיִּצְעֲקוּ הַגִּידוּ בְּאֶרְנוֹן כִּי שָׁדַד מוֹאָב)—The imperative verbs heyliku (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

הָבַ יֵשׁ	מוֹאָב׃	כִּי	חָתָה	הֵיל יֵלִין	וְזָעוּ קוֹי	הִגִּידוּ
is confounded	Moab	H3588	for it is broken down	howl	and cry	tell
H3001	H4124		H2865	H3213	H2199	H5046
בְּאַרְנוֹן	יְכִי	שָׂדֵה	מוֹאָב׃			
ye it in Arnon	H3588	is spoiled	Moab			
H769		H7703	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.