

Jeremiah 48:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon,

Analysis

And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon—Kiriathaim (double city) was an ancient settlement conquered by Israel (Numbers 32:37). Beth-gamul (house of recompense) appears only here in Scripture. Beth-meon (house of habitation) is identified with Baal-meon (Numbers 32:38), showing the persistence of Baal worship in Moabite culture.

The names themselves are ironic: 'house of recompense' receives divine recompense; 'house of habitation' becomes uninhabitable. Biblical writers often note such ironies—Babel (confusion) becomes confused, Babylon (gate of god) falls to divine judgment. Names meant to celebrate human achievement or invoke pagan deities become monuments to God's sovereign justice.

Historical Context

These cities formed part of Moab's northern territory, originally Israelite settlements in the tribal allotment of Reuben (Numbers 32) but later absorbed by Moab. The Mesha Stele mentions Baal-meon (Beth-meon) among Moabite building projects. Archaeological surveys suggest these were substantial towns with defensive walls and administrative functions during the Iron Age.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do the ironic meanings of city names (house of recompense receives judgment) illustrate that God's justice often uses people's own choices against them?
2. What does the fall of formerly Israelite cities to Moab, and then both to Babylon, teach about the futility of territorial claims without covenant faithfulness?
3. In what ways do human names, titles, and labels (meant to convey permanence or power) become hollow when confronted with divine reality?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	קִרְיַת יִם	וְעַל	בֵּית יִתְּ	גַּם וְעַל	בֵּית יִתְּ
H5921	And upon Kiriathaim	H5921	H0	and upon Bethgamul	H5921 H0
	H7156			H1014	
וְעַל בֵּית מֵעוֹן					
and upon Bethmeon					
H1010					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:17 (Parallel theme): Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon,

Jeremiah 48:1 (Parallel theme): Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.

