

Jeremiah 48:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab;
mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres.

Analysis

Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab (עֲלֶיךָ עַל־מוֹאָב וְלִכְל־מוֹאָב אֶזְעַק)—Despite pronouncing judgment, God (or His prophet) expresses grief. The Hebrew *za'aq* (זָעַק) means to cry out, call for help, lament loudly—intense emotional outcry. This reveals God's character: He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). Even righteous judgment grieves His heart.

Mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres (אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ יִהְיֶה). The word *hagah* (הָגָה) means to moan, growl, meditate—deep, visceral grief. Kir-hareseth (Kir-heres) was Moab's capital fortress. Even for enemies under judgment, God expresses compassion. This paradoxical combination—executing justice while mourning its necessity—reveals God's complex emotional life. He is not a cold, mechanical judge but a grieving Father who must discipline His rebellious children and judge those who afflict them.

Historical Context

Kir-hareseth (modern Kerak, Jordan) was Moab's chief city and final refuge when Israel besieged them (2 Kings 3:25). Its destruction symbolized Moab's complete downfall. Jeremiah's lament echoes Isaiah 16:7-11, suggesting these prophets genuinely grieved over Moab's fate despite their wickedness. This reflects God's heart—He created all nations, and their destruction under judgment brings Him

sorrow even as His justice requires it. This prefigures Jesus weeping over Jerusalem even as He pronounced judgment (Luke 19:41-44).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does God's grief over judging Moab reveal His character and challenge simplistic views of divine judgment?
2. What does it mean to maintain both moral clarity about sin's consequences and genuine compassion for those suffering judgment?
3. How should Christians balance proclaiming God's righteous standards with expressing grief over those who reject Him and face consequences?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כֵּן	עַל	וּלְמוֹאָב	ב	אֵיל יֵל	וּלְמוֹאָב	ב	כָּל הַ
H5921	H3651	H5921	for Moab		Therefore will I howl	for Moab		H3605
			H4124		H3213	H4124		
אֶזְעָק	אֶל	אֲנָשִׁי	י	קִיר	רֶשֶׁת	יְהִנֶּה:		
and I will cry out					of Kirheres	mine heart shall mourn		
H2199	H4113	H376		H0	H7025	H1897		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 15:5 (Parallel theme): My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with

weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

2 Kings 3:25 (Parallel theme): And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

Jeremiah 48:36 (Parallel theme): Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished.