

Jeremiah 48:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.

Analysis

From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice—Three Moabite cities (Heshbon, Elealeh, Jahaz) form a geographical span across Moab's territory, indicating that lamentation will be nationwide. The Hebrew nathan qol (נתן קול) means to give voice, to cry out—loud, public mourning heard across the land.

From Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old (מצער עד). Zoar and Horonaim span Moab's southern region. The simile 'as an heifer of three years old' (eglat shelishiyyah, עגלת שלשה) refers to a young, strong cow suddenly yoked for the first time—bellowing in distress and shock at unfamiliar suffering. Moab, previously free and prosperous, will cry out like a heifer first experiencing the yoke of oppression.

For the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate (כִּי גַּם־מֵי נִמְרִים מִשְׁמָות וְהִיו). Nimrim's springs, providing life-sustaining water, will become meshammot (משammot)—desolations, wastes. Water sources drying up represents total devastation—not just military defeat but ecological catastrophe.

Historical Context

These cities represent Moab's full territory from north (Heshbon, Elealeh, Jahaz) to south (Zoar, Horonaim). Heshbon and Jahaz were contested border cities; Zoar was the city Lot fled to (Genesis 19:22-23). Nimrim (perhaps Wadi Numeirah near the Dead Sea) was known for springs. The prophecy's fulfillment involved comprehensive devastation—Babylon didn't merely conquer cities but destroyed infrastructure, including irrigation systems, creating long-term desolation. The heifer imagery emphasizes shock—Moab had never experienced such subjugation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the nationwide scope of mourning (from north to south) illustrate that sin's consequences affect entire communities?
2. What does the heifer imagery teach about how prosperity can leave us unprepared for suffering?
3. In what ways do even natural resources (like Nimrim's waters) become subject to God's judgment on rebellious nations?

Interlinear Text

תִּמְעַט מִן וְחַשְׁבָּה עַד הַלְּעֵל עַד עַד יְהֹזָּעַן וְחַשְׁבָּה עַד
From the cry of Heshbon H5704 even unto Elealeh H500 and even unto Jahaz H3096
H2201 H2809 H5704 H3096

תִּמְעַט מִן וְנִתְּנֵן עַד מִצְּעָר עַד רַנְּגִים עַד תִּמְעַט
have they uttered their voice from Zoar even unto Horonaim as an heifer
H5414 H6963 H6820 H2773 H5697

תִּמְעַט מִן וְנִמְרָם יְמִינֵי הַנִּמְרָם וְנִמְרָם יְמִינֵי הַנִּמְרָם
of three years old H3588 H1571 for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate
H7992 H4325 H5249 H4923

רְבָבָה!
H1961

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 32:3 (Parallel theme): Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

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