

Jeremiah 48:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

Analysis

Moab is destroyed (נִשְׁבְּרָה מוֹאָב nishberah Moav)—the verb shabar means broken, shattered like pottery. This is irreparable destruction, not mere defeat. The pathos intensifies with **her little ones have caused a cry to be heard** (הַשְׁמִיעוּ צֶעֱקָה הַשְׁמִיעוּ צֶעֱקָהּ hishmi'u tze'aqah tze'eireiha). The word tze'irim refers to small children or young ones—the most vulnerable, whose cries pierce the heavens.

This detail reveals God's comprehensive judgment encompasses entire populations, yet also God's awareness of individual suffering. The children's cries are **heard**—not ignored, not minimized. This doesn't contradict God's justice; rather, it demonstrates that national sin brings corporate consequences that affect the innocent, a sobering reality that should drive societies toward righteousness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern warfare regularly resulted in civilian casualties, particularly women and children. Jeremiah doesn't celebrate this suffering but records it as the tragic fruit of generational pride and idolatry. Moab's covenant relationship with Chemosh included child sacrifice (2 Kings 3:27), making this judgment grimly fitting.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the mention of children's cries challenge simplistic views of divine judgment?
2. What responsibility do present generations bear for protecting future generations from the consequences of corporate sin?
3. How should awareness of judgment's collateral damage inform our pursuit of justice and righteousness?

Interlinear Text

הַשִּׁבְרָה	בְּ	מוֹאָב	הַשָּׁמַיִם	יָעוּזוּ	הַ	צְעוּרֶיהָ:
is destroyed		Moab	to be heard	have caused a cry		her little ones
H7665		H4124	H8085	H2201		H6810
