

Jeremiah 48:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.

Analysis

They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force—refugees sought shelter in Heshbon, formerly a Moabite stronghold captured from Sihon the Amorite (Numbers 21:26-30). The Hebrew koach (ךּוֹךּ, force, strength) suggests they fled there expecting protection, exhausted and powerless (mi-koach, lacking strength).

But a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon—this directly quotes Numbers 21:28: 'For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon.' What was once Moab's victory (conquering Heshbon from Sihon) becomes the source of their destruction. The poetic justice is striking: the very city they trusted for refuge becomes the origin point of their annihilation.

And shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones—'corner' (pe'ah, פְּאָה) likely means border regions or princes (cf. Numbers 24:17, which this echoes). 'Crown of the head' (qodqod, קְׂדָקָד) represents the elite, the proud leaders. 'Tumultuous ones' (bene sha'on, בְּנֵי שָׁאֹן, sons of tumult/uproar) characterizes Moab's arrogant, boastful leadership (see Jeremiah 48:29).

Historical Context

Heshbon (modern Hesban, Jordan) was strategically important, controlling the King's Highway trade route. Its history symbolized Moab's pride—they had taken it from the Amorites, then lost it to Israel, then apparently regained control by Jeremiah's day. That this stronghold would become the source of Moab's final destruction demonstrates divine irony. Archaeological excavations at Hesban show destruction layers from the Babylonian period, confirming the city's violent end. The citation of Numbers 21:28 creates a theological connection: just as fire once consumed Moab's Amorite enemies, now fire consumes Moab itself. The principle is consistent—pride precedes destruction (Proverbs 16:18).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of past victories (Heshbon) as the source of present judgment illustrate that human achievements offer no lasting security?
2. What does the specific targeting of 'the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones' teach about God's attitude toward proud leadership?
3. In what ways might our past successes become sources of false confidence that lead to spiritual complacency?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תֵּסֶם	מִכְּרָעָה	עָמָד וְ	מִחְשָׁבָה וְ	בָּאָלֶה
under the shadow	of Heshbon	stood	because of the force	They that fled	H3588
H6738	H2809	H5975	H3581	H5127	
אֲשֶׁר	יְצַצֵּא	מִחְשָׁבָה וְ	וְלֹפֶתֶת	מִבֵּין	סִיחָה וְ
but a fire	shall come forth	of Heshbon	and a flame	from the midst	of Sihon
H784	H3318	H2809	H3852	H996	H5511
וְתַאֲכַל	פָּאַת	מוֹאָב	וְקַדְמָה	בְּנֵי	
and shall devour	the corner	of Moab	and the crown of the head	ones	
H398	H6285	H4124	H6936	H1121	
שָׁאוֹל					
of the tumultuous					
H7588					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 24:17 (Parallel theme): I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

Numbers 21:28 (Parallel theme): For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon.

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