

Jeremiah 48:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth:
for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.

Analysis

Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth—the Hebrew hoy (הוי, woe) introduces a funeral lament. Moab is identified as 'people of Chemosh,' their national deity (1 Kings 11:7, 33). The verb 'avad (אָבַד, perisheth, is destroyed) indicates total ruin. This phrase echoes Numbers 21:29, turning Israel's ancient victory song into Moab's epitaph. The theological point is devastating: Chemosh could not protect his own people, proving his impotence against Yahweh.

For thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives—the double mention of 'captives' (shevi, שָׁבִי, captivity) emphasizes complete population deportation. Sons (banim, בָּנִים) and daughters (benot, בָּנוֹת) represent the totality of Moab's future—both male and female lines are cut off through exile. This fulfills the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28:41: 'Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.' What God threatened against disobedient Israel now falls on Moab for their arrogance.

Historical Context

Chemosh (Kemosh) was the Moabite national deity, mentioned in the Mesha Stele (c. 840 BC), where King Mesha credits Chemosh with victories over Israel. Solomon built a high place for Chemosh (1 Kings 11:7), which stood until Josiah's reforms (2 Kings 23:13). Moabites practiced child sacrifice to Chemosh (2 Kings 3:27). Jeremiah's pronouncement that 'the people of Chemosh perish' declares the absolute failure of this deity. When Babylon conquered Moab, Chemosh worship

ceased. The captivity of sons and daughters meant not just immediate suffering but the end of Moabite continuity—no next generation to maintain language, culture, or religion. Unlike Israel's exiles who maintained identity and returned, Moab's deportation was permanent assimilation into other peoples.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does the total failure of Chemosh to protect Moab teach about the impotence of false gods?
2. How does the captivity of 'sons and daughters' illustrate judgment's comprehensive impact across generations?
3. Why does God allow the innocent (children) to suffer in national judgments, and how does this challenge simplistic understandings of justice?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|-------|
| אֲוִי | לְךָ | מוֹאָב | אָבֶד | עַם | כֶּמֶשׁ | כִּי |
| Woe | H0 | be unto thee O Moab | perisheth | the people | of Chemosh | H3588 |
| H188 | | H4124 | H6 | H5971 | H3645 | |
| לְקָח ו | בְּנֵי יְרָ | בְּשָׁבִי | וּבָנוֹת יְרָ | בְּשָׁבִיָּהּ: | | |
| are taken | for thy sons | captives | and thy daughters | captives | | |
| H3947 | H1121 | H7628 | H1323 | H7633 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 21:29 (Parallel theme): Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

Jeremiah 48:7 (Parallel theme): For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together.

Jeremiah 48:13 (Parallel theme): And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence.

1 Kings 11:7 (Parallel theme): Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

Judges 11:24 (Parallel theme): Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

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