

Jeremiah 48:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

Analysis

Flee, save your lives (נָסוּ מְלֹטוּ נַפְשָׁכֶם) —two imperative verbs: nus (flee, escape) and malet (deliver, save). The urgency is unmistakable: abandon everything and run. **Be like the heath in the wilderness** (וְהִיְּנָה כָּעֵר בָּמִדְבָּר) —the Hebrew aro'er refers to a scraggly desert shrub, likely juniper or tamarisk, that survives in barren wasteland through deep, hidden roots.

This simile is paradoxical: flee to become like a worthless wilderness plant? The point is survival through humility and obscurity. Better to live as nothing in the desert than to cling to proud cities and perish. Jesus would later echo this principle: 'Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it' (Luke 17:33). Moab must embrace degradation to survive.

Historical Context

The Moabite plateau bordered the eastern wilderness, the same desert where Israel wandered for forty years. For prosperous Moabites accustomed to fertile highlands and fortified cities, becoming desert nomads represented complete humiliation. Yet this was God's mercy—survival for those willing to humble themselves.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'cities' (status, reputation, comfort) might God be calling you to flee in order to save your life?
2. How does the image of becoming a wilderness shrub challenge cultural values of success and significance?
3. When has humiliation been God's path to your preservation?

Interlinear Text

בְּמִדְבָּר: כָּעֵרֹעַ רַיְתָּהִי יְהָה נִפְשָׁךְ מִמְּלָטָה נְגַדְּלָה
Flee save your lives and be like the heath in the wilderness
H5127 H4422 H5315 H1961 H6176 H4057

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:6 (Parallel theme): For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Jeremiah 51:6 (Parallel theme): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org