

Jeremiah 48:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.

Analysis

Give wings unto Moab (תנו־ציץ למוֹאָב tenu-tzitz leMoav)—the Hebrew tzitz can mean 'flower' or 'wing,' here used metaphorically for swift flight. The irony is palpable: Moab needs supernatural aid to escape the coming disaster. **That it may flee and get away** (כִּי תֵצֵא תֵצֵא ki tetze tetze)—another Hebrew repetition for emphasis: 'surely it will go forth,' or 'it must absolutely escape.'

For the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein (יערֵיכֶם) (לֹא־שָׁמַם תָּהִיָּה מֵאַיִן יוֹשֵׁב ve'areha leshamah tihyeynah me'ein yoshev). The word shamah (desolation, waste) appears throughout prophetic judgment oracles (Isaiah 1:7, Jeremiah 4:7). Complete depopulation—not conquest and resettlement, but utter abandonment. This fulfills Levitical covenant curses where cities become uninhabited ruins (Leviticus 26:31-33).

Historical Context

Archaeological evidence shows major Moabite cities experienced destruction and abandonment in the 6th century BC, with settlement gaps lasting centuries. The Mesha Stele (c. 840 BC) had earlier boasted of Moabite strength; Jeremiah's prophecy announces the reversal of that pride. By the Hellenistic period, Moab effectively ceased to exist as a distinct people.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why does God sometimes express judgment through irony and metaphor (giving wings to flee)?
2. What does complete desolation 'without any to dwell' teach about the finality of refusing God's warnings?
3. How does Moab's disappearance from history demonstrate the temporary nature of all human kingdoms compared to God's eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

תנו	למֹאָב	בְּאֵץ	כִּי	נִצְאָה	תִּצְאָה	עַל יְהִי
Give	wings	unto Moab	H3588	that it may flee	and get away	for the cities
H5414	H6731	H4124		H5323	H3318	H5892

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 16:2 (Parallel theme): For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

Psalms 11:1 (Parallel theme): In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul,
Flee as a bird to your mountain?

Jeremiah 48:28 (Parallel theme): O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.

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