

Jeremiah 49:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.

Analysis

Edom shall be a desolation (לְשַׁמְמָה תִּהְיֶה, l'shammah tihyeh)—The noun shammah denotes horrified astonishment at judgment, used frequently in Jeremiah's oracles (see 2:15, 18:16). **Every one that goeth by it shall be astonished** (וְשָׁבֵב, yisshom)—travelers will hiss (שָׁרַק, sharaq), a sound expressing derision and horror, drawing attention to God's judicial handiwork.

This prophetic perfect tense treats future judgment as accomplished fact, demonstrating Yahweh's sovereign control over history. The clause **all the plagues thereof** (מְכֹנְתֵּהָ, makkoteha) employs Exodus language, suggesting Edom's judgment mirrors Egypt's—covenant breakers face covenant curses. Edom's ruins become a teaching tool, a perpetual sermon on pride's consequences.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern travelers would 'hiss' at ruins as both a protective gesture (warding off evil) and a moral commentary. Edom's desolate cities became proverbial. Malachi 1:2-4 confirms God's perpetual anger against Edom ('the people with whom the LORD is indignant forever').

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do historical ruins and failed civilizations serve as 'witnesses' to God's justice?
2. What distinguishes astonishment at judgment from genuine repentance—and which does God desire?
3. How should Christians respond when witnessing the downfall of the proud and mighty?

Interlinear Text

וְקִימֵת הַ	אֶדְוֹם	לְשָׁמֶן הַ	כִּלְ	עָבֵר	עַל יְהֻ
H1961	Also Edom	shall be a desolation	H3605	every one that goeth	H5921
H123		H8047		H5674	
בַּיּוֹם	וְיִשְׁרָאֵל	כִּלְ	מִפְתַּחַת		
by it shall be astonished	and shall hiss	H5921	H3605	at all the plagues	H4347
H8074		H8319			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 35:7 (Parallel theme): Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.

Jeremiah 50:13 (Parallel theme): Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

Jeremiah 49:13 (Parallel theme): For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.

Jeremiah 18:16 (Parallel theme): To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

Jeremiah 51:37 (Parallel theme): And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

1 Kings 9:8 (Parallel theme): And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

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