

Jeremiah 49:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

Analysis

Damascus is waxed feeble (רַפְּתָהּ דַּמְשֶׁק, raphtah Dammeseq)—The verb raphah means to become slack, enfeebled. Syria's ancient capital loses military and political vitality. **Turneth herself to flee** (הִפְנִתָּהּ לָנוּס, hiphn'tah lanus)—Damascus personified as a woman turns to escape, but **fear hath seized on her** (וַחֲרָדָהּ הֶחֱזִיקָתָהּ, v'chirdah hecheziquattah). The verb chazaq (seize) suggests fear grips Damascus like a predator's jaws.

Anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail (צָרָה וְחִבְלִים אֶחְזָקָתָהּ, tsarah vachavalim achazattah kayyoledah)—Again the childbirth metaphor. Tsarah (distress) and chavalim (labor pains) are divinely appointed suffering. Damascus's feminization isn't contempt but indicates helplessness before God's irresistible power. No military prowess avails; only submission to divine sovereignty offers hope.

Historical Context

Damascus had survived Assyrian conquest (732 BC) and remained influential under Babylonian hegemony. But Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns through Syria-Palestine (605-604 BC) reduced Damascus to vassal status, fulfilling this prophecy of weakness and fear.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Damascus's 'turning to flee' reveal about the futility of escaping God's judgment?
2. How does the repeated 'woman in travail' metaphor across different nations emphasize universal accountability to God?
3. In what ways do modern nations exhibit the same 'weakness' when they abandon God's standards?

Interlinear Text

רַפֹּתָהּ	דָּמַשְׁקַּי	הַפְּנוּתָהּ	לָנֶפְשָׁהּ	וְרִיָּאָהּ	הִחָזְקָהּ
is waxed feeble	Damascus	and turneth	herself to flee	and fear	hath seized
H7503	H1834	H6437	H5127	H7374	H2388
עָלָהּ	וְחַבְלֵי יָם	אָחֲזוּ בָּהּ	כִּי־לֵדָהּ:		
on her anguish	and sorrows	have taken	her as a woman in travail		
H6869	H2256	H270	H3205		