

Jeremiah 49:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O
backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying,
Who shall come unto me?

Analysis

Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? God confronts Ammon's arrogant self-confidence. 'Gloriest' (tithallel, תִּתְהַלֵּל) means to boast, praise oneself, glory in—misplaced confidence in military or economic strength. 'The valleys' (possibly the fertile Jordan valley region) were Ammon's pride—'thy flowing valley' (emeq ha-zeiv) might mean 'overflowing valley' (abundant resources) or 'valley of blood' (military victories). Ammon boasted in natural advantages and past successes.

The address 'O backsliding daughter' (bat ha-shovevah, בַּת הַשׁוֹבֶבָה) uses shuv (turn away/apostatize)—often applied to Israel's covenant unfaithfulness. Applying it to Ammon suggests they knew better, perhaps having witnessed God's dealings with Israel, yet turned away from truth. The 'daughter' terminology may indicate personification of the nation or suggest immaturity and foolishness.

That trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me? The root of sin is exposed: trust (batach, בָּטַח) in material wealth instead of God. Ammon's treasures (possibly from controlling trade routes) bred arrogance—'Who shall come unto me?' expresses false security, believing themselves invulnerable. This echoes Babylon's boast in Isaiah 47:8, 10. Proverbs 11:28 warns: 'He that trusteth in his riches shall fall.' True security is in God alone (Psalm 20:7, Proverbs 18:10-11).

Historical Context

Ammon's territory included the King's Highway, a major trade route, providing economic prosperity. Their capital Rabbah was well-fortified in a defensible position. When Babylon destroyed Judah, Ammon not only survived but profited, seizing Israelite lands and likely controlling trade. This bred arrogance—they thought their strategic location, fortifications, and wealth made them secure. Yet Nebuchadnezzar's invasion (c. 582 BC) shattered this illusion. Their treasures couldn't prevent conquest; their valleys couldn't stop the Babylonian army. History repeatedly shows that nations trusting in military might and economic strength rather than righteousness eventually fall (cf. Assyria, Babylon, Rome).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Ammon's boasting in 'flowing valleys' and 'treasures' teach about the danger of finding security in material prosperity?
2. How does the question 'Who shall come unto me?'—expressing false confidence—parallel modern attitudes of national or personal invulnerability?
3. In what ways might Christians today subtly trust in wealth, security, or favorable circumstances rather than in God alone?

Interlinear Text

מֶה	תִּתְהַלֵּלִי	עֲמִקַּי	יִב	עֲמִקַּי	
H4100	Wherefore gloriest	thou in the valleys	thy flowing	thou in the valleys	
	H1984	H6010	H2100	H6010	
הַבִּת	הַשׁוֹבֵב	הַבִּטְחָה	בְּאֵצְרֹתֶיהָ	מִי	יָב וְאֵל
daughter	O backsliding	that trusted	in her treasures	H4310	saying Who shall come
H1323	H7728	H982	H214		H935
אֵלַי:					
H413					

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 6:17 (Faith): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

Jeremiah 21:13 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

Jeremiah 9:23 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

Psalms 62:10 (Faith): Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Psalms 49:6 (Faith): They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

Psalms 52:7 (Faith): Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

Jeremiah 48:7 (Faith): 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 3:14 (Parallel theme): Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

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