

Lamentations 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.

Analysis

The metaphor shifts to hadar (הָדָר, "beauty, glory, majesty") departing from Zion. This term describes visible splendor—the magnificent temple, the Davidic court, the city's architectural glory, and ultimately God's manifest presence. All have vanished. The phrase "from the daughter of Zion" personalizes the city as a once-beautiful maiden now stripped of adornment. The comparison of princes to "harts that find no pasture" employs hunting imagery. Harts (male deer) are normally majestic, swift, and strong, but when grazing lands fail, they weaken and fall easily to pursuers. Similarly, Judah's leaders—once strong and resourceful—became powerless before Babylon. The Hebrew ayyalim (אַיָּלִים) may evoke Psalm 42:1's "as the hart panteth after the water brooks," suggesting spiritual thirst alongside physical weakness. They flee "without strength before the pursuer"—the Hebrew lo-koach (לֹא-כֹּחַ) indicates complete exhaustion. This imagery fulfills Leviticus 26:36-37: "I will send a faintness into their hearts...and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword...and fall when none pursueth." When God removes His sustaining strength, even mighty warriors collapse. Only divine empowerment sustains covenant people; without it, they have no strength at all.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem reveal the splendor that was lost. The temple complex that Solomon built and successive kings embellished represented one of the ancient world's architectural wonders. Gold overlay, bronze pillars

(Jachin and Boaz), the massive bronze sea, and intricate carvings demonstrated wealth and artistic achievement. The royal palace, fortifications, and public buildings reflected a prosperous kingdom. The Babylonian siege of 588-586 BC systematically destroyed this glory. Nebuchadnezzar's forces burned the temple, demolished walls, and reduced Jerusalem to rubble (2 Kings 25:9-10). The princes who fled found themselves hunted through Judean wilderness. King Zedekiah's escape attempt failed when Babylonian forces overtook him near Jericho (2 Kings 25:4-5)—exactly the "without strength" imagery Lamentations describes. The deer metaphor would have resonated in an agricultural society familiar with hunting. Just as drought forces deer to abandon normal habitats and vulnerability follows, so covenant judgment left Judah's leaders exposed. The 70-year exile meant an entire generation grew up never seeing Zion's former glory, knowing it only through their elders' laments.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'beauty' or 'glory' in our lives might we be tempted to trust instead of God's covenant faithfulness?
2. How does the imagery of exhausted princes fleeing illustrate the futility of self-reliance apart from God's sustaining grace?
3. In what ways does Christ restore the true glory that Zion lost, and how is He the 'crown of beauty' for His people (Isaiah 28:5)?
4. What does this verse teach about the inseparable connection between spiritual vitality and effective leadership in God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

אָזֶן	מִן	בַּת	כָּל	בְּיַעֲזָר
is departed	H4480	And from the daughter	of Zion	all her beauty
	H3318	H1323	H6726	H1961
שָׁׁמֶן	לֹא	מִצְאָה	מְרַעַת	בְּלֹא
her princes	are become like harts	that find	no pasture	princes
H8269	H354	H4672	H4829	H3808
כַּעֲזָבָן	לְפָנֵי	רֹצֶחֶן		
without strength	before	the pursuer		
H3581	H6440	H7291		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 24:25 (Parallel theme): Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

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