

# Micah 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee.

## Analysis

**O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast** (חַתָּם לְכִישׁ, retom hamerka vah larekesh yoshevet Lakhish). לְכִישׁ (Lakhish) was Judah's second most important city after Jerusalem—a massive fortress guarding the Shephelah. The command to הַמֶּרְכָבָה (merkavah, chariot) and רֶכֶשׁ (rekeshe, swift horses) to flee suggests panic—escape while possible. Lachish had military might but would still fall.

**She is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion** (רֵאשִׁית חַטָּאת הִיא לְבַת־צִיּוֹן, reshit chatat hi le-vat Tsiyyon). This stunning accusation identifies Lachish as the רֵאשִׁית (reshit, beginning/first) of Jerusalem's חַטָּאת (chatat, sin). How? **For the transgressions of Israel were found in thee** (כִּי־בָךְ נִמְצְאוּ פִשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, ki-vakh nimtse'u pishe'i Yisrael). Northern Israel's פִּשְׁעַת (pesha, transgression/rebellion) infected Judah through Lachish—perhaps as trade/cultural gateway bringing idolatrous practices south.

The accusation may reference Lachish's role importing foreign influences, military alliances with Egypt (trusting chariots/horses—Isaiah 31:1), or specific idolatrous practices. Excavations at Lachish uncovered cult centers suggesting syncretistic worship. The broader point: sin spreads through cultural exchange, military alliances, and compromised border cities. Lachish's strategic location made it prosperous but spiritually vulnerable. Trusting in military strength (chariots/

horses) rather than covenant faithfulness exemplified the prideful self-reliance God condemns throughout Scripture (Psalm 20:7; Hosea 14:3).

## Historical Context

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Lachish was Judah's premier fortress city, controlling access to the Shephelah and protecting approaches to Jerusalem. Archaeological excavations reveal massive fortifications—double walls, large gate complex, governor's palace. Yet in 701 BC, Sennacherib besieged and conquered Lachish, commemorating his victory with elaborate reliefs in his Nineveh palace (now in the British Museum). These reliefs show battering rams breaching walls, defenders hurling torches, Assyrian archers, fleeing civilians, executed prisoners, and Sennacherib receiving tribute.

Excavations at Tel Lachish confirm the reliefs' accuracy—burned destruction layer, hundreds of arrowheads, mass graves, siege ramp. The city's fall was catastrophic. Micah's prophecy that Lachish was the "beginning of sin" may reflect its role as conduit for foreign influences through trade with Philistia and Egypt. The city's reliance on military power (chariots) rather than God exemplified Judah's apostasy. Isaiah's contemporary condemnation of trusting Egyptian chariots (Isaiah 30:1-7, 31:1-3) likely includes Lachish's alliance politics.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does Lachish's role as 'beginning of sin' warn about the spiritual dangers of cultural gateways and foreign influence?
2. What does the command to bind chariots and flee teach about the futility of military strength when God removes His protection?
3. In what ways might churches or Christians become spiritual 'Lachishes'—importing worldly practices that compromise covenant faithfulness?

## Interlinear Text

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לְכִי יֹשֵׁב בֵּית	לְךָ כָּשׁ	הַמְרֻכָּב הַרְתָּם			
of Lachish	O thou inhabitant	to the swift beast	the chariot	bind	
H3923	H3427	H7409	H4818	H7573	
כִּי צִיּוֹן	לְבַת	הִיא	חַטָּאת	רֵאשִׁית	בְּרֵךְ
of Zion	to the daughter	H1931	of the sin	she is the beginning	H0
H6726	H1323		H2403	H7225	
		יִשְׂרָאֵל:	פְּשָׁעֵי	נִמְצְאוּ	
		of Israel	for the transgressions	were found	
		H3478	H6588	H4672	

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Kings 18:17** (Parallel theme): And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

**Joshua 10:3** (Parallel theme): Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

**2 Chronicles 32:9** (Parallel theme): After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem, saying,