

Micah 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil.

Analysis

Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil (לֹכֶן כִּי-אָמַר יְהֹוָה הָנָנוּ חָשַׁב עַל-הַמְשִׁפְחָה פָּזָאת רָעָה), lakhen koh-amar YHWH hineni choshev al-hammishpachah hazzo't ra'ah). The divine "therefore" (לֹכֶן, lakhen) links judgment to crime. God חָשַׁב (choshev, devises/plans) (ra'ah, evil/calamity) against the family (mishpachah, family/clan)—using the oppressors' own vocabulary. They "devised" wickedness (2:1, חָשְׁבִ-אָוֹן, choshevei-aven); God devises judgment. Measure for measure—lex talionis (Exodus 21:23-25).

From which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily (אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִמְשִׁיחו מִשְׁמָךְ צְאָרָתֵיכֶם וְלֹא תַלְכִּדוּ רֹומָה) tsavve'roteikhem we-lo telkhu romah). The imagery is a yoke from which they cannot remove צְאָר (tsavvar, neck)—captivity, subjugation, exile. haughtily/proudly) describes their former arrogance; judgment will humble them. Those who walked proudly oppressing others will walk bent under exile's yoke.

For this time is evil (כִּי עַת רָעָה הִיא). The עַת (et, time/season) is evil—an era of judgment, not prosperity. Amos similarly warned: "**Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time**" (Amos 5:13). The oppressors' evil deeds inaugurated an evil time of reckoning. Galatians 6:7-8 states the principle: "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**" They sowed oppression; they'll reap captivity.

Historical Context

The phrase "this family" likely refers to the ruling class, wealthy landowners, and corrupt officials who exploited the poor. God's judgment came through Assyrian invasion (722 BC for Northern Kingdom, 701 BC assault on Judah) and later Babylonian exile (586 BC). The imagery of a yoke they cannot remove reflects captivity's inescapability—deportation to foreign lands, loss of freedom, subjugation to pagan empires.

The concept of divine measure-for-measure justice pervades Scripture. Haman was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai (Esther 7:10). Babylon, which destroyed Jerusalem, was itself destroyed (Jeremiah 50-51). Revelation depicts God's judgments as righteous and fitting (Revelation 16:5-7, 18:6-8). The principle: God's justice precisely fits the crime. Those who devise evil against neighbors experience corresponding evil. This isn't vindictive but restorative—removing oppressors protects the vulnerable and vindicates the righteousness of God's moral order.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of measure-for-measure judgment (devising evil against those who devised evil) demonstrate both justice and irony?
2. What does the imagery of an inescapable yoke teach about the inevitability of consequences for persistent covenant violation?
3. In what ways might modern Christians walk 'haughtily' in ways that invite divine humbling?

Interlinear Text

עַל חִשְׁבָּב הַנּוּ יְהִי אֶמְרָה כִּי לְכָא |

H3651

H3541

Therefore thus saith

H559

הַנּוּ יְהִי אֶמְרָה

H2005

עַל חִשְׁבָּב do I devise

H5921

H2803

לֹא אֵשֶׁר בַּעַד הַזָּאת הַמְשֻׁפֶּת הַ

Behold against this family

H4940

H2063 an evil

H834

לֹא

H7451

H3808

תְּמַמָּן יִשְׁוֹן

from which ye shall not remove

H4185

מִשְׁמָן צָאָרָתִיכֶם

H8033

your necks

H6677

לֹא

רֹמֶם הַמְלָכָה

H1980

haughtily

H7317

הִיאוּ בַּעַד הַזָּאת כִּי

H3588

for this time

H6256

an evil

H1931

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 8:3 (Evil): And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

Amos 5:13 (Evil): Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

Jeremiah 18:11 (Evil): Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

James 2:13 (Parallel theme): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Lamentations 2:17 (References Lord): The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he

hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.

Lamentations 5:5 (Parallel theme): Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest.

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