

Micah 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.

Analysis

In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשָּׂא עֲלֵיכֶם מָשָׁל וְנָהָה נְהִי נִיחָה, bayyom hahu yissa aleikhem mashal we-nahah nehi nihyah). "That day" (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, bayyom hahu) is judgment day. מָשָׁל (mashal, parable/proverb/taunt-song) indicates mocking poetry—enemies will compose songs ridiculing Israel's downfall. נָהָה (nahah, lament/wail) is repeated for emphasis—intense, bitter mourning.

And say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people (אָמַר שָׁדוֹד נֶשְׁחָדוּנוּ חֵלֶק אַמִּי יָמִיר, amar shadod neshadunu cheleq ammi yamir). שָׁדוֹד (shadod, utterly devastated) uses intensive reduplication—completely ruined. חֵלֶק (cheleq, portion/allotment) refers to inherited land, now יָמִיר (yamir, exchanged/changed)—transferred to conquerors. The oppressors who seized others' heritage now experience their own heritage seized—divine poetic justice.

How hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields (אֵיךְ יָמִישׁ לִי לְשׁוֹבֵב סֵדֵינוּ יַחֲלֶק, eykh yamish li le-shovev sadeinu yechaleq). אֵיךְ (eykh, how/alas) expresses shocked grief. שׁוֹבֵב (shovev, apostate/turncoat) may describe Israel's relationship with God or conquerors who divide fields among themselves. The oppressors who coveted and seized fields (v. 2) now watch helplessly as

invaders divide their fields. Jesus's parable of the unmerciful servant illustrates similar justice (Matthew 18:23-35)—he who showed no mercy received none.

Historical Context

Taunt-songs against defeated enemies were common in ancient Near Eastern warfare. When Babylon fell, Israel sang: "**How hath the oppressor ceased!**" (Isaiah 14:4-21). Lamentations is extended mourning poetry over Jerusalem's fall. Psalm 137:1-3 describes Babylonian captors demanding celebratory songs from exiled Jews. Micah prophesies role reversal—those who oppressed will be taunted by their oppressors.

The redistribution of Israel's land to foreigners occurred repeatedly. Assyria resettled foreign populations in Samaria (2 Kings 17:24). Babylon deported Judah's elite and gave land to the poor (2 Kings 25:12; Jeremiah 39:10). Later, Romans destroyed Jerusalem (70 AD) and distributed land to veterans. Each fulfillment demonstrated God's justice: covenant-breakers lose covenant blessings, including the land itself. Yet prophecy also promises restoration (Jeremiah 30:3, 18; Ezekiel 36:24-28)—judgment isn't God's final word for repentant remnants.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the prospect of enemies singing taunt-songs against defeated Israel underscore the shameful reversal that judgment brings?
2. What does the principle of measure-for-measure justice (land-grabbers losing their land) teach about God's administration of moral order?

3. In what ways should awareness that unrepentant sin leads to shameful exposure motivate holy living?

Interlinear Text

בַּיּוֹם In that day H3117	וְהָיָה H1931	וְשָׂא shall one take up H5375	עָלָיו H5921	מִשָּׁל a parable H4912
וְנָגַדְתָּ against you and lament H5091	וְנָהֲיָה lamentation H5092	וְנָהֲיָה with a doleful H5093	וְאָמַר and say H559	וְנִשְׁדָּה We be utterly H7703
וְנִשְׁדָּה We be utterly H7703	חֵלְקוֹ the portion H2506	עַמִּי of my people H5971	וְיָמַר he hath changed H4171	אֵין H349
וְיָמַר how hath he removed H4185	לִי H0	לְשׁוֹבֵב H7728	שָׂדֵינוּ our fields H7704	יִחְלֶק: he hath divided H2505

Additional Cross-References

Habakkuk 2:6 (Parallel theme): Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!

Isaiah 6:11 (Parallel theme): Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

Isaiah 24:3 (Parallel theme): The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

Jeremiah 9:10 (Parallel theme): For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone.

Deuteronomy 28:29 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

Numbers 23:7 (Parallel theme): And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

Micah 1:15 (Parallel theme): Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall come unto Adullam the glory of Israel.

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