

Micah 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

Analysis

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail (חֲלִי וְגָחִי בְּתִצִּיּוֹן כַּיּוֹלֶדָה, chuli va-gochi bat-Tsiyyon kayyoledah). The imperatives חֲלִי (chul, writhe/travail) and גָּחִי (gachah, labor/burst forth) command Jerusalem to embrace the painful process. This isn't permission but prophetic necessity—exile must come. Yet labor produces birth; suffering yields redemption. The comparison כַּיּוֹלֶדָה (kayyoledah, like one giving birth) reiterates verse 9's imagery.

For now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon (כִּי־אַתָּה תֵּצְאִי מִקִּרְיָה וְשָׁכַנְתְּ בַּשָּׂדֶה וּבָאת עַד־בָּבֶל, ki-attah tetse'i miqqiryah we-shakhant bassadeh u-va't ad-Bavel). The threefold progression depicts exile stages:

1. יָצָא (yatsa, go out) from Jerusalem
2. שָׁכַן (shakhan, dwell) in fields (temporary camps, vulnerability)
3. בּוֹא עַד (bo ad, go even to) Babylon.

Remarkably, Micah names Babylon over a century before it became dominant power—stunning prophetic precision.

There shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies (שָׁם תִּנָּצֵל יְהוָה יִגְאֹלְךָ מִכַּף אֹיְבֶיךָ, sham tinnatseli sham yig'alekh YHWH mikkaf oyevayikh). The repeated שָׁם (sham, there) emphasizes location—in Babylon itself, amid exile, deliverance comes. נָצַל (natsal, deliver/rescue) and גָּאֹל (ga'al, redeem) promise salvation in the place of bondage. This parallels the Exodus—Israel enslaved in Egypt, redeemed from there. Exile isn't abandonment but redemptive discipline; Babylon becomes unlikely location for divine deliverance. God saves not by preventing exile but through it—refining, purifying, then restoring (Jeremiah 29:10-14; Isaiah 48:10).

Historical Context

Micah prophesied circa 740-700 BC when Assyria was the dominant threat. Babylon was merely an Assyrian vassal. Yet Micah specifically named Babylon as Israel's future captor—fulfilled over a century later when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem (605, 597, 586 BC) and exiled Jews to Babylon. This prophetic precision demonstrates divine inspiration; Micah couldn't have guessed Babylon's rise to superpower status or Jerusalem's eventual fall to them.

The exile lasted 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10). Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon (539 BC) and issued an edict allowing Jews to return (538 BC—Ezra 1:1-4). Thus "there"—in Babylon—God redeemed them through a pagan king (Isaiah 44:28-45:1 calls Cyrus God's "anointed"). The pattern reveals God's sovereignty over history—He orchestrates even pagan empires to accomplish redemptive purposes (Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 2:21, 4:34-35). The ultimate exodus came through Christ, who descended into death (our Babylon) and emerged victorious, redeeming His people from sin's captivity (Ephesians 4:8-10; Colossians 1:13).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the command to 'labour to bring forth' like a woman in travail reframe suffering as redemptive process rather than meaningless tragedy?
2. What does Micah's specific naming of Babylon (over a century before it conquered Judah) demonstrate about biblical prophecy's divine origin?
3. In what ways does God's promise to redeem 'there'—in Babylon itself—illustrate His power to save through circumstances, not merely from them?

Interlinear Text

ח וְלִי	וְגַחֲי	בֵּת	צִיּוֹן	כְּלִלְתָּ הַ
Be in pain	and labour to bring forth	O daughter	of Zion	like a woman in travail
H2342	H1518	H1323	H6726	H3205
כִּי	עַתָּה	תֵּצֵא י	מִקִּרְיָהּ הַ	וְשָׁכַנְתָּ
H3588	H6258	for now shalt thou go forth	out of the city	and thou shalt dwell
		H3318	H7151	H7931
בַּשָּׂדֶה הַ	וְכָאתָ	עַד	בָּבֶל	שָׁמָּה
in the field	and thou shalt go	H5704	even to Babylon	H8033
H7704	H935		H894	
תִּנָּצֵל לִי	שָׁמָּה	יִגְאֹלֶנָּה	יְהוָה הַ	
there shalt thou be delivered	H8033	shall redeem	there the LORD	
H5337		H1350	H3068	
מִכַּף	אֲדִיבֶנָּה:			
thee from the hand	of thine enemies			
H3709	H341			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 48:20 (Redemption): Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

2 Kings 20:18 (References Babylon): And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Isaiah 45:13 (References Lord): I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 43:14 (Redemption): Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

Hosea 13:13 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

Hosea 2:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

Revelation 12:14 (Parallel theme): And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Psalms 106:10 (Redemption): And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

Jeremiah 15:21 (Redemption): And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Hosea 1:10 (Parallel theme): Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.