

Nahum 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts.

Analysis

And Huzzab shall be led away captive (vehuzzav guletah hu'alatah)—the identity of Huzzab (הַצַּב) is debated: possibly a title for the queen ('the one established/stationed'), the city personified, or a specific royal woman. Regardless, the phrase depicts royal humiliation: galah (גָּלָה, led away/uncovered) and alah (אָלָה, brought up) describe deportation and exile. Queens and noblewomen would be led away as captives, the ultimate disgrace for a royal house.

Her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts (ve'amhoteyha menanhagot kekol yonim metophaphot al-libben)—female attendants (amhot, אִמּוֹת) moan like doves (yonim, יוֹנִים), beating their breasts (topheph, תִּפְפֹּה) in ritual mourning. Doves' cooing represents plaintive lamentation. This vivid imagery depicts the reversal of Nineveh's pride: from imperial arrogance to mourning captivity, from commanding nations to being led away powerless. The feminine imagery intensifies the humiliation in a patriarchal honor-shame culture.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare regularly included enslavement and deportation of royal women as spoils of conquest and symbols of total victory. Assyria itself had practiced this extensively—deporting conquered peoples, enslaving royal families, parading captives before victors. Assyrian palace reliefs depict captive women being led away, prisoners in chains, royal families humiliated. Now Nineveh would

experience what it had inflicted on others. The mourning rituals described—breast-beating, dove-like moaning—were standard ancient Near Eastern expressions of grief. This fulfilled the biblical principle: 'with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again' (Matthew 7:2).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the image of royal women led captive demonstrate the totality of God's judgment against Nineveh?
2. What does this verse teach about the principle of measure-for-measure justice—experiencing what you inflicted on others?
3. How should the mourning imagery affect our understanding of the real human cost of sin and judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְהָצַב	גִּלְתָּ הָ	הָעֵלָ תָּהּ	וְאִמָּהֶתָּ יָהּ		
And Huzzab	shall be led away captive	she shall be brought up	and her maids		
H5324	H1540	H5927	H519		
מִנְהֻגֹתָ	כְּקוֹל	יוֹנֵי יָם	מִתְכַּפֵּת	עַל	לְבִבְהֶן:
shall lead	her as with the voice	of doves	tabering	H5921	upon their breasts
H5090	H6963	H3123	H8608		H3824

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 38:14 (Parallel theme): Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

Isaiah 59:11 (Parallel theme): We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves:
we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

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