

Version speaks of takers and givers of "usury," the American Standard Version more correctly translates "interest." The question whether the rate of interest was or was not excessive is not involved in the verse.

Verses 3 and 4 describe the devastation and resulting decline of the land, and say that this is in accordance with divine predictions. Verse 5 gives the cause of the disaster: Israel's departure from God's commands.

Verses 7 to 9 dwell on the results of the depopulation. Joy and mirth have disappeared from the land.

In verses 10 to 12 the attention is concentrated on Jerusalem. It is called "the city of confusion." The American Standard Version reads "the waste city," but this does not express the sense of the original nearly as well as the rendering of the King James Version. In Genesis 1:2 the word is translated "without form" in the King James Version, and "waste" in the American Standard Version. It is used only twenty times in the Old Testament and the context of many of its occurrences shows that its primary idea is not that something is the result of devastation, but that its condition may be described as empty, useless, vain, or confused. It would be tautologous to say, with the American Standard Version, "the waste city is broken down;" the rendering of the King James Version is preferable as containing a reason for the disaster. Jerusalem should have been the city of order. She had God's law. He had established her government, and poured out His blessings upon her. Yet she neglected His ordinances and forgot His commands. She became a "city of confusion." The breaking down is the inevitable result.

The beginning of verse 11 differs in the two English versions. King James Version reads: "There is a crying for wine in the streets;" American Standard Version says: "There is a crying in the streets because of the wine." The latter is the more literal. Yet it does not make clear whether the crying is because of a lack of wine, or because of its results. Most commentators think that it is a sign of hunger, like a cry for bread (cf. Lam. 2:12). Yet the American Standard Version reading suggests that it means a cry of suffering, uttered as a result of having drunk of the wine of the wrath of God.

Verse 12 once more stresses the desolations of the city.