

Journey through Jeremiah Part 50, Judgment Against Moab

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017

† Jeremiah 48:1-47 – Judgment against Moab

1 Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded *and* taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.
2 *There shall be* no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from *being* a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee.

This entire chapter is devoted to the LORD's judgment against Moab. The inhabitants of Moab were called Moabites. Their name comes from their founder, Moab. The Bible tells us where Moab came from. Look at it with me in

Genesis 19:30-38

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

So, the Moabites were from that sinful incestuous relationship between a drunken Lot and his oldest daughter. The relationship between the Israelites and the Moabites was sometimes peaceful but more often it was not.

Moab was the last place the Israelites went through before they entered into the Land of Canaan. It was where Moses died and was buried as well.

Probably one of the most familiar Moabites we read about in the Bible was Ruth, the wife of Mahlon. We all know the story; Mahlon died and left Ruth as a widow. Ruth stayed with her mother-in-law, Naomi and ended up marrying a kinsman redeemer named Boaz, they had a son named Obed and he had a son named Jesse, and of course, Jesse had a son named David. So, Ruth was the great grandmother of King David.

But, by the time we get to the Book of Jeremiah and the prophecy given here in our opening text, the Moabites are considered just like all of the other Gentile nations. They worshiped the false god, Chemosh, and the female goddess named Ashtar. They also worshiped another god named Nebo, which the city and mountain of Nebo

was named after and mentioned in verse one as one of the Moabite cities that is being judged.

3 A voice of crying *shall be* from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.

4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

5 For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

The cry of destruction is heard from one end of the land of Moab to the other. These cities that are mentioned stretch from the mountains to the sea. All of the land of Moab is encompassed in the LORD's almighty wrath against their sin.

6 Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

7 For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity *with* his priests and his princes together.

8 And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken.

9 Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.

The cry for them to *flee and save their lives* is more of a mocking because there is no escape from God's wrath. He tells them to be like the *heath in the wilderness*. The heath was a low growing tree that grew in the desert places and had no fruit or leaves, it constantly was blasted by the desert winds.

Then he mentions their god, *Chemosh*. The Moabites and the Ammonites were both worshipers of Chemosh. The Moabites sometimes are referred to as the people of Chemosh. Even their god, Chemosh, will be unable to help them escape God's wrath, he too will be taken into captivity.

Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away, again, more mocking them at their feeble attempts of escape from the LORD God Jehovah. He will not leave one single city untouched.

10 Cursed *be* he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed *be* he that keepeth back his sword from blood.

The curse is pronounced upon the enemies of Moab that God has commanded to destroy the Moabites – mostly the Chaldeans. He promises a curse to anyone that does not do His work as instructed or if they hold back their swords from destroying the Moabites. God is the one who gives life, sustains life, and has the prerogative to take life if He so chooses.

11 Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

Throughout their history, even from their youth, they have been at ease. They have been able to withstand their enemies and have never been utterly destroyed or forced into captivity, so they have become "settled" the Bible says. In other words, they have become comfortable with their position in the world and fear no one.

12 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.

These “wanderers,” that the LORD is sending into the Moabites land are most likely Chaldeans that God has sent into their land as unassuming citizens that blend in with their society and then begin to infiltrate their land and government. Then they will overthrow it from the inside.

13 And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.

When the Moabites see that the LORD intends to destroy them and their god Chemosh cannot do a thing about it, they will be ashamed of their god.

Then he mentions “as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.” What this is referring to is when Israel was first divided into the two kingdoms; the 10 tribes of the North which was called Israel, and the 2 tribes of the south which was called Judah. After King Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam became king of Israel. He was a tyrant of a King and when he made things hard on the Children of Israel they rebelled and they put Jeroboam in as King of Israel. Jeroboam used to work for King Solomon and had already been told by a Prophet that that all of this would happen. Well, Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin followed him and he became the King of Judah and reigned from Jerusalem while Jeroboam reigned over Israel from Samaria. Well, Jeroboam was worried that people would go to Jerusalem to worship and would end up defecting over to Judah, let me read you what happened:

1 Kings 12:25-33 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Well, we aren't going to read the entire story tonight because that isn't what we are studying about but in the next chapter in 1 Kings 13 we read where God sent a prophet to warn Jeroboam of the sinfulness that he had done and that God was going to destroy the altars and golden calf that he had built in Bethel. Thus, the meaning of the phrase: “as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.”

14 How say ye, *We are mighty and strong men for the war?* **15** Moab is spoiled, and gone up *out of* her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

They once bragged of their mighty army, their legions of young men that went into battle and prevailed, but the LORD assures them that the mighty and strong men and the young men will all be destroyed and slaughtered, and he also uses His title of **King of the LORD of hosts**. He's a greater king than the King of the Moabites, greater than the King of the Chaldeans, He's King of Kings and Lord of Lords and there are none above him.

16 The calamity of Moab *is* near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. **17** All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, *How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!*

Remember that this prophecy was given in the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign. Though it says the “calamity of Moab is near to come,” it was another 23-years before it came about. Moab's final destruction came 5-years after the destruction of Jerusalem. We must remember that God does things in his own time, not our time. We think that was a long time to wait but for God that was just a blip in time.

Moab's destruction will shock everyone around them. They will find it hard to believe that a people as strong as they are can be wiped out. He mentions their “**strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod,**” these are indications of Moab's prominent place in the world and their national power and influence. They will lose it all.

18 Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from *thy* glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, *and* he shall destroy thy strong holds. **19** O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, *and* say, *What is done?*

Dibon was a city in Moab, known to be well protected. Even they will be brought down by the “spoiler of Moab,” meaning the Chaldeans .

20 Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, **21** And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, **22** And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim, **23** And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, **24** And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

All of these places mentioned are cities and towns in the Land of Moab. No one will be safe from the Chaldeans. The LORD will use them to destroy everything.

25 The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD.

The horn is a symbol of power and the arm is a symbol of authority. Moab's horn will be cut off and their arm broken, indicating that they will lose everything they have.

26 Make ye him drunken: for he magnified *himself* against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.

When he speaks of making them **drunken**, he doesn't mean with the wine of grapes, he means with the wine press of God's wrath. I think we've preached and taught on God's cup of wrath enough that everyone understands that very well. Moab had exalted itself against the LORD. He had defied God's word and His people. The LORD will cause him to be drunken with his wrath and he will be like a drunk man wallowing in his own vomit.

27 For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou speakest of him, thou skippedst for joy.

When the Northern kingdoms of Israel were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians and then when the Southern kingdoms of Judah were carried off into captivity by the Chaldeans, the Moabites laughed, mocked, and ridiculed them. They treated them as if they were thieves and robbers being carried off to prison, yet they had done nothing to deserve such treatment by the Moabites.

Nothing has changed in all these years. The countries and people all around Israel still rejoice in any bad thing that happens to them. Israel is the most hated nation in the world. The Muslims would like nothing better than to wipe it off the face of the earth, but as we know, God will not allow them to. While Israel may be small in size they are very powerful in weapons and technology. Not only does Israel have nuclear weapons but they have some of the most advanced weapon systems in the world. Not only do they have the “Iron Dome” for protection against short range missiles and mortar shells, and the **Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 system** for protection against long-range missiles, but this past April they rolled out “David’s Sling,” which was a joint effort between the US and Israel. David’s Sling is equipped with 2-stage, hit-to-kill stunner missiles, which will completely obliterate anything it hits just by shear force.

So, you better believe the **Palestinians**, the **Iranians**, the **Hammams**, and everyone else around them would “skip for joy,” if anything happens to Israel. That’s what the Moabites did, and they paid dearly for it.

28 O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole’s mouth.

The only chance of escape is to flee to the mountains and dwell in the rocks like the birds do. Their fortified cities will offer them no protection .

29 We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. 30 I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but *it shall not be so*; his lies shall not so effect *it*.

Moab’s pride was known the world over. Look at all of those adjectives he uses to describe the same thing; *pride, proud, loftiness, arrogancy, pride, haughtiness*. As we have preached many times in the past, pride is man’s biggest downfall and the catalyst behind every sin. All of their lies and false dealings is coming back to haunt them.

31 Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; *mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres*. 32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach *even* to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. 33 And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; *their shouting shall be* no shouting. 34 From the cry of Heshbon *even* unto Elealeh, *and even* unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar *even* unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. 35 Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods. 36 Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches *that* he hath gotten are perished.

Most of verses 31-36 seem to be a quote from the Prophet Isaiah, as we find it written in his prophecy as well: **Isaiah 16:6-13** We have heard of the pride of Moab; *he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so*. 7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareth shall ye mourn; surely *they are* stricken. 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea. 9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses; I have made *their vintage* shouting to cease. 11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirhareth. 12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail. 13 This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

37 For every head *shall be* bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands *shall be* cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.

These are, of course, signs of great mourning. The shaving of the head, and clipping of the beard were usual signs of mourning. The cutting of the hands was something that the heathen did but it was forbidden for the Jews: **Deuteronomy 14:1-2** *Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead*. 2 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

38 *There shall be* lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure, saith the LORD. 39 They shall howl, *saying*, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him. 40 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. 41 Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men’s hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. 42 And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he hath magnified *himself* against the LORD. 43 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *shall be* upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD. 44 He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, *even* upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. 45 They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. 46 Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives. 47 Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible