

PROPHECIES AGAINST JUDAH'S NEIGHBORS

TEXT: JEREMIAH 47:1-7

INTRODUCTION:

1. I mentioned last week that the final section of the book of Jeremiah (chapters 46 through 51) deals with God's judgments upon Judah's Gentile neighbors.
2. Back in chapter 1, verse 5, the LORD said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."
3. It has been noted that the order in which these prophecies are recorded follows a geographical pattern of west to east -- Egypt (chap 46), then the Philistines (47:1), then Moab (48:1), then the Ammonites (49:1), then Edom (49:7), then Damascus (49:23), then Kedar (49:28), then Elam (49:34), then Babylon (50:1; 51:1).

I. THE PHILISTINES (47:1)

1. The Babylonian army is described as "an overflowing flood" that shall overflow the land of the Philistines (47:1, 2).
2. The invasion would be so terrible that fathers would flee for their lives and leave their children behind (47:3).
3. Once again, the Babylonians were the instruments of God's judgment -- "for the LORD will spoil the Philistines" (47:4; cf. 47:6, 7).
4. Tyrus and Zidon (47:4) were Phoenician cities of Philistine origin, but they would have no power to help because it was the Lord who was about to destroy the Philistines.
5. Making oneself bald and cutting oneself were heathen customs of mourning and self-mutilation (47:5). The Bible condemns these pagan customs. Leviticus 19:27 and 28 says, "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD."
6. First Kings 18:28 says that up on Mount Carmel, the devilish prophets of Baal "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

7. These demonic practices are still around today. For example, recent studies have shown that many girls between the ages of 10 and 18 are now cutting themselves with razor blades.
8. I have read articles about frenzied young people cutting themselves at a rock concert. Recently articles have stated that Justin Beiber fans have been posting pictures of themselves cutting themselves as a way of pleading with him to stop smoking marijuana.
9. Sometimes the prophets refer to shaving as a picture of judgment. Isaiah 7:20 says, "In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard."

II. THE MOABITES (48:1)

1. The Moabites and the Ammonites (49:1) were descended from Lot. H.A. Ironside refers to the Moabites as the "descendants of inglorious Lot and his wretched first-born daughter" (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*).
2. Genesis 19:32 says that after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's daughters said, "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father."
3. Genesis 19:37 says Lot's older daughter bare him a son, "and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day."
4. Genesis 19:38 says Lot's younger daughter also bare him a son, "and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day."
5. Jeremiah 48:2 says, "Let us cut it off from being a nation."
6. Jeremiah 48:42 says, "And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD." In fulfillment of this prophecy, Moab is no longer a nation. The country of Jordan occupies the land that used to be Moab.
7. But Jeremiah 48:47 says, "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD." So the LORD is not finished with Moab.
8. We have seen in Jeremiah's prophecies that Babylon was the instrument of God's judgment upon both Judah and Egypt. Three times in the book of Jeremiah, King Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as God's "servant" (25:9; 27:6; 43:10).

9. He was also the instrument of God's judgment upon Moab. In Jeremiah 48:40, King Nebuchadnezzar is described as an eagle, that "shall spread his wings over Moab." Jeremiah 48:10 refers to Nebuchadnezzar performing the LORD'S work of judging Moab.
10. Hebrew lexicons say the word translated "deceitfully" in verse 10 means "negligently."
11. For a long time Moab had been permitted to go unpunished. They had become very haughty and careless -- "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees (dregs)..." (48:11).
12. Moab was famous for its vineyards, so under the figure of wine-making the LORD described how He would judge them (48:11, 12, 32, 33).
13. Over twenty different places are named in this chapter -- Nebo (this is the mountain from whose summit Moses viewed the promised land), Kiriathaim, Misgab, etc. (48:1). "Madmen" (48:2) is a Moabite city. *The Scofield Study Bible* says it means "dung heap."
14. God judged Moab because they were trusting in their works and in their treasures and in their false religion (48:7, 35). Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites (48:7, 13, 46).
15. The horn and the arm in Scripture represent physical strength, but the LORD cut off the horn of Moab, and broke his arm (48:25).
16. Moab "magnified himself against the LORD" (48:26). Therefore, "Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision" (48:26). Moab was to be made drunk with the wine of God's wrath. Moab would be forced to drink the cup of God's judgment.
17. God judged the Moabites because of their pride (48:29).
18. Merrill Unger said, "He would therefore wallow in his vomit, disgorging all his past pride (riches, glory), and fall in ignominious abasement" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
19. Jeremiah has been called the "Weeping Prophet" because he wept over the backslidden condition of Judah and their well-deserved judgment. Interestingly, Jeremiah also wept over Moab (48:31, 32).
20. Jeremiah even wailed for Moab like pipes (flutes) played mournfully at a funeral (48:36).
21. The Moabites were all idolatrous pagans, and they expressed their grief in pagan customs such as shaving their heads bald, and clipping their beards, and cutting their hands (48:37; cf. 47:5).
22. Isaiah 15:2 and 3 says, "He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off. In their

streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly."

III. THE AMMONITES (49:1-6)

1. Ammon was situated north of Moab, and east of the tribes of Reuben and Gad. The Ammonites took land belonging to the tribe of Gad during the time of the Assyrian captivity. So the LORD asks in Jeremiah 49:1, "Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their (referring to the Ammonites) king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?"
2. In other words, since the tribe of Gad was deported, the land rightly belonged to the tribe of Judah (the rightful heir), not to the Ammonites.
3. The Ammonites were known for double-dealing and treachery (cf. 40:13, 14).
4. Like the Moabites, the Ammonites were the product of Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughters. The older daughter said to her younger sister, "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: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father" (Gen. 19:31, 32).
5. And like the Moabites, the Ammonites were the inveterate enemies of Israel. Ezekiel 35:5 refers to the "perpetual hatred" the Edomites had for the Israelites. The LORD'S judgment upon Edom is dealt with in verses 7-22. But all of Israel's neighbors had the same "perpetual hatred." And they still do today.
6. Jeremiah 48:7 says that the Moabites trusted in their treasures. Jeremiah 49:4 says the Ammonites did the same thing. The Ammonites thought they were secure because they were surrounded on three sides by mountains, so the LORD said, "Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me?"
7. They thought no one would come, but the LORD said, "Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee...from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth" (49:5).
8. It seems strange that the LORD would refer to Ammon as a "backsliding daughter" (49:4), but they were descended from Lot, who was a believer (though carnal). Lot is called "just" and "righteous" in II Peter 2:7 and 8.

9. As in the case of Moab, we once again see the LORD'S gracious promise to restore them (49:6; cf. 48:47).

CONCLUSION:

1. Regarding the LORD'S promise to restore Moab "in the latter days" (Jeremiah 48:47), Merrill Unger said, "Where such a remnant is, or how the LORD is going to accomplish such a restoration, we do not know. We do know He will fulfill His own Word in His own omniscient and omnipotent way" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
2. Cf. Psalm 83.