

Jer. 48:1 ¶ 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.

Jer. 48:2 *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 chapter is a record of God's declaration of judgment against Moab. The people of Moab were descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot through incest with his oldest daughter. It was located east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea in what is today part of the land of Jordan and shared a border with Ammon in the north and Edom in the south.

Nebo was identified as the son of Marduk and was worshipped in Moab. Kiriathaim was originally a part of the land allotted to Reuben, but it was eventually taken over by the Moabites. It seems that Misgab was a city located in the heights of Moab. Maybe this is a reference to the whole of Moab from its lowest to highest points. Heshbon was also once a part of the land of Reuben that was given to the Levites. The wording indicates that the enemy would initiate their attack to conquer Moab from Heshbon.

Jer. 48:3 A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.

Jer. 48:4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

Jer. 48:5 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.

Jer. 48:6 Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

Horonaim was located in the southern part of Moab near Zoar. Luhith is another location that required one to go up. This seems to be another expression similar to "from top to bottom." I would assume all these cities are being singled out to emphasize that all of Moab would suffer "spoiling and destruction." Verses 4-5 picture a people crying in sorrow because of suffering at the hands of their enemies. Their only hope is to escape and hide in the wilderness.

Jer. 48:7 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.

At this point the LORD explains that Moab is suffering His judgment because of their pride and worship of idols. Their *works* was a reference to the actions they had taken to provide for their own protection, e.g., the construction of fortresses, performing sacrifices to their false gods, etc. The Hebrew for *treasures* seems to be a direct reference to their armory, their stash of weapons. Chemosh, the primary god of the Moabites, would prove to be powerless and would be taken into captivity along with his priests and princes.

Jer. 48:8 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.

Jer. 48:9 Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.

Verse 8 again makes it very clear that all of Moab will fall to the enemy; not one city will escape. I think the NLT expresses the message of verse 9 more clearly: *"Oh, that Moab had wings so she could fly away, for her cities will be left empty, with no one living in them."*

Jer. 48:10 Cursed *be* he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed *be* he that keepeth back his sword from blood.

After looking at the Hebrew, I think the NIV has the clearest translation: *"A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work! A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!"*

I think the language used emphasizes the importance of obedience to God. Some take issue with the idea of the prophet of God declaring a curse, but there are other examples in scripture that speak of God declaring a curse against His enemies.

In His covenant with Abraham-- *Genesis 12:3 "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

Regarding the people of Israel breaking covenant--*Deuteronomy 11:26-28 "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."*

Regarding refusing to help Him in defense of Israel--*Judges 5:23 "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty."*

We know that Babylon was the destroying instrument in God's hands against Moab; and if they refused to completely destroy Moab, it would be refusing to do God's will.

Jer. 48:11 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.

Jer. 48:12 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.

Jer. 48:13 And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.

Throughout most of their history it seems that the people of Moab had pretty much experienced peace in their land, though they were under tribute to Israel for a time, then under the authority of Assyria for a time. The people had never been subject to being taken into captivity. The prophet paints a word picture of wine that has been poured into bottles and allowed to age and acquire a potent aroma until foreigners come to break those bottles causing their contents to be dispersed.

Their defeat will be to the shame of Chemosh, just as surely as Israel's defeat was to the shame of their misplaced confidence in their idols in Bethel.

1 Kings 12:28–29 “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. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.”

Jer. 48:14 ¶ How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war?

Jer. 48:15 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.

Point seems to be that in spite of the boastful pride of the mighty men of Moab, Moab is going to be destroyed, their best young men slaughtered, and the country's treasures confiscated by the enemy as judgment from the “LORD of hosts.” Note that the LORD is identified as “the King,” the one and only rightful authority over all mankind.

Jer. 48:16 The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast.

Jer. 48:17 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!

The prophet declares that the judgment to come upon Moab is near. Josephus records that Moab fell to Babylon five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. According to JFB, this would be an interval of about 23 years.

The scepter and the beautiful rod are emblems of authority and rulership. The nations around Moab are called to mourn for her because she is going to lose her independence and fall under the rule of another.

Jer. 48:18 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.

Jer. 48:19 O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?

Though the message is prophetic, the language calls for mourning to begin in Dibon; this city was located on the King's Highway south of Amman, about 13 miles east of the Dead Sea. Though abundant in water resources, they would

soon experience “thirst” and deprivation. (According to the NIV Commentary, the Moabite Stone was found here in 1868.)

The people living in Aroer were on the path of escape and are described as on the lookout for those fleeing for their lives to get news of what was happening.

Jer. 48:20 Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,

Jer. 48:21 And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath,

Jer. 48:22 And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim,

Jer. 48:23 And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon,

Jer. 48:24 And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

Jer. 48:25 The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD.

This seems to be the answer that those in Aroer can expect to hear. It’s basically saying that all the cities of Moab are being spoiled and destroyed by the enemy. Verse 21 again emphasizes that these events are a result of judgment by Almighty God. The “horn” and the “arm” are references to the power and strength of Moab—point being, they will be left without power or strength.

Jer. 48:26 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.

Jer. 48:27 For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy.

The word “drunken” comes from a root word that means to drown. I think this is just another way of saying that Moab is going to be destroyed because of his pride. That Moab will “vomit” I think is a graphic word picture of the land spewing out its people. The Hebrew for “wallow” made reference to the grief caused by the “vomit.” Just as Moab had scorned and mocked Israel when she was taken captive, so too would they experience the same. It’s so in the nature of man to scorn or mock when those who are mighty are taken down.

The point seems to be that Israel was no more deserving than Moab of falling to the enemy, so what right did they have to scorn them. Israel had not been guilty of a crime against Moab, so why should Moab have taken such delight in their devastation.

Jer. 48:28 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 prophet is declaring that the only hope for the people of Moab is to escape from their cities and flee to the caves in the mountains. The IVP Old Testament Commentary gave some interesting insight: “The flight of the Moabites from danger is compared to the nesting habits of rock doves. These birds relied on placing their nests in fairly inaccessible cliff faces and the crevices along the sides of gorges like the Arnon to protect their young.”

Jer. 48:29 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.
Jer. 48:30 I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but *it shall not be so*; his lies shall not so effect *it*.

The Moabites evidently had a reputation as being very proud and arrogant; they considered themselves to be a nation to be respected and admired for all they had accomplished and the wealth they had garnered. The LORD is saying, however, that their pride was misplaced; they may boast, but their boasting will not save them.

The message of these verses are echoed in the prophecies of Isaiah: *Isaiah 16:6* "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."

Jer. 48:31 Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; *mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres.*
Jer. 48:32 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.
Jer. 48:33 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.*
Jer. 48:34 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.

This expression from the heart of Jeremiah reminds me of the response of Isaiah.

Isaiah 15:5 "My heart shall cry out for Moab...."

Isaiah 16:9 "Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh...."

Isaiah 16:11 "Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh."

I believe this reflects the heart of God and is an example of what our response should be when we consider the destruction to come on those who choose to reject the truth of the gospel. I remember thinking about the people in Iraq during the time of our campaign against them and praying that a mighty work of the LORD among them would follow. Sadly, it is only in the face of suffering that some will choose to turn to God.

Again, the prophet seems to be emphasizing that the whole of Moab will be destroyed—from the valleys to the mountains, from the smallest to the largest. Where once the land had produced bountifully, the coming judgment would cause rejoicing over the harvest to cease.

Jer. 48:35 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.

Jer. 48:36 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.

Jer. 48:37 For every head *shall be* bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands *shall be* cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.

Jer. 48:38 *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.

The LORD has purposed through this judgment to put an end to the worship of idols in Moab. This judgment will result in the loss of all their wealth. Verse 37 is describing actions that were expressions of mourning. All the people of Moab will be in mourning when they experience God's judgment at the hands of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar.

Moab is described as a vessel that the potter has destroyed because it was not acceptable and was deemed of no value to him.

Jer. 48:39 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.

Jer. 48:40 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.

Jer. 48:41 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.

Jer. 48:42 And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he hath magnified *himself* against the LORD.

The prophet is putting an exclamation point on the fact that Moab will be destroyed and become an object of scorn and mocking among the nations.

The Lord is pictured as a mighty eagle swooping down over his prey and striking fear in the heart of the people. This would be a picture of the response of the people to the armies of Babylon.

The fear of the people is compared to that of a woman experiencing great labor pains. Isaiah used the same type of comparison in his prophecy regarding God's judgment.

Isaiah 13:6–8 "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth...."

Bottom line—Moab is being destroyed because he boasted in pride against the LORD. My heart grieves at the thought that America seems intent on positioning herself accordingly.

I think that people choose to ignore the fact that God has purposes connected to every nation on earth. Every nation is subject to His judgment for rejecting Him or proving not acceptable towards accomplishing His purposes. Every nation is a potential vessel of judgment against another nation in the hands of God. It is one of the most amazing characteristics of God to me that He can utilize people and nations to accomplish His purposes in concert with their own intents and purposes.

Jer. 48:43 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.*

Jer. 48:44 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.*

Jer. 48:45 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.

The message in this section is very bleak. Though the inhabitants of Moab may try to flee, they will not be successful. Everywhere they turn they will encounter danger. The LORD has declared judgment, and it will happen according to His purpose. There will be no escape.

Again, the prophet Isaiah has the same message for those who will experience God's judgment during the time known as the tribulation before He returns as King.

Isaiah 24:17–18 “Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare....”

Jer. 48:46 Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.

Jer. 48:47 Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far *is the judgment of Moab.*

The people of Moab are identified with the false god they worshipped—Chemosh. Their future is to be one of captivity. “Yet”—a glimmer of hope. The LORD will reestablish Moab as a nation in the latter days.

Though Jordan is the nation occupying the land of the Moabites at this time, I believe this is speaking of the days when the LORD will be ruling from His throne in Jerusalem in the millennium. I think Moab will once again exist as a distinct nation. This concludes Jeremiah's prophecy of God's judgment on Moab.