

Jeremiah Ch 47-48 • “An Alarm of War”

- Background: Ch 47 & 48 continue the section of Jeremiah that began in Ch 46; prophecies against the nations. God starts with Egypt (Ch 46) and proceeds west, speaking judgment against various peoples until He ends up at Babylon. Collectively these chapters fulfill Jeremiah 1:5 (Jeremiah will be a “prophet to the nations”)
- 47v1 Judgment v Philistines (even though only small principality by this time). Best guess “before Pharaoh attacked” either 609BC or 605BC (going to or coming from the Battle of Charchemish).
- v2-4 Babylonian army again an instrument of God’s judgment (coming in like flood). Prophecy fulfilled @ 604BC. Population decimated; cities largely destroyed.
- v5-7 Leading cities = Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, Ashdod. At least two left in ruins; survivors cutting themselves in sorrow.
- 48v1a God next turns attention to Moab (east of Israel; part of modern Jordan). More judgment pronounced v Moab than any nation except Babylon! Also read about judgment v Moab in Isaiah 15-16; Ez 25; Amos 2; Zeph 2. Not sure why – descended from Lot? Proximity to Israel?
- v1b-6 Note the number of place names (25) in chapter. Some known, some lost. Holy Spirit using specificity to convey how comprehensive judgment is?
- v7 Reason for judgment: worship of Chemosh (Solomon buildt altar in 1 Kings 11).
- v8-9 “Give wings to Moab” (v9) translated in NIV “pour salt on Moab. Either way, the picture is one of destruction. What’s left is unfit for human habitation.
- v10 Odd interjection – probably directed at Babylonians (who would never here it). Included to convey how serious God is about judgment?
- v11 Extended metaphor from winemaking. Very specific details, but the bottom line is God is indicting the people of Moab for complacency. They’re fat and happy.
- v12-13 God about to wreck their complacency. Compares to Israel (northern kingdom). Just like golden calf didn’t hold back Assyrians, Chemosh won’t stop Babylonians
- v14 Mocking – “You think you’re strong?!”
- v15-17 Prophetic past tense – God speaks as if it’s done.
- v18-25 More place names; more vivid description of brutal destruction. Note use of “horn” (power) and “arm” (authority). Bottom line: Moab will be shattered as a nation.
- v26 Evokes God’s cup of wrath (Is 51, Jer 25, Ob 16, Rev 14).

- v27 What did Moab do to deserve judgment? God already answered once (worshipped false god). Now answers again: mistreated Israel. God asks what Israel did to deserve Moab's abuse (answer: nothing!).
- v28-29 So flee God's impending judgment! Which is coming – why? Now God gives a 3rd answer: pride! (Uses 6 different words for pride!)
- v30 All the pride in the world won't save Moab.
- v31-33 God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).
- v34-35 Echoes of Isaiah 15 & 16 here.
- v36 Flutes intended to evoke funeral dirge. Mourning and lamenting.
- v37 All the familiar signs and symbols of grief in biblical times.
- v38-39 Nation shattered and shamed. Own people wailing; neighbors ridiculing.
- v40 Eagle could be vulture? Or symbol of conquest? Either way, bird of prey.
- v41-42 Fulfillment in 582BC (prophecy at least 20 years in advance). Images intended to convey judgment is inescapable.
- v43-44 Wordplay in Hebrew (fear, pit, snare – all sound similar). Message: no escape!
- v45-46 Heshbon = heart of the nation. Perhaps an analogy: destruction will begin in heart of the nation since guilt began in the heart of the people?
- v47 Chapter ends on a strange positive note. Strange because subsequent to 582BC, Moab ceased to exist as a nation. Subsequently inhabited but different people.
- Consider long-term fulfillment! We've had clues all along (v12 @ "days are coming", v26 @ cup of wrath image, v28 @ dwelling in rocks ala Petra, v41 @ woman in labor).
- But more than that — v45 quotes from Num 21:28 & Num 24:17 (Balaam). Balaam hired to curse Israel; God compels him to curse Moab instead. What do we read in Num 24:17? Reference to "star" and "scepter" = Messianic!
- Jesus will apparently bring judgment against Moab in His 2nd Coming, but subsequently (v47) the nation will be resettled
- Application Our sin is personal and grievous. God's forgiveness is personal and glorious!