

Jeremiah Chapters 47-49 John Karmelich

1. One of the classic moments that Peter had in the gospels is after Jesus predicts that he'll die in an unpleasant way, as he said, "Well, what about John, what'll happen to him? (See John 21:20-21.) I bring that up here because in effect that's Jeremiah's next question. Let me put it this way:
 - a) The last two chapters dealt with Egypt where Israel "was born" and where many Israelites are living at that moment including Jeremiah. Chapters 50-51 (essentially the end of the book) discuss what'll happen to Babylon. The question here is "everyone else".
 - b) In a sense Jeremiah's going to give a discussion of all the nations that border (or close to it) Israel to say in effect, "Here's what's going to happen to all of them". The short version is it is all bad news and the Babylonians pretty much wipe out the neighborhood.
 - c) So why have three chapters with details about all these nations? Why not say, while those Babylonians were in the area, they wiped out everyone in sight. Why have three chapters in effect describing the specifics of different nations and the fact they're all wiped out? Yes I'm glad you asked, and let me explain.
 - i) First, I'm sure Jeremiah gave this out of "curiosity" the same way Peter was curious about what would happen to the disciple John. Next it's God's response to, "Wait a minute, we messed up, but we're God's chosen! How come they aren't suffering in a way similar to, or worse than us?" It's the same way we'd be curious about the question, "God we know we got to be obedient to You and You'll discipline us when we're not, but what about all of the other people around here?"
 - ii) In other words, these chapters explain why as tough as it is to live the Christian life, let me (God) explain what's going to happen to everyone else! Yes Babylon is a separate topic as they represent open rebellion to God. These chapters in effect will explain what happens to people who know about God (they were within "earshot" of Israel and therefore are more accountable) but didn't do anything about it.
 - d) OK John, we know those who don't believe in Jesus are going to hell. Why have three long chapters dealing with their fate? Why not just say, "Everybody around here are judged based on what they knew about God and what they didn't do with that information? Do we really have to study three long chapters giving details about long dead nations dealing with their fate for ignoring God? Yes. Let me explain:
 - i) First by giving all these details, we can see how literally it came true exactly as it is predicted. Cities are named in each of these chapters and even in many cases, the exact order they were destroyed. So how do we know Jeremiah didn't just write it after the fact? What validates him is he also makes future predictions about what's the ultimate destiny of each of these nations of each of them.
 - ii) Also keep in mind that these nations have been enemies of God's people leading to this date. The underlying message to you and me is "We're betting on the winning horse" so to speak and all the hardships we go through in this life are worth it. The fate of these nations is all about destruction. The fate of our lives is about joy and a wonderful sense that despite whatever suffering we go through in this life, it's still worth it as our fate is sealed in Jesus as long as we're trusting Him for salvation.
2. I admit, this is both encouraging and depressing at the same time! We're about to read three long chapters on the specific fates of Israel's traditional enemies and nations that existed at that time in that area. So why should I care? To use an old Christian expression, "If they won't listen to Jesus, given them Moses"! The idea is if people won't accept the good news of Jesus, they must hear the bad news of hell. What's underlying these chapters is explaining the "bad news" if people are not willing to accept the good news. It's also a reminder to ourselves that it's all worth it. All that I'm saying is all of this bad stuff about nations near Israel has underlying principals for us to study!

3. Before I give a few chapter details, let me also discuss another parallelism between these chapters and something Jesus preached. He said in Matthew 25:32 that all nations will be judged. It refers to the Gentile nations. OK, we get "individual judgment", but why is there national judgment? I'd argue it has to do with how nations treated Israel. God told Abraham that He'll bless those who'll bless him (Abraham) and curse those who curse him. (Genesis 12:3.) Whether we care or not, God will judge nations based on how they treat Israel. The more I study these chapters the more I see them as a preview of that concept. We'll read of some of them being completely wiped out. Some of them are going to be resurrected. How will that happen? Debated. It may refer to people who believe in Jesus from those nations. The point is Jeremiah predicts with great accuracy the fate of these nations. Historical records from Babylonian writings that verify Jeremiah wrote this before the actual events. In short, Jeremiah was called to preach to these nations about their fate. Why is that? To show that the Israelite God is also "the God", so "deal with it"!
 - a) The application for us as Christians is to show people that nations (which includes the one I'm writing from) will be judged by God. Are there individuals saved from those nations? Of course. Still, it's a reminder of the ultimate fate of nations who ignore God's people and what will be the fate of those nations. To quote the late Billy Graham, "If God doesn't judge the United States of America, He owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology, and God doesn't apologize!"
4. OK, time to get off my soapbox and describe what's happening in these chapters. First, here is the "scorecard" of the nations being discussed.
 - a) First we get the Philistines. If you know your bible they've been a pain in Israel's side for centuries. Think David and Goliath. Think Samson and the Philistines, etc. They lived in what we call today the Gaza strip. Bottom line is they're going down for the count as they get wiped out by the Babylonians and are long gone. Nothing positive is said in the end.
 - b) Then we get separate lectures on two nations that today form Jordan. First we get Moab, a nation essentially across the Dead Sea. They've had their wars with the Israelites and have been a "pain in their side" to put it mildly. Then we get a study of Ammon, a nation that's just north of Moab. Bottom line is they'll both get judged heavily, although God promises a remnant will be saved after the Babylonians essentially wipe them out. In case you care, Moab gets a much longer poem probably due to their long history with Israel.
 - c) By the time we're in the middle of Chapter 49, we get to Edom, which is south of Moab. It is another nation. They are the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau. As God said, "Jacob I have loved Esau I have hated." Malachi 1:3 and Romans 9:13. Bottom line is they go down for the count and nothing redeeming is said of their descendants.
 - d) The final judgment is about places to the north of Israel in what is Syria today. It includes a section about the city Damascus as well as some smaller places. It ends with a small discussion of nomads east of Babylon as if to say this judgment will affect "everyone"!
 - e) Bottom line is Jeremiah goes "round the dial" to show us how nations get judged for being (or the lack of being) a good neighbor to the Israelites. Yes God uses the Babylonians as an instrument to wipe them out, but it shows that God judges nations as we must accept the fact that He does.
5. So what do I call this lesson: "Why God judges the nations (and why we should care)? It's because almost all of us reading this live in nations that are not Jewish. The issue isn't individual salvation but "group judgment". Whether we like it or not, we're all subject to "group judgment". It can be the nation we live in, the church we belong to or even a group project. The question comes down to is, "Are we being a good witness for Jesus?"
 - a) I'll be the first to admit, these chapters have a lot of poetry where one wonders, why must I read all of this? Again, it's not to learn ancient history, but to realize how His judgments against the nations occur. Some of these nations will have some redemption. Some will be gone for good. Understanding the "why" is why we study this. So, let's begin.

6. Chapter 47, Verse 1: This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza:
- a) I always preach to read bible verses in context. The last chapter focused on Egypt. So why jump to the Philistines next? Yes, they've been a pain in Israel's side for centuries. Yes it's a nation that has been illegally parked in the land of Israel for centuries. We get the idea that the Babylonians are in the neighborhood so they could wipe out everyone in site. I'm asking, why did God choose this particular time to destroy them after centuries of dealing with them?
 - b) To understand, let me back up a little to explain their history. Scholars argue this nation's origins were "Greek". They argue that they came as an expansion from areas around seas bordering what we call Greece. They were "parked" in the land when the Israelites first got there. There have been wars on and off with them since the days of Joshua lead them in that land. What I'm asking is why did God choose to wipe them out now? I can argue that God wanted to give them time to repent. I could say that they saw God operate for a few centuries so they're now "out of excuses" to ignore Him. Even when the Assyrian Empire wiped out the Northern Israel kingdom, the Philistines never suffered from that empire. So why now at this point did God say in effect, "That did it, time to wipe all of you out completely?" We don't know for sure. Other than to remind ourselves that God's patience has a limit. We don't know that limit, but it exists.
 - c) Notice that God gave this prophesy to Jeremiah before it occurred. I sort of see it as God's "final call" to the Philistines. He's saying, "The Israelites are My people. You've caused lots of problems with them for centuries. Whether you the Philistines like it or not, judgment day is here for your nation, deal with it!" With that said, time for the details.
7. Verse 2: This is what the LORD says: "See how the waters are rising in the north; they will become an overflowing torrent. They will overflow the land and everything in it, the towns and those who live in them. The people will cry out; all who dwell in the land will wail ³ at the sound of the hoofs of galloping steeds, at the noise of enemy chariots and the rumble of their wheels. Fathers will not turn to help their children; their hands will hang limp.
- a) I don't know how many of you have ever experienced a flood either in your home or over a larger area. With water rising, there is only so much sandbags will do. The picture here is that the Babylonian army is so much larger than the Philistines is there's nothing they'll be able to do to stop or prevent it. The destructive force will be so overwhelming, people won't be able to help their own children.
 - b) The other image being painted here is of horses and chariots. Maybe the Philistines had a few of their own, but the main idea here is the Philistines are going down for the count as they're about to be overrun by an army attacking fast, strong and big. The application for us is in a sense, judgment is coming and it's going to overwhelm us whether we desire to accept it or not.
 - c) Is this horrible? Yes. Why? From the Babylonian point of view, it was their desire to rule over the entire Middle East and destroy all groups "in their way". They were clearing out all of the land of Israel and the Philistines lived in what we call the Gaza strip. From God's perspective, it's a simple matter of saying, "You've been harassing My people for centuries and I've had it. So while the Babylonians are wiping out the Israelites, they'll also destroy you as a nation once and for all."
 - d) So if all of this is true, why warn them? Why have Jeremiah announce it? For starters for the Israelites and the Philistines to realize "God's God" and if He says their time is up, well it's up! Next maybe it's meant as a warning to them to face the fact His judgment's here so turn one's life over to Him. Remember that God judges everyone fairly based on what we do know about Him and what we did with that information.
 - e) Anyway, these verses are tough. There's nothing they can do to change the situation.

8. Verse 4: For the day has come to destroy all the Philistines and to cut off all survivors who could help Tyre and Sidon. The LORD is about to destroy the Philistines, the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor.
- Short version, nobody can help them. Tyre and Sidon were two Phoenician nations up the coast who were powerful at that time. They may even have been related to them. All of this is essentially saying, "There's no help coming. Just destruction!"
 - So let me personalize this for a moment. Many of us have been with loved ones with their death imminent and we can't do anything other than offering comfort before it happens. I argue that God never promises each of us a long life. He promises that if we dedicate our lives to Him and use them for His glory, we'll be eternally rewarded for it. Why does He allow us to suffer so much? Short version is either to test us or allow our suffering for His glory in some way or mean. All I can say is do what we can to comfort them and accept it as an unfortunate reality we must face in this lifetime.
 - OK, enough of our suffering, back to the Philistines!
9. Verse 5: Gaza will shave her head in mourning; Ashkelon will be silenced. O remnant on the plain, how long will you cut yourselves?
- The Philistines had five prominent cities in the Gaza strip. Yes Gaza was one of them. In these verses we read ancient ways of mourning. It was a way to appease their gods. That included shaving their heads and cutting themselves. It's sort of the ancient version that we could compare to the Pentecostal (false) stereotype of "swinging from the chandeliers".
 - Bottom line is the suffering will be horrid and the Philistines will be doing these things to appeal to their false gods, but it won't make a difference.
10. Verse 6: " `Ah, sword of the LORD,' you cry, `how long till you rest? Return to your scabbard; cease and be still.' ⁷ But how can it rest when the LORD has commanded it, when he has ordered it to attack Ashkelon and the coast?"
- In a sense these verses are dedicated to the Babylonians attacking them. Jeremiah's saying in effect, "Don't hold back. I've (God) has called for their destruction and don't ease up!"
 - OK enough horror for this group. Notice there is no "I'll preserve a remnant." God's doing a permanent once and for all judgment on this group and to borrow a quote used from a famous boxing match many years ago, "Down goes Frazier!" I couldn't resist saying that!
 - Time for the next group to be judged!
11. Chapter 48, Verse 1: Concerning Moab: This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:
- First a quote on who is Moab. Way back in Genesis 19:30-38, Abraham's nephew Lot and his daughters survived the famous judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. His two daughters each had sex with their father when as he was drunk. The girls thought the whole world's destroyed after that event. Both girls got pregnant and had boys from that encounter. One is named Moab and the other was Ammon. It's strange to consider the babies born from that became the two men who in effect started these nations.
 - Anyway, when the Israelites first got out of Egypt, let us just say the Moabites didn't want the Israelites around. Wars existed between the Israelites and them for centuries. Now it's many centuries later. Scholars stated the Babylonians tried to make peace with Moab and when they rebelled against Babylon, well, "Down goes Frazier!" This chapter gives details of how they went down for the count. Here goes:
12. Verse 1: (cont.) "Woe to Nebo, for it will be ruined. Kiriathaim will be disgraced and captured; the stronghold will be disgraced and shattered. ² Moab will be praised no more; in Heshbon men will plot her downfall: `Come, let us put an end to that nation.' You too, O Madmen, will be silenced; the sword will pursue you. ³ Listen to the cries from Horonaim, cries of great havoc and destruction.
- We're going to read the names of a bunch of cities in Moab who let's face it, unless we are archeologists, we won't care that much.

- b) These cities do follow a pattern of how Moab was destroyed. The short version is Babylon worked their way south destroying one city after another until that nation was destroyed.
- c) Unfortunately we're only beginning describing all these cities, so let's keep going.
13. Verse 4: Moab will be broken; her little ones will cry out. ⁵ They go up the way to Luhith, weeping bitterly as they go; on the road down to Horonaim anguished cries over the destruction are heard. ⁶ Flee! Run for your lives; become like a bush in the desert.
- a) It may help to keep in mind that the bible wasn't just written for us to study while having a cup of coffee. It was written for people of many millenniums to study. This would also include the Jewish people living in the Babylonian empire who may have lived or been in one of those cities.
- b) The bottom here is that all of that was horrible. Even in the English it comes across all that they suffered in this conquest. Children were not spared and cities and towns were wiped out as the Babylonians worked their way from place to place.
- c) Hold on, we'll eventually get through all of this even with some applications tucked in!
14. Verse 7: Since you trust in your deeds and riches, you too will be taken captive, and Chemosh will go into exile, together with his priests and officials. ⁸ The destroyer will come against every town, and not a town will escape. The valley will be ruined and the plateau destroyed, because the LORD has spoken.
- a) One of the reasons for all of this judgment is God wanted to show everyone around that He is the only God and the deities that the Moabites (as well as the other groups we will read of here) trusted in their deities. The verses mentioned Moabites riches. The idea is that the Moabites won't be able to buy their way out and their gods won't help them. All of that land will be ruined.
- b) So why now? The best answer as I said in the introduction is God has a limit on patience with us. The fact that Moab got judged after all those centuries shows that there is a limit.
15. Verse 9: Put salt on Moab, for she will be laid waste; her towns will become desolate, with no one to live in them.
- a) One of the ways ancient armies would destroy a place is after it's all conquered would be to pour salt on the soil so nothing will ever grow there again for a long time. Even when the Romans conquered areas, they'd do the same thing. It's like the idea of "rubbing salt in the wounds" (to make it hurt more).
16. Verse 10: "A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work! A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!
- a) Here we get another "encourage the destroyers" message from God. This is God saying in effect, "Yes I know you're hurting a lot of innocent people there, but I've called for them to be destroyed and I'm using you (The Babylonian army) to do it work despite the fact you have no idea I'm behind all of this.
- b) OK, why is God being so cruel here? Why not just ship them off as slaves somewhere? I stated earlier part of the reason is that they rebelled against Babylon so they're sending a message to the world "not to mess with them". The other thing to grasp is whether we do like it or not, God judges nations. How many Moabites do you know today? In contrast, I have met many Israelites and Egyptians that are obviously still around today.
17. Verse 11: "Moab has been at rest from youth, like wine left on its dregs, not poured from one jar to another-- she has not gone into exile. So she tastes as she did, and her aroma is unchanged. ¹² But days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will send men who pour from jars, and they will pour her out; they will empty her jars and smash her jugs.
- a) We get another word picture in these verses. To distill wine, it would be poured from one vessel to the other to eliminate the impurities. Jeremiah's saying in effect that Moab is like a glass of wine with impurities still in it. If one has ever tasted a bad glass of wine, you'd get the word picture used here.

- b) Then Jeremiah drives the point home as he says in effect, "Since you refused to honor the real God around here, despite the fact you've know who He is for roughly a millennium! He compares the Moabites to the wine vessels that are smashed due to a "bad drink!"
 - c) The underlying point isn't about calling the Moabites a bunch of bad wine. The Moabites are being judged because they saw how the Israelites God is also a "god of judgment" and in effect ignored that warning!
 - d) Since I get asked this regularly, let me explain the God of Judgment and the God of Grace as I argue it's the same God. Judgment's based on what we knew about God or even what we could have known and what we did with that judgment. His grace to keep it simple is the idea of God having lots of patience with us as many of us will turn to Him in our life. I am simply making the point that God is perfect in "both" with no contradiction!
18. Verse 13: Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed when they trusted in Bethel.
- a) Bottom line here is we get a shot at the Moabites false god "Chemosh". Just as the Israelite suffered for trusting in a false god, well "Down goes Frazer". Yes it's a running joke now!
19. Verse 14: "How can you say, `We are warriors, men valiant in battle'? ¹⁵ Moab will be destroyed and her towns invaded; her finest young men will go down in the slaughter," declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty. ¹⁶ "The fall of Moab is at hand; her calamity will come quickly.
- a) It may help to keep in mind that we're reading poetry. If it seems like Jeremiah is pouring it on here, he's trying to pound the point home that Moab's is going down once and for all after roughly a millennium of being Israel's neighborhood and having been a major "pain in the rear" to them. These verses essentially say that no matter how hard Moab do try to prevent the inevitable, they're going down.
 - b) Also keep in mind Jeremiah wrote this before it occurred, so he wrote history before it did occur. So how do we know he wrote it before hand, "just because he says so?" One reason he got accepted as a prophet immediately was his accuracy of what happened. Remember that the last of the Israelite kings called him a prophet, so his accuracy about Israel is only one simple way to say, "He was a prophet, deal with it", let alone the exact accuracy of his seventy-year prediction of how long Babylon lasted as a kingdom.
20. Verse 17: Mourn for her, all who live around her, all who know her fame; say, `How broken is the mighty scepter, how broken the glorious staff!' ¹⁸ "Come down from your glory and sit on the parched ground, O inhabitants of the Daughter of Dibon, for he who destroys Moab will come up against you and ruin your fortified cities. ¹⁹ Stand by the road and watch, you who live in Aroer. Ask the man fleeing and the woman escaping, ask them, `What has happened?'
- a) The short version here is Moab's neighbor's would be aware of what's going down. We've got references to places near Moab who are saying in effect, "Moab was an entity who has been around since Genesis (OK, let's say roughly 1,500 years to Israel) and here it's saying they're going down once and for all. Dibon and Aroer weren't in Moab proper as implied in these verses. The text also implies those places will also be destroyed.
 - b) Realize what God's doing here. He's using Babylon as His instrument of judgment just as He used the Israelites as His instrument of judgment when the Israelites first came to that land of Israel. It also implies that when ancient nations go down, it implies that God will be the one behind it for some reason that only He knows.
21. Verse 20: Moab is disgraced, for she is shattered. Wail and cry out! Announce by the Arnon that Moab is destroyed.
- a) At this point Jeremiah's describing life outside the border of Moab that they're a goner. It is a thing to be announced. Why? To show them that God decides who lives and for how long. The idea is that the damage isn't just inside the country. Word is going to get out in the neighborhood that Moab's going down and guess what, the Babylonians won't stop at the border to so speak! Just as God's judgment doesn't stop with the person next to us!

22. Verse 21: Judgment has come to the plateau-- to Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath, ²² to Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim, ²³ to Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul and Beth Meon, ²⁴ to Kerioth and Bozrah-- to all the towns of Moab, far and near. ²⁵ "Moab's horn is cut off; her arm is broken," declares the LORD.
- a) We're back to naming places in Moab again. As I warned you this judgment is the longest one in the book as it's 47 verses just picking on Moab. Of all the countries bordering Israel they've had the longest history other than Egypt, who got a long discourse too.
 - b) Anyway, Jeremiah's still rambling off poetry trying to describe just how complete all of its going to be. We're over half way through this. Let's see what else Jeremiah has to say:
23. Verse 26: "Make her drunk, for she has defied the LORD. Let Moab wallow in her vomit; let her be an object of ridicule. ²⁷ Was not Israel the object of your ridicule? Was she caught among thieves, that you shake your head in scorn whenever you speak of her?"
- a) Occasionally the bible uses the idea of being drunk as a word picture of a staggering one who doesn't have full control over their faculties. Verse 27 gives us a clue as to why Moab is being punished so badly. It's because Moab picked on Israel. It isn't just historically, it's the idea that the Israelites died as a nation before Moab and Moab effectively said, "Your god is letting you down". That's why God's allowing the Babylonians to destroy Moab.
 - b) If that's the case, why didn't God just allow the Israelites to destroy them? Because that is the land of Lot's descendants and God still blesses those who bless Abraham, so to speak.
 - c) Anyway, if you study the book of Daniel, the king of Babylon publicly announces many a time how Daniel's God is "the" God, so He gets the last word in that way as well.
 - d) Meanwhile, time to pick on Moab some more.
24. Verse 28: Abandon your towns and dwell among the rocks, you who live in Moab. Be like a dove that makes its nest at the mouth of a cave. ²⁹ "We have heard of Moab's pride-- her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and arrogance and the haughtiness of her heart. ³⁰ I know her insolence but it is futile," declares the LORD, "and her boasts accomplish nothing."
- a) Jeremiah's saying in effect, "You want to live, abandon your homes and go hide in caves. It is the only way you'll survive. So why did Moab have such pride to think they will be spared the Babylonian invasion? Maybe it's because they supported Babylon earlier as it conquered other places. Maybe they thought we'd be spared all that judgment. Maybe it is simply a matter of thinking their (false) god would protect them. No matter how we're slicing it, they're going down just like everyone else around here.
 - b) The underlying idea is that God wants to show He is the God of all people even if it takes the destruction of everyone in the neighborhood to prove it.
25. Verse 31: Therefore I wail over Moab, for all Moab I cry out, I moan for the men of Kir Hareseth. ³² I weep for you, as Jazer weeps, O vines of Sibmah. Your branches spread as far as the sea; they reached as far as the sea of Jazer. The destroyer has fallen on your ripened fruit and grapes. ³³ Joy and gladness are gone from the orchards and fields of Moab. I have stopped the flow of wine from the presses; no one treads them with shouts of joy. Although there are shouts, they are not shouts of joy. ³⁴ "The sound of their cry rises from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz, from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah, for even the waters of Nimrim are dried up. ³⁵ In Moab I will put an end to those who make offerings on the high places and burn incense to their gods," declares the LORD. ³⁶ "So my heart laments for Moab like a flute; it laments like a flute for the men of Kir Hareseth. The wealth they acquired is gone."
- a) First let me say that if you've made it this far, you might as well keep going. We all know there are some chapters in the bible tougher than others. Yes they're all God inspired and despite the repetition and lack of a lot of application, they still have things to teach us.
 - b) Like Israel, Moab was a wine growing country. That's why there are references here to it (wine production) coming to an end. One has to read this from the Israelite perspective. I guess a lot of Israelites think of Moabites as our neighbors who've caused problems, but it is also a place that grows a lot of grapes.

- c) OK, besides mentioning a bunch of cities we don't care about and the fact that grapes are grown here, why should I care? It's the idea that God will judge our nation or our church, as He believes in "group judgment". What about the fact I'm saved? Separate issue. This is about the fact that God wants us to work as a group or nation to make a difference for Him. What about all the nonbelievers in our country? We only can control what we can. It obviously starts with ourselves being a good witness for Him. As Christianity spreads, it is then a matter of working with other believers to be a witness for Him.
 - d) Anyway Moab is an example here of being aware of God and because they ignored Him, I am describing them "go down for the count". How many Moabites do you know today?
 - e) The last thing to grasp from these verses is that God isn't happy He's doing this. He wants all people to come to Him. Again, there's a limit to His patience as we're reading here.
26. Verse 37: Every head is shaved and every beard cut off; every hand is slashed and every waist is covered with sackcloth. ³⁸ On all the roofs in Moab and in the public squares there is nothing but mourning, for I have broken Moab like a jar that no one wants," declares the LORD. ³⁹ "How shattered she is! How they wail! How Moab turns her back in shame! Moab has become an object of ridicule, an object of horror to all those around her."
- a) Let me ask the question most of us must be thinking, "Why go on and on about this? Why not just say God wiped out Moab and that was that?" Why has this very long dirge telling us of its destruction? Why single Moab out for such a long time versus everyone else that we'll read in the next chapter and the last one with a lot less verses? I think it's simple the fact that God uses Moab as an example of what happens to a nation, group or individual, who has some knowledge of God but chooses to ignore it or rebel against it. Consider all the people you know who never pick up a bible or don't stop to consider why God has all of this "game plan" in motion. They too will end up like all of this horror we read of Moab here in this section.
 - b) Meanwhile we read of Moab "swinging from the chandeliers" as we did the Philistines as the Moabites "waste their time" appealing to their gods. Jeremiah is saying despite all the crying in pain and suffering, "they're still going down for the count".
27. Verse 40: This is what the LORD says: "Look! An eagle is swooping down, spreading its wings over Moab. ⁴¹ Kerioth will be captured and the strongholds taken. In that day the hearts of Moab's warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor. ⁴² Moab will be destroyed as a nation because she defied the LORD. ⁴³ Terror and pit and snare await you, O people of Moab," declares the LORD. ⁴⁴ "Whoever flees from the terror will fall into a pit, whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare; for I will bring upon Moab the year of her punishment," declares the LORD. ⁴⁵ "In the shadow of Heshbon the fugitives stand helpless, for a fire has gone out from Heshbon, a blaze from the midst of Sihon; it burns the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of the noisy boasters. ⁴⁶ Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh are destroyed; your sons are taken into exile and your daughters into captivity.
- a) Verse 40 mentions "an eagle swooping down". Yes it's a metaphor for Babylon as they are be ruthless as they destroy that place.
 - b) Notice Verse 42 says the reason they're being destroyed is because "she defied the LORD". Again, it's the idea that God's god and He's proving it to the neighborhood!
 - c) The rest of these verses list more places in Moab (again southern Jordan today) that were destroyed by Babylon. The general idea is the whole land will be ravished and there's no way to escape all of this.
 - d) That's the bad news. The good news is we finished it with bit of good news to finish it.
28. Verse 47: "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in days to come," declares the LORD. Here ends the judgment on Moab.
- a) So how will Moab be restored? My guess is there are some people who descended from it who escaped and their descendants became Christians. Could it be another way? Sure. I never put it past God to resurrect what He wants to resurrect.

- b) Final thought, why does Moab get resurrected and Philistines don't? We don't know. I'm suspecting it has something to do with them being part of "Abraham's descendants in that indirect way", but who knows. What we do know is there is "national judgment" as Jesus told us in the Gospels and some groups do get resurrected so to speak.
- c) One more chapter to go. It's a bit long too, but it covers a lot of groups. Now that we grasp how the judgment works we can go a little faster through this section.
29. Chapter 49, Verse 1: Concerning the Ammonites: This is what the LORD says:
- a) First, who are the Ammonites? They were a group that lived in what's the northern part of Jordan. In fact the capital of Jordan today is the city of Ammon. Among thee nations God told the Israelites to wipe out within the land of Israel was the Ammonites. Anyway more of them lived outside of Israel proper east of the Jordan River.
30. Verse 2: "Has Israel no sons? Has she no heirs? Why then has Molech taken possession of Gad? Why do his people live in its towns?
- a) For those of you familiar with the book of Numbers or Joshua, two and one half of the 12 tribes of Israel settled east of the Jordan River in the northern part of Ammon. The verse's implying that the Ammonites were guilty as they took that land from the tribe of Gad.
- b) If "Molech" sounds familiar, it was the Ammonite god and Israelites worshipped it. If you recall, I'd talk about babies being offered to this god to prove one's loyalty. Let's just say it is judgment time on that false diety.
31. Verse 3: But the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will sound the battle cry against Rabbah of the Ammonites; it will become a mound of ruins, and its surrounding villages will be set on fire. Then Israel will drive out those who drove her out," says the LORD.
- a) We have here a future prophesy. God's going to allow Israel one day to have all the land that He promised they would have. Let's just say that when Jesus returns to rule, Israel is going to be larger in geography than it is today. Yes this land being described here east of the Jordan River will be part of "Israel" when Jesus returns to "set up shop". How will that happen? It'll be after all the horrid parts of Revelation and if Jesus says so, we can't argue!
32. Verse 3: "Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is destroyed! Cry out, O inhabitants of Rabbah! Put on sackcloth and mourn; rush here and there inside the walls, for Molech will go into exile, together with his priests and officials.
- a) In the book of Joshua, there is a destruction of a place called Ai. That's a different place as this is east of the Jordan and that was west of it. The simple point is this country will also be "going down for the count" and Molech worship will come to an end. Do you know of any Molech worshippers today? My point is it came to an end as Jeremiah predicted.
33. Verse 4: Why do you boast of your valleys, boast of your valleys so fruitful? O unfaithful daughter, you trust in your riches and say, `Who will attack me?' ⁵ I will bring terror on you from all those around you," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. "Every one of you will be driven away, and no one will gather the fugitives.
- a) Like Moab, the Ammonites thought they were safe from a Babylonian attack. The story is similar to the politics of the relationship of Moab to Babylon. Anyway, without repeating a lot of stuff I said a few pages back, they're a goner too.
- b) The good news is that's it for this group. Chapter 49 moves a lot faster from one group to the next. Now that we get the idea of how the judgment works, even Jeremiah speeds up!
- c) The judgment on Ammon does get one final positive thing though:
34. Verse 6: "Yet afterward, I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites," declares the LORD.
- a) As I stated with Moab, somehow this nation will be restored. Could it simply be referring to the fact that Jordan as a nation? Maybe. I suspect it is more "millennial" as it's a nation when Jesus returns. The underlying idea is that as God judges nations, some will survive to exist when He rules the world and some will not. Yes we're about to read of others that won't get that privilege. That's what the rest of the chapter is all about. Anyway, it's time to move on to the Edomites, who were in effect cousins of the Israelites. Let's read on:

35. Verse 7: Concerning Edom: This is what the LORD Almighty says:
- a) To begin with, we get fifteen verses on Edom. Not as detailed as Moab, but still they get a significant mention. They were south of Moab and southeast of the Dead Sea. I'll cut to the chase first and say this nation doesn't get resurrected, so keep that in mind as we read.
36. Verse 8: "Is there no longer wisdom in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed? ⁸ Turn and flee, hide in deep caves, you who live in Dedan, for I will bring disaster on Esau at the time I punish him. ⁹ If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? If thieves came during the night, would they not steal only as much as they wanted? ¹⁰ But I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his hiding places, so that he cannot conceal himself. His children, relatives and neighbors will perish, and he will be no more.
- a) Time for a quick discussion of Edom as a nation. It was a mountainous country. If you've ever studied the one chapter book of Obadiah, it's similar to this section. That book also is an account of Edom's fall. Like the other nations we've been reading about here, they also tried to make peace with Babylon and even rebelled against them. Edom thought because they lived in mountainous country, they'd be safe from attacks. In a sense they tried to be like Switzerland is today, neutral and providing financial support. Just to show that God's in charge of all things, I'll just say neither Edom's riches nor it's geography could stop the Babylonians from destroying that place.
 - b) Like the other judgments we get mentions of the cities that were destroyed. We also get a strange reference to "grapes that are left". The idea is like picking a vine so clean of grapes that none were left is how "bare" Esau will be left. The idea is everyone there will die as in there will be no place to hide. OK, you get the idea by now.
37. Verse 11: Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me."
- a) There's a classic joke in the United States that goes if God announces the end of the world is happening tomorrow, the New York times newspaper would have as it's headline, "The end of the world is tomorrow, women and minorities to be hurt the most". That popped in my head as I read here that God's going to spare the orphans and widows here, which is a reference to those who have no one to take care of them. Did it mean the soldiers did have some heart? Don't know. Maybe they were just taken as slaves or prizes of war. All that it does mean is that the destruction wasn't just everybody there dies. God is fair when He judges nations and it's based on what we can and did do with what we have.
38. Verse 12: This is what the LORD says: "If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it. ¹³ I swear by myself," declares the LORD, "that Bozrah will become a ruin and an object of horror, of reproach and of cursing; and all its towns will be in ruins forever."
- a) So what did the Edomites do to get judged this harshly? I'm sure it's about with how they treated Israel. Again one of the big pictures here is that God is God and He wants all those nations in the area to realize that fact. Obviously their common ancestor Esau knew that. I'd say it came down to the fact from Esau down, they became a bad witness for Him. It's one reason for the famous biblical quote, "Jacob have I loved and Esau I hated" as I stated in my introduction.
 - b) Bozrah was the capital. The Babylonians and the Romans did conquer that city and today it's simply a tourist spot. It's a city in the mountains but despite it's hidden location, we're reading that large armies like those two destroyed it.
39. Verse 14: I have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, "Assemble yourselves to attack it! Rise up for battle!" ¹⁵ "Now I will make you small among the nations, despised among men. ¹⁶ The terror you inspire and the pride of your heart have deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks, who occupy the heights of the hill. Though you build your nest as high as the eagle's, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD. ¹⁷ "Edom will become an object of horror; all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds.

- a) Bottom line, Edom's going down for the count! Verse 15 says they will be small among the nations. As I stated earlier, the Romans also conquered them and by then they were much less powerful than they were when the Babylonians dealt with them. As I stated earlier in spite of the mountainous terrain and in spite of their wealth, "down they went!"
- b) These verses are pretty self explanatory even in the translation, so we can move on.
40. Verse 18: As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their neighboring towns," says the LORD, "so no one will live there; no man will dwell in it. ¹⁹ "Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets to a rich pastureland, I will chase Edom from its land in an instant. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me? And what shepherd can stand against me?"
- a) The traditional location of Sodom and Gomorrah was in or near Edom. The pastureland's a reference to parts of Edom used to raise sheep. The point being made here is no one can stand against God's power. It's a shot not only at the country of Edom but also their trust in the false gods they worshipped.
- b) Three more verses on Edom to go.
41. Verse 20: Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned against Edom, what he has purposed against those who live in Teman: The young of the flock will be dragged away; he will completely destroy their pasture because of them. ²¹ At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble; their cry will resound to the Red Sea. ²² Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor.
- a) Other than the brief line reference to sparing widows and orphans, there's nothing else we read good said about Edom. We get images that we're already discussed in this lesson and the short version is again, they're going down for the count.
- b) OK John, this is getting repetitious at this point. Why continue? Again notice that some of the nations we read of will get resurrected and some die permanently. It's a reminder that God's judgment on the nations is not "uniform" as some have different rates. That'll make it more interesting to watch assuming we get to witness all of this. Even for us Christians, it's a reminder that again we're judged corporately of how we used our lives as a witness for God in this world. OK then, time for the next nation!
42. Verse 23: Concerning Damascus: "Hamath and Arpad are dismayed, for they have heard bad news. They are disheartened, troubled like the restless sea. ²⁴ Damascus has become feeble, she has turned to flee and panic has gripped her; anguish and pain have seized her, pain like that of a woman in labor. ²⁵ Why has the city of renown not been abandoned, the town in which I delight? ²⁶ Surely, her young men will fall in the streets; all her soldiers will be silenced in that day," declares the LORD Almighty. ²⁷ "I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad."
- a) For those who don't know Damascus is in Syria. While it's been conquered many times in history, it was never once destroyed. It may be the oldest continual habited city in history. However Isaiah predicts it will be destroyed one day (Isaiah 17). Does it mean the war in Damascus right now (when I'm writing this) will be it? Don't know. I suspect it is an end time thing. Anyway it's a large city that one can see if one's in the northern edge of Israel. Like everyone else in these chapters God uses the Babylonians as His source for revenge of how they've treated Israel.
- b) Verse 23 mentions two other places north of Damascus. Those other cities are in shock, as they are much smaller and fear for their own fate.
- c) Yes I could state some of the negative things Damascus did to Israel over millenniums of a relationship with them, but I suspect you're getting the point by now. I'll just say if you'll read through First and Second Kings there are references to horrid things done to Israel so one can see that they're on God's "naughty list". This is the end of their judgment and they don't have any positive comments so that ties to Isaiah's judgment against them.

43. Verse 28: Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked: This is what the LORD says: "Arise, and attack Kedar and destroy the people of the East. ²⁹ Their tents and their flocks will be taken; their shelters will be carried off with all their goods and camels. Men will shout to them, 'Terror on every side!'"
- a) This is a group located to the east of Babylon. So why mention them? Is it to be thorough and list everybody Babylon's destroying? Disagree. I think it is simply to say that God's judging everyone, even those nations who are far away.
 - b) There's a classical and false view among some Jewish scholars that the purpose of Gentile (non-Jewish) nations is to "fuel the fires of hell". The idea is Gentile nations don't care for God and will suffer for it. One of the reasons we get nation after nation listed here with a different eternal fate listed for each one is to teach us that God does care for other nations and wants all of us to be witnesses for Him. Yes God used the Babylonians as His method of judgment but that's after each of these nations have had dealings with Israel.
 - c) These groups were nomads. To quote my tour guide in Israel, some people like the idea of the nomad life as they don't have to pay taxes to any one country! Anyway, the idea here is that even these smaller groups will not escape His judgment. Just because they wander from place to place (as Verse 29) implies, it doesn't mean they'll escape God's judgment.
44. Verse 30: "Flee quickly away! Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor," declares the LORD. "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has plotted against you; he has devised a plan against you. ³¹ "Arise and attack a nation at ease, which lives in confidence," declares the LORD, "a nation that has neither gates nor bars; its people live alone. ³² Their camels will become plunder, and their large herds will be booty. I will scatter to the winds those who are in distant places and will bring disaster on them from every side," declares the LORD. ³³ "Hazor will become a haunt of jackals, a desolate place forever. No one will live there; no man will dwell in it."
- a) Jeremiah has a little more to say about this group. Their herds of cattle (sheep, goats etc.) will be prizes for the Babylonians as they defeat this group. The land associated with this group will be desolate. Bottom line, more bad news. Let's finish up:
45. Verse 34: This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: ³⁵ This is what the LORD Almighty says: "See, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might. ³⁶ I will bring against Elam the four winds from the four quarters of the heavens; I will scatter them to the four winds, and there will not be a nation where Elam's exiles do not go. ³⁷ I will shatter Elam before their foes, before those who seek their lives; I will bring disaster upon them, even my fierce anger," declares the LORD. "I will pursue them with the sword until I have made an end of them. ³⁸ I will set my throne in Elam and destroy her king and officials," declares the LORD.
- a) So why so many verses on this group that's so far away from Israel? Again it's to show us that His judgment is everywhere not just the nations that knew Israel well because they're in close proximity. Anyway, this is another group that got destroyed by Babylon as they'll have to deal with God's judgment for failing to be a witness for Him based on what they'd could have known or did know about the God of Israel.
46. Final verse: Verse 39: "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam in days to come," declares the LORD.
- a) In Chapter 2 of the book of Acts, we read that people came from "all over the place" when they "spoke in tongues" when the Holy Spirit first came on the church. My simple point is among those groups were some from Elam (Acts 2:9) so we read of their restoration here.
47. I admit I went a little fast through the last few groups, but to be honest it was getting repetitious at this point. We read God's judgment on nations within Israel, abutting Israel, near Israel and a few that were far away. The idea's that God has, is and will judge the nations based on how they do treat His chosen people. To quote a scholar I read many years ago, "The biggest mistake that the Jewish people make is they refuse to see that Jesus is their promised Messiah. The biggest one that Gentiles make is they refuse to see that the Israelites are still God's chosen people!" My quote is paraphrased a little, but you get the idea.

- a) So what does all of this group judgment mean for you and me as Christians? It's another reason to remember that God requires obedience. He saved us by His grace, but He saved us for a purpose, to be a witness for Him. If we waste the opportunities He gives us, then we have wasted the life we've been given as well.
 - b) While we may not care about all of these long dead or distant places today, what's key for us is we too will be "group judged" in our lives? How? Christians do get judged but only to see what are our eternal rewards in heaven. Part of it is how we acted individually, but part of it as how we acted as a group that we worked with making a difference for Him in our lives as believers. Personally that scares me more than all of this horror that we've had in this lesson. Therefore, it's a good excuse to ask God for help in my closing prayer.
48. Father, despite the difficulty and hardships we experience in this life, we're grateful that you still have called us to be a witness for You. We don't know what the future holds and we can't change the past. All we can do is learn from our experiences so we can be a great witness for You. So we ask that through Your Spirit, guide us so that we can use the time we have left to work with other believers to make a difference for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.