

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 47-49

In the city of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, there is a church called, **“The Church Of All Nations.”**

The name is a reminder that Yahweh is not only the God of the Jews, He reigns in every time zone, over all people. The Psalmist sings, **“From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised.”**

So far in Jeremiah, the prophet's message has been primarily to Jerusalem and Judah, but when God first called Jeremiah (1:5) He told him, **“I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”** His ministry was to be global.

God called Jeremiah to represent Him internationally, to the nations surrounding Judah. He told Jeremiah in 25:15, **“Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.”**

God loves all people. He has a plan for all nations.

And He is grieved when the nations sin. All the world is accountable to God... In Chapters 46-51 Jeremiah records God's judgment on the sin of ten nations.

And it's interesting, whenever Gentiles are judged in Scripture they always appear in groups of ten nations.

God told Abraham that Israel would go to Egypt, and be afflicted for 400 years - *until the sins of the Amorites, a Canaanite nation, was ready to be judged.*

The exodus from Egypt, and the conquest of Canaan, was designed to bring judgment on the idolatrous nations who

dwelt in the land. And Israel faced **ten nations** - **three** were subdued by Moses - and another **seven** nations were overcome by Joshua.

In Daniel 2 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has a vision. Messiah returns to the Earth during the time of an empire composed of *ten nations*... In Revelation a beast is seen having ten horns, representing a *ten nation* confederacy that will appear in the last days...

God judges Gentile nations in groups of ten.

Here we have Jeremiah's prophecies concerning ten nations. In Chapter 46 we saw that Jeremiah begins with Egypt; then goes from west to east, ending up in Chapter 50-51 with Babylon. Jeremiah brings God's judgment on the two superpowers of his day - Egypt and Babylon - and the smaller nations in between.

Remember, at the time these prophecies were uttered the Jews in Jerusalem were divided into two parties - the pro-Egyptian and the pro-Babylonian.

The pro-Egyptian party looked southward for rescue.

The pro-Babylonian party looked eastward, and wanted to appease the growing superpower.

Jeremiah told them to trust in neither. They needed to trust the Lord. Jeremiah stated in chapter 17, **“Thus says the Lord: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength... Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.”**

It reminds me of our US coins. They read, “In God We Trust.” The idea of engraving that motto on our currency can be traced back to the efforts of a pastor from Ridleyville, PA. His name was WR Watkinson.

The pastor wrote a letter to his Congressman on November 13, 1861. Seven days later Congressman SP Chase wrote a letter to James Pollock, Director of the US mint... “No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins. Will you cause a device to be prepared without delay with a motto expressing in the finest and tersest words possible, this national recognition.”

And Chase’s words are the enduring lesson of our passage tonight. *“No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense.”*

Last time, we studied Chapter 46 - God’s judgment on Egypt. Tonight we begin with the Philistines...

Chapter 47, “The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.” We remember the Philistines from the days of Samson, Saul, David. Israel’s victories over the Philistines, launched their golden age.

The Philistines were vicious warriors. In the days of David, their champion was a giant - Goliath of Gath.

The Philistines were also a coastal, sea-faring people. They lived on the southern shore of Canaan, in five cities: Ekron, Gath, Askelon, Ashdod, and Gaza.

But now in the days of Jeremiah, the Philistines and Jews were no longer enemies, for they faced a mutual foe. The Babylonians were gathering in the north.

And for the same reason Judah should never have forge an alliance with Egypt, any alliance with the Philistines would prove fatal. God will use Babylon as His instrument of judgment on Judah and Philistia.

Verse 2, “Thus says the Lord: “Behold, waters rise out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood; they shall overflow the land and all that is in it, the city and those who dwell within; then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.” As we’ve seen a *“flood or rising waters”* is an idiom for invading armies.

“At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers will not look back for their children, lacking courage...” When the invasion begins, cowardly Philistines won’t even look back to save their own children, they’ll be running for their lives.

“Because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains; for the Lord shall plunder the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.”

This word *“Caphtor”* means *“wreath-shaped.”*

Some have identified *“the country of Caphtor”* as the Mediterranean island of Crete. They believe the Philistines originated from Crete before sailing to east.

The term “*Caphtor*” is actually Egyptian, which causes other scholars to believe the Philistines originated in Egypt, but moved north along the coast.

We’re not sure of *the origin* of the Philistines, but Jeremiah prophesies *their destiny*. Verse 5, “*Baldness has come upon Gaza, Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley. How long will you cut yourself?*”

Their “*baldness*” wasn’t the result of a scalp disease. In ancient times hair was symbolic of a person's glory.

Remember part of the vow of the Nazarite was to avoid haircuts. Samson’s long hair was part of his vow.

To say “*baldness has come upon Gaza*” is to say she’s been conquered, stripped of her glory, defeated.

Verse 5 also asks how long will Ashkelon be cut off?

It’s interesting, Zephaniah 2:7 speaks of the future restoration of Ashkelon. She’ll be re-inhabited by Jews.

And since the birth of the modern state of Israel in 1948 Israelis have transformed the area of Ashkelon into a world leader in citrus production... 2500 years later the city of Ashkelon has made a comeback.

Verse 6, “*O you sword of the Lord, how long until you are quiet? Put yourself up into your scabbard, rest and be still! How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord has given it a charge against Ashkelon and against the seashore? There He has appointed it.*” In other words, God doesn't judge because He wants to - *He has to*.

God is righteous. In keeping with His justice, sin has to be punished. Until the job is finished, the sword of Lord will continue to flash its steel. It won't be holstered until all the punishment due has been meted out.

Chapter 48 is God's judgment **"Against Moab. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Woe to Nebo! For it is plundered, Kirjathaim is shamed and taken; the high stronghold is shamed and dismayed -"**

Abraham's nephew, Lot, started out a godly man, but the decadent influence of Sodom took its toll on his wife and two daughters. When they escaped the city, his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

If Mrs. Lot turned *salty*, Lot's daughters *soured*.

One night, they got their father drunk, and slept with him. They bore two babies from the incestuous relationship. The younger daughter named her son, Ammon. The older daughter named her boy, Moab.

And both the people of Moab and Ammon became the nation Israel's nemesis for many years to come.

The Moabites lived east of the Dead Sea.

Verse 1 declares, **"Woe to Nebo!"** Mount Nebo overlooked the eastern shore of the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Moses was buried on top of Mount Nebo.

Verse 2, **"No more praise of Moab. In Heshbon they have devised evil against her..."** **"Heshbon"** was the chief city of Moab... And here's a play on words...

“Heshbon” means “*a place of counsel.*” Heshbon was a leading city, it’s where the Moabite king received counsel - but now Babylonian counselors are meeting in Heshbon to plot the destruction of Moab.

‘Come, and let us cut her off as a nation.’ You also shall be cut down, O Madmen!” Rather than describing the Moabites, this was a city (“*mad main*” not “*mad men*”). In Hebrew it means “*dunghill*” or *garbage dump*.

“The sword shall pursue you; a voice of crying shall be from Horonaim: ‘Plundering and great destruction!’

“Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard; for in the Ascent of Luhith they ascend with continual weeping; for in the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.”

Horonaim was in the valley. Luhith was on the mountains. When the Moabites were defeated in the plain, they ran for the hills. The “*Ascent of Luhith*” was a place of weeping and licking their wounds.

Jeremiah says, “Flee, save your lives! And be like the juniper in the wilderness.” A juniper was a desert shrub - an evergreen. It could survive harsh conditions.

It gets its name from circumcision... *Jew-nipper*

Verse 7, “For because you have trusted in your works and your treasures, you also shall be taken.”

The Moabites were materialistic. They trusted in their riches. That’s why soon they’ll be plundered.

“And Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, his priests and his princes together.” Chemosh was the Moabite deity. Imagine, being a Moabite, and watching the god you worshipped, and served, and trusted to protect you, taken into captivity by your enemies. Suddenly, you’d realize, you’ve been worshipping the wrong god.

And when the repo guy drives off with the car you just had to have... or when you’re handed a pink slip from the job you thought would fulfill you... or the stock market you were trusting with your security crashes... you realize, “*I was worshipping the wrong god.*”

God wants us all to trust Him and Him alone!

“And the plunderer shall come against every city; no one shall escape. The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord has spoken.

“Give wings to Moab, that she may flee and get away; for her cities shall be desolate, without any to dwell in them. Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood.” God had commissioned Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar to punish Moab. Here Jeremiah exhorts the general to follow through on his orders.

He tells him not to let the Moabites use their treasure to buy a reprieve. They’ll try to buy their freedom. The Babylonians will be cursed if they sheath their sword.

“Moab has been at ease from his youth; he has settled on his dregs, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into captivity.

Therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent has not changed.” Prior to this point, Moab had known a calm and tranquil history. The nation had been at peace. Moab had yet to taste God’s judgment.

Jeremiah uses a common illustration... Wine was poured from vessel to vessel. The impurities or dregs would settle to the bottom of the bottle, and the wine was poured off the top. With each upheaval the wine became purer. The taste and scent became sweeter.

And God does the same with nations. Upheaval and judgment force a nation to return to Him.

But Moab had *“been at ease.”* The dregs had settled. The taste was the same. Their smell was no sweeter. Here was a nation that needed some divine upheaval.

And this is why people see in Moab a type of the USA. We too are wealthy and have become materialistic. We’ve been *“at ease since our youth.”*

Until the war on terror we’ve yet to fight a war on our own soil. We’re the most prosperous country on the planet. Yet the dregs have settled. We’ve become impure - contaminated. We’re in need of repentance.

And if we don’t bow to our knees, God will send an upheaval. He’ll empty us from vessel to vessel. If God brought judgment on Moab - then He’ll bring it on us.

Verse 12, “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I shall send him wine-workers who will tip him over and empty his vessels and break the bottles.” Like a bottle of wine that had never been tipped, Moab had sat there collecting impurities. She had never undergone the purification that comes with difficulty and upheaval. Her bottle was full of dregs.

And again, this is the problem with the United States.

Among nations, we’re the spoiled brat. We’ve grown up in the wealthy family, and we’ve been sheltered from the hardships the rest of the world has to endure.

For Moab to season like a fine wine they had to be toppled. *Only God knows whether that’s true for us...*

And certainly, this illustration also has a personal application. Our lives are like a bottle of wine...

We collect the dregs - *the complacency, the laziness, the impurities, the bad attitudes*. And at times we need upheaval in our lives - some tipping - we need to be put in a place where we’re forced to trust in the Lord.

Some of the most dangerous places in life are the comfortable, predictable, stable zones. That’s when sin can settle. Be thankful for the tipping times when God rids us of the dregs and forces us to run to Him again.

Verse 13, “Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their confidence.” The northern kingdom of Israel set up idols, golden calves, in Dan and in Bethel. The OT refers to them over and over as “the sin of Jeroboam.”

They proved to be impotent, weak, false gods who offered no protection... Moab will learn the same about Chemosh! “How can you say, ‘We are mighty and strong men for the war’? Moab is plundered and gone up from her cities; her chosen young men have gone down to the slaughter,” says the King, Whose name is the Lord of hosts.” - the true God. “The calamity of Moab is near at hand, and his affliction comes quickly.”

“Bemoan him, all you who are around him; and all you who know his name, say, ‘How the strong staff is broken, the beautiful rod!’ “O daughter inhabiting Dibon, come down from your glory, and sit in thirst; for the plunderer of Moab has come against you, he has destroyed your strongholds. O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way and watch; ask him who flees and her who escapes; say, ‘What has happened?’

Moab is shamed, for he is broken down. Wail and cry! Tell it in Arnon, that Moab is plundered.” All the Moabite cities are mourning her defeat and destruction.

“And judgment has come on the plain country: on Holon and Jahzah and Mephaath, on Dibon and Nebo and Beth Diblathaim, on Kirjathaim and Beth Gamul and Beth Meon, on Kerioth and Bozrah, on all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near. The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken,” says the Lord.”

A “*horn*” is a biblical idiom for authority, power, or government. For example, the world leader, or beast in Revelation 13 appears with ten horns - or ten nations.

Verse 26, “Make him drunk, because he exalted himself against the Lord. Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he shall also be in derision. For was not Israel a derision to you? Was he found among thieves?

For whenever you speak of him, you shake your head in scorn.” Moab and Israel were related peoples.

Moab was the jealous cousin that mocked the misfortune of Israel when she was conquered by Assyria. Now Moab will be mocked herself!

“You who dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove which makes her nest in the sides of the cave’s mouth.” In other words, leave the cities - seek refuge in the rock - hide in the caves.

“We have heard the pride of Moab (he is exceedingly proud), of his loftiness and arrogance and pride, and of the haughtiness of his heart.” And here too, is another of the parallels between Moab of old and the USA today - like Moab, we’ve become known for our pride.

Rather than a presidential candidate who promises to make America great. We need one who’ll lead us in repentance and encourage us to humble ourselves.

“I know his wrath,” says the Lord, “but it is not right; his lies have made nothing right. Therefore I will wail for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; I will mourn for the men of Kir Heres. O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for you with the weeping of Jazer. Your plants have gone over the sea, they reach to the sea of Jazer.

The plunderer has fallen on your summer fruit and your vintage. Joy and gladness are taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab; I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses; no one will tread with joyous shouting - not joyous shouting! "From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh and to Jahaz they have uttered their voice, from Zoar to Horonaim, like a three-year-old heifer; for the waters of Nimrim also shall be desolate." A three year old heifer had not been broken; thus here the harness is being applied for the first time.

"Moreover," says the Lord, "I will cause to cease in Moab the one who offers sacrifices in the high places and burns incense to his gods." Their idolatry will be put to an end. Yahweh, the true God, will shut it down.

"Therefore My heart shall wail like flutes for Moab, and like flutes My heart shall wail for the men of Kir Heres. Therefore the riches they have acquired have perished. "For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped; on all the hands shall be cuts, and on the loins sackcloth..." This is how pagans beseeched their gods in crisis times - with desperate and self-abasing acts. They would shave their heads and cut themselves in hopes of getting their god's attention.

"A general lamentation on all the housetops of Moab, and in its streets; for I have broken Moab like a vessel in which is no pleasure," says the Lord. "They shall wail: 'How she is broken down! How Moab has turned her back with shame!' So Moab shall be a derision and a dismay to all those about her." For thus says the Lord: "Behold, one shall fly like an eagle, and spread his wings over Moab." The eagle was the symbol for

ancient Babylon and its Emperor. Daniel 7:4 depicts Babylon as a lion with the wings of an eagle.

Verse 41, “Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are surprised; the mighty men’s hearts in Moab on that day shall be like the heart of a woman in birth pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed as a people, because he exalted himself against the Lord.” This is the ultimate result of pride. It exalts a person against the Lord.

Either the glory goes to you or to God? Did you do it yourself? Or were you endowed and enabled by God?

“Fear and the pit and the snare shall be upon you, O inhabitant of Moab,” says the Lord. “He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who gets out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For upon Moab, upon it I will bring the year of their punishment,” says the Lord.” There’ll be no escape. Judgment is certain.

Escape the pit and the snare will get them.

“Those who fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of exhaustion. But a fire shall come out of Heshbon, a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the brow of Moab, the crown of the head of the sons of tumult.” Heshbon was at the northeast corner of the Dead Sea. It’s where Moab’s fall will be finalized.

“Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh perish; for your sons have been taken captive, and your daughters captive.” A tipping time will come!

But the chapter ends with a ray of hope. “Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab in the latter days,” says the Lord. Thus far is the judgment of Moab.”

As with Egypt in Chapter 46 God extends a long term hope to Moab. Apparently, in the Millennial Kingdom, when Jesus returns to reign over the Earth, the people of Moab will be blessed and brought back to their land.

Chapter 49 begins with God’s judgment... “Against the Ammonites.” Ammon was the son of Lot's youngest daughter, and turned into a predatory and violent people. Ammon was always hostile toward Israel.

Recall, in Chapter 40 Baalis, king of Ammon, was the man who hatched the plot to assassinate the governor, Gedaliah. He was hoping this would cause Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar to wipe out the rest of the Jews.

Instead, it brought judgment on the Ammonites.

Verse 1, “Thus says the Lord: “Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir? Why then does Milcom inherit Gad, and his people dwell in its cities?” Milcom, or Molech, was the false god of the Ammonites. Ammon had tried to annex Israel. They had taken the region of Gad.

Today, Ammon is embodied in the word “*Amman*.” The ancient Ammonites are the modern Jordanians.

And Gad was the land on the east bank of the Jordan River. It had belonged to the Hebrews for 1000 years when the Ammonites tried to take possession.

Today, the contested territory is *the west bank* of the Jordan River, whereas in 586 BC it was *the east bank*.

Verse 2, “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will cause to be heard an alarm of war in Rabbah of the Ammonites; it shall be a desolate mound, and her villages shall be burned with fire. Then Israel shall take possession of his inheritance,” says the Lord.” Today, the land of Ammon is occupied by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and King Hussein’s son, King Abdullah II. His capitol is Ammon or Amman.

King Abdullah is threatened by the radical Muslims in his country, and has sought to normalize relations with the West and Israel. He’s entered into several trade agreements. Tensions have eased over the years.

Yet the contested territory is still the west bank of the Jordan River. Millions of Palestinians live in Jordan and oppose the Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Verse 2 sounds like a surprise attack on “*Rabbah*,” or Amman. The city is burned. Israel takes the spoils.

When you hear the expression, “*The West Bank*,” the real question is “*the west bank of what river?*”

In Genesis 15 God promised Abraham and his heirs all the land from the west bank of the Euphrates River in Babel to the Nile River in Egypt. Those boundaries include the whole Middle East, including all of Jordan.

The real issue isn’t that *Israel occupies Palestinian territory*, but that *Jordan occupies Israeli territory*. Here we’re told that one day the conflict will be resolved.

Verse 3, “Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is plundered! Cry, you daughters of Rabbah, gird yourselves with sackcloth! Lament and run to and fro by the walls; for Milcom shall go into captivity with his priests and his princes together.” Again “*Milcom*” or “*Molech*” was a Canaanite idol - *half-bull, half-man*. He was known for the child sacrifices scalded in his molten-hot arms.

He'll be no help when the Babylonians invade.

“Why do you boast in the valleys, your flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? Who trusted in her treasures, saying, ‘Who will come against me?’ Like Moab, the Ammonites trusted in their wealth. When threatened, they thought they could buy off the invaders.

“Behold, I will bring fear upon you,” says the Lord God of hosts, “from all those who are around you; you shall be driven out, everyone headlong, and no one will gather those who wander off.” The Ammonites will suffer the same fate as the other nations in the region.

Verse 6, “But afterward I will bring back the captives of the people of Ammon,” says the Lord.” Like Egypt and Moab, there's a future for the people of Ammon. Perhaps Jordan will be blessed when Jesus rules.

Verse 7 launches God's judgment “**Against Edom.**”

Edom or Esau was the brother of Israel or Jacob.

Though Esau failed to inherit the covenant God made with Abraham and Isaac, God still made Esau and his descendants a great nation. A whole chapter, Genesis 36, is devoted to the chiefs or kings of Edom.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished?” The Edomites were known for their wisdom. Genesis 36:33 names one of their kings, “Jobab” - possibly the wise man we know as “Job.”

Verse 8, “Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Dedan!” Dedan was one of Edom’s neighboring nations. “For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will punish him.

If grape-gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, would they not destroy until they have enough?” Both the gleaners and the thieves would leave a portion of the crop.

But that’s not how God will treat Esau. “But I have made Esau bare; I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself.” The implication is that he’ll try, and he has the ideal refuge. He mentions it in just a moment. “His descendants are plundered, his brethren and his neighbors, and he is no more. Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let your widows trust in Me.”

For thus says the Lord: “Behold, those whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And are you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink of it.” The Hebrews were God’s chosen people. They were held to a higher standard.

Yet if God is willing to judge His own people, how much more will He judge Edom for the same sins.

God did not intend for Edom to drink of His judgment, but in the end she will *“surely drink of it.”*

Verse 13, *“For I have sworn by Myself,”* says the Lord, *“that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes.”* Bozrah was a chief city of Edom.

“I have heard a message from the Lord, and an ambassador has been sent to the nations: “Gather together, come against her, and rise up to battle! “For indeed, I will make you small among nations, despised among men. Your fierceness has deceived you, the pride of your heart, O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, who hold the height of the hill! Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there,” says the Lord.” Moab trusted in its wealth, but Edom trusted in her strongholds and fortifications.

Edom was located southwest of the Dead Sea. One of her chief cities was the ancient stronghold of Petra.

Petra was considered the most impregnable city in the ancient world. It was located in basin cut out of the mountain. The rock city was one mile long, and 3/4 of a mile wide. Its entranceway - a narrow path a mile long.

In fact, the pass was so narrow only one soldier could enter at a time. This made it easily defendable. An army could pick off an invading army one at a time.

If you've ever watched the movie, *“Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade,”* the holy grail was found in *“the cave of the valley of the crescent moon.”* The cave is actually the facade of the ancient library in Petra.

Yet, verse 17 predicts, “Edom also shall be an astonishment; everyone who goes by it will be astonished and will hiss at all its plagues.” Despite its natural advantages, the rock city won’t be able to protect the Edomites from the coming Babylonians.

“As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors,” says the Lord, “no one shall remain there, nor shall a son of man dwell in it.” And Petra remains abandoned to this day. Over the years attempts have been made to colonize Petra, but to no avail. As God says here, “*no one shall remain there...*”

Verse 19, “Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain of the Jordan against the dwelling place of the strong; but I will suddenly (the Hebrew word means “in a twinkling of an eye.”) make him run away from her. And who is a chosen man that I may appoint over her? For who is like Me? Who will arraign Me? And who is that shepherd who will withstand Me?”

Edom will run from the invaders, but to no avail.

“Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord that He has taken against Edom, and His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman: surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; surely He shall make their dwelling places desolate with them.

The earth shakes at the noise of their fall; at the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea.” Egypt will hear of Edom’s destruction. Perhaps they’ll hear an explosion.

Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, and spread His wings over Bozrah; the heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.” Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians will also conquer the Edomites.

But notice, no promise of a future hope is given to Edom, as was given to Egypt, and Moab, and Ammon.

Verse 23 is God’s judgment “**Against Damascus.**”

Which should interest us since Syria and Damascus are currently at the heart of the war in the Middle East.

Jeremiah writes, “**Hamath and Arpad are shamed, for they have heard bad news. They are fainthearted; there is trouble on the sea; it cannot be quiet.**”

“**Hamath**” or “**Hama**” today is a city 110 miles north of Damascus on the Orontes River. Arpad was 90 miles northwest of Damascus. Today, it’s an archeological site. This prophecy is against the entire nation of Syria.

Verse 24, “**Damascus has grown feeble; she turns to flee, and fear has seized her. Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in labor. Why is the city of praise not deserted, the city of My joy? Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day,**” says the Lord of hosts.

“**I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad.**” “**Ben**” is the Hebrew word for “**son**” - “**Hadad**” was a Syrian idol.

The Syrian dynasty were called “**the sons of Hadad.**”

Isaiah 17 is labeled, “The burden against Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap.” Given that Damascus claims to be the world’s oldest city, this is a significant prediction.

Today, five million people live in metro Damascus.

Yet Isaiah predicts Damascus will one day cease from being a city. Jeremiah adds that God will kindle a fire in its walls. Damascus will burn in God’s judgment.

Could this be related to what’s happening in Syria today? Perhaps. We’ll see over the coming months...

Jeremiah continues to judge the nations of his day, “Against Kedar and against the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon shall strike.”

In the days of Jeremiah, Kedar and Hazor were bedouin tribes that roamed the Arabian peninsula.

“Thus says the Lord: “Arise, go up to Kedar, and devastate the men of the East!” Today, “*the men of the East*” could point to the Arabian countries - *Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE.*

“Their tents and their flocks they shall take away. They shall take for themselves their curtains, all their vessels and their camels; and they shall cry out to them, ‘fear is on every side!’ “Flee, get far away! Dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Hazor!” says the Lord.

“For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has taken counsel against you, and has conceived a plan against you. “Arise, go up to the wealthy nation that dwells securely,” says the Lord, “which has neither gates nor bars, dwelling alone.” God is

telling Nebuchadnezzar to invade the Arabian tribes... Today, because of their oil proceeds all of these countries are *“wealthy nations.”*

“Their camels shall be for booty, and the multitude of their cattle for plunder. I will scatter to all winds those in the farthest corners, and I will bring their calamity from all its sides,” says the Lord. *“Hazor shall be a dwelling for jackals, a desolation forever; no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it.”* At the time of Jeremiah these nomadic Arabian tribes were trusting in their remoteness - their evasive ability - their mobility.

How could Nebuchadnezzar hit a moving target?

Yet they weren't fighting against Babylon. Jeremiah is pointing out their conflict is with God! *And you can't run from God!* Notice, God will bring *“their calamity from all its sides...”* These nomads will be surrounded.

There's one more nation to judge. *“The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying...”* The people of Elam were 200 miles east of Babylon - in Persia - what is today the country of Iran.

God has been speaking to the Arab nations around Jerusalem. But *“Elam”* isn't Arab. They were Persian.

Verse 35, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the foremost of their might.’”*

Elam will eventually ally themselves with the Medes, who will ally themselves with the Persians, and together their coalition will overthrow the Babylonians.

The Elamites was renown for their archery. They were sharpshooters. Skilled with a bow. Yet here God breaks their bow. He strips them of their military might.

The Medes and Persians (which included the Elamites) were eventually conquered by the Greeks. Here Jeremiah is seeing 250 years into the future.

Verse 36, “Against Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and scatter them toward all those winds; there shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.” And if you don’t believe that, pull into a convenience store in Lilburn and you’ll probably find an Iranian working the counter.

There’ll be no nation where you can’t find an Elamite.

“For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies and before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will send the sword after them until I have consumed them. I will set My throne in Elam, and will destroy from there the king and the princes,’ says the Lord. ‘But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,’ says the Lord.” Elam or Persia is also promised an end times restoration.

Apparently, prior to the return of Jesus, not only will Jews, but Persians will also convert to Christianity.

Let me sum up God’s judgment on the nations...

Egypt trusted in idols... **Moab** in materialism and pride... **Ammon** in opportunism... **Edom** trusted in its fortifications... The **tribes of Arabia** in their isolation and mobility... **Elam** in its skill with a bow, and its weaponry. *Yet all these nations fell to the Babylonians.*

Numerous times in Jeremiah God speaks of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar as His instrument of judgment. He even calls its pagan king “**the servant of Yahweh.**”

But the fact that God used the Babylonians, didn't mean He approved of all they did. In fact, after He uses the Babylonians to judge, He in turn to judge them.

Don't ever think that just because God uses you it means you're immune from His scrutiny. Not so!

And we'll discover this next week in the last three chapters of Jeremiah, when God gives His Prophet amazing predictions concerning the fall of *Babylon*.