Introduction

The people of Moab were the descendants of Lot (see Genesis 19:20-28). Both Ammon and Moab were for the most part enemies of the Jews (there were brief periods of peace).

Many of the locations in this chapter (about 20) are unknown.

“In 582, Nebuchadnezzar’s army invaded Moab, destroyed the people and the cities, and left destruction behind. The reason for this judgment was Moab’s pride (48:7, 29-30) and complacency (v.11). The Moabites were certain that their god Chemosh would protect them (vv. 7,13,35,46 and that no army could scale the heights to reach them on their secure plateau (v. 8)” (see Be Decisive; pp.167-168).

The Bible teaches that a series of judgments will take place; a judgment for sin at the cross of calvary; a daily judgment; judgment of the saints, of the living nations, of the great white throne, of fallen angels and of Israel. In Psalm 96:13 we are told “For He comes, for he comes to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”

The passage is a reference to a reward for the righteous--and included in the concept of judgment is both punishment for sin and reward for righteousness.

Why will God judge the world? There are many reasons; not least include sin, rebellion; violent acts of evil. In this chapter Jeremiah includes several reasons for judgment;
(1) Materialism and idolatry (pp.1-10)
(2) Complacency (vv.11-17)
(3) Self-sufficiency; self-exaltation, and the persecution of God’s people (vv.18-28)
(4) Pride (vv.29-46)
(5) That judgment will cease--mercy and restoration--in Messiah’s Kingdom (see v.47).

The People of Moab’s Anguish (vv.1-6)

Jeremiah 48:1 (NKJV) 1Against 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—

In Ezekiel 25:9 the boundaries are given as being marked by Beth-jeshimoth (north), Baal-meon (east), and Kirjathaim (south).

Jeremiah predicts that when God’s hand of judgment is executed against Moab; it would include the destruction of her cities. Six of the major cities are listed; and their destruction is indicative
of the trial on the whole nation. Nebo would lie in ruins (this is not Mount Nebo mentioned in Deuteronomy 32:49); a territory located where the tribe of Rueben was to dwell. A famous archeological find—the Moabite stone—discovered in 1868—mentions King Mesha of Moab conquered the city.

Kiriathaim—humiliated and captured

“the high stronghold” Misgab— a fortified city, sitting on a high stronghold, would be disgraced and cast down”.

2No more praise of Moab. In Heshbon they have devised evil against her: ‘Come, and let us cut her off as a nation.’ You also shall be cut down, O Madmen! The sword shall pursue you;

Heshbon—would be conquered and used as the headquarters of the invading army; within that city—the Babylonian army would plot the strategy necessary to consume the entire country—the entire nation of Moab.

Madmen—mentioned only here in Scripture—would be silenced; the enemy would pursue the citizens of the city and slaughter them with the sword.

3A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim: ‘Plundering and great destruction!’

Horonaim—hear the cries of the battle and in the midst of destruction, chaos,

4“Moab is destroyed; Her little ones have caused a cry to be heard;

5For in the Ascent of Luhith they ascend with continual weeping; For in the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

6“Flee, save your lives! And be like the juniper in the wilderness.

The people of Moab weep bitterly; children scream and cry horrified by the slaughter.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

One of the truly tragic consequences of war are the death of children.

People run and hide. They head for the desert and try to blend in with the bushes.

The People Of Moab’s Apostasy (vv.7;35)

Jeremiah 48:7 (NKJV) For because you have trusted in your works and your treasures, You also shall be taken. And Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, His priests and his princes together.

According to the Bible, the worship of this god, "the abomination of Moab," was introduced at Jerusalem by Solomon (1 Kings 11:7), but was abolished by Josiah (2 Kings 23:13). (Note: The Talmud quoted by Rashi says that his wives built the temples and he is considered responsible for not stopping them.) On the Moabite stone, Mesha (2 Kings 3:5) ascribed his victories over the king of Israel to this god, "And Chemosh drove him before my sight."

The major sins of Moab included materialism and idolatry. It would appear that Moab’s location on the trade route between North and South led them to have a very prosperous economy. The city centers indicate a highly skilled and industrious people. Moab was a materialistic society--they loved wealth and all the comforts that wealth brings. But the Moabites were also guilty of idolatry.

The invading army would take their wealth--and the false god Chemosh would be totally helpless before the invading armies. The false god along with priests and prophets would go into exile.

The Lord’s Divine Anger (8-10;15-16; 40-46)

Jeremiah 48:8–10 (NKJV) 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.

9 “Give wings to Moab, That she may flee and get away; For her cities shall be desolate, Without any to dwell in them.

10 Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully, And cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood.

The people’s idolatry, materialism, sin--the nation would be ruined. Not a single town would escape destruction. All the towns in the plateau and valleys would be destroyed. Human being would no longer inhabit the area (v.9). The cites would be so utterly destroyed--it would be like if a person took salt to the ground to prevent any further growth. “The Lord had appointed an agent to execute His justice and judgment on Moab. And the LORD was determined to execute the judgment, so determined that He pronounced a curse on the agent if he failed
to be diligent in executing judgment (10)” (see The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible; p. 172).

We are encouraged not to place our trust in wealth and possessions. We know wealth and possessions can be taken away. How does money disappear? Recession, economic downturns, war, sickness, depressions, bankruptcies, thefts, extortions, strikes, natural disasters, catastrophic events, terrorists, war. We can lose our job, serious accident, diseases--riches, materialism are not worth our affection and trust. Our primary trust must be in the Lord; anyone who places full trust on riches invites God’s judgment.

The same is true of idolatry. Anyone who places confidence in something other than the true and living God of the Bible.
(Mark 10:24-25); “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust riches to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”. “and I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat drink and be merry. But God said to Him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you, then whose shall these things be, which you have provided?
(LUKE 12:19-20).

The People Of Moab’s Arrogance (vv.11-14; 25-30)

Jeremiah 48:11-14 (NKJV)11 “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.

The prophecy uses the illustration of wine aging in a jar--that has become vintage wine--aged--tasty. The nation was comfortable, self-sufficient--unprepared for the looming judgment.

Moab felt safe and secure. Although other nations had oppressed the Moabites; no one had been able to deport them and take them into exile.

For a very long time the nation had escaped suffering and invasion on its own soil.

It seemed they had everything money could buy; materialistic advantages, a strong economy, wealth.

But Jeremiah predicts the shattering of Moab’s complacency (vv.12-17)

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.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

There seems to be a double meaning; or double reference; the Lord Himself will arouse them from their complacency, the judgment of Babylon--and a future judgment by Christ Himself.

Seven predictions give a graphic picture--

(1) Moab’s abuse--poured out like wine--smashed like a wine jar (v.12)

Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, As the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their confidence.

(2) Moab would be ashamed of Chemosh, the false god people esteemed so highly--they would be ashamed of their idol the way Israel was of the false gods they had worshipped at Bethel)
In the day of judgment mankind’s preoccupation with idolatry will seem senseless and foolish.

What were we thinking?

14“How can you say, ‘We are mighty And strong men for the war’?"

(3) Moab would no longer boast of a strong army and the valor of its soldiers

(4) Moab would be invaded, its cities destroyed, and its young men slaughtered (v.15)

(5) Moab would be punished, judged by the Lord Himself, the only true and living God (v.15b).

(6) Moab would face calamity--a day of reckoning was at hand (v.16)

(7) Moab would be mourned by the surrounding nations--because its mighty scepter and glorious staff--its power--and rule would be broken (v.17).

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.

16”The calamity of Moab is near at hand, And his affliction comes quickly.

17Bemoan him, all you who are around him; And all you who know his name, Say, ‘How the strong staff is broken, The beautiful rod!’

18“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.

19O inhabitant of Aroer, Stand by the way and watch; Ask him who flees And her who escapes; Say, ‘What has happened?’

20Moab is shamed, for he is broken down. Wail and cry! Tell it in Arnon, that Moab is plundered.

21“And judgment has come on the plain country: On Holon and Jahzah and Mephaath,

22On Dibon and Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,

23On Kirjathaim and Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,

24On Kerioth and Bozrah, On all the cities of the land of Moab, Far or near.

25The horn of Moab is cut off, And his arm is broken,” says the Lord.

The horn and arm--the military power of Moab is broken
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

26“Make him drunk, Because he exalted himself against the Lord. Moab shall wallow in his vomit, And he shall also be in derision.

The Moabites were self-sufficient--and exalted themselves above the Lord--and defied Him

We are reintroduced to the image of wine--and drinking wine. The nation was now overcome, intoxicated, inebriated by the cup--given to him by the Lord.

The image is a party--where Moab has come to the party--and now the nation finds itself vomiting--wallowing in a puddle of vomit. What an awful image.

27For was not Israel a derision to you? Was he found among thieves? For whenever you speak of him, You shake your head in scorn.

The Moabites had persecuted God’s people and were treating Israel--and the people of Israel with contempt through the ages.

These two sins were an invitation to judgment. As a result--the people of Moab--would be humiliated and become objects of ridicule--they would be forced to flee to the rocks and caves in an effort to escape.

Self-sufficiency and self-exaltation will arouse God’s anger against us. So will persecuting God’s people.

Life is fragile--temporary. No wonder God calls on all human beings to put their trust in Him. Human knowledge and human strength--is fleeting and temporary.

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12).

28You 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.

Now the image is that of a dove hiding in a cave; doves are clueless--empty headed--unaware of the danger.

Later will see the image of Babylon as an eagle--coming out of the sky and capturing and destroying its prey (see verse 40).
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

29“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."

Pride or a synonym for pride is used—proud conceited arrogant—note the heart—their pride went far deeper than just an attitude; their very character was insolent, disrespectful, untruthful, shamelessly boastful—where there is pride there is usually boasting—but God says their boasts are foolish and futile—they would accomplish nothing.

30“I know his wrath,” says the Lord, “But it is not right; His lies have made nothing right.

31Therefore I will wail for Moab, And I will cry out for all Moab; I will mourn for the men of Kir Heres.

Jeremiah is the weeping prophet—and his sympathy and compassion is not limited to his own people. Jeremiah weeps for Moab.

What does Jeremiah’s compassion mean? God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (see Ezekiel 18:32). What about the people who are destroyed because of their sins against the Lord?

What is the principle? God is at work—calling people to repentance before judgment falls.

What is the Lord’s attitude about judgment? It is one of compassion, weeping, mourning for those being punished.

GOD GIVES NINE REASONS

32O 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.

33Joy 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!

34“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.

35“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.

36Therefore 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.

37“For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped; On all the hands shall be cuts, and on the loins sackcloth—

38A 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.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

39“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.”

(1) God would weep because the people suffer economic devastation (v.32) they would lose their
vineyards, the mainstay of their economic wealth. What is the mainstay of our economic
wealth?
(2) God would weep because the people would lose their joy and gladness as judgment swept
upon them (v.33); their orchards and fields would be destroyed, and the wine would no longer
flow from their presses, no longer would anyone tread on the grapes with shouts of joy. Any
shout would not be due to joy, but to the horrible suffering brought by judgment.
(3) God would weep because the people’s cry could be heard throughout the land (v.34). All the
major cities of the land would be filled with people crying out in agony because of the pains
caused by the atrocities of war and destruction.
(4) God would weep because the people’s idolatry was forcing Him to execute judgment against
all false worshippers (v.35).
(5) God would weep because of the loss of wealth (v.36). When their armies were defeated and
their cities destroyed; they suffered economic collapse. The conquerors would plunder all
their wealth and valuables.
(6) God would weep because the people were gripped by a spirit of grief and mourning (v.37).
(7) God would weep because the people were mourning in every home and on every street of the
nation (v.38a).
(8) God would weep because the people would be broken and shattered by His hand of judgment
on their horrible sins (v.38b). Their sins would force Him to execute justice and judgment
against them.
(9) God would weep because the people would become the object of shame and ridicule to all the
surrounding nations and peoples (v.39).

MOAB Faces Judgment Because of Pride (vv.40-46)

40For thus says the Lord: “Behold, one shall fly like an eagle, And spread his wings over Moab.

41Kerioth 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.
42And Moab shall be destroyed as a people, Because he exalted himself against the Lord.
43Fear and the pit and the snare shall be upon you, O inhabitant of Moab,” says the Lord.
44“He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit, And he who gets out of the pit shall be
captured in the snare. For upon Moab, upon it I will bring The year of their punishment,” says the
Lord.
45“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.
46Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh perish; For your sons have been taken captive,
And your daughters captive.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy Against Moab
Jeremiah 48:1-47

Warren Wiersbe (pp.168-169)
“There is no escape (Jer. 48:44-46; See Amos 5:19). Flee from the army, and you’ll fall into a pit. Climb out of the pit, and you’ll be caught in a trap. Escape from the trap, and you’ll be engulfed by a fire. Escape from the fire, and you’ll be captured and taken away to Babylon. Sinners need to face the fact that there is no place to hide hen God begins to judge (Rev. 20:11-15). For lost sinners today, there only hope is faith in Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the world. They need to flee for refuge to Christ (Heb.6:18)--the only refuge for their souls”.

Sinful pride is a terrible evil. Exalting oneself--often result in the degrading of others.

The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible:

Moab would face judgment of God because of its pride (vv.40-46). The nation would be attacked by an enemy that would swoop down like an eagle spreading its wings over the entire land (v.40). All the cities would be captured, and the soldiers defending the cities would as helpless as women in labor (v.41). The Lord would destroy Moab because the people had exalted themselves and defiled GOD (v.42). None of the citizens would escape the terror and snare of God’s judgment (v.43). Anyone who attempted to flee the terror would fall into a trap (v.44). Even the people who fled to the safety of Heshbon would not escape the blazing fire of the invader, the agent of God’s judgment (v.45). God himself would make sure that every person received his or her just punishment. The year of Moab’s punishment, the very day of the nation’s reckoning, was at hand. Moab would be conquered and devastated as a nation. And all the worshippers of Chemosh would be destroyed or taken captive or exiled (v.46).

The Lord’s Determined Assurance (v.47)

Jeremiah 48:47 (NKJV) 47 “Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab In the latter days,” says the Lord. Thus far is the judgment of Moab.

Moab is given a promise of mercy and restoration. When will this happen? “In the latter days”--which days are those? In the Kingdom Rule of the Messiah.

Conclusion