

**Jer. 48, The Oracle Against Moab**  
**1-28, Jeremiah's Original Material**  
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**Overview**

1. Major break between 28-29:
  - a) 29-47 is mostly reworked quotations from Isaiah and Numbers; 1-28 is almost entirely original (though the two halves do trade images back and forth)
  - b) The structure of 1-28 is symmetric, while that of 29-47 is syntactic (dialog between Jer and the Lord).
  
2. 1-5 is an overview of the judgment.
  
3. Gross structure of 6-28 is chiasitic:
 

a) Command to flee	6	28
b) Judgment pictured with vine and related to Israel	7-13	26-27
c) Moab's military fails	14-15	25
d) Command to onlookers to witness	16-17	20-24
e) Command to Moabites to witness	18	19

**A. Historical Background**

Excellent summary in Keil's introduction to this chapter.

1. Descendants of Lot by his elder daughter, Gen. 19:37. The younger daughter begat the Ammonites, and the two nations lived on the East bank of Jordan, with the Jabbok as their border, Numb. 21:24.
2. The Amorites under Sihon took over the northern part of Moab from the Jabbok south to the Arnon, Num. 21:13, 26.
3. Israel in the Exodus was not to touch Moab, Deut. 2:8-9, but did conquer Sihon and took over his territory, between the Jabbok and the Arnon, Numb. 21:25. Became territory of Reuben.
4. Moabites were jealous, and always fought with Israel over this.
  - a) Their king Balak hired Balaam to curse them, Num. 22-25.
  - b) Eglon oppressed Israel until judge Ehud assassinated him, Judg. 3.
  - c) Continuing strife under Saul, David, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah.
  - d) Yet in times of difficulty, some Israelites sought refuge there. Ruth came from there as a result of her in-laws' refuge there; David took his parents there for safe-keeping, 1 Sam. 22:3-4.
5. At the time of the fall of Jerusalem, they were still intact, and some Jews fled there for refuge, 40:11.
6. Josephus (Ant. 10.181) records that five years later Neb. swept through Moab and Ammon on his way to Egypt, and that is probably the destruction here prophesied.
7. *Application:* Note how jealousy can arise through no fault of your own. Moab is jealous because Israel is able to defeat those whom she was not able to defeat.

**B. 1-5, Announcement of Judgment**

These verses anticipate the rest of the chapter by giving us a "newsreel" of the fall of Moab. Notice two progressions as we move through the verses:

1. The place names move roughly (but not without exceptions) from north to south, paralleling the course of invasion by the Babylonian army.
2. The voices we hear:
  - a) 1, the Lord declaring Moab's fall.
  - b) 2, the enemy planning to cut it off.
  - c) 3, witnesses announce, "spoiling and great destruction."
  - d) 4-5, the weeping of the people as they march on the road to captivity.

**C. 6, 28, Command to Flee**

The nation must leave its cities. Is there a recollection here of their hostility to Israel during the Exodus, when Balak sought first to curse them and then to seduce them into judgment? Now they will become a wandering people.

**Application:** God is able to match the judgment to the crime. PRO 26:27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. PRO 28:10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

**D. 7-13, Detailed Description of Judgment**

This section, corresponding to 26-27, is itself chiastic.

1. 7, 13. The fundamental basis of their judgment is misguided trust, particularly in false gods. This is the very first sin of Moab mentioned in this chapter; how pertinent to our situation in the US today! Trusting in our works and in our treasures. Materialism is nothing new.

Chemosh was the god of the Moabites; he is unable to deliver them, just as the northern ten tribes of Israel found the false gods of Bethel unable to deliver them from the Assyrians.

*Application:* This is the most basic sin, the one that leads to all the others: trust in anything or anyone other than the Lord. Violation of the first commandment.

2. 8, 11-12, Description of the judgment. The first element is literal; the second introduces a vineyard figure that will be continued throughout the chapter. This is the major image of the section, and the one that is picked up in the parallel with 26-27.
  - a) 8, Literal. The completeness of the judgment is emphasized. "Valley ... plain" are the two regions of the country, moving from the Jordan, first the lowlands by the river, then the high tableland.

b) 11-12, Figurative.

1) The figure: as grape juice ferments, the dead yeast cells precipitate out to the bottom of the container, and must be strained out before the wine is consumed to avoid a bitter taste.

2) The parallel: like wine still in its original containers, Moab has never been taken captive, but has always resided in its land. God will change that:

a> He will send "decanters," not "wanderers," those who will take Moab captive, thus emptying the "vessels" (the country) of its people.

b> He will "break their bottles." This goes far beyond ordinary wine production, and reflects the violence they will suffer.

3. 9, 10, the Lord's desire. Two verses expressing wish or desire.

a) 9, that Moab might leave her land, and that its cities might be (not "shall be") desolate. Continues the idea of exile presented in 11-12.

b) 10, that those who fight against her might do so diligently. Continues the description of 8.

**E. 26-27, The Corresponding Image of Judgment**

These verses correspond with 7-13 through two images: the vineyard (only here in 1-28; again in 29-47 in 32-33,38), and the introduction of Israel (only in these two places in the entire chapter).

1. 27, Moab has mocked Israel, as one might mock a thief with his hand caught in the till. Yet there was no ground for this mockery.

2. 26, Now Moab will reel under the judgment as a drunken man, and she will be the object of derision.

**F. 14-15, 25, Moab without Defense**

14-15 give the literal truth: her proud boast of military strength is worthless, for her prime soldiers have been killed. 25 is the image: the "horn" of a country is its military might, just as an animal's horn is its means of self-defense.

*Application:* It is futile to trust in the arm of human strength when God moves against us. An important lesson for us to remember in the shadow of Desert Storm.

**G. 16-17, 20-24, Command to Onlookers to Bear Witness**

In both elements, God commands the bystanders to bear witness to Moab's defeat.

*Application:* God's judgments are seldom private. He shames and dishonors those who rebel against him.

#### H. 18, 19, Commands to Moab

The central section calls on Moab herself to witness the destruction. Dibon and Aroer are two cities in the middle of Moab.

#### I. Synthesis

Moab (18-19) and all around her (16f, 20-24) see that her defenses have failed (15f, 25) and she is under judgment, emptied out as a wine barrel (11f), shamefully drunken (26-27), because she has trusted in her works and treasures (7). Therefore she should flee (6, 28).

The lessons here are the same as those we have seen for Egypt and Philistia:

1. Payday does come someday for those who abuse God's people. If judgment begins at the house of God, what must the end be of those who reject the gospel?
2. Beware the arm of flesh. Moab's military cannot stand against God's rod; her wealth and treasures are useless when his day of judgment comes. Similarly, if we trust in anything or anyone other than God's appointed savior, the Lord Jesus, we too will reel and stagger under God's judgment.

#### Ps. 72, "Christ Shall Have Dominion"

##### Analysis

- A. Structural indices--see colored displays for more.
1. There are three clusters of densely concentrated place names: 1-5, 18-24, 31-34. See Mac Bi Atlas map 155.
  2. The wine imagery
    - a) 11-12, Moab as wine on its lees
    - b) 26, Moab as a drunkard
    - c) 32-33, Moab as a failed vintage
    - d) 38, Moab as a broken vessel
  3. "saith the Lord" at the END of clauses (NOT middle, 20, 35) (Keil)
  4. 29-38 draws heavily from Isa. 15-16
- B. 1 L:/MOW)FB
- C. K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT ):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L
- D. 1b-28, Original to Jer--see symmetric analysis for chiasm.
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E. 29-47, adopted from Isaiah and elsewhere (next study)