

Jer. 49:23-39, Small Oracles
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Overview

Two progressions can be traced as we move through these three short oracles.

1. Each of these nations is successively less involved with Israel than the one before (because they are successively more remote from Israel geographically).
2. The Lord's agency in the judgment comes increasingly into focus.

The effect of these two progressions is to emphasize to us that the issues involved are not parochial matters of Israel's nation politics and her relations with her earthly neighbors, but the demonstration of God's sovereign power and authority over all the earth. God is Israel's protector and defender, but he is far more than that.

A. 23-27, Damascus

1. Historical background
 - a) Capital of Syria, which extended all the way up the levantine coast; cf. refs. to northern cities Arpad (farthest north; Hittite influence) and Hamath in this oracle.
 - b) Though not a cousin of Israel like Edom, Moab, or Ammon, Syria was a regular enemy during the period of the kings. Thus we begin with a judgment that could be considered repayment for their cruelty and abuse of Israel.
2. The oracle itself describes Syria's terror and its consequences in the face of a foreign invader, and only at the very end introduces the Lord's agency. Fear -> Immobility -> Unable to leave the city -> Destruction in the city
 - a) 23, there is terror in the northern cities, because they hear the rumor of coming war. The last two clauses, about anxiety in the sea, are an echo of Isa. 57:20, which furnishes an illustration of the turmoil in the hearts of the Syrians.
 - b) 24 moves to the south, to the capital, and at the same time introduces a consequence of the spreading fear: weakness and seizing as she turns to flee. As one is paralyzed in a bad dream, so she is unable to do what she wants most to do.
 - c) 25, thus the people are not able to abandon the city before the invader comes, and are trapped in it.
 - d) 26, the result of their inability to flee is their destruction in the streets.
 - e) 27 unfolds for the first time in this oracle the Lord's agency

in this judgment: he is the one who has kindled the fire that destroys Damascus. (This verse is an echo of the refrain from Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5.)

3. So, at the start of our progression, we have a country marked by enmity with Israel, and a judgment that recognizes God's agency without emphasizing it.

B. 28-33, Qedar and Hazor

1. Historical background
 - a) Both KD and Holladay agree that Kedar, a Bedouin tribe, represents the nomadic Arabs, and Hazor < xzr represents those who settle in towns, and that between them they encompass all of the Arabs.
 - b) Descended from Ishmael, thus we are back to the cousins of the chosen people once again.
 - c) The Arabs in the Bible have only a few interactions with Israel:
 - 1) paid tribute to Jehoshaphat of Judah (2 Chr. 17:11)
 - 2) raided Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:16,17)
2. The oracle has five parts, AB C AB, divided just before C between Qedar (28-29) and Hazor (30-33).
 - a) In A (28, 31) we hear the Lord commanding the invaders to move against the Arabs. Thus he is plainly in control.
 - b) In B (29, 32-33) we see the result of this invasion. 32 in particular emphasizes again that the Lord is the one doing this.
 - c) At the same time, the opening title and C (30) emphasize Neb as the agent who is plotting against them. Note particularly in 30 how Neb is functioning as though he were independently responsible: he "takes counsel" and "conceives a purpose." God's human agents often do not recognize that they are under divine control, but that does not in any way reduce God's influence over them.
3. Thus we move a step along our path.
 - a) The Arabs have less to do with Israel than Damascus does. In judging them, God is here less the avenger of Israel and more in his role as sovereign judge of all the earth.
 - b) The Lord's in controlling the judgment is much clearer, though human agency is still at the focus.

C. 34-39, Elam

1. History
No recorded interaction with Israel during its history. God's authority over the nations of the earth independent of their dealings with his people is thus established. He is not just an angry father taking vengeance on those who abuse his child; he is

also a just king punishing those who reject his law.

2. The oracle is punctuated by the dominance of the first person verbs that YHWH speaks. There is no hint here of any human agent, only of God's judgment. From an afterthought in 23-27, it is now the dominant note of the entire oracle.

Note the promise of restoration at the end. How gracious our God is, offering salvation not only to his chosen nation Israel, but also to those whom he has elected out of the gentiles.

D. Summary

1. God is the ultimate agency in judgment, though he may use human instruments.
 - a) AMO 3:6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?
 - b) ISA 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.
2. God is sovereign over all the earth, not just over Israel and its neighbors.

Psalm or Hymn:

Analysis

- A. 23-27, Damascus
23 L:/DAM.E&EQ
 1. Terror in the north (illustration p)
 - a) text: chiasmic reason p
 - 1) text-1: B.OW\$FH X:AMFT W:/)AR:P.FD
 - 2) reason: K.IY-\$:MU(FH RF(FH \$FM:(W.
 - 3) text-2: NFMOGW.
 - b) Illustration: (cf. Isa. 57:20)
 - 1) B.A/Y.FM D.:)FGFH
 - 2) HA\$:Q"+ LO) YW.KFL
 2. Immobilizing fear in the south (as in a bad dream)
 - a) 24 RFP:TFH DAM.E&EQ
 - b) HIP:N:TFH LF/NW.S
 - c) W:/RE+E+ HEX:EZIIYQFH
 - d) CFRFH WA/X:ABFLIYM):AXFZAT./FH K.A/Y.OWL"DFH
 3. Thus they remain in the city
25)"YK: LO)-(UZ.:BFH (IYR {T.:HIL.FH} [T.:HIL.FT] QIR:YAT
M:&OW&/IY
 4. Thus they are destroyed
 - a) 26 LF/K"N YIP.:LW. BAXW.REY/HF B.I/R:XOBOTEY/HF
 - b) W:/KFL-)AN:\$"Y HA/M.IL:XFMFH YID.AM.W. B.A/Y.OWM HA/HW.) N:)UM
Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
 5. The Lord's agency becomes clear (the refrain from Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5)
 - a) 27 W:/HIC.AT.IY)" \$ B.:/XOWMAT D.AM.F&EQ
 - b) W:/)FK:LFH)AR:M:NOWT B.EN-H:ADFD S

B. 28-33, Qedar and Hazor

28 L:/Q"DFR W./L:/MAM:L:KOWT XFCOWR):A\$ER HIK.FH
{N:BW.KAD:RE)C.OWR} [N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR] MELEK:-B.FBEL

1. Qedar:

a) quote p: command to the invading armies

1) quote f: K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH

2) quote:

a> QW.MW.

b> (:ALW.)EL-Q"DFR

c> W:/\$FD:DW.)ET-B.:N"Y-QEDEM

b) Description of the results

1) 29)FH:FL"Y/HEM W:/CO)N/FM YIQ.FXW.

2) Y:RIY(OWT"Y/HEM W:/KFL-K.:L"Y/HEM W./G:MAL."Y/HEM YI&:)W.
L/FHEM

3) W:/QFR:)W. (:AL"Y/HEM MFGOWR MI/S.FBIYB

2. Hazor:

a) reason p: flee, because Neb. is plotting against you.

1) text: quote p: command to the people

a> quote:

1> 30 NUSW.

2> N.UDW. M:)OD

3> HE(:MIYQW. LF/\$EBET YO\$:B"Y XFCOWR

b> quote f: N:)UM-Y:HWFH

2) reason: K.IY-

a> YF(AC (:AL"Y/KEM N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL ("CFH

b> W:/XF\$AB {(:AL"Y/HEM} [(:AL"Y/KEM] MAX:A\$F\$BFH

b) command to the invader:

1) 31 QW.MW.

2) comment p

a> text: (:ALW.)EL-G.OWY

1> comment <GOWY>

a: \$:L"Y/W

b: YOW\$"B LF/BE+AX N:)UM-Y:HWFH

c: LO)-D:LFTAYIM W:/LO)-B:RIYXA L/OW

d: B.FDFD YI\$:K.ONW.

c) description of their fall--the Lord's agency

1) 32 W:/HFYW. G:MAL."Y/HEM LF/BAZ

2) WA/H:AMOWN MIQ:N"Y/HEM L:/\$FLFL

3) W:/Z"RITIY/M L:/KFL-RW.XA Q:CW.C"Y P")FH

4) W./MI/K.FL-(:ABFRFY/W)FBIY))ET-) "YDFM N:)UM-Y:HWFH

5) 33 W:/HFY:TFH XFCOWR LI/M:(OWN T.AN.IYM \$:MFMFH (AD-(OWLFM

6) LO)-Y"\$"B \$FM)IY\$

7) W:/LO)-YFGW.R B./FH. B.EN-)FDFM S

C. 34-39, Elam--The rhythm of this section is established by the first person verbs that YHWH speaks, emphasizing his agency.

34):A\$ER HFYFH D:BAR-Y:HWFH)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. HA/N.FBIY))EL-("YLFM
B.:/R")\$IYT MAL:KW.T CID:QIY.FH MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH L"/)MOR

1. 35 K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT

2. HIN:/NIY \$OB"R)ET-QE\$ET ("YLFM R")\$IYT G.:BW.RFT/FM

3. 36 W:/H"B"TIY)EL-("YLFM)AR:B.A(RW.XOWT M"/)AR:B.A(Q:COWT
HA/\$.FMAYIM

4. result p

a) text: W:/Z"RITIY/M L:/KOL HF/RUXOWT HF/)"L.EH
b) result: W:/LO)-YIH:YEH HA/G.OWY):A\$ER LO)-YFBOW) \$FM NID.:X"Y
{ (OWLFM} [("YLFM]

5. 37 W:/HAX:T.AT.IY)ET-("YLFM L/P:N"Y)OY:B"Y/HEM W:/LI/P:N"Y
M:BAQ:\$"Y NAP:\$/FM

6. W:/H"B")TIY (:AL"Y/HEM RF(FH)ET-X:AROWN)AP./IY N:)UM-Y:HWFH

7. W:/\$IL.AX:T.IY)AX:AR"Y/HEM)ET-HA/XEREB (AD K.AL.OWT/IY)OWT/FM

8. 38 W:/&AM:T.IY KIS:)/IY B.:/("YLFM

9. W:/HA):ABAD:T.IY MI/\$.FM MELEK: W:/&FRIYM N:)UM-Y:HWFH

10. 39 W:/HFYFH B.:/)AX:ARIYT HA/Y.FMIYM {}F\$W.B} []F\$IYB]
)ET-{\$:BIYT} [\$:BW.T] ("YLFM N:)UM-Y:HWFH S