

Journey through Jeremiah Part 52, Judgment Against Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017

† Jeremiah 49:23-39

Last week we looked at the first 22 verses of this chapter and the LORD's continuing judgment against the Gentile nations and we looked at His judgment upon Ammon and Edom. Tonight, Lord willing, we will finish up this chapter and look at the LORD's judgment against four more Gentile nations: Damascus, Kedar and Hazor, and Elam.

23 Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.

Damascus

The first place mentioned in verse 23 is **Damascus**, which was the chief city of the nation of Syria, and then **Hamath and Arpad**, which were both cities North of Damascus, so this is really judgment upon the entire nation of Syria.

If you are like me, when you hear the word "Damascus," your first thought is of Saul of Tarsus traveling to Damascus with papers to arrest Christians and ended up getting saved on the road on his way there.

Damascus is about 135 miles from Jerusalem and it is still a very busy place. If you keep up with world news, then you know a lot is happening right now in Syria. They have been in a civil war for years. Recent peace talks in Geneva just broke down and the fighting rages on. The president of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, is a tyrant and dictator. Syria and Iraq were just announced to be the most dangerous places on earth for reporters.

The chief religion in Damascus in current day is Islam and the people are mostly Sunni Muslim. There is still a Christian element in Syria and Russian President, Vladimir Putin, just vowed to help rebuild Christian churches and restore the Christians back to their homes. Putin has always been a big supporter of Syria and has sent humanitarian aide to them for years. You may have seen the "embrace heard round the world," last month when Assad traveled to Russia to thank Putin for his help in restoring war torn Syria.

24 Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

We are not give specific reasons for the LORD's judgment against Damascus and Syria but they have a long history of strife with God's people. Back in King David's time, the Bible tells us **2 Samuel 8:5-6** *And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. 6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.*

David's son Solomon, lost Syria and it was won back by King Joash. Syria actually joined forces with the Northern kingdom of Israel and battled against the Southern kingdom of Judah at one time. This alone could be the reason the LORD is judging them.

25 How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy!

It is difficult to understand who these words belong to; Jeremiah or perhaps the King of Syria? It seems to be a bewilderment by whoever is speaking that the city that is praised and brings him so much joy will be destroyed.

26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts. 27 And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad.

The LORD's judgment will destroy the young men and the men of war, they will all fall. The city will be burned down as well as the King's palace – King Hadad or Benhadad as written here.

We know from both Bible and secular history that Syria was overtaken by Assyria and shortly after, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians took over.

Kedar and Hazor

The people of Kedar were descendants of Ishmael – his second born son's name was Kedar which means "dark." These folks were tent dwellers in the Arabian desert. They were known for their camels and archers. The name "Hazor" means "village," and these folks lived in houses.

28 Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the LORD; Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east.

29 Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side.

30 Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you.

31 Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone.

32 And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD.

33 And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it.

Much of the same type of judgment the LORD has pronounced on all of these Gentile nations – he is intent on destroying them by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar. Notice that the LORD uses descriptions of things that they are known for: tents, flocks, camels, and wealth. These are all things that causes them to feel self-reliant. Much the same as people are today. Riches have a way of causing people to feel self-sufficient and you know what the Bible says: **1 Timothy 6:10** *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Elam

The last Gentile nation in this chapter is Elam. The Elamites were descendants of Elam. Elam was the son of Shem, Noah's son. Which would make Elam Noah's grandson.

34 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,

Notice this prophecy is given later than the previous ones in this chapter. It is given during the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, which was the last King of Judah.

35 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might.

The fighting men of Elam were known for their archery skills. Isaiah mentions them in his prophecy: **Isaiah 22:6** And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

Here in Jeremiah 49 is yet another reference to their “bow.” It is called the “chief of their might.” In other words, it is the weapon they relied upon for protection and during battles.

36 And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.

While the name Nebuchadnezzar is not used here, it is implied that it will be him with his mighty Chaldean army coming upon them from all four corners. There will be no place they can escape from them.

37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, *even* my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them:

The LORD will cause the inhabitants of Elam to be **dismayed** before their enemies. That means utter confusion and fear, they will become completely unraveled. Then the enemy will completely destroy them with the sword.

38 And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD.

The LORD will even allow Nebuchadnezzar to establish a throne in Elam. You may recall that there was a King’s Palace in Elam in Shushan. Daniel talks about it in his prophecy: **Daniel 8:2** And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

Nehemiah also mentions it and of course the Book of Esther takes place in the Palace at Shushan.

39 But it shall come to pass in the latter days, *that* I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.

One thing we also need to notice is that the LORD also has mercy upon Elam. He tells them that “**in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam.**” The latter days could be referring to the time period when Cyrus allowed those in captivity to return, but he also may be referring to the latter days of the Gospel, because we see that they are mentioned during Pentecost in the Book of Acts chapter 2 verse 9, as one of the nations that heard the Gospel being preached in their own language.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible