

## JEREMIAH 49

## AGAINST MORE FOREIGN NATIONS

Ammon, the brother-nation of the Moabites (Gen. 19:37), was doomed to share their fate. The destruction of Moab was foretold in the last chapter, and now the fall of the Ammonites is predicted here (verses 1-6). They were also guilty of oppressing the people of God at various times. When the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom were carried captive into Assyria, the Ammonites had taken possession of the land on the eastern side of the Jordan River, which had formerly been inhabited by the tribes of Gad and Reuben. But now the war-shout was about to be heard against the Ammonite's capital city of Rabbah; and Ai, another of its cities, would be utterly spoiled. Their king would be led into captivity, along with the priests and princes. Ammon had gloried in her flowery valley, which – being well-watered – produced large crops of corn. Therefore, she trusted in her earthly treasures; and she said, "Who will come near to do me any harm?" But the Lord of hosts would indeed bring a fear upon her; her inhabitants would wander forth, and no one would gather them up.

These verses open a beautiful picture of the Lord Himself – the lawful Sovereign of His people – demanding, as in a court of justice, how and why the land which He gave to Israel was now possessed by the Ammonites. "What!" He says. "Is Israel without any children or heirs?" That was impossible! God had promised that their posterity would be as the sand of the sea for multitude. And would any nation then dare to possess the land of Israel's birthright? But let us spiritualize this passage, and it will be a blessed assurance for us to remember that the Lord's sons and daughters shall never be dispossessed of their inheritance; for they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ! (Rom. 8:16-17)

Edom is the nation that is next threatened (verses 7-22). This prophecy echoes many of the same thoughts as that of the Book of Obadiah. The inhabitants of Edom, who were descendants of Esau, were a proud people; they boasted of their wisdom and of their rocky fortresses which were literally carved out of rocky cliffs. In these rocky strongholds, they built their nests like the eagle. Nevertheless, the Lord assured them that from the height of their fortifications, He would certainly bring them down. One of the most famous of these rock-cities is known to us as Petra, and there is probably an allusion to this fortress here in this prophecy. It was originally called Sela, and it was the great stronghold of the Edomites; and Bozrah was their ancient capital. But in vain would the Edomites

Outline of the chapter:

The Lord's judgments are pronounced upon...

- ❖ The Ammonites – verses 1-6
- ❖ The Edomites – verses 7-22
- ❖ The Syrians – verses 23-27
- ❖ The inhabitants of Kedar – verses 28-33
- ❖ The Elamites – verses 34-39





try to hide themselves from the approaching foe! Their land would become a desolation, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah; and everyone would be astonished at its mighty overthrow. Jeremiah's prophecy against Edom was first fulfilled by the invasion of their land by the Babylonians; at

a later period, the Maccabees conquered it; and later still, the Romans completed its devastation, so that the Edomites ceased to exist as a nation. The famous ruins of the rock-city of Petra, which still exist today, teach us a very impressive lesson. In her present condition, we see not only the accomplishment of all the denunciations against Edom, but also a warning of the certainty with which all of God's righteous judgments against sin will be fulfilled. If we read the lesson rightly, every stony fragment of that desolate city seems to address us with this solemn admonition: "Think ye that they were sinners above all men because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-3).

Shorter prophecies occupy the remainder of this chapter. We have one against Damascus, the far-famed city of the north (verses 23-27) – or rather, against the nation of Syria, of which it was the capital. There would be no quietness here, for terror would seize the Syrians. The warriors of Damascus would fall in her streets; and a fire would break out upon her walls, which would consume the palaces of the Syrian kings.

Next, the prophet speaks against the inhabitants of a place called Kedar (verses 28-33), which was occupied by a nomadic tribe that descended from Abraham's son Ishmael. The "kingdoms of Hazor" which are also referenced in verse 28 are thought to refer to Arabic tribes who lived a more settled life, and were governed by their own sheikhs. These tribes were smitten by King Nebuchadnezzar, but we are unsure of the exact time when he did so.

Concerning the Elamites, or Persians (verses 34-39), the prophet predicted that they would be scattered to the four winds of heaven, but the prophecy concluded with these words: "But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the Lord." By "the latter days," we are to understand the days of the Messiah; and some have thought that the prediction was partially fulfilled by the visit of the Magi, who were undoubtedly Persians, to present our Lord with their homage and their gifts (Matt. 2:1-2). And on the day of Pentecost, there were Parthians, Medes, and Elamites present in Jerusalem; they had already become Jewish proselytes, and then they were received into the brand-new Christian Church. And perhaps those Elamites were the firstfruits of an even larger ingathering of people from this region of the globe, to be brought into the fold of Christ!

*O Lord, we pray that You would continue to subdue and conquer both the physical and the spiritual enemies of Your people, and bring their power low! Amen.*