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JEREMIAH 48: 1 Of Moab. Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: Woe to Nebo! for it is laid waste; Kiriathaim is disappointed, it is taken; Misgab is put to shame and broken down.

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The following prophecy concerning the Moabites is supposed to have had its accomplishment during the long siege of Tyre in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The whole of this chapter is poetry of the first order. The distress of the cities of Moab, with which it opens, is finely described. The cries of one ruined city resound to those of another, Jer 48:1-3. The doleful helpless cry of the children is heard, Jer 48:4; the highways, on either hand, resound with the voice of weeping, Jer 48:5; and the few that remain resemble a blasted tree in the wide howling waste, Jer 48:6. Chemosh, the chief god of the Moabites, and the capital figure in the triumph, is represented as carried off in chains, with all his trumpery of priests and officers, Jer 48:7. The desolation of the country shall be so general and sudden that, by a strong figure, it is intimated that there shall be no possibility of escape, except it be in the speediest flight, Jer 48:8, Jer 48:9. And some idea may be formed of the dreadful wickedness of this people from the consideration that the prophet, under the immediate inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces a curse on those who do the work of the Lord negligently, in not proceeding to their utter extermination, Jer 48:10. The subject is then diversified by an elegant and well-supported comparison, importing that the Moabites increased in insolence and pride in proportion to the duration of their prosperity, Jer 48:11; but this prosperity is declared to be nearly at an end; the destroyer is already commissioned against Moab, and his neighbors called to sing the usual lamentation at his funeral, Jer 48:13-18. The prophet then represents some of the women of Aroer and Ammon, (the extreme borders of Moab), standing in the highways, and asking the fugitives of Moab, What intelligence? They inform him of the complete discomfiture of Moab, Jer 48:19-24, and of the total annihilation of its political existence, Jer 48:25. The Divine judgments about to fall upon Moab are farther represented under the expressive metaphor of a cup of intoxicating liquor, by which he should become an object of derision because of his intolerable pride, his magnifying himself against Jehovah, and his great contempt for the children of Israel in the day of their calamity, Jer 48:26, Jer 48:27. The prophet then points out the great distress of Moab by a variety of striking figures, viz., by the failure of the customary rejoicings at the end of harvest, by the mournful sort of music used at funerals, by the signs which were expressive among the ancients of deep mourning, as shaving the head, clipping the beard, cutting the flesh, and wearing sackcloth; and by the methods of catching wild beasts in toils, and by the terror and pitfall, vv. 28-46. In the close of the chapter it is intimated that a remnant shall be preserved from this general calamity whose descendants shall be prosperous in the latter days, Jer 48:47.

#### Verse 1

Against Moab - This was delivered some time after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Moabites were in the neighborhood of the Ammonites, and whatever evils fell on the one would naturally involve the other. See Isa 15:1-9 and Isa 16:1-14 on this same subject.

Wo unto Nebo! for it is spoiled - This was a city in the tribe of Reuben, afterwards possessed by the Moabites. It probably had its name from Nebo, one of the principal idols of the Moabites.

Kiriathaim - Another city of the Moabites.

Misgab is confounded - There is no place of this name known, and therefore several learned men translate המִּשְׁגַּב hammisgab, literally, The high tower, or fortress, which may apply to Kiriathaim, or any other high and well-fortified place.

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JEREMIAH 48: 2 The praise of Moab is no more; in Heshbon they have devised evil against her: Come, and let us cut her off from being a nation. You also, Madmen, shall be brought to silence: the sword shall pursue you.

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#### Verse 2

No more praise of Moab - "The glory of Moab, that it had never been conquered," (Dahler), is now at an end. Dr. Blayney translates: - "Moab shall have no more glorying in Heshbon; They have devised evil against her (saying.)"

And this most certainly is the best translation of the original. He has marked also a double paronomasia in this and the next verse, a figure in which the prophets delight; בחֶשְׁבוֹן חֶשְׁבוֹן becheshbon chashebu "in Cheshbon they have devised," and מַדְמֵן תִּדְמֵי madmen tiddommi, "Madmena, thou shalt be dumb."

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JEREMIAH 48: 3 The sound of a cry from Horonaim, desolation and great destruction!

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#### Verse 3

Horonaim - Another city of Moab, near to Luhith. At this latter place the hill country of Moab commenced. "It is a place," says Dahler, "situated upon a height between Areopolis and Zoar."

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JEREMIAH 48: 4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

JEREMIAH 48: 5 For by the ascent of Luhith with continual weeping shall they go up; for at the descent of Horonaim they have heard the distress of the cry of destruction.

JEREMIAH 48: 6 Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

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#### Verse 6

Flee, save your lives - The enemy is in full pursuit of you.

Be like the heath - כְּעֵרְוֵר caeroer, "like Aroer;" which some take for a city, others for a blasted or withered tree. It is supposed that a place of this name lay towards the north, in the land of the Ammonites, on a branch of the river Jabbok; surrounded by deserts. Save yourselves by getting into the wilderness, where the pursuing foe will scarcely think it worth his while to follow you, as the wilderness itself must soon destroy you.

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JEREMIAH 48: 7 For, because you have trusted in your works and in your treasures, you also shall be taken: and Chemosh shall go out into captivity, his priests and his princes together.

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Verse 7

Chemosh shall go forth into captivity - The grand national idol of the Moabites, Num 21:29; Jdg 11:24. Ancient idolaters used to take their gods with them to the field of battle. This was probably in imitation of the Israelites, who took the ark with them in such cases.

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JEREMIAH 48: 8 The destroyer shall come on every city, and no city shall escape; the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed; as the LORD has spoken.

JEREMIAH 48: 9 Give wings to Moab, that she may fly and get her away: and her cities shall become a desolation, without any to dwell therein.

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Verse 9

Give wings unto Moab - There is no hope in resistance, and to escape requires the speediest flight. I cannot conceive how Dahler came to translate thus: Tirez Moab par les chevaux, "Drag Moab away by the hair of the head."

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JEREMIAH 48: 10 Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD negligently; and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood.

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Verse 10

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully - Moab is doomed to destruction, and the Lord pronounces a curse on their enemies if they do not proceed to utter extirpation. God is the Author of life, and has a sovereign right to dispose of it as he pleases; and these had forfeited theirs long ago by their idolatry and other crimes.

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JEREMIAH 48: 11 Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither has he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.

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Verse 11

Moab hath been at ease - The metaphor here is taken from the mode of preserving wines. They let them rest upon their lees for a considerable time, as this improves them both in strength and flavour; and when this is sufficiently done, they rack, or pour them off into other vessels. Moab had been very little molested by war since he was a nation; he had never gone out of his own land.

Though some had been carried away by Shalmaneser forty years before this, he has had neither wars nor captivity.

Therefore his taste remained in him - Still carrying on the allusion to the curing of wines; by resting long upon the lees, the taste and smell are both improved. See the note on Isa 25:6.

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JEREMIAH 48: 12 Therefore behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will send to him those who pour off, and they shall pour him off; and they shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles in pieces.

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#### Verse 12

I will send unto him wanderers that shall cause him to wander - Dr. Blayney renders צַעִים tsa'im, tilters; those who elevate one end of the wine cask when nearly run out that the remains of the liquor may be the more effectually drawn off at the cock. And this seems to be well supported by the following words, -

And shall empty his vessels - I will send such as will carry the whole nation into captivity.

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JEREMIAH 48: 13 Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.

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#### Verse 13

Beth-el their confidence - Alluding to the golden calves which Jeroboam had there set up, and commanded all the Israelites to worship.

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JEREMIAH 48: 14 How do you say, We are mighty men, and valiant men for the war?

JEREMIAH 48: 15 Moab is laid waste, and they are gone up into his cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, says the King, whose name is the LORD of Armies.

JEREMIAH 48: 16 The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hurries fast.

JEREMIAH 48: 17 All you who are around him, bemoan him, and all you who know his name; say, How is the strong staff broken, the beautiful rod!

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#### Verse 17

How is the strong staff broken - The scepter. The sovereignty of Moab is destroyed.

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JEREMIAH 48: 18 You daughter who dwells in Dibon, come down from your glory, and sit in thirst; for the destroyer of Moab has come up against you, he has destroyed your strongholds.

Verse 18

That dost inhabit Dibon - This was anciently a city of the Reubenites, afterwards inhabited by the Moabites, about two leagues north of the river Arnon, and about six to the east of the Dead Sea. - Dahler.

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JEREMIAH 48: 19 Inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and watch: ask him who flees, and her who escapes; say, What has been done?

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Verse 19

O inhabitant of Aroer - See the note on Jer 48:6 (note). This place, being at a greater distance, is counselled to watch for its own safety, and inquire of every passenger, What is done? that it may know when to pack up and be gone.

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JEREMIAH 48: 20 Moab is disappointed; for it is broken down: wail and cry; tell it by the Arnon, that Moab is laid waste.

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Verse 20

Tell ye it in Arnon - Apprize the inhabitants there that the territories of Moab are invaded, and the country about to be destroyed, that they may provide for their own safety.

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JEREMIAH 48: 21 Judgement has come on the plain country, on Holon, and on Jahzah, and on Mephaath,

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Verse 21

Upon Holon, etc. - All these were cities of the Moabites, but several of them are mentioned in no other place.

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JEREMIAH 48: 22 and on Dibon, and on Nebo, and on Beth Diblathaim,

JEREMIAH 48: 23 and on Kiriathaim, and on Beth Gamul, and on Beth Meon,

JEREMIAH 48: 24 and on Kerioth, and on Bozrah, and on all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

JEREMIAH 48: 25 The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, says the LORD.

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Verse 25

The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken - His political and physical powers are no more.

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JEREMIAH 48: 26 Make him drunken; for he magnified himself against the LORD: and Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.

JEREMIAH 48: 27 For wasn't Israel a derision to you? was he found among thieves? for as often as you speak of him, you shake your head.

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Verse 27

Was not Israel a derision unto thee? - Didst thou not mock my people, and say their God was no better than the gods of other nations? See Eze 25:8.

Was he found among thieves? - Did the Israelites come to rob and plunder you? Why then mock them, and rejoice at their desolation, when their enemies prevailed over them? This the Lord particularly resents.

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JEREMIAH 48: 28 You inhabitants of Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock; and be like the dove that makes her nest over the mouth of the abyss.

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Verse 28

Dwell in the rock - Go to the most inaccessible places in the mountains.

The hole's mouth - And into the most secret eaves and holes of the earth.

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JEREMIAH 48: 29 We have heard of the pride of Moab. He is very proud; his loftiness, and his pride, and his arrogance, and the haughtiness of his heart.

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Verse 29

The pride of Moab - See on Isa 16:1 (note).

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JEREMIAH 48: 30 I know his wrath, says the LORD, that it is nothing; his boastings have worked nothing.

JEREMIAH 48: 31 Therefore will I wail for Moab; yes, I will cry out for all Moab: for the men of Kir Heres shall they mourn.

JEREMIAH 48: 32 With more than the weeping of Jazer will I weep for you, vine of Sibmah: your branches passed over the sea, they reached even to the sea of Jazer: on your summer fruits and on your vintage the destroyer is fallen.

Verse 32

O vine of Sibmah - See on Isa 16:8 (note).

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JEREMIAH 48: 33 Gladness and joy is taken away from the fruitful field and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to cease from the wine presses: no one shall tread with shouting; the shouting shall be no shouting.

JEREMIAH 48: 34 From the cry of Heshbon even to Elealeh, even to Jahaz have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even to Horonaim, to Eglath Shelishiyah: for the waters of Nimrim also shall become desolate.

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Verse 34

As a heifer of three years old - Which runs lowing from place to place in search of her calf, which is lost or taken from her.

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JEREMIAH 48: 35 Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, says the LORD, him who offers in the high place, and him who burns incense to his gods.

JEREMIAH 48: 36 Therefore my heart sounds for Moab like pipes, and my heart sounds like pipes for the men of Kir Heres: therefore the abundance that he has gotten is perished.

JEREMIAH 48: 37 For every head is bald, and every beard clipped: on all the hands are cuttings, and on the waist sackcloth.

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Verse 37

For every head shall be bald - These, as we have seen before, were signs of the deepest distress and desolation.

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JEREMIAH 48: 38 On all the housetops of Moab and in its streets there is lamentation every where; for I have broken Moab like a vessel in which no one delights, says the LORD.

JEREMIAH 48: 39 How it is broken down! How they wail! How Moab has turned the back with shame! So shall Moab become a derision and a terror to all who are around him.

JEREMIAH 48: 40 For thus says the LORD: Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread out his wings against Moab.

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Verse 40

He shall fly as an eagle - The enemy will pounce upon him, carry him off, and tear him to pieces.

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JEREMIAH 48: 41 Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are seized, and the heart of the mighty men of Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

JEREMIAH 48: 42 Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he has magnified himself against the LORD.

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Verse 42

Moab shall be destroyed from being a people - They shall not have a king or civil governor: and I doubt whether there be any evidence that they were ever reinstated in their national character. They were captivated by the Chaldeans; and probably many returned with the Jews on the edict of Cyrus: but as to their being an independent nation after this, where is the positive proof?

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JEREMIAH 48: 43 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are on you, inhabitant of Moab, says the LORD.

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Verse 43

Fear, and the pit, and the snare - See the note on Isa 24:17, Isa 24:18.

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JEREMIAH 48: 44 He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he who gets up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring on him, even on Moab, the year of their visitation, says the LORD.

JEREMIAH 48: 45 Those who fled stand without strength under the shadow of Heshbon; for a fire is gone out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and has devoured the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.

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Verse 45

They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon - Heshbon being a fortified place, they who were worsted in the fight fled to it, and rallied under its walls; but, instead of safety, they found themselves disappointed, betrayed, and ruined. See Jer 48:2 (note), and the note there.

But a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon - Jeremiah has borrowed this part of his discourse from an ancient poet quoted by Moses, Num 21:28 (note); where see the notes.

The crown of the head - The choicest persons of the whole nation.

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JEREMIAH 48: 46 Woe to you, O Moab! the people of Chemosh is undone; for your sons are taken away captive, and your daughters into captivity.

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Verse 46



The people of Chemosh - The Moabites, who worshipped Chemosh as their supreme god.

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JEREMIAH 48: 47 Yet will I bring back the captivity of Moab in the latter days, says the LORD. Thus far is the judgement of Moab.

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Verse 47

Will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days - I have already expressed doubts (see Jer 48:42) whether the Moabites were ever restored to their national distinction. The expressions in this chapter, relative to their total destruction as a people, are so strong and so frequent, that they leave little room for a limited interpretation. That many of them returned on the edict of Cyrus by virtue of which the Jews were restored, I doubt not; but neither the Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, nor even the Jews themselves were ever restored to their national consequence. Perhaps the restoration spoken of here which was to take place in the latter days, may mean the conversion of these people, in their existing remnants, to the faith of the Gospel. Several judicious interpreters are of this opinion. The Moabites were partially restored; but never, as far as I have been able to learn, to their national consequence. Their conversion to the Christian faith must be the main end designed by this prophecy.