

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part LXXXI: God's Judgment On Moab's Belittling Of God And His People (Jeremiah 48:18-28)

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 1:1c ESV notes the blessing of the man who does not scoff, who does not ridicule or belittle others.
- B. The sin of belittling others, especially if it involves scoffing God or ridiculing His people, is repulsive to the Lord, and Jeremiah 48:18-28 calls for God's judgment on Moab for this very sin. We view it for our insight:

II. God's Judgment On Moab's Belittling Of God And His People, Jeremiah 48:18-28.

- A. The city of Dibon, a great city in Moab where the archaeologically famous Moabite Stone was discovered that told of Moab's defeat of Israel during the reign of Mesha' king of Moab, was predicted by Jeremiah to humble herself because the destroying invader was coming upon her to destroy her strongholds and city. (Jeremiah 48:18; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jer. 48:18; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Four, p. 266-267)
- B. The inhabitants of Aroer were told to stand by the road to watch and ask the people fleeing past them what had occurred, Jer. 48:19. The answer would be that Moab had been put to shame, that the nation had been broken so that the Moabites were to wail and to cry, Jeremiah 48:20a.
- C. The news that Moab had been laid waste would be told as far away as Aroer by the Arnon River, Jer. 48:20b.
- D. The cities of the Transjordan Plateau in Moab that would be destroyed are listed in Jeremiah 48:21-24 ESV, including Holon, Jahzah, Mephaath, Dibon, Nebo, Beth-diblathaim, Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul, Beth-meon, Kerioth and Bozrah; Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1196. "His point in naming these 11 cities was to show that all the towns of Moab, both far and near, would be destroyed," that no one in Moab would be unaffected, Ibid.
- E. Two symbols of strength, one's horn and one's arm, are used by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 48:25 to show that Moab's strength would be obliterated -- his horn being "cut off" and his arm being "broken," Ibid.
- F. The reasons given for this judgment of Moab's loss of strength are provided in Jeremiah 48:26-27 as follows:
 - 1. God called for Moab to be made drunk, for the nation had magnified itself against the Lord, in essence ridiculing Israel's God so that Moab figuratively would be made drunk and have to wallow in her vomit caused by drunkenness, the object of ridicule by others in just judgment, Jeremiah 48:26; Ibid.
 - 2. The Lord rhetorically asked Moab if she had not treated Israel as an object of ridicule, if she had not treated her with the contempt one who had been caught among thieves, that when the Moabites spoke of Israel they waged their heads, a cultural practice of scorning another party, Jeremiah 48:27a,b.
- G. Accordingly, the Moabites were directed to leave their cities and humbly dwell in the rock, to be like the dove that nests in the sides of the mouth of a gorge in humiliation as if ridiculed by others, Jeremiah 48:28; Ibid.
- H. In viewing the text of the Moabite Stone that was found at Dibon, Moab's ridiculing contempt becomes clear:
 - 1. Speaking of his victory over the house of Israel's king Omri, king Mesha' stated in the Moabite Stone, "I triumphed over him and over his house, while Israel has perished for ever!" (Ibid., Z. P. E. B., p. 266)
 - 2. Mesha' added, "Now the men of Gad had built Ataroth for themselves, but I fought against the town and took it, slaying all the people of the town as a satiation for Chemosh and Moab. I brought back from there Oriel its chief (or 'the altar-hearth of David') and dragged him before Chemosh in Kerioth!" (Ibid. p. 267)
 - 3. Moab's king Mesha' added: "'Chemosh said to me, 'Go, seize Nebo from Israel!' So I went up by night, fought against it from daybreak to noon and took it, slaying everyone; seven thousand men, boys, women, girls and maidservants, for I had consecrated it to Ashtar-Chemosh.'" (Ibid.)
 - 4. Against Israel's God Jahweh, king Mesha' added: "'And I took from there the vessels of Jahweh, hauling them before Chemosh.'" (Ibid.) This effort tried to signal Jahweh's subjection to Moab's god Chemosh.

Lesson: For belittling Israel's God and people, the Moabites were judged of God to experience judgment by which they would be made objects of the scorn they had administered against God and His people. The Moabite king's Moabite Stone actually cites his belittling of Israel's God and people, what brought judgment upon Moab.

Application: (1) May we realize that God is to be honored, never ridiculed, for He is a Great King Who demands that all men, including the Gentile nations, honor Him, Malachi 1:14 ESV. (2) May we realize that every human being is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), that we must thus honor every person, 1 Peter 2:17a. (3) If we have ridiculed other people in any way, may we confess it as sin before the Lord lest He cause us to be ridiculed in just discipline for our sin.