Jeremiah

Chapter 49

*A Message About Ammon*

**Concerning the Ammonites: This is what the LORD says: “Has Israel no sons? Has she no heirs? Why then has Molech taken possession of Gad? Why do his people live in its towns? 2 But the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will sound the battle cry against Rabbah of the Ammonites; it will become a mound of ruins, and its surrounding villages will be set on fire. Then Israel will drive out those who drove her out,” says the LORD. 3 “Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is destroyed! Cry out, O inhabitants of Rabbah! Put on sackcloth and mourn; rush here and there inside the walls, for Molech will go into exile, together with his priests and officials. 4 Why do you boast of your valleys, boast of your valleys so fruitful? O unfaithful daughter, you trust in your riches and say, ‘Who will attack me?’ 5 I will bring terror on you from all those around you,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. “Every one of you will be driven away, and no one will gather the fugitives. 6 “Yet afterward, I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites,” declares the LORD.**

**49:1** *Concerning the Ammonites.* See Eze 25:1–7; Am 1:13–15; Zep 2:8–11. Ammon was east of the Jordan and north of Moab (see note on Ge 19:36–38). (CSB)

Descendants of Lot and therefore a people related to Israel (Gn 19:38; Dt 2:19). (TLSB)

 NO SONS…NO HEIRS – This is someone who may legitimately take possession of the land which was now left vacant, since Israel had been led away into exile. (Kretzmann)

 *Molech.* The chief god of the Ammonites (see 1Ki 11:5, 7, 33), also known as Milcom (see NIV text note on 1Ki 11:5). Both titles are related to the West Semitic word for “king” (see NIV text note here). (CSB)

 *taken possession of Gad.* Probably refers to the aftermath of Tiglath-Pileser III’s conquest of Transjordan in 734–732 b.c. The Ammonites later apparently recovered from their defeat and overran some of the territory owned by the Israelite tribe of Gad. (CSB)

"Judah was by right of kindred the heir, not Ammon; but Ammon joined with Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Kings 24, 2, and exulted over its fall, Ps. 83, 4-7. 8; Zeph. 2, 8. 9. It had already in the days of Jeroboam, in Israel's affliction, tried to enlarge its border, 2 Kings 14, 26; Amos 1, 1." (Kretzmann)

The Ammonites, it appears, took advantage of the depressed state of Israel, and invaded their territories in the tribe of Gad, hoping to make them their own for ever. But the prophet intimates that God will preserve the descendants of Israel, and will bring them back to their forfeited inheritances. (ACC)

 *his.* Molech’s. (CSB)

**49:2** *battle cry.* See Am 1:14. (CSB)

 *Rabbah of the Ammonites.* See note on Dt 3:11. (CSB)

This was their capital. (Kretzmann)

 *mound.* See note on 30:18. (CSB)

literally, "a hill of desolation," a pile of ruins. (Kretzmann)

 SURROUNDING VILLAGES – These would be her suburbs, the smaller cities and towns within her sphere of influence. (Kretzmann)

 ISRAEL WILL DRIVE OUT – They will be in a position once more to occupy the land which the Ammonites had gotten by unfair means. On account of this misfortune, wailing and lamenting would be in order in the land of the Ammonites. (Kretzmann)

**49:3** *Heshbon.* See note on 48:45; see also Jdg 11:26–27. (CSB)

At that time occupied by the Ammonite. (Kretzmann)

 *Ai.* Not the Ai of Jos 8. Its location is unknown. (CSB)

 *walls.* The Hebrew for this word refers not to city walls but to walls separating vineyards from each other (see Nu 21:24). (CSB)

It is supposed that this may refer to the women making lamentations for the dead, that were in general buried by the walls of their gardens; but others think that it refers to the smaller cities or villages, called here the daughters of Rabbah, the metropolis; the inhabitants of which are exhorted to seek safety somewhere else, as none can be expected from them, now that the enemy is at hand. (ACC)

 *Molech.* See note on v. 1. (CSB)

 *will go into exile … and officials.* See note on 48:7. (CSB)

The reason for the Lord's punishment upon Ammon is now set forth, as the prophet pictures the pride, the stubbornness, and the security of its inhabitants. (Kretzmann)

**49:4** BOAST OF YOUR VALLEYS – Though thy valleys be fruitful, yet glory not in them. Though thou have much political and military power, do not trust in them, nor in the multitude of thy cities; a stronger than thou is coming against thee. (ACC)

 *unfaithful daughter.* Applied to the people of Judah in 31:22. (CSB)

 *you trust in your riches.* Spoken to Moab in 48:7. (CSB)

 *Who will attack me?* According to Josephus (*Antiquities,* 10.9.7) Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Ammon in the 23rd year of his reign (582 b.c.). (CSB)

The Ammonites boasted that no enemy could successfully launch a campaign against their land. (Kretzmann)

**49:5** BRING TERROR ON YOU – Their misfortune and overthrow would bring terror upon them. (Kretzmann)

 NO ONE WILL GATHER THE FUGITIVES – No one would make any attempt to bring about so much as a semblance of order among the scattered fugitives. According to secular accounts the overthrow of Ammon took place in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, after King Baalis had executed the murder of Gedaliah, chap. 40, 14. (Kretzmann)

**49:6**† See 48:47 and note on 46:26; see also note on 29:14. (CSB)

In their case also the Messianic promises were held out to all those who would return to the Lord in true repentance. (Kretzmann)

The Ammonites are supposed to have returned with the Moabites and Israelites, on permission given by the edict of Cyrus. (ACC)

 *A Message About Edom*

**7 Concerning Edom: This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Is there no longer wisdom in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed? 8 Turn and flee, hide in deep caves, you who live in Dedan, for I will bring disaster on Esau at the time I punish him. 9 If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? If thieves came during the night, would they not steal only as much as they wanted? 10 But I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his hiding places, so that he cannot conceal himself. His children, relatives and neighbors will perish, and he will be no more. 11 Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me.” 12 This is what the LORD says: “If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it.  13 I swear by myself,” declares the LORD, “that Bozrah will become a ruin and an object of horror, of reproach and of cursing; and all its towns will be in ruins forever.” 14 I have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, “Assemble yourselves to attack it! Rise up for battle!” 15 “Now I will make you small among the nations, despised among men. 16 The terror you inspire and the pride of your heart have deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks, who occupy the heights of the hill. Though you build your nest as high as the eagle’s, from there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD. 7 “Edom will become an object of horror; all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds. 18 As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their neighboring towns,” says the LORD, “so no one will live there; no man will dwell in it. 19 “Like a lion coming up from Jordan’s thickets to a rich pastureland, I will chase Edom from its land in an instant. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me? And what shepherd can stand against me?” 20 Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned against Edom, what he has purposed against those who live in Teman: The young of the flock will be dragged away; he will completely destroy their pasture because of them. 21 At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble; their cry will resound to the Red Sea. 22 Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom’s warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor.**

**49:7–22** Shares many memorable phrases and concepts with the book of Obadiah. (CSB)

**49:7** *Concerning Edom.* See Isa 21:11–12; Eze 25:12–14; Am 1:11–12; Ob 1–16. (CSB)

These were the descendants of Esau (Gen 36:1) and were the enemies of Israel. (TLSB)

 *wisdom.* For which Edom was justly famed (see notes on Job 1:1; 2:11). (CSB)

 *Teman.* An important Edomite town located south of the Dead Sea (see note on Job 2:11). In v. 20 it is used in parallelism with Edom itself. (CSB)

 WISDOM HAS DECAYED – The rhetorical question has, of course, a strong negative significance: Wisdom and common sense seem to have disappeared entirely. (Kretzmann)

**49:8** *Turn and flee.* See v. 24; 46:21. (CSB)

An allusion to the custom of the Arabs, who, when about to be attacked by a powerful foe, strike their tents, pack up their utensils, lade their camels, which they can do in a couple of hours, and set off to the great desert, and so bury themselves in it that no enemy either will or can pursue, as it is the Arabs alone that know the deserts, and can find water and provender for their support. (ACC)

 *Dedan.* See 25:23; see also notes on Isa 21:13; Eze 25:13. (CSB)

Was a city of Idumea, not far from Teman. (ACC)

 *Esau.* The patriarch Jacob’s brother, and another name for Edom (see Ge 25:29–30; 36:1), just as Israel was another name for Jacob (see Ge 32:28). The fact that Esau was Jacob’s brother made Edom’s enmity toward Israel all the more reprehensible (see Am 1:11; Ob 10). (CSB)

**49:9–10** Paralleled in Ob 5–6. (CSB)

**49:9** *grape pickers.* See note on v. 13. (CSB)

Both in vintage and harvest every grape and every stalk are not gathered; hence the gleaners get something for their pains: but your enemies shall not leave one of you behind; all shall be carried into captivity. (ACC)

 *leave a few grapes.* For the poor to glean (see note on Ru 2:2). (CSB)

The Chaldeans, however, would be less considerate in their treatment of Idumea. (Kretzmann)

**49:10** *strip … bare.* See note on 13:22. (CSB)

Where his treasures were hidden. (Kretzmann)

 *be no more.* See 31:15; Isa 19:7. (CSB)

His direct descendants ceased from being a nation. Edom ceased to be a factor politically at the time of the Romans. (Kretzmann)

**49:11** LEAVE YOUR ORPHANS - The connection of this with the context is not easy to be discerned; but, as a general maxim, it is of great importance. Widows and orphans are the peculiar care of God. He is as the best of fathers to the one, and the most loving of husbands to the other. Even the widows and orphans of Esau, who escape the general destruction, shall be taken care of by the Lord. (ACC)

The words imply an exhibition of mercy on the part of the Lord toward all those who, in true sorrow over their sins, turn to Him for help. (Kretzmann)

**49:12** Echoed from 25:28–29. (CSB)

 *those who do not deserve … must drink it.* Though they are God’s chosen ones, the people of Judah will be punished because of their sin (see Am 3:2). (CSB)

Even the fact that Israel had been chosen as God's people did not give them exemption and deliverance from God's punishment if they took part in the idolatry of the heathen; how much more, then, would the heathen be subject to the judgment of Jehovah! (Kretzmann)

**49:13** *swear by myself.* See notes on Ge 22:16 – (There is no greater name in which the Lord can take an oath (see Heb 6:13); Isa 45:23; see also 22:5; 51:14. (CSB)

 *Bozrah.* Not the Bozrah of 48:24 (see note there); the Edomite Bozrah was probably the capital of Edom in the days of Jeremiah (see v. 22; Ge 36:33; see also notes on Isa 34:6. (CSB)

Bozrah, a city of Idumea, is here put for the whole country. (ACC)

 *ruin … cursing.* See 25:18. (CSB)

 *in ruins forever.* See 25:9; Ps 74:3; Isa 58:12 and note. (CSB)

**49:14–16** Paralleled in Ob 1–4. (CSB)

**49:14** I HEARD A MESSAGE – The Lord has revealed to me what he is about to do to the Edomites. (ACC)

 AN ENVOY WAS SENT – I believe this means only that God has given permission, and has stirred up the hearts of these nations to go against those whom he has doomed to destruction. (ACC)

**49:15** MAKE YOU SMALL – This is in just retribution for Edom's pride. (Kretzmann)

**49:16** *pride.* Edom’s besetting sin (see v. 4; Ob 11–13; cf. 48:29–30). (CSB)

This is the insolence usually having this influence upon the heart of the proud, to deceive them, wherefore the Lord now calls out. (Kretzmann)

 *rocks.* Perhaps a reference to Petra (see note on 2Ki 14:7), the most spectacular of the mountain strongholds for which Edom was noted. (CSB)

All Idumea is full of mountains and rocks, and these rocks and mountains full of caves, where, in time of great heats, and in time of war, the people take shelter. (ACC)

**49:17** Echoed from 19:8. (CSB)

**49:18** Repeated almost verbatim in 50:40, and echoed in part in v. 33. (CSB)

 *Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown.* See Ge 19:24–25. Later calamities were often compared with the one that befell Sodom and Gomorrah (see note on Am 4:11). (CSB)

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities was so terrible, that, when God denounces judgments against incorrigible sinners, he tells them they shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall be so desolate as not to be habitable. Travellers may lodge on the ground for a night; but it cannot become a permanent dwelling. (ACC)

 *their neighboring towns.* Primarily Admah and Zeboiim (see Ge 14:2, 8; Dt 29:23; Hos 11:8). (CSB)

**49:19–21** Repeated almost verbatim in the oracle against Babylon (see 50:44–46). (CSB)

**49:19** *Jordan’s thickets.* See 12:5 and note – (Providing cover for lions (see 49:19; 50:44; Zec 11:3). If the Hebrew for this word means “flooding” (see NIV text note) here, an ancient example is described in Jos 3:15. (CSB)

The banks of the Jordan were a dense jungle, a hiding place for Asiatic lions. (TLSB)

Literally, "And in a land of peace thou wast secure, how wilt thou do along the wooded banks of Jordan?" The comparison is between an inhabited district, with its comparative security, and a country of primitive forests and undergrowth, where wild animals abounded, the application being the same as in the first part of the verse. (Kretzmann)

 *shepherd.* Ruler (see note on 2:8). (CSB)

Nebuchadnezzar. That is, God has chosen this man, and given him a commission against Idumea. (ACC)

**49:20** *Teman.* See note on v. 7. (CSB)

Taken here for the whole of Idumea. These are a kind of synonyms which prevent monotony, and give variety to the poet’s versification. (ACC)

 *flock.* The people of Edom. (CSB)

 WILL BE DRAGGED AWAY – literally, "Most certainly they will be dragged away, the feeble of the flock," the Edomites being helpless before the attack of the invaders. (Kretzmann)

 COMPLETELY DESTROY – "Certainly their pasturage will be astounded at them," their own land being horrified at the misfortune which had befallen them. (Kretzmann)

**49:21** WILL RESOUND – The whole state is represented here as a vast building suddenly thrown down, so as to cause the earth to tremble, and the noise to be heard at a great distance.(ACC)

**49:22** Echoed from 48:40–41. (CSB)

 *eagle.* Represents Nebuchadnezzar in 48:40 (see note there), and probably here also. A more complete subjugation of the Edomites, however, was accomplished by Nabatean Arabs (perhaps the “desert jackals” of Mal 1:3) beginning c. 550 b.c. (CSB)

 LIKE HEART OF A WOMAN IN LABOR – No matter how impregnable the position of God's enemies may seem in the eyes of human beings, they will quickly fall before the attack of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

*Message About Damascus*

**23 Concerning Damascus: “Hamath and Arpad are dismayed, for they have heard bad news. They are disheartened, troubled like the restless sea. 24 Damascus has become feeble, she has turned to flee and panic has gripped her; anguish and pain have seized her, pain like that of a woman in labor. 25 Why has the city of renown not been abandoned, the town in which I delight? 26 Surely, her young men will fall in the streets; all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,” declares the LORD Almighty. 27 “I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.”**

**49:23** *Concerning Damascus.* See Isa 17; Am 1:3–5 (see also note on Isa 17:1). (CSB)

This is the head or title of another prophecy. Damascus was one of the principal cities of Syria. It was taken by David, 2 Samuel 8:6, was retaken in the reign of Solomon, 1 Kings 11:24, etc., and regained its independence. Its kings were often at war with the ten tribes, and once it joined with them for the destruction of Judah. To defend himself against these powerful enemies Ahaz made a league with the king of Assyria, who besieged Damascus, took, and demolished it. From that time we hear nothing of Damascus till we meet with it in this prophecy. It appears to have been rebuilt and restored to some consequence. It made an obstinate resistance to Nebuchadnezzar; but was at last taken and sacked by him. At present it is both a large and populous city, with considerable commerce. (ACC)

 *Hamath.* An important city in the kingdom of Aram (see Isa 10:9 and note). (CSB)

This was a powerful city on the Orontes and formerly the capital of a country of the same name. (Kretzmann)

 *Arpad.* See note on Isa 10:9. (CSB)

Not far from Damascus. (ACC)

It was another mighty city. (Kretzmmann)

 *troubled like the restless sea.* See Isa 57:20 (CSB)

They are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest. (ACC)

**49:24** *anguish.* See note on 4:19. (CSB)

**49:25** ABANDONED – How was it that the place of delight, as Damascus was called of old, was not abandoned by its inhabitants, so that they might have saved their lives by a speedy flight? (Kretzmann)

Damascus is so ruined that she can no more be called a praiseworthy or happy city. (ACC)

**49:26** Repeated almost verbatim in 50:30. (CSB)

So great had been their terror at the approach of the enemy that they had not even had recourse to flight and so were cut down in the very streets of their city. (Kretzmann)

**49:27** A conventional word of judgment (see note on Am 1:4). (CSB)

Damascus was a seat of the Syrian kings, and Ben-hadad was a name common to several of its kings. (ACC)

*Message About Kedar and Hazor*

**28 Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked: This is what the LORD says: “Arise, and attack Kedar and destroy the people of the East. 29 Their tents and their flocks will be taken; their shelters will be carried off with all their goods and camels. Men will shout to them, ‘Terror on every side!’ 30 “Flee quickly away! Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor,” declares the LORD. “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has plotted against you; he has devised a plan against you. 31 “Arise and attack a nation at ease, which lives in confidence,” declares the LORD, “a nation that has neither gates nor bars; its people live alone. 32 Their camels will become plunder, and their large herds will be booty. I will scatter to the winds those who are in distant places and will bring disaster on them from every side,” declares the LORD. 33 “Hazor will become a haunt of jackals, a desolate place forever. No one will live there; no man will dwell in it.”**

**9:28** *Concerning Kedar.* See Isa 21:13–17; see also 2:10 and note. (CSB)

 *kingdoms of Hazor.* See vv. 30, 33; not the Hazor north of the Sea of Galilee (see Jos 11:1). These kingdoms may have included Dedan, Tema, Buz and other Arab regions (see 25:23–24 and notes), since the Hebrew root of the proper name Hazor often serves as a common noun meaning “settlement” (see especially Isa 42:11; see also Ge 25:16). (CSB)

Kedar was the name of one of the sons of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13) who settled in Arabia, and who gave name to a powerful tribe of Arabs who used to traffic with the Tyrians in cattle. It appears from this prophecy that Nebuchadnezzar got a commission to go against and reduce them to great misery. (ACC)

 *Nebuchadnezzar … attacked.* In 599–598 b.c. (CSB)

 *people of the East.* See Job 1:3; Eze 25:4. The Hebrew for this phrase is translated “eastern peoples” in Jdg 6:3 (see note there). (CSB)

These were the people of Canaan designated all the wilderness dwellers of Arabia. (Kretzmann)

**49:29** TENTS…FLOCKS – This description of property shows that they were Scenite or Nomad Arabs; persons who dwell in tents, and whose principal property was cattle, especially camels, of the whole of which they were plundered by the Chaldeans. (ACC).

 *Terror on every side.* See note on 6:25. (CSB)

**49:30** *Stay in deep caves.* See v. 8. (CSB)

They were hiding themselves in remote places. (Kretzmann)

**49:31** *at ease.* Completely secure (see Job 21:23). (CSB)

This was a tranquil tribe, having no presentiment of evil. (Kretzmann)

 *in confidence.* In safety, unsuspecting (see Jdg 18:7; Eze 38:11 (CSB)

 *has neither gates nor bars.* Lives in unwalled villages (see Dt 3:5; cf. 1Sa 23:7). (CSB)

The Arabs, who had nothing but their tents; no cities, nor even permanent villages. (ACC)

 *alone.* A condition that elsewhere characterizes Israel (see Nu 23:9; Dt 33:28). (CSB)

On with little or no intercourse with other nations or tribes, from which they might expect assistance in case of an attack. (Kretzmann)

**49:32** *scatter to the winds.* See Eze 5:12; 12:4. (CSB)

 *who are in distant places.* See note on 9:26. (CSB)

Even in these utmost inaccessible recesses the sword and pillage shall reach them. “‘The utmost corners;’ insulated coasts; the peninsula of Arabia.” (ACC)

 *disaster … from every side.* Contrast the description of Solomon’s realm in 1Ki 5:4. (CSB)

**49:33** *haunt of jackals.* See note on 9:11. (CSB)

 *No one … dwell in it.* Repeated verbatim from v. 18. (CSB)

This prophecy was fulfilled when the Chaldeans, on their way to the West and South, sent detachments of troops to bring these nomadic tribes into subjection. (Kretzmann)

*A Message About Elam*

**34 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: 35 This is what the LORD Almighty says: “See, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might. 36 I will bring against Elam the four winds from the four quarters of the heavens; I will scatter them to the four winds, and there will not be a nation where Elam’s exiles do not go. 37 I will shatter Elam before their foes, before those who seek their lives; I will bring disaster upon them, even my fierce anger,” declares the LORD. “I will pursue them with the sword until I have made an end of them. 38 I will set my throne in Elam and destroy her king and officials,” declares the LORD. 39 “Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam in days to come,” declares the LORD.**

**49:34** *This is the word of the Lord… concerning.* See note on 46:1. (CSB)

 *Elam.* See note on Isa 11:11. (CSB)

200 miles East of Baylon. Its city if Suza was to become one of capitals of the Medo-Persian Empire. Elam, which liest east of Babylon, allied with Babylon in her conquest of the Assyrians. (TLSB)

 *Zedekiah.* Ruled 597–586 b.c. (CSB)

**49:35** *bow.* The Elamites were skilled archers (see Isa 22:6). (CSB)

They were eminent archers; and had acquired their power and eminence by their dexterity in the use of the bow. (ACC

This would break their military power. (TLSB)

**49:36** Contrast Isa 11:12. (CSB)

 *to the four winds.* In every direction (see Eze 37:9; Da 7:2; 8:8; see also NIV text note on Zec 6:5). (CSB)

Nebuchadnezzar and his armies, gathered out of different provinces, and attacking this people at all points in the same time. They shall be scattered through the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of which the Babylonish empire is composed. (ACC)

**49:37** *I will pursue … made an end of them.* The Hebrew for this sentence is repeated verbatim from 9:16. (CSB)

They will be so shattered that their identity as a separate nation, would be lost. (Kretzmann)

**49:38** *set my throne in.* See 1:15 and note – (For the fulfillment see 39:3. Since the gateway of a city was the place where its ruling council sat (see notes on Ge 19:1; Ru 4:1), the Babylonians replaced Judah’s royal authority with their own (cf. 43:10; 49:38). (CSB)

**49:39**† See note on 29:14 and on 46:26. (CSB)

From this country also there were some who accepted the Messiah as their Lord and Savior. It is interesting to note that among the strangers present on the great day of Pentecost to hear the sermon of Peter there were also people of Elam. Cf. Acts 2, 9. (Kretzmann)