

Pour Me!: Jeremiah 48

First: Read Jeremiah 48

In this chapter Jeremiah moves to Judah's familiar neighbor, the nation of Moab. What the prophet describes is the fall of that nation, the cities that become a waste, and some of the reasons why Moab was judged.

One thing that becomes clear is that Moab was destroyed at the height of its prosperity. It was nestled, securely it was thought, in a rich valley. They were off the beaten path between mortal enemies, and a relatively small and unimportant nation. But it turns out that none of these things saved them. So what is the root of their collapse and destruction? Jeremiah is clear about their pride—it was a fundamental factor in their demise, and it was something that broke the heart of God.

In the midst of the judgment on Moab, God laments:

“We have heard of the pride of Moab--he is very proud--of his loftiness, his pride, and his arrogance, and the haughtiness of his heart. I know his insolence, declares the LORD; his boasts are false, his deeds are false. Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the men of Kir-hareseth I mourn.” (vs. 29-31)

Their pride cut them off from God, and in what I find to be a fascinating twist, it broke the heart of God. Isn't the God of Judah supposed to be “against” their enemies? Every other god in the ancient world might lack compassion on those who despise them, but Jeremiah's God is completely different—he is a lover of sinners.

It is crucial to note that pride cuts us off from God. In every area of my life where pride has reigned, I have excluded God; pride is the primary roadblock between God and me. Any way in which I feel self-satisfied or self-sufficient is a guaranteed hole in my relationship with God. If I feel I can handle my tomorrows, God is no longer sovereign. If I feel emotionally and relationally self-sufficient, God is no longer the God of comfort or my redeemer and friend. If in any way God is not my all-in-all, I have shut God out of my life.

The solution? My life needs to be stirred up and poured out. The problem the Moabites had was that they lived in luxury and never felt the need to rely on something greater than themselves. The imagery is stunning. When wine is left too long to ferment in the same barrel, the sediment that settles to the bottom turns the wine sour. The barrels need to be stirred up and poured out from time to time to guarantee good aging.

“Moab has been at ease from his youth and has settled on his dregs; he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile; so his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.” (vs. 11)

Disturbance in life, the difficulties we face, serve to ripen us—to make us deeper and richer in flavor. Instead of crying, “poor me!” we should pray, “pour me!” If we turn to the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3), we can be turned into something deep and powerful. Scripture is unambiguous: *“Count it all joy...when you meet trials”* (James 1:2), *“In this you rejoice [that]...you have been grieved by various trials”* (1 Peter 1:6), *“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake”* (Col. 1:24).

The key to moments like these is to whom we turn. Will I let my pride turn me within myself, to a shallow and foolish well of advice, or will I allow God to be my strength and comfort when all my faculties fail me? Billy Graham once said, “Mountaintops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valley.”

Posted by Phil Steiger at 2:50 PM 