

# Jeremiah 48:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD.

## Analysis

**There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof** (על כל-גגות מוֹאָב וּבָרְחוּבָתָיו גָּלָה מִסְפָּד)—Housetops were public spaces in ancient cities, used for various activities including announcements and mourning. The streets (rechovot, רְחוּבּוֹת) were gathering places. The word misped (מִסְפָּד) means lamentation, wailing, funeral dirge. Mourning will be public, loud, and universal—from private homes to public squares.

**For I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD** (פֶּשֶׁבְּרָתִי אֶת-מוֹאָב בְּכָלִ אַיִלְחָפֶץ בָּזֶן אַמְּדִיחָה). God takes direct responsibility—'I have broken' (shavar, שָׁבַר—shattered, broken to pieces). The metaphor compares Moab to a keli (כָּלִי, vessel/pottery) in which there is no chefetz (חֶפְץ, delight/pleasure)—a useless pot fit only for discarding and breaking (compare Jeremiah 22:28, Romans 9:21-22). This harsh imagery indicates complete rejection—God finds no value in preserving Moab and destroys them as one would discard broken pottery.

## Historical Context

Flat housetops in ancient Near Eastern cities served as living spaces, especially for evening coolness and social interaction. They were natural gathering places for public mourning, visible and audible across neighborhoods. The broken vessel imagery was common in ancient cultures—pottery was ubiquitous, and broken pots

were worthless, discarded in trash heaps. Archaeological sites contain massive pottery dumps from broken vessels. God's statement that He finds no pleasure in Moab indicates they have become worthless through pride and sin, fit only for destruction. Babylon served as God's instrument to 'break' Moab circa 582 BC.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the public nature of Moab's mourning (housetops and streets) illustrate that national sin brings corporate shame?
2. What does the broken vessel metaphor teach about how sin makes us 'worthless' in terms of our created purpose?
3. In what ways does this imagery point to the need for re-creation through Christ, who makes us 'vessels of mercy' (Romans 9:23)?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל	הַ	וּבְרַחֲבָתָה	יְהֻדָּה	מֹאָב	בְּ	כָּל	הַ	וּבְרַחֲבָתָה	יְהֻדָּה	מֹאָב	בְּ	כָּל	הַ	
H5921	H3605	generally	upon	all	the	housetops		Moab		and	in	the	streets	H3605
		H1406		H4124		H7339								
מִסְפֵּת	תִּ	שָׁבֵר	רָתִי	מֹאָב	בְּ	אֶת	מֹאָב	בְּ	אֶת	מֹאָב	בְּ	אֶת	מֹאָב	
There	shall	be	lamentation	H3588	thereof	for	I	have	broken	H853	Moab	H4124		
				H7665										
כָּל	יְהֻדָּה:	נָאָמֵן	בְּ	זֶה	יְהֻדָּה:	נָאָמֵן	בְּ	זֶה	יְהֻדָּה:	נָאָמֵן	בְּ	זֶה	יְהֻדָּה:	
like	a	vessel	H369	wherein	is	no	pleasure	H0	saith	the	LORD	H5002	H3068	
				H2656										

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 22:28** (Parallel theme): Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

**Isaiah 22:1** (Parallel theme): The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

**Jeremiah 25:34** (Parallel theme): Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

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