

# 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** (עַל כָּל־גִּגֹּת מוֹאָב וּבְרִחוֹבֶיהָ כָּלָה מִסֵּפֶד)—Housetops were public spaces in ancient cities, used for various activities including announcements and mourning. The streets (rechovot, רְחוֹבוֹת) were gathering places. The word misped (מִסֵּפֶד) 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** (כִּי שִׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת־מוֹאָב כְּכֵלִי אֵין־חֶפֶץ בּוֹ נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה). God takes direct responsibility—'I have broken' (shavar, שָׁבַר—shattered, broken to pieces). The metaphor compares Moab to a keli (כֵּלִי, vessel/pottery) in which there is no chefetz (חֶפֶץ, 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	עַל	ל	גַּג וְעַל	מִן	וּבִרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ	כָּל	הָ
H3605	H5921		H1406		H4124	H3605	
			<b>generally upon all the housetops</b>	<b>Moab</b>	<b>and in the streets</b>		
					H7339		
מִסֵּפֵי דָ	כִּי	שָׁבַרְתִּי	אֶת	מִן	בְּ		
H4553	H3588	H7665	H853	H4124			
<b>There shall be lamentation</b>		<b>thereof for I have broken</b>	<b>Moab</b>				
כַּכֵּל	אֵין	יֵפֶץ	בְּ	נֹאם	יְהוָה:		
H3627	H369	H2656	H0	H5002	H3068		
<b>like a vessel</b>		<b>wherein is no pleasure</b>		<b>saith</b>	<b>the LORD</b>		

## 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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