

A Message Concerning Kedar and Hazor

49: 28-33

DIG: How would you characterize the lifestyle of these people of the east living at Kedar and Hazor? What had their ancestors done to the Israelites (Judges 6:1-6)? Who attacks them in 598 BC and why? Were they ready for it or taken off guard? Why are they so vulnerable? Who is behind this disaster?

REFLECT: Are roots important to you? Do you consider yourself "settled down," or do you tend to "move on?" Why? Do you feel you have arrived or are "at ease" spiritually? Where are you now compared to where you used to be? Is there the need to move on to new places spiritually? Where to?

Sometime between 604 and 601 BC during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim

The horizon of **the prophet** now makes a sweep toward the Arabian tribes of the East. **Concerning Kedar**, Bedouins, or nomadic **Arabs**; and **the kingdoms of Kazor**, meaning **Arabs** living in settlements, as distinct from nomads. The Assyrians conducted campaigns against them on more than one occasion. One of the most serious incursions came in the middle of the seventh century when lands in the Transjordan and southern Syria were invaded by **Arabs**. The Assyrian king Ashurbanipal undertook vigorous punitive raids. With the collapse of Assyria the **Arabs** troubled **Nebuchadnezzar** and in 599 BC he **attacked the Arabs (49:28a)**. This probably provided the background for the present prophecy.²²⁴

This is what **ADONAI** says: **Arise, and attack Kedar and destroy the people of the East (49:28b)**, which is a common biblical term for the Saudi Arabian tribes (**Genesis 29:1; Judges 6:33, 7:12, 8:10; First Kings 4:30; Job 1:3; Isaiah 11:14; Ezekiel 25:4**). They dwelt east of the Ammonites in villages (**Isaiah 42:11**) and their princes carried out extensive commerce with Tyre (**Ezekiel 27:21; Isaiah 21:16-17**). Kedar was a son of **Ishma'el** (see the commentary on **Genesis 16 - The Twelve Sons of Ishma'el**). He is also mentioned in **Song of Solomon 1:5, Isaiah 21:16-17, 42:11, 60:7; Jer 2:10; Ezk 27:21**. What were the results of this call for destruction?

As the city dwellers trusted in their strong walls, so **the people of the East** relied on the wide-open spaces, the immense expanse of desert, which made army expeditions against them very difficult and facilitated their own escape. They felt quite safe and secure even without doors and gates and locks and bars. **The prophet** warned them. For **Nebuchadnezzar** would carefully lay his plans, counsel with men experienced in desert warfare, and succeed in rudely shattering their fatal overconfidence of serene security. He would surround them **(49:32)** and **from every direction they** would hear the battle cry of the enemy.²²⁵

The near historical destruction of Kedar: Their tents (they were especially famous for their tents) and their flocks will be taken; their shelters will be carried off with all their goods and camels. People will shout to them, "magor misasbib" or *terror on every side* (49:29, 6:25; 20:3-4 and 10, 46:5; Psalm 31:13; Lamentations 2:22).

The near historical destruction of Hazor: Hazor was more tribal, but we know nothing more than what our text tells us. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded they are told to **flee quickly away! Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor, declares the LORD. Why? For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is coming and he has made a plan against you and formed a purpose against you (49:30 ESV).** The most interesting element is the explicit reference to Nebuchadnezzar, who is said to have a **plan and a purpose**. This is worth noting, because none of the other messages specifically mention him at all. Why? It is **God** who claims the verbs: **I will scatter, I will bring, I will bring their disaster on them.**

Arise and attack a nation at ease, which lives in confidence, declares ADONAI. Thinking themselves secure from attack they had made no preparations for defense. **A nation that has neither gates nor bars; its people thought they lived far from danger.** Then destruction came. **Their camels will be booty, their many cattle a spoil. I will scatter to the winds those who shave the sides of their heads. The Arabs were accustomed to shave the hair around the head and let a tuft stand up on the crown in honor of their god Bacchus.²²⁶ From every direction I will bring their disaster on them: says the LORD (49:31-32 CJB).** Such defenseless communities were no match for the well-equipped Babylonians (see **Ae - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh**). The king of Babylon is merely the LORD's servant. Yes, he hovers over the Gentile nations. But it is **God** who builds up and plants; it is YHVH who uproots and tears down (1:10), just as He would do to Y'hudah (see **Gb - The Destruction of Solomon's Temple on Tisha B'Av in 586 BC**).²²⁷

Far eschatological prophecy: Kedar and Hazor (or Saudi Arabia), like Edom and Babylon will become a haunt of jackals, a desolate place forever (see the commentary on **Revelation Er - Babylon Will Never Be Found Again**). During the thousand-year millennial Kingdom, no one will live there; no people will dwell in it (49:33).