

To this point Ezekiel's focus has been on Israel, her sin and deserved judgement and the rod of God's wrath, Babylon. The last chapter ended with the sudden, predicted death of Ezekiel's wife whom God used to portray the sudden reality of the destruction of His sanctuary, Jerusalem. While Israel was in no place to even mourn God's word to Ezekiel will now shift to the certain judgement that He will deal out to the heathen nations. That will be the focus now of chapters 25 through 32.

JUDGEMENT ON THE NATIONS

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|----|-----------|---|--------------|
| 1. | Amon | } | · 25 |
| 2. | Moab | | |
| 3. | Edom | | |
| 4. | Philistia | | |
| 5. | Tyre | | · 26 – 28:10 |
| | (Satan) | | · 28:10 – 19 |
| 6. | Sidon | | · 28:20 – 24 |
| 7. | Egypt | | · 29 – 32 |

As we study the judgement of God on the nations, Ezekiel is given by God the consistency for His just actions on them. It is important to notice that these judgements are going to be pronounced after God has carried out His wrath on His people. Yet the heathen neighbors will be judged because of

1. Their mocking joy upon viewing the destruction of God's nation, and
2. Their pride and self-deification.

From the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:3 we see the faithful declaration of God to Israel: “I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee”. Just as Christians cannot lose their elect status, neither can the nation of Israel. It has been remarkable to see how this principle is in effect today. Three authors have documented the proof of this reality for further study:



John P. McTernan



David J. Brennan



William R. Koenig

AMMONITES

25:1-4 *“And the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them, and say to the sons of Ammon, ‘Hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because you said, ‘Aha!’ against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession, and they will set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk.””*

EZEKIEL

“Strengthened by God”

Session 18 - Ezekiel 25

The Ammonites sprung forth as a nation from rather dubious circumstances. The account is given in Genesis 19 verses 30 -38 where we read of the incestuous acts that brought about the origins of both the Moabites and Ammonites. After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot’s daughters, while in hiding with him feared that the family would cease to exist because there was no man left around them and taking matters into their own hands they conceived to make their father Lot drunk and lie with him in order to become pregnant and have a progeny for themselves and their father.

Lot’s younger daughter gave birth to “Ben-ammi” the father of the Ammonites (Gen 19:38; Ps 83:7,8). Lot’s older daughter gave birth to Moab. Their descendants remained the constant enemies of Israel. They both hired Balaam in order to try to bring about Israel’s curse (Deut 13:4; Num 22, 23). Ben-ammi means “son of my people” and while they are not Israel, they are none the less related and we see that the Lord forbids Israel from attacking them on their march through the promise land (Deut 2:19).

Originally the Ammonites possessed the land between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Num 21:24-29), but were thrown out by the Amorites and the kingdom of Sihon. As part of the quest to inhabit Canaan, the Israelites overthrew the Amorites and the Ammonites once again were able to possess that land. A fact that they should have been thankful for through history, yet the opposite is true.



The Ammonites were the more fierce of the two tribes. They engaged in barbaric acts upon those they defeated in Jabesh Gilead (1Sam 11:2). They ripped up pregnant women in Gilead (Amos 1:13). And Jer 40:14 41:5-7 records more of their treachery. In 2Sam 10:1-5; 12:31, they insult David by doubting his word and character to their demise. Their stronghold city was Rabbah - “the city of waters”

They worshipped Moloch in a tent, not a fixed temple or high place. Their worship was in conjunction with their bedouin lifestyle. They, like the Moabites were excluded for ten generations from full Israelite citizenship (Deut 23:2,46; Neh 13:2) unlike the Edomites who had been excluded for only three generations. This exclusion only applied to citizenship and its privileges, not to spiritual ones if they became converts to Judaism.

The days of conflict with them and Israel in the days of Jephthah and Saul are recorded in Judges 11:33; 1Sam 11:11; 14:47. While they had been defeated, they still acted out in hostility toward the Israelites in the days of Saul and David (2Sam 10-11).

They received cruel treatment in the resulting war (2Sam 12:26-31). Later Ammon joined with Moab in an attempt to uproot Judah during Jehoshaphat's reign and yet were soundly defeated and had to bring gifts to Uzziah (2Chron 20; Ps 83:3-7; 2Chron 26:8). While the struggles continued, they moved in to try to regain territory after Jerusalem was defeated by Babylon and the surviving Jews were taken captive east of the Jordan (2Ki 15:29; 1Chron 5:26).

It was the Ammonite wives of Solomon that seduced him into honoring their idol Moloch (Jer 49:1,3). He was responsible for building many of the high places for this idol that were not destroyed till Josiah's reign (2Ki 23:13). This is why the rage of the Lord on His people. The Israelites chased after the idols of those that hated them while they should have remained faithful to the One who loves them and would have blessed them.

The Ammonites joined Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem and their cruelty is noted in Amos (1:13). Their destruction is noted by Jeremiah (49:1-6), Ezekiel and Zephaniah (2:8,9). Even upon the return of the Israelites under Nehemiah to rebuild the temple, the Ammonites united with Sanballat to bring opposition to the process (Neh 4) and their hostilities didn't end there. They joined the Syrians in the war with the Maccabees and were defeated by Judas Maccabeus.

25:5-7 *“I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and the sons of Ammon a resting place for flocks. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.” For thus says the Lord GOD, “Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the scorn of your soul against the land of Israel, therefore, behold, I have stretched out My hand against you and I will give you for spoil to the nations. And I will cut you off from the peoples and make you perish from the lands; I will destroy you. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.”*

MOABITES

25:8-11 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because Moab and Seir say, ‘Behold, the house of Judah is like all the nations,’ therefore, behold, I am going to deprive the flank of Moab of its cities, of its cities which are on its frontiers, the glory of the land, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon and Kiriathaim, and I will give it for a possession along with the sons of Ammon to the sons of the east, so that the sons of Ammon will not be remembered among the nations. “Thus I will execute judgments on Moab, and they will know that I am the LORD.””*

The Moabites were characterized more by culture and agriculture than they were by war and a nomadic type of life. The hostility between them and the Israelites began under Balaak who was responsible for hiring Balaam to bring a curse upon Israel (Num 22-24). They did succeed in getting the young Israelite men to commingle with the Moabite women. During the time of the judges, Eglon, king of Moab oppressed Israel (Jud 3:12-30). However the tensions between the two nations was not as constant as with the Ammonites

It was during a famine that many Israelites moved into the land of the Moabites and found provision. It was during this time that Naomi's sons married Moabite women and we meet Ruth who becomes betrothed by Boaz and thus becomes part of Messiah's family tree. But the relationship between Israel and Moab went into decline during Saul's reign (1Sam 14:47). Moab was eventually conquered and forced to become a vassal state of Israel by David (2Sam 8:2) and remained in that state through Solomon's reign. It was after the split of Israel that Moab rebelled against Israel.

During Jehoshaphat's reign, Moab joined with Ammon and Edom in an attempt to defeat Judah (2Chron 20:1-23). Moab also supported Babylon in an attack on Judah after Jehoiakim's revolt (2Ki 24:2). Moab's territory was between the Zered and Arnon River. Seir was a mountain range to the south of the Dead Sea that was the defining border of Edom (2Chron 20:10; Num 20:1-4). Edom was often referred to as Seir. Although her punishment is mentioned separately, she is guilty of the same envy and contempt for Israel.

He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa 121:4) and the problem with any nation that has contempt for Israel has a problem with the Lord. In so doing they effectively deny God's promises to Israel and profane His name in so doing. Even Paul when writing to the church addresses any contempt that may rise in the hearts of the “unnatural branches” toward the nation of Israel:

“But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.”

Rom 11:13-21 (NASB)

EDOMITES

25:12-14 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt, and avenged themselves upon them,” therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also stretch out My hand against Edom and cut off man and beast from it. And I will lay it waste; from Teman even to Dedan they will fall by the sword. I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom according to My anger and according to My wrath; thus they will know My vengeance,” declares the Lord GOD.”*

Edom was descended from Esau. Edom began to display her hatred of Israel when they refused to let Israel cross their territory during the wilderness wanderings (Num 20:14-21). Saul fought Edom and David captured it turning it into a vassal state (1Sam 14:47; 2Sam 8:13-14). Solomon turned Elath into Israel's

seaport to the gulf of Akaba (1Ki 9:26-28). Edom rose against Solomon during the later part of his reign (1Ki 11:14-18), but continued as a vassal state even after the kingdom split until after the time of Jehoshaphat (1Ki 22:47-48). The struggle remained all through the time of Judah till Edom became a vassal state of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt in 605 BC. Although Edom joined a conspiracy to revolt against Babylon in 593 BC. (Jer 27:1-7), they did not follow through with it and instead joined Babylon in its attack against the revolts of Judah in 588 BC. (Ps 137:7; Jer 49:7-22).

Their land extended from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the gulf of Akaba and was on both sides of the Arabah. Its capital was Sela which is most likely Petra. The Edomites pressed into southern Judah at the fall of Jerusalem, but after the Maccabean revolt, John Hyrcanus allied with Rome defeated Samaria and Idumaea (Edom) and forced Jewish conversion on Edom. They lost their national identity as a result. The Herods were Edomites and used by Rome as vassal kings in Judah, a reason why the Jews hated the Herod's.

PHILISTINES

25:15-17 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because the Philistines have acted in revenge and have taken vengeance with scorn of soul to destroy with everlasting enmity,” therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, even cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. “I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes; and they will know that I am the LORD when I lay My vengeance on them.””*

The territory of the Philistines was not very large. It covers Judea and Samaria and in Latin the term was “Palestina”, a name used by Israel's enemies to describe the geographic area. Today the term Palestine or West Bank is used to describe the region, even though that is not the way the Lord sees it. Of all of the enemy nations of Israel, the Philistines are mentioned the most in the OT. They lie in the heart of Israel and were subjugated by David and Saul through many attacks (1Sam 13,14). Jehosaphat conquered them (2Chr 17), Uzziah subjugated them (2Chr 21) but they rose again to power during the reign of Ahaz.

Hezekiah brought them under control again (2Ki 18) and when Babylon rose to power, Nebuchadnezzar invaded them (Jer 47). There are many prophecies against them (Joel 3:4; Amos 1:6-8; Obad 19; Zeph 2; Zech 9). The whole history of the Philistines in the OT is their attempt to push Israel out of the promised land and that ancient struggle is just as prominent today only the attention that the conflict has gained is global.

TODAY

Many of the immediate nations surrounding Israel today have descended from the enemies of ancient times. Psalm 83 is believed by some today to be highlighting the confederation of these nations to attempt the accomplishment of their constant theme to remove Israel from the face of the earth. Unlike the motivation for the

Gog / Magog invasion in Ezekiel 38 and 39, this conflict has this distinct motive. Author Bill Salus has written “Psalm 83 – the missing prophecy revealed” in which he states that the confederation of the surrounding nations of Israel to “cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.” (v.4) is what is about to take place in modern times.

“A Song, a Psalm of Asaph. O God, do not remain quiet; do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Your people, and conspire together against Your treasured ones. They have said, “Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more.” For they have conspired together with one mind; against You they make a covenant: the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites; Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; they have become a help to the children of Lot. Selah.”

Ps 83:1-8 (NASB)

All of the current nations that surround Israel have ethnic roots that trace right back to biblical times so that while some of the names may be different today, the people are the same and so is the hatred that they have toward Israel. It is an ancient hatred that will not allow them to peacefully exist with the Jewish people at all. Their hatred is such that they will not tolerate Israel as a sovereign state in her God-given land.