

God Will Punish The Sins of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism

The first twenty-four chapters of Ezekiel contain a series of prophecies against the kingdom of Judah. In these prophecies Yahweh repeatedly warned the Israelites to repent, but they refused to repent. Finally in chapter 24, we read that Yahweh announced that judgment had arrived. That is, the Babylonian army was in the process of invading the land and the temple, Jerusalem, and Judah would all be destroyed.

The chapter we will be studying is Ezekiel 25. It introduces a change in the prophecies given in book Ezekiel. It is the first chapter of a new series of prophecies recorded in Ezekiel 25-32. They are directed against enemies of Israel: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt. These nations surrounded Israel and were adjacent to its borders. Most of the prophecies were given during the time of the Babylonian invasion into Israel beginning in the year 588 B.C. The last prophecy was given in 571 B.C.

There are two possible reasons why Yahweh gave the Israelites these prophecies against their surrounding neighboring nation. First, it could be that some Israelites were complaining that Yahweh was punishing them but not their wicked neighboring nations. We can imagine the Israelites saying, "Look at those wicked nations. Yahweh is letting those people get away with

wickedness. He is unfairly punishing us. He is biased against us." If so, they would have implied that Yahweh played favorites and was not a just God. But Isaiah 30:18 says,

Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,
And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.
For the LORD is a God of justice;
How blessed are all those who long for Him.
Isaiah 30:18 (NASB)

The seven prophecies we will study reveal that Yahweh is just. For just as Yahweh was punishing Israel for their wickedness, He would also punish seven surrounding nations too!

The second reason for the prophecies is that the immediate neighboring nations had committed sins that must be punished. Their sins will become obvious as we study the prophecies.

PROPHECY AGAINST AMMON (v 1-7). Verses 1-2 introduce the first prophecy.



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, . . ." Ezekiel 25:1-2 (NASB)

The nation of Ammon was located on the east

side of Israel across the Jordan River. The nation was north of

the nation of Moab. The southern region extended from the Arnon River up to the Jabbok River (Numbers 21:24). The nation also extended from the Jordan River eastward into the wilderness (Judges 11:22). The capital of Ammon was Rabbath. Today it is called Amman.

Genesis 19:38 tells us the Ammonites were descendants of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his youngest daughter. The Ammonites were a very evil people who worshiped the false god named Molech (1 Kings 11:7). Molech was also called Milcom. The worship of Molech required parents to force their sons to walk thru the fire of Molech. In 600 B.C. the Ammonites had joined forces with the Babylonians, Arameans, and Moabites against Judah (2 Kings 24). The Ammonites were usually enemies of Israel.

In verses 3-4, Yahweh continues,

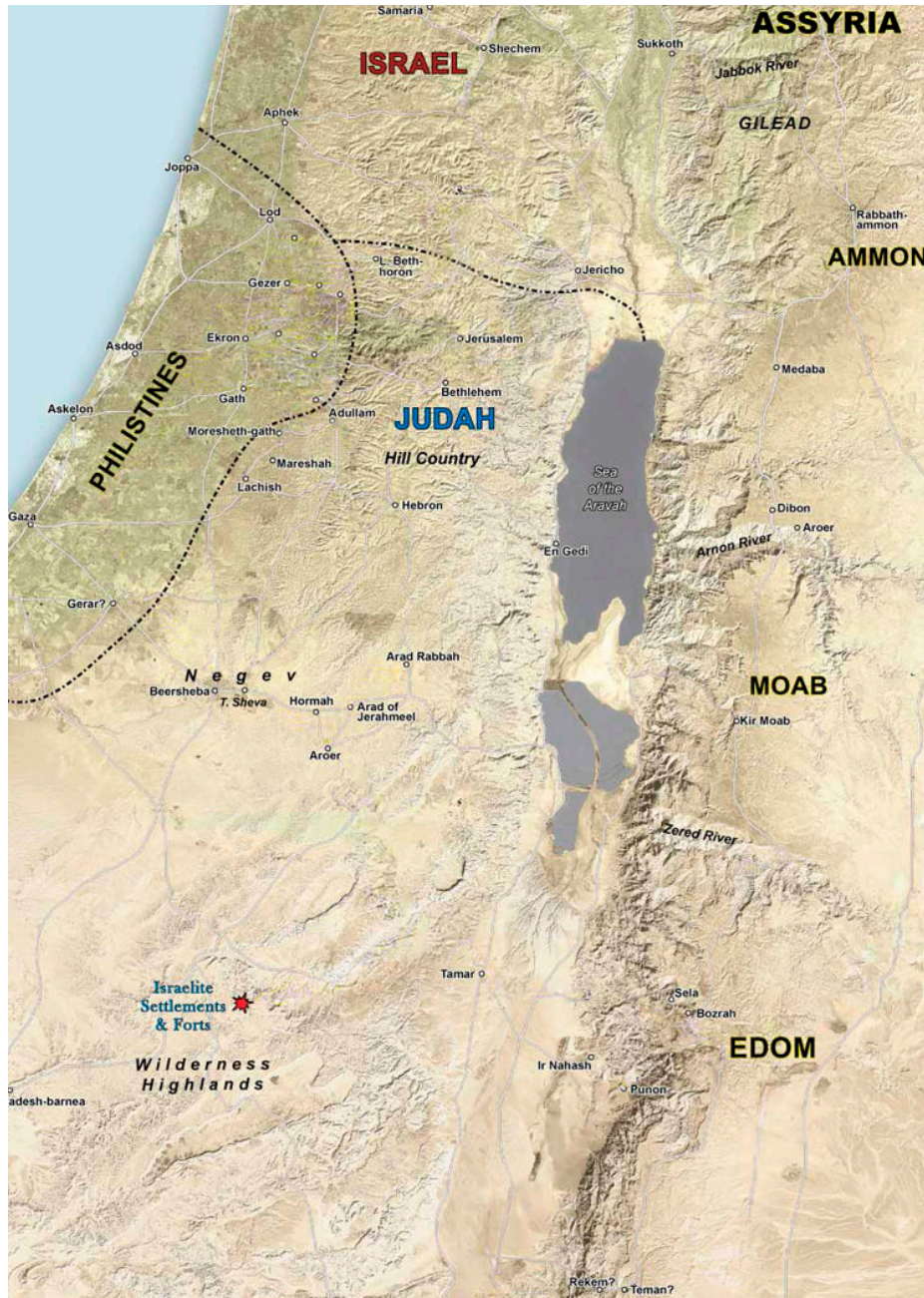
“... and say to the sons of Ammon, ‘Hear the word of the Lord

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 25:3-4 (NASB)

Now we are given the reason for the prophecy. The Ammonites had said, “Aha!” They had rejoiced that Judah was being attacked by the Babylonian army. They were glad that the Babylonian army had profaned the sanctuary, destroyed the land of Israel, and had taken people of Judah into exile. Consequently,

Yahweh announced that the sons of the east would eventually occupy their land and eat their fruit and drink their milk. But who were the sons of the east? Ezekiel 21:28-32 tells us. It says the Babylonian army would be Yahweh’s



sword against the Ammonites. Ezekiel 21:28 says,

“Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the sons of Ammon and concerning their reproach,’ and say: ‘A sword, a sword is drawn, polished for the slaughter, to cause it to consume, that it may be like lightning . . .’” Ezekiel 21:28 (NASB)

So, the Babylonians would fulfill the prophecy in Ezekiel 25:1-7. In 582/581 B.C., the Babylonian army almost destroyed the Ammonites after it destroyed the temple, tore down Jerusalem, and made Judah barren. Thus they would know that Yahweh had spoken and not Molech.

Verses 5-7 say,

“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.”’ Ezekiel 25:5-7 (NASB)

So, the result would be that the Ammonites’ capital city would become a pasture for camels, and their lands would be a resting place for flocks. Then Yahweh repeated the reason for the destruction. They had also clapped their hands and rejoiced at Israel’s calamity. They were Judah’s enemy.

This prophecy is an illustration of a very important principle that is found in Proverbs 24:17-18. It says,

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;
Or the LORD will see it and be displeased,
And turn His anger away from him.
Proverbs 24:17-18 (NASB)

The proverb uses the same word for “rejoice” that is in Ezekiel 25:6. These two verses give us the first principle that

if we rejoice when our enemy is punished, then the Lord will be displeased with us, and remove the punishment from that person or persons. Proverbs 17:5 adds,

He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.
Proverbs 17:5 (NASB)

So not only will the Lord stop punishing our enemy, but He will start punishing us. Therefore, let me share three ways a believer should respond to an enemy. First, Romans 12:19-21 tells us to not seek vengeance,

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19-21 (NASB)

Second, Matthew 5:44 says,

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, Matthew 5:44 (NASB)

That is, we are to love our enemies and pray for them. We should pray for their salvation. Third, if God does punish our enemy, then we must not rejoice. So, those are the three steps believers should follow in dealing with anyone.

PROPHECY AGAINST MOAB (v 8-11). The second prophecy is against the nation of Moab. Verses 8-9 say,

“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 . . .’” Ezekiel 25:8-9 (NASB)

The territory of the nation of Moab was located south of the Ammonites or below the Arnon River down to the southern tip of the Dead Sea. It included the region of Seir, the

mountainous region that included Mount Seir. Their territory extended into the wilderness (Numbers 22:1). The Moabites were descendants of incest between Lot and his oldest daughter (Genesis 19:37). The Ammonites and Moabites were enemies of Israel. Eventually the descendants of Ammon and Moab became part of the peoples known as Arabs.

The reason for this prophecy was that the Moabites were saying there was nothing special about the Israelites. The Israelites were just like all of the other Gentile nations. They denied Israel's special relationship with Yahweh. Dr. Charles Feinberg, the late dean of Talbot Theological Seminary, made this important comment about Moab's sin,

Now Moab was guilty of denial of God's special dealings and providences in Israel's history. For this insult and impudence the Lord was to open Moab to the depredations of enemies.¹

Clearly, the Moabites denied that Israel had a special relationship with Yahweh. The Moabites would have denied that Israel was Yahweh's chosen people (2 Chronicles 6:6). They denied that Yahweh chose Israel because He loved them (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). Most likely they denied that Yahweh gave Abraham a promise of a 1) great land, to become a 2) great nation, and a 3) promise to bless those who bless his descendants and to curse those who curse his descendants. We can be confident they denied Israel had been promised a future Messiah, and a glorious, future kingdom. But the book of Ezekiel and other prophets promised that would occur. The promise of a Messiah and a worldwide kingdom will be given in future studies of Ezekiel.

Then Yahweh said,

... 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.”
Ezekiel 25:10-11 (NASB)

Therefore, Yahweh promised that the Moabites and

Ammonites would be completely annihilated from the earth. Consequently, in 582/581 B.C. Yahweh had the Babylonian army attack both Moab and Ammon. But the Babylonian army did not completely obliterate the Moabites then for Nehemiah 4:7 refers to their existence. Nehemiah was written 424-400 B.C. But those nations do not exist today.

This gives us a second principle. Those who deny Israel's special status as His chosen people and deny that they have a unique future will be punished. Consequently, it displeases God for anyone to claim that He is finished with Israel and that Israel does not have a special future. I believe that it displeases God for some to claim that the church has inherited all of the promises given to Israel and has replaced Israel.

Before we end the study, I want to read several important quotes from Barry Horner's book, *Future Israel*. The book is endorsed by both Moishe Rosen and John MacArthur. The subtitle to his book is *Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged*. He and many other theologians have noticed that anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism exist in some teachings about future things. He quotes one author as an illustration.

In a nutshell then, the issue here concerns whether Israel, incorporating individuality, nationality, and territory, has a future according to the mind of Abraham's God. It is certain that great ethical consequences are at stake here, and not mere eschatological speculation. Consider the comment of Reformed theologian Herman Ridderbos.

The church, then, as the people of the New Covenant has taken the place of Israel, and national Israel is nothing other than the empty shell from which the pearl has been removed and which has lost its function in the history of redemption.²

Ridderbos' words are at least anti-Judaism because he says the church has "taken the place of Israel." He claims that Israel no longer has a special relationship with God. That was the sin of the Moabites, and eventually God punished them for it. The logical conclusion of Mr. Ridderbos' eschatology is that Israel has no hope of a future Messiah and a messianic kingdom because the church has replaced it.

¹ Charles Feinberg, Ezekiel. Moody Press. 1969. p. 144

² Barry E Horner. Future Israel. B&H Publishing. 2004. p. xx.

Then Barry Horner continues by saying that C. E. B. Cranfield, a scholar and outstanding exegete, states this in his commentary on Romans 9-11.

It is only where the church persists in refusing to learn this message [of Romans 9-11], where it secretly-perhaps unconsciously-believes that its own existence is based on human achievement, and so fails to understand God's mercy to itself, that it is unable to believe in God's mercy for still unbelieving Israel, and so entertains the ugly and unscriptural notion that God has cast off His people Israel and simply replaced it by the Christian Church. These three chapters emphatically forbid us to speak of the Church as having once and for all taken the place of the Jewish people.³

So, we must not commit the sin of the Moabites and claim that God will not fulfill His many promises to Israel of a glorious future. We must remember that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel. The four nations in Ezekiel 25 ignored the promise and suffered destruction.

PROPHECY AGAINST EDMOM (v 12-14). The third prophecy is against the nation of Edom and it is recorded in verses 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.” Ezekiel 25:12-14 (NASB)

The territory of Edom was south of Moab. The Edomites' land stretched from the southern end of the Dead Sea down to the gulf of Aqabah. Genesis 36:8 tells us that Esau is Edom. That is, the Edomites were descendants of Esau and

his twelve sons.

During the reign of King David, the nation of Edom was almost obliterated (2 Samuel 8:14). Later they sought revenge against Israel (2 Kings 8:20-22; Isaiah 34:5-7). Psalm 137:7 and Lamentations 4:21-22 tell us that the Edomites kept calling for the temple, Jerusalem, and Judah to be destroyed by the Babylonian army. Psalm 137:7 says,

“Raze it, raze it
To its very foundation.”
Psalm 137:7 (NASB)

That is, the Edomites wanted Jerusalem to be destroyed also for they considered Israel to be their enemy. Now notice that immediately in verse 12, Yahweh states that because Edom acted in vengeance against Israel, they would be cut off. Yahweh would kill them with a sword. This gives us a third principle. We are not to seek vengeance on others. That is the message of Leviticus 19:18, as well as Romans 12:19-21. Since the Edomites considered Israel to be its enemy and rejoiced in the destruction of Jerusalem, the first principle also applied to them. They were eventually subdued by Israel. Today, Edom does not exist (Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:1-21; Malachi 1:3-5). The descendants of Edom are now part of the Arab peoples.

PROPHECY AGAINST PHILISTIA (v 15-17). The fourth prophecy is against the nation of Philistia and it is recorded in verses 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.”” Ezekiel 25:15-17 (NASB)

The territory of the Philistines is called Philistia. Their land stretched along Israel's coastland along the Mediterranean Sea from Gaza, in the south to Joppa, in the north. The

³ Ibid., p. xxi.

Philistines were a confederation of five cities: Ashdod, Askelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza. They were constantly fighting against Israel from the very beginning of the days of the judges (Judges 13-16).

So, Yahweh announced that He would take vengeance upon them. This occurred when the Babylonian army invaded in 588-586 B.C. This nation was destroyed sometime between 588 B.C. to 581 B.C.

This gives us a fourth principle. We are to live in peace with all men. 2 Corinthians 13:11 says,

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11(NASB)

Notice the promise that the God of love and peace will be with those who are like-minded, that is who think the same thing, and live in peace. Remember that we are to be peace-makers. Clearly, Philistia did not live in peace with Israel.

CONCLUSION. There is also another principle that is illustrated by all four nations. It is found in Genesis 12:3. God made this promise to Abraham,

And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
Genesis 12:3 (NASB)

This principle was violated by Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. The principle is also being violated by nations and by certain doctrines being taught today. Ezekiel 25 illustrates four sins related to anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism, which exist today and are increasing. Some nations hate Israel and seek to destroy it. Some Christians deny that Israel is still God's chosen people. They claim the church has replaced Israel. Others are cheering against Israel. All of them fail to remember God's warning that He will curse those who curse Israel. We must remember that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel.

So, we have learned five important principles. But remember that these four nations were destroyed because of the way they treated Israel. They were glad Judah was destroyed,

refused to believe Israel had a special relationship with God, sought vengeance against Judah, did not live in peace with her, and did not bless Israel. We should follow these five principles and please our God.