

God's Judgments Against the Nations

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Text: Ezekiel 25-32

Introduction:

- I. This lesson will discuss Ezekiel's prophecies of judgment on the nations (Ezek. 25-32). We wish to include lessons for us to learn and pitfalls for us to avoid when interpreting and applying prophecy.
 - A. "One may ask, 'What is the use of studying these nations in prophecy?' Two points in particular will be emphasized: 1. Their destiny in fulfillment of prophecy is irrefutable evidence that God has spoken; and 2. Within the things said and their fulfillment is clearly revealed the ruling hand of God in the kingdoms of men." (Hailey, *Comments*, 209)
 - B. The prophets deal with three primary themes.
 1. God's message to the people of the prophet's day.
 2. God is the God of all the earth; therefore His message to/about the nations.
 3. Most importantly, the Messianic Hope.
 - C. Ezekiel devotes eight chapters to oracles against the nations.
 1. In this section seven nations are dealt with.
 - a. Ammon (25:1-7)
 - b. Moab (25:8-11)
 - c. Edom (25:12-14)
 - d. Philistia (25:15-17)
 - e. Tyre (26:1-28:19)
 - f. Sidon (26:20-24)
 - g. Egypt (29-32)
 2. Keil & Delitzsch believes there is symbolism in the number: "On the basis of Gen. 1, seven is the number denoting the completion of the works of God. When, therefore, Ezekiel selects seven nations and utters seven words of God concerning the principal nation, namely Egypt, he evidently intends to indicate thereby that the judgment predicted will be executed and completed upon the heathen world and its peoples through the word and acts of God." (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:202)
 3. Beginning in Ezekiel 25 there is a shift in focus, a transition.
 - a. Ezekiel leaves for now the topic of Jerusalem's sin and resultant downfall, to deal with the subject of the foreign nations; their sin and downfall.
 - b. Yahweh is not a local deity; His power and authority is not limited to the land of Israel.
 4. One rather glaring omission is Babylon.
 - a. "I know of no good explanation for the omission." (McGuiggan, 265)
 - b. One suggestion: "Ezekiel's prophecy of the judgment upon the heathen is restricted to those nations which had hitherto cherished and displayed either

enmity or false friendship toward Israel, and the Chaldeans were not then reckoned among the number.” (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:205)

- c. Smith suggests, “Commentators puzzle over the absence of any word concerning the fall of Babylon. Perhaps such an oracle would have stirred foolish resistance among the captives. (Smith, Eze 25:1-17)

D. Oracles against the nations also appear in Isaiah 13-23 and Jeremiah 46-51.

E. Most of the prophecies in this collection are dated 587-585 BC.

- 1. The exception is noted in Ezekiel 29:17-30:19, where the date is 571 B.C., the latest date given in the book.
- 2. Not all the prophecies are dated.

F. Cf. Jeremiah 18:1-12 regarding the contingent nature of prophecies against a nation.

G. Included in the oracles against the nations are promises for Israel.

- 1. After the threat of judgment against Sidon (22:24-26).
- 2. Likewise in the context of judgment against Egypt (29:21).

H. The nations would learn that God is Yahweh: 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23; 29:6, 9; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15.

- 1. He is the God of righteous judgment.
- 2. He is the God of salvation.

I. Indeed, “The kingdoms of men pass away one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains.”

Body:

I. Ammon (Eze. 25:1-7).

A. Ammon's History.

- 1. Origin.
 - a. Descendant of Lot.
 - b. The sad story is narrated in Genesis 19:30-38.
 - c. Incestuous relations with his younger daughter.
- 2. Geography.
 - a. “At an early date the Ammonites occupied the territory of the Zamzumim between the Arnon and Jabbok rivers (Dt. 2:20-21, 37; 3:11). Later, part of this territory was taken from them by the Amorites, and they were confined to an area to the E of the Jabbok (Nu. 21:24; Dt. 2:37; Jos. 12:2; 13:10, 25; Jdg. 11:13, 22). Archaeology shows that the Ammonites, like others, surrounded their territories by small fortresses (Nu. 21:24). (New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed., 29)
 - b. Ammon's chief town was Rabbath Ammon (modern Amman).
 - c. The first four nations cited here, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia were border nations of Israel.
- 3. Prior to the Conquest.
 - a. Israel was instructed to treat them kindly (Deut. 2:19).

b. However, later the "Ammonites were condemned for joining the Moabites in hiring Balaam, and were forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel to the 10th generation (Dt. 23:3-6)." (*New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 29)

4. Judges.

- a. Ammonites joined forces with Eglon of Moab to defeat Israel, taking possession of Jericho (Jud. 3:12-13).
- b. After the brief mention of Jair's tenure as judge the narrative relates Israel's worship of false gods, specifying the gods of the people of Ammon (Jud. 10:6).
- c. Jephthah was raised up as judge when the Ammonites made war against Israel (Jud. 11:4-6).

5. Kings.

a. Saul.

- 1) Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieged Jabesh-gilead in the early days of King Saul (1 Sam. 11).
- 2) This threat was present before the anointing of Saul (1 Sam. 12:12).

b. David.

- 1) Later Nahash was a friend of David (2 Sam. 10:1-2).
- 2) His son Hanan insulted David's ambassadors, which led to war (2 Sam. 10; 1 Chron. 19).
- 3) David's commander, Joab, captured the Ammonite capital city, Rabbah (2 Sam. 12:26-31).
- 4) Zelek the Ammonite was one of David's 30 mighty men (2 Sam. 23:37).

c. Solomon.

- 1) Solomon's collection of wives included Ammonite women (1 Kings 11:1)
- 2) He worshipped Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites (1 Kings 11:5).
- 3) Solomon built a high place for the worship of this and other gods (1 Kings 11:7)

a) Note reference to the "Mount of Corruption" in 2 Kings 23:13).

b) This is a derogatory name for the Mount of Olives, involving a wordplay between **hx'v.m'** (*mash^ekhah*), "anointing," and **tyxiv.m;** "*mash^ekhit*), destruction." See *HALOT* 644 s.v.

tyxiv.m; and M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings* (AB), 289. (NET Bible note).

c) Solomon's wife who was the mother of Rehoboam was an Ammonitess named Naamah (1 Kings 14:21).

6. Divided Kingdom.

- a. The Ammonites joined Moab and Edom in a raid on Judah (2 Chron. 20:1-30).
- b. King Joash of Judah was killed by Zabad and Jehozabad who were sons of an Ammonitess (2 Chron. 24:26).

c. Judah's kings Uzziah and Jotham received tribute from Ammon (2 Chron. 26:8; 27:5).

7. Judah Alone.

a. God used bands of Ammonites (among others) to destroy Judah in the days of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:5).

8. Return and Rebuilding.

a. Tobiah the Ammonite opposed Nehemiah and his work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:10, 19; 4:3, 7).

B. Ammon's Condemnation.

1. In Ezekiel 21:28ff, in the context of pronouncing judgment against Judah and Jerusalem, Ezekiel had foretold the coming destruction of Ammon.
2. "Because you said 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned."
 - a. Re: chronology of this prophecy: "But the short, threatening words against the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines in Ezek. 25 belong to the time immediately succeeding the fall of Jerusalem, since they presuppose its having occurred. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:203)
 - 1) Further, "The date of these utterances is not given in the heading [of chapter 25, *LM*]; but in vv. 3, 6, and 8 the destruction of Jerusalem is presupposed as having already occurred, so that they cannot have been delivered till after this catastrophe. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:206)
 - b. Ammon was gleeful at the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.
 - 1) Their reviling and venting expressed what K&D have called their "hatred of the divine calling of Israel." (*Ibid.*)
 - 2) ". . . contemptuous and malicious joy at the profanation of the sanctuary of Jehovah by the destruction of the temple . . ." (*Ibid.*)
 - 3) This hostility "had its roots not so much in national antipathies, as in antagonism to the sacred calling of Israel" (*Ibid.*)
 - c. Tyre likewise expressed malicious delight at the fall of Israel (Eze. 26:2).
3. To show scorn over the calamity of the people of God is to show scorn for God Himself.
 - a. God hears and sees this taunting (*cf.* Zeph. 2:8, 10).
 - b. This becomes the basis for punishment.
4. "God cannot stand the gloating of one people over the misfortune of another, especially if the misfortune had befallen *his* people. The Ammonites had clapped their hands, stamped their feet and rejoiced with all the scorn of their soul against the land of Israel. Therefore, Yahweh had stretched out his hand against Ammon. That nation would be given as spoil to other nations. The Ammonites would cease to exist as a distinct people." (Smith, Eze 25:1-7)

C. Ammon's Judgment.

1. They would lose their land (25:4-5) and be cut off from the nations (vv. 6-7).
 - a. Verse 6 reiterates the sin which would result in their destruction.

- b. "The fulfillment of these threats would cause those who knew of these predictions to recognize Yahweh as sole divinity (25:6f.)." (Smith, Eze 25:1-7)
2. "In 581 Nebuchadnezzar attacked and devastated them. In the years following everyone beat Ammon. They didn't die out immediately. The city existed on down into the Roman times. Judas Maccabeus fought the Ammonites." (McGuigan, 230)
3. Archaeological work suggests that sedentary occupation was interrupted by the Babylonian campaigns of the 6th century BC and did not resume until the 3rd century. Bedouin groups occupied the area until the Tobiads (4th-2nd century BC), the Nabataeans (1st century BC) and the Romans (1st century BC-3rd century AD). (*New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 30)

II. Moab (Eze. 25:8-11).

A. Moab's History.

1. Origin.
 - a. As was the origin of Ammon, the sad story of the nation's descent from Lot's incestuous union with his daughter (oldest) is narrated in Genesis 19:30-38.
2. Geography.
 - a. Located east of the Dead Sea between the wadis Arnon and Zered.
 - b. "They normally inhabited the area on the Transjordan plateau between Wadi Arnon on the north and Wadi Zered on the south, though they often pushed north of Wadi Arnon. (Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 6:866)
 - c. Jephthah stated, ". . . for the Arnon was the border of Moab" (Jud. 11:18).
3. Wilderness Wandering.
 - a. When Balaam was alarmed by Israel's conquering of the territories of Sihon and Og, he sent for Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22-24).
 - b. When Israel was poised to take possession of Canaan, their encampment is referenced as "the plains of Moab" (Num. 22:1).
4. Judges.
 - a. Eglon, king of Moab, defeated Israel and subjugated them for eighteen years (Jud. 3:12-14).
 - b. Elimelech and Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Moabite women, Orpha and Ruth (Ruth 1:1-5).
 - 1) Significantly, Ruth married Boaz; their son Obed is in the lineage of David through whom the Christ would come (Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:5-16).
5. Kings.
 - a. Saul victoriously battled the Moabites (1 Sam.14:47)
 - b. David shuffled his parents to Moab when he was fleeing from Saul (1 Sam. 22:3-4).
 - c. Later as king, David defeated the Moabites, then put every two of three to death (2 Sam. 8:2).
 - 1) David dedicated silver and gold taken from the Moabites (among other nations) to the Lord (1 Chron. 18:11).
6. Divided Kingdom.

- a. After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled, ceasing to pay tribute to Israel (2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-27).
 - 1) The Moabite version of King Mesha's rebellion is recorded in the Moabite Stone, discovered in Dibon.
 - a) "The Mesha Stone recounts the king of Moab's boast that his god Chemosh had vanquished Israel (ANET, pp. 320-21). (Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 6:866)
 - b) Dibon is mentioned in Isaiah 15:2; Jeremiah 48:18, 22, among others biblical texts.
 - c) Aroer "and the site of Dibon were typical of important Iron Age walled settlements contemporary with the period of the kings of Israel." (*New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 777)
 - 2) Jehoram's effort to regain Moab failed (2 Kings 3:4-27).
- b. The Moabites, along with the Ammonites and Edomites joined forces against Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:1-30).
 - 1) It was demonstrated to Judah that "the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chron. 20:15).
 - 2) These three nations turned on each other and destroyed one another (2 Chron. 20:23).
- c. After Elisha's death the Moabites raided Israel (2 Kings 13:20).
 - 1) This occasioned an unforeseen resurrection from the dead (2 Kings 13:21).

7. Captivity.

- a. According to Josephus Moab was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar. (*Antiquities*, 10.181)

8. Intertestamental Period.

- a. Josephus also informs us that Alexander Jannaeus "overcame" the Moabites and "made them bring tribute." (*Antiquities*, 13.374)

B. **Moab's Condemnation.**

1. "Moab has become guilty of the same sin against Judah, the people of God, as Ammon, namely, of misunderstanding and despising the divine election of Israel. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:207)
 - a. Edom is mentioned here (Eze. 25:8) in connection with Moab, their commonality being their shared disdain of Judah, though Edom will next be treated separately in vv. 12-14.
 - b. Israel was a "laughingstock" to Moab; a joke, and an object of scorn (Jer. 48:27).
2. Like Ammon, Moab would lose their land to the "people of the East" and disappear from the nations (v.10).
3. Jeremiah specifically mentions the pride of Moab as a major factor in her condemnation (48:29-30).

C. **Moab's Judgment.**

1. "The execution of these judgments commenced with the subjugation of the Ammonites and Moabites by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem (vid., Josephus, *Antt.* x. 9. 7, and M. von Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, etc., p. 215). Nevertheless the Ammonites continued to exist as a nation for a long time after

the captivity, so that Judas the Maccabaeen waged war against them (1 Macc. 5:6, 30–43) . . .”. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:209)

2. “The attack would begin on this shoulder of the land of Moab, along a line drawn from north to south between the cities of Beth Jeshimoth (in the Jordan Valley), Baal Meon (about five miles southwest of Madabah), and Kiriathaim (location uncertain), “the glory of the land” (the best part; cf. an atlas). (Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 6:866)
3. Lesson to be learned: “Thus I will execute judgments on Moab, and **they will know that I am the LORD**” (v.11).

D. The punishment is in part because Moab regarded Judah as just another nation.

III. Edom (Eze. 25:12-14)

A. Edom's History.

1. Origin:
 - a. From Esau, brother of Jacob (Gen. 26, etc.).
 - b. This made them closer kin than Ammon or Moab.
2. Geography.
 - a. “It stretched from the Wadi Zered to the Gulf of Aqabah for c. 160 km, and extended to both sides of the Arabah or wilderness of Edom (2 Ki. 3:8, 20), the great depression connecting the Dead Sea to the Red Sea (Gn. 14:6; Dt. 2:1, 12; Jos. 15:1; Jdg. 11:17-18; 1 Ki. 9:26, etc.). It is a rugged, mountainous area, with peaks rising to 1,067 m. While not a fertile land, there are good cultivable areas (Nu. 20:17, 19). In Bible times the king's highway passed along the E plateau (Nu. 20:14-18). The capital, SELA, lay on a small plateau behind Petra. Other important towns were Bozrah and Teman. (*New Bible Dictionary* 3rd ed., 290)
 - b. Judah's territory at its extreme south bordered with Edom (Josh. 15:1).
3. Wanderings.
 - a. Edom refused Israel passage by the King's Highway (Num. 20:14-21; 21:44).
 - b. Balaam predicted the conquest of Edom (Num. 24:18).
4. Kings.
 - a. Saul successfully battled the Edomites (1 Sam. 14:47).
 - 1) The infamous Doeg was in Saul's army (1 Sam. 21:7; 22:9, 18).
 - b. David conquered Edom and installed garrisons there (2 Sam. 8:13-14).
 - c. Joab, David's commander, remained in Edom “until he had cut off every male in Edom” (1 Kings 11:15-16).
 - d. David's conquest of Edom paved the way for Solomon to build a harbor at Ezion-geber, near Eloth (1 Kings 9:26-28).
5. Divided Kingdom.
 - a. During Jehoshaphat's reign the Edomites joined forces with the Ammonites and Moabites in an invasion on Judah (2 Chron. 20:1).
 - 1) God intervened on Judah's behalf, with the end result that the enemies turned on each other and destroyed one another (vv. 22-23).

- b. Edom rebelled in the days of Judah's king Joram (Jehoshaphat's son) (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chron. 21:8-10).
- c. God gave Amaziah victory over the Edomites.
 - 1) He slew 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt (2 Kings 14:7).
 - 2) Then inexplicably he turned to worshipping the gods of the Edomites (2 Chron. 25:14).
- d. Uzziah restored the harbor at Elath (2 Kings 14:22).
- e. The Edomites carried away captives in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:17).

6. Idumea.

- a. The Greek form (*Idoumaia*) of the Hebrew *Edom*.
- b. "Later, as various Arab groups, notably the Nabataeans, pressed into old Edom, more migrants settled in Judah, and the area they occupied became known as Idumaea (1 Macc. 4:29; 5:65)." (*New Bible Dictionary* 3rd ed., 498)
 - 1) However this designates the area in western Israel, rather than Edom proper.
- c. "Judas Maccabaeus had successful campaigns against these people, and John Hyrcanus subdued them c. 126 BC, placed them under Antipater as governor and compelled them to be circumcised (Jos., *Ant.* 13.258)." (*Ibid.*)
- d. Antipater was the grandfather of Herod the Great.
 - 1) "The Herods were of general Edomite stock. (*Ibid.*, 291).
- e. The word Idumea occurs in the New Testament in Mark. 3:8.

B. Edom's Condemnation.

- 1. Because they had taken vengeance upon Judah, God would take vengeance upon them (Eze. 25:12-14).
- 2. Edom had rejoiced when Judah fell (Psa. 137).
- 3. Ezekiel refers to the "everlasting enmity" (NASB) of Edom toward Israel.
 - a. "Perpetual enmity" (ASV, ESV).
 - b. "Perpetual hatred" (KJV).
 - c. "Unrelenting hostility" (NET)
 - d. "Ancient hostility" (NIV)
 - e. "Ancient hatred" (NKJ).
- 4. Though this hatred found expression when Judah fell, it was generalized and "perpetual."
- 5. From time immemorial Edom had taken the leading role as Israel's foe. (*cf.* Keil & Delitzsch, 9:210).
- 6. Homer Hailey (at age 95!) authored the book, *The Edomites: Symbol of the World*.
 - a. In this publication he proposes and defends the view that the nation of the Edomites and their hatred for and opposition to Israel became biblically symbolic for the world generally and its antagonism and hostility toward God and His people.

- b. Bro. Hailey especially considers the prophets, and Isaiah in particular, as he pursues this theme in the book.

C. Edom's Judgment.

1. "They shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord GOD" (Eze. 25:14).
2. Judgment upon Edom is further expanded in Ezekiel 35:1-36:15.
 - a. "As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD" (Eze. 35:15)
3. A theme found in many of the prophets was the destruction of Edom for its bitter hatred of Israel (Jer. 49:7-22; Lam. 4:21-22; Joel 3:19; Amos 9:12; Ob. 10ff)
 - a. Consider Amos 1:11 as representative: "Thus says the LORD, For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever."
4. "The history of Edom subsequent to Ezekiel indicates the accuracy of this prediction. Edom fell to the Arabs in the fifth century B.C., to the Nabataeans in the third century B.C. In the second century the great Jewish general Judas Maccabaeus conquered the area and forced the inhabitants there to accept circumcision. This brought to an end the existence of Edom as a distinct people. (Smith, Eze 25:12-14)
 - a. "The Hasmoneans under John Hyrcanus I put Edom to the sword and compelled them to circumcision." (McGuiggan, 268)
5. Re: "From Teman to Dedan" K&D state, "These names denote not cities, but districts. *Teman* is the southern portion of Idumaea (see the comm. on Amos 1:12); and *Dedan* is therefore the northern district. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:209).
 - a. The terms are used as a periphrasis for the whole of Edom. (*cf. Ibid.*, 210)

IV. Philistia (Eze. 25:15-17).

A. Philistia's History.

1. Origin.
 - a. Unlike the previous three nations, Philistia sustained no blood kin to Israel, but she was a border nation.
 - b. From Casluhim, son of Mizraim (Heb. Egypt), the son of Ham (Gen. 1:14; 1 Chron.1:12).
 - c. "And the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and lived in their place" (Deut. 2:23).
 - d. Amos refers to the Philistines coming from Caphtor (Amos 9:7).
 - e. Caphtor is generally thought to be Crete.
2. Geography.
 - a. Ezekiel is moving geographically clockwise in his announcements of judgments.
 - b. The five main Philistine cities, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath, comprised the coastal strip southwest of Judah.
 - c. It is clear also that there were Philistine enclaves at a number of other sites, notably Tell Beit Mirsim, Gezer, Beth-shemesh and Deir el-Balah. (*New Bible dictionary* 3rd ed., 922).

3. Patriarchal.
 - a. Abraham interacted with the Philistines (Gen. 20-21).
 - b. Isaac made a covenant with the Philistines, after much spiteful dissension on the part of the Philistines (Gen. 26).
4. Exodus.
 - a. God had Israel detour around the “way of the land of the Philistines” (Ex. 13:17).
 - b. The Mediterranean was called the “sea of the Philistines” (Ex. 23:31).
5. Conquest.
 - a. Joshua did not engage the Philistines in battle.
 - b. The Philistines were established in a pentapolis: in the five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath.
6. Judges.
 - a. Shamgar (Jud. 3:31)
 - b. Samson (Jud. 13-16)
 - c. In the days of Eli and Samuel, the Philistines captured the ark and destroyed Shiloh (1 Sam. 4).
7. Kings.
 - a. Saul.
 - 1) Saul battled the Philistines, who had made inroads westward to the hill country of Judah (1 Sam. 13-14).
 - 2) The Philistines challenged Israel at Ephes-dammim (1 Sam. 16-17).
 - 3) As Saul was unrelentless in his malicious pursuit of David, David sought and received asylum from the Philistines, who ultimately gifted him with Ziklag, where he and his 600 men and their families resided (1 Sam. 27:1-6).
 - 4) Saul was mortally wounded by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 31)
 - 5) “Philistia had at the mid-eleventh century B.C. reached the peak of its greatest power and importance. Lying on one of the most convenient trade routes between Egypt and Syria, the nation held a key place in the Near East.” (Hindson, 22)
 - b. David.
 - 1) David finally drove the Philistines out of the hill-country (2 Sam. 5:25; 8:1).
8. Divided Kingdom.
 - a. Nadab, king of Israel, besieged Gibbethon, a Philistine city (1 Kings 15:27).
 - b. Jehoshaphat received tribute from the Philistines (2 Chron. 17:11).
 - c. The Shunammite woman sojourned among the Philistines for seven years (2 Kings. 8:2).
 - d. The Philistines invaded Judah (taking Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages) in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:18).

e. Hezekiah defeated the Philistines (2 Kings 18:8).

B. Philistia's Condemnation.

1. "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" (Eze. 25:15).
2. Translation comparisons.
 - a. "took revenge with deep contempt" (CSB).
 - b. "took revenge with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity" (ESV).
 - c. "have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart" (KJV).
 - d. "despite of soul" (ASV).
 - e. "have exacted merciless revenge, showing intense scorn in their effort to destroy Judah with unrelenting hostility" (NET).
 - f. "took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred" (NKJV).

C. Philistia's Judgment.

1. "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" (Eze. 25:16).
 - a. The Cherethites are a synecdoche for the Philistines.
2. Philistia would experience Yahweh's "great vengeance" "with wrathful rebukes" (Eze. 25:17).
3. "The execution of the vengeance threatened by God began in the Chaldean period, in which Gaza was attacked by Pharaoh, and, judging from Jer. 47, the whole of Philistia was laid waste by the Chaldeans (see the fuller comments on this in the exposition of Jer. 47). (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:211).
4. "They will know that I am the LORD when I lay My vengeance on them" (25:17).

V. Tyre (Eze. 26:1-28:26).

A. History.

1. The Phoenicians.
 - a. "But the Phoenicians—or maybe their racial predecessors—took to the sea, apparently, very early in history. Contact between Egypt and Dorak, a site on the coast of the Sea of Marmara, is known to have existed during the Early Bronze Age." (AP-Thomas, 261)
 - 1) Phoenicia was a world of merchants. "The Phoenicians were above all else middlemen." (AP-Thomas, 274)
 - 2) The importance of Tyre and Sidon as important maritime cities of the ancient Near East can scarcely be overstated.
 - 3) Tyre was the principle seaport on the Phoenician coast.
 - b. "In many ways sea travel was easier than travel overland, not least in Phoenicia itself." (*Ibid.*)
 - c. "The Phoenicians were above all else middlemen. They accepted ideas, methods, and processes from every quarter. Egyptian influence is particularly evident in their ivory carving; they show more affinity with Mycenaean and other Aegean

types where potter is concerned; in seal-cutting on the other hand, especially cylinder seals, Mesopotamian prototypes are fairly closely copied. Lastly, Asia Minor, probably their earliest rich source of metallic ores, provided the pattern for their metalwork." (*Ibid.*, 274)

- d. Phoenicia possessed "two types of sea snail from along her coasts, *Murex brandaris* and *Murex trunculus*, from which the famous Tyrian purple (really a range of colours from reddish-brown to deep purple) was distilled, and then used to dye those woolen goods that possibly gave the Phoenicians/Canaanites not only their stock-in-trade but their very name." (*Ibid.*).
- e. The Phoenicians were also known for their manufacture of glass.
- f. Major contribution: the invention of the alphabet.
 - 1) "One of the principal merits of the Phoenician alphabet is what we might call its universality." (Massa, 117)
 - 2) "All the peoples who, on land or sea, were in touch with the Phoenicians, borrowed from them their alphabet, and, changing it as appropriate, they adapted it to the requirements of their own languages." (*Ibid.*, 118)
 - 3) "The Phoenician alphabet had no vowels; only the consonants were written, and the reader then had to supply the missing vowels, on the basis of the context." (*Ibid.*)
 - 4) "Even if the Phoenicians had made no other contribution besides the alphabet, this would still have been a justification for their glory." (*Ibid.*, 141)

2. Tyre was prominent in the days of David and Solomon.

- a. Tyre's King Hiram was friends with David (1 Kings 5:1).
- b. Hiram supplied lumber and craftsmen for the construction of the temple during the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 5:1-11).
- c. Hiram also assisted Solomon in the development of the port of Ezion-geber at the Red Sea for his southern expeditions (1 Kings 9:27); those ships traveled as far south as Ophir (area of the Queen of Sheba) (1 Kings 9:28).

3. Geography.

- a. "It was really no more than a series of ports, to each of which was attached a narrow urban strip. (Massa, 26)
- b. The "ladder of Tyre" marks the division between Phoenicia and Israel (Josephus, *Wars*, 2:188; also 1 Mac. 11:59).
- c. Tyre was the northern border for the tribe of Asher (Josh. 19:29).

B. Oracle against Tyre has four parts.

1. Destruction is promised (Eze. 26).
 - a. The date is the 11th year, 1st day of the month.
 - 1) This is the fifth date in the book (1:2; 8:1 20:1; 24:1).
 - 2) The month here is not specified.
 - 3) The year would be 587/586 (Alexander, 6:839).
 - a) About two years have passed since the chronological reference in 24:1.

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- b) Smith believes this text should be assigned to September 18, 586 BC, three weeks after the fall of Jerusalem (Smith, Eze 26:1-21).
- 4) 26:2 may indicate that the fall of Jerusalem was past.
- b. Note “because” (v. 2)
- 1) Tyre delighted at Jerusalem’s downfall; wanted to be filled with her spoils.
 - 2) Principle: “He who mocks the poor taunts his Maker; He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished” (Prov. 17:5).
- c. “Many nations” would come against Tyre (v. 3)
- d. To become a place for “spreading nets” (v. 5)
- e. “Daughter villages” (v. 6a) refers to Tyre’s outlying coastal settlements.
- f. “and they will know that I am the LORD” (v. 6b)
- g. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is specified (v.7ff.)
- 1) Though Nebuchadnezzar began the judgments against Tyre, he didn’t finish it.
 - 2) Babylon would be the first in a series of judgments against Tyre by “many nations” (*cf.* v. 3).
- h. Stones, timber and soil to be laid in the midst of the water (v. 12). Alexander destroyed mainland Tyre and from its rubble build a causeway out to the island fortress.
- i. Desolation is highlighted by the lack of any song in the city (v. 13)
- j. “I will make you a bare rock; a place for the spreading of nets” (v. 14).
- 1) “For I the LORD have spoken” gives certainty to the prophecy.
- k. The nations surrounding Tyre would be shaken (vv. 15ff.)
- 1) Clothe themselves with trembling; tremble every moment, and be appalled (v. 16)
 - 2) Tyre’s fall portended the same for them.
 - 3) Chapter 27 will expand this theme of lamentation.
- l. To be made a “desolate city” (v. 19).
- m. Down into the “pit”; death/Sheol.
- 1) Personification is here used to depict the disappearance of the city of Tyre.
 - 2) Tyre would never again play the role she had in the past (vv. 20-21).
 - 3) God would establish glory in the “land of the living” (v. 20).
 - a) “The kingdoms of men pass away one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains!”
2. Lamentation over the destruction (Eze. 27)
- a. The figure used to depict Tyre is a well-built, magnificent ship (vv. 1-11).
 - 1) Oars from the “oaks of Bashan” are referenced in verse 6.

- a) “The fertility of this region was well known, for the biblical writers repeatedly speak of the fatness of the animals that grazed there and of the oak forests that covered portions of the landscape.” (Rasmussen, 33)
- 2) Smith entitled this section as the “Parable of the Sinking Ship.”
- b. Listing of her military mercenaries.
- c. The goods Tyre supplied and the peoples she traded with are listed (vv. 12-25).
- 1) “Ezekiel named twenty-four nations, cities and peoples as being the ports of call for this allegorical ship. (Smith, Eze 27:1-36).
 - 2) These include Judah and Israel (v. 17).
 - 3) Verse 12 mentions silver, iron, tin and lead. “Of all these metals the one the Phoenicians valued most, and the one which brought them the most profits, was tin. The ancient world relied more heavily on bronze than on any other metal, for all domestic and military purposes—and tin was essential to the making of bronze. The fact that they were now masters of one of the sources of tin was in inestimable benefit to the Phoenicians.” (Massa., 47)
- d. “For her size, she was the most glorious and influential kingdom of that time” (McGuiggan, 270).
- e. When Tyre falls, the lamentation of her commercial partners is not for Tyre’s sake, but the fact that as a result of her fall, they are all losers.
- f. Revelation 18 makes use of the imagery of these verses.
- g. The destruction of Tyre is depicted as the wreck of a magnificent ship.
3. Threat against the king of Tyre (Eze. 28:1-10).
- a. The figure of a prince is used.
 - 1) A challenging passage.
 - 2) Many believe this to be a description of Satan.
 - 3) “You are a man” helps us see we are dealing with a human(s), not with Satan.
 - 4) Sometimes the king is used to represent his kingdom/people (cf. Dan. 7:17 with Dan. 7:23).
 - b. Tyre thought her greatness was due to her own wisdom.
 - 1) “Wiser than Daniel” !?! (v. 3)
 - 2) The sin of pride (v. 5-10).
 - 3) Privileges (vv. 12-14).
 - a) Principle: Unto whom much is given, much shall be required (Lk. 12:48).
 - c. אֲבִנֵי-אֵשׁ (*ʾabnê-ʾēš*, “fiery stones”) is also a *hapax legomenon* phrase and therefore difficult to interpret.¹ (Alexander, 6:886).
 - 1) There are many hapax legomena in this passage.

¹ Alexander, R. H. (1986). *Ezekiel*. In F. E. Gaebelain (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel* (Vol. 6, p. 886). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

C. Judgment/fulfillment of prophecy.

1. "The siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar lasted for thirteen years (c. 586-573 b.c.). Under King Ba'ali II, Tyre accepted Babylonian suzerainty and was ruled by 'judges.' However, when Babylonia declined in power, Tyre regained her independence once again. This brief freedom lasted till the second 'wave' of destruction brought her into submission to the Persians around 525 b.c. Tyre's remaining history demonstrated the continuing 'waves' of conquerors: the resistance to Alexander the Great, eventuating in her collapse; her initial resistance to the Seleucid kingdom of Antiochus III, terminating in her becoming part of that kingdom; her submission to Rome" (Alexander, 6:870)
 - a. This will be referenced in Ezekiel 29:17-21, the point being that though Nebuchadnezzar strenuously labored to conquer Tyre, neither he nor his army received "wages"; it was largely unsuccessful. Therefore God would give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar "for his labor, because they worked for Me" (v. 19).
 - b. "However, the sheer length of the blockade had done considerable damage to Tyrian trade. Caravan-borne merchandise was no longer reaching its stores, its manufacturers were idle, it was running short of sailors and the fight to survive was draining its strength." (Massa, 50)
2. Later Alexander the Great laid siege to the island for seven months (332 BC).
 - a. The building of the causeway blocked the natural flow of current-borne sand along the coast, triggering the harbor to silt up.
3. Tyre's judgment "would be less than that of the Galileans who rejected Christ's constant ministry to them (Matt 11:21-22; Luke 10:13-14)." (Alexander, 6:870-871)

D. Other considerations.

1. God had His people in Tyre in the 1st century (Acts 21:3-6).
2. The fact that there is a modern Tyre causes one to question the phrase "You will never be rebuilt." One explanation could be that the modern town has not been rebuilt over the majority of the ancient ruins. More likely, however, is the explanation that the city would never again reach the grandeur and importance of Tyre in the biblical period—which has been the case. (Alexander, 6:871)
3. Are there lessons here regarding how God hates pride and materialism?

VI. Sidon (Eze. 28:20-24)

A. Sidon's History.

1. "In Africa they build Utica and Kambe, on the site where Carthage was later to rise." (Massa, 40).
2. Divided Kingdom.
 - a. Ahab of Israel married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (1 Kings 16:31).
 - 1) This resulted in Baal worship becoming the state religion of Israel.

B. Sidon's Condemnation.

1. For despising and causing pain to God's people (v. 24)

C. Sidon's Judgment.

1. Execute judgments in her (v. 22)
2. Pestilence and sword (v. 23)

3. Removal from that which caused pain for Israel

D. Summary statement 28:25-26.

1. Vindication of God's people and punishment of those in opposition to God.
2. Application to the "Return and Rebuilding" period.
3. Ultimate application at the 2nd Coming (2 Thess. 1:6-10).

VII. Egypt (Eze. 29-32)

A. Introduction.

1. Seven oracles consisting of ninety-seven verses are devoted to the downfall of Egypt. "All but one of these oracles are dated precisely between the tenth and twenty-seventh years of the exile, i.e., January 587 BC when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, and April 571. The latest of the Egypt oracles—in fact the latest oracle in the entire book—is the second in the group. (Smith, Eze 29-32)
2. Smith gives the following outline for these four chapters:
 - a. The Future of Egypt (29:1-16).
 - b. The Judgment of Egypt (29:17-30:19).
 - c. The Fall of Egypt (30:20-31:18).
 - d. The Lament for Egypt (chap. 32). (Smith, Eze 29-32)

B. Egypt's History.

1. It would be easy to miss the first reference to Egypt. Genesis 10:6 lists the sons of Noah's son Ham as "Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan." As is the case with so many regions, the place name comes from the actual person (and descendants) who settled there. From these men came the descendants/countries bearing their name. Thus we have the place names: Cush, denoting the region of Ethiopia, Mizraim becomes the designation for the land of Egypt, Put is Libya, and Canaan, the designation for that which became the Promised Land. In the Hebrew text, the word translated "Egypt" is "Mizraim." Actually our English word "Egypt" comes from the Greek *Aiguptos*.
2. Thutmose III (ca. 1504-1450 BC) was a Pharaoh of the 18th dynasty. He was a powerful ruler who received tribute from as far away as Mesopotamia. At Karnak in Egypt, Thutmose III left his listing of cities that he conquered in the Levant. Egyptian hieroglyphics list 119 place names in Canaan, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria. Princes are depicted with hands tied behind their backs. The rulers shown were trapped in Megiddo; when Thutmose III took the city after a seven-month siege, he said it was the "capture of a thousand cities." There is a statue of Thutmose III seated by his city list in Karnak.

C. Egypt's Condemnation

1. Compared to a great crocodile which was about to be captured (29:3b-9a).
 - a. The familiar problem of pride is seen: "My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it" (v. 3)
2. The land of Egypt would become a desolation (29:6b-9a).

D. Egypt's Judgment.

1. Regarding the "forty years" of Egyptian captivity McGuiggan states, "It's not hard to see here a play on the troubles of Israel. What Israel endured, Egypt would endure. (McGuiggan, 272)

2. "But Egypt shall not attain to its former power any more. It will be and continue a lowly kingdom, that it may not again become a ground of confidence to Israel, a power upon which Israel can rely, so as to fall into guilt and punishment. (Keil & Delitzsch, 9:248)
 - a. "The truth of the prediction in vv. 13-16 has been confirmed by history, inasmuch as Egypt never recovered its former power after the Chaldean period. (*Ibid.*)
 - b. Permitted to live on, but as a "lowly kingdom" (29:14); "the lowest of the kingdoms" (v. 15); "so small that they will not rule over the nations" (v. 16).
3. The section of 29:17-30:26 addresses Babylon's role in the downfall of Egypt.
 - a. To compensate Nebuchadnezzar for his work at Tyre, which did not give him full compensation, the spoils of Egypt would be given to him.
4. God would destroy the idols and make the images cease from Memphis; He would execute judgments on Thebes (30:13-14).
 - a. These were capital cities.
 - 1) Memphis ("Noph", KJV, NKJV), established by the first Pharaoh, Menes, served for centuries as the capital of Egypt and was indeed one of the greatest cities of the ancient world.
 - a) Today there is not much left of this once large and powerful city, fulfilling such texts as Ezekiel 30:13.
 - 2) Thebes (Karnak), was the capital of reunited Egypt at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (*ca.* 2060-1700 BC).
 - b. These cities were centers of idolatrous worship.
 - 1) Memphis was the site of temples to Ptah, Apis, Hathor and Ramesses. Within the enclosure of the temple of Ptah there is a large alabaster sphinx, which dates to the reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC), as well as an image of the goddess Hathor.
 - 2) Thebes was the site of a vast temple complex, dedicated primarily to the god Amun.
 - a) Also at Thebes you can still see the Sacred Lake (130 X 77 meters), which was used daily by the priests for purification. It was also used in festivals, when images of the gods would cross the lake in boats.
 - 3) It is important also to see how the influence of Egyptian gods was incredibly wide-spread.
5. A parallel between Assyria and Egypt (Eze. 31:1-18).
 - a. Assyria was a great cedar in Lebanon; God brought it down.
 - b. What God did to Assyria He would do to Egypt (v. 18)
6. Closing oracles (Eze. 32:1-32).
 - a. Note the use of imagery of cosmic disturbances to denote the eclipse of the nation of Egypt in verses 7-8.
 - 1) This clarifies Matthew 24:29, etc.
 - b. My sword (v. 10) is identified as "The sword of the king of Babylon" (v. 11).
 - c. Egypt is seen as joining the ranks of the dead.

- 1) Includes Assyria, Elam, Edom and others.
- 2) This will give Pharaoh comfort (v.31).

Conclusion:

- I. We are enriched as a result of “living with the prophets.”
- II. The Sovereignty of God. “God rules over the affairs and destiny not only of Israel but also of all other nations (Ezek. 25-32). He was not tied to a place, to a small room in the back of the temple in Jerusalem. The nations did his bidding. The words that God spoke through his prophet would be performed. The book is pervasively concerned with demonstrating the trustworthiness of the prophet’s words. The phrase ‘they/you will know that I am the LORD’ or its equivalent occurs with great frequency . . . God would vindicate himself and his prophet by fulfilling the words spoken by Ezekiel. (Longman & Dillard, 368)

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