

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 25

In this chapter the prophet foretells the judgments of God upon the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, for their ill usage of the Jews; on the Ammonites, (^{<321>}Ezekiel 25:1-7), on the Moabites, (^{<3218>}Ezekiel 25:8-11), on the Edomites, (^{<3212>}Ezekiel 25:12-14), on the Philistines, (^{<3215>}Ezekiel 25:15-17).

Ver. 1. *The word of the Lord came unto me*, &c.] After he had done prophesying to the Jews, he is bid to prophesy against the Gentiles, the nations that lay nearest the Jews: *saying*; as follows:

Ver. 2. *Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites*, &c.] Who were of the posterity of Lot, implacable enemies of the Jews; who hated their religion, and envied their wealth and happiness; against these the prophet is bid to “set his face”; to look that way where they lived, and to put on a frowning countenance, and a menacing aspect: “strengthen thy face”, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; look boldly at them:

and prophesy against them; deliver out the following prophecy concerning them.

Ver. 3. *And say unto the Ammonites*, &c.] Either to their ambassadors at Babylon, or merchants there; or by letters to them, the prophet being in Chaldea, at a distance from them:

hear the word of the Lord God; not Chemosh their idol, nor their lying oracles, but the word of the true and living God; which is always accomplished, and is never frustrated:

thus saith the Lord God, because thou saidst, aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; that is, expressed joy, as the Targum paraphrases it, at the destruction of the temple, when it was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar; it was foreknown by the Lord that they would do so, and are here threatened before hand; for as yet the temple was not destroyed; a proof this of God’s prescience of future contingencies:

and against the land of when it was desolate; the country of the ten tribes, which had been desolate from the sixth year of Hezekiah, when the people of it were carried captive by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; this also was matter of joy to the Ammonites:

and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; part of which had already been carried captive under Jeconiah, and the rest would be, and were, under Zedekiah; which completed the destruction of Israel and Judah, and gave the utmost pleasure to their enemies the Ammonites; who were so impious as to rejoice at the destruction of their temple, the place of their religious worship, which they abhorred; and so inhuman as to express the delight and satisfaction they had in the ruin of their fellow creatures and neighbours, and who were originally related to them; this brutish and barbarous behaviour of theirs is resented by the Lord.

Ver. 4. *Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, &c.*] The Chaldeans and Syrians, which were on the east side, as Jarchi; or the Medes and Persians, as Kimchi, which lay more eastward; or it may be the Arabians, who are commonly called the men of the east; who were a part of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and whom he might reward with this country, when taken by him; for this prophecy, according to Josephus^{f396}, was fulfilled five years after the destruction of Jerusalem:

and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee; or, "their camps and their tents"^{f397}; and so the Syriac version renders it, their armies and their tents; who should subdue them, and take possession of their cities and fields, and enjoy what they found there:

they shall eat thy fruit, and drink thy milk; the fruit of their land, their vineyards and fields, and the milk of their flocks and herds, which was commonly drank in those countries; these are put for the whole of their substance. So the Targum,

"they shall eat the good of thy land, and spoil thy substance."

Ver. 5. *And I will make Rabbath a stable for camels, &c.*] Creatures much used by the eastern nations, especially the Arabians; who pitching their tents about Rabbath, the royal city, the metropolis of the children of Ammon, would convert the houses, and even palaces in it, into stables for

their camels. This city, in Jerom's time, as he says, was called Philadelphia, from Ptolemy Philadelphus, who rebuilt it.

And the Ammonites a couching place for flocks; that is, the land of the Ammonites should be made a place for flocks of sheep to lie down in, which the Arabians would bring and feed upon it:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; omniscient, and sees and observes all your insults upon the children of Israel and Judah; and omnipotent, able to perform all that is threatened; and immutable, bringing about all that is here prophesied of.

Ver. 6. *For thus saith the Lord God,* &c.] Their sin and punishment are further enlarged upon:

because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with thy feet: gestures expressive of joy and gladness, (²³⁵¹²Isaiah 55:12 ²³⁵¹⁵Lamentations 2:15 ²⁴⁸²⁷Jeremiah 48:27), the Ammonites clapped their hands together, and leaped and skipped for joy, when they heard of the calamities of the Jews; who yet had more reason to be sorrowful, since they might expect their turn would be next; for the king of Babylon had a design against them, at the same time he came against Jerusalem, and was in doubt for a while which he should attack first; (see ³⁵²¹¹Ezekiel 21:20):

and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; they had a secret joy in their heart, which they expressed by gestures, in the most spiteful and scornful manner they were capable of; which showed the wretched malignity of their dispositions against the children of Israel; they hated them with a perfect hatred.

Ver. 7. *Behold, therefore, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee,* &c.] In just retaliation for clapping their hands against his people; and which hand of the Lord they would find to be a heavy one, and which they would not be able either to resist or bear. The Targum is,

“I will lift up the stroke of my power upon thee:”

and will deliver thee for a spoil to the Heathen; to the Chaldeans first, and then to the Arabians, to be spoiled and plundered by them of their wealth and substance: some render it, “for meat”^{f398} unto them; to be devoured and consumed by them:

and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries; so as to be no more a people and a country; or be reckoned among the people and countries; or have any alliance with them, or help from them:

I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; who has said and done all this; (see Gill on “³²¹⁵Ezekiel 25:5”).

Ver. 8. *Thus saith the Lord God,* &c.] By his servant the prophet, to whom the word of the Lord came; as concerning the Ammonites, so likewise concerning the Moabites, as follows:

because that Moab and Seir do say; that is, the Moabites, and the Edomites, which latter are meant by Seir, that being the seat of them; these lived near one another, and bore a like enmity to the Israelites and Jews, and had the same sentiments concerning them, and said the same things of them: only Moab is mentioned in the Septuagint and Arabic versions: the Moabites are first prophesied of, and then the Edomites, who both joined in saying, behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the Heathen; it fares no better with them than with the rest of the nations, who do not profess and serve the same God they do; they are fallen into the hands of the king of Babylon, as well as others; and have no more security against him, nor protection from him, than other people; they pretend to serve and worship the one only living and true God, and to be his covenant people, and to be favoured with privileges above all other nations; and yet are brought into the same miserable circumstances, and left in them, as others are; where is the God they boast of, and their superior excellence to the rest of the world? thus blasphemously, as well as wickedly, did they insult them, which was provoking to the Lord. The Targum renders it interrogatively,

“in what do the house of Judah differ from all people?”

and so the Septuagint,

“behold, are not the house of Israel and Judah in like manner as all nations?”

Jerom, on the place, relates a fable of the Jews, that when the city and temple were opened, the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, went into the temple, and saw the cherubim over the mercy seat, and said, as all nations worship images, so Judah hath the idols of their religion. Jarchi makes mention of such a Midrash, but with some difference.

Ver. 9. *Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, &c.]* Or, “the shoulder of Moab”^{f399}; that part of their country where their greatest strength lay, So the Targum renders it,

“the strength of Moab;”

where their principal cities were, their frontier towns, and fortified places, as appears by what follows:

from his cities which are on his frontiers; or, “from his Ars”^{f400},

from his cities which are at his end; at the extreme part of the land, upon the borders of his countries; the two cities of Ar and Aroer, (^{<0628>}Numbers 21:28 ^{<0626>}Deuteronomy 2:36):

the glory of the country; as the above cities were, and what follow:

Bethjeshimoth; this was formerly in the tribe of Reuben, now in the possession of the Moabites, and one of their principal cities, (^{<0633>}Joshua 13:20):

Baalmeon; the same with Bethbaalmeon, and which was also of the tribe of Reuben, (^{<0637>}Joshua 13:17 ^{<0628>}Numbers 32:38), in Jerom’s time it was a large village in Moab, about nine miles from Heshbon: some think by Meon is meant Menes, or Osiris the god of the Egyptians, and so this might be a temple of his; or at least he might have a temple in it, from whence it had its name:

and Kirjathaim; or the double city, built also by the Reubenites, (^{<0627>}Numbers 32:37 ^{<0639>}Joshua 13:19), now in the hands of the Moabites, ten miles from Medeba; on this side of the country of Moab, and through these cities, the Lord threatens to open a way for their enemies to enter in and destroy them, as follows:

Ver. 10. *Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and I will give them in possession, &c.]* Or, “against the Ammonites”, as the Targum; that is, way should be made for the same people of the east, the Chaldeans or Arabians, that came against the Ammonites and destroyed them, to enter into the land of Moab and possess it, as they had done the land of Ammon:

that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations: the name of that people, which is entirely lost; and Moab likewise, which underwent the same fate.

Ver. 11. *I will execute judgments upon Moab, &c.*] For though the Chaldeans and Arabians were the instruments of their ruin, their destruction was of the Lord; it was his hand that was upon them, and his vengeance that was executed on them, for their hard sayings against his people; for though he had spoke against them in his providence, and chastised them for their sins, yet he will not suffer others to speak against them:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; that takes part with Judah, and will avenge himself of all their enemies.

Ver. 12. *Thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] Concerning Seir or the Edomites, the prophecy concerning the Moabites being finished:

because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance: or, “revenging a revenge”^{f401}; the Edomites bore an old grudge against the Jews, not only because their father Jacob had got the birthright and blessing from their father Esau; but because they were made tributaries to them in David’s time, and afterwards severely chastised by Amaziah; these things they laid up in their minds, and vowed revenge whenever they had an opportunity; and now one offered at the destruction of Jerusalem, which they took:

and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them: not only by rejoicing at the destruction of the Jews, but by encouraging the Babylonians in it; assisting them therein, joining with them in plundering the city, and in cutting off those with the sword who endeavoured to make their escape; (see ^{<4370>}Psalm 137:7 Obidiah 1:12-14).

Ver. 13. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] Because of such base and barbarous usage, from a people that were originally brethren:

I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, by the sword of the Chaldeans, and by famine and pestilence, and such like sore judgments; in which the hand of God is manifestly seen:

and I will make it desolate from Teman; a very principal city of Edom, so called from Teman, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, (^{<4135>}Genesis 36:15) it lay in the south of the land of Idumea; the Targum renders it, “from the south”:

and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword; of the Babylonians; this was another city of Edom, it lay in the north of that country; so that hereby is signified that destruction should go through it from the southern to the northern parts of it.

Ver. 14. *And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel*, &c.] This was fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabins overthrew and conquered them, ``Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Arabattine, because they besieged Gael: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils.” (1 Maccabees 5:3)

and when Hyrcanus took their cities, and subdued them, and they became Jews, as Josephus^{f402} relates; though Kimchi thinks this refers to future time, and is yet to be accomplished; and it is, by the ancient Jews^{f403}, understood of the times of the Messiah: some choose to understand the phrase,

by the hand of my people Israel, the same hand by which judgment was inflicted upon Israel; suggesting that by the same hand vengeance would be inflicted on the Edomites, namely, by the Babylonians:

and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; that is, shall execute all the anger and fury, or all that punishment in anger and fury, which the Lord in righteous judgment has appointed them to, and has determined shall be performed upon them, by the children of Israel or the Babylonians, as his instruments:

and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God; the meaning is, they shall feel it, and be sensible of it, and know that it comes from the Lord himself; full of resentment against them, and highly displeased at their behaviour towards his people Israel.

Ver. 15. *Thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] Once more, and concerning another enemy of the people of Israel, and who had been of old an implacable one:

because the Philistines have dealt by revenge: for what they suffered in the times of Saul, when Goliath was slain by David, and their army was discomfited; and for the overthrow of them by David, when he came to throne; and for his burning their images, and subduing them, (<075>1 Samuel 17:51,52 <075>2 Samuel 5:20,21,25 8:1), this revenge they took in the time

of Ahaz, (^{<488>}2 Chronicles 28:18), and very probably also showed their spite at the time of Jerusalem's destruction:

and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred; which they bore to the people of Israel, from their first settlement in Canaan; from the times of the judges, particularly Samson; and from the times of Saul and David: it was an old grudge they bore, they had spite and malice in their hearts, and wanted an opportunity to vent it; having determined to take vengeance when they could, and utterly destroy them from being a people; very likely, through despite, they assisted the Chaldean army: or, this they did "with a perpetual hatred"^{f404}; they did everything they could, in a spiteful and malicious way, to perpetuate the hatred between them and Israel.

Ver. 16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] Because of such wretched malice and despiteful usage:

behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines; as is foretold, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:1),

and I will cut off the Cherethims: one of the tribes of the Philistines, a principal part of their country, which lay to the south, (^{<0814>}1 Samuel 30:14 ^{<3415>}Zephaniah 2:5), there is a beautiful play on words^{f405} in the Hebrew:

and destroy the remnant of the seacoast; as that of Ashdod, Caphtor, and Ashkelon, formerly spoiled by other persons; what they left should now be utterly destroyed; (see ^{<2301>}Isaiah 20:1 ^{<2510>}Jeremiah 25:20 47:4,5)

Ver. 17. *And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes, &c.*] By way of retaliation for their vengeance and fury, wrath and malice, against his people; suggesting, that the judgments inflicted on them, for quantity and quality, should be very great:

and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them; they shall see the hand of God in it, acknowledge his justice, and confess that their gods were idols, and that the God of Israel is the only true God.