

## Messages of Judgment Against the Nations

### Ezekiel 25:1-32:32

The next eight chapters of **Ezekiel** contain oracles (or "burdens") of Divine judgment pronounced against the surrounding neighbors of Judah. They show that while Divine judgment begins with the people of YHWH, it is not exclusively limited to them--the surrounding nations will not escape the Divine wrath that burns against universal evil--especially such things as gloating malice, the taking of revenge, and the keeping of ancient hostility! These seven chapters contain seven messages, the fifth of which has three major parts, and the seventh of which has seven major parts.

Rabbi Fisch comments that "With the preceding chapter Ezekiel's denunciation of Israel's sins and prophecy of Jerusalem's doom come to an end. Before he reverts to the theme of Judea's future, her restoration and spiritual regeneration, he proclaims the downfall of the heathen nations in the next eight chapters...The nations singled out for condemnation are Israel's neighbors, seven in number. The nearest are Ammon, Moab, Edom and the Philistines; those farther away are Tyre, Zidon and Egypt. For similar denunciations, compare **Isaiah 13-27** and **Jeremiah 46-51**.

"The sins of these nations, on account of which they are doomed, are twofold: not only did they take no warning from Israel's chastisement and made no effort to amend their evil ways, but they indulged in malicious joy over Israel's calamity. Also, their presence was a constant physical and spiritual danger to Israel's restoration and thereby a frustration of the Divine plan for humanity in the moral sphere." (P. 168) What do you think Rabbi Fisch means by "the moral sphere"? Are there distinct "spheres," such as "moral," and "religious," and "political"? Or, is there only one sphere--humanity's relationship with its Creator, YHWH?

Reimer entitles **25:1-32:32** "Oracles Against Foreign Nations." He comments that "Poised at this moment in the dramatic downfall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's tirade ends and the focus shifts. The fate of the city is left hanging as a collection of oracles against foreign nations is presented..."

"While not all the oracles in this collection are dated, most seem to fall within the period 587-585 B.C.E. (for the exception, see **29:17**). Almost every other prophetic Scroll includes prophecies addressed to nations other than Israel and Judah (e.g. **Isaiah 13-23**; **Jeremiah 46-51**; **Amos 1-2**; **Zephaniah 2**). Their primary theological role is to show that all peoples are under the dominion and discipline of the King of kings. Israel is uniquely [YHWH's] Own, yet all nations are subject [and belong] to the one true God [YHWH]."

See **Amos 9:7**,

הֲלוֹא כְּבְנֵי כְּשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי

Are you people not<sup>1319</sup> like the people of Ethiopia<sup>1320</sup> to Me,

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1319

There is a two-fold question in **verse 7**, each beginning with הֲלוֹא, *halo*), “Is it not?” It is a question, which implies a positive answer, such as “of course!”

1320

The בְּנֵי כְּשִׁיִּים, which we have translated by “the people of Ethiopia,” are literally “sons of Cushites.” The phrase is translated into Greek by υἱοὶ Αἰθιοπῶν, “sons of Ethiopians.”

For occurrences of the adjective describing a people, כְּשִׁיִּי, *kushiy* in the **Hebrew Bible**, see:  
**Numbers 12:1, 1** (a women whom Moses married, raising the ire of both Aaron and Miriam, Moses’ siblings);  
**2 Samuel 18:21, 21, 22, 23, 31, 31 32, 32** (a runner sent by Joab to communicate the news of Absalom’s death to David);  
**Jeremiah 13:23**, “Can an Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its marks?” (a question asked by many an inter-racial child adopted into a family with a different skin color!);  
**Jeremiah 38:7, 10, 12** (an Ethiopian official in the royal palace in Judah, who is sent to rescue Jeremiah from death in a cistern / prison);  
**Jeremiah 39:16**, (a Divine oracle comes to the Ethiopian official, telling him that he will be saved from the Babylonian destruction because of his trust in YHWH);  
**Amos 9:7**, here—“Are not the Ethiopians the same in YHWH’s eyes as the Israelis?”—with the implication, Of course they are!  
**Zephaniah 2:12** (the Ethiopians too will be destroyed by the sword);  
**Daniel 11:43** (at the end, the king of the south—Ptolemy—will gain control of the Ethiopians and others);  
**2 Chronicles 12:3** (people joined with the Egyptians in attacking Judah);  
**2 Chronicles 14:8, 11, 12; 16:8** (an Ethiopian general and his forces fighting against and defeated by Asa of Judah);  
**2 Chronicles 21:16** (Arabs who lived near the Ethiopians).

Andersen and Freedman ask, “In what way is [Amos] trying to say that the Israelites are just like the Cushites, as far as Yahweh is concerned? No stories are told of Yahweh’s dealing with this nation [but consider the imparting of Divine grace to Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian], which seems to be the remotest of all known peoples. The following question, if a parallel and an explication, lines the Cushites up with the nearer and better-known Philistines and Aramaeans, all of whom have been moved around and settled into their lands by the same God and on the same basis...The opposite is said of Israel in contrast to other nations in **3:1-2**, also in connection with the Exodus.” (P. 869)

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

O children of Israel?<sup>1321</sup>

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1321

Mays notes that there is no other passage in the entire **Jewish Bible** that is quite like **verse 7** in its unique, pointed challenge to normal Jewish thought (p. 156). Indeed, Mays calls its implications “radical and perplexing.” This fact alone ought to stir our interest!

Why does Mays consider this passage so radical and perplexing? Because it claims that Israel is no better in YHWH’s eyes than Ethiopia, and claims in addition that YHWH has been active in the history of the hated Syrians and Philistines in the same manner that He has been active in the history of Israel! If this seems radical and perplexing to us, does this not indicate that we have something less than the God of the universe in our minds, a “parochial” God, and that we have been mistaken in our reading of the **Bible**?

What would you think if Amos came to us today with a modernized version of his proclamation, stating that America is no better than Iran or North Korea, and that YHWH has been just as active in their histories as He has been in ours? What if Amos claimed that YHWH God has been the moving force in the Communist Revolution in Russia, China, Cuba and Venezuela, just as He was in the American Revolution? Would you agree with him, or would you call for his deportation? Why? Why not? Is the God you worship only the God of the Christians, and of the democratic nations of the earth, but not of the Communists, not of the Muslims, or of the far-east? How big is your God? Is He the God of the native Americans?

This is not just Amos’ question—it is YHWH’s! And it is rhetorical in nature—that is, no answer is really expected. There is a Divine affirmation behind this question. It is that the people of Northern Israel (or, we can add, we Christians in North America) are no more God’s “creatures,” or “children” than are the poor famine-stricken inhabitants of the Darfur region of the Sudan, or the inhabitants of Ethiopia!

Wolff holds that the “Cushites” or “Ethiopians” are mentioned simply as representatives of foreign and remote peoples who live on the outermost periphery of the known world in Amos’ day. “If Israel is the same as they in the sight of Yahweh, then Israel cannot claim any privileged position. Precisely this is what those who rejected the threats of Amos must have done. Having considered themselves the foremost of the noblest nations (**6:1**), they must now suffer being equated with a people from the remotest part of the world.” (P. 347)

We conclude that in Amos’ view, the Northern Israelites (and Christian Americans as well, we add), do not “belong” to YHWH any more than do the far off “strangers” of another skin color and language and nationality and religion! How humbling it is to be told by the spokesperson of YHWH that we Christian Americans are no more God’s children or “chosen people” than are the bush-people of  
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נֹאמֵי יְהוָה

–(It is) a saying of YHWH!<sup>1322</sup>

הֲלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלִיתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם

Did I not bring up Israel from the Land of Egypt--<sup>1323</sup>

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<sup>1321</sup>(...continued)

Australia, or any other people on earth—regardless of their class, their customs, their creeds, or their sexual orientations! Such seems to be the meaning of this Divine question. What do you think? How will you answer YHWH’s question?

But we disagree with Mays in calling this question “radical and perplexing.” Isn’t this really what the first book of the **Bible, Genesis**, teaches so emphatically in its depiction of the entire human race as descended from one common mother and father (**Genesis 1-3**)? Is this not exactly the teaching of **Genesis 10**, with its “table of 70 nations,” in which all of the nations of the earth are related directly to God as His children, and in which there is no “chosen nation”? Is this not also the meaning of YHWH’s claim that “all the earth is Mine” when in **Exodus 19** He is pictured as calling Israel to become His “priestly” people in the world? What are “priestly people” supposed to do—tell everyone else they are unwelcome, unwanted by YHWH? Or, lead them in worship, teaching them about YHWH? And as we move from the prophetic literature of Israel, to take up Israel’s “Wisdom Literature,” what are we to do when Job, a non-Jewish Arabian, is depicted as “perfect”—complete, wholesome, in YHWH’s sight, and one with whom YHWH enters into a unique, interpersonal relationship?

In fact, this “universal view” has already been implied by Amos in **1:1-3:2**, where he insists that YHWH has been active in the history of the nations surrounding Israel and Judah. Perhaps it is little more than our own prejudiced views that cause us to take this passage as “radical and perplexing”! What do you think?

<sup>1322</sup>

Once again Amos asserts that the message he is proclaiming is not his own, but has come from YHWH! The human personality and unique language of this 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. sheep-herder can be seen again and again throughout this document. But just as clearly, the Divine message can also be heard and seen—the message that Amos has received from YHWH, and that he sought to deliver through his unique vocabulary and expressions. What do you think? How do you understand the **Book of Amos** as the “Word of God”? Would you not have to say that the Word of God comes to us embedded in human words?

<sup>1323</sup>

This is, of course, the basic teaching of the **Book of Exodus**.

וּפְלִשְׁתִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר

and the Philistines from Caphtor / Crete,<sup>1324</sup>

וְאַרָם מִקִּיר:

and Syria from Qir?<sup>1325</sup>

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1324

כַּפְתּוֹר, *kaphtor*, is most probably the Island of Crete, located in the Mediterranean, south of Greece.

1325

Andersen and Freedman state that “Just where and what Qir was have not been determined, but there is no reason to doubt that there was such a place in the days of Amos (compare **1:5**) or that the Aramaeans had come from that region centuries before. The common view is that it lay to the east of the classic territory of Aram, and there seems to be no good reason to doubt this claim, but how far and in what particular region seems beyond recovery at the present time, especially because the place-name has so far not appeared in cuneiform or alphabetic sources.” (P. 875)

This is another “rhetorical question” which implies its answer even before the answer is given. Yes, YHWH has acted in Israel’s history—that’s a summation of the **Torah**, especially the **Book of Exodus!** YHWH “brought Israel up” from the land of Egypt. Israel can rightly be proud and thankful for this fact, and give thanks to YHWH for it.

But the Divine question affirms that YHWH has also been active in the history of Israel’s most hated enemies—in the national history of the Philistines, and as well in the national history of the Syrians. It is YHWH Who “brought up” the Philistines from their original home on the Island of Crete (or, perhaps, in southern Asia Minor, in “Cappadocia”); it is also YHWH Who “brought up” the Syrians from their native home in Qir (somewhere in central Mesopotamia) to inhabit Aram, the Land of Syria.

Andersen and Freedman state that “Yahweh brought them all from one place to another. The comparison with Israel is explicit and deliberate. So the various implications and overtones that we associate with the Exodus must be present with regard to the Philistines and the Aramaeans.” (P. 874)

The question implies that YHWH God is not the “tribal God” of one people of one geographical area! YHWH is God of all the nations on the whole earth; He is the “Universal God” of all peoples, the One Who is active in the entire human story, both in judgment and in salvation!

That is why Israel must never draw the conclusion that she is a “special,” “privileged” people to the exclusion of everybody else on earth, just because YHWH has acted in her history in wondrous saving ways. That YHWH has acted in Israel’s history does not mean that He has not acted similarly in  
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<sup>1325</sup>(...continued)

the life and history of other nations and peoples! Israel was prone to draw such conclusions, and all too often Christians likewise have been tempted to draw exclusive conclusions because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Mays comments that “This basic (fact) of Yahweh’s historical relationship with Israel is neither denied or robbed of its emphasis by its expansion to include the Philistines and (Syria). What is denied and shattered is a theology based on that (fact)—that Yahweh’s act in the exodus established Israel in a special status (over against) the other nations...”

Of course the understanding that Israel’s election was the action of a world God, not a national God, is no invention of Amos. It is fundamental to the structure of the...(Genesis) portrayal of Israel’s history from creation to conquest; it comes to clear expression in sentences like **Exodus 19:5** (‘You shall be My Own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine’). But never before had this sovereignty of Yahweh been read in such radical fashion... (Amos) stands with the theological tradition of Israel, but understands it in such a way as to leave no place for the way his audience understood it.” (Pp. 158-59)

Andersen and Freedman hold that the reason for Amos’ view of the authority of YHWH over the nations as expressed in **chapters 1-2**, is suggested here in this passage. “Notice is taken of God’s action in bringing Israel from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Qir. Just as Yahweh’s claim to and demand on Israel is based on His act of unmerited kindness and grace in bringing them out of Egypt, so He has acted in comparable fashion by bringing the Philistines to Palestine from Caphtor (perhaps Crete or another Aegean location) and the Arameans from Qir...”

“The implication of the passage is quite clear; the relationship is essentially the same--one of grace. Because He has acted on behalf of Philistines and Arameans, He has the right to impose demands and to insist on compliance with rules and requirements, just as in the case of Israel. The difference, and it is not a small one, is that these nations obviously are unaware of that all-important truth. They have their own Gods and explain their history in a different fashion, no doubt; but Amos insists that the truth is as he has stated it. Whether the nations are aware of the action of Divine grace in bringing them out of one place to another and establishing and providentially guiding their history, they are not less responsible because of their ignorance.

“We may assume that Amos would make the same claim and the same argument about the rest of the nations on the list: that Yahweh brought them to their present territory and has overseen their historical experience. They are answerable for their behavior to Him primarily because He is their benevolent Sovereign. This doctrine is unusual, especially because it emphasizes Divine grace in the lives of other peoples—not that it reduces Israel to the level of common humanity, but that it raises all others to the level of Israel’s special status.

(continued...)

Exodus 19:5-6, where YHWH is depicted as speaking:

5 וְעַתָּה אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי

And now, if you (plural) will truly listen to My voice

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי,

and (if) you will keep My covenant--

וְהָיִיתֶם לִי סִגְלָה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים

and you will be for Me a treasured possession from all the peoples;

כִּי-לִי כָל-הָאָרֶץ:

because all the earth belongs to Me!

6 וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי מַמְלַכַת כֹּהֲנִים

and you (plural) will be for Me, a kingdom of priests,

וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ

and a set-apart people!

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

These are the words which you (singular, Moses) shall speak to Israel's children.

“The fate of every nation, whether for judgment or for blessings, is in [YHWH’s] Hands ...Implied hope for Israel is thus a secondary message of the condemnatory foreign-nation oracles. Further, the reasons for judgment found in the foreign and domestic oracles tend to cohere within a given Scroll. In Ezekiel, just as Judah and Jerusalem are punished for impurity and oppression, so too are the foreign nations. However, Ezekiel often simply announces [YHWH’s] opposition to these nations without offering an explicit rationale...

“The oracles are arranged in three large sections: first, Judah’s nearest neighbors are condemned (**Ezekiel 25**), followed by the extended collections of oracles against Tyre (**chapters 26-28**) and Egypt (**chapters 29-32**). Two smaller oracles—one against Sidon, the other looking to Israel’s regathering—are embedded at the halfway point (**28:20-26**). In all, seven nations stand condemned.” (P. 1536)

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<sup>1325</sup>(...continued)

“All have received the grace of God and all are answerable to Him, each in accord with the measure of grace received and acknowledged...” (P. 352)

Yes, but remember that Ezekiel's oracles against Jerusalem and Judah have been just as condemnatory, if not even worse!

Reimer entitles **25:1-17** "Against Judah's Neighbors." He comments that "Apart from the old northern kingdom of Israel to the north, Judah had four immediate neighbors. Clockwise, they are Ammon on the northeast (**verses 1-7**), Moab to the east across the Dead Sea (**verses 8-11**), Edom to the south (**verses 12-14**), and Philistia to the west (**verses 15-17**)..."

"The oracles against these nations group into two pairs. Excluding Philistia, but including Tyre and Sidon (**chapter 26-28**), these nations had been part of a coalition with Judah against Babylon early in Zedekiah's reign (see **Jeremiah 27:3**). Each of these oracles has a similar structure, with formulaic address and conclusion, as well as similar content: condemnation for contemptuous cruelty of heart toward Judah." (P. 1536)

Hilmer notes that "In the case of Ezekiel there are seven oracles (the seventh of which has seven parts, each introduced by the phrase 'the word of [YHWH] came to me.'" (P. 1260)

Matties adds that "The collection of seven is divided in half, with the first six nations separated from the seven oracles against Egypt by a word of hope for Israel in **28:24-26**. Babylon is never addressed because Ezekiel considers Nebuchadnezzar the instrument of [YHWH's] judgment...These oracles were addressed to the exilic community and were never understood as part of diplomatic missions to the nations. The oracles served as a word of hope to Israel...by affirming [YHWH's] sovereignty in the events of international (not only Judean) politics, by asserting a moral order that transcends the judgment leveled against Israel, by challenging the pride (and attractiveness for Israel) inherent in military and economic power, and by undermining the idolatry that supports such power." (P. 1193)

Darr states that here, "Ezekiel turns from pronouncements of doom against Israel / Judah to a collection of oracles against four of Judah's neighbors / enemies: Ammon (**verses 3b-7**); Moab (**verses 8-11**); Edom (**verses 12-14**); and Philistia (**verses 15-17**). The order of these oracles has apparently been determined by the geographical locations of the nations addressed. From Israel's perspective, Ammon lay to the east, Moab to the southeast, Edom to the south, and Philistia to the southwest.

"Israel shared a history of enmity with each of these four peoples, even as it acknowledged kinship ties with three of them (Ammon, Moab, and Edom). According to Israelite tradition, both the Moabites and the Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. **Genesis 19:30-38** tells an insulting story about the origins of these two peoples, a 'put down' reflective of long-lived hostility: Bereft of eligible mates, Lot's two daughters conspire to get their father drunk and have sexual intercourse with him in order to bear children. The elder daughter names the son born of that union Moab; 'he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day' (**Genesis 19:37 NRSV**). The younger daughter names her son Ben-Ammi, 'the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day' (**Genesis 19:38 NRSV**). Israelite tradition also asserts that Esau, Jacob's twin and the

first to emerge from Rebekah's womb, was the ancestor of the Edomites. According to **Genesis 25:22**, the two babies were already in conflict in utero [the womb].

“The feuds between Israel and these nations were largely rooted in territorial disputes. Ammon emerged around the beginning of the Iron Age, about 1200 B.C.E. According to biblical tradition, its well-defended boundaries precluded Israelite intrusion as the conquest generation made its way through Transjordan (**Numbers 21:24**). Moses is said to have forbidden the Israelites to harass or engage in warfare with the Ammonites, since their territory was God's gift to Lot's descendants (see **Deuteronomy 2:19, 37**). Yet **Joshua 13:25** states that ‘half the land of the Ammonites’ (**NRSV**) was allocated to the tribe of Gad.” (P. 217)

Darr adds that “Neither past territorial disputes, nor Nebuchadrezzar's enlistment of Ammonite, Moabite, and Edomite troops in punitive raids against Judah, constitutes the focus of Ezekiel's oracles against Israel's neighbors / enemies. Rather, the prophet condemns these peoples because, by disparaging and victimizing Judah in its darkest hour, they impute Yahweh's dominion...

“Ezekiel proclaims the folly of peoples whose mockery demeans God's power...When Ammon says ‘Aha!’ over Yahweh's profaned sanctuary, Israel's desolate land, and the deportation of its inhabitants (**verse 3**; see also **verse 6**), when Moab concludes that ‘The house of Judah is like all the other nations’ (**verse 8**), when Edom takes vengeance upon the house of Judah (**verse 12**), and when the Philistines pursue endless hostilities (**verse 15**), they both insult Israel's Deity and undercut Ezekiel's fundamental premise that Judah's destruction is no sign of Divine impotence, but terror-inducing testimony to the God Whose sovereignty, justice, and wrath extend beyond Israel's borders to include all the nations.

“Not one of the nations Ezekiel ‘addresses’ was privy to his words, of course. The import and function of his oracles against the nations lies not in what they said to Israel's foes, but in their significance for his exilic audience and for readers of his scroll. In the aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction, both Israel's election and the power of its God were thrown open to survivors' questions. How could Yahweh allow the city and its temple to be destroyed, while age-old enemies survived, gloating over and profiting from Judah's demise? Perhaps God had not permitted the catastrophe at all, much less brought it on, but had been defeated by the superior Deities of a world-class empire. When Ezekiel ‘quotes’ the Moabites' claim that [the house of Judah is like all the other nations’ (**verse 8**), he echoes the exiles' own frustration and fears, cited in **20:32**. In proclaiming that the Lord will personally ‘execute judgments upon Moab’ (and its neighbors), forcing that nation to acknowledge in its own undoing the doing of Israel's Lord (‘then they shall know that I am Yahweh,’ (**verse 11**; see also **verses 7, 14, 17**), Ezekiel consoles and emboldens his fellow deportees, asserting Yahweh's unrivaled sovereignty at the moment when it most seems in doubt. The God Who brings upon the Judeans' heads punishment for their sins will not brook their enemies' insults.” (Pp. 219-220)

Against Ammon (25:1-7)<sup>1326</sup>

25:1 וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

And YHWH's word was / came to me, saying:

25:2 בֶּן־אָדָם שִׁים פְּנֶיךָ אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן

Son of Adam / Humanity, place your faces to / towards<sup>1327</sup> (the) children of Ammon,<sup>1328</sup>

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1326

Reimer comments on **25:1-7** that “Ammon and Moab fell to the Babylonians much later than Judah. Clearly, talk of ‘coalition’ did nothing to help Judah’s cause when the Babylonians overran it. Ammon receives two oracles, and the pattern is followed in the succeeding indictments: the basis of judgment is stated (‘because,’ Hebrew *ya’an*), the outcome announced (‘therefore,’ Hebrew *lakhen*), and the recognition formula follows by way of conclusion. The Ammon oracle, then, falls into two sections, with **verses 1-5** being more detailed than **verses 6-7**.” (P. 1536)

Darr states that “Though Ezekiel is commanded to speak to the Ammonites...**verses 3b-4** address feminine singular entity...The likely referent is Rabbah (**verse 5**), Ammon’s capital, though it, in turn can represent the nation as a whole. Because she said ‘Aha!’ an exclamation of malevolent greed over God’s sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the ‘house of Judah’ when its population was forced into exile, therefore Yahweh is handing her over to [the people of the east]—that is, nomads of the Syro-Arabian desert, as a possession...

“This text amplifies the substance of Ezekiel’s threat against the Ammonites. Because they (‘she’) expressed malicious delight over Israel’s desolate land, their land will be appropriated and plundered. The nomads will establish stone-encircled encampments and pitch their tents in Ammon’s midst, eating the food that the Ammonites have labored to produce and drinking the milk of their livestock...Have the Ammonites relished the deportation of Judah’s population? Even their capital city will be stripped of its inhabitants. The concluding recognition formula reverts to masculine plural address: ‘Then you shall know that I am Yahweh.’” (Pp. 220-221)

1327

See **Ezekiel 20:46**, with its footnote for “setting ones’ face.”

1328

Rabbi Fisch comments on Ammon, stating that “This people, dwelling on the other side of the Jordan north-east of Jerusalem, were racially connected with Israel (compare **Genesis 19:38**, [where it is said of Lot’s younger daughter, who had sexual intercourse with her drunken father]

(continued...)

וְהִנָּבֵא עֲלֵיהֶם:

and prophesy concerning / against them

25:3 וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבָנֵי עַמּוֹן

And you shall say to (the) children of Ammon:

שְׁמְעוּ דְבַר־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

Hear my Lord YHWH's word:

כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

יֵעַן אָמַרְךָ הָאֵח

Because of your saying Aha!<sup>1329</sup>

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<sup>1328</sup>(...continued)

38 וְהִצְעִירָה גַם־הוּא יִלְדָה בֵּן

And the younger girl, she also gave birth (to a) son;

וְהִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶן־עַמִּי

and she called his name Son of My People--

הוּא אָבִי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן עַד־הַיּוֹם:

he [is] the father of Sons of Ammon until today.)

“Though the Israelites had respected their territory when journeying to Canaan (**Deuteronomy 2:19, 37**), they bore animosity and waged several wars against them. After the Israelite tribes on the east side of the Jordan had been carried away by the Assyrians, the Ammonites seized their land (**Jeremiah 49:1**). On the fall of Jerusalem they instigated the treacherous murder of Gedaliah, appointed governor by the Babylonian king (**Jeremiah 40:14**), and obstructed Judea’s restoration in the time of Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 4:1**). Still later they are found aiding the Syrians in the Maccabean war (compare **1 Maccabees 5:6**).” (P. 168)

Hilmer notes that “Ammon (part of modern Jordan) was immediately east of Israel.” (P. 1260) See **Ezekiel 21:20; Jeremiah 9:26; 49:1-6; Amos 1:12-15; Zephaniah 2:8-11**. “For hostile Ammonite action during this time and later, see **2 Kings 24:2; Nehemiah 4:7**.”

אֶל-מִקְדָּשִׁי כִּי-נִחַל

to My sanctuary when it was polluted / profaned;<sup>1330</sup>

וְאֶל-אֲדָמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי נִשְׁמָה

and to Israel's ground when it was made desolate;

וְאֶל-בַּיִת יְהוּדָה כִּי הָלְכוּ בְּגוּלָה:

and to (the) house of Judah when they went into the exile--

25:4 לָכֵן הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי-קָדָם לְמוֹרָשָׁה

therefore look at Me—giving you to (the) children of (the) east for a possession,<sup>1331</sup>

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<sup>1329</sup>(...continued)

Hilmer states that Aha! is “a cry of malicious joy (compare **26:2**; **37:2**; **Psalm 35:21-25**).” (P. 1261)

<sup>1330</sup>

Reimer comments that “The leading reason for judgment against Ammon is the insult they gave to ‘My sanctuary’—[YHWH’s] Own reputation is of primary concern. While ‘land (Hebrew *adamah*—see **Ezekiel 7:2**) of Israel’ is a common phrase in **Ezekiel**, ‘house of Judah’ is not; it is used outside this chapter only at **4:6** and **8:7**. ‘House of Israel,’ by contrast, is used 83 times in **Ezekiel**, well over half of its occurrences in the entire **Old Testament**.” (P. 536)

<sup>1331</sup>

Rabbi Fisch states that the “children of the east” were “the nomad tribes of the Arabian desert. Josephus (**Antiquities X, ix. 7**) records that five years after his campaign against Judea, Nebuchadnezzar successfully warred against the Ammonites and Moabites. In their weakened state they could not resist the plundering Bedouins. But since the prophet speaks of the attackers settling in the towns of Ammon, a later and more serious invasion is intended. Kimchi explains the phrase as referring to the peoples of Persia and Media whose territory was situated north-east of Ammon.” (P. 169)

Reimer comments that “The agents of Divine justice are ‘the people of the east,’ that is, desert nomads. This both accounts for the description that follows, and implies the ironic insult that the people unconquered by mighty Babylon will fall to nomads.” (P. 1536)

Hilmer notes that while this is probably referring to “nomadic tribes of the desert east of Ammon, [it] could be a reference to Nebuchadnezzar and his army (see **21:31**).” P. 1261)

וְיִשְׁבוּ שִׁירֹוֹתֵיהֶם בְּךָ

and they will set their encampments among you,

וְנָתְנוּ בְּךָ מִשְׁכְּנֵיהֶם

and they will place their tent-dwellings among you.

הֵמָּה יֹאכְלוּ פְרִיֶךָ

They will eat your fruit,

וְהֵמָּה יִשְׁתּוּ חֲלָבֶךָ:

and they will drink your milk.

25:5 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־רַבָּה לְנוֹה גַמְלִים

And I will give Rabbah<sup>1332</sup> to (be) a habitation for camels,

וְאֶת־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן לְמִרְבֵּץ־צֹאן

and Ammon's children to (be) a place for sheep to lie down.<sup>1333</sup>

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1332

Rabbi Fisch comments that Rabbah was “the capital of Ammon (compare **Ezekiel 21:25**<sup>Heb</sup> / **20**<sup>Eng</sup>, which depicts Nebuchadnezzar choosing between attacking Rabbah or Jerusalem:

דֶּרֶךְ תָּשִׂים לְבֹא הָרֶב

A way you shall place / mark for a sword's coming

אֶת רַבַּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן

to / against Rabbath of (the) Children of Ammon,

וְאֶת־יְהוּדָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם בְּצוּרָה:

and to / against Judah in Jerusalem—inaccessible / fortified.)

“From being a great city, the site will be overgrown and camels pasture in what were once its streets.” (P. 169

1333

Hilmer notes that this verse contains “a common **Old Testament** description for destroyed cities (see **Isaiah 34:13-15**; **Zephaniah 2:13-15**). The sites were returned to the conditions they were in before the cities were built, representing the undoing of human efforts.” (P. 1261)

וַיִּדְעֻם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה:

And you (plural) will know that I (am) YHWH.<sup>1334</sup>

25:6 כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

Because in this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

יַעַן מִחֲאֵךְ יָדְךָ

Because of your clapping of hand(s),<sup>1335</sup>

וּרְקִיעַךְ בְּרַגְלֶךָ

and your stamping with (your) foot / feet,

וַתִּשְׂמַח בְּכָל־שֹׁאטְךָ בְּנִפְשׁ

and you (singular) rejoiced with all your contempt in your innermost-being

אֶל־אֲדָמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

at Israel's ground / land,<sup>1336</sup>

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1334

Rabbi Fisch comments “The words may be regarded as addressed to the Ammonites or the Judean captives (see on **verse 3** and contrast the end of **verse 7**). In either case, it will be evident that the fate of Ammon is an act of Divine punishment.” (P. 169)

There can be no doubt that the same phrase, repeated at the close of **verse 7**, has the people of Ammon in mind, as knowing YHWH as a result of their punishment. YHWH wants and intends to be known by the nations!

1335

See **Ezekiel 6:11** with its footnote.

1336

Rabbi Fisch states that the clapping of hands and stamping with feet were expressions of “gloating over Judea’s disaster (see on **Ezekiel 6:11**,

כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

הִכָּה בְּכַפְּךָ

Strike / clap with your hand,

(continued...)

25:7 לָכֵן הִנְנִי נֹשֵׂתִי אֶת־יָדִי עָלֶיךָ

Therefore look at Me: I have stretched out My Hand upon / against you (singular),<sup>1337</sup>

וְנָתַתִּיךָ- (לְבַג) [לְבַיִן] לְגוֹיִם

and I will give / make you for spoil / booty for the nations.

וְהִכַּרְתִּיךָ מִן־הָעַמִּים

And I will cut you off<sup>1338</sup> from the peoples;

וְהִאַבְדְתִיךָ מִן־הָאָרְצוֹת

And I will make you perish from the lands.

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<sup>1336</sup>(...continued)

וְרָקַע בְּרִגְלֶךָ

and stamp / beat out with your foot,

וְאָמַרְתָּ אַח

and say, Ah! / Brother!

אֵל כָּל־תּוֹעֵבוֹת רָעוֹת בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל

to all evil abominations, house of Israel,

אֲשֶׁר בַּחֶרֶב בְּרָעַב

because with the sword, with the famine,

וּבִדְבַר יִפְלוּ:

and with the plague, they will fall!

Rabbi Fisch adds that “Their exultation over the calamity was prompted by hatred and contempt.” (P. 169)

<sup>1337</sup>

Rabbi Fisch notes that the stretching out of the Divine Hand means for “execution of judgment.” (P. 169) See **Ezekiel 6:14** and **25:16**.

<sup>1338</sup>

Compare **verse 16** for this matter of “cutting off.”

אֶשְׂמִדְךָ

I will destroy you.<sup>1339</sup>

וַיֵּדַעַת כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה:

And you will know that I (am) YHWH!

**Against Moab (25:8-11)<sup>1340</sup>**

1339

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Ammon will never rise again as a nation. It is noteworthy that **Jeremiah 49:6** predicts the return of Ammonite captives to their country. Perhaps two invasions of Ammon were predicted, that by Ezekiel being the later.” (P. 169)

49:6 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן

And afterwards I will cause to return Ammon’s children’s captivity.

נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

(It is) a saying of YHWH.

See end-note 7 for all of the passages in the **Hebrew Bible** concerning YHWH’s restorations of captivity / fortunes.

1340

Rabbi Fisch entitles **verses 8-11** “Against Moab.” He comments that “Like Ammon [Moab was] a kindred people to Israel. Their country was situated east of the Dead Sea. There was constant strife between the two nations, and Moab joined in the attack upon Judah by the Babylonians, **2 Kings 24:2**,

וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה בּוֹ אֶת־גְּדוּדֵי כַּשְׂדִּים

And YHWH sent against him marauding bands of *khasdiym* / Chaldeans,

וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי אַרָם וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי מוֹאָב

and marauding bands of Aram / Syria, and marauding bands of Moab,

וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן

and marauding bands of Ammon’s children.

וַיִּשְׁלַחֵם בִּיהוּדָה לְהַאֲבִידוֹ

And He sent them against Judah, to destroy it,

כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר

according to YHWH’s word which He spoke

(continued...)

25:8 כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

יֵעַן אָמַר מוֹאָב וְשֵׁעִיר

Because of Moab and Seir's<sup>1341</sup> saying

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<sup>1340</sup>(...continued)

בְּיַד עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים:

by (the) hand of His servants / slaves the prophets.

Reimer comments that “Although the indictment [against Moab] is very brief, the insult to [YHWH] behind the belittling of Judah (**verse 8**) can still be discerned.” (P. 1536)

Hilmer notes that Moab was located “immediately to the south of Ammon, east of the Dead Sea.” (P. 1261) For other biblical passages concerning Moab, see **Isaiah 15-16; Jeremiah 48: Amos 2:1-3** and **Zephaniah 2:8-11**.

Darr states that like Ammon, “Moab also emerged at the beginning of the Iron Age, prior to Israel’s arrival in Transjordan. Its land lay east of the Dead Sea. The northern border of Moab fluctuated with the nation’s fortunes. At times it extended as far as just north of the Dead Sea. During periods of weakness, however, it moved south as much as twenty-five miles, to the Arnon River. Its southern boundary was the Zered Brook, with Edom lying to its south. **Deuteronomy 2:9** prohibits Israelite intrusion into Moab territory, also Yahweh’s gift to Lot’s descendants. According to **Joshua 13:15-23**, however, Moses allotted the land lying north of the Arnon to the transjordanian tribe of Reuben...

“**Deuteronomy 23:3-6** betrays Israel’s extreme animosity toward the Moabites (and Ammonites), excluding these peoples from Yahweh’s assembly to the tenth generation.” (P. 218)

<sup>1341</sup>

Rabbi Fisch notes that “Seir stands for ‘Edom.’ They are mentioned together probably because they were allies in support of Babylon. A specific denunciation of Edom follows in **verse 12**.” (P. 170)

Reimer notes that the phrase “Moab and Seir” is “lacking in the **Septuagint [Rahlfs]**” and “is surprising here and may be the result of a copyist’s error. Seir is consistently identified with Edom in the **Old Testament**, but nowhere else with Moab. It is not mentioned in the judgment of **verses 9-11**.” (P. 1536)

(continued...)

הִנֵּה כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם בֵּית יְהוּדָה:

Look–(the) house of Judah (is) like all the nations!<sup>1342</sup>

25:9 לָכֵן הִנְנִי פֹתַח אֶת־כַּתְּף מוֹאָב

Therefore, look at Me–opening Moab’s shoulder / side,<sup>1343</sup>

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<sup>1341</sup>(...continued)

Hilmer notes that “Seir [is] Edom, a country south of Moab and south of the Dead Sea ([for other passages concerning Seit / Edom], see **Ezekiel 35**, especially **verse 15; 36:5; Isaiah 34:5-17; 63:1-6; Jeremiah 49:7-11** and **Amos 1:11-12**).” (P. 1261)

1342

Seir joined with Moab is claiming that “the house of Judah is like all the nations.” Rabbi Fisch comments that “They taunted the afflicted Judeans with being no different from other nations and mocked their claim to be a people chosen by God.” (P. 170)

Hilmer comments that “Israel wanted to be like the nations (see **20:32**), but when the nations saw Judah in her apparent vulnerability and lost their awe of her, they failed to take her God [YHWH] seriously.” (P. 1261) Compare **Lamentations 4:12**,

לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ מְלְכֵי־אֲרָץ

Kings did not believe / have confidence

(וְכָל) [כָּל] יֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל

all those inhabiting (the) earth,

כִּי יָבֹא צָר וְאוֹיֵב

that an adversary and an enemy would enter

בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:

into Jerusalem’s gates–

Darr comments that “”Being ‘like the nations’ is never an option for Israel, a people singled out as Yahweh’s possession.” (P. 222)

1343

Rabbi Fisch’s translation has “the flank of Moab.” He comments that “God will expose Moab to attack by invaders who will penetrate the fortified cities on the frontiers and overrun the whole country. The three towns named were the fortresses upon which Moab relied for security. Beth-jeshimoth was situated in the south of the Plains of Moab, to the northeast of the Dead Sea. It is mentioned in **Numbers 33:49; Joshua 12:3; 13:20**. Baal-meon is more fully named Beth-baal-meon in **Joshua 13:17**. It

(continued...)

מִתְּעָרִים מְעָרָיו מִקְצֵהוּ

from the cities—from its cities, from its border--

צְבִי אֶרֶץ

(the) beauty / honor of (the) land--

בֵּית הַיְשִׁימוֹת בְּעַל מְעוֹן (וְקִרְיַתְמָה) [וְקִרְיַתְיָמָה]:

Beth Yeshiymoth, Baal Meon, and Qiryathayemah,<sup>1344</sup>

25:10 לְבָנֵי-קָדָם עַל-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן

to (the) children of (the) east,<sup>1345</sup> above / in addition to (the) children of Ammon.<sup>1346</sup>

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<sup>1343</sup>(...continued)

is located by the Dead Sea a few miles inland, with Kiriathaim to its south. Both Baal-meon and Kiriathaim occur in Mesha's inscription on the Moabite Stone." (P. 170)

Hilmer notes that the "flank of Moab" is referring to "Lower hills rising from the Dead Sea, visible from Jerusalem." (P. 1261)

<sup>1344</sup>

Reimer notes that "These place names are known from sources outside the **Bible**. Although not leading cities themselves, they form a direct line pointing to Dibon and Aroer in the Moabite heartland." (P. 1536)

Hilmer notes that Beth Jeshimoth was "a town in the plains of Maob...Baal Meon was a major Moabite town mentioned in an inscribed monument of Mesha, king of Moab... Kiriathaim was a city also mentioned in the Mesha inscription (compare **2 Kings 3:4-5**)." (P. 1261)

Darr states that "The three cities mentioned are located north of the Arnon River, in land Israel regarded as its own. According to **Joshua 13**, Beth-jeshimoth (**Joshua 13:20**), Baal-meon (Joshua 13:18) were it is called by its full name, 'Beth-baal-meon,' and Kiriathaim (**Joshua 13:9**) lay within the land allotted to the Transjordanian tribe of Reuben. For that reason, perhaps, Ezekiel refers to them as 'the glory of the land'...

"Despite Israel's long-lived territorial disputes with Moab, Ezekiel's oracle does not promise to give the latter's land to the Israelites. To the contrary, as in the first oracle against Ammon (**verse 4**), Yahweh will give Moab's land to the people of the east." (P. 222)

<sup>1345</sup>

(continued...)

וְנָתַתִּיהָ לְמוֹרָשָׁה

And I will give it for a possession,

לְמַעַן לֹא־תִזְכָּר בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן בְּגוֹיִם:

in order that (the) children of Ammon will not be remembered among the nations.<sup>1347</sup>

25:11 וּבְמוֹאָב אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים

And I will do / make judgments against Moab--

וַיָּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה:

and they will know that I (am) YHWH.<sup>1348</sup>

### Against Edom (25:12-14)<sup>1349</sup>

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<sup>1345</sup>(...continued)

For “the people of the east” see **verse 4**.

1346

Rabbi Fisch’s translation has “together with the children of Ammon,” and he comments that “Moab will suffer the same fate as Ammon. Rashi connects this verse with the opening words of the preceding verse: *I will open*. God will open the fortified cities of Moab through which the armies of the children of the east will march on to Ammon.” (P. 170)

1347

Rabbi Fisch comments that “The children of the east will destroy the Ammonites and then do likewise to the Moabites.” (P. 170) Yes...but see end-note 7 where it is affirmed that YHWH will restore the fortune / captivity of both Ammon and Moab. What do you think is the final word of YHWH concerning these two countries? Destruction, or Restoration? And if the same thing is said concerning the worst whore-cities in history—Sodom, and Samaria, and Jerusalem—cannot the same thing be affirmed concerning all cities and peoples?

1348

Yes, the final word concerning Moab is that she will know YHWH—and knowing YHWH is the finest thing that can ever happen to any people!

1349

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Edom was nearer in kinship to Israel than Ammon and Moab, being descendants of Esau [Jacob’s brother] (**Genesis 36:43**, a lengthy verse that ends with the phrase,  
(continued...)

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<sup>1349</sup>(...continued)

הוא עֵשָׂו אָבִי אֲדוֹם:

He is Esau, father of Edom.

“Their hostility to Judea in the time of crisis is frequently condemned in strong language.” (Pp.

172) Compare **Obadiah 10-14**,

10 מִחַמַּס אֶחָיִךְ יַעֲקֹב

From / because of violence (to) your brother Jacob,

תִּכְסֶּה בּוֹשָׁה

shame will cover you.

וְנִכְרַת לְעוֹלָם:

and you will be cut off to long-lasting time!

11 בְּיוֹם עֲמֻדְךָ מִנְּגֵד

On a day of your standing in front of / opposite,

בְּיוֹם שְׁבוּת זָרִים חִילוֹ

on a day of strangers taking captive his army / treaure;

וְנִכְרָיִם בָּאוּ (שְׁעָרָיו) [שְׁעָרָיו]

and foreigners entered his gates,

וְעַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם יָדוּ גוֹרָל

and over Jerusalem they threw dice / lots—

גַּם-אַתָּה כְּאַחַד מֵהֶם:

also you (singular) (were) like one of them!

12 וְאַל-תִּרְא בְּיוֹם-אֶחָיִךְ

And do not look / observe on your brother’s day,

בְּיוֹם נִכְרוֹ

on a day of his misfortune;

וְאַל-תִּשְׂמַח לְבְנֵי-יְהוּדָה בְּיוֹם אֲבָדָם

and do not rejoice at Judah’s children on a day of their destruction;

וְאַל-תִּגְדֵּל פִּיךָ בְּיוֹם צָרָה:

and do not make your mouth great on a day of distress.

1:13 אַל-תִּבּוֹא בְּשַׁעַר-עַמִּי בְּיוֹם אִיָּדָם

And do not enter My people’s gate on a day of their calamity.

אַל-תִּרְא גַם-אַתָּה בְּרַעַתוֹ בְּיוֹם אִידוֹ

Do not look / observe, even you, at his injury / distress, on a day of his calamity.

(continued...)

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<sup>1349</sup>(...continued)

וְאַל־תִּשְׁלַחְנָה בְּחֵילוֹ בְּיוֹם אִידוֹ:

And do not loot (?) his wealth on a day of his calamity.

1:14 וְאַל־תַּעֲמֹד עַל־הַפְּרָק

And do not stand upon the crossroad,

לְהַכְרִית אֶת־פְּלִיטָיו

to cut off his escaped ones!

וְאַל־תִּסְגֵּר שְׂרִידָיו בְּיוֹם צָרָה:

And do not hand over his survivors on a day of distress!

**Psalm 137:7,**

זְכֹר יְהוָה לְבָנֵי אֲדוֹם

Remember, YHWH, Edom's children / people,

אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים

(on) Jerusalem's day, those saying,

עָרוֹ עָרוֹ עַד הִסּוֹד בָּהּ:

Lay it bare! Lay it bare—as far as the foundation in it!

Reimer comments that “The intense hatred felt for Edom by later Judeans is amply attested in the **Old Testament**, e.g., **Psalm 137:7**; **Jeremiah 49:7-22**; **Lamentations 4:21-22**. In the **Old Testament**, Edom often serves as the chief representative of hostility to [YHWH] and His people. The accusation of taking vengeance (**Ezekiel 25:12**) coheres with this wider picture...

“The locations of the cities Teman and Dedan are not certain, but the suggestion that they represent the extremities of Edom (‘from...to’) makes good sense. Assigning ‘My people Israel’ (**verse 14**) to be the agent of [YHWH’s] wrath is not paralleled elsewhere in **Ezekiel**, but it does have the ring of poetic justice against this traditional foe.” (P. 1537)

Darr comments that “The Edomites occupied territory south of the Dead Sea, from the Zered Brook to the Gulf of Aqaba. According to **Genesis 36:31-39**, eight kings ruled Edom before Israel established its monarchy...

“Like its neighbors, Edom became an Assyrian vassal. After a century of subservience to that empire, it submitted to the yoke of Babylonia...According to certain biblical texts (e.g., **Psalm 137:7**; **Lamentations 4:21**; **Obadiah 10-14**), Edom took advantage of Judah’s demise, gloating over Jerusalem’s destruction, looting the city, refusing its refugees, and grabbing Judean territory.” (Pp. 218-219)

Darr adds, “Edom’s transgression is expressed in a single emphatic verse. Because it has acted vengefully against the nation of Judah, committing an irreparable offense in taking vengeance upon  
(continued...)

25:12 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

יַעַן עָשׂוֹת אֲדוֹם בְּנִקְמָם נִקְמָם

Because of Edom's action in taking vengeance

לְבַיִת יְהוּדָה

to against (the) house of Judah;

וַיִּאֲשָׁמוּ אֲשׁוֹם וַנִּקְמָמוּ בָהֶם:

and they truly offended and avenged themselves against them--<sup>1350</sup>

25:13 לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

therefore in this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

וְנִטַּחְתִּי יָדִי עַל-אֲדוֹם

And I will stretch out My Hand against Edom;

וְהִכַּרְתִּי מִמֶּנָּה אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה

and I will cut off from it human(s) and animal(s).

וְנָתַתִּיהָ חֲרָבָה מִתִּימָן וּדְדָנָה

And I will give / make it a waste / desolation from Teyman and Dhedhaneh--<sup>1351</sup>

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<sup>1349</sup>(...continued)

them...therefore Yahweh...will stretch out 'His' Hand against it...slaying its population—both human and animal—and rendering it a desolation...If Ezekiel proclaimed these words to his fellow exiles, then they move beyond the current catastrophe to a time when God's people will be reconstituted as a powerful nation." (P. 223)

<sup>1350</sup>

Hilmer explains that Edom took revenge "by not harboring Judah's refugees after 586 B.C.E." (P. 1261)

<sup>1351</sup>

(continued...)

בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ:

with the sword they will fall.

25:14 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־נִקְמָתִי בְּאֵדוֹם

And I will give / place My vengeance against Edom,

בְּיַד עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

by (the) hand of My people Israel.<sup>1352</sup>

וַעֲשׂוּ בְּאֵדוֹם כְּאַפִּי וְכַחֲמָתִי

And they will do / act in Edom according to My anger and according to My wrath.

וַיֵּדְעוּ אֶת־נִקְמָתִי

And they will know My vengeance--

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<sup>1351</sup>(...continued)

Rabbi Fisch's translation has "from Teman, even unto Dedan." He comments that "The former [Teman] was a district in the extreme north of Edom called after Esau's grandson (**Genesis 36:11**); while the latter [Dedan] was in the extreme south. The meaning is, therefore, that the entire country will be ravaged (compare **Obadiah 18**)." (P. 171)

18 וְהָיָה בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ

And Jacob's house will be a fire;

וּבֵּית יוֹסֵף לְהָבָה

And Joseph's house a flame;

וּבֵּית עֵשָׂו לְקֶשׁ

and Esau's house for stubble / kindling.

וַדִּלְקוּ בָהֶם וַאֲכָלוּם

and they will burn among them and consume them!

וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה שְׂרִיד לְבֵּית עֵשָׂו

And there will not be a survivor to / of Esau's house!

כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:

Because YHWH has spoken!

<sup>1352</sup>

Rabbi Fisch comments that "The Edomites were finally defeated and incorporated in the Jewish State by the Maccabees." (P. 171)

נֹאם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה:

(it is) a saying of my Lord YHWH.

Against Philistia (25:15-17)<sup>1353</sup>

1353

Rabbi Fisch comments that “The Philistines, who inhabited the southern coast of the holy land [west of Judah], are believed to have come from the island of Crete and also known under the name of Cerethim. The designation ‘the Cherethites and the Pelethites’ (compare **2 Samuel 8:18**) is assumed to have been that of a bodyguard of king David consisting of Philistines. Hence the dual name *Kerethi Pelethi*. The hostile acts of the Philistines against Israel at various periods were of such ferocity as to be capable of being committed only by an outraged people seeking vengeance. For Philistine cruelties towards Judea at the time of the fall of Jerusalem, compare **Joel 4:4-8**.” (P. 171)

- 4 וְגַם מֶה־אַתֶּם לִי  
And also, what are you to Me,  
צֹר וְצִידוֹן וְכָל גְּלִילוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים  
Tyre and Sidon and all regions / circles of Philistia?  
הֲגִמּוּל אַתֶּם מִשְׁלָמִים עָלַי  
Are you repaying Me for My deed / benefit?  
וְאִם־גִּמְלִים אַתֶּם עָלַי  
And if you are dealing out to Me,  
קָל מִהֲרָה אָשִׁיב גִּמְלָתְךָ בְּרֹאשְׁךָ:  
swiftly, quickly I will return your deed on your head.
- 5 אֲשֶׁר־כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב לָקַחְתֶּם  
Because My silver and My gold you have taken  
וּמַחְמְדֵי הַטֹּבִים הֵבֵאתֶם לְהִיכָלֵיכֶם:  
and My good, precious things you have brought to your temples.
- 6 וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
And Judah's children and Jerusalem's children,  
מְכַרְתֶּם לְבְנֵי הַיּוֹנִים  
you have sold to the children of Greece  
לְמַעַן הֲרַחֲקֶם מֵעַל גְּבוּלְךָ:  
in order that you might remove them far from your border.
- 7 הִנְנִי מְעִירָם מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתָם שָׁמָּה  
Look at Me! I am stirring them up from the place where you sold them

(continued...)

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<sup>1353</sup>(...continued)

וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי גְּמֻלָּתְכֶם בְּרֹאשְׁכֶם:

and I will return your deed on your head.

4:8 וּמְכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם בְּיַד בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה

And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the children of Judah's hand;

וּמְכָרוּם לְשָׂבָאִים

and they will sell them to the people of Sheba,

אֶל־גּוֹי רְחוֹק

to a nation far away.

כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:

For YHWH has spoken!

Reimer comments that “Philistia had already been subdued by Nebuchadnezzar before the campaigns against Judah. It was thus not in a position to be part of the conspiracy planned in Zedekiah’s day (see **verses 1-17**). This oracle is very much an echo of the preceding one. The Cherethites (**verse 16**) were coastal dwellers, identified with the Philistines also in **Zephaniah 2:5**. Use of their name also provides a pun on their punish-ment: in the phrase ‘cut off the Cherethites,’ the verb and the proper noun both have the same three consonants (k-r-t) in their root (Hebrew: אֶת־כְּרִתִּים).” (P. 1537)

Hilmer notes that the Philistines “strove for control of Canaan until subdued by David. Their hostility to Israel continued, however (see **Isaiah 14:29-31**; **Jeremiah 47**; **Anmos 1:6-8**; **Zephaniah 2:4-7**), until Nebuchadnezzar deported them.” (P. 1261)

Darr comments that “Biblical tradition traces the Philistines’ origins to Crete, a datum not substantiated by archaeology. Repelled by the Egyptians, these ‘People of the Sea’ settled along the western coastal plain of Palestine, capturing the cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Gaza, and founding Ekron to create an alliance of five city-states (Pentapolis).” (P. 219)

Darr adds that “The Philistines, Ezekiel charges, espied in Judah’s destruction a moment ripe for revenge, and so acted with heartfelt malice to settle ancient scores...Again the prophet resorts to holy war language to forecast that Yahweh’s Hand will be stretched out against the Philistines to their destruction...Vengeance breeds even greater vengeance. **Verse 17a** proclaims in no uncertain terms Yahweh’s determination to execute wrathful punishments on them...When the Philistines experience it, they will ‘know that I am Yahweh’—that is, recognize that Israel’s Deity is at work in the historical experience of their own demise.” (Pp. 223-224)

25:15 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

יֵעַן עֲשׂוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּנִקְמָה

Because of (the) Philistines doing / acting with vengeance--

וַיִּנְקְמוּ נֶקֶם בְּשֹׂאֵט בְּנַפְשׁ

and they truly took vengeance with contempt in (their) innermost-being,

לְמַשְׁחִית אֵיבַת עוֹלָם:

to destroy (with) long-lasting enmity--<sup>1354</sup>

25:16 לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה

therefore in this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

הִנְנִי נוֹטֵה יָדִי עַל-פְּלִשְׁתִּים

Look at Me, stretching out My hand against (the) Philistines;

וְהִכַּרְתִּי אֶת-כְּרֶתִים

and I will cut off (the) Kerethiym / Cretans;<sup>1355</sup>

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1354

It should be noticed that what YHWH is depicted as condemning in Philistia, is exactly what YHWH is depicted as commanding the Israelites to do in **Exodus 17:14-16!** How do you explain this?

1355

See **Zephaniah 2:5**,

הוֹי יוֹשְׁבֵי חֶבְלֵי הַיָּם

Alas / woe--(to) those inhabiting (the) territory / band of the Sea,

גוֹי כְּרֶתִים

nation / people of **kerethim** / Kerethites / Cretans / Philistines!

דְּבַר-יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם כְּנֹעַן

YHWH's word (is) against you (plural), Canaan / Trader(s)--

אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים

land of Philistines!

(continued...)

וְהִאַבְדֵּתִי אֶת־שְׂאֲרֵי תְּחֻף הַיָּם:

and I will destroy (the) remnant of the sea-coast.<sup>1356</sup>

25:17 וְעָשִׂיתִי בָם נִקְמֹת גְּדֹלוֹת

And I will do / execute against them great vengeance,

בְּתוֹכָחוֹת חֵמָה

with reproofs of rage.

וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה

And they will know that I (am) YHWH,

בְּתַתִּי אֶת־נִקְמָתִי בָם:

when I give / place My vengeance against them.<sup>1357</sup>

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<sup>1355</sup>(...continued)

וְהִאַבְדֵּתִיךְ

And I will destroy you (feminine singular)--

מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב:

(literally) from not being an inhabitant!

Hilmer comments that the Kerethites were “related to, if not identical with, the Philistines (see **1 Samuel 30:14; 2 Samuel 8:18; 15:18; 20:7**).” (P. 1261)

<sup>1356</sup>

Rabbi Fisch comments that “The part of the coast [of the Mediterranean], so far spared in the overthrow of Judah, will be utterly destroyed.” (P. 172)

<sup>1357</sup>

Reflecting over **chapter 25**, Darr asks, “What are we to make of this avenging and wrathful God Whose plan for Israel’s enemies is largely motivated by Self-vindication? We are not surprised that Ezekiel would look to the nations through the lens of Yahweh’s unparalleled power and control over history. He has consistently and adamantly read Israel’s experience from that perspective; and we cannot imagine that he would ascribe to (the Deities of) other nations any ability to thwart that plan. At the same time, however, we are called to struggle with (against?) Ezekiel’s notion that the Lord’s method of choice for dealing with offending people is to wipe them out, so that they are ‘remembered no more among the nations’ (**25:10**). Christian readers may be tempted to ‘run around’ the prophet’s world view, taking refuge in Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. But avoiding difficult biblical texts is no answer. When  
(continued...)

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<sup>1357</sup>(...continued)

a prophet—ancient or modern—proclaims, ‘Thus says the Lord,’ we are free neither to accept his or her words unreflectively nor to reject them out of hand. In a world where wars continue to be fought in God’s Name, we are responsible for engaging in difficult conversations and making hard choices. Even as we understand why Ezekiel spoke as he did, we must listen (an active, not a passive, activity) for God’s Word for our day.

“Ezekiel’s oracles against the nations present one side of complex and poignant stories. He has nothing to say about Israel’s long-lived hostilities toward its kin / neighbors / enemies. He casts other nations as the ‘bad guys,’ and does not acknowledge that both parties (e.g., Israel and Ammon, Israel and Edom) likely did their share to fan the flames of hatred. The desire for possessions has ripped apart many a familial tie. The kinship connection that binds Israel to Ammon, Moab, and especially Edom, reminds us of just how virulent inter-family feuds can be. The history of Jewish and Christian relations warns us of the consequences of placing God on one side or another.” (P. 226)