

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 61

November 13, 2016



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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel
Message Sixty One

THE PROPHECY AGAINST SIDON

November 13, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 28:20-26

²⁰And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²¹Son of man, set thy face toward Sidon, and prophesy against it, ²²and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Sidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. ²³For I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. ²⁴And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor a hurting thorn of any that are round about them, that did despite unto them; and they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

²⁵Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations, then shall they dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. ²⁶And they shall dwell securely therein; yea, they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and shall dwell securely, when I have executed judgments upon all those that do them despite round about them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God (ASV, 1901).

GOD'S CHARGE TO EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 28:20-21

²⁰And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²¹Son of man, set thy face toward Sidon, and prophesy against it (ASV, 1901),

Once again God comes to Ezekiel and instructs him to purposefully prophecy against an enemy of Israel. By saying *set thy face toward Sidon* God is saying to intensively and not carelessly that is, to seriously proclaim a judgment for the evil they have done. Similar words were given to Amos to show how intense God's judgments can be.

Amos 9:4

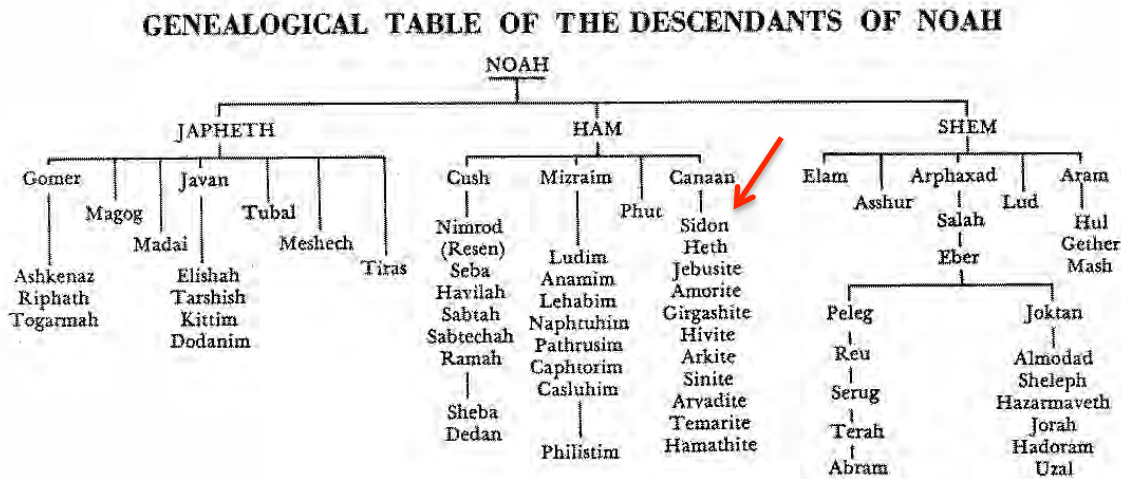
⁴And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good (ASV, 1901).

It is important to capture the strength of God's attitude toward the Sidonians as He brings this prophecy to Ezekiel. This is divine providential vindication.

The Lord is executing Divine judgments against nations that have risen up against Israel many times as their adversaries. This time it is Sidon. The Sidonian's presence posed a constant spiritual as well as physical danger to Israel's relationship to God and added to the frustration of the Divine plan for the nation Israel.

THE ORIGIN OF SIDON'S SIN

Sidon was a great grandson of Noah through Ham. His father Canaan had received a curse from God after the flood.



Genesis 9:20-27

²⁰And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard: ²¹and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. ²³And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. ²⁴And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. ²⁵And he said, Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. ²⁶And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant (ASV, 1901).

Noah has been given a new occupation of farmer (husbandman) and he planted a vineyard (Genesis 9: 20). Noah drank of the wine, became drunk and as a result was unclothed in his tent. The Hebrew verb form describes the uncovering as being done by Noah himself. Frequently drunkenness leads to nakedness (Lamentations 4: 21; Habakkuk 2: 15). Scripture warns us to be sober and vigilant because our adversary the Devil walks about seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5: 8). The text next describes the sin of Ham and his youngest son Canaan.

Ham who is cited here as the father of Canaan, committed a sexual sin of some sort. Many opinions have been offered up as to what that sin just might have been. They include:

1. Ham castrated Noah to prevent him from having any more children
2. He had or allowed Canaan to have homosexual relations with Noah

3. They viewed Noah's nakedness with impure thoughts, failed to cover Noah, and told others what they saw deriding Noah

Whatever the exact nature of the sexual sin was Noah cursed it. He was disgraced as a result of this sin. The curse fell on Canaan and he developed Ham's characteristics. This clearly demonstrates that the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons (Exodus 20: 5, 34: 6-7; I Kings 14: 22; II Kings 15: 9; Nehemiah 9: 2; Daniel 9: 16; etc.). However, Noah was not punishing Ham's son for something *Ham* did. Instead, Noah's curse was making reference to the nation of Canaanites that would come from Ham through Canaan. Ham's sexual sin could not be left without repercussions. A humiliation equal to what was done had to be carried out according to the principle of retributive justice. Ham had made an irreparable breach in his *father's* family; so therefore a curse of like measure needed to be placed on his *son's* family. The result of the curse was that Canaan was to be a servant of servants to his brother's progeny (Genesis 9: 26). This has been obvious throughout the Bible. The term "servant of servants" is called a superlative genitive in the Hebrew and means the most abject slavery. The offspring of Ham and Canaan in later years became just that to the offspring of his brothers Shem and Japheth (I Kings 9: 20-21). The enslavement of Canaanites is seen in many situations in the history of the Old Testament. The Canaanites were defeated and enslaved by eastern kings (non-Jewish Shemites Genesis 14: 4). Another example was the Gibeonites who later under Joshua became woodchoppers and water carriers for Israel's tabernacle (Joshua 9:27). The Canaanites became servants to the Jews who descended from Shem.

The Phoenicians (Sidonians) became servants to the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans all of whom descended from Japheth. The subjugation of Canaan to Japheth's line would end with the Battle of Carthage (146 B.C.) where the Phoenicians (who were Canaanites) were finally defeated. The text (Genesis 9: 26) then moves on to state a blessing and a cursing. Shem is blessed with knowing Jehovah. He would have the very oracles of God imparted to him (Romans 3: 2) and the Seed of the Woman would come through him. Abraham the first Hebrew and Jesus came through the line of Shem (I Chronicles 1: 24-28; Luke 3: 36). Canaan is cursed as being the servant to the Shemites.

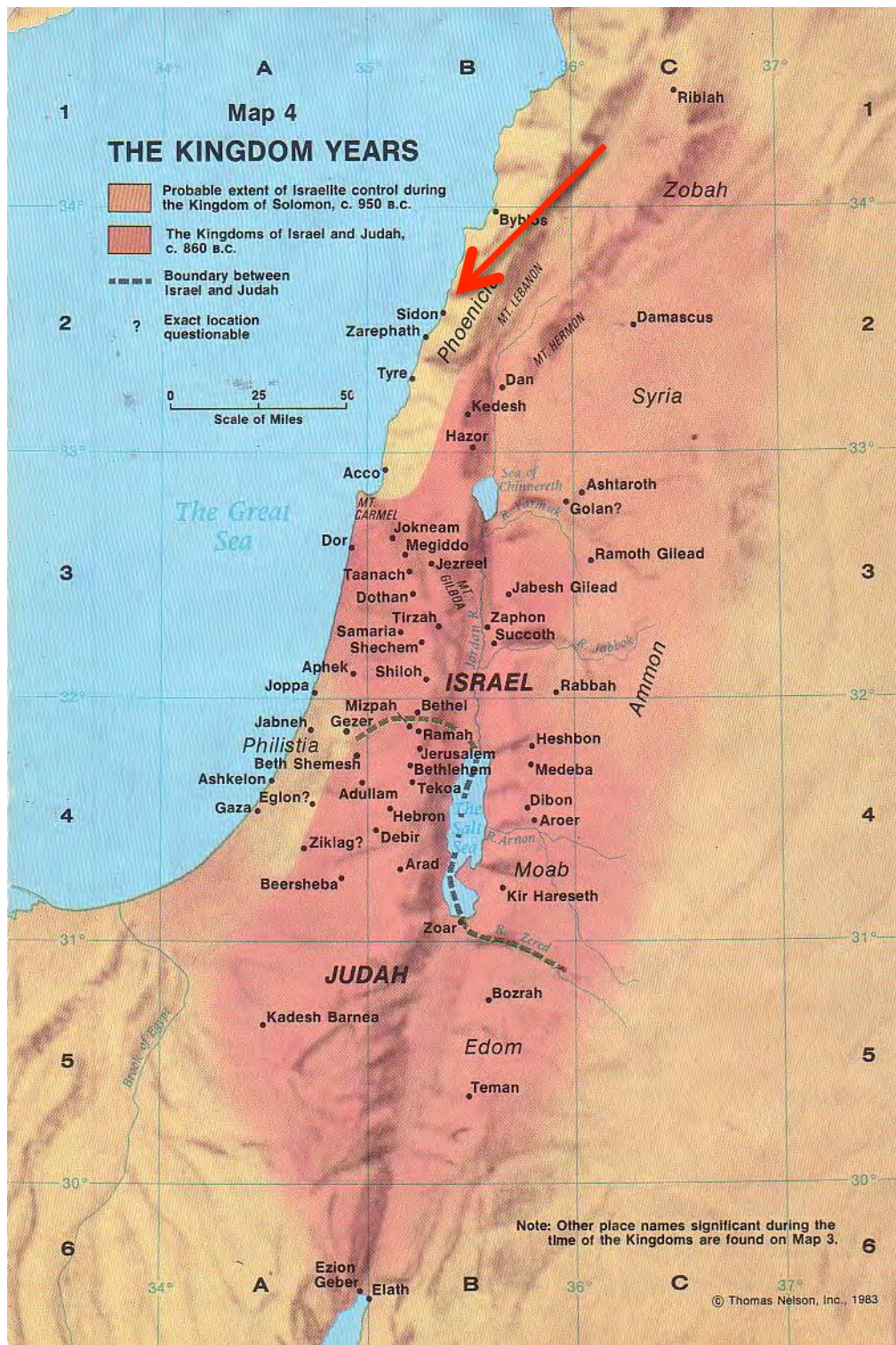
This curse is now seen being formally given to the Sidonians through Ezekiel. The ancient Phoenician city of Sidon, situated 25 miles north of Tyre, plays a considerable role in biblical literature. It came to stand for Phoenicia in general (SCHMITZ 1992:17). LEWY has argued that the city bears the name of the demon *Šīdānu* known from the Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal (1934).¹

Many gods were worshiped at Sidon. The chief male deity was Eshmun, a god of healing, to whom a large temple had been built. The principal goddess was Astarte, who was well known throughout Palestine in the Israelite period. Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab, king of Israel, was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon. She fostered the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth in Israel (I Kings 16:31-33).²

¹ Van der Toorn, K. (1999). Sidon. In B. Becking & P. W. van der Horst (Eds.), *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible* (2nd extensively rev. ed., p. 777). Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans.

² Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (p. 1961). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

The level of evil that emanated from Sidon was exorbitant and unrestrained. God is always fully justified in taking His vengeance on sin. He judges according to His righteousness and in the appropriate measure.



From: http://www.sheltonstate.edu/faculty_staff/faculty_website_directory/boeing_chuck/western_civ.aspx

Ezekiel 28:22-24

²²and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Sidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. ²³For I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, ²⁴And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor a hurting thorn of any that are round about them, that did despite unto them; and they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah. (ASV, 1901).

Interestingly God does not cite the specific sins of Sidon as He did with Tyre. It is also the only passage in the Old Testament that treats Sidon independently of Tyre. Perhaps it was because of the close association of the two cities it would have been repetitious to do so. She had violated God's holy nature since the curse He gave them through Noah after the Flood. Therefore Sidon would not remain unpunished. God's judgment would be by a plague and the sword. The overall result would be for them to acknowledge God's righteous character and fully realize that their wickedness would come to an end and God would be vindicated. This judgment would remove an obstacle to Israel's faithfulness to God. The Sidonians influence on Israel is characterized as a *pricking brier unto the house of Israel*, and a *hurting thorn*. The Lord affirms His sovereignty again by saying that *they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah*.

GOD PROMISES TO PLACE ISRAEL IN HER LAND IN PEACE

Ezekiel 28:25-26

²⁵Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations, then shall they dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. ²⁶And they shall dwell securely therein; yea, they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and shall dwell securely, when I have executed judgments upon all those that do them despite round about them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God (ASV, 1901).

These two verses provide a promise of future blessing to Israel. This promise appears in the center of the oracles against the nations. God always assures of His love and faithfulness to Israel. This short section provides a welcome pause between announcements of woe to the Gentile nations and relief to Israel for finally being rid of their antagonizers.

God never leaves His punishment as the last word among his people. Instead, His desire is to bring His people back to Himself in full restorative relationship to Him. These verses draw from these covenant assurances, especially Deuteronomy 30:1–10.

Apart from the explicitly named conditions, God will gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered. Since this oracle is given as assurance to those in exile, "the people of Israel" refers to all those whom God gathers back to the land which he gave to his servant Jacob. This is also true of the regathering from the 1800's.

That promised territory is what was originally promised in the Abrahamic Covenant “My servant Jacob” The purpose of this regathering is not simply for Israel’s sake, but so that God may show himself holy among them in the sight of the nations. This reiterates God’s purpose in establishing Israel as a nation at Mount Sinai. They were to be his “treasured possession,” “a kingdom of priests,” and “a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5–6) so that those throughout the whole earth might know what it was to live under the loving sovereignty and blessings of God.

The permanent restoration to their land will be in the Millennial Kingdom based upon the covenant promises and conditions mentioned in Leviticus 25:18–19 and Deuteronomy 8:1–20. God had once promised them safety from their enemies as they entered the land (Deuteronomy 7:17–24). Now He assures them of the promises He made regarding the geographic description of the land they will receive to live in in complete peace and safety.

Exodus 6:7-8

⁷And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸And I will bring you in unto the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Genesis 15:18-21

¹⁸In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, ²⁰and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, ²¹and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite (ASV, 1901).

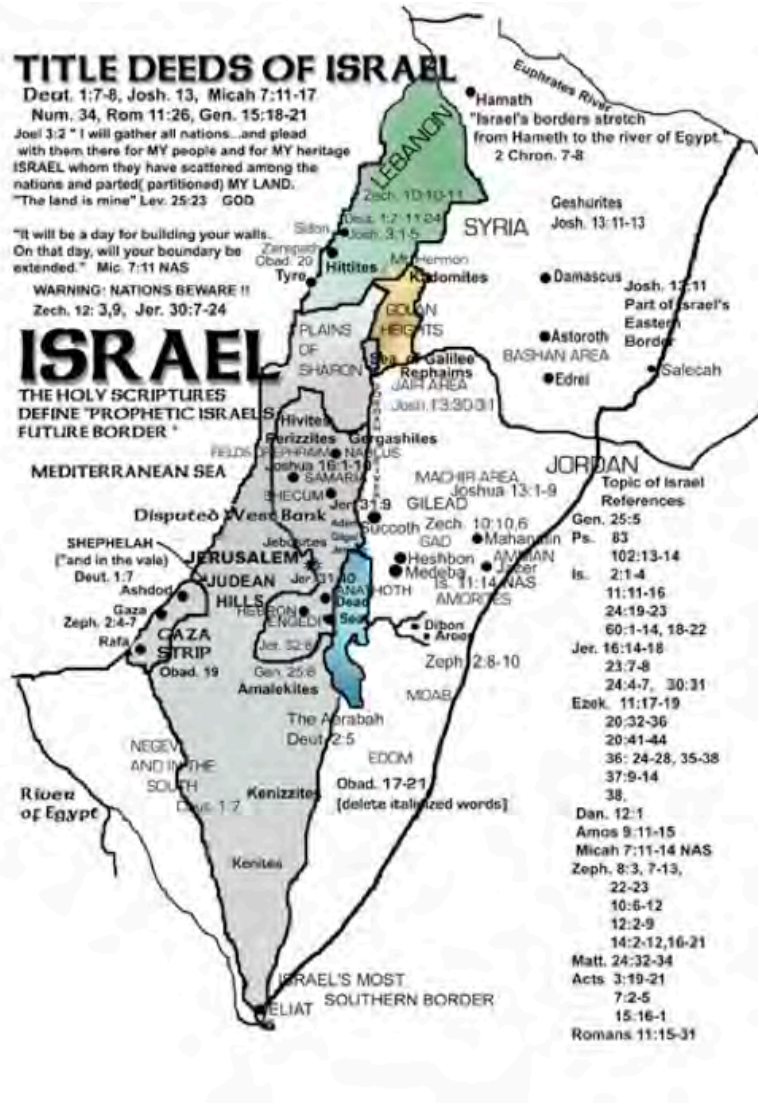
Leviticus 25:23

²³And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me (ASV, 1901).

Numbers 34:1-12

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, ²Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to the borders thereof), ³then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the side of Edom, and your south border shall be from the end of the Salt Sea eastward; ⁴and your border shall turn about southward of the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass along to Zin; and the goings out thereof shall be southward of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall go forth to Hazar-addar, and pass along to Azmon; ⁵and the border shall turn about from Azmon unto the brook of Egypt, and the goings out thereof shall be at the sea. ⁶And for the western border, ye shall have the great sea and the border thereof: this shall be your

west border. ⁷And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall mark out for you mount Hor; ⁸from mount Hor ye shall mark out unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings out of the border shall be at Zedad; ⁹and the border shall go forth to Ziphron, and the goings out thereof shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border. ¹⁰And ye shall mark out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham; ¹¹and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward; ¹²and the border shall go down to the Jordan, and the goings out thereof shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land according to the borders thereof round about (ASV, 1901).



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NEXT MESSAGE: THE PROPHECY AGAINST THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT
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