

Ezekiel Part 32 (Ezekiel 25:1-7)

Judgment on Gentile Nations (chaps. 25–32)

1. Ezekiel turned from Jerusalem to the surrounding Gentile nations.
2. If God would not spare His own people because of their sin, how could the surrounding Gentile nations hope to escape His judgment?
3. God's judgment on these nations is based on the Abrahamic Covenant. (Gen. 12:1–3; 15)
4. Those who bless the descendants of Abraham will be blessed, and those who curse the descendants of Abraham will be cursed.
5. Ezekiel pronounced God's curse on seven countries that contributed to Judah's downfall.
6. The first three—Ammon, Moab, Edom—formed the eastern boundary of Judah; the fourth nation, Philistia, was on her western boundary.
7. Tyre and Sidon, cities of Phoenicia, were the principal powers north of Judah; Egypt was the major power to the southwest. God's judgment would extend out from Judah in all directions.
8. Ezekiel's first four prophecies (against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia) each cited the sin that prompted God's judgment and then described that judgment.
9. Each prophecy closes with a statement of the result of its judgment: then "they will know that I am the Lord."

A. *Judgment on Ammon (25:1–7)*

10. **25:1–2** Ezekiel had already pronounced judgment on Ammon (21:28–32).
11. Now Ammon was singled out to head the list of nations that would feel divine judgment.
12. Ammon and Israel had been in conflict since the time of Jephthah during the period of the Judges. (Judges 10:6–11:33)
13. David conquered Ammon. (1 Chronicles 19:1–20:3)
14. Sometime after the death of Solomon the Ammonites regained their independence and renewed their hostilities with Judah.
15. During Jehoshaphat's reign the Ammonites joined the Moabites and Edomites in an unsuccessful attack on Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:1–30)

16. Ammon tried to expand their territory at Israel's expense (cf. Jeremiah 49:1), and they even sided initially with Nebuchadnezzar in an attempt to gain additional territory. (2 Kings 24:1-2)
17. In 593 B.C. Ammon joined a secret meeting to consider rebelling against Babylon. (Jeremiah 27:1-7)
18. But – the plan did not materialize, then in 588 B.C. they did unite with Judah and Tyre against Babylon.
19. So two ancient enemies, Judah and Ammon, were joined against a common foe.
20. When Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Judah instead of Ammon (Ezekiel 21:18-27), Ammon was relieved that they had been spared.
21. Instead of coming to Judah's aid, she rejoiced over Judah's misfortune, hoping to profit territorially from Judah's destruction.
22. **25:3-7** Twice he repeated his "because/therefore/you will know" formula to show the destruction of Ammon (vv. 3-5, 6-8).
23. Ammon rejoiced over the destruction of the temple and the exile of the people of Judah. The Ammonites gloated over Judah's misfortune (v. 6).
24. God's judgment would fit Ammon's sin. They rejoiced over Judah's downfall so *they* would fall.
25. God would send them to the people of the East, nomadic desert tribesmen, as a possession.

B. Judgment on Moab (25:8-11)

26. The hostility between Moab and Israel began when Balak, king of Moab, tried to oppose Israel as Moses was leading them to Palestine. (Numbers 22-24).
27. During the time of the Judges, Israel was oppressed by Eglon, king of Moab (Jud. 3:12-30).
28. Some Israelites went to Moab during a famine. Through this contact Ruth the Moabitess entered Israel's history and the royal line of David.
29. David conquered Moab and it remained under Israel's control through Solomon's reign. (2 Samuel 8:2)
30. Moab united with Ammon and Edom in an ill-fated attempt to defeat Judah also during Jehoshaphat's reign. (2 Chronicles 20:1-23)
31. Later Moab supported Babylon and attacked Judah after Jehoiakim's revolt. (2 Kings 24:2).
32. 25:8-11. Moab's sin, Ezekiel said, was her contempt for God's people.

God said He would give Moab ... to the people of the East, the same fate as Ammon (cf. v. 4). The nomadic desert tribesmen who would overrun Ammon would also overrun Moab.

C. *Judgment on Edom (25:12–14)*

Like Ammon and Moab, Edom was involved in a long series of conflicts with Israel. The strife actually began when Edom refused to let Israel cross her territory during the time of the wilderness wanderings (cf. Num. 20:14–21). Saul fought the Edomites (1 Sam. 14:47), and David finally captured Edom and made it a vassal state to Israel (2 Sam. 8:13–14). Solomon further exploited Edom and established Elath in Edom as Israel's seaport (cf. 1 Kings 9:26–28); but Edom opposed Solomon during the latter part of his reign (1 Kings 11:14–18). The nation continued as a vassal state after Israel and Judah split, and it was controlled by a governor from Judah till after the time of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:47–48).

In the days of Jehoram (ca. 845 b.c.) Edom successfully rebelled against Judah (2 Kings 8:20–22a) and regained her freedom. Thereafter Judah and Edom struggled to see who would control the vital caravan and shipping routes at the southern end of the Transjordanian highway. Both Amaziah (2 Kings 14:7) and Uzziah (or Azariah, 2 Kings 14:21–22) regained territory that had been lost to Edom, but Edom counterattacked during Ahaz's reign and inflicted a major loss on Judah (2 Chron. 28:17).

Edom became a vassal of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar's stunning defeat of Egypt in 605 b.c. Then in 593 b.c. Edom joined the other conspirators in planning to revolt against Babylon (cf. Jer. 27:1–7), but did not carry out the plan. When Judah revolted in 588 b.c., Edom sided with Babylon and aided Babylon in her assaults on Judah (cf. Ps. 137:7; Jer. 49:7–22).

25:12–14. Ezekiel said Edom's sin was that she **took revenge on the house of Judah**. Edom saw in Judah's conflict with Babylon an opportunity to oppose her rival. If her foe were destroyed then Edom could achieve a place of power at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

Because Edom had aided in Judah's destruction, God said He would aid in her destruction. He would **kill Edom's men and their animals ... from Teman to Dedan**. Teman was a city in central Edom about three miles from Sela, later known as Petra. Dedan was southeast of Edom in northern Arabia. Perhaps Dedan was mentioned here because some Edomites were living there. Edom was conquered by the Nabateans during the intertestamental period. The remnant of the Edomites (also called Idumeans) moved west to the Negev. Later they were forced to become Jewish converts (Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 13. 9. 1). Thus the Edomites lost both their country and their national identity.

God said **Israel** would bring His **vengeance** against the Edomites. As a result the Edomites would come to **know** (experience) His **vengeance**. This differs from what He had said about Ammon and Moab (vv. 7, 11).

D. *Judgment on Philistia (25:15–17)*

The Philistines had been Israel's enemy from the time of the Conquest. Israel had failed to take all the Promised Land because she disobeyed God and because of the Philistines' military superiority on the coastal plain (cf. Jud. 3:1–4). Then the Philistines moved into the hill country in an attempt to control all the territory of Israel. They were opposed by the judges Shamgar (Jud. 3:31), Samson (Jud. 13–16), and Samuel (1 Sam. 7:2–17). Saul's major battles in Israel were designed to check the Philistines' advances on the central Benjamin plateau (1 Sam. 13:1–14:23) and in the Jezreel Valley (1 Sam. 28:1–4; 29:1–2, 11; 31:1–3, 7–10).

David finally subdued the Philistines. After a series of battles early in his reign blunted a Philistine challenge to his kingdom (2 Sam. 5:17–25), David was able to go on the offensive and defeat the

Philistines (2 Sam. 8:1). Philistia remained a vassal country through the reign of Solomon and into the divided monarchy.

The battle between Philistia and Judah was renewed during the divided monarchy as each country tried to control the other. Jehoshaphat was able to dominate Philistia as a vassal state (2 Chron. 17:10–11), but she revolted against his son Jehoram and sacked Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chron. 21:16–17). Uzziah reestablished Judah's control over Philistia (2 Chron. 26:6–7), but Philistia again gained the upper hand in Ahaz's reign (2 Chron 28:16–18).

The feud between Philistia and Judah was halted by Babylon's intervention. Nebuchadnezzar established control over both countries. Yet the rivalry remained. Philistia waited for an opportunity to try again to conquer Judah.

25:15–17. Ezekiel placed his finger on Philistia's underlying sin. She **acted in vengeance and took revenge** (cf. v. 12) **with malice** (cf. v. 6), **and with ancient hostility she sought to destroy Judah**. Philistia's history included a string of attacks on God's Chosen People as they tried to dispossess Israel of the Promised Land.

Because Philistia had tried to destroy Judah, God would destroy her. He would **stretch out His hand** (cf. v. 13) **against the Philistines, and would cut off the Kerethites and destroy those remaining along the seacoast**. "Kerethites" (*kerētîm*) was a synonym for the Philistines (cf. 1 Sam. 30:1–14; Zeph. 2:5). The word might have come from "Crete" which was known as "Caphtor" in Old Testament times (cf. Amos 9:7). Ezekiel used "Kerethites" here instead of "Philistines" to produce an interesting wordplay: God would "cut off" (*hikratî*) the "Kerethites" (*kerētîm*).

During the intertestamental period the Philistines disappeared as a nation. This nation that had tried to usurp God's people discovered God's true character (**they will know that I am the Lord**; cf. Ezek. 25:7, 11) when He judged them for their sin.