

The Book of Ezekiel, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 11: Oracles Against the Surrounding Nations

Ezekiel 25:1-26:21

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Show that the LORD is sovereign over all nations and judges every people, not Israel only, so that no one stands outside His authority or His justice.

Lead the class to see the sinfulness of gloating, vengeance, and malice toward others, and to repent of any such spirit in their own hearts.

Press home the refrain you shall know that I am the LORD as God's purpose in judgment, calling each believer to a real and humble acknowledgment of God.

Question 1

Student Question:

What charge does the LORD bring against Ammon in 25:1-7, and how does it reveal that God judges the heart attitude behind an action, not only the action itself?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The phrase the word of the LORD came to me marks a new section. Having finished his long indictment of Jerusalem, Ezekiel is now directed to set his face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them.

To set the face against a people is a posture of fixed, deliberate confrontation. The prophet stands as God's spokesman, announcing the verdict of heaven upon a nation.

Ammon was descended from Lot and was a perennial neighbor and rival of Israel east of the Jordan. That kinship makes their hostility the more pointed.

The placement is significant. God deals first with His own people, then turns to the surrounding nations, showing that His justice is comprehensive and orderly, not arbitrary.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Some treat the nation oracles as mere historical footnotes. They are in fact a sustained declaration that God rules all peoples and that His moral law binds every nation.
- These oracles are not Israel boasting over her enemies. They come from the LORD, who has just judged Israel herself with equal severity.
- The certainty of the sign-act and the spoken word is at work here. What God announces against the nations comes to pass exactly as He says.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God turn to the nations only after He has dealt with His own people?
- What does it mean that God's moral standard binds nations that never received the Law of Moses?
- How does setting the face against a people picture the seriousness of God's word?

Question 2

Student Question:

When have you said Aha over someone else's trouble, and what did that response expose about your own heart?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Ammon is charged because it said Aha over the LORD's sanctuary when it was profaned, over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the house of Judah when it went into exile (25:3).

The sin is gloating, a malicious joy at the suffering of God's people. Ammon clapped its hands and rejoiced with all the malice within its soul (25:6).

The LORD's sentence fits the crime. Because Ammon despised His people, He will hand Ammon over to the people of the East as a possession, and it will be no more remembered among the nations.

The oracle closes with the refrain, then you will know that I am the LORD. The aim of the judgment is recognition of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Gloating over another's downfall is treated here as a grave sin, not a small fault. God sees the heart that takes pleasure in ruin.
- Ammon's joy was aimed at the LORD's sanctuary and people, so its malice was ultimately against God Himself.
- The judgment is just and certain, yet its stated purpose is that they will know I am the LORD, which holds justice together with the call to acknowledge God.

Discussion Prompts

- What does Ammon's reaction reveal about the connection between how we treat God's people and how we treat God?
- Why is taking pleasure in another's calamity such a serious matter before God?
- How does the refrain you will know that I am the LORD reframe the purpose of judgment?

Question 3

Student Question:

Moab said that the house of Judah is like all the other nations (25:8). Why is it a serious matter to treat God's covenant people as nothing special, and how does the LORD answer that charge?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Moab, like Ammon a descendant of Lot, is charged with saying, Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations (25:8).

The sin here is contempt, a denial that there is anything distinct about God's covenant people. Moab leveled Judah down to the status of any pagan nation.

The LORD will lay open the flank of Moab from its frontier cities and give it, along with Ammon, to the people of the East.

Again the oracle ends, then they will know that I am the LORD, binding the judgment to the knowledge of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- To treat God's people as nothing special is to deny God's choosing and His covenant. This is a sin against the LORD, not merely against Judah.
- The danger remains for us when we measure the church by worldly standards and forget that she is the people of God.
- Moab's words sound almost philosophical, yet the LORD treats them as an offense worthy of judgment, showing that He weighs even our assessments of His people.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it wrong to regard God's people as just like everyone else?
- How might a believer today fall into Moab's error regarding the church?
- What does this oracle teach about God's care for the distinctness of His people?

Question 4

Student Question:

In what ways are you tempted to measure God's people and His church by the same standard you apply to the world around you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Edom, descended from Esau and therefore a brother nation to Israel, is condemned because it acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them (25:12).

The LORD declares He will stretch out His hand against Edom and make it desolate, laying His vengeance upon Edom by the hand of His people Israel.

Vengeance is the issue. Edom seized the moment of Judah's fall to settle old scores, a brother turning on a brother in his day of distress.

The chapter closes, and they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord GOD, again pointing to the knowledge of God as the end of judgment.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Edom's brotherhood with Israel makes its hostility especially grievous. Family ties betrayed are no small matter before God.
- Scripture reserves vengeance to the LORD. Romans 12:19 quotes the principle, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.
- That God Himself repays vengeance frees the believer from the corrosive work of repaying evil with evil, and calls us to leave justice in His hands.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is private vengeance forbidden to the believer when God Himself executes justice?
- How does the brotherhood between Edom and Israel deepen the guilt of Edom's actions?
- What freedom comes from trusting God to repay rather than repaying ourselves?

Question 5

Student Question:

Edom is condemned for taking vengeance and being greatly guilty (25:12). What does Scripture teach about vengeance belonging to God rather than to us?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Philistines are charged because they acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in unending hostility (25:15).

Their sin is settled, long-nursed hatred. The phrase unending hostility describes a bitterness that had hardened into a way of life.

The LORD will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast, executing great vengeance with wrathful rebukes.

The oracle and the chapter close with the now familiar refrain, then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Old hatred that is never released corrupts a soul or a nation, hardening into an unending hostility that invites God's judgment.
- Each of the four oracles ends with the same refrain, underscoring that God's consistent aim is to be acknowledged as the LORD.
- These judgments are real and severe, yet held together with the mercy that calls all peoples to know the one true God before it is too late.

Discussion Prompts

- How does a long-held grudge change a person over time?
- Why does the LORD repeat the refrain at the close of each oracle?
- What old hostility might the LORD be calling you to lay down?

Question 6

Student Question:

Is there a grudge you have nursed or a vengeance you have privately wished for, and what would it look like to surrender that to the LORD?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Tyre rejoiced over Jerusalem, saying, Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste (26:2).

Tyre's interest in Jerusalem's fall was commercial. With the inland trade gate broken, Tyre expected to gain her business and grow rich.

Therefore the LORD declares, Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves (26:3).

Tyre will be scraped bare, made a bare rock, a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Tyre's gloating was driven by greed, seeing a sister city's ruin only as an opportunity for profit.
- Wealth gave Tyre a false sense of security, but the LORD shows that no fortress of trade can stand against His decree.

- The image of waves rising against the city pictures wave upon wave of nations the LORD will bring, an unstoppable judgment from His hand.

Discussion Prompts

- How does greed distort the way we view other people's misfortunes?
- Why is wealth such an unreliable foundation for security?
- What does the picture of the sea's waves teach about the certainty of God's judgment?

Question 7

Student Question:

Philistia acted with malice of soul to destroy in unending hostility (25:15). How does long-held bitterness corrupt a person or a people over time?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The LORD names the instrument of judgment, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north with horses and chariots and a great host (26:7).

He will lay siege to Tyre, build a siege wall, throw up a mound, and set engines against her walls, trampling her streets with the hoofs of his horses.

The detail of the siege underscores that this is no vague threat but a concrete, historical judgment carried out by a named king.

Tyre's mighty pillars will fall to the ground, her strong walls breached, for no human strength can withstand the purpose of the LORD.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God uses real historical agents, even pagan kings, to accomplish His purposes against the nations.
- Calling Nebuchadnezzar king of kings in this context shows that even the greatest earthly power serves under the LORD's hand.
- The specific siege details affirm the certainty of the prophetic word. What God speaks comes to pass in time and history.

Discussion Prompts

- How does God's use of Nebuchadnezzar show His sovereignty over even pagan rulers?
- Why does the concreteness of this prophecy matter for our confidence in God's word?
- What comfort is there in knowing no power can finally resist God's purposes?

Question 8

Student Question:

Where have you allowed an old wound to harden into settled hostility, and how can you let the LORD heal it instead?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The enemy will plunder Tyre's riches, break down her walls and pleasant houses, and cast her stones, timber, and soil into the midst of the water (26:12).

The LORD will stop the music of her songs, and the sound of her lyres will be heard no more (26:13). Her bustling life will fall silent.

I will make you a bare rock; you shall be a place for the spreading of nets. You shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken (26:14).

The proud merchant city is reduced to a fisherman's drying place, stripped of everything she trusted in.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The very wealth and beauty Tyre boasted in are stripped away, showing how empty earthly glory is when set against God.
- The silencing of her songs pictures the end of all her self-confident celebration.
- For I the LORD have spoken seals the oracle. God's word is certain, and what He declares will surely come to pass.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the stripping of Tyre teach about the emptiness of trusting in possessions?
- Why does Scripture so often picture judgment as the silencing of joyful sounds?
- How does for I the LORD have spoken strengthen your confidence in God's word?

Question 9**Student Question:**

Tyre rejoiced over Jerusalem's fall, saying, I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste (26:2). Trace how the LORD answers this greed and gloating through chapter 26, and explain what it teaches about the danger of trusting in wealth and rejoicing in another's ruin. How does the refrain you shall know that I am the LORD show that God's deeper aim in all these judgments is to be truly acknowledged as God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

At the sound of Tyre's fall, the coastlands will tremble, and the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones, removing their robes and stripping off their embroidered garments (26:16).

They will clothe themselves with trembling and sit on the ground, appalled at the city that was once mighty on the seas.

They take up a lamentation, How you have perished, you who were inhabited from the seas, the renowned city that was mighty on the sea (26:17).

The fall of so secure a city sends fear through all who trusted in their own strength and wealth.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- When a power thought unshakable falls, it exposes the false security of all who trusted in the same things.
- The princes step down from their thrones, a picture of pride humbled in the presence of God's judgment.
- The lament here is sober, not gloating. It is fitting to mourn judgment, not to rejoice in it as the nations rejoiced over Judah.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Tyre's fall frighten the other coastland rulers so deeply?
- What does the kings stepping down from their thrones picture?
- How should the fall of the proud move us, given how the nations wrongly gloated over Judah?

Question 10

Student Question:

After studying these oracles, what does it mean for you personally to truly know that He is the LORD, and how should that knowledge change the way you regard your neighbors, your enemies, and your own security?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The LORD will make Tyre a city laid waste, bringing up the deep over her so that the great waters cover her (26:19).

She will be brought down with those who descend to the pit, to the people of old, to dwell in the world below, and will not return or have a place in the land of the living (26:20).

I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more. Though you be sought for, you will never be found again, declares the Lord GOD (26:21).

The proud city that thought to profit from Jerusalem's ruin is herself blotted out, swallowed by the waters she once ruled.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The finality here, you shall be no more, underscores the certainty and thoroughness of God's judgment on settled pride and greed.
- Tyre trusted in the sea for her wealth and defense, yet the LORD turns the very deep against her.
- This sober ending warns that gloating over another's downfall and trusting in riches lead to ruin, and it calls the reader to humble dependence on God.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the warning for us in the finality of Tyre's end?
- How does the LORD turning the sea against Tyre expose the folly of her trust?
- What in your own life are you tempted to trust the way Tyre trusted in the sea?