

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part XXXVII: God's Punishment Of Philistia For Taking Vengeance On Judah

(Ezekiel 25:15-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Paul in Romans 12:19 KJV alluded to Deuteronomy 32:35 when writing, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."
- B. However, contrary to God's judgment on the **relative** nation of Edom in Ezekiel 25:12-14 for taking vengeance on His people, Ezekiel 25:15-17 predicted God's destruction of the "**unrelated**" nation of Philistia for taking vengeance on Israel in its long conflict with her. We thus view this passage for application in cases where people who are not closely related avenge one another (as follows):

II. God's Punishment Of Philistia For Taking Vengeance On Judah, Ezekiel 25:15-17.

- A. In Ezekiel 25:15, God condemned Philistia for acting revengefully, taking vengeance with hatred to destroy His people in Judah with a hatred dating back a long time in history.
- B. Reviewing Israel's long historical conflict with the Philistines supports this divine complaint (as follows):
 - 1. When Israel had conquered the Promised Land, she failed to drive out the Philistines, and God left this people group in the land to test whether ensuing generations of Israel's people would heed the Lord and gain victory over Philistia and other Gentile groups that remained or whether they would fail, Jud. 3:1-3.
 - 2. Accordingly, though Israel's judges Shamgar (Jud. 3:31), Samson (Jud. 13-16), Samuel (1 Sam. 7:2-17) and king Saul all battled the Philistines (1 Sam. 13:1-14:23; 28:1-4; 29:1-2, 11; 31:1-3, 7-10), only with David's arrival were they finally defeated and subdued as a vassal state to Israel, 2 Sam. 5:17-25; 8:1; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1277.
 - 3. When the Davidic Kingdom split, the Philistines rose up and competed with Judah for the control of one another until Jehoshaphat returned Philistia to being a vassal state to Israel, 2 Chronicles 17:10-11; *Ibid.*
 - 4. The Philistines revolted against Jehoshaphat's son king Jehoram and broke into Jerusalem, taking away much spoil, 2 Chronicles 21:16-17; *Ibid.*
 - 5. Judah's king Uzziah regained control over Philistia (2 Chronicles 26:6-7) but Philistia once again rebelled and invaded parts of Judah in the reign of Ahaz, 2 Chronicles 28:16-18, *Ibid.*
 - 6. This constant struggle between Judah and Philistia was stopped by Babylon's establishment of control over both nations, but the Philistines still waited for another opportunity to conquer Judah, *Ibid.*, p. 1277-1278.
- C. God thus critiqued Philistia's malicious spirit of revenge to try dispossessing Israel of her conquest of the land that God had promised and planned to give her, Ezekiel 25:15. For this spirit of revenge, the Lord promised to stretch out His hand over the Philistines and, using a play on words in the Hebrew text, to "cut off" (*hikrati*) the "Cherethites" (*keretim*), another word for the Philistines (*Ibid.*, p. 1278), Ezekiel 25:16.
- D. The Lord would execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes so that the Philistines would know He was God, Ezek. 25:17. Thus, in "the intertestamental period the Philistines disappeared as a nation," *Ibid.*
- E. To understand **why** God was so **severe** with the **Philistines though** they were **not closely related** to **Israel**, we note that they like all Gentiles now were obligated to respect God's ancient Noahic and Abrahamic covenants:
 - 1. The Noahic Covenant held that the descendants of primarily Shem, including Abraham and Israel, and secondarily Japheth would be blessed (Gen. 9:20-27) while the Philistines who came from Ham's son Mizraim (Gen. 10:6, 13-14) did not get a blessing where Ham's son Canaan was cursed (Gen. 9:18-27).
 - 2. The Philistines were thus responsible to yield to God's covenants and not try to detract from the blessing of the seed of Shem or of Shem's blessed son of Abraham, the seed of Jacob (Genesis 11:10-26; 12:1-3)!

Lesson: For an ancient hatred of God's chosen people with acts of revenge to dispossess them opposite the Noahic and Abrahamic Covenants, God promised to stretch out His hand of judgment on the Philistines and destroy them.

Application: (1) May we believers in Christ not take vengeance even on people not closely related to us, for vengeance on any human being is the Lord's ministry to perform, Romans 12:19-21. (2) All people worldwide must still heed God's Noahic and Abrahamic Covenants: (a) we all must respect God's primary blessing of Shem's line, followed by a lesser blessing to Japheth's line followed in turn by the lack of blessing to Ham's line followed in turn by the curse on Canaan of Ham's line! (b) All men of the world must respect God's blessing on Abraham's line, be they Jewish or Arab. (c) Most of all, all Gentiles must respect God's blessing on Israel, His chosen people!