

Zephaniah 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

Analysis

I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon (shamati cherpat Moav ve'gidufei benei Ammon)—God hears when His people are mocked. 'Reproach' (cherpah) and 'revilings' (gidufei) are strong terms for blasphemous taunting, not mere criticism.

Whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border—Moab and Ammon, Lot's descendants (Genesis 19:37-38), were related to Israel but hostile. They expanded their borders at Israel's expense during weakness. Magnifying themselves (vayyagdilu) means arrogant self-exaltation. To reproach Israel is to reproach Israel's God (Zephaniah 2:10)—judgment on Moab/Ammon vindicates God's honor.

Historical Context

Moab and Ammon occupied Transjordan east of the Dead Sea. They frequently allied against Judah (2 Chronicles 20:1) and gloated over Jerusalem's fall (Ezekiel 25:3, 8). Both nations were conquered by Babylon shortly after Judah (c. 582 BC, Josephus, Antiquities 10.9.7), fulfilling these prophecies. By the Hellenistic period, they had ceased to exist as distinct peoples.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's hearing the 'reproach' of His people comfort believers mocked for their faith?
2. What does it mean that attacks on God's people are ultimately attacks on God Himself?
3. When have you witnessed arrogant nations or individuals 'magnify themselves,' and what was the outcome?

Interlinear Text

עַמּוֹן וְ בְּנֵי אַמּוֹן וְ בְּנֵי מֹאָב וְ בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה וְ בְּנֵי שָׁמָן עַתִּים
I have heard the reproach of Moab and the revilings of the children of Ammon
H8085 H2781 H4124 H1421 H1121 H5983

עַל אַשְׁר רְבִרְפֵּי אֶת עַמּוֹן וְ בְּנֵי אַמּוֹן וְ בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה וְ בְּנֵי שָׁמָן
whereby they have reproached my people and magnified
H834 H2778 H853 H5971 H1431 H5921

בְּבּוֹלָם:
themselves against their border
H1366

Additional Cross-References

Amos 1:13 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:

Jeremiah 49:1 (Parallel theme): Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?

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