

Zephaniah 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

Analysis

Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts (chai-ani ne'um YHWH tseva'ot)—God swears by His own life, the strongest possible oath (Hebrews 6:13). His own existence guarantees this judgment. 'LORD of hosts' emphasizes His command over heavenly armies.

Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah—The fate of Lot's descendants mirrors Lot's original cities (Genesis 19:24-25). **The breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation** (mimshaq charul u'mikhrah melach u'shemamah ad-olam)—The Dead Sea region's desolation extends to their territories. Yet **the residue of my people shall spoil them**—God's remnant will inherit their land, reversing the oppressor-oppressed relationship.

Historical Context

The Dead Sea's eastern shore, once Moab and Ammon's territory, remains largely desolate—one of earth's harshest environments. Archaeological sites show destruction layers from Babylonian campaigns, followed by sparse occupation. The

Nabataeans and later Arabs occupied the region, but Moabites and Ammonites disappeared as distinct peoples.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does God's oath 'as I live' teach about the certainty of His promises and threats?
2. How does the fate of Moab and Ammon warn against taking advantage of God's people during their weakness?
3. In what sense does the church—the 'remnant'—inherit the territories of hostile powers that opposed God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| לְכָ | כִּי | אָנָּי | נָאָמָּה | יְהִינָּה | אֱלֹהִים | צָבָא | וְתִּהְעַלְתָּה | אֱלֹהִים |
| H3651 | Therefore as I live | H2416 | H589 | saith | the LORD | of hosts | the God | |
| | | | H5002 | H3068 | H6635 | H430 | | |
| לְבָנָי | וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | מִזְמָרָתָם | כִּסְדָּם | מִזְמָרָתָה | וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | |
| of Israel | H3588 | Surely Moab | H4124 | shall be as Sodom | H1961 | and the children | | H1121 |
| H3478 | | | H5467 | | | | | |
| עַמּוֹן | כְּעַמְקָה | קְמַשְׁקָה | מִקְשָׁקָה | לְבָנָה | מִמְכָּרָה | בָּרָאָלָה | עַמּוֹן | |
| of Ammon | H5983 | as Gomorrah | H6017 | even the breeding | H4476 | of nettles | H953 | H4417 |
| | | | | H2738 | | | | |
| וְשִׁמְמָה | עַד | עַזְלָה | עַזְלָה | שִׁירָה | עַמְּנִי | עַמְּנִי | וְשִׁמְמָה | |
| desolation | H8077 | and a perpetual | H5704 | H5769 | H7611 | the residue | H5971 | H962 |
| | | | | | | of my people | | |
| וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | גּוֹן | וְתִּהְרַבְתָּה | | | | shall spoil | | |
| them and the remnant | H3499 | of my people | H1471 | | | | | |
| | | | | H5157 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 11:14 (Parallel theme): But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

Deuteronomy 29:23 (References Lord): And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

Isaiah 25:10 (References Lord): For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

Isaiah 49:18 (References Lord): Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

Jeremiah 50:40 (References God): As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org