

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

לְכִּי	חִי	אֶנִּי	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה	צָבָא	וְהָ	אֱלֹהֵי
H3651	Therefore as I live	H589	saith	the LORD	of hosts		the God
	H2416		H5002	H3068	H6635		H430
וּבְנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	כִּי	מוֹאָב	בְּכֶסֶד	וְהָיָה		
	of Israel	H3588	Surely Moab	shall be as Sodom	H1961		and the children
	H3478		H4124	H5467			H1121
מִן	לַח	וּמִכְרֵהָ	חֵר וּלְ	מִמֶּשֶׁשׁ	קַ	בְּעֵמֶק	הָ
	of Ammon		of nettles	even the breeding		as Gomorrah	
	H5983		H2738	H4476		H6017	
וְשָׂמָהּ	הָ	עַד	עוֹלָם	שְׂאֵר יֵת	עַמִּי	וְיָצְאוּ	וּם
desolation		and a perpetual	H5769	the residue	of my people	shall spoil	
H8077		H5704		H7611	H5971		H962
וְיִתְּרוֹ	וְהָ	גֹּוֹ	יִנְחָלוּם:				
them and the remnant		of my people	shall possess				
H3499		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.

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