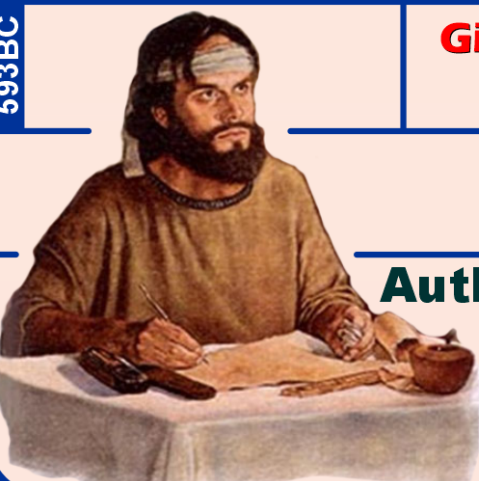


HISTORY OF JUDAH'S CORRUPTION

21

EZEKIEL

BOOK OF EZEKIEL — OUTLINE

INWARD → Personal		OUTWARD ↺ Peoples		ONWARD → Prophetic													
1 — 3		4 — 24		25 — 32		33 — 48											
Ezekiel's Call to Ministry - Ezekiel Birth (623BC) and Ministry Years (593-571BC) 597BC is the 2nd Deportation; Ezekiel taken at age 25 593BC Ezekiel begins Ministry at age 30		Sinfulness of Israel and Fall of Jerusalem - A Disobedient Nation (4-7) - A Departed Glory (8-11) - A Disciplined Nation (12-24) - The Futility of False Optimism (12-19) - The History of Judah's Corruption (20-24)		Judgment on Nations that Opposed Israel - Ammon (25:1-7) - Moab (25:8-11) - Edom (25:12-14) - Philistia (25:15-17) - Tyre (26:1—28:19) - Babylonia (26) - Sidon (28:20-24) - Egypt (29-32)		Restoration of Israel in the Future - Return of Israel to the land (33-39) - Restoration of Israel in the Kingdom (40-48) - Promised Land; Millennial Temple, and the Glory of God											
593BC		Given BEFORE the siege of Jerusalem		587BC		Given DURING the siege of Jerusalem		586BC		Given AFTER the siege of Jerusalem		571BC					
						The City Destroyed 7 Years Prophesying <u>JUDGMENT</u>						The City Restored 15 Years Prophesying <u>HOPE</u>					
Author: Ezekiel (“God strengthens”) Place: Babylonia Time: About 22 years (593-571BC)																	
Events: 605BC — FIRST Siege upon Israel by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel taken) Ezekiel 17 years old																	
597BC — SECOND assault upon Jerusalem (Ezekiel taken) Ezekiel 25 years old																	
593BC — Ezekiel at age 30 called by God to testify against Israel Ezekiel 30 years old																	
586BC — THIRD assault upon Jerusalem (City & Temple destroyed) Ezekiel 37 years old																	

INTRODUCTION: EZEKIEL 21

- **Since the people refused to understand Ezekiel's message about the fire on the southland (Ek.20:45-49), he gave four messages to expand his parable's meaning.**
- **In these messages Ezekiel changed the "fire" to a "sword" and the "Negev" to Judah and Jerusalem.**
- **This chapter has more references to the sword of the Lord as a figure of God's judgment than any other chapter in the Bible.**



INTRODUCTION: EZEKIEL 21

THE SWORD DRAWN (Ezekiel 21:1-7)

THE SWORD SHARPENED (Ezekiel 21:8-17)

**THE SWORD DIRECTED TOWARD JERUSALEM
(Ezekiel 21:18-27)**

**THE SWORD DIRECTED TOWARD AMMON
(Ezekiel 21:28-32)**



THE SWORD DRAWN

Ezekiel 21:1-7

**And the word of the LORD
came to me, saying,**

EZEKIEL 21:1



And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (Ek.21:1)

- **This is the sign of the sword against Jerusalem (Ek.21:1-17).**
- **The historical background for this prophecy is Nebuchadnezzar's 588 B.C. campaign to quell revolts in Judah, as well as Tyre and Ammon.**
- **This would be a clarification of the figures used in the previous parable of the forest fire (Ek.20:45-49).**



**"Son of man, set your face toward
Jerusalem, preach against the
holy places, and prophesy against
the land of Israel;**

EZEKIEL 21:2



"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; (Ek.21:2)

- **In the parable (Ek.20:45-49) Ezekiel had “set” his “face toward the south,” but now God told him to set his face against Jerusalem.**
- **The object of God’s judgment was His land, His Holy City, and His dwelling place.**



**and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus
says the LORD: "Behold, I am
against you, and I will draw My
sword out of its sheath and cut
off both righteous and wicked
from you.'**

EZEKIEL 21:3



and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. (Ek.21:3)

- **God said that by a sword He would cut off both the righteous and the wicked.**
- **This seems to contradict Ezekiel's earlier prophecy (Ek.18:1-24) that only the wicked would die and the righteous would live.**
- **This may mean that “the righteous and the wicked” may be viewed from the people's perspective.**
- **As far as the people could tell the judgment was indiscriminate.**



and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. (Ek.21:3)

- **It affected those who were in open idolatry as well as those who claimed to be followers of God.**
- **Another thought is that the phrase “cut off” may refer to captivity, not physical death.**
- **When judgment came, then the people would know that the Lord had drawn His sword.**



**Because I will cut off both righteous
and wicked from you, therefore My
sword shall go out of its sheath
against all flesh from south to north,**

EZEKIEL 21:4



Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north, (Ek.21:4)

- **In God's eyes only the wicked were being punished since He had promised to deliver those who were truly righteous.**
- **Ezekiel was stressing the extent of the coming judgment.**
- **The judgment would extend from south to north (Ek.20:47).**



**that all flesh may know that I,
the LORD, have drawn My
sword out of its sheath; it shall
not return anymore."**

EZEKIEL 21:5



that all flesh may know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore." (Ek.21:5)

- **Though the people refused to acknowledge the meaning of the parable (Ek.20:49), they could not claim ignorance when God's slaughter would actually begin.**
- **The Book of Habakkuk deals with the problem of how and why God would use the wicked Babylonians as His instrument of chastening.**
- **Everyone would know that God had been responsible for the judgment.**



**Sigh therefore, son of man,
with a breaking heart, and
sigh with bitterness before
their eyes.**

EZEKIEL 21:6



Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. (Ek.21:6)

- **Ezekiel was instructed to act out the grief the people would feel when Jerusalem fell.**
- **The awful realization of their country's demise would devastate them (Ek.7:17).**



Every hand will be feeble, And every knee will be as weak
as water. (Ek.7:17).



**And it shall be when they say to you,
'Why are you sighing?' that you shall
answer, 'Because of the news; when it
comes, every heart will melt, all hands
will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and
all knees will be weak as water. Behold,
it is coming and shall be brought to
pass,' says the Lord GOD."**

EZEKIEL 21:7



And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord GOD." (Ek.21:7)

- As he sobbed in anguish, the people would ask what was wrong.**
- He was to answer that it was because of the news that was coming.**
- There was no doubt it would happen. It will surely take place, declared the Sovereign Lord.**



THE SWORD SHARPENED

Ezekiel 21:8-17

**Again the word of the LORD
came to me, saying,**



EZEKIEL 21:8



Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (Ek.21:8)

- **Ezekiel's second message about the sword was a poetic song of judgment.**

Stanza 1 (vs.8-10)

Stanza 2 (vs.11-12)

Stanza 3 (vs.14-17)



**"Son of man, prophesy and say,
'Thus says the LORD!' Say: 'A
sword, a sword is sharpened
And also polished!"**

EZEKIEL 21:9



**"Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD!' Say:
'A sword, a sword is sharpened And also polished! (Ek.21:9)**

- **The message is that God's sword was sharpened and ready for the slaughter.**
 - **The song is in three stanzas (vs.8-10, vs.11-12, vs.14-17).**
 - **These sections were divided by two interludes, each focusing on "the scepter" (v.10, and v.13).**
- **In the first stanza God's sword of judgment was sharpened with a whetstone to give it a keen cutting edge and polished**



**Sharpened to make a dreadful
slaughter, Polished to flash like
lightning! Should we then make
mirth? It despises the scepter
of My son, As it does all wood.**

EZEKIEL 21:10



Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter, Polished to flash like lightning! Should we then make mirth? It despises the scepter of My son, As it does all wood. (Ek.21:10)

- **The sword was coming because Israel had despised the scepter and all advice.**
- **The “scepter” or “rod” was often used for discipline (Pr.10:13; 13:24; 23:13), and God used “the rod” to discipline His own (2Sm.7:14; Jb.9:34; 21:9).**
- **Israel had despised God’s earlier attempts to use a rod to correct her, so He now used the sword.**
- **The “son” is not Ezekiel but Israel and her king.**



**And He has given it to be polished,
That it may be handled; This
sword is sharpened, and it is
polished To be given into the hand
of the slayer.'**

EZEKIEL 21:11



And He has given it to be polished, That it may be handled; This sword is sharpened, and it is polished To be given into the hand of the slayer.' (Ek.21:11)

- **Stanza 2 (vs.11-12)**
- **The second stanza revealed the victims against whom the sword was drawn: God's people and all Israel's princes.**
- **The sharpening is like a soldier preparing for battle, God had honed His weapon so it would be effective.**



"Cry and wail, son of man; For it will be against My people, Against all the princes of Israel. Terrors including the sword will be against My people; Therefore strike your thigh.

EZEKIEL 21:12



**"Cry and wail, son of man; For it will be against My people,
Against all the princes of Israel. Terrors including the sword
will be against My people; Therefore strike your thigh. (Ek.21:12)**

- **The leaders had rejected God's advice and chastisement so all they could expect was the sword.**
- **Because of the massive destruction God told Ezekiel,
Cry out and wail.**



**"Because it is a testing, And what
if the sword despises even the
scepter? The scepter shall be no
more," says the Lord GOD.**

EZEKIEL 21:13



**"Because it is a testing, And what if the sword despises even the scepter?
The scepter shall be no more," says the Lord GOD. (Ek.21:13)**

- **The sharpened sword is Babylon.**
- **This likely refers to the life and exile of King Zedekiah.**
- **He despised YHWH's leadership, now he is rejected as leader.**
- **But one of David's line will be king again in the future.**



**"You therefore, son of man, prophesy,
And strike your hands together. The
third time let the sword do double
damage. It is the sword that slays,
The sword that slays the great men,
That enters their private chambers.**

EZEKIEL 21:14



"You therefore, son of man, prophesy, And strike your hands together. The third time let the sword do double damage. It is the sword that slays, The sword that slays the great men, That enters their private chambers. (Ek.21:14)

- **The third stanza stressed the work of the sword.**
- **In derision both the prophet and God would strike their hands (Ek.21:14, 17; 6:11; 22:13).**
- **As the sword would move swiftly against the people and princes, it would strike and strike again (twice, even three times), seemingly coming from every side.**



**I have set the point of the sword
against all their gates, That the
heart may melt and many may
stumble. Ah! It is made bright; It
is grasped for slaughter:**

EZEKIEL 21:15



I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, That the heart may melt and many may stumble. Ah! It is made bright; It is grasped for slaughter: (Ek.21:15)

- **In fear the people's hearts would melt (Ek.21:7).**



**"Swords at the ready! Thrust
right! Set your blade! Thrust
left— Wherever your edge is
ordered!"**

EZEKIEL 21:16



"Swords at the ready! Thrust right! Set your blade! Thrust left— Wherever your edge is ordered! (Ek.21:16)

- **The judgment moved to all sides (to the right, then to the left) as it relentlessly pursued the people.**
- **This is a personification of God's sword.**
- **The sword is addressed in several IMPERATIVES.**



**"I also will beat My fists together,
And I will cause My fury to rest;
I, the LORD, have spoken."**

EZEKIEL 21:17



"I also will beat My fists together, And I will cause My fury to rest; I, the LORD, have spoken." (Ek.21:17)

- It would stop only when the judgment was complete.**
- God brings the deserved judgment and He also stops it at His discretion (Ek.5:13; 16:42; 24:13)!**
- Judah's fall and exile are not the result of the power of the invading army (Ek.21:19-27).**



THE SWORD TOWARD JERUSALEM

Ezekiel 21:18-27

**The word of the LORD came
to me again, saying:**

EZEKIEL 21:18



The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: (Ek.21:18)

- **This is Ezekiel's third message concerning the sword.**



**"And son of man, appoint for yourself
two ways for the sword of the king
of Babylon to go; both of them shall
go from the same land. Make a sign;
put it at the head of the road to the
city.**

EZEKIEL 21:19



"And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put it at the head of the road to the city. (Ek.21:19)

- **Ezekiel's third message on the sword showed God's directing the sword of Babylon against Jerusalem.**
- **In symbolic actions Ezekiel pictured God supernaturally guiding Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem to overthrow the city.**



**Appoint a road for the sword
to go to Rabbah of the
Ammonites, and to Judah,
into fortified Jerusalem.**

EZEKIEL 21:20



Appoint a road for the sword to go to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem.(Ek.21:20)

- **God told Ezekiel to mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to take.**
- **When Jerusalem rebelled against Babylon in 588 b.c., she was one of three cities or countries seeking independence. The other two were Tyre and Ammon.**
- **“Rabbah” was the capital of Ammon and is identified with the modern city of Amman in Jordan.**



**For the king of Babylon stands at
the parting of the road, at the fork
of the two roads, to use divination:
he shakes the arrows, he consults
the images, he looks at the liver.**



EZEKIEL 21:21



For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. (Ek.21:21)

- **Nebuchadnezzar led his forces north and west from Babylon along the Euphrates River.**
- **When he reached Riblah (north of Damascus in Syria) he had to decide which nation he would attack first.**
- **He could head due west toward the coast and attack Tyre, or he could go south along one of two “highways” leading to Judah and Ammon.**



For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. (Ek.21:21)

- **Tyre was the most difficult of the three cities to attack (Ek.26:1-21; 29:17-20), so Nebuchadnezzar decided not to make it his first objective.**
- **The war council met at Riblah, at the fork in the road, to decide which course of action to take.**
- **It appears that Nebuchadnezzar and his generals could not agree on which direction to go, so they consulted their gods.**



For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. (Ek.21:21)

- **Nebuchadnezzar used three means to determine his course of action: casting lots with arrows, consulting his idols, and examining the liver.**
- **Casting lots with arrows was probably similar to today's practice of drawing straws.**
- **Two arrows were placed in a quiver, each one inscribed with the name of one of the cities being considered for attack. The arrow drawn or cast out first was the one the gods indicated should be attacked.**



For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. (Ek.21:21)

- **The consulting of idols or images involved the use of teraphim or household idols.**
- **Perhaps the idols were used in an attempt to contact departed spirits and hear their advice.**



For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. (Ek.21:21)

- **Examining the liver was a form of divination known as hepatoscopy.**
- **The shape and markings of the liver of a sacrificed animal were studied by soothsayers to see if a proposed plan was favorable or not.**
- **These practices by themselves could do nothing, but God worked through them to accomplish His judgment.**



**In his right hand is the divination for
Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to
call for a slaughter, to lift the voice
with shouting, to set battering rams
against the gates, to heap up a siege
mound, and to build a wall.**

EZEKIEL 21:22



In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a siege mound, and to build a wall. (Ek.21:22)

- Into Nebuchadnezzar's right hand would come the lot for Jerusalem.**
- As Nebuchadnezzar went through his procedures, God had all the signs point toward the coastal highway and Jerusalem.**
- That would be where he decided to proceed.**



**And it will be to them like a false
divination in the eyes of those who
have sworn oaths with them; but he
will bring their iniquity to
remembrance, that they may be
taken.**

EZEKIEL 21:23



And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken. (Ek.21:23)

- **The rulers of Judah had pledged allegiance to Babylon, but they had violated their oath by rebelling.**
- **Even as Nebuchadnezzar set up his siege works around the city, the people refused to believe he would succeed.**
- **They thought his omen was false and that he was doomed to failure — but they were wrong.**
- **Since they had broken their covenant with Nebuchadnezzar (Ek.17:11-21), he would take them captive.**



**"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
'Because you have made your iniquity
to be remembered, in that your
transgressions are uncovered, so that
in all your doings your sins
appear—because you have come to
remembrance, you shall be taken in
hand.**

EZEKIEL 21:24



"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand. (Ek.21:24)

- **God then pronounced judgment on the people and the prince (v.25-27).**
- **Because of open rebellion, Jerusalem's people would be taken captive.**
- **They felt secure in their city, but they would be forcibly torn from it and dragged in chains to Babylon.**



**'Now to you, O profane, wicked
prince of Israel, whose day has
come, whose iniquity shall end,**

EZEKIEL 21:25



'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity shall end, (Ek.21:25)

- **The profane and wicked prince of Israel was King Zedekiah.**
- **Because he violated his oath of allegiance to Babylon, he would be deposed.**
- **God explains what will happen to him when his day has come.**



**thus says the Lord GOD: "Remove
the turban, and take off the crown;
Nothing shall remain the same.
Exalt the humble, and humble the
exalted.**

EZEKIEL 21:26



thus says the Lord GOD: "Remove the turban, and take off the crown; Nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted. (Ek.21:26)

- **Zedekiah was stripped of authority (his turban and crown were removed), blinded, and imprisoned for life in Babylon (2Ki.25:4-7).**
- **The once-proud king was humbled (the exalted will be brought low).**
- **The lowly ("poorest people of the land," 2Ki.25:12) who were allowed to remain took his place in managing the land for Babylon.**



**Overthrown, overthrown, I will
make it overthrown! It shall be
no longer, Until He comes
whose right it is, And I will give
it to Him."**

EZEKIEL 21:27



**Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer,
Until He comes whose right it is, And I will give it to Him.” (Ek.21:27)**

- **The right to rule in Israel was taken from Zedekiah, and the land was destroyed.**
- **Ezekiel’s triple use of “overthrown” stressed that Israel’s throne was to be absolutely desolate.**
- **It will not be restored until He comes to whom it rightfully belongs; to Him I will give it.**
- **This prophecy recalls Genesis 49:10, which speaks of “the scepter” in the line of Judah.**



**Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer,
Until He comes whose right it is, And I will give it to Him.” (Ek.21:27)**

- **The line of David would not be restored till the righteous, God-appointed King would come.**
- **There were no valid claims till Christ rode into Jerusalem to claim His rightful rule (Zc.9:9; Mt.21:1-11; Rv.19:11-16; 20:4).**
- **Christ will fulfill Ezekiel’s prophecy; He will be the King of Israel.**

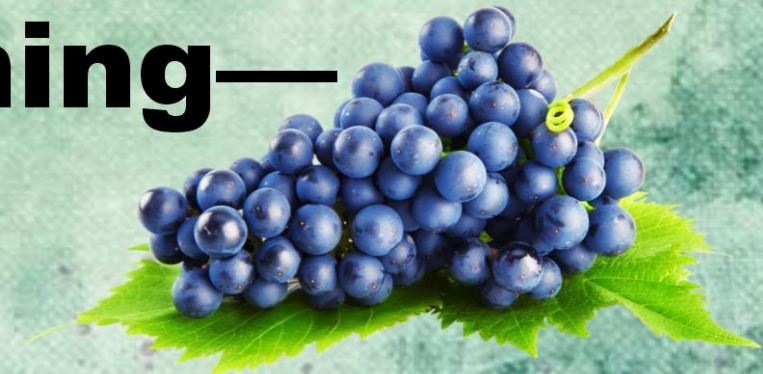


THE SWORD TOWARD AMMON

Ezekiel 21:28-32

**"And you, son of man, prophesy and
say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD
concerning the Ammonites and
concerning their reproach,' and
say: 'A sword, a sword is drawn,
Polished for slaughter, For
consuming, for flashing—**

EZEKIEL 21:28



"And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say: A sword, a sword is drawn, Polished for slaughter, For consuming, for flashing— (Ek.21:28)

- **Ezekiel's fourth prophecy about the sword was directed against the Ammonites.**
- **The Ammonites thought they had escaped Nebuchadnezzar's attack (Ek.21:20-22).**



"And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say: A sword, a sword is drawn, Polished for slaughter, For consuming, for flashing— (Ek.21:28)

- **Ammon and Jerusalem, though enemies, had allied against Babylon.**
- **When Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Jerusalem, Ammon was relieved and happy.**
- **They were thankful that Jerusalem would suffer in their place.**



"And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say: A sword, a sword is drawn, Polished for slaughter, For consuming, for flashing— (Ek.21:28)

- **After Jerusalem's fall the Ammonites organized a coup that caused the death of Gedaliah, the governor of the land appointed by Nebuchadnezzar (Je.40:13 — 41:10).**
- **The Ammonites tried to set up another government in Israel that would be opposed to Babylon — probably so Nebuchadnezzar would again attack Judah instead of Ammon!**



**While they see false visions for you,
While they divine a lie to you, To
bring you on the necks of the
wicked, the slain Whose day has
come, Whose iniquity shall end.**

EZEKIEL 21:29



While they see false visions for you, While they divine a lie to you, To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain Whose day has come, Whose iniquity shall end. (Ek.21:29)

- **There were false prophets among the Ammonites as well as in Judah.**
- **They gave their people false assurances of peace, and their predictions seemed plausible because Nebuchadnezzar was seen to direct his course toward Judah and that would seem to remove any threat to other places.**



**'Return it to its sheath. I will judge
you In the place where you were
created, In the land of your nativity.'**

EZEKIEL 21:30



'Return it to its sheath. I will judge you In the place where you were created, In the land of your nativity. (Ek.21:30)

- **The question is asked of Ammon if he thought that God would withhold the sword just because the diviners had predicted it so.**
- **The question was then answered in the negative and the Ammonites were warned of judgment in their own land.**



**I will pour out My indignation on
you; I will blow against you with
the fire of My wrath, And deliver
you into the hands of brutal men
who are skillful to destroy.**

EZEKIEL 21:31



**I will pour out My indignation on you; I will blow against you with the fire of My wrath,
And deliver you into the hands of brutal men who are skillful to destroy. (Ek.21:31)**

- **In God's wrath and fiery anger He would hand Ammon over to brutal men, men skilled in destruction.**
- **These invaders are identified in Ezekiel 25:4 as "people of the East."**
- **The fire of judgment directed against Judah (Ek.20:45-49) would also consume Ammon.**



**You shall be fuel for the fire; Your
blood shall be in the midst of the
land. You shall not be
remembered, For I the LORD have
spoken.**

EZEKIEL 21:32



**You shall be fuel for the fire; Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.
You shall not be remembered, For I the LORD have spoken. (Ek.21:32)**

- **The sword that had been polished for Jerusalem (v.9, 11) would also reach Ammon.**
- **The Ammonites thought they had escaped Nebuchadnezzar's judgment but they would be punished.**



HISTORY OF JUDAH'S CORRUPTION

21

EZEKIEL