

Ammonites Study Notes

Refer to Genesis 19:30-38 to summarize the circumstances surrounding the births of Moab and Ben-Ammi (Ammon) to Lot.

1Ki 11:1 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

1Ki 11:2 from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love.

1Ki 11:3 He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.

1Ki 11:4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

1Ki 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1Ki 11:6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.

1Ki 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.

1Ki 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

1. Shared Family Origin (Distant Relatives)

The Ammonites descended from **Ben-ammi**, the son of Lot through his younger daughter:

- **Genesis 19:36–38** – Lot’s descendants become:
 - **Moab** (Moabites)
 - **Ben-ammi** (Ammonites)

Since Lot was Abraham’s nephew, the Ammonites were related to Israel, but not closely like Edom.

So Ammonites are “cousin nations” to Israel through Abraham’s family line.

2. God Recognized Their Territory

When Israel traveled toward the Promised Land, God specifically commanded Israel **not to take Ammonite land**:

- **Deuteronomy 2:19** – Israel must not harass Ammon, because God gave that land to Lot’s descendants.

This shows:

- God had allotted them a territory
- Israel was initially restrained from conquest

3. Dispute Over Land Claims

Even though Israel avoided Ammon directly during the Exodus journey, later the Ammonites claimed Israel had stolen land.

This becomes central in the time of the Judges:

- **Judges 11:12–28** – Jephthah argues with the king of Ammon.
- The Ammonites claim Israel took their land.
- Jephthah responds that Israel took land from the **Amorites**, not Ammon.

This shows a long-standing territorial rivalry and political hostility.

4. Major Enemies During the Period of the Judges

The Ammonites were among Israel’s repeated oppressors:

- **Judges 10:6–9** – Ammonites oppress Israel
- **Judges 11** – Jephthah defeats them

This is one of the major Ammonite-Israel conflicts.

5. Saul’s Early Kingship Begins With War Against Ammon

One of the first major military threats to Israel’s monarchy comes from Ammon:

- **1 Samuel 11** – Nahash the Ammonite attacks Jabesh-gilead.
- Saul delivers Israel and is confirmed as king.

Nahash’s cruelty is highlighted when he proposes gouging out the right eyes of the Israelites.

Ammon helped create the conditions that unified Israel under Saul.

6. David and Ammon: Friendship Turns to War

At first, there is peace:

- **2 Samuel 10:1–2** – David tries to show kindness to Hanun, king of Ammon, after his father dies.

But the Ammonites humiliate David's messengers:

- They shave their beards and cut their garments.

This sparks war:

- **2 Samuel 10–12** – Israel defeats Ammon.
- David's sin with Bathsheba happens during this conflict (2 Samuel 11).

Eventually, Ammon is subdued.

7. Ammonites Promote Idolatry in Israel

Ammon's influence was not only military but spiritual.

Their chief god was **Milcom / Molech**:

- **1 Kings 11:5, 7** – Solomon builds high places for Molech (an Ammonite god).

This is significant because it shows Ammonite religion became a temptation even for Israel's king.

8. Prophetic Condemnation and Judgment

The prophets condemn Ammon for violence, pride, and hatred toward Israel:

- **Amos 1:13–15** – judgment for brutal violence
- **Jeremiah 49:1–6** – judgment for aggression and land seizure
- **Ezekiel 25:1–7** – condemned for rejoicing when Israel fell
- **Zephaniah 2:8–11** – condemned for mocking God's people

Like Edom, Ammon is condemned for gloating over Israel's suffering.

9. Post-Exile Opposition

After Judah returned from Babylon, Ammonites opposed rebuilding efforts:

- **Nehemiah 2:10, 19**
- **Nehemiah 4:1–3**
- **Nehemiah 6:1–2**

A key figure is **Tobiah the Ammonite**, who tries to undermine the restoration of Jerusalem.

Jdg 11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute. Gilead was the father of Jephthah.

Jdg 11:2 And Gilead's wife also bore him sons. And when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You shall not have an inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."

Jdg 11:3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and worthless fellows collected around Jephthah and went out with him.

Jdg 11:4 After a time the Ammonites made war against Israel.

Jdg 11:5 And when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob.

- Jephthah's tenure as judge was spawned from conflict with an Ammonite king and their dispute over lands taken from the Amorite (they incorrectly accused Israel of taking the land from them when Israel had avoided direct conflict with them, but had been attacked and defeated the Amorites).

1Sa 11:1 Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you."

1Sa 11:2 But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel."

1Sa 11:3 The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you."

1Sa 11:4 When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people wept aloud.

- Saul's first victory was against the Ammonites and this solidified the people's choice for him as king.

1Ki 14:19 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

1Ki 14:20 And the time that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. And he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.

1Ki 14:21 Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city that the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite.

1Ki 14:22 And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their fathers had done.

- After the kingdom divided (two southern tribes as Judah and ten northern as Israel), Solomon's son, Rehoboam, reigned in Judah and his mother was Ammonite.