

# Prophecy of Edom's Destruction For Hating Israel

**A**ntisemitism has been a major theme in the book of Ezekiel. God keeps revealing what He has done and will do to various nations because they had hated Israel. In chapters 25 through 32 Yahweh announced that He would destroy six nations. You may remember that those nations were Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Sidon. In chapters 30-32, Yahweh announced that a seventh nation would be invaded and a great number of people would be killed. That nation was Egypt. Why did Yahweh do this to these nations? They had cursed Israel. Genesis 12:3 warns,

And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
Genesis 12:3 (NASB)

In this verse, there are two words that are translated as “curse” from the Hebrew. The first Hebrew word that is translated as “curse” literally means “to disparage, abuse, dishonor, and despise.” It is the second “curse” that actually means curse. So,

any nations which abused, despised, and dishonored Israel would be destroyed or punished.

This study is a second announcement of judgment upon the ancient nation of Edom in the book of Ezekiel. The first

announcement of judgment or a curse upon this nation was given in Ezekiel 25:12-14. In that prophecy Yahweh said that Edom had incurred grievous guilt by their treatment of Israel. Edom had a history of hatred towards Israel.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau. He was the oldest brother of Jacob, who was the forefather of Israel. Genesis 27 tells us that Jacob stole the birthright from his brother Esau. When Esau discovered that his birthright was stolen, he was very upset and asked his father, Isaac, to give him a blessing. Here is the blessing that Isaac gave him.

“Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be  
your dwelling,  
And away from the dew of heaven from above.  
By your sword you shall live,

And your  
brother you  
shall serve;  
But it shall  
come about  
when you  
become  
restless,  
That you will  
break his yoke  
from your  
neck.”  
Genesis  
27:39-40  
(NASB)



The blessing says that Esau would be a violent man and serve his brother. But later he would break free. The offspring of Esau were called Edomites. Genesis 36:8 states

that Esau lived in the hill country of Seir. Then it adds that Esau is Edom. Those two terms were used interchangeably.

The Edomites lived in the region of Seir, south of the Dead Sea and down to the Gulf of Aqaba, also known as the Red Sea. The main cities of the nation were Teman and Petra. The location of Teman is unknown today. They settled in the land of Palestine before Israel.

After the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the nation wandered in the wilderness for forty years. When Israel was ready to enter the Promised Land, Moses asked the king of Edom to allow Israel to travel through Edom to the east side of the Dead Sea. But the king refused. He sent a heavy military force to block Israel. Deuteronomy 2:12 states that the Edomites had destroyed the Horites and settled in their place. Now the Edomites refused Israel permission to cross over their land.

Once Israel was established in the land of Palestine, conflict with the Edomites never ended. There was a long history of conflict between Israel and Edom (2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:14-16).

Psalms 137:7 states that the Edomites wanted Israel to be razed to its very foundation. Consequently, Israel was constantly forced to defend itself. So Yahweh planned to destroy the Edomites who are characterized in Isaiah 34:5 as a people who were devoted to destruction, especially the destruction of Israel.

Therefore, Jeremiah 49:17-21 tells us that the prophet Jeremiah announced that Yahweh had declared Edom would be destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Here is Yahweh's plan for Edom,

*“Edom will become an object of horror; everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss at all its wounds. Like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah with its neighbors,” says the LORD, “no one will live there, nor will a son of man reside in it.*

*Jeremiah 49:17-18 (NASB)*

Then in Ezekiel 25:12-14, we read another prophecy from Yahweh about the destruction of Edom. In that prophecy, Yahweh gave us the reason for destroying Edom. He said the

nation had acted against Israel by taking vengeance.

Then in Ezekiel 32:29, Yahweh described another part of His punishment upon the kings and people of Edom. When these individuals were killed, they would spend eternity with the uncircumcised in hell. For the Edomites, that would have been disgusting and insulting.

**Yahweh's Plan For Mount Seir (v 1-4).** The next time that Edom is mentioned is in Ezekiel 35. Our study is about this chapter. In this chapter Yahweh announces more details about His plan for Edom's destruction. As we study the chapter, it may seem strange that a chapter about Edom follows chapter 34, which is about the regathering of Israel and the millennial kingdom. It may also seem strange that chapter 36 is about the salvation of Israel at the end of the tribulation. So chapter 35 contrasts Edom's future to Israel's future. Israel's future is a worldwide kingdom ruled by the Messiah, My servant David. Together these three chapters reveal Yahweh favors Israel, and anyone who insults and attacks Israel is in serious trouble.

Chapter 35 has three sections. The first section is verses 1-4. It is about Yahweh's plan for Edom or Mount Seir.

*Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it and say to it, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,*

*“Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir,  
And I will stretch out My hand against you  
And make you a desolation and a waste.*

*“I will lay waste your cities*

*And you will become a desolation.*

*Then you will know that I am the LORD.”*

*Ezekiel 35:1-4 (NASB)*

Notice that once again Yahweh says, “I will.” He is sovereign. He is in control and will personally make the nation desolate and a waste. In verse 3 He said that He would make Edom waste. In verse 4 He said, “I will lay waste your cities.” There are three different Hebrew words translated as desolation and waste in verses 3 and 4. Together these three words describe a total ruin resulting in a sparsely populated

land. That is a good description of the nation of Jordan today. Jordan occupies a good portion of the territory of ancient Edom and is largely barren. That is a description of Yahweh's plan for Edom.

**First Reason For Yahweh's Plan (v 5-9).** The next section is verses 5-9. They describe Yahweh's first reason for His plan to effectively destroy Edom. Verses 5-6 say,

Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end, therefore as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you. Ezekiel 35:5-6 (NASB)

Immediately, Yahweh reveals that Edomites had hated Israel from generation to generation. It began in Genesis and continued century after century. Esau hated Jacob and that hatred never ended. Yahweh said it was everlasting enmity. It still exists today in the Arab community. Yahweh said that hatred resulted in the Edomites killing Israelites. Therefore, Yahweh said bloodshed would pursue them because they loved bloodshed. The killers would be killed. There is a play on words in verse 6. The Hebrew word for bloodshed is used four times. The Hebrew word is dam. It means red. The name Esau means red. Yahweh is emphasizing that Edom was a bloody nation.

They sought vengeance against their brother Israel. We should not be surprised for Proverb 17:17 gives us this biblical principle,

A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.  
Proverb 17:17 (NASB)

The mark of a true friend is that they never stop loving each other. Yet, brothers will very often be in conflict. Therefore, we should not be surprised that conflict existed between the two nations. Consequently, Yahweh would

protect Israel and end the conflict by destroying Edom.

Verses 7-8 continue the description of Yahweh's punishment upon the Edomites,

"I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation and I will cut off from it the one who passes through and returns. I will fill its mountains with its slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain by the sword will fall." Ezekiel 35:7-8 (NASB)

Now we are told that when the Edomites were killed, their bodies would be left on the mountains, in the valleys, and in the ravines. Dr. Charles Feinberg makes this comment,

The height of indignity in the Orient was not to be properly buried. The slain of Edom would be found in the mountains, hills, valleys and watercourses, all without benefit of burial. God's sole and final answer to perpetual enmity was perpetual desolation.<sup>1</sup>

Why did Yahweh plan to intentionally crush their pride? Because punishment is supposed to hurt in order to motivate us to change. The book of Obadiah reveals Edom was very proud. Verses 2-3 tell us,

"Behold, I will make you small among the nations;  
You are greatly despised.  
The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,  
You who live in the clefts of the rock,  
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,  
Who say in your heart,  
'Who will bring me down to earth?'"  
Obadiah 2-3 (NASB)

So, the answer to their question in verse 3, "Who will bring me down to earth?" is that Yahweh will. Yahweh keeps saying that He will. This is a serious reminder that God Himself will punish us for unrepentant sins.

Before we move to the next verse, we need to read 1 Corinthians 11:31-32,

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel. Moody Press. 1969. p. 202.

But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 (NASB)

Notice that we are told that if we judge ourselves, then we will not be judged. That is, if we will call our sin a sin and repent, then the Lord will not punish us. But if we do not repent, then He will punish us. So, God is encouraging His saints to pursue righteousness. Galatians 6:7 says that we reap what we sow.

The next verse in Ezekiel 35 is verse 9.

“I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Ezekiel 35:9 (NASB)

This is the consequence of Edom’s pride. Their pride turned into hatred, which turned into killing Israelites. Here Yahweh promised to punish them for not repenting. Then for the second time Yahweh said, “Then you will know that I am the LORD.” He said it the first time in verse 4. This suggests that they did not believe in Yahweh or His warnings. So, the first reason for Yahweh destroying Edom was their hatred for Israel. So, they had cursed Israel.

### **Second Reason For Yahweh’s Plan (v 10-15).**

The third section of the chapter is verses 10-15. Verse 10 states,

“Because you have said, ‘These two nations and these two lands will be mine, and we will possess them,’ although the LORD was there . . .” Ezekiel 35:10 (NASB)

The two nations refer to the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. The LORD knew their thoughts. He knew they wanted to take control of all the land possessed by Israel. When Yahweh said, “although the LORD was there” He revealed that He identified Himself with Israel. That is, to attack Israel is to attack Yahweh. That is a serious warning to every nation. Attacking Israel with a

missile is an assault upon God.

Verse 11 says,

“ . . . therefore as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “I will deal with you according to your anger and according to your envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; so I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. Ezekiel 35:11 (NASB)

This verse is special. It defines the symptoms of hatred. Yahweh has already told us in verse 5 that the Edomites hated Israel. Now Yahweh says the symptoms of hatred are anger and envy. The Hebrew word for envy literally means “jealousy.” Since Yahweh sees the hatred in their hearts, He will punish them. Yahweh is helping them identify their root sin. Their symptoms of hatred were anger and jealousy. It also helps us identify our own sin of hatred.

Verses 12-13 say,

“Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all your revilings which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel saying, ‘They are laid desolate; they are given to us for food.’ And you have spoken arrogantly against Me and have multiplied your words against Me; I have heard it.” Ezekiel 35:12-13 (NASB)

Verse 12 starts with “you will know that I, the LORD.” This is being stated for the third time. Then again, Yahweh repeats Edom’s guilt. Edom wanted to possess the land of Israel and they hated Israel. Notice the jealousy or envy in this verse. Notice that they wanted the land Israel occupied. We see that today in the Middle East and around the world. Many people hate Israel and some want their land. Then Yahweh added that Edom had spoken against Him too! To speak against Israel is to speak against God.

Verses 14-15 conclude the chapter.

“Thus says the Lord GOD, “As all the earth rejoices, I will make you a desolation. As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O

Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 35:14-15 (NASB)

Now Yahweh reveals the earth will rejoice when Edom is destroyed. He also reveals that what Edom did to Israel, He would do to them. Once again, this is another reminder of Galatians 6:7 which says that we reap what we sow. Then a fourth time Yahweh announces that then they will know He is in fact Yahweh.

So, the first reason for Yahweh destroying Edom was their hatred for Israel. The second reason for Yahweh destroying Edom was they were jealous of Israel. They wanted to remove Israel from the land and possess it for themselves. Now we can better understand the sense of Yahweh’s comment in Malachi 1:2b-3a, “I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau.” Edom was Israel’s arch enemy.

**Conclusion.** A. C. Gaebelein makes this concluding comment in his commentary.

When the Lord is merciful to His people and bestows upon them the promised blessings, He will also deal with their enemies in judgment. Edom was the most bitter enemy of Israel, their blood-relation. The judgment threatened here was executed upon Edom.<sup>2</sup>

Then, in verses 14-15, we hear of the time of rejoicing which will come for His people when their enemies are judged (Deuteronomy 32:43).

So, peoples and nations of our world are warned by God Himself that He will punish them if they attack Israel. To attack Israel, to insult Israel, to speak against Israel, IS it to attack, insult, and speak against God.

We should rejoice for Israel that our God is their defender, their Rock. We should also rejoice that God is the defender of Christians too (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)!

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<sup>2</sup> A. C. Gaebelein. Prov-Ezek. The Annotated Bible. Publication Office of “our Hope.” 1913., p. 314.