

A Message Concerning Edom

49: 7-22

DIG: From whom do the Edomites descend? Where is their country? What kind of land is it? What kind of people were they? The crimes of Edom were well known to Jeremiah's hearers, but they are only hinted at here. What had they done? How extensive would ADONAI's wrath be? What were the orphans and widows offered? Did they take advantage of God's mercy? Why? Why not? What does that say about the sovereignty of YHVH? Ha'Shem is compared to a lion and an eagle. Which image do you think fits the LORD best? Why do you think Ha'Shem makes no promise of restoration, as He does for the Egyptians, Moabites and Ammonites (see 46:26, 48:47, 49:6)?

REFLECT: Have you ever been afraid of God? When and why? What does it mean to "fear God" in the way Jeremiah advises? The flip side of every virtue is a vice, and so it was with Edom's wisdom. How can intellect hinder spiritual growth? How can it help? What is the role of intelligence in your spiritual life? Of the "orphans and widows" in your life? Of the "orphans and widows" in your world, for whom can you be an instrument of God's mercy? What "eagle's nest" (fortress mentality) have you built to feel secure in your private world? How secure are you, really? How has ADONAI broken through that to bring you to Himself?

Sometime between 604 and 601 BC during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim

Now **Jeremiah** turns to the third trans-Jordan country. **Edom** lay south of the Dead Sea and extended for about 100 miles between the Wadi Zered and the Gulf of Aqabah. Like Moab, it was a high mountainous area that fell away steeply to the west into the Arabah. It had cultivable areas and straddled the King's Highway, which passed along the eastern plateau of **Edom** to the north.

There was a long history of antagonism between **Judah** and **Edom** reaching back to the days of the exodus (**Numbers 20:14-21**). The **Israelites** were on one occasion forbidden to mistreat the **Edomites** (**Deuteronomy 23:7-8**), who were **their** brothers. David brought them under his control (**Second Samuel 8:13-14**). Solomon had trouble with Hadad, who fled to Egypt (**First Kings 11:14-22**). Yet in the days of Jehoshaphat there was a Judean deputy in **Edom** (**First Kings 22:47**), and **Edom** supported **Judah** and **Isra'el** (**Second Kings 3:9**) in a retaliatory war against Moab. **Edom** revolted in the days of Joram (**Second Kings 8:20-22**) when the southern kingdom of **Judah** was attacked by the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** and **Aram**, and broke free from **Judah** (**Second Kings 16:5-6**). King Amaziah of **Judah** defeated the **Edomites** in battle (**Second Chronicles 25:14; Second Kings 14:22**) in

the eighth century BC. King Uzziah of Judah extended his boundaries into **Edom** (**Second Kings 14:22**). But **Edom** won back much of its territory during the reign of wicked King Ahaz (**Second Kings 16:6**).²²²

Edom remained hostile to **Judah** even when Edom was dominated by other nations. **Edom** paid tribute to the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser II at Damascus and remained a vassal of Assyria for the next century. Probably **the Edomites** paid tribute to Nebuchadnezzar after Babylon defeated Assyria at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, but **Edom** plotted rebellion against Babylon in 594 BC with Ammon, Moab, Tyre, Sidon and **Judah**. When **Y'hudah** felt the weight of Nebuchadnezzar's attack in 589-587 BC, **Edom** not only gave no assistance but seemed to have collaborated with the Babylonians (**Ezekiel 25:12-14**) and reveled over **Judah's** destruction (**Psalms 137:7; Obadiah 1-21; Lamentations 4:21**). **The Edomites** subsequently expanded **her** territory west and made Hebron **her** capital. In the B'rith Chadashah, that area was known as **Idumea** (**Mark 3:8**). King Herod, whose soldiers ridiculed and mocked **Yeshua** (**Luke 23:11**), was an **Idumaeen** of Jewish (Nabatean) and **Edomite** descent, whose ancestors converted to Judaism (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Aw - Herod Gave Orders to Kill all the Boys in Bethlehem Two Years Old and Under**).

Concerning Edom, this is what the LORD of heaven's angelic armies says: **Is there no longer wisdom in Teman** (literally: *south*)? **Teman** was the grandson of **Esau** (see the commentary on **Genesis 16 - Esau's Sons and Grandsons**). **Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed? Turn and flee, hide in deep caves, you who live in the oasis of Dedan, for I will bring disaster on Esau at the time when I punish him (49:7b-8)**. **Dedan** was the grandson of Abraham and his third wife **Keturah** (see the commentary on **Genesis 6 - Abraham Took Another Wife, Whose Name Was Keturah**). **Dedan** and his brothers settled into Arabian border with **Edom** and the disaster that was to fall on **Edom** would spill over to those Arabian tribes as well.

The totality of **Edom's near historical prophecy** destruction is then described. **If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? Normally when grapes are gathered some are left. If thieves came during the night, would they not steal only as much as they wanted** (this is a quote from **Obadiah 5**). Normally when **thieves** steal they don't take everything away. Although **grape gatherers** leave gleanings and **thieves** leave some possessions, this will not be so with **the Edomites**. **But I will strip bare the land of Edom, and there will be no place left to hide. Its children, its brothers, and its neighbors will all be destroyed, and Edom itself will be no more (49:9-10 NLT)**. The picture is one of total destruction. There will be no remnant. **YHVH** promised a remnant for both the **Moabites** and the **Ammonites**, but **He** makes no such promise to **the Edomites**.

In the context of judgment, however, Ha'Shem offers mercy. **But I will protect the orphans who remain among you. Your widows, too, can depend on Me for help (49:10b-11).** After the initial **near historical judgment** in which the fathers die, their children and widows are left. If they put their faith in the God of Isra'el and stop their spiritual adultery, they would be saved. However, as subsequent verses show, the LORD's offer was rejected. YHVH gave Edom a choice and He gives us a choice. We can say "No" to ADONAI and make it stick. And that's exactly what Edom did. They continued to trust in themselves and their own gods, which eventually caused their total destruction. Nothing will survive and life is not possible.

This is what ADONAI says: In the **far eschatological future**, if those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it (49:12). When the cup is used symbolically in Scripture, it is always a picture of the wrath of Ha'Shem. Although Edom did not want to drink it, God determined that she must. If Jacob must drink it, then surely Esau and his descendants must also be forced to drink it. For the Jews, however, the promise is that they will return (**shuwb**), but as for the Edomites . . . none will survive.

I swear by Myself, declares the LORD, that Bozrah (the capital of Edom) will become a ruin and a curse, an object of horror and reproach; and all its towns will be in ruins forever (49:13). Here the inspired writer focuses his attention on Bozrah and the effect that this cup of wrath will have on her. Bozrah is commonly known today as Petra. Bozrah, in particular, will suffer divine wrath. It will be the key focal point of Edomite destruction (see the commentary on **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**).

The means of Edom and Bozrah's destruction is then given. I have heard a message from Ha'Shem; an envoy was sent to [all] the nations to say, "Assemble yourselves to attack it! Rise up for battle" (Jeremiah 49:14 and Obadiah 1). The gathering of all the nations is part of the overall Campaign of Armageddon (see the commentary on **Revelation Ex - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon**). These are the armies of the antichrist for the purpose of wiping out the Jews. They gather in the Valley of Armageddon, also known as the Valley of Megiddo, or the Valley of Jezreel. Then they move south against the Jews of Yerushalayim, which eventually falls (Zechariah 12:1-3, 14:1-2). However, the majority of Jews will no longer be in Tziyon, but Bozrah (Micah 2:12-13). Therefore, the armies of the antichrist continue south past the Dead Sea, to the small village of Paran. Turning east, they will tighten the noose around the neck of the Jews in Bozrah.

The result of the gathering of all the nations will be the destruction of Edom. Now I will make you small among the nations, despised by mankind (Jeremiah 49:15 and Obadiah 2). The reason? Their pride! Edom had a lot of pride in her defenses, but they will be worthless when Messiah comes back. The terror you inspire and the pride of your heart have deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks, who occupy the heights of the hill. Though you build your nest as high as the eagle's, from there I will bring you down, declares ADONAI (Jeremiah 49:16 and Obadiah 3-4). Jeremiah uses **three powerful metaphors** to describe the results of the Second Coming.

First, Edom will be like Sodom and Gomorrah. Edom will become an object of horror; all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds (49:17). As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown (they may have been cities within what later became Edom), along with their neighboring towns, says the LORD, so no one will live there; no people will dwell in it (Jeremiah 49:18; Genesis 19:24-28; Deuteronomy 29:23; Psalm 11:6; Revelation 14:10-11). No one has lived in those cities since then and the same will be true of Edom and Babylon (50:40). They will be three desolate wastelands in the messianic Kingdom when you include Hazor (see the commentary **Revelation Er - Babylon Will Never Be Found Again**).

Second, God will be like a lion who will attack the flock of sheep that is Edom and will devastate and terrorize her. The sheep will be completely exposed when the lion comes. Verses 19-21 are repeated almost verbatim in the message concerning Babylon (50:44-46). Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets to a rich pastureland, In an instant I will chase Edom away and appoint over it whomever I choose. YHVH will choose the Jews: But on Mount Tziyon there will be a holy remnant who will escape, and the house of Ya'akov will reclaim their rightful inheritance (Obadiah 17 CJB). Then the victorious will ascend Mount Tziyon to rule over Mount Esau, but the kingship will belong to ADONAI (Obadiah 21 CJB). Isra'el will own it, have the title deed to it, even though no one will live there. For who is like Me and who can challenge Me? And what shepherd can stand against Me (49:19)? No one. Yeshua Ha'Meshiach will strike terror into the hearts of the antichrist and his armies (see the commentary on **Revelation Ce - The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David Has Triumphed**).

Therefore, YHVH calls to the world to understand His special, unique, divine decree: Hear what ADONAI has planned for Edom, what He has purposed against those who live in Teman: The young of the flock will be dragged away; their pasture will be appalled at their fate. At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble. Their cry will resound to the Sea of Reeds (49:20-21), the site of Ha'Shem's first destruction of a nation that threatened His Chosen People (see the commentary on **Exodus Cn - The LORD Will Fight For You, You Need Only to Be Still**).

Third, YHVH will be like a large eagle, who will intimidate and terrorize, causing warriors to quake like women in labor. Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor (49:22).

The picture for **Edom** is one of total destruction, which agrees with the other prophets (**Isaiah 21:11-12, 34:1-17, 63:1-6; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1-21**). Ezekiel makes the point that when the whole world is beautiful during the messianic Kingdom, **Edom** will be lay waste, desolate forever . . . never to be inhabited again (**Ezekiel 25:12-14, 35:1-15**). **Obadiah 17-21** points out that **Esau** will not have a single descendent left, while his brother **Jacob** will have many descendants (see the commentary **Genesis Gm - Two Nations, One Womb**). **Edom's land** will be reduced to volcanic waste. **Her streams will be turned into black sticky pitch, and her dust into burning sulfur.** The result of **ADONAI's** sword of judgment on **Edom** is that **her land will become blazing pitch! It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever (Isaiah 34:9-10a).** The word **forever** means *until the end of an age or dispensation*. In this case, it will continue until the end of the dispensation of the millennial Kingdom. Throughout the messianic Kingdom the land of **Edom**, and **Kedar and Hazor** or Saudi Arabia (see **Dp - A Message Concerning Kedar and Hazor**), like **Babylon**, will be nothing but a burning wasteland. And in even stronger language than the first line, **Isaiah** tells us that **from generation to generation Edom will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again (Isaiah 34:10b).** It will have no *human* inhabitants, but it *will* have inhabitants. **Isaiah** lists a number of *animals* that will dwell there.

The desert owl and screech owl will possess it (see Ad - The Owl as a Symbol of Judgment); the great owl and the raven will nest there (Isaiah 34:11a). These cannot be literal animals because literal owls and ravens could not survive in the burning wasteland described here by **Isaiah**. We may not know what kind of *animals* they are, but we do know that they are the only kind of *animals* who can live in **burning pitch and burning sulfur** that will not be quenched day and night. When we look at the animal kingdom, none of them could normally survive in this kind of an environment. Then what are these? Keep reading (see the commentary on **Isaiah Gi - Edom's Streams Will Be Turned into Pitch**).