

EZEKIEL

Hard to Heart

"Where Have All the Edomites Gone?"

35:1-15

Anti-semitism is prejudice against, or hostility towards, Jews.

It may be manifested in many ways, ranging from personal expressions of hatred and discrimination against individual Jews to organized violent attacks by mobs or even state, police, or military attacks on entire Jewish communities.

Extreme instances of anti-semitism include the First Crusade of 1096, the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290, the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, the expulsion of Jews from Portugal in 1497, and the most infamous, the Holocaust under Hitler's Nazi Germany.

Why so much historic anti-semitism? It is satanic. In The Revelation of Jesus Christ the devil is portrayed as seeking to devour the Messiah Who would be born through the nation of Israel.

- Before the birth of Jesus the devil sought to destroy the line through which He must be born. Pharaoh's order to the midwives to kill all the male babies born to Jewish mothers is an example.
- After the birth of Jesus the devil sought to kill Him prematurely. Herod's order to kill all the male children two years old and under is an example.
- After the resurrection of Jesus the devil has been seeking to destroy every last Jew. It would thwart the prophecies that Jesus will return and all Israel will receive Him as their Savior.

High on the list of historic anti-semites are the descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau. They are the Edomites and are associated with Mount Seir.

Their judgment is described in chapter thirty-five. Any who embrace anti-semitism should take notice because God establishes that He identifies with His chosen people and will defend them.

Ezekiel 35:1 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
Ezekiel 35:2 "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it,
Ezekiel 35:3 and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against you; I will stretch out My hand against you, And make you most desolate;
Ezekiel 35:4 I shall lay your cities waste, And you shall be desolate. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

Esau and Jacob were twins, born to Isaac and Rebekah. Esau was the first of the twins to be born. He was covered with red hair and was called Esau. Some scholars believe that the word Esau means *hairy*. Esau became the ancestor of the people of Edom, which means *red*.

Before Esau's birth, the Lord told Rebekah that her older son would serve the younger son (Genesis 25:23). This was an unusual concept in ancient times because the oldest son was regarded as the heir of the father's wealth, power and authority.

Esau was born first. But when his twin brother Jacob was being born, Jacob's hand was holding onto Esau's heel. This was taken as a sign that Jacob wanted to be born first. Later in life, Jacob continued to show that he wanted to be his father's heir.

One day, Esau returned from an unsuccessful hunting trip and was famished. He saw that Jacob had been cooking food and he asked for a serving. Jacob asked him if he would be willing to sell his rights as the first-born son in exchange for a bowl of food. Esau agreed. (Genesis 25:29-34).

Jacob sought to make good on the deal and, with his mother's help, tricked his aging father into giving Jacob the blessing that traditionally would be reserved for the first-born.

After Jacob had gotten the blessing from his father, Esau vowed to kill Jacob. To protect Jacob, his mother arranged for him to live with her relatives in Haran. Jacob lived in Haran for about twenty years, working for his uncle, Laban. When Jacob returned home, his brother, Esau, who now had wealth and a 400-man army, forgave Jacob.

Esau married Hittite women, against his parents wishes. He also married two Ishmaelite women. One of them was Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. After Isaac died, Esau took his wives, his children, his servants and his cattle and moved away from his brother to Mount Seir.

In the New Testament passage of Hebrews 12:16, Esau is described as immoral and unreligious. Paul, in Romans 9:10-13, indicates that God had chosen Jacob to be the heir to the promises that he had made to his grandfather, Abraham.

The Romans passage is often used out of context to say that in God's election to personal salvation, He chooses some while overlooking others. That's not at all what the passage teaches. In Romans Nine Paul is explaining to Jews that God has set aside Israel for a time in order to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. Even though Israel was God's 'firstborn,' as it were, He was setting them aside temporarily and giving His blessings to the Gentiles, the second-born. Paul appealed to the case of Jacob and Esau as an illustration from the Jew's own history that God can set aside the firstborn in favor of the second-born at times.

It has nothing to do with unconditional election and predestination. Nothing.

Esau's descendants practiced a constant animosity against Jacob's descendants. For that God would utterly and totally wipe them out.

The nation of Esau's descendants is sometimes referred to as Esau (Malachi 1:3), Idumea (Isaiah 34:5), and Mount Seir (Ezekiel 35:3). All of these names are interchangeable, referring to the same nation, Edom.

Edom was located to the southeast of Judah, in a rugged, mountainous region which is now the southwestern part of the kingdom of Jordan. It's most well known city is Petra.

Throughout ancient history, the Edomites manifested their hatred against the Hebrews, as shown by their refusing Moses and his people permission to pass through Edomite territory in Numbers 20:14-22.

God would deal with them by destroying them as an identifiable people.

Ezekiel 35:5 "Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end,

Ezekiel 35:6 therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you.

Ezekiel 35:7 Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns.

Ezekiel 35:8 And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall.

Ezekiel 35:9 I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I am the Lord.

There is a play on the word "blood" in this passage. Edom means *red*, so "Red" (Edom), who "have not hated [shedding the] blood" of Jews would themselves be pursued by blood.

The prophecy here is that "I will make you perpetually desolate." Scholars and historians say there are no Edomites today.

One author writes,

History records that the Edomites were ravaged by the Babylonian armies in the early 6th Century BC, and that near the end of the 6th Century BC, the Nabateans attacked the Edomites, driving them from their mountain fortresses of Mount Seir, into the Negev Desert to the west.

The ancient prophecies against Edom were completely fulfilled, and there is no need to look for those prophecies to be fulfilled yet again today, especially since the Edomites no longer exist as an identifiable nation or ethnic group.

What became of them? Jewish historian Josephus, writing of Jewish conquests in the 2nd Century BC writes the following:

[John] Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews (Chapter IX, 2).

There is another part to the prophecy. In Ezekiel 35:9 it says, “I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited.” Thus while there would be no Edomites as an identifiable ethnic group, their cities would remain and be uninhabited.

That is literally true! Petra was discovered in 1812 by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. A tourism website boasts of it, saying it “is without doubt Jordan’s most valuable treasure and greatest tourist attraction.”

Many Bible scholars and students of prophecy speculate that Petra will be the place where the believing remnant of Jews will flee mid-way through the Great Tribulation when the antichrist declares himself to be God and begins to persecute them. It seems to fit the general geography of their flight insofar as its is described.

Lambert Dolphin writes,

Jesus does not tell the residents of Tel Aviv or Haifa to flee. The greatest danger is in Jerusalem and the peril is so great that the true believers must leave town immediately. The number fleeing will certainly number thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands. They are called to flee to the mountains, and since Jerusalem is already in the mountains of Judea, the flight will evidently be down to Jericho, then across into Jordan. Most Bible scholars believe this godly remnant will find refuge in the ancient rock-hewn cliff city of Petra, or least in the land of Edom (Southern Jordan). They will survive, protected by God, for three and a half years.

It makes sense. We’ll see from our vantage point in Heaven, having been resurrected or raptured at least three and one half years prior.

Ezekiel 35:10 "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess them,' although the Lord was there,
Ezekiel 35:11 therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you.

Not only did the Edomites fight against Israel, they often aided Israel's enemies against her. They thought by aiding the Babylonians that "these two countries" - referring to Israel and Judah - "shall be [theirs] to move into and possess.

God would not let that happen. His unconditional promises to the Jews, that they would possess their land, would be defended by Him.

Ezekiel 35:12 Then you shall know that I am the Lord. I have heard all your blasphemies which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are desolate; they are given to us to consume.'

Ezekiel 35:13 Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me and multiplied your words against Me; I have heard them."

God considers any anti-semitism as if it were directed at Him! Israel is the apple of His eye, His own peculiar people, and He takes notice of those who are against her.

Ezekiel 35:14 'Thus says the Lord God: "The whole earth will rejoice when I make you desolate.

Ezekiel 35:15 As you rejoiced because the inheritance of the house of Israel was desolate, so I will do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom - all of it! Then they shall know that I am the Lord."'

Petra exists. The Edomites who once inhabited it do not.

Most Bible prophecy has been fulfilled. One scholar estimates two thousand of a total of two thousand five hundred have literally been fulfilled. The rest are future prophecies which will be literally fulfilled.

The odds for all these prophecies having been fulfilled by chance without error is less than one in 10 to the 2000th power (that is 1 with 2000 zeros written after it)!

How much Bible prophecy needs to be fulfilled before a person understands that the Bible is indeed the Word of God?

