

Session 2 The Forerunner Message in Ezekiel 35

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Outline for Ezekiel 35
 - 35:1-9 The certainty of Edom’s judgment
 - 35:10-15 The reasons for Edom’s judgment
- B. Ancient Edom occupied the area that is now in southern Jordan, just below the Dead Sea.
- C. Edom in the prophetic scriptures can speak of its physical descendants, the geographic territory, or the demonic spirit that energizes its hatred throughout history. Many commentators see Edom also as representative of all the nations that stand against God’s purpose for Israel.
- D. Ezekiel 35 is one of the strongest indictments and warnings against anti-Semitism. Ezekiel gave two oracles against Edom (cf. 25:12-14). There are many prophecies about Edom (Ps. 60:8-9; 83:6; 108:9-10; 137:7; Isa. 11:14; 34:5-15; 63:1-6; Jer. 25:21; 49:7-22; Lam. 4:21-22; Dan. 11:41; Ezek. 32:29; 35:1-5; 36:5; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:6-12; 2:1; 9:12; Obad. 1-21; Mic. 2:12-13; Mal. 1:4).
- E. **“Crossing the Line”** is a 5-minute video exposing the anti-Semitism in the BDS movement. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=TRTRBvYPXLY>
- F. Note the end-of-age context when Edom is made desolate permanently (35:3, 4, 9) and when Edom acknowledges that the God of Israel prevailed over them in judgment (35:4, 9, 12, 15).

II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

- A. One reason that people hate Israel is because God chose them and Satan hates what God loves. The Lord has the sovereign right to have mercy on “whom He will” (Rom. 9:18).
- B. The nations hate the idea of God’s election of Israel that does not depend on Jewish behavior, good or bad. All throughout the Scripture, the nations are held accountable for their attitude towards Israel, regardless of Israel’s spiritual condition, even when Israel’s apostasy has brought the divine discipline of exile. This evokes the everlasting hatred in the nations towards Israel.
- C. Scripture teaches that there are none good (Rom. 3:10)! Jewish sin is a trap for “election-despising, self-righteous people” (R. Kelly). There is no justification for people refusing to love what God has loved. His sovereign election of Israel had no regard for Jewish sin or righteousness, but is based completely on His sovereign prerogative to do as He pleases. It is not about who is better—Jews or Gentiles. It is not about race, but grace! The sins that Israel is guilty of are found in all nations.

- D. The divine action to reestablish the state of Israel in 1948 has stirred great hatred toward Israel. The Nazis hated the Jews because of their belief in being elected as the chosen people. Many Christians are provoked by this issue. The Lord will vindicate His right to choose His purposes for each nation, without being obligated to do the same for all nations.
- E. God’s sovereign election is a source of envy that tests and exposes the hearts of many Gentiles.
- F. God gave Esau (Edom) a land grant in the same way that He gave one to Israel (Deut. 2:1-14).
4“You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir...”⁵I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. ⁶You shall buy food from them with money...and you shall also buy water from them with money...” ¹²The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them...and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them. (Deut. 2:4-12)
- G. In justice, God made Israel wait 400 years for the land—until the Amorites’ sin was complete.
¹³Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years...”¹⁶In the fourth generation they [Israel] shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (Gen. 15:13-16)
- H. Edom must be content with the land allotment that God sovereignly chose to give them. To speak evil of Israel’s sovereign land grant is to taunt the true Owner of the land. Even when the Lord’s tenants are expelled from the land, the Lord remains the divine landlord, and He will not tolerate Edom’s desire to usurp the land of Israel. He sees it as blasphemous against God.
- I. One of the main themes of Ezekiel 35 is the removal of Edom who sought to rule the land of Israel. Ezekiel continues the theme of removing the people who are hostile to God’s purpose for Israel, including Israel’s own shepherds (34:1-11) and Israel’s enemies—Edom (35:1-15).

III. THE CERTAINTY OF EDMO’S JUDGMENT (35:1-9)

- A. Judgment on Israel’s enemies who sought to possess the land—Edom:
²“Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, ³and say to it, ‘Thus says the Lord: “...O Mount Seir, I am against you; I will stretch out My hand against you, and make you most desolate; ⁴I shall lay your cities waste...Then you shall know that I am the Lord.””[”] (Ezek. 35:2-4)
1. **Mount Seir:** This is a territorial name for Edom (i.e., modern-day southern Jordan).
“All” of Edom is included in this judgment against Mount Seir! (35:15).
¹⁵“...you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom—all of it!” (Ezek. 35:15)

- a. Edom is another name for Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. The “children of Abraham and Isaac” descended from Jacob who had twelve sons (hence, twelve tribes).
 - b. Edom entered the story via Esau who had enmity against his younger brother Jacob (Gen. 33:4-16; Num. 20:14-21).
2. **Most desolate:** The Lord promised to make Edom most desolate (35:3, 4, 7, 9; 36:5) and to lay waste his cities. Today, the population of Jordan is about 10,000,000 people including several cities in the southern Jordan (ancient Edom) with over 25,000 people, such as *Ma’an* (40k) and *Tafilah* (25k). The name Edom is gone; now that area is called Jordan.
- B. Edom’s ancient hatred of Israel (35:5-6): Edom’s hatred of Israel began almost 4,000 years ago when the conflict between Jacob and Esau began, around 1800 BC (Gen. 25:22-23, 41).
- 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, 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. (Ezek. 35:5-6)***
1. Scripture gives us insight into Esau’s heart. “Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father Isaac had blessed him. Esau said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near. ***Then I will kill my brother Jacob***’” (Gen. 27:41). This root of bitterness was expressed in Edom and is in many today (Heb. 12:15-16).
 2. *“There is rage against the holy covenant in the injured spirit of Esau. That spirit is lodged in the neighboring Arab nations, and in the Palestinians in particular. This calls for a closer study of Edom and Esau in scripture and prophecy. The humanistic world, ignorant of God’s covenant Word, is being drawn into the conflict as their sympathetic identification with the Palestinian struggle is causing them to pick up Esau’s offense at God’s prerogative ‘to choose as He will choose.’ In their biblical illiteracy, and disregard for an ancient covenant concerning a literal land and people, the nations and many Christians are naively advancing and facilitating the final expression of Esau’s everlasting hatred that will show no mercy.”*
Reggie Kelly
 3. *“The hatred of Israel is satanic. It is motivated by seeking to stop the second coming of Yeshua at which time Satan will be imprisoned. The murder of Israel’s children before Jesus’ first coming was to stop Him coming to save the human race. The same hatred is against Israel and the church (Rev. 12). It is motivated by Satan’s fear of Yeshua.”* **Asher Intrater**
 4. ***At the time of their calamity:*** After Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC, the land of Judah lay in ruins. The Edomites assisted Babylon in plundering Jerusalem (Obad. 10-14). The descendants of Edom have consistently supported those attacking Israel (2 Chr. 20:10).
- ¹⁰“For violence against your brother Jacob...you shall be cut off forever. ¹¹In the day that...strangers [Babylon] carried captive his forces...¹³You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity...nor laid hands on their substance...***

¹⁴You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress.” (Obad. 1:10-14)

- C. The Lord will bring a final and permanent judgment on the land of Edom or Mount Seir (35:7-9)
- ⁷“Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. ⁸And 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. ⁹I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I am the LORD.” (Ezek. 35:7-9)***
- D. When Jesus returns, He will travel through Bozrah, the ancient capital of Edom (Isa. 63), releasing His judgment, resulting in the mountains and valleys being filled with dead bodies and the land perpetually desolate (35:8). At that time the Edomites will acknowledge the God of Israel as Lord.

IV. FIVE REASONS FOR EDOM’S JUDGMENT (35:10-15)

- A. Ezekiel gave five reasons for God’s judgment on Edom (35:5, 10-13).
- ⁵“Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel... ¹⁰Because you have said, ‘These two nations...shall be mine, and we will possess them’... ¹¹Therefore, as I live...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. ¹²Then you shall know that I am the LORD. I have heard all your blasphemies which you have spoken against...Israel... ¹³Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me...” (Ezek. 35:5, 10-13)***
1. ***Ancient hatred:*** The translation of “everlasting enmity” (NASB), or “perpetual enmity” (ESV), points to “permanent” hatred which is more serious than “long-standing” hatred. For almost 4,000 years, since Jacob deceived Esau, the sons of Esau or Edom have manifested continual enmity against Israel throughout her history (35:5; 25:12).
 2. ***Shed the blood:*** The Edomites have urged Israel’s enemies to kill the Jews. They seem to miss no opportunities to participate in attacking Israel (35:5; Obad. 10-14).
 3. ***Possess the land:*** The desire of the sons of Edom to possess the entire land of Israel (the north and the south parts) has been fueled by their conviction that the land still belongs to them because Jacob had obtained it by deceiving their father Esau (35:10; cf. Gen. 27).
 4. ***Blasphemies against Israel:*** Their words are blasphemous because they disregard the Lord’s sovereign commitment to give the land to Israel (35:12).
 5. ***Boasting against God:*** They arrogantly assert that they will prevail against Israel (35:13).
- B. ***Two nations:*** The two nations speak of Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

- C. ***We will possess them:*** Here, Ezekiel prophesied Edom would seek to take full possession of both Israel and Judah (35:10). After Judah was taken captive to Babylon in 586 BC, Edom moved into a small portion of the Judean territory in the south, only reaching Hebron. This prophecy was only partially fulfilled when Edom was subjugated by Babylon, then Persia, and then again in 126 BC by John Hyrcanus (a Jewish high priest).

5...“I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and...all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds...”
(Ezek. 36:5)

- D. The ultimate end-time fulfillment of this passage will cause the whole world to rejoice (35:14-15).

14...“The whole earth will rejoice when I make you desolate. 15As 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.”
(Ezek. 35:14-15)

V. THE BDS MOVEMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

- A. We must reject the same ancient arguments and hateful demonic spirit that energized Edom. This hatred is behind some who promote the *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement* that works to end international support for Israel because of her alleged oppression of the Palestinians.
- B. I feel deep compassion for the real suffering that Palestinian refugee families endure. It is terrible, and we must continue to pray for God's solution and provision to be given to those in authority.
- C. There is a spiritual side to this traumatic situation. First, we must esteem the Lord's sovereign decrees in giving land grants to nations such as Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Israel (Deut. 2:1-12). Second, we must discern and reject the spirit that fueled the Edom's ancient hatred of Israel. Third, we must operate in the spirit of Christ by showing kindness to all, even our enemies.
- D. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) Movement is a Palestinian-led movement for justice and equality. Its claims center on the fact that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as all others.
1. ***Boycotts:*** Withdraws support for Israel and all international companies and cultural, sporting, and academic institutions that violate Palestinian human rights according to their view.
 2. ***Divestment:*** This includes their campaigns to urge banks, churches, pension funds, and universities to withdraw investments from Israeli companies.
 3. ***Sanctions:*** This includes pressuring governments to end military and free-trade agreements with Israel and to expel Israel from international forums such as the UN and FIFA.

VI. MORE ON EDOM IN THE END TIMES

- A. The Lord desires to bring the remnant of Edom, or individual people, to salvation (Amos 9:11-12).
¹¹“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David...I will raise up its ruins...¹²that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name”... (Am. 9:11-12)
¹⁶“After this I will...rebuild the tabernacle of David...I will rebuild its ruins...¹⁷that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name...” (Acts 15:16-17)
- B. Edom will escape or be spared the destruction of the Antichrist (Dan. 11:41).
⁴¹He [Antichrist] shall enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and...Ammon. (Dan. 11:41)
- C. Israel will participate in the defeat of Edom when Jesus returns. Zechariah prophesied God would anoint them for battle in the days that Jesus was returning to Jerusalem (Zech. 12:6-9).
¹⁴“I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury...” says the Lord GOD. (Ezek. 25:14)
⁸In that day the LORD will defend...Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David...like the Angel of the LORD.... (Zech. 12:8)

VII. THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT TO COME ON THE LAND OF EDOM (ISA. 34)

- A. In the Lord’s end-time judgment against Edom, the land will be soaked with blood (Isa. 34:6) at the time that the stars fall to earth (34:4; Rev. 6:12-14) and when Edom is “turned into pitch” (34:9) so that it burns generation after generation (34:10). Bozrah was the ancient capital of Edom.
²The indignation of the Lord is against all nations...⁴The heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall...⁵“My sword shall...come down on Edom”...⁶The Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom...their land shall be soaked with blood... (Isa. 34:2-6)
- B. The land of Edom will be desolate forever (34:8-12). God’s vengeance on Edom has an eternal dimension to it. It is very rare for God’s judgment on a nation to be eternal in duration.
⁸For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance...⁹Its [Edom’s] streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰... its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever. (Isa. 34:8-10)
1. ***Its streams shall be turned into pitch:*** Pitch is a hot, tar-like substance comparable to asphalt. The streams that once flowed with water will be filled with pitch. Streams of burning pitch will move slowly through Edom like lava, filling it with flames and smoke.

2. ***Dust turned to brimstone:*** The soil will be turned to a combustible brimstone.
3. ***Its smoke shall ascend forever:*** The burning pitch and brimstone will send up columns of smoke that will ascend forever from Edom. This is comparable to the smoke ascending forever from the lake of fire (Rev. 14:11) and from Babylon (Rev 18:9, 18:19:2-3).
***⁹...If anyone worships the beast...¹⁰he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night...* (Rev. 14:9-11)**
4. Edom shall be called the “Territory of Wickedness” (Mal. 1:4). It seems that the judgment on Edom is connected in some way with the lake of fire.
⁴...they [Edom] shall be called the Territory of Wickedness and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever. (Mal. 1:4)
5. In the Millennium, those going to Jerusalem to worship will look on corpses (Isa. 66:23). Isaiah did not identify where these corpses will be—Edom is a possibility. John used the language about Edom from 34:10, adding that the people will be tormented in the “presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:10)—whose throne will be in Jerusalem, about 75 miles from Edom.
²³“And it shall come to pass that...all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. ²⁴“And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched.” (Isa. 66:23-24)