

In the Beginning

Studies in Genesis

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

Pastor Phil Erickson

February 10, 2016 (revised from original Sunday School Series started in January 2008)

Chapter Thirty-Six - *The Children of Esau*

Memory Verse – Genesis 36:8

Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

Introduction

This chapter contains the genealogy of the family of Esau. Oftentimes when we come to these passages in the Scripture we are tempted to pass over them. However, these verses are very important because God chose to include them in the Bible. When studying these pages, we want to look for people who will be prominent figures elsewhere in the Bible, and we also want to look for statements that are given within the lists of names that offer extra explanation regarding a particular person or place. In this study we will look beyond this chapter and try to find out what happens to Esau and his family later on in history. Esau ends up in Edom, which is named after him and is located to the south and east of the Dead Sea. The capital city of Edom was Petra.

I Esau Moves to Mount Seir (vs. 1 – 8)

A Esau is Edom (v. 1; 8)

The name Esau means rough and that was certainly an accurate description of Esau who was a hunter. His name was also Edom which means red. He got that name back in chapter 25 after eating his brothers red pottage which he bought with his birthright.

B Esau's Wives and Children (vs. 2 – 5)

These verses tell us about the wives of Esau and the children born to him while still in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 26:34 & 35; 28:8 & 9)

- 1 Adah - Eliphaz
- 2 Aholibamah – Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah
- 3 Bashemath – Reuel

Note – In comparing the names of Esau's wives in chapters 26 and 28, we see that it appears that Esau had another wife that is not mentioned here.

C Esau's Move

We see here a similar story to the one of Lot and Abraham. The land was too small for the two of them, and Esau decided to depart. It is apparent from Scripture that Esau left prior to Jacob's arrival in the land.

II The Descendants of Esau (vs. 9 – 19)

Note – Amelek – see Exodus 17 and 1 Samuel 15

III The Descendents of Seir (vs. 20 – 30)

It is interesting that in the middle of the family of Esau, God also includes this family of Seir. The land of Edom was named for Esau; but the specific place where Esau lived was named after Seir. Esau also marries Aholibamah who is a descendent of Seir. God includes all of these people here because he is giving us a history of the nation of Edom, including their rulers who either descend from Esau or Seir.

IV The Kings of Edom (vs. 31 – 39)

V The Dukes of Esau (vs. 40 – 43)

The word duke means a prince or a chief or a governor.

VI The Rest of Esau's Story

A God Protects Esau – Deuteronomy 2:1 – 8

B God Rejects Esau – Obadiah 1; Malachi 1:1 -4

Excerpt from Notes from Minor Prophets – Lecture Eleven - Malachi:

A Declaration of God's Love for Israel (Malachi 1:2 – 5)

The main truth of this section is not God's hatred of Esau, but God's love for Jacob. Some folks have a problem with the fact that God hated Esau, but I have a hard time understanding why God loved Jacob. God never said that He hated Esau until long after the life of Esau (the person) was ended, and also long after the history of the Edomites (the descendants of Esau) had been established. Esau had lived a life that indicated that he was not a man of faith, and the Edomites were cruel enemies of the Israelites for much of their existence. (See Numbers 20:14 – 21)

Some try to use this passage, along with Romans 9:13 where this passage is quoted, to prove that God chooses (predestines, elects) some to Hell. While I do not understand the sovereignty of God completely, I do know that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9); and that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord (in faith with a repentant heart) shall be saved. (Romans 10:13) Because of God's foreknowledge He knows who the "whosoever wills" are.

The point of this section of Malachi is that God demonstrated His love for Israel in that He has preserved Israel as a nation. God made a covenant with Israel, not Esau. The covenant began with Abraham (Genesis 12:1 – 3; 17:1 – 8; 18:17 – 19; 22:15 – 18), continued through Isaac (Genesis 21:12), and then Jacob (Genesis 35: 10 – 12).

The Edomites were eventually destroyed as a nation. See the notes from Obadiah for more information on the nation of Edom.

Excerpt from Notes from Minor Prophets - Lecture Five – Obadiah – "The Pride of Edom"

Introduction

Obadiah is a prophecy pronouncing judgment on the nation of Edom, which is located just to the south east of Judah, below the Dead Sea. This nation had lifted themselves up in pride against God, and against God's people. Though they descended from Israel's brother, Esau, they treated the children of Israel as their bitter enemy.

The Prophet - Obadiah

His name means "servant of Jehovah" or "servant of the Lord", and he is one of a dozen or so men in the Bible that share that name. It is difficult to tell which Obadiah he may be, as it is also difficult to determine the exact date of the writing. Bible experts are torn between an early date of around 840 BC, and a later date of 586 BC. This Book is either the earliest of all of the prophets, or it is among the latest (excluding the post-exilic prophets). The context of the Book describes an invasion of Jerusalem. There were four main invasions of Jerusalem in Israel's/Judah's history, but exactly which invasion of Judah Obadiah is speaking about is difficult to determine:

Four Invasions of Jerusalem:

- 1 Egypt (Shishak) – 926 BC during the reign of King Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25 – 26; 2 Chronicles 12)
- 2 Arabians and Philistines – 848 – 841 BC during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:8 – 20)
- 3 Israel (Jehoash - Northern Kingdom) – 790 BC during the reign of Amaziah. (2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25)
- 4 Babylon – 605 – 586 BC (2 Kings 24 – 25)

Possibilities of which Obadiah was the writer:

- 1 The Obadiah that was in Ahab's Kingdom of Israel. (1 Kings 18)
- 2 The Obadiah sent by Jehoshaphat to teach the law in Judah. (2 Chronicles 17:7)
- 3 The Obadiah who was one of the overseers responsible for repairing the breaches of the temple in Josiah's day. (2 Chronicles 34:12)

The supporters of the early date believe that invasion # 2 by the Arabians and the Philistines is the one referred to in Obadiah; and Obadiah #2 (above) could be the writer. The Obadiah (#1 above) mentioned in relation to Ahab's kingdom did prophecy around the same time, but it is not probable that he was a prophet to the southern kingdom. It is possible that the writer to this Book is not one of the other Obadiah's mentioned in Scripture.

The People – The Edomites

The people of Edom descended from Esau, Jacob's twin brother. There was a sibling rivalry between Edom and Israel, found first in Esau and Jacob:

- 1 The twins struggled in their mother's womb. (Genesis 25:22 – 26)
- 2 Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. (Genesis 25:27 – 34)

3 Jacob tricked Esau out of his blessing as the firstborn. (Genesis 27)

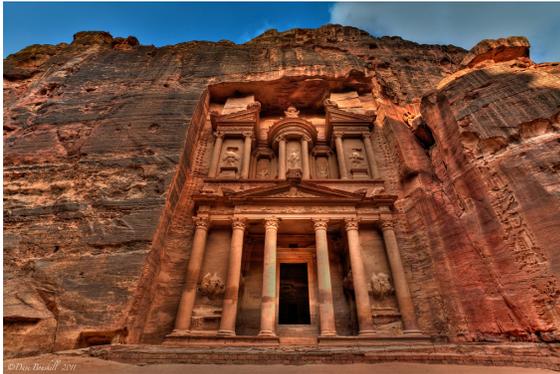
While Jacob and Esau eventually reconciled (Genesis 32 – 33), their descendants were often at odds with one another:

- 1 In the Exodus, Edom refused Israel passage through their land. (Numbers 20:14 – 21)
- 2 Edom was finally subjected by David (2 Samuel 8:13 – 14)
- 3 During the reign of Jehoram, Edom revolted (2 Kings 8:20 – 22)

After the prophecy of Obadiah the Edomites were overcome by the Nabataeans, and forced to settle south of Judah. Around 100 B.C., they were conquered by John Hyrcanus of the Maccabees who forced many of them to be circumcised and accept the Law. As such, many became nominal Jewish proselytes (Herod the Great was among them). By 100 AD, Edom as a race and nation had become lost to history.

The Place

Located to the south of the Dead Sea (see map of Israel), they built their cities in the cliffs, and thought that their cities were impregnable to invading armies.



Petra

This city in the Desert of Edom (present day Jordan) has miles of underground chambers and passageways. It is believed by some to be the place the Israelites will escape to during the Tribulation Period when fleeing from the Antichrist.

The Prophecy

I The Description of Their Pride (vs. 1 – 9)

The Edomites were a proud people. They especially prided themselves in the fact that their cities were so fortified that enemies could not invade them. (verse 3) According to this prophecy, Edom would be betrayed by their allies, and completely destroyed.

The obvious lesson that we can learn from this prophecy is that pride is something that will surely bring any nation, and any individual Christian, down:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." - (Proverbs 16:18)

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." - (Proverbs 6:16-19)

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." - (2 Chronicles 7:14)

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." - (Proverbs 8:13)

Note on v. 9 – Temon – see Job 2:11 (Eliphaz was from Temon); Jeremiah 49:7 (Temon is spoken of as once having wisdom)

II Their Defiling of God's People (vs. 10 – 14)

In this section, God describes the specific reasons for the judgment that was coming.

A For their treatment of Israel (v. 10, 13 - 14)

"Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: " - (Deuteronomy 23:7)

See Deuteronomy 2:1 – 7; Numbers 20:14 – 21

When Jerusalem was invaded, the Edomites not only participated, but also blocked off the escape of the Israelites through their border.

B For their siding with Israel's enemies (v. 11)

It is unwise to take sides against the people of God:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." - (Genesis 12:3)

C For their rejoicing over Israel's defeats. (v. 12)

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:" - (Proverbs 24:17)

III The Depiction of Their Punishment (vs. 15 – 21)

"The Day of the Lord" refers to Christ's future judgment of all of the nations, and the setting up of His earthly Kingdom. (see 2 Peter 3:7 – 13) However, Edom's demise as a nation came about before Christ's first coming, but there may be some "remaining" (v. 18) that will have to be dealt with.

1 Edom's destruction began with the Babylonian invasion under Nebuchadnezzar (600 B.C.)

2 It continued into the fourth century B.C. with the invasion of the Arabs known as the Nabataeans, forcing them to a region south of Judah.

3 In the second century B.C., the Maccabees brought them under subjection when Judas Maccabeus slew twenty thousand of them

4 John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) forced the remnant to accept circumcision and the Law.