

Jeremiah 49:7-22 The Rise and Fall of Common Sense Falls Ch. AM
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Where do you go for advice?

On Father's Day. What should I do here, Dad?

From our passage, verse 7, 'Has their wisdom vanished'

We could ask that about the Dad's in America – has their wisdom vanished?

Where do you go for advice?

In the 1940s, people would write to Ask Ann Landers and her advice was published in newspapers across the country.

In the 1980s, in came life coaches, such as Tony Robbins, and Americans paid their fees, attended their seminars, read their books.

In 1996, the website ask.com was launched. In 2002, was the first show by Dr. Phil, but there are many others. Social media opened the opportunity for anyone to ask everyone for advice.

In 2009, one accounting firm who was offering their business consulting services, developed this advertising tagline, "people who know, know BDO."

In the ancient world, to borrow a modern advertising phrase, 'people who know, know E-D-O-M, Edom.' Traditionally, Edom was famous for sound advice and wisdom. But at the time that God spoke to them here in Jeremiah 49, such common sense had departed from Edom.

As one Bible scholar put it, in terms of common sense, the ancient people of God lived in a bad neighborhood! These last chapters of Jeremiah remind us that they were surrounded by countries that were fierce enemies of God, and therefore unwise people groups, such as the Egyptians to the far Southwest, the Philistines to the near Southwest, the Moabites to the Southeast, and the Ammonites to the East. Today we study the Edomites to the south. None of these gave good advice. Rather, they needed to listen to God give them wise words. Will they listen?

As Christians in modern America, we sometimes feel like we are living in a bad neighborhood, with opponents to Christianity all around us. That brings us to this sermon's main point... **Because we keep on receiving God's grace in Christ, we remain open to basic teachings from God and religious assumptions about how the world works.**

1. The inevitability of God's judgment for lack of enough sense to repent. (v.7-13)

Father's day has us thinking about how broken families are in America. This is not new. The Old Testament reports to us family fights and dysfunction.

That is the backstory to our study today. Edom was related to the people of God. Think back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Well, Jacob's brother was Esau/Edom.

The sibling rivalry between Jacob and Esau/Edom persisted throughout their lives, and was passed on to their children and grandchildren, and eventually each family became a country.

To understand our passage, we keep in mind the ongoing bad relationship between the country of Edom and the people of God. Let me give you a few highlights. In Numbers chapter 20, we read that the Edomites refused to let Moses and the people of God pass through their territory. In the Book of Judges, chapter 11, the Edomites tried to conquer the land of Israel in the days of the judges. In 2 Samuel 8, in the days of King David, the Edomites were still an enemy, and in one fierce battle, King David struck down 18,000 Edomites. In 1 Kings 11, the Edomites tried to get revenge later under King Solomon. And in Psalm 137, when Jerusalem fell to Babylon and was taken into exile, the Edomites rejoiced.

So, you get the point, which is - after centuries of hostility, now here in Jeremiah 49:8, we read that the Edomites would be destroyed. Why? Because they would not repent. They thought they had become smarter than God.

Edom used to be well-known for two great things: their wise men and their fortresses. Remember the so-called wise men who gave advice to Job - the ancient classic suffering and faith-filled man? One of those men was a supposed wise man from Edom. Job 2:11, "*Now when Job's 3 friends heard of all this evil that had come upon [Job], they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, (2 others) ... They made an appointment together to come to show [Job] sympathy and comfort him.*" People who know, call EDOM.

But now their wisdom had faded, and their fortresses were threatened.

Edom was traditionally associated with wise men. They seemed to know the answers to life's conundrums, and they had practical common sense. So, God's questions in verse 7, such as "*has their wisdom vanished?*" suggests that they were no longer acting in a way that corresponded to their reputation of wisdom.

God wrote later how wisdom and foolishness are to be defined by God. 1 Corinthians 1:18-21, "*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."* 20 *Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*"

Back to our study of the wise men of ancient Edom, this is what God was saying back then! God would destroy their so-called wisdom, because it was actually foolishness. Obadiah verse 8, "*Will I not on that day, declares the Lord, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau?*"

Jeremiah 49, now in verse 8, the people in the city of Dedan were advised to run from the coming invasion and hide in caves, and disassociate themselves from Edom.

In those days, God (Lev. 19:10 and Deut. 24:21) required the farmers who picked grapes to leave some of the grapes to provide for poor people, such as women whose husbands had died, and children without parents.

The prophecy of judgment on Edom here involved the prophet Jeremiah reminding his readers of this law about grapes being left behind, and adding that thieves would only take as many of those grapes as they wanted. Contrast that to verse 10, that The LORD would take every single grape away.

Furthermore, that The LORD would take away every hiding place. These are various poetic ways of saying that God would destroy the foolish country of Edom. In verse 11, the threat of judgment was softened with the mention of God's compassion for widows and orphans, and that God would protect them while God was judging Edom.

Then, in verses 12-13, the Lord told about the judgment with yet another illustration – this time of a cup that they must drink, a cup famously called the cup of wrath. Edom was guilty. Everyone knew it.

Edom was prideful. They assumed that no one could overthrow them, not even God Himself. God would send them a response message of destruction.

2. The manner of God's judgment. (v.14-19)

Verse 14 showed the manner in which God's judgment would arrive. God would send an envoy, a messenger to say that a battle was brewing. Verse 15, the nations would despise Edom. Verse 16, because of Edom's pride, they think that they can hide in the cleft of the rock, or in a nest as high as the eagle's nest. But those were not safe places from God's judgment. There was an international strategy of nations joining for a savage attack against Edom, and behind it was God Himself. Under it all is God's own resolve, as verse 16 ends by God Himself saying, "*I will bring you down...declares the LORD!*"

Because of the pride and arrogance of Edom's fake wisdom and false security, there will be no hiding place, no escape, no refuge.

What a contrast for the one who trusts in The LORD, such as from verse 11, even the fatherless children and the widows. Contrast what God said to them! "*I will keep them alive.*" We know how God fulfilled this. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of His people, and in the resurrection of Jesus, God kept alive His people. By faith, we are safe. We have true wisdom, true security, a real hiding place, an escape from evil attacks, and a permanent refuge. Hiding in the cleft of the rock was a false belief for Edom, and it is a reality for us. This is why we can echo the Psalmist and sing "Rock of Ages, cleft for me Let me hide myself in thee..."

Edom's foolish mistake was refusing to trust in the LORD God for safety. It was a lethal mistake. It was the height of folly. God would brutally destroy them.

In fact, in verse 17, when other nations would see the ruin that God inflicted on Edom, those other nations would be in such shock that they would be horrified. The destruction of Edom would be so bad, that they could only be compared in verse 18 to the most classic destruction scene in the history of the world – God's raining down fire and brimstone on the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In verse 19, God again changed the word picture and compared Himself to a hungry lion coming out of the bushes in search of a victim to eat as food. God would make them run away. What sort of lion was this? Unique! It is God Himself! The job of shepherds was to feed and protect sheep, even from wild beasts, but in this case, no such "shepherd" would be able to thwart God's judgment on Edom. What shepherd can stand before God the Lion? The manner of God's judgment is fierce and unstoppable. This brings us to verse 20.

3. The plan of God's judgment and its consequences. (v.20-22)

In verse 20, the metaphor of God as a fierce lion is continued. The lion dragged away the victim, while the shepherd watched helplessly and powerlessly.

In verse 21, despite the fact that Edom seemed to be an insignificant nation, the whole earth would tremble at the fall of Edom. All must deal with this God!

In verse 22, God presented one more word picture – this time God was an eagle that went up high in the sky and flew very fast. The huge wings of the super-sized eagle would intimidate and terrorize, like an ancient F-16 or F-18. When that day of judgment would come for Edom, our passage ended in verse 22 with the hearts of the brave warriors becoming weak. The picture of a woman in labor was used in the ancient world as a picture of helplessness and distracting concerns.

All this from the initial basic problem of a lack of common sense? Yes.

Sodom and Gomorrah, the lion, and the eagle are all images assembled to voice 1 message – the impending threat of God for lack of enough sense to repent.

Jeremiah said it much earlier. Jeremiah chapter 9:23, "*Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom....but let him who boasts boast in this, that He understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares The LORD.*"

Conclusion: Where do you go for advice?

1) Be thankful that we have wisdom in Christ, and refuge in Christ. The lesson in our passage today is your common sense cannot save you. Your intelligence cannot save you. If you depend on human resources rather than on God, you will always fail. Test scores will not be checked at heaven's gates. God told us this in the Bible. Colossians 2:3, in Christ are "...*hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" By faith in Christ, His wisdom is shared with His church, and from His church wisdom is shared with the foolish world! We call on enemies of God to

repent! In this task, like Jeremiah the prophet, we are given wisdom and protection from all enemies. Listen to the Westminster Larger catechism question 63 explain how thankful we should be for our safety and refuge. Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible church? A. The visible church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.

2) Be thankful that God guides us. Psalm 23:1, "*the LORD is my shepherd... (v.3) He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*" We are profoundly thankful to God that He leads and guides us. We can go to God for advice, and we find that in His Word and Spirit through prayer, reading, and studying. God gave us a guidebook. It is filled with advice. We are thankful that God guides us.

3) Stop going to bad sources of advice. Do you know what was the first piece of advice in the earthly spoken ministry of Jesus Christ? Repent! Mark 1:14-15, "*...Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*" The first piece of advice from the Good Teacher Jesus was to repent! Do your sources of advice say anything to you about repenting, about how you might want to consider that your ways have been wrong, your words have been unhelpful, your thoughts have been poor, your attitude has been self-pitying, and your actions have been unjustified and lacking in kindness and graciousness? Do your sources of advice sound like Jesus. Jesus told about the gospel, the good news from God. And the good news from God was not that God accepts you in your sins. Rather the good news from God is that God pulls you out of your sins, and accepts you as righteous because of the righteousness of Jesus that has become yours by faith.

God said that Edomites would be completely destroyed in verse 10. But then in verse 11, God said that He would preserve children and widows. God gives grace to needy children and lonely women.

With the eyes of faith, we can see the contrast! The unrepentant strong men in Edom would receive the full force of the day of judgment from God on the world. Edom stands in contrast to Zion. Those who receive God's judgment live in Edom. Those who receive God's grace live in Zion. Fastforward, and where do we see this contrast between Edom and Zion, this contrast between the profane and the sacred, this contrast between people being judged and people being saved by God? We see it at the end of the Bible. In the closing chapters of the Book of

Revelation, we see the proverbial city of Babylon is the picture of evil, and the proverbial city of God is the picture of grace.

Revelation 18: 2, *“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit.....all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”*

Revelation 18:4, *“Come out of her, My people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquitiesmix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.”*

Revelation 21:2, *“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...(v.3) Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people,....He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.”*

With Christ’s wisdom, we can see the contrast between the ungodly and the godly, between Edom and Zion, between the wicked and God’s people.

The same God is the God of judgment and the God of salvation!

Isaiah 63:1, *“Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save!”*