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Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by David Roberts

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

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The Book of Isaiah

Message Eighty-Two

THE AFTERMATH OF THE TRIBULATION

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Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 34:11–17

¹¹But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and he will stretch over it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness. ¹²They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there; and all its princes shall be nothing. ¹³And thorns shall come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of jackals, a court for ostriches. ¹⁴And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster shall settle there, and shall find her a place of rest. ¹⁵There shall the dart-snake make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shade; yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate.

¹⁶Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read: no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth, it hath commanded, and his Spirit, it hath gathered them. ¹⁷And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall they dwell therein (ASV, 1901).

INTRODUCTION

The concluding section of this Scripture depicts the region of Edom (southern Jordan) after the end of the Great Tribulation. During the Messianic Kingdom the entire world will be blessed with peace, order and tranquility. Nevertheless, there will be two desolate spots of burning pitch and burning brimstone throughout the thousand-year Kingdom: Babylon and Edom. Here Edom is specifically singled out for a strong judgment by God resulting in its desolation. This is because of the close proximity of Edom to Israel. Those who persecute Israel and are closer to Israel in blood receive the greater judgments. Jacob was the twin brother of Esau. Esau is also called Edom and Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Additional reasons will be provided by God in chapter thirty-five.

Isaiah 34:11

¹¹But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and he will stretch over it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness (ASV, 1901).

But the cormorant and the porcupine shall possess it. The word for *cormorant* is rendered a *pelican* in Psalm. 102:6. They are both unclean fowls according to the law, of which is found in Leviticus 11:17, 18. *the owl also and the raven shall dwell therein;* which were likewise unclean creatures; and these, and other creatures mentioned, delight to dwell in desolate and ruinous places; and so Babylon like Edom being destroyed, will become a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, (Revelation 18:2). *and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the plummet of emptiness.* It is God who is doing this.

The use of the line and plummet, in building to measure exactness, or true vertical. Here is used to signify to pull down exactly. It is used so that we may know what is to be pulled down, and how far they it will go. Therefore, the destruction will be entire, nothing will be left but confusion and emptiness. This can be characterized by the Hebrews words *tohu* and *bohu*, which are the words used here, and are the same that are used to express the confusion, chaos, of the unformed and empty earth, Genesis 1:2 after the fall of the anointed cherub Lucifer who became Satan. So likewise, that God's judgment should be by line and level, by rule and measure; or according to the rules of justice and equity.

NO TRUE HUMAN LEADERS LEFT

Isaiah 34:12

¹²They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there; and all its princes shall be nothing (ASV, 1901).

Edom will be so desolate that there will be no people to rule it. In other words, there will be no nobles there who shall survive the destruction, and can run the government. Edom was formerly governed, by *dukes* or princes all from the progeny of Esau (Genesis 36:1–43). In the Messianic Kingdom none will be left who could rule. The people will be gone as will the need for a government of a country where all will be disorder and confusion.

DEMONS WILL INHABIT EDOM

Isaiah 34:13–15

¹³And thorns shall come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of jackals, a court for ostriches. ¹⁴And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster shall settle there, and shall find her a place of rest ¹⁵There shall the dart-snake make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shade; yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate (ASV, 1901).

The primary reason for Edom's becoming a perpetual desolation is their sins against Israel which are personal crimes against God. Like Babylon, Edom will become a place of continual burning and smoke inhabited by various unclean foul birds and animals, that are characterized by confusion. God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). It will be totally uninhabited by men and will be populated only by the animals mentioned. The word that the KJV renders "great owl" refers to the arrow snake as in the ASV, is a kind of small snake native to Arabia and

Africa, which would strike from a tree or other ambush and seriously wound its prey. This snake makes its nest and lays its eggs, hatching them and gathering them so that the snake protects the young, covering them as a symbol of protection and certainty of God's prophecies. This is again to show how forbidding and desolate Edom will be so that only there will be evil demons and foul unclean animals. It is important to realize that these animals as we know them cannot live in a place of burning pitch and burning brimstone.

These are not literal birds and animals as we could recognize them today. The Hebrew word translated *wild goats* actually means "demons in goat form." Likewise, the Hebrew word translated *night-monster* means "night demons." Like Babylon, Edom will also, be an abode of demons. God provided a similar prophecy through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 49:17–18

¹⁷ And Edom shall become an astonishment: every one that passes by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. ¹⁸ As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, says Jehovah, no man shall dwell there, neither shall any son of man sojourn therein.

The emphasis is on the totality, for no human will inhabit the land of Edom or even pass through it. Like Babylon, the desolation will be similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, total. Joel also makes a similar observation.

Joel 3:19

¹⁹ Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. ²⁰ But Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation (ASV, 1901).

The Lord adds to His depiction of Edom's destruction the fact that the nation Israel and particularly the tribe of Judah will abide forever as will the city of Jerusalem. In the short one-chapter book of Obadiah the Lord summarizes the destruction of Edom and the reasoning He will do this.

Obadiah 1:1–4

¹ The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom: We have heard tidings from Jehovah, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, saying, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. ² Behold, I have made thee small among the nations: thou art greatly despised. ³ The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? ⁴ Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Edom's pride would be her undoing, for it would deceive her into thinking that no one could conquer her. "Pride" translates *zedôn*, from *zîd*, "to boil up, to be presumptuous." The Edomites' arrogance was presumptuous. This was given to them by their progenitor Esau who despised his

birthright (Genesis 25:34). Jacob/Israel offered to give Esau a bowl of stew in exchange for his birthright (the right to be recognized as firstborn) and Esau agreed.

The birthright (*bekorah*) has to do with both position and inheritance. By birthright, the firstborn son inherited the leadership of the family and the judicial authority of his father. Deuteronomy 21:17 states that he was also entitled to a double portion of the paternal inheritance.

Esau acted impulsively. As he did not value his birthright over a bowl of stew, by his actions, Esau demonstrated that he did not deserve to be the one who continues the Abrahamic Covenant, since he did not have the steady, thoughtful God-fearing qualities necessary for leadership in Israel.

Contributing to this self-deception was the supposed security of Edom's geographical location in the mountains of Seir. They trusted in the natural protection provided by the clefts of the rocks. Living in caves high above the ground level the Edomite leaders thought they were completely safe from enemy attacks. Some of the Edomites had settled in such high caves and other places up in the mountains that it was as if they, were soaring like the eagle and nesting among the stars.

In response to Edom's self-confident, arrogant question, *Who shall bring me down to the ground?* the LORD answered that He will bring them down! God, like an eagle, would swoop down (Jeremiah 49:22) on those who thought they were safe as eagles. Though Edom was almost impregnable to man, they will be no match for God.

EDOM'S DESTRUCTION

Obadiah 1:5–9

⁵If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!), would they not steal only till they had enough? if grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? ⁶How are the things of Esau searched! how are his hidden treasures sought out! ⁷All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee on thy way, even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread lay a snare under thee: there is no understanding in him. ⁸Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? ⁹And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one may be cut off from the mount of Esau by slaughter (ASV, 1901).

Once again, there is emphasis on the totality of the destruction, with the addition that this final desolation and destruction of Edom will come by means of a war and an armed military conflict. This is the Great Tribulation. It is important to realize that, the smallest book of the Old Testament, Obadiah, centers its entire attention of Edom's destruction. They will not receive any aid from their friends or allies as well as their own military prowess or might. God is going to totally destroy them.

THE REASONS FOR THE DESTRUCTION

Obadiah 1:10–14

¹⁰For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. ¹¹In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. ¹²But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of distress. ¹³Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. ¹⁴And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress (ASV, 1901).

As the prophet Joel stated the cause of their destruction will be because of her violent, hurtful, oppressive cruelty against her brother Jacob, and, Jacob's descendants. Obadiah intentionally spoke of the Judahites as Edom's "brother" to reveal the terrible persecution of one's own blood relatives.

When foreign forces warred against Judah, they cast lots to see who would plunder which parts of Jerusalem. Edom, because of her indifference was no different from the strangers who went against her own relatives. Then they engaged in gloating over the misfortune of her brother and rejoicing over Judah's destruction, and then bragging of her trouble. So, Edom's crimes against Judah went beyond being spectators to rejoicing over Judah's misfortune. Edom looted their wealth, killed those who tried to escape, and handed over any survivors to the attacking armies. This probably took place during the first time when the Philistines and Arabians attacked Jerusalem in the days of Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son (II Kings 8:20–22; II Chronicles 21:16–17). Since Obadiah told Edom not to do such things again, he was probably writing about a time *before* Jerusalem's total destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. But they would again as Jordan come against Israel several times after the modern State of Israel declared independence in May of 1948.

EDOM IS INCLUDED IN THE LORD'S VENGEANCE ON ALL NATIONS

Obadiah 1:15–16

¹⁵For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head. ¹⁶For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and swallow down, and shall be as though they had not been (ASV, 1901).

During the Great Tribulation Edom will suffer like all the nations of the Antichrist what they have done. The Lord will bring upon them the same persecutions that they have brought upon the Israelites. They will be so destroyed it will be *as though they had not been*.

THE TIMING OF THEIR DESTRUCTION

Obadiah 1:17–21

¹⁷But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. ¹⁸And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall burn among them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining to the house of Esau; for Jehovah hath spoken it. ¹⁹And they of the South shall possess the mount of Esau, and they of the lowland the Philistines; and they shall possess the field of Ephraim, and the field of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. ²⁰And the captives of this host of the children of Israel, that are among the Canaanites, shall possess even unto Zarephath; and the captives of Jerusalem, that are in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South. ²¹And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Jehovah's (ASV, 1901).

The timing of Israel's final spiritual regeneration and restoration will also be the time of Edom's final destruction. With the allied forces of the Antichrist besieging Bozrah in Edom and the Lord's return there Edom will be destroyed. Obadiah makes it quite clear that this destruction of Edom will come by means of the children of Israel, for the two houses of Israel will be like fire, while Edom will be like stubble that quickly catches fire when brought near to the flame. The destruction will be complete, so that nothing will remain of Esau's descendants, while the descendants of his brother Jacob will own and possess the mountains of Edom and other designated areas of the Philistines and the Canaanites. It is out of Mount Zion that judgment will fall on Edom.

Isaiah 34:16–17

¹⁶Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read: no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth, it hath commanded, and his Spirit, it hath gathered them. ¹⁷And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall they dwell therein (ASV, 1901).

Now comes the counsel to look carefully at the prediction, and its fulfilment. This is addressed to the inhabitants of Edom, and any who might doubt, the Lord's promises to Israel. All are invited to compare the prediction with the fulfilment, and see how literally all will be fulfilled

The book of Jehovah which, He has caused to be written, refers, to His prophets and to what Isaiah has here recorded. This also includes what God has revealed to the other prophets in regard to Edom. Not one of these predictions, or these things which have been spoken will fail to come to pass.

None shall want her mate refers it to the predictions of the prophet, as meaning that no one thing which he had uttered should need a more complete fulfilment. All has been spoken. No more will be said.

And his spirit. The Spirit of God; that is, Jehovah Himself.

He hath cast the lot for them. God, who allots to all the nations of the earth what they have, has now allotted to Edom the unclean demonic beasts and birds and reptiles which have been cited. Now, it is formally assigned to them as their habitation.

According to God's sovereignty over the universe, He has commanded this desolation and he will bring it to pass. He has apportioned the Edoms of this world to the birds of the desert. No nation or people is able to choose its destiny without regarding its own behavior. Rather, by its behavior it earns a destiny according to God's morality and His unchanging character. So, it is important to realize that no one should place their trust in the nations of this world. They are not masters of their own destiny. Rather, they belong to God who, like the landowner, can divide them into plots of his own choosing (Psalm 16:6; Micah 2:5). The Bible states that the various nations of the world were geographically segmented through God's predetermined plan for Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8). It cannot be changed.

Next message: THE KINGDOM BLESSINGS

E-mail: Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org Call: 877-706-2479