

Text: Obadiah

Title: Backgrounds

Truth: Esau did not live a model life. But we can learn from him.

Date/Location: Wednesday November 30, 2016 at FBC

I. Esau's Birth and Life

- A. Gen. 25:20-26 records the birth of Esau and his younger brother Jacob when their father was 60 years old. Esau was born with a lot of hair all over his body that was reddish in color. The word for 'red' sounds like Edom, and the word for 'hairy' is close to Seir, which was later the name of the mountain in the region of the Edomites.
- B. Gen. 25:27-28 gives some light on the difference between the fraternal twins in terms of their skills and interests, and this in turn led to each parent having a favorite son. This will have an impact later in the history of Esau.
- C. Gen. 25:30 explains the name Edom derives from the Hebrew word for 'red' because of the red stew that he wanted from his brother Jacob. So Esau's descendants and their land became known as Edom. This may fit also because of the reddish color of the countryside in the area south of the Dead Sea.
- D. Gen. 26:34-35 record the portion about Esau taking two Hittite wives. This was not in accord with Isaac's faith in God, for he knew that his son was not supposed to take pagan wives, but rather from his own family who believed in the God of Abraham and Isaac, just like Isaac had to do. Isaac commanded his other son Jacob to do the same (Gen. 28:1). The two daughters-in-law were a point of grief for the parents, not only because they were unbelievers, but because they were two instead of one. Isaac and Rebekah modeled what a monogamous marriage should look like as opposed to a polygamous one.
- E. According to Gen. 25:29-34, Esau despised his birthright—his firstborn status and the blessings that came with it as a son of Isaac. We have to pause to consider the importance of this standing. It was attached to the Abrahamic covenant—the promises from God—which Isaac certainly had explained to his sons as they grew of age. Esau sold that privilege and blessing for a pot of stew instead of being respectful of his firstborn standing and patient and preparing food another way. Some suggest that his descendants may have had that same quick, impatient, live-for-the-moment kind of mentality.

- F. Genesis 27 is all about the trickery that Jacob and his mother Rebekah played on his father to get the blessing under false pretense. Thus they “helped” to implement the transfer of the birthright blessing and complete what was begun at the red stew incident.
- G. Jacob left and returned 20 years later (Genesis chapters 28-32). Meanwhile, Esau married another woman, this one closer to the family who may have believed in God (Gen. 28:6-9).
- H. Esau and Jacob met again in Genesis 33 and had a more peaceful meeting than what Jacob had anticipated. By this point, we see that Esau is living in the land of Seir in the country named Edom (Gen. 32:3, 36:8).
- I. Gen. 36:1 explicitly says that Esau is Edom and the ensuing verses give a detailed genealogical record of his descendants. Remember that in Gen. 25:23 God told Rebekah that two *nations* were in her womb. These represented more than individual people, and that’s how Isaac and his wife saw them. So should we—look at people not just as individuals but also as having a solidarity or part with their descendants and their ancestors.

II. Esau’s Relationship to God

- A. Malachi 1:2-5 teaches us that God loved Jacob but hated Esau. He destroyed the nation of Esau, as Obadiah predicted prior to Malachi’s prophecy.
- B. Romans 9:11-18 restate this truth, and add that God is not unjust; that He is sovereign, has an electing plan, shows mercy to whom He wills, and emphasizes that we cannot argue with Him on it!
- C. Hebrews 12:16 says that Esau was totally worldly—uninterested in the things of God and thus “godless” and “unholy” as translated by NIV/NAS/ESV. Apparently his nation followed in his footsteps. Yes, the sins of the fathers can have a great impact on the sons, even if the sons are not guilty for the sins of the fathers (Ezekiel 18:20).

III. Other Prophecies

- A. Jer. 49:8-10 indicates that Esau’s nation will be laid bare. Jeremiah 49:17-22 (esp. v. 20) lays out the plans that God has for Edom—and they are not very nice and wonderful plans. 25:21 records the figure of Ezekiel pouring out the cup of God’s wrath against Edom, and many other nations.

- B. Amos 1:6 and 9 show us that Edom received captives from Gaza and Tyre. 1:11 says that Edom's punishment is coming. Amos 2:1 adds that Edom's king was desecrated when his bones were burned by the Moabites.
- C. Amos 9:12 indicates that the house of David (his dynasty) will possess all the nations of the earth, and specifically Edom.
- D. Joel 3:19 also indicates the destruction of Edom is coming—and specifically because of their past mistreatment of Judah, the southern kingdom of the nation of Israel.
- E. There are many more references to Edom (total of 85 verses) and Esau (total of 82 verses). Ones that I don't cover here are found in Joshua through 2 Chronicles.
- F. Another reference is in Daniel 11:41 where Edom is mentioned in the end times (during the Tribulation). At that time, the region known as Edom will somehow be delivered from the destructive campaign run by the invading king of the north.
- G. In Ezekiel 25:12-14 God declares that He will completely destroy Edom because they took vengeance against Judah. In 32:29, the Edomites are seen lying down in death with others who have been destroyed. Ezekiel 35 is an entire chapter of judgment against Edom because of their hatred against Israel and their rejoicing over the destruction of Israel. See also Ezekiel 36:5.
- H. Although Lamentations 4:21-22 indicates present peace for Edom, their punishment would be coming soon.
- I. Isaiah 34:5-6 and 63:1 tell of the destruction of Edom by the sword of the Lord. Chapter 11 and verse 14 speaks of the remnant of Israel taking over Edom, Ammon, and Moab.
- J. Psalm 83:6 records an imprecatory prayer (prayer asking for judgment) against Edom and other nations. 137:7 asks God to remember what Edom said against Israel in the past. 60:8-9 declares that Edom is a place where one's shoe will be cast out.
- K. Other references to Seir, and Teman.

Conclusion

Evidently the flippant attitude about God that was demonstrated by Esau in his early life was embraced by his descendants as well and they were happy to harm their relatives the Israelites. They should have known better, having been informed about the Abrahamic covenant and the

promises—and curses—that went with it. Since they refused God’s ways, He was bound to punish them—because of His holy nature and His promises to His people Israel.

I see a lot of Esau in modern Middle Eastern peoples who want to destroy Israel. It will not go well with them in the end, even if they seem to prosper from time to time throughout world history.

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