

Sagecreek Bible Church

Worksheet

“Saved By the Skin of Their Teeth – The Relationship of Edom, Moab, and Ammon with Israel”



8 August 2022

The Northern King's Conquests

As we study the counterattack of the king of the north against the king of the south spoken of by Daniel in Chapter 11:40-45, we see three countries that will be allowed to escape from him. Edom, Moab, and Ammon will get a pass at this time.

Daniel 11:⁴⁰ “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them*, and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* at his heels. ⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Many countries will be ravaged and overthrown, but the prophecy declares that Edom, Moab, and the principal part of the children of Ammon will be delivered out of the hand of the vindictive northerner. These three countries were ancient enemies of God's people.

Who were these people?

The Edomites

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the firstborn son of Isaac and the twin brother of Jacob. In the womb, Esau and Jacob struggled together, and God told their mother, Rebekah, that they would become two nations, with the older one serving the younger (Genesis 25:23). As an adult, Esau rashly sold his inheritance to Jacob for a bowl of red soup (Genesis 25:30-34), and he hated his brother afterward. Esau became the father of the Edomites, and Jacob became the father of the Israelites, and the two nations continued to struggle through most of their history. In the Bible, “Seir” (Joshua 24:4), “Bozrah” (Isaiah 63:1) and “Sela” (2 Kings 14:7) are references to Edom’s land and capital. Sela is better known today as Petra.

The name “Edom” comes from a Semitic word meaning “red,” and the land south of the Dead Sea was given that name because of the red sandstone so prominent in the topography. Esau, because of the soup for which he traded his birthright, became known as Edom, and later moved his family into the hill country of the same name. Genesis 36 recounts the early history of the Edomites, stating that they had kings reigning over them long before Israel had a king (Genesis 36:31). The religion of the Edomites was similar to that of other pagan societies who worshiped fertility gods. Esau’s descendants eventually dominated the southern lands and made their living by agriculture and trade. One of the ancient trade routes, the King’s Highway (Numbers 20:17) passed through Edom, and when the Israelites requested permission to use the route on their exodus from Egypt, they were rejected by force.

Because they were close relatives, the Israelites were forbidden to hate the Edomites (Deuteronomy 23:7). However, the Edomites regularly attacked Israel, and many wars were fought as a result. King Saul fought against the Edomites, and King David defeated them, establishing military garrisons in Edom. With control over Edomite territory, Israel had access to the port of Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea, from which King Solomon sent out many expeditions. After the reign of Solomon, the Edomites revolted and had some freedom until they were subdued by the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser.

During the Maccabean wars, the Edomites were subjugated by the Jews and forced to convert to Judaism. Through it all, the Edomites maintained much of their old hatred for the Jews. When Greek became the common language, the Edomites were called Idumaeans. With the rise of the Roman Empire, an Idumaeen whose father had converted to Judaism was named king of Judea. That Idumaeen is known in history as King Herod the Great, the tyrant who ordered a massacre in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill the Christ child (Matthew 2:16-18).

After Herod’s death, the Idumaeen people slowly disappeared from history. God had foretold the destruction of the Edomites in Ezekiel 35, saying, **“As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so I will deal with you;**

you shall be desolate, Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 35:15). Despite Edom’s constant efforts to rule over the Jews, God’s prophecy to Rebekah was fulfilled: the older child served the younger, and Israel proved stronger than Edom.

There are many prophecies concerning Edom (Isa 34:5-6; Jer 49:7-18; Eze 25:13; 35; Joe 3:19; Am 1:11; Obadiah; Mal 1:3-4) which have been remarkably fulfilled. The present desolate condition of that land is a standing testimony to the inspiration of these prophecies.

Why would God allow the Edomites to escape the wrath of the Antichrist? Could it be because they were close relatives with Israel? Is there any other reason that stands out to you?

The Moabites

The Moabites were a tribe descended from Moab, the son of Lot, born of an incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter (Genesis 19:37). From Zoar, the cradle of this tribe, on the southeastern border of the Dead Sea, they gradually spread over the region on the east of Jordan. Shortly before the Exodus, the warlike Amorites crossed the Jordan under Sihon their king and drove the Moabites out of the region between the Arnon River Valley and the Jabbok River, and occupied it, making Heshbon their capital. The Moabites were then confined to the territory to the south of the Arnon Valley (Numbers 21:26–30).

During the Exodus, like Edom, they refused passage to God’s people (Judges 11:17) and showed the utmost animosity to them. Instead, the Israelites went through the “wilderness” to the east, eventually reaching the country to the north of Arnon. The Moabites were alarmed, and their king, Balak, sought aid from the Midianites (Numbers 22:2–4). This was the occasion when the visit of Balaam to Balak took place (Numbers 22:2–6).

In the Plains of Moab, which was in the possession of the Amorites, the children of Israel had their last encampment before they entered the land of Canaan (Numbers 22:1; Joshua 13:32). If we had nothing else to interest us in the land of Moab, it was from the top of Pisgah that Moses, the mightiest of prophets, looked upon the Promised Land; it was here on Nebo that he died his solitary death; it was here in the valley over against Beth-peor where he was buried (Deuteronomy 34:5–6).

A basalt stone, bearing an inscription by King Mesha, was discovered at Dibon by Klein, a German missionary at Jerusalem, in 1868, consisting of thirty-four lines written in Hebrew-Phoenician characters. The stone was set up by Mesha about 900 BC as a record and memorial of his victories. It records Mesha’s wars with Omri, his public buildings, and his wars against Horonaim. This inscription supplements and corroborates the history of King Mesha recorded in 2 Kings 3:4–27. It is the oldest inscription written in alphabetic characters and, in addition to its value in the domain of Hebrew antiquities, is of great linguistic importance.

Perhaps the most significant Bible character to come from Moab was Ruth, who was “of the women of Moab” but was genetically linked to Israel through Lot, the nephew of Abraham (Genesis 11:31). Ruth is an example of how God can change a life and take it in a direction He has foreordained, and we see God working out His perfect plan in Ruth’s life, just as He does with all His children (Romans 8:28). Although she came from a pagan background in Moab, once she met the God of Israel, Ruth became a living testimony to Him by faith. Ruth, the Moabitess, is one of the few women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5).

The complete crushing of Moab was foretold in Isaiah 25:10-12 and Jeremiah 48:1-47.

Why would God allow the Moabites to escape the wrath of the Antichrist? Could it be because of Ruth or because of the location of the death of Moses? Is there any other reason that stands out to you?

The Ammonites

From the very beginning (De 2:16-20) of their history till they are lost sight of (Jg 5:2), this tribe is closely associated with the Moabites (Jg 10:11; 2Ch 20:1; Zep 2:8). Both tribes hired Balaam to curse Israel (De 23:4). The Ammonites were probably more of a predatory tribe, moving from place to place, while the Moabites were more settled. They inhabited the country east of the Jordan and north of Moab and the Dead Sea, from which they had expelled the Zamzummims or Zuzims (De 2:20; Ge 14:5). They are known as the Beni-ammi (Ge 19:38), Ammi or Ammon being worshipped as their chief god. They were of Semitic origin, and closely related to the Hebrews in blood and language. They showed no kindness to the Israelites when passing through their territory, and therefore they were prohibited from "entering the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation" (De 23:3). They afterwards became hostile to Israel (Jg 3:13). Jephthah waged war against them, and "took twenty cities with a very great slaughter" (Jg 11:33). They were again signally defeated by Saul (1Sa 11:11). David also defeated them and their allies the Syrians (2Sa 10:6-14), and took their chief city, Rabbah, with much spoil (2Sa 10:14; 12:26-31). The subsequent events of their history are noted in 2Ch 20:25; 26:8; Jer 49:1; Eze 25:3,6. One of Solomon's wives was Naamah, an Ammonite. She was the mother of Rehoboam (1Ki 14:31; 2Ch 12:13).

The national idol worshipped by this people was Molech or Milcom, at whose altar they offered human sacrifices (1Ki 11:5,7). The high places built for this idol by Solomon, at the instigation of his Ammonitish wives, were not destroyed till the time of Josiah (2Ki 23:13).

The cruelty of the Ammonites was legendary. They thrust out the right eyes of whole cities (Amos 1:13) and displayed a very high degree of crafty cruelty (Jeremiah 41:6, 7; Judges 7:11, 12) to their enemies.

The prophets predicted fearful judgments against the Ammonites because of their hostility to Israel (Zep 2:8; Jer 49:1-6; Eze 25:1-5,10; Am 1:13-15).

Why would God allow the Ammonites to escape the wrath of the Antichrist? Is there any other reason that stands out to you?

Write a quick recap on the results of your study.
