

# The Edomites

1. Esau was also called Edom (i.e., *red*) in Gen. 25:30 because he exchanged his birthright for a bowl of red vegetable soup (which would be not unlike, in terms of desirability, chili or red beans and rice). Also see Gen. 36:1, 8, 19.
2. Edom was also used as the name of the land where his descendants dwelt (Gen. 32:3 36:20, 21, 30) and as the designation of his descendants (Gen. 36:1–17 Num. 20:18, 20, 21).<sup>1</sup>
3. There came to be great animosity between Jacob and his twin brother Esau when Jacob tricked his father and received what was supposed to have been a blessing upon Esau (Gen. 27 records the deception; the animosity is found in Gen. 27:41).
4. This animosity was the seed which grew into the great enmity between Israel and Edom (e.g., Num. 20:18–21 I Kings 11:14).<sup>2</sup>
  - a) Edom refused to allow Israel to travel along the King's Highway during the exodus from Egypt (Num. 20:14–21 21:4 Judges 11:17–18)
  - b) When Judah eventually fell, the Edomites rejoiced (Psalm 137:7)
  - c) Edom was under divine judgement due to her bitter hatred of Israel (Jer. 49:7–22 Lam. 4:21–22 Ezek. 25:12–14 35:15 Joel 3:19 Amos 9:12 Obad. 10).
5. However, the Israelites were forbidden to allow mental attitude sins fester against the Edomites as God made provision for any Edomite to become a part of Israel (Deut. 23:7–8). Joshua allowed the extension of Judah up to the boarder of Edom, but he did not take any land from them (Josh. 15:1, 21)\* even though Balaam had already predicted that Edom would lose its independence (Num. 24:18).
6. The portion of real estate that they occupied was previously called the land of Seir (Gen. 32:3 36:20, 21, 30 Num. 24:18) The boundaries of Edom began at the Wadi Zered and went to the Gulf of Aqabah for approximately 100 miles and extended to both sides of Arabah (the desert of Edom) (II Kings 3:8, 20). This included the valley between the Dead sea and the Red Sea (Gen. 14:6 Deut. 2:1, 12 Josh. 15:1 Judges 11:17, 18 I Kings 9:26). The famous King's Highway passed along its eastern plateau (Num. 20:14–18).<sup>3</sup>
7. This area that they occupied was rugged, mountainous area with 3500 ft. peaks, and few cultivatable areas (Num. 20:17, 19 Jer. 49:16).\* This was, originally, given especially to them (Deut. 3:2), referred to as a rich and fertile piece of real estate by Zodhiates and one which could not be cultivated easily by ZPEB. Zodhiates mentions that the land was transversed by many roads.
8. We have no direct records from the Edomites themselves; none of their written records or inscriptions survived over the past few millenniums. Our information concerning them has come through the Scriptures and from the historical records of the Egyptians and the Assyrians. They are found in the records of Merneptah (circa 1225–1215 BC) and Rameses III (circa 1198–1167 BC), both Pharaohs of Egypt. They speak of Edom and Seir as being their taxed subjects. Since the records of various kings tend to over exaggerate their strength, conquests and the extent of their authority, these claims may not be entirely accurate.

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<sup>1</sup>I still need to double check these references!

<sup>2</sup>Ditto on the references

<sup>3</sup>check 'em

9. Archeology has shown us that this land was occupied prior to the influx of the Edomites, indicating that after Esau migrated there, he and his progeny assimilated the original Horites (Gen. 14:6 26:34 36:2, 5–8, 20–30) along with the other inhabitants until the Edomites became the dominant population. The original form of leadership of the Horites, wherein the rulers were known as tribal chiefs, was incorporated into the Edomite rulership (Gen. 36:15–19, 40–43 Deut. 2:12, 22).
10. According to the finds of archeology, it seems as though there was some sort of break in the culture of Edom in this area between circa 1850 BC and 1300 BC, during which the land was essentially uninhabited and occasionally transversed by roving bands of nomads.
11. Esau had moved to this area early on, even prior to Jacob's return from Harran (Gen. 32:3 36:6–8 Deut. 2:4, 5 Josh. 24:4). *Kings* (which were at first called tribal chiefs) ruled over this land much earlier than the advent of kings in the lives of the Israelites (Gen. 36:15–19, 31–39, 40–43 I Chron. 1:43–54).\*
12. Even though King Saul had some Edomites in his service (I Sam. 21:7 22:9, 18), he is the one who first has armed conflict with the Edomites (I Sam. 14:47).
13. David continues this conquest of Edom in II Sam. 8:13–14 (a Scribal error here changed Edom into Eram because the resh ר and the dalet ד look so similar in the Hebrew). Also see II Sam. 8:13 I Kings 11:15–16 I Chron. 18:13
14. Even though Joab *cut off every male in Edom* in I Kings 11:15–16, some males obviously escaped as Hadad, a royal prince of Edom, fled to Egypt and later plagued Solomon's life (I Kings 11:14–22). Solomon's general control of Edom gave Judah control of rich caravan trade, the Israelites were able to make use of the copper and iron mines in this area and Solomon was able to construct a port at Ezion-Geber on the Gulf of Aqabah, from where he could trade with Ophir and Arabia (I Kings 9:26 II Chron. 8:17). Archeology reveals to us that there was a copper and iron smeltery only 2½ miles west of Aqabah during this time period.
15. The Edomites became a force again during the days of Jehoshaphat (870–848 BC) and allied themselves with the Ammonites and the Moabites to fight against Judah (II Chron. 20:1). However, this uneasy alliance soon degenerated into fighting amongst themselves (I Chron. 20:22–23). In fact, a *king* (actually, a deputy) of Edom eventually recognized the supremacy of Judah and allied himself with the Israel-Judah coalition to wage war against Moab (I Kings 22:47 II Kings 3:4–27).
16. Edom soon thereafter rebelled against Judah and King Joram, even though he was able to defeat them in battle, he was unable to place them under his control and they enjoyed 40 years of independence (II Kings 8:20–22 II Chron. 21:8–10).
17. Amaziah (796–767 BC) later attacked Edom, killing 10,000 Edomites in the valley of Salt and threw an additional 10,000 of them from the top of Sela to their deaths (II Kings 14:7 II Chron. 25:11, 12). His successor, Uzziah (767–739 BC), continued this conquest and restored the port at Aqabah (now, Elath) (II Kings 14:22).
18. Amos mentions the Edomites in a boarder skirmish with the Moabites. The Moabites cremated the corpse of the Edomite king, apparently a great insult at that time (Amos 2:1).
19. During the time of Ahaz, when Judah was under siege, Edom also attacked Judah and carried away captives (II Kings 16:6<sup>4</sup> II Chron. 28:17). This was approximately 735 (or 740) BC.

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<sup>4</sup>*Aram* should be *Edom* in this passage

20. Judah never again exercised control of Edom. Assyrian inscriptions indicate that Edom became a vassal-state of Assyria's circa 732 (or, 736) BC under Tiglath-pileser III.
21. The heavy tribute which they were forced to pay to Assyria considerably weakened the kingdom of Edom and they meekly fell under Babylonian rule in 604 BC. They allied themselves with Nebuchadnezzar when he overthrew Jerusalem in 587 BC and expressed great happiness at the destruction of the Israelites (Psalm 137:7 Lam. 4:21–22 Obad. 10–16). Much of the book of Obadiah denounces Edom for their betrayal of their blood relatives, the Jews, at this time. Jeremiah, in prophecy, also condemns the Edomites for the same thing (Jer. 49:7–22). Because this betrayal was foreseen by the prophets, Edom's destruction and desolation was predicted as divine retribution for their treachery (Isa. 11:14 34:5–17 Ezek. 35:1–15).
22. Afterwards, some of the Edomites occupied southern Judah, making Hebron their capital. This was Idumaea of the postexilic era.
23. Edom later fell under the control of the Arabs in the 5th century BC and after that to the Nabataeans in the 3rd century BC. During these times, Edomians did seek asylum in Judah and Judas Maccabeus subjected those in his land (I Macc. 5:1–5, 65). John Hyrcanus forced them to be circumcised and assimilated into the Jewish race. The Herod's were of Edomian ancestry (Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, came from Idumaea).

**None of the passages quoted were looked up; I need to check them out!**