

Edom, Moab, and Ammon

By Jack Kelley, Rapture Ready Forum

Here's a brief summary of the history and prophecy concerning these three neighbors of Israel who always seem to wind upon the wrong side of things where the Lord is concerned.

Edom, Moab, and Ammon In History

The Biblical people called by the names above once occupied the territory we know today as Jordan... the nation due east of Israel. Not many people realize that Edom, Moab, and Ammon were given their homelands by God himself (Deut. 2:5, 9, 19) just like Israel was. And just like Israel was told to clear the land west of the Jordan River of the people who lived there at the time, Edom, Moab, and Ammon were told to perform the same service for God on the Eastern side (Deut. 2:10-12, 20-22).

One of the people groups they eliminated was the Rephaites (Rephaim), an ancient group of loosely related tribes of giants who are often thought to be descendants of the Nephilim, mentioned in Genesis 6. In fact, when the 12 Israelite spies first went into the promised land they reported seeing Nephilim there (Numbers 13:33). The Rephaites were a mysterious people about whom the Bible says very little, except that Israel, Edom, Moab, and Ammon were all given the task of destroying them and taking their land.

Moab and Ammon were named after the children of the incestuous unions of Lot and his two daughters. Lot was an unknowing participant, having been made intoxicated by his daughters, who saw becoming pregnant by their father as their only way to produce any offspring. Every other man they knew had perished in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:30-38).

The Lord gave the Moabites and the Ammonites land east of Israel extending from the Jabbok River in the north to the Zered River in the south, with undefined eastern boundaries. Edom was the name given to the descendants of Jacob's twin brother Esau. Having patched things up after their split over the way Jacob had tricked Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing (Genesis 27), they returned to the area near Kiriath Arba (Hebron) where Isaac and Rebekah lived. Upon Isaac's death the two brothers buried him and divided up their inheritance. Realizing they needed separate pasturelands because their herds would now be too large for them to remain together, Esau took his Canaanite wives and all he owned and moved some distance away into the hill country of Seir, east and south of the Dead Sea, just south of Moab and Israel.

Later, the Lord told Moses He had given this land to Esau and his descendants. (Deut 2:5). The relationship between Israel and its three neighbors to the East was never good, and they fought with each other frequently. Sometimes God used Israel to discipline them and at other times He used them to discipline Israel. Under King David, Israel conquered and subjugated all of them for a time (2 Samuel 8:1-14). 400 years later, the Babylonians came as the Lord's instrument of judgment against Israel. Edom, Moab, and Ammon all cheered for Babylon and made plans to carve up the Promised

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Land for themselves after the Babylonians carried Israel into captivity. This displeased the Lord and He had the Babylonians destroy them as well. Moab and Ammon ceased to exist as nations at that time (Ezekiel 25:10).

Edom was first welcomed as an ally in the Babylonian conquest of Judah, but Babylon soon turned on them and conquered them, too (Obadiah 1:7-9). God repaid Edom's treachery against Israel (Obadiah 1:10-14) with Babylon's treachery against Edom. The Edomites were destroyed and their lands were taken over by the Nabateans, a desert tribe from the south. So Edom, Moab, and Ammon ceased to be nations at about the same time that Judah was carried off to Babylon. After 70 years of captivity, Israel was restored. In Jeremiah 48:47 the Lord promised one day to restore the fortunes of Moab as well, and in Jeremiah 49:6 He made the same promise to Ammon. But He made no such promise to Edom.

Edom, Moab, and Ammon in The End Times

Edom, Moab, and Ammon are listed in Psalm 83:6-7 among the participants in a scheme to destroy Israel and erase its name from people's memories. By most accounts this battle has never taken place and will most likely be one of the next events on the prophetic horizon. The psalmist's prayer is that the Lord will cause them to perish in disgrace.

Edom, Moab, and Ammon are also mentioned in a prophecy from Daniel 11:41. Speaking of the anti-Christ and his end times conquest of the Middle East, Daniel said, "He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand."

The Beautiful Land is Israel, and the timing of this prophecy is during the Great Tribulation. The fact that Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from the anti-Christ's hand indicates he will have intended to conquer them but will be unable to do so. Based on existing conditions in the world today we would interpret this prophecy as pertaining to Jordan. But this could all change with the Battle of Psalm 83 when Edom, Moab, and Ammon could come under Israel's control again. Is that what will prevent the anti-Christ from conquering them, or is there more to it? Rev. 12:13-17 tells us that after Satan is confined to Earth he will go after "the woman", symbolic of Israel. But the woman will be given the wings of a great eagle, enabling her to flee into the desert to a place prepared for her, where she will be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, which is 3 ½ years, the duration of the Great Tribulation. This agrees with Matt. 24:15-21 where the Lord warned the believing remnant of Israel to flee to the mountains to escape the Great Tribulation. The closest mountains to Jerusalem are in Moab and Edom.

And concerning the time of the 2nd coming, Isaiah wrote; "Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save."

Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress?

"I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in

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my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come. I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm achieved salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground" (Isaiah 63:1-6). Bozrah was the capitol of Edom, and is often associated with the abandoned city of Petra, which is only twenty miles away.

Combining these prophecies we have the anti-Christ, now indwelt by Satan, determined to rid the world of God's people once and for all. Heeding the Lord's 2,000 year old warning, the believing remnant will flee to the mountains of Edom where the city of Petra has been standing empty for centuries, as if in preparation. The phrase "wings of a great eagle" in Rev. 12:14 is reminiscent of Exodus 19:4 where the Lord used the same phrase to describe the way he delivered Israel from the Egyptians. This implies the same kind of supernatural assistance, such as when Satan spews out a river of water to sweep the woman away. But the Lord will open the earth to swallow the river and save the woman. This will enrage Satan, but he will leave the woman and go after other followers of Jesus (Rev. 12:15-17).

This helps us understand how Edom, Moab, and Ammon could escape the clutches of the anti-Christ. The Lord has chosen Petra as the city of refuge where He will protect His people throughout the Great Tribulation. In doing so, He will make sure the whole area stays out of the hands of His enemy. It also explains why, when He returns, He will first go to Edom to clear the way for His people to return to Jerusalem (Isaiah 63:1-6).

Edom, Moab, and Ammon In The Millennium

On several of our visits to Israel we crossed into Jordan near Jericho. We used its capitol city, Amman, as our headquarters, from which we visited other parts of the country. Amman is a modern city of 4 million inhabitants that we always found to be very hospitable. Our various destinations always included the ruins of Jerash (Gerasa). It was a prominent city of the Decapolis in the Lord's time (Matt. 4:25), and is located about 30 miles north of Amman. Traveling through the ancient land of the Ammonites, we found it to be quite beautiful in places, with green valleys and numerous villages.

We always spent a day in Petra, as well. We traveled south from Amman down the eastern side of the Dead Sea, through ancient Moab and into Edom. As we journeyed south we soon found ourselves in desert country, but it's still far from being a wasteland. The highway was wide and well maintained, with light to moderate traffic in both directions, and we passed through several villages with pleasant rest stops before reaching Petra.

But all that will change in the day God brings His vengeance on the lands east of the Jordan river and south of Israel. When He's finished with them, Moab and Ammon will resemble Sodom and Gomorrah. "I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. Therefore, as surely as I live," declares

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the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah-a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land" (Zeph. 2:8-9).

Here's another hint that Moab and Ammon will yet fall back under the control of Israel.

And Edom will receive an extra portion of the Lord's wrath.

My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed. The sword of the Lord is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat-the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat. For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause. Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch! It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again. The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there. God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation (Isaiah 34:5-11). Isaiah's descriptive language calls up images of hell itself and has led more than one commentator to suggest Edom as the location of the Lake of Fire, where the unbelievers of all ages will spend eternity in torment.

From the above we can see that it won't be out of any consideration for Edom, Moab, and Ammon that God will protect them from the anti-Christ, but out of a need to preserve the believing remnant of Israel. After the 2nd Coming the homelands of these three antagonists of Israel will become desolate wastelands forever.

Edom, Moab, and Ammon stand as witnesses to the terrible end that comes to countries who take their stand against God and His people. It truly is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God (Hebrews 10:31). 01-24-15