

The Palestinians in Bible Prophecy

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Who are the Palestinians?

The Palestinians are an Arabic-speaking people who inhabit or originate from the land “on the eastern Mediterranean coast, occupied in biblical times by the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and, in the 20th century, the scene of conflicting claims between Jewish and Arab national movements” (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1980, Vol. VII, “Palestine”).

Three million or so Palestinians lived in Palestine or scattered in countries around the world in 1987. Now there are more. They seem to have good-sized families. Many live in refugee camps, but Israel proper has a large population of Arab citizens. They all claim to descend from the pre-1948 population of Palestine.

It was in 1948 that the modern state of Israel was formed and many of the Palestinians displaced. There are many historical accounts of this. In 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organization was formed to train guerrilla units and terrorists for raids on Israel. Yasser Arafat became chairman of the PLO in 1969. The PLO and its military component al Fatah have sent wave after wave of terrorists and bombers into Israel to kill Jews, soldiers and civilians alike. They have pursued Jews to other parts of the world and fought other Arabs

who would have been more moderate in their attitudes.

There are a host of splinter groups and fronts. It is impossible to identify all of them or to show how they are related to each other. This is by design. They want to be secret.

Our concern here is to understand who the Palestinians are, where they come from and why they harbor such animosity towards the Jews. This answer has to come from the Bible and we believe that it shows them to be Edomites, descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother.

A word about normal sense

We will use the Bible, taking the words in a normal sense. This means that we will not look for hidden meanings, cryptic signals, codes or symbolic messages. We will not force any meaning on the text nor do violence to it by taking it out of context.

A normal sense, face-value interpretation involves consideration of all figures of speech, but not transferring their meanings to far-flung verses where the figures do not have bearing.

Places are geographical locations. People are the ethnic populations. Incidents are as described and time indicators such as days and years mean just what the words denote.

Please be aware that the Bible is not a simplistic book. It is complex and mature. There is much poetic language, but this is recognizable. The Bible is not impossible to understand. It is an open book that anyone can read and which everyone should read. It is inspired of God down to the letters in the original text, all of which we have, and it is true, accurate and trustworthy.

We approach it being assured that God wants us to understand the message which He has given to us.

Jacob supplants Esau

The Palestinians are descendants of Esau, the ancient Edomites (see Gen. 25:30, 36:1, 8). The Jews are descendants of Jacob. The struggle between them is the working out of that animosity that arose even in the womb as Rebekah bore the twins.

She had questioned God in Genesis 25:22, "Why is this happening to me?" The Lord answered her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Esau was born first, but Jacob "came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel" (Gen. 25:26). It was for this reason that he was named Jacob, which means "supplanter."

Esau, being the firstborn, should have received the birthright. This included the blessing passed on from Abraham through Isaac. That blessing is stated in Genesis 17:5-8, "I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."

"The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

It was this birthright that Jacob bought from Esau in Genesis 25:29-34. Esau came from hunting without any game and was very hungry. Jacob, sensing his opportunity, refused to give Esau any of the stew he was cooking unless he sold him his birthright. Esau agreed, saying, "I am about to die, What good is the birthright to me."

Jacob made him swear an oath to seal the bargain and then gave him all the stew and bread he could eat. Thus, Jacob supplanted Esau, who "despised his

birthright” (Gen. 25:34).

But this was not the final time Jacob supplanted Esau. When Isaac was about to give his personal blessing to Esau Jacob dressed up in his brother's clothes at Rebekah's behest and even put hairy goatskin on his hands and neck so that his blind father would be fooled.

Jacob then lied to Isaac, averring that he was Esau. The ruse was successful. Isaac blessed Jacob saying, “May God give you of heaven’s dew and of earth’s richness—an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers and may the sons of your mother bow down to you” (Gen. 27:27-29).

So, Jacob supplanted Esau and God took notice. What was spoken on the earth was sealed in heaven. This has been confirmed two ways: 1) biblical references and 2) historical events. Jacob and Esau lived approximately 2000 B.C.

What happened to Esau?

You might ask how we know that the Palestinians are Edomites. We intend to show in the pages which follow that the Palestinians are descended from the Edomites who inhabited southern Judea in 69 A.D., the last time they are mentioned in historical records. It is a long journey, but after Jacob fled from Esau in Genesis 28 Esau married another wife, a daughter of Ishmael, in addition to the two Hittite wives he had. Then he moved from Beersheba to the “land of Seir, the country of Edom” (Gen. 32:3). This is the rugged mountain country bounded by the Dead Sea on the north, the Gulf of Aqaba on the south, the valley of the Arabah on the west and the Arabian plateau on the east; it is 40 miles wide, 100 miles long, and in the country of Jordan today.

It was here in this area of red sandstone cliffs and narrow canyons that Esau dominated the original inhabitants, the Horites, and grew into a large, powerful

tribe.

Esau is called Edom, which means red. He was notably red at birth. He sold his birthright for red lentil stew, and he lived in an area of red-walled canyons.

While the Israelites were multiplying in Egypt the Edomites became a nation in the craggy fastness of Seir, where Petra is located. After the Exodus the Edomites prevented the Israelites from passing through their area. Moses recounts the warning from the Lord in Deuteronomy 2:5, "Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own."

Edomites conquered, liberated

Saul fought the Edomites but David finally subdued them about 1000 B.C. according to 2 Samuel 8:13-14, "he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David."

This fulfilled the prophecies of Genesis 25:23 and 27:40. In this latter passage Isaac included in his blessing of Esau the statement, "You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother." But he also added, "But when you grow restless you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

Balaam had predicted in Numbers 24:18, "Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy, will be conquered." Solomon had such control over the area that he created a naval station at Ezion-geber, near modern Elat on the Gulf of Aqaba.

"Hadad the Edomite," in 1 Kings 11:14, tried to throw off the yoke, but could not. Another attempt was made with the combined forces of Moab and Edom in 2 Chronicles 20:22, albeit without success.

It was not until 847 B.C., during the reign of Jehoram, that "Edom rebelled against Judah and set up

its own king” (2 Kings 8:20). The writer added, “To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah,” indicating that it was a permanent liberation.

Thus, was fulfilled Isaac’s prophecy of Genesis 27:40, but this did not stop the fighting and raiding. Amaziah in 2 Kings 14:7 captured the Edomite city of Sela, probably present-day Petra, and renamed it.

Uzziah retained possession of the port of Elat (2 Chron. 26:2), but then we find the Edomites raiding Judah and carrying away prisoners during the reign of Ahaz in 2 Chronicles 28:17.

The enmity between the twin brothers did not stop with liberation. Edom was to begin occupying Israelite territory and invading the land until at last an Edomite would sit as king in Jerusalem ruling the Jews!

Moving in on the Jews

The first advance of the Edomites was at the port of Elat on the Gulf of Aqaba. 2 Kings 16:6 records, “At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram by driving out the men of Judah. Edomites then moved into Elath and have lived there to this day.”

There is a variant reading here and some texts have Syrians (Aram) and some have Edomites (Edom). The only difference between the two in Hebrew is the “tittle” Jesus spoke about in Matthew 5:18. It is a sharp corner instead of a rounded one on the Hebrew letter for D (daleth), and is easily rounded to look like the R (resh). A copiest could easily mistake one for the other so that Aram should actually be Edom.

The Edomites began migrating into Judean territory, moving westward from their ancestral homeland. They encroached upon the Jews by occupying areas in southern Palestine and when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land, they sided with him against them. Psalm 137:7 laments, “Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. ‘Tear it down,’ they cried, ‘Tear it down to its foundations.’ ” So, we find the

Edomites at the scene of Judah's downfall, ready to fill the void at their deportation.

Ezekiel 25:12-14 is a prophecy against Edom which refers to their participation in the fall of Jerusalem, "Because Edom took revenge on the house of Judah and became very guilty by doing so, ..."

Edomites penetrated as far north as Hebron and the entire area eventually became known as Idumea.

Look on any map

After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., and the deportation of the Jews to Babylon, the Edomites migrated into southern Palestine, which became known as Idumea, after the Greek form of the word Edom. This migration, or invasion, is documented in an article, "Edomites Advance into Judah—Israelite Defensive Fortresses Inadequate" (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, November/December 1996) by Itzhaq Beit-Arieh.

Any map of Bible lands for the period 500 B.C. to 70 A.D. shows Idumea to be located just west of the Dead Sea and south of Jerusalem. Towards the beginning of the Roman period, which began in 64 B.C. the traditional Edomite cities of Teman, Sela (Petra) and Bozrah had been left to others as they occupied the area around Beersheba, Lachish and Hebron.

The population of the area had been ruled over by the Persians until 333 B.C. when Alexander the Great routed them and ushered in the Greek period.

It was during this Hellenistic (Greek) period that the Nabataeans, an Arab tribe, gained power and put pressure on the Edomites, driving them out of their traditional homeland in Seir and causing their migration into Judea, where strange circumstances brought about a mixing of blood much to the detriment of the Jews.

An Edomite king of the Jews

The Jews revolted against the Greek Seleucid ruler

Antiochus IV Epiphanes who had defiled the temple and sought to force all Jews to worship him as a god. The revolt began in 167 B.C. and led to victory for the Jews.

Known as the Maccabean Rebellion this military action by Jewish religious zealots led to the establishment of an independent Jewish state. The rededication of the temple is still celebrated in the feast of Hanukkah. It was foretold in Daniel 8:14, and is the feast of dedication mentioned in John 10:22

The book of First Maccabees records this conflict and makes mention of the conquest of the Edomites in 1 Macc. 5:3, "Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Acrabattine, because they besieged Israel: and he gave them a great overthrow."

The Edomites continued to fight and it was in 125 B.C. that they were finally subdued by John Hyrcanus who tried to incorporate them within the Jewish nation by forcing them to submit to circumcision and other religious duties.

This union of the descendants of the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, never took hold completely. A split in the Hasmonean ranks due to rivalry between the Pharisees and Sadducees brought on a civil war.

The one faction was supported by an Idumean named Antipater. This Edomite was installed as the minister of state by the Romans who finally quelled the fighting in 63 B.C. When Pompey took Jerusalem after a three-month siege, massacred the priests and entered the Most Holy Place.

Antipater the Idumaeen was made procurator of Judaea and after his murder in 42 B.C. his son Herod became King of the Jews, supported by Rome. His reign began in 37 B.C. after much intrigue, fighting and slaughter.

A Jewish Edomite

Herod the Great, son of the Edomite Antipater by his Arabian wife Cypros, was a Jew by religion. He ruled

with Roman support from 40 B.C. to 4 A.D. He sought to gain the Jews' allegiance by marrying Miriamne, the granddaughter of the Hasmonean Hyrcanus.

Herod had no less than ten wives during his unhappy and suspicious life. He was cruel beyond belief, putting to death even his oldest son. He catered to the Jews by authorizing the building of the temple in 21 B.C. but he also introduced heathen customs such as plays, shows, races, and Olympic games. He offered sacrifices to Jupiter and his coins bore Greek legends. He persecuted the Jewish rabbins and showed contempt for all of the Jews.

With Herod, his sons, and his grandsons, we have almost the final glimpse of Edomites in history. His great-grandson, Herod Agrippa II appears briefly in Acts 25 & 26 giving audience to Paul's defense. He was the last King of the Jews.

It is interesting, and ironic, to note that today the Jews in Jerusalem worship at the wall containing building stones from the Herodian temple.

What ever happened to the Edomites?

Idumea was a recognized province of the Herodian kingdom, and was worthy of its own special governor. In the New Testament Mark 3:8 is the only reference to it, "When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan."

Josephus, in his *Wars Of The Jews, Book IV*, writes that the Idumeans were recruited to help defend the city of Jerusalem, "to maintain the liberty of their metropolis; and 20,000 of them were put into battle array" (Chapter IV).

However, instead of defending the city they, along with the Jewish zealots who recruited them, slew some 8,500 people, "nor did the Idumeans spare anybody; for they are naturally a most barbarous and bloody nation" (Josephus, *Wars* 4:4). They then plundered the city and

committed atrocities for a period of days before repenting and leaving.

As the Romans under Vespasian were marching on the city of Jerusalem in the year 69 A.D. the Idumeans were leaving it. Josephus says in chapter VI, "After which these Idumeans retired from Jerusalem and went home."

This reference is the last sight we have of them in history. They fade from view and are lost. All we know is that they called Palestine home.

Who lived in Palestine?

Eventually it was the Jews who left Palestine and the Edomites who remained. I do not pretend that the Edomite population was of pure blood. Certainly, they had mixed with not only the Jews but the other ethnic people such as the Philistines, for whom Palestine is named. But they were counted as the children of Edom, descendants of Esau.

So it was that at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and after the Second Revolt ended in 135 A. D., the Edomites were a known and identifiable ethnic group with a small but existing homeland in southern Palestine. Where did they go in the next 1900 years? Can we expect to find them today in world events?

I think that the answers to these questions are: They did not go anywhere; and they can be found today because the Bible contains prophecies about Edom that have not yet been fulfilled.

The land of Palestine was ruled by the Romans who continued the Hellenization of the populace. The Byzantine period is hailed as the Golden Age for Palestine partly due to the attraction of multitudes of Christians who came to the holy sites. But the main influence which lingers to this day is that of the Muslim Arabs who invaded the area in the year 634. The religion and culture of the Arabs was adopted by the inhabitants of Palestine, whom we now know to have been, at least

in part, Edomites.

The dynasties of the various Caliphs and the conflicts of the Muslims with the Crusaders are beyond the scope of this booklet but we take note that the population did not shift, migrate or get displaced until 1948, except for the Jews.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt, called the Second Jewish Revolt, was put down by the Romans in 135 A.D. after much bloodshed and fanatical fighting by the Jews. Rabbinic Judaism, Pharisaism, had continued in Jabneh after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Rabbi Akiba, the brightest light of the era, recognized Bar Kokhba as the Messiah and urged the people support him.

In their eventual defeat the Jews lost something like a third of their total people and constituted only half of the entire populace of Palestine. Those not killed were sold into slavery. Although a Jewish community grew up again in the Galilee area, they became a steadily declining minority in the rest of the country. It ceased to be a Jewish homeland. Jerusalem was placed off limits to Jews, on pain of death. A temple to Jupiter Capitolinus was built on the temple site. The country was renamed Syria Palestina, and so it has been called ever since.

The center of active Jewry moved elsewhere. The final defeat at Betar left the nation traumatized and the effects linger to this day. The Jews left their homeland and became wanderers among the nations. What people filled the void? In my opinion it was the Edomites who had lived side-by-side with them for 500 years.

Arabicized but still Edomite

At the end of the Mamluk period (1517) and the beginning of the Ottoman period there were probably only 1000 Jewish families living in Palestine, according to the authorized handbook of Israel distributed by the Israeli government.

Jews had fared well sometimes and worse other times, but badly most of the time under the various rulers who conquered the land after the Romans. The Caliphs of the Arabian period ruled from 636 to 1099. Then the Crusaders dominated the scene from 1099 to 1291. The Mamluks were the masters from 1291 to 1516, during which it was said that only 70 poor Jews inhabited Jerusalem.

From 1517 to 1917 the Ottoman Turks controlled the Holy Land, except for the years 1832-1841 when Pasha Muhammad Ali of Egypt sent his son Ibrahim to conquer it. On December 11, 1917, British General Allenby entered Jerusalem, ushering in the British period. This ended on May 14, 1948, when the Jewish People's Council proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel.

During all of these transitions we have no cause to think that the Edomite population moved or migrated anywhere else. We also have no indication that they were annihilated. All indications are that they were the native inhabitants. They became Muslim by religion and Arabs by culture, but they remained Edomite by ethnic background.

Take notice that during none of these periods were the Palestinians independent of another power. They never ruled their own land. They never had an independent kingdom or government.

Certainly, there were true Arabs in the land also, but this does not diminish the presence of the Edomites. Esau had married a daughter of Ishmael according to Genesis 28:9. This did not compromise the Edomite identity of his children then, and the mixing of Edomites with Arabs over the past two thousand years has not compromised their identity today.

Supplanting one million Edomites

Although the Zionist movement and the numerous Aliyahs are not our subject, we should mention that by

1939 the Jewish population of Palestine had reached 500,000 and there was then established a Jewish secret police and clandestine army.

The flood of Jews escaping the terrible events of World War II swelled the number of potential immigrants and the British refusal to allow them entry increased the resolve of the 650,000 Jewish Palestinian inhabitants to secure an independent Jewish homeland.

When war broke out in 1948 the Zionists fought off both the Arab irregulars and the armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. One million Palestinian “Arabs” fled to neighboring areas.

This mass exodus of Palestinians was a major event in the Jewish-Palestinian rivalry. It left the Jews a majority in their own land. Jacob had again supplanted Esau!

Having seen the historical events, we want to look at the biblical prophecies concerning Edom.

An ancient book on the subject

There is one book in the Bible devoted exclusively to the Edomites. That book is Obadiah. A skeptical inquirer might ask how we know that Obadiah applies to the future instead of to the past. Perhaps it was written about the Edomite participation in the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.?

Certainly, the book takes us up to the time when God establishes His Kingdom on the earth, because we read in verse 21, “Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the Kingdom will be the Lord’s.”

Working backwards then we try to find a break in the outline of events that would distinguish between the ancient events and the future ones. Verses 19-20 describe the settlement of the Jews in the coming kingdom:

1:19 People from the Negev will occupy

the mountains of Esau,
and people from the foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.
They will occupy the fields of
Ephraim and Samaria
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.
This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan
will possess the land as far as Zarephath;
the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negev.

Still working backwards, we see that from verse 15 to verse 18 we have a section showing the contrast between the judgment on Edom and the blessing on Israel. The first phrase identifies it as in the “day of the Lord,” a poetic way of referring to the Kingdom of God and its establishment.

1:15 The day of the Lord is near for all nations
As you have done, it will be done to you;
Your deeds will return upon your own head.
Just as you drank on my holy hill,
so all nations will drink continually;
they will drink and drink
and be as if they had never been.
But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
it will be holy,
and the house of Jacob
will possess its inheritance.
The house of Jacob will be a fire
and the house of Joseph a flame;
the house of Esau will be stubble,
and they will set it on fire and consume it.
There will be no survivors from the house of Esau.

Notice that this has never happened. The last we see Esau he is plundering and murdering the Jews in Jerusalem! The last dynasty to rule the Jews was the Edomite Herodian family! Certainly this passage is yet

future.

Verses 10-14 contain a list of sins by the Edomites against the Jews. These could very well describe the treachery of the Edomites as the Jews tried to escape the Babylonians. “Violence against your brother Jacob, . . . you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth, . . . and cast lots for Jerusalem, ... in the day of destruction, . . . You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors.”

This could also be describing the events in 70 A.D. or it could be yet in the future.

A Pause To Consider The Prophetic Outline

Let us draw aside from Obadiah for a moment to consider the outline of prophetic events as given in Daniel 9:25-27:

1. The decree to rebuild the city goes forth, beginning the seventy weeks of years. Joshua and Zerubbabel worked on the temple. It was finished in 516 B.C. But it was the rebuilding of the wall under Nehemiah that fulfilled the prophecy. The command went forth in March 445 B.C. (Neh. 2:1-8).
2. The rebuilding of the city with “streets and a trench, but in times of trouble” was done by Nehemiah.
3. The coming of Messiah, 483 prophetic years (one year equals 360 days) after the decree. Jesus entered Jerusalem 483 years to the day after the decree of Artaxerxes. His triumphal entry is described in Matthew 21.
4. The cutting off of Messiah in between the 69th and 70th weeks, not during either of them. There is a definite gap here in Dan. 9:26, “After the sixty-two sevens. . .”
5. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem along with the temple by “the people of the ruler who will come.” In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans,

so an evil ruler will arise in the future from Roman, or European, stock. Note that the destruction is still during the gap before the 70th week.

6. “War and desolations” continue “until the end.” This is the present time, still in the gap, when the temple worship is not functioning and the Gentiles are in the ascendancy.

7. The “ruler who will come” makes a “covenant with many for one ‘seven,’” (Dan. 9:27) beginning the 70th period of seven years. This is evidently a diplomatic settlement of the Mid-East quagmire of many nations.

8. After three and one-half years the evil ruler breaks his word to the Jews and invades Israel, stopping the temple sacrifices. This assumes the rebuilding of the temple, probably as part of the covenant settlement. He sets up the “abomination that causes desolation.”

Just taking this at face value, and I know that Antiochus Epiphanes seems to have fulfilled some of these prophecies, there is a time of trouble ahead for the Jews. Daniel 12:1 refers to it, “There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.”

In Daniel 7:21 the boastful horn who represents a king who arises from the Roman empire “was waging war against the saints and defeating them.” Verse 25 explains, “He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time,” three and one-half years.

This time of trouble ends with the establishing of God's kingdom on earth according to Daniel 7:26-27, “his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”

Daniel 8 seems to be talking about a different ruler, a king who is an ethnic Greek (8:21), Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The struggle is the Maccabean Revolt. However, the troublesome times of Chapters 7 and 12 are yet to come. It is during this time of distress that the events of Obadiah 10-14 may occur.

Doom for the Palestinians

The verbs of Obadiah should be translated in the imperative, not the past perfect, as the KJV has them. The NIV uses the imperative and it fits in with the rest of the book.

The day of disaster for the Jews, coming after a promise of protection by the “ruler who will come” of Daniel 9:26, will find the Palestinians harrying the fleeing Jews as they leave Jerusalem and seek shelter in the rocks and caves of the wilderness. It will be, as it says in Daniel 12:1, a time a trouble such as never happened before. But God sees all and will settle the account with them.

Obadiah 5-9 (still working backwards to find the break between the past and the future events) speaks of the demise of the Edomites, who will be defeated and decimated.

1:5 If thieves came to you,
if robbers in the night—
Oh, what a disaster awaits you—
would they not steal only as much as they wanted?
If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?
But how Esau will be ransacked,
his hidden treasures pillaged!
All your allies will force you to the border;
your friends will deceive and overpower you;
those who eat your bread will set a trap for you,
but you will not detect it.
In that day, declares the Lord,
will I not destroy the wise men of Edom,

men of understanding
in the mountains of Esau?
Your warriors, O Teman,
will be terrified,
and everyone in Esau's mountains
will be cut down in the slaughter.

During the first three and one-half years of Daniel's 70th week the Palestinians will be fuming over the evil ruler's peace with Israel, and then when he breaks his covenant and begins persecuting the Jews they will go wild getting in on the murder and plunder, much as the Edomites were doing in Jerusalem in 69 A.D.

But then the allies will turn on the Palestinians and force them back to their original homeland, which is what "force you to the border" (Obad. 1:7) means in my opinion. Eventually they will be totally wiped out as a people. Who are their allies? They are the other Arab and Muslim countries that today refuse to assimilate the Palestinian refugees and use them as suicide bombers, and indeed, as a suicide nation, against the Jews. They are not really their friends nor loyal allies.

A diplomatic settlement in the Mid-East

The Arabs threaten Israel with total annihilation, to drive the Jews into the sea. Israel is caught in the perplexing situation of administering the "occupied areas" of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan.

Besides this there is the danger of attack by Iraq and Iran with their missiles and armies, and of Egypt once again turning hostile. Lebanon and Syria are a morass of terrorist factions and militias. Political pressures are being applied by the United States and European nations. Oil is the big worry. How will the economies of nations like Japan be affected? So what hope is there of a solution? Who could solve the problems?

Daniel 9:27 states plainly, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'." This seems to be a

diplomatic and political settlement to the problem. The man who can bring this about will be hailed as a genius, worshiped even. The Jews will honor him as their Messiah, for a while anyway. I will tell you what I think the solution will be.

The “ruler to come” will carve a homeland for the Palestinians out of Jordan, giving them their ancestral land of Seir! There are over 150,000 Palestinian refugees in Jordan out of a total population of 2,300,000. They have citizenship but the situation is explosive.

Part of the future Palestinian homeland might include some of Israel's land south of the Dead Sea too. The Jews will sacrifice land for peace, as they already have. It is becoming obvious that the two peoples cannot live together.

The “ruler to come” will promise the Jews a guarantee of safety and disarm them along with the Palestinians. This will set the economies of these nations free to pursue commercial enterprises that will raise the standard of living of the populations. This will then defuse the explosive social situations caused by poverty and hopelessness found in Egypt, Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria.

The diplomatic solution worked out by the future evil ruler will seem to be the answer to the world's problems. It will assure a steady flow of oil for western industry. I see in scripture a scenario where Europe invades Iraq to keep weapons of mass destruction in check, thus making the European ruler also king of Babylon, which he rebuilds as his world capital. This construction project will be huge, bringing prosperity to the Middle East and to much of the rest of the world. I refer you to Revelation chapter 18. But I digress.

Our interest is in the Edomites, and we find them after the “covenant with many” once again the people of Edom in the land of Edom: Seir, Petra, Bozrah, Teman.

A despised people

One bit of evidence for the repatriation of the Edomites is to be found in Obadiah 1-4. This passage talks of Edom's pride and the way in which God will humble him.

Verse 1, the nations will fight against them saying, "Rise, and let us go against her for battle— ..." This seems to put this prophecy in the time of the future trouble, after the Edomites have participated in Israel's persecution and the nations turn on their erstwhile confederate.

Verse 2 speaks of the Edomites as being "small among the nations." I interpret this as a reference to the time before their final demise. They have been small for 1900 years, virtually unknown in fact, rising from obscurity to the world stage only in the past century. Think of it. The Palestinians are really without a homeland, but are considered a nation. That is exceptionally strange. They are refugees and beg their support from their Muslim co-religionists and compassionate western nations. They are at the mercy of their hosts. They travel to other nations looking for work and are treated some places virtually as slaves. They are indeed despised. They will get even more so!

Verse 3 describes their sin of pride, this in spite of their poor situation. "The pride of your heart has deceived you." Esau thought he could make his own way in the world, living by his sword and overcoming all obstacles without God. This attitude continues, with the PLO terrorists, guerillas and militias.

Pride is pictured as a person confident in the security of a rocky fortress as the Edomites had at Seir.

1:3 you who live in the clefts of the rocks
and make your home on the heights,
you who say to yourself,
"Who can bring me down to the ground?"
Though you soar like the eagle
and make your nest among the stars,

from there I will bring you down,
declares the Lord.

From the fertile valley floors, the peaks of the rocks around Petra look like they reach up to the stars. The sheer cliffs look impregnable. Living there, and they will live there again, the Edomites felt, and will feel, invincible.

However, God has the final word and will deal with them. They will meet their doom and God will raise up the nation of Jacob as He promised so long ago. Messiah will rule the world from His throne in Jerusalem. King David will rise from the dead to be the prince in the new temple as outlined in Ezekiel. It will be God's kingdom and the Jews will be God's people.

Coveting Israel's land

In Ezekiel 35 we find a prophecy against Edom. This comes immediately after the great passage predicting future peace and prosperity for Israel. In Ezekiel 34:31 the Lord assures the Jews, "You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God."

Then in Ezekiel 35 He promises to make Seir "a desolate waste." The reason is, "Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax."

This is the time spoken of in Daniel 12:1, "a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then." It is the time immediately preceding the establishment of God's kingdom. Therefore, we know that it has not happened yet because God's kingdom has not been established.

Unfortunately, this also means that the Jews will be undergoing another, and worse, holocaust. The Nazi persecution and atrocities will be eclipsed by the future campaign of extermination by the "ruler who will come" and his cohorts, which will include the Edomites.

But God will settle the account, which is the subject of Ezekiel 35. “I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you” (35:6). This is spoken with a vow and will certainly come to pass.

“I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and cut off from it all who come and go. I will fill your mountains with the slain; those killed by the sword will fall on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines. I will make it desolate forever; your towns will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the Lord” (35:7-9).

A glimpse into the thinking of the Palestinians is given in verse 10, “Because you have said, ‘These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them.’” The Palestinians today have vowed to drive the Jews into the sea and take their land. They do not consider the birthright that was purchased and given to Jacob. They have changed the story to suit their own ends. They do not count the Hebrew Scriptures as God's unchanging word. They are not afraid to fight against God's anointed people. All they care about is getting the land for themselves.

However, all this will come back on their own heads, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them” (Ezek. 35:11).

“Know that I the Lord have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel” (35:12), is the comforting word to the Jews who today see, hear and read the threats of the PLO and others like them. God takes notice of every lie in every Arab news article. He hears the plotting in the camps and sees the infiltration of the terrorists. He knows their secret plans. God is not fooled, flattered, nor faked out. Neither is He intimidated nor mocked.

The promise made to Jacob through his father Isaac is still good today, “May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed” (Gen. 27:29).

So the word to the Edomites is, “Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of the house of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, O Mount Seir” (Ezek. 35:15).

The epitaph of the Palestinians has already been written.

Like Sodom and Gomorrah

The desolate salt wastes around the Dead Sea hide the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Jeremiah 49:18 the Lord says of Edom, “As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their neighboring towns, says the Lord, so no one will live there, no man will dwell there.”

Jeremiah 49:7-22 is an oracle against Edom and says plainly, “His children, relatives and neighbors will perish, and he will be no more” (vs. 10). The Lord takes an oath to confirm His intention, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that Bozrah will become a ruin and an object of horror, of reproach and of cursing; and all its towns will be in ruins forever” (Jer. 49:13).

Jeremiah 49:19 seems to point to the Lord Himself as the agent of Edom's destruction, “Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me?” God is the final judge who will come against the PLO and the rest.

Blood-stained clothes

Isaiah 63:1-6 describes the one who executes judgment on the nations that have fought against His chosen people Israel. It must be describing God Himself because we just saw in Jeremiah that God identifies Himself as the agent of punishment.

“Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? ... It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. ... I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. . . . For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the

year of my redemption has come.”

This Redeemer seems to be the one pictured in Daniel 7:13-14, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

The Jews will be redeemed from the oppression of all the nations, including the Edomites, who are the present day Palestinians, in my opinion. Isaiah 63:5 attributes this salvation to one person alone, “I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me.” This can be no other than the Messiah. He is God in human flesh. Jesus returning for His people. He has allowed them to reach the point where their only hope is in Him. All other resources have been removed. They trust Him and are saved

How can we be sure that the Edomites are the Palestinians?

Let me give you four reasons why we identify the Palestinians as Edomites:

1. The character of the Palestinians matches that of the Edomites. They are militant, proud, and aggressive. They are determined to exterminate Israel and gain control of the land. They are filled with hate against the Jews.

2. Notice the pattern of being supplanted. If we believe in God’s hand in history we see the biblical pattern and prophecy being worked out in the restoration of the land to the Jews at the expense of the descendants of Esau. No other ancient people would fit the biblical pattern. The Palestinians have to be Esau.

3. The record of the Palestinians matches the biblical prophecy concerning the events of the last days immediately preceding Messiah's return. This was shown in Obadiah and the other prophets. Edom was named and the time periods spelled out. The signs all match the prophecies and the Palestinians are the only ones who qualify for Edom.

4. There is another line of argument that causes us to believe that the Palestinians are Edom. Would God allow Edom who struggled with Jacob in the womb to pass off the scene before the culmination of the age? No! God works everything according to His sovereign will, and it has been shown that He foretells of a final conflict between Jacob, the Jews, and Esau, the Edomites. If the Palestinians are not Edomites then we can not identify anyone as Edom and God's word becomes nonsense.

These arguments are all added on to the historical record which places the Edomites in southern Judea when last heard from.

Is Edom in the New Testament?

No. The only mention of Edom is in the list of regions from which people came to Jesus in Mark 3:8. However, there is a great deal of material concerning the nations in the last days.

Daniel's 70th week of years is the subject of most of the book of Revelation. The evil "ruler who will come" is identified as the Antichrist, labeled "the beast" and described in detail. In my opinion, the Antichrist will be Antiochus IV Epiphanes reincarnated into the body of a European (Roman) king, as stated in Revelation 17:8-11. This also makes it possible for the horn of Daniel 7:21 with the stern-faced king of Daniel 8:23, but this is a subject for another booklet.

Therefore, with this we turn to the lessons that a study of Edom brings before us.

For us: Hold on to God's promises

We see the far-reaching consequences of Esau's mistake. He decided early-on in his life to seek his own way and reject a God-centered lifestyle. He hardened his heart. Hebrews 12:16 says of him, "See that no one ... is godless like Esau." The KJV reads, "profane," meaning impious.

Esau was not a bad person, as we think of immorality or perversion. He is not spoken of as a thief. He was just godless. He did not speak evil of God or blaspheme, but he just ignored God and did not consider God as his maker or redeemer.

We cannot harden our hearts with impunity. We must submit to the Lord and his will. We are not able to manage our own lives. It is dangerous to say that we do not need God; that we do not need His promises, our birthright; that we can be self-sufficient; or that we can displease our parents with impunity, as Esau did by marrying the Hittite women.

We have to beware of thinking that we know what is good for ourselves. We also have to be careful to treat the Jews, God's chosen people with respect, giving them a blessing and in no way maligning them. Remember that in Matthew 25 the proof of salvation in the Tribulation period, Daniel's 70th week, is how people treat the Jews, Christ's brethren.

We have to beware of pride creeping into our lives. Neither should we join God's enemies in any of their ventures, as the Edomites joined with the Babylonians and Romans.

All the other nations may in the last analysis have a word of mercy spoken for them, but for Esau, who despised his birthright and sold it for a mess of pottage there is only "indignation forever" (Malachi 1:4).

The sins of the flesh may all be forgiven a man, but if we turn away from the promise of God to save us we have no more hope because we cannot save ourselves.

Esau lived by his sword and it failed him. We need to live by our faith, as Jacob did, and God will save us. God saved Jacob at the Jabbok when Esau came with four hundred men, and God can save us even in the valley of the shadow of death.

Jesus promises, “whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:26), and we can trust in His words even as we trust Him to return from heaven to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

God has restored Israel to their land, supplanting Esau once again, and as we compare the biblical prophecies with the newspaper each day, we see that even the reports about the PLO give us added confidence in the truth of the Bible because they match up exactly with the Holy Word.

Modern theologians would have us launch into sophisticated unbelief, the famous JEDP theory (the Graf-Welhausen or documentary hypothesis) which has neither a single scrap of any of the supposed documents to back it up nor any validity at all when applied to any other book in the world. We need to take God's word at face value, the literal meaning, with common sense in a normal sense. It is accurate and inspired of God down to the letters. We thank the Jews for their faithful transmittal of the texts. Even the New Testament was given to Jews!

We understand that we who are saved by faith in the Jewish Messiah are indwelt by the one who controls every movement of history. Surely, He is able to guide us in our daily lives.

Most of all, as we look at the Palestinians in Bible prophecy, we see that God Almighty is worthy of our devotion and service. That is the cry from Revelation 5:12, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.” Will you let God have control of your life?

Will you take God's advice? Will you submit to him

and dedicate yourself to work for Him and His kingdom? Will you receive Messiah by faith in the biblical record of His coming?

Just as Edom was godless and relied on his own strength, we can turn away from God, sell our birthright by ignoring the Bible and its promises, and fall into a lifetime pattern of sin. For such a person there is one sure message from Obadiah: God does not forget sin.

God remembers and will punish sin even though it seems to have been buried in the past. The Lord will let each sin reach a state of fruition, giving the sinner every chance to repent and to obtain salvation by faith in Messiah's death and resurrection.

For those outside Messiah's fold there is a sure and certain day of judgment when each sin must be answered for.

Our hope for individual Palestinians is that they hear the gospel message and believe. There are some Christian Palestinians. We need to pray for their protection and strength. We should pray for and participate in reaching all of our own neighbors here in his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Important Prophecies Concerning Edom

Genesis 25:23

Given to Rebekah concerning the twins Jacob and Esau

Genesis 27:27-29

Isaac's blessing to Jacob

Genesis 27:39-40

Isaac's blessing to Esau

Numbers 24:18

Balaam's fourth oracle

Isaiah 11:14

Revenge on Edom by Israel

Isaiah 34:5

Destruction of Edom by the Lord

Isaiah 63:1-6

Messiah pictured coming from Bozrah after taking vengeance on Edom

Jeremiah 49:7-22

God's plan for Edom, similar to Obadiah

Lamentations 4:21

Jews predict Edom will suffer as they did

Ezekiel 25:12-14

Edom's guilt and fate at the hands of the Jews

Ezekiel 35:1-15

Edom's boasts and punishments

Ezekiel 36:5

Edom specifically named by God for judgment because of malice against the land of Israel

Amos 1:11

Edom's sins detailed

Obadiah 1:1-21

God delivers the Jews, punishes Edom

Malachi 1:3

Edom, hated by God, cannot rebuild

A note on the Documentary Hypothesis

Interpretations of the Bible based on the documentary hypothesis have dominated theological circles for more than a century, be they Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. It is sometimes called the Graf-Wellhausen Theory after its originators, or the JEDP theory after the initials of the supposed documents in the Pentateuch, or higher criticism as opposed to textual criticism. Some people are surprised to find that there is anybody going against this strong current. On the other hand, common ordinary church members are amazed to find that their ministers and clergy people do not believe the Bible. Please let me outline this theory and then point out some fatal weaknesses in it. After all, it is the basis of all liberalism and neo-orthodoxy so prevalent today. (Neo-orthodoxy is the redefining of evangelical Protestant terms to allow for the preaching to sound orthodox while the preacher holds to none of the actual biblical beliefs.)

Scholars who adhere to the documentary hypothesis (see the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article under “Biblical Literature”) maintain that the Bible is a composite book put together somewhere around 200 B.C. (Old Testament) or even later by unknown editors. It was compiled from disparate oral and/or written sources. These sources, referred to as documents, are lost to us and we can only reconstruct them by examining the text of the Bible. Scholars look for, and claim to find, clues such as different names for God, different writing styles, phrases out of chronological context, and themes that recur.

The assumptions are that the Bible is an ordinary book, miracles cannot possibly be true, predictive prophecy is impossible, society and religion are evolving, and man is the highest authority. From the clues and assumptions scholars have determined that the five books of Moses were not written by Moses, but came from four sources: J comes from people who

worshiped a god named Jehovah, E is from people who worshiped Elohim, D is for Deuteronomy and is obviously from the party of the prophets because it promotes their agenda, and P is for the priestly party which opposed the prophets and supported the tabernacle and temple with its rituals.

Other books are analyzed similarly. Isaiah, for example, was not written by just one man. The change in the tenor of the book after chapter 53 indicates a second person, a Deutero-Isaiah. There may have been a third person. Who knows? Obviously, to them, none of the named authors wrote the books attributed to them. The events are largely mythical, warped, and distorted. God is a product of the human mind and evolution is just so very, very true. The book evolved.

My first acquaintance with this theory was in an Old Testament course at the University of Pennsylvania taught by James. B. Pritchard, Curator of Biblical Archaeology at the University Museum. He was certainly a giant in his field. However, in spite of the great academic minds who adhere to the theory and its ubiquity and acceptance, there are some fatal flaws with it.

1) It is not used to analyze any other book in the world except the Bible. This is because it does not work. Not on the works of English authors, not on El Cid, not on the Code of Hammurabi, not on Beowulf, not on the Gilgamesh epic, not on anything! So why should we accept its use on the Bible?

2) There is not one single scrap of any of the supposed documents. There is not one piece of hard evidence to support the theory. It is totally an armchair fantasy. Not one potsherd backs it up. Not one piece of sculpture, papyrus, or anything. Every quotation on jewelry or seal or manuscript fragment has been in the form that we have in the Bible now. There is complete corroboration. The text as extant is valid and trustworthy.

3) The documentary hypothesis is based on a false premise, biological evolution. Life shows no evidence of having evolved and theories linked to it are equally invalid. This is a different subject deserving of separate treatment, but neither fossils nor living species show evolution. Every mutation is harmful. The laws of chance rule it out absolutely.

4) The documentary theory is used to escape responsibility to our Creator. God's book should be used to judge our lives and direct our paths, but the documentary theorists have a strong bias because of their desire to find an excuse not to be subject to God and His rules. Their word and theories should not be trusted.

The Bible contains accurate historical accounts as far as can be checked. It is a unified document in spite of its diverse writers and span of time in production. Critics have been forced to admit that the Bible has accurate place names, people movements, linguistic characteristics and cultural descriptions. Belshazzar, once thought to be a fictional character, has had his name found on bricks in Babylon. Hittites were once thought to be fictional, but their cultural center has been found and excavated. The king of Moab mentioned in II Kings 3:4 (i.e. Mesha on the Moabite Stone) was a real historical person. The list goes on and is extremely interesting. All the evidence seems to be on the side of the veracity of the Bible.

We have good copies of the Bible. Daniel, much maligned as a late and pious fraud, has been shown to be what the book claims to be by two things, fragments were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls that were older than the 150 B.C. date put on the work by liberal scholars, and the Imperial Aramaic language in which part of the book is written was only spoken circa 550 B.C. and could hardly be forged.

What is left to us then? The only way in which we can

approach the Bible is with a face-value interpretation. It is a book from God to man and is authoritative and binding upon us. We disregard it at our peril. I urge you to heed the Bible and make it the rule for your life by which all other things are measured. God has spoken through His inspired revelation and you know Him and His salvation through His written word, the Bible, and only through the Bible. No dreams, visions, experiences or other revelations are valid. No other book is inspired.

To what extent is the Bible true? It is true down to the letters. The words are inspired of God, not the writers. The prophets were moved along by the Holy Spirit to make sure that the letters were what He wanted on the page. God bless you as you study your Bible.



Ravine in Idumaea

