

The Visions of Ezekiel

Lesson 27

Ezekiel's Fifty-fourth Assignment from the LORD

4. The Way of the Saboteur of Israel (35:1- 36:15)

a) The Slap by God (35:1-4)

35:1 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, 35:2 "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it 35:3 and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, And I will stretch out My hand against you And make you a desolation and a waste. 35:4 "I will lay waste your cities And you will become a desolation. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

The LORD had taken over the task of caring for Israel. Yes, the Israelites were in exile, but they were also under His divine and sovereign care as a nation. That did not mean that normal heartache and tragedy would not come into the lives of the families of Israel. It meant that the *nation of Israel* would follow a path that was promised by the LORD by which they would return to the Promised Land, regain control of the land and never lose it again. There they would remain, and no other powers would ever be able to take the land from them again. There they would be when the LORD made His return to be their King of kings and LORD of lords. But, in His plan, there was a problem that would need to be handled by Him and it concerned the cousin nation of the Israelites – the nation of Esau called Edom. The way of the saboteur of Israel was identified. The people who looked to Mount Seir as their stronghold were guilty of deliberately taking action aimed at weakening the life, liberty and God-ordained future of the nation of Israel. It was the descendants of Esau that held that mountain and it was the descendants of Esau that would be the saboteurs of Israel. This is a prophecy against the future actions of Esau's descendants, the Edomites. At this point in the story, in 585 B.C., Edom was scattered throughout the southern parts of what we recognize as Southern Israel, Jordan and Arabia today. A large bulk of the Edomites had moved into the Philistine area that we call the Gaza Strip and married into those tribes. From the original days of the conquest of the Promised Land by Joshua, the Edomites were beaten back and pushed out of the way under the strict approval and instruction of the LORD. He was never happy with the actions of this tribal group. The last book of the Old Testament found His words to say, "Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated." What stern words those are from the LORD. But, because of their outright sabotage against the nation of Israel, the LORD intended to punish them. However, to this point in the story, the Edomites had not committed their gravest sins against the LORD and Israel. If you will remember, King Herod who tried to kill the baby Jesus and his descendant who wanted Jesus killed on the cross were of the Edomite tribe. But the actions of those Edomites were not enough yet to stir the slap of God. It would take more than that. Therefore, this prophecy must be for the future. The fact is, the land of Edom was basically inhabited by tribal families in tents that moved from place to place depending on

the supply of water and grazing areas and by the time of this story in 565 B.C., the land was basically abandoned.

For clarity purposes, this might be a good time to address development of the old Edomite land after 585 B.C. Two hundred years after this story, the old Edomite area would begin to establish more permanent structures in the land, literally carved into the stones of the mountains by a tribe of people called the Nabataeans. They were not Edomites of the tribes of Esau. They were Arab tribes of the descendants of some of the sons of Abraham, born long before the births of Jacob and Esau. They moved into the area and reestablished it about 312 B.C.. It was about that time that the great and beautiful treasury of Petra was carved in the side of the mountain. Other beautiful permanent stone structures were carved throughout the region. It became an important stop on the trade route from the west to the east during the days of the Greek Empire. However, by the 500's A.D., merchandise began to be imported and exported exclusively through the Tyre area about 200 miles away. The old Edom land was no longer on the most convenient trade path and the land began to be abandoned by the Nabataeans.

At the time of the writing of the book of Obadiah, about 586 B.C., the year of the fall of the Southern Kingdom, the Edomite land was desolate. In that book, the LORD prophesied that the land would be reestablished by the Edomites and experience the punishment of the LORD when He returned because of their sabotage of the nation of Israel. Therefore, this prophecy about Edom and Mount Seir was still for the future and it centered directly on the enmity between the descendants of Esau and those of Jacob.

b) The Punishment by God (35:5- 6)

35:5 "Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end, 35:6 therefore as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you.

Why will the Edomites experience the punishment by God? The LORD gave the reason. He said it was *"Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end"* There we see the sabotage. At some time in the future, the Edomites will be guilty of capturing and handing over to the evil Satanic trio some of the Israelites as they run for their lives in the end times. At that time, the Edomites will be punished by God.

c) The Destruction by God (35:7-9)

35:7 "I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation and I will cut off from it the one who passes through and returns. 35:8 "I will fill its mountains with its slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain by the sword will fall. 35:9 "I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

According to Obadiah 1:21, "The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD's. Here is a summary of the rest of that story found in the Bible.

The deliverers of Israel will ascend to Mt. Zion after they descend from heaven. They include the Lord and all the host of saints from all the ages who return with Him when He breaks through the eastern skies and destroys the Edomites from their mountains and cities to their borders on the way to the Battle of Armageddon.⁶⁰ The Lord's foot will touch the Mt. of Olives which will split from east to west. A plain will be formed that will rise above all the other natural structures of the world. Every mountain will be laid low. What began at noon will be completed in fewer than six hours. By 6:00 PM on the day of the Lord, it will all be over. Over the next 45 days, the new temple will be built in Jerusalem and the great white throne will be placed there for the King of the kingdom.⁶¹ The world will belong to the Lord completely for 1,000 years at that time. "The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD'S." Mount Zion will become the center of all governmental control in Jesus' millennial kingdom. "Deliverers," or judges, will be in constant communication with this power center and will exercise Christ's authority over the most distant outposts of His world empire, including mount Esau itself. Never again will Edom actually or representatively threaten the Jewish people or anyone else. " And the kingdom will be the LORD'S." With these words Obadiah's prophecy ended. There was no more to be said, for Christ is the King "against whom there is no rising up" (Proverbs 30:31). Obadiah turned our eyes toward Jesus and then put down his quill.

d) The Distinction by God (35:10-11)

35:10 "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two lands will be mine, and we will possess them,' although the LORD was there, 35:11 therefore as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will deal with you according to your anger and according to your envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; so I will make Myself known among them when I judge you.

In the end times, it will be the intent of the Edomites to possess both their land and all the Promised Land. Greedy, they will claim the Promised Land as their land and be a thorn in the side of Israel until the coming of the LORD. Let us remember the history of these Edomites. The Edomites refused to allow the Israelites to traverse their land on their way to conquer the Promised Land. As a result, the Lord instructed Joshua to conquer them, scattering the inhabitants all the way to the Mediterranean coast, where they intermarried with the Phoenician people, renamed the Philistines, and ultimately misnamed the Palestinians by one of the Caesars.⁶² They are the Palestinians today who claim the Promised Land as their land and seek to destroy the nation of Israel. For that, the LORD has made a distinction and He will destroy them when He returns.

e) The Prosecution by God (35:12-13)

35:12 "Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all your revilings which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel saying, 'They are laid desolate; they

⁶⁰ Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-16; Habakkuk 3:3-13, Joel 2:1-11; Zechariah 12:2-10; Zechariah 14:1-21; Zechariah 13:2-9; Revelation

⁶¹ Amos 8:9; Habakkuk 3:11; Zechariah 14:7; Daniel 12:10-12; Revelation 20:1-11

⁶² Hadrian (117-138 A.D.)— However, the Greek historian Herodotus had used the word *Palaistin* just 100 years after the time of Ezekiel in the fifth century B.C. and that entry was probably the reason for the mispronunciation in the second century A.D..

are given to us for food.' 35:13 "And you have spoken arrogantly against Me and have multiplied your words against Me; I have heard it."

What had the LORD heard? He said, "*They are laid desolate; they are given to us for food. And you have spoken arrogantly against Me and have multiplied your words against Me; I have heard it.*" But there was more to that story. Obadiah greatly enhances the reason the Edomites will receive the prosecution by God.

Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered *with* shame, and you will be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, On the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem-- You too were as one of them. Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast in the day of *their* distress. Do not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster. And do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; And do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress. *Obadiah 1:10-14*

The Edomites will be destroyed because they will have done everything possible to hurt their Israelite cousins during their time of tribulation and trouble. The Edomites will do nothing to protect Israel or her property, almost acting like border guards while others plunder Israel's assets. They will be part of the siege on Jerusalem when half of the people in the city are cut off or die (Zechariah 14:2). They will be thrilled to see Israel's travail. When the Jews begin to run, the Edomites will block their exits from the cities, capturing them as fugitives and returning them for rewards. The Lord warns them not to do these things, but they will, and He will destroy them. Edom had committed three unpardonable sins: encouraging Judah's foes, enjoying Judah's fall, and enslaving Judah's fugitives. Because of these sins, retribution was soon to be meted out. Obadiah said to Edom, "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever." It is true that God's ancient people, like His people today, had many faults and sins and deserved chastisement. But they were still God's people and it was not Edom's place to urge on Judah's foes or actively side with the enemies of those who were dear to His heart. Whatever knowledge of God, salvation, true holiness, justice, mercy, or truth that was to be found in the world, was deposited with God's people. Terrible is the state of the souls of those who rejoice to see God's people—however erring and backslidden they might be—attacked and harmed by their foes. Whose side are they on? Edom was on the wrong side. "On the day that you stood aloof," added Obadiah, " On the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem-- You too were as one of them." Consider what will happen. It will be the darkest hour in Hebrew history. The situation had been bad enough a century earlier when the Assyrians had carried the northern tribes into captivity and ravished Judah right down to the wall of Jerusalem. But now Jerusalem and the temple lay in ruins. The northern tribes had never truly represented God's truth. They had worshiped the golden calf, and all their kings had been evil. So the Northern Kingdom had come to an end, while the preaching of Isaiah and the prayers of godly King Hezekiah had saved Jerusalem and the Temple from the Assyrians. But now it looked as though "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," (2 Corinthians 4:6) had gone out forever. It hadn't, of course. There was still a Jeremiah, an Ezekiel, and a Daniel. The Edomites, who had encouraged Judah's foes, revealed the state of their souls by rejoicing when the light of God on this earth was seemingly extinguished. They remind us that there are people

who love darkness. There were people who rejoiced in the death of Christ and even mocked Him as He died. And today there are people who rejoice in the downfall of the Church and in the disgrace of her ministers. When the Chaldeans invaded Judah, "cast lots upon Jerusalem," carried off the spoil, and enslaved her people, Edom applauded and helped the conquerors. Obadiah was not the only prophet to react to this unbrotherly sin (See Psalm 137:7; 83:4-6; Ezekiel 35; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Isaiah 34; 63). The book of Obadiah is a divine commentary on Proverbs 17:5: "He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Edom found both pleasure and profit in Judah's fall, and Obadiah's denunciation rang out again and again: "Thou shouldest not have..." Here, incidentally, we come to the crux of the question. Was Obadiah speaking of the prophetic past or the real past? Scholars who believe that he was speaking of the prophetic past usually rephrase the words "Thou shouldest not have" as "Do not," "Look not," or "Gloat not." According to this view the words are a warning, not a woe; Obadiah was telling Edom not to gloat. However, even if strict translation calls for this rephrasing, Obadiah did not necessarily live long before the event. He could have been a contemporary and still have warned Edom not to play the wretched part it did. He could have witnessed the sin of Edom (either actually or in a vision) and denounced it. Note the things that Edom had done (or would do): "Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast in the day of their distress. Do not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster." We can picture the Edomites swarming down from their cliff homes when the tidings came that Nebuchadnezzar's army had breached the wall of Jerusalem and receiving the news with rousing cheers. We can hear the canyons echoing shouts of glee and the caves reverberating boastful words. "That will teach those despicable Jews a lesson," someone would have called out. Raising the flag of Edom in triumph, someone else would have cried, "Three cheers for Edom!" as if the Edomites had done the deed. "Come on, Edom!" another probably shouted. "What are we waiting for? Let's get in on the action. This is the day we've been hoping for." Out of their rocky ravines the Edomites came—wild, fierce, exultant. Soon they were cheering the Babylonians, gloating over the captives, pouring into Jerusalem, and plundering the spoils. Their sin was unpardonable.

God had given Israel special instructions regarding Edom: "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother.... The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation" (Deuteronomy 23:7-8). God expected the Hebrews to extend the olive branch to Edom, to evangelize the descendants of Esau and win them to Him. The Hebrews never did, so they reaped the fruit of their failure. But their failure did not excuse Edom's behavior. From the beginning Edom had hated the Hebrews and been jealous of them. That seed of hate had germinated and borne its bitter fruit of malice and revenge. The Edomites had progressed from indifference to Judah's fate, to active participation in the persecution of God's people, to rejoicing in their downfall. Some professing Christians are like the Edomites. Instead of helping a brother when he falls, they delight in digging out the details and spreading the news. Feeling smug, they do not hesitate to add an extra kick or two to a man who is down. Obadiah warned against such wicked behavior. In verse 14 we read of Edom's final damning sin, the last malicious kick delivered to a fallen brother: "And do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives; And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress." We can picture a frantic mother who has somehow survived the horrors of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Her husband is dead. She and her two small children have miraculously eluded the ravaging troops who are sacking the city and performing all the

acts of horror expected of an invader. Through an unguarded hole in the wall, the three escape the city. Maybe if we can get to the mountain pass, we will be safe, the mother thinks, and she urges her children to be brave, to hurry, to run for their lives. Believing there will be some safety in numbers, she joins other desperate fugitives. At last they reach the pass. The noise of the battle and the screams of the wretched people trapped in the city grow fainter and a prayer of thankfulness rises in the mother's heart. Hope revives—and then armed warriors, roaring with ill-gotten mirth, spring from ambush. Quickly they round up the fugitives and shackle young and old, women and children. The warriors are not Babylonians; they are Edomites! "Back you go," they mock. "We're handing you over to the Babylonians." The fugitives plead for mercy, but they might as well try to convince a tiger to give up its prey.

f) The Prophecy by God (35:14-15)

35:14 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "As all the earth rejoices, I will make you a desolation. 35:15 "As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

And now we come to the prophecy by God concerning Edom and Mount Seir. *"You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it."*

Once again, Obadiah can help us understand the timing of this event.

For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow, and become as if they had never existed. *Obadiah 1:15-16*

When the day of the Lord finally arrives, the fate of Edom is set. By that time, she will have used and abused Mt. Moriah for her own purposes for hundreds of years. The dome of the rock mosque was built in 1193 AD by Islam on the holy mount and it will not be removed until the Lord destroys it on His day. Because Edom and its allies have used the mount for Islam's false religion, they all will be destroyed. It will be as if they never existed. They will rot where they stand on that day (Zechariah 14:12). Having finished his indictment against Edom, Obadiah was about to pass sentence. At this point his prophecy was enlarged to embrace not only Edom, but also all the other countries that consider themselves to be enemies of the Jewish people. Obadiah's vision carried him over the centuries to "the day of the Lord" to the end-time fulfillment of many Old and New Testament prophecies. From God's point of view, that day was near. Like so many prophecies, Obadiah's words would have a fulfillment for Edom in the end-time as the foes of Israel. The retribution pronounced on Edom follows the principle of all divine retribution: "As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head." Sin is like a boomerang. What we do to others often comes back and is done to us. Obadiah's prophecy has its ultimate focus on "the day of the Lord," when all nations, including a latter-day Edom, will come up against the nation of Israel. Ancient hostilities will be back on center stage. The rebirth of the state of Israel in our day heralds the approaching fulfillment of Obadiah's end-time prophecy. The ancient arena is fast becoming the modern arena. The old land of Edom is now part of the Arab country of Jordan, which joins with other Arab and Muslim nations in their hostility toward Israel. Jordan was created by the British

government about the same time Britain was making plans to implement the Balfour declaration and the League of Nations' mandate. Hatred of Israel will cause embittered Arab nations to ally themselves with Russia, the beast, or anyone else who might make their dream of eradicating Israel and exterminating the Jews a reality. As God wills, however, justice will be done. The Middle Eastern Arab nations that are so vehement and unrelenting in their anti-Semitism will reap what they have sown: "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." God's justice is poetic. The punishment corresponds with the offense, just as one line of a poem corresponds to another.

Historically, Edom's doom, although slow, was sure. Jeremiah foretold that Edom would be subject to Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 27:2-6), and after their captivity ended, Malachi bore witness to the fact that Edom had been made utterly desolate (Malachi 1:2-3). Nebuchadnezzar, no doubt, conquered Edom when he marched against Egypt. He could not afford to leave behind him such a strong fortress of robber barons. He needed secure passage for men and materials, and the unsubdued Edomites sat astride his supply lines. It was the same route that Edom had so spitefully denied to Israel centuries earlier when the Hebrews were marching from Egypt to Canaan. Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar needed safe passage between the Dead Sea and the gulf of Aqaba. We can be sure that Nebuchadnezzar treated Edom the way he treated all conquered countries—with plunder, death, and captivity. God's justice, however, is ever tempered with mercy. His judgments often are slow in coming, allowing time for repentance. Edom must have recovered at least some of its power during the years of Judah's exile because the repatriated Jews found Edomites plundering the Negev in the south and ravaging as far north as Hebron. Malachi 1:4 records Esau's boast, "We will return and build the desolate places," and foretells further desolation. Probably during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who viciously persecuted the Jews, the Edomites took possession of the southern part of Judah and Hebron, which was just twenty-two miles from Jerusalem. Judas Maccabeus battled the Edomites at Arra-batene in Idumea and twenty years later Simon Maccabeus was still fighting them. Twenty years after that, Simon's son John Hyrcanus had to fight them again; he thoroughly thrashed them and forced them to accept circumcision, become Jewish proselytes, and accept Jewish law. The Edomites' character, however, remained unchanged and Judah could not get rid of them that easily. In time, Judah had to deal with the Herods, subservience to Rome and insatiable cruelty. During the terrible siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Zealots made the fatal mistake of sending for the Edomites. The city was infiltrated by some twenty thousand Edomites who only added further torment to the death pangs of Jerusalem. Then their names disappeared from history. Most of them perished during the dreadful extermination that accompanied the siege and sacking of Jerusalem. For Israel's end-time enemies, victory will be followed by revelry (Obadiah 16). The prophet could see, in a vision, the victorious armies of the beast sweeping through Jerusalem, desecrating synagogues and shrines, plundering the already defiled Temple and toasting their successes in drunken orgies on the temple mount. The beast will be the last of a long train of conquerors who have desecrated the holy city, "the city of the great King." Obadiah could see Edomites, Babylonians, Macedonians, and Romans in successive waves seizing Jerusalem and celebrating by drinking to the triumph of their gods over the God of Heaven. But the victory of the heathen is temporary. "Wine for wine" is the promise of verse 16. God has always triumphed in the end and the beast's doom is sure. Even as Jerusalem falls into his hands, the heavens will rend open and the rightful King will return.

In the story, it is now time for a declaration by God!

g) The Declaration by God (36:1-3)

36:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. 36:2 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because the enemy has spoken against you, 'Aha!' and, 'The everlasting heights have become our possession,' 36:3 therefore prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "For good reason they have made you desolate and crushed you from every side, that you would become a possession of the rest of the nations and you have been taken up in the talk and the whispering of the people.'"" 36:4 'Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the forsaken cities which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of the nations which are round about,

Edom will have made a dreadful mistake in the future time of Israel's tribulation. For that matter, Edom had made a dreadful mistake concerning their cousins from the days of Moses when the Israelites requested permission to cross the Edomite's land on their way to conquer the Promised Land (Numbers 20:14-21). Edom to this day has been a thorn in the side of the *nation of Israel*. But because Edom stood against Israel in the days of Moses, a prophecy was set for them by the LORD concerning their end.

" And Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also shall be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly. "One from Jacob shall have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city." *Numbers 24:18-19*

In this short prophecy, the Israelites will ultimately take control of everything owned by the Edomites. When will that happen? It will occur when the "*One from Jacob shall have dominion....*" Who will that be? It will be the LORD Jesus. When will that be? When He returns to be King of kings and LORD of lords to reign on this earth for 1,000 years from Jerusalem. How will He take control? By destroying the remnant of Edom when He arrives.

The LORD will destroy all the enemies of Israel; however, Edom is on a short list with the LORD. Two other groups of people are on that list and they are Ammon (25:3) and Tyre (26:2). We have already heard from the LORD concerning these two groups in Ezekiel. The three together have several things in common. First, they are all extremely close to Israel through relationships. The Ammonites were cousins of Israel. Ammon was the son of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. The people of Tyre were the laborers and businessmen from Phoenicia who supported King David during his rule and provided most of the supplies needed by King Solomon in all of his grand building projects. Even after the days of Solomon, the city of Tyre was close to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms because of the trade routes and Tyre's position as a center for merchandizing in the world. The Edomites were a group of cousins even closer to the previous two; they were descendants... of Esau, the brother of Jacob, the father of the Israelites. Why were these three in trouble with the LORD? All three wished dread and harm on Israel. All three had said, "Aha" as an enemy of Israel. All three tried to annihilate Israel. As you might remember, the LORD annihilated Ammon. Not one Ammonite remains on this earth. As for Tyre, the prophecy in chapter 26 states the following.

Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, "Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, *now that* she is laid waste," therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves." *Ezekiel 26:2-3*

Here we see that because Tyre said "Aha" about the disaster in Jerusalem, the LORD would "*bring many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves.*" Waves and waves of enemy nations would overflow the city of Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar was first; Alexander the Great was second; Rome was third; the Ottoman Turks were fourth; Britain was fifth. And so it will be until the LORD rolls over Tyre and brings all its evil, controlled by Satan, to an end. That will happen when the LORD arrives at His Second Coming.

What will be the reason for Edom's total destruction by the LORD? In the time of Israel's tribulation of the last days, Edom will sabotage the actions of Israel. They will not be successful in obtaining their goal of destroying Israel as the Palestinians and the rest of the Muslim world desires today. Rather, the Palestinians and the Edomites will be destroyed by the LORD for their treatment of Israel. Because they did not bless Israel through all the years, they will not be blessed in the end. They will be crushed, and their land will be given to tribes of Issachar, Zebulun and Gad for their habitation during the 1,000-year reign of the LORD. Their mountains will become Israel's mountains. Their ravines will be Israel's ravines. Their valleys will become Israel's valleys. Why? Because the land they controlled was to be part of the Promised Land and it will be in the 1,000-year kingdom.

h) The Assertion by God (36:5-7)

36:5 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and with scorn of soul, to drive it out for a prey." **36:6** 'Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, "'Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My wrath because you have endured the insults of the nations.' **36:7** "'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'I have sworn that surely the nations which are around you will themselves endure their insults.

Why had the LORD made this assertion against Edom? He said it was "*...against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and with scorn of soul, to drive it out for a prey.*" Edom took the land and occupied the land that was to be part of the Promised Land. They did so with joy for themselves and with scorn for Israel. Because Israel had to endure this insult on the part of Edom, the LORD will bring about His vengeance on the Edomites in order to make all things right. But Edom was not alone in this plight from the LORD. All the nations that surround Israel will feel the same jealousy and wrath from the LORD if they remain enemies of Israel. All the nations will be enemies of Israel when that time comes.

i) The Multiplication by God (36:8-11)

36:8 'But you, O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come. **36:9** 'For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. **36:10** 'I will multiply

men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. 36:11 'I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.

Israel needs not fear the coming days. The LORD Who has promised to provide and protect Israel will keep His promises. At this point in the story in Ezekiel, many prophecies concerning Israel were still waiting to be fulfilled. The LORD would never change a prophecy. This prophecy in this passage is simply a tag to the end of all the other former prophecies and Israel must wait for each to occur in its proper timing; however, all of the outstanding prophecies are for the good of Israel. With this prophecy we see the LORD promising to multiply Israel. The Promised Land will *"be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first."* Today, we would say, "Israel will one day own all the Promised Land that was granted to Abraham and life on the land will be better for the Israelites than it ever has been in history."

j) The Promise by God (36:12)

36:12 'Yes, I will cause men—My people Israel—to walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.'

And now we come to the promise by God concerning the land of Israel. When the LORD returns, Israel will live safely on its inherited Promised Land and never again be ousted, attacked or threatened. It will belong to Israel and the people of Israel will belong to the land.

k) The Blessed by God (36:13-15)

36:13 "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because they say to you, "You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children," 36:14 therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,' declares the Lord GOD. 36:15 "I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer," declares the Lord GOD."

Here we must pause to notice an enlightening part of this forward-looking prophecy that is being fulfilled today. In telling Ezekiel what the Edomites would be saying about Israel, He speaks, *"You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children..."* What do the Palestinians today say about the nation of Israel? Israel is hated by them. They claim that Israel is on their land illegally. They claim that Israel is occupying the land that belongs to the Palestinians. They call Israel detestable infidels. They wish to annihilate every Israelite from the land - men, women, boys and girls. In short, every day the Palestinians are casting insults at the people of Israel. But it is the Edomites who are in the wrong as the saboteurs of the world against God's chosen people. Because of that, the LORD will punish the Edomites and they will be the ones to be annihilated because of their treatment of God's chosen nation. They may be hurling insults now, but the LORD promises Israel that *"I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer ..."* Israel, the festering sore in the minds of most countries of the world today will one day be the esteemed country of this world.