

THE USE OF  
THE OLD TESTAMENT  
IN THE NEW AND  
OTHER ESSAYS

*STUDIES IN HONOR OF*  
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## THE CONDEMNATION OF EDOM IN POSTEXILIC JUDAISM

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Professor Stinespring, with charismatic ability for expressing ideas in rememberable statements, has explained to several decades of students that one of the characteristics of postexilic prophecy is a "Damn-Edom" theology. This volume provides an appropriate occasion for consideration of this oft-noticed but seldom pursued aspect of Old Testament prophetic thought.

Edom and the Edomites are frequently spoken of in the Old Testament. Such bitterness, hatred, and contempt characterize these references that it is scarcely hyperbolic to say that never a kind word is spoken about Edom in the Old Testament.

There are four significant relationships in which Edom is mentioned in the Old Testament: (1) the stories concerning the nation's origin and kinship with Israel; (2) the Israelite-Edomite contact in the wilderness after the Exodus; (3) the accounts of periodic subjugation and control of Edom by Israel or Judah during the period of the Hebrew monarchies; and (4) the hatred and condemnation of Edom and the Edomites, primarily in the prophetic writings. There are other brief references to Edom in the Old Testament, but they give little help in our understanding of relationships and attitudes between these nations. The fourth of the above enumerated relations is of major concern in this study. However, the first three demand some initial consideration. The intense hatred of Edom by the Jews must have had some historical background.

The stories of conflict between Jacob and Esau, the patriarchs of the nations Israel and Edom, are well known. The relationship between these stories and the later hatred between nations is not clear and is rarely explored. To attempt to explain the hatred between Israel and Edom by saying that Esau (and his descendants) refused to forgive Jacob (and his descendants) for the bowl of pottage withheld from Esau is hopelessly naive, but evidently such

an explanation for this hostility is uncritically accepted by some students of the Old Testament.

The Esau-Jacob stories in Genesis testify to an insistent and unbroken tradition of ill feeling between Israel and Edom. The prominent place these stories occupy in the Old Testament, but not their origin, can be understood in the light of Damn-Edom theology. One place to look in search of an understanding of the hatred between Edom and Israel is to the history of Edom.

## I

The references to Edom, especially historical, in the Old Testament, though not extensive, are not altogether insignificant. The territory of Edom was located south of the Dead Sea reaching to the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqabah. The only boundary in question is the western boundary. There is some evidence limiting Edomite territory to the region east of the Wadi Arabah, but there is evidence, however, pointing to Edomite occupation and control of territory on both sides of the Wadi Arabah. It is nevertheless very clear that the most important part of Edom lies to the east of the Arabah. The home territories of the kings and chieftains of Edom mentioned in Genesis 36 and I Chronicles 1 appear to be in this eastern area, as do the sites of conflict with Edom in the wilderness period and the Hebrew kingdoms period.

Little of certainty can be known concerning Edomite history during patriarchal Old Testament times. Nelson Glueck reports evidence that there was a civilization of high achievement in Edom and nearby areas between the twenty-first and nineteenth centuries B.C. Then, about 1900 B.C. there was a thoroughgoing destruction visited upon the land, marking the end of this particular civilization. Several centuries followed, according to Glueck's analysis, with the territory of Edom occupied by no more than nomadic clans. He posits the founding of the Kingdom of Edom in the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

1. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 5719-1959), p. 11; Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1940), p. 114. G. Lankester Harding has raised questions about these conclusions. The evidence at present suggests that Glueck is probably correct. See Harding, *The Antiquities of Jordan*, rev. ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), pp. 32-33.

That the Edomites were present in the twelfth century B.C. is clearly evident from biblical references and archaeological evidence. The view of Glueck is that near the beginning of the thirteenth century B.C., with both Egypt and Assyria weak, there came an influx of Bedouin or seminomadic peoples from the desert areas to the south and east absorbing or dispossessing the seminomadic inhabitants who had developed no sedentary civilization while having held the land since around 1900 B.C. This movement encompassed the Trans-Jordan area from Lake Huleh to the Gulf of Aqabah. The subsequent division of the land into five kingdoms was influenced probably by both the separate tribal groups of invaders and the topographical divisions of the land. Edom, the southernmost of the five kingdoms, developed rapidly during this late Bronze-early Iron Age into a highly advanced, strongly organized, and well-integrated kingdom. The agricultural potential of the territory was used to good advantage.<sup>2</sup>

The value of the land of Edom, besides its agricultural potential when the strictest methods of water conservation and use were employed, lay in the presence of copper and in the strategic position of the land with the "King's Highway" traversing the length of its territory. The extent of copper mining activity in Edom during the thirteenth to the fourth centuries is unknown. It is a logical guess that the Edomites carried on some mining operations in this time.<sup>3</sup> The location of Edom on the King's Highway gave opportunity for control of, enrichment from, and participation in ancient commerce, particularly that between Egypt, Arabia, and India (by way of Arabia) and the regions to the north. The kingdom of Edom must have become strong and relatively wealthy. The presence of strong and well-situated border fortresses and a significant decrease in the thickness of protecting walls of individual cities suggest that this was a kingdom with protected borders, strong central authority and national unity.<sup>4</sup> The account in Numbers 20 indicates that the kingdom of Edom was sufficiently strong to admit or refuse entry to other peoples into its borders.

Concerning the history of Edom beginning with the thirteenth

2. Glueck, *Other Side*, pp. 127-28; M. E. Kirk, "An Outline of the Ancient Cultural History of Transjordan," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 76 (1944), 187, 188.

3. Kirk, p. 185; Glueck, *Other Side*, p. 83.

4. Kirk, p. 187.

century B.C., after the accounts of the contact with the Hebrews in the wilderness, there is silence in the biblical account for a considerable period of time. Down to the time of Saul there is no evidence to Edom's history except the listing of the king-chiefs in Genesis 36. Eight kings are listed who ruled Edom before the establishment of a monarchy in Israel (vv. 31-39); then eleven chiefs of Edom are enumerated (vv. 40-43). No chronology of any sort is supplied. Little of historical value can be gathered from the lists.

From the period of the Hebrew monarchy relatively little evidence concerning the history of Edom comes from extrabiblical sources. There are questionable references to excursions from Egypt into Edom in the period of nineteenth and twentieth dynasties.<sup>5</sup> Shishak's expedition that took him into Jerusalem in the time of Rehoboam took him also into Edom, which he claims in an inscription at Karnak to have overrun.<sup>6</sup> These evidences are interesting but cast little, if any, light upon the history of Edom. From the records of the Assyrian king, Adad-Nirari III (810-783 B.C.), is the claim that he made expeditions to the west in 806, 805, and 797 B.C. in which tribute was received from, among other places, Edom. Edom is named by this monarch as a new conquest for the Kingdom of Assyria.<sup>7</sup> Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 B.C.), in an extant building inscription, relates that he received tribute from "Kaushmalaku (Qaushmalaku) of Edom" as well as from many other rulers and nations.<sup>8</sup> The Broken Prism of Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) records an attempted revolt in which Edom was involved.<sup>9</sup> According to the Oriental Institute Prism of Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), in the same campaign (701 B.C.) in which he besieged Jerusalem, Aiarammu of Edom, among other rulers, offered gifts and obeisance to Sargon.<sup>10</sup> Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) claims to have forced Qaushgabri, King of Edom, with twenty-one other kings from Hatti, to transport building materials to Nineveh.<sup>11</sup>

5. G. A. Frank Knight, *Nile and Jordan* (London: James Clark and Company, 1921), pp. 233-41, 250, 254, 257.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 280.

7. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to The Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 281, col. 2.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 282, col. 1. In the same list Jehoahaz of Judah is mentioned.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 287, col. 1.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 287, col. 2.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 291, cols. 1, 2. Manasseh of Judah is one of the kings listed.

Ashurbanipal (668-633 B.C.) records that he received tribute from Qaushgabri, King of Edom, who, with other kings, accompanied him (probably with their armies) in his attack on Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Edom was a participant in a revolt against Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian Empire having then succeeded the Assyrian in world dominance. This rebellion of western states led to the 587 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem. Details of what befell Edom for its participation are lacking. G. L. Robinson assumes that Edom's power was dealt a severe blow but that consequences were not as severe for Edom as for Judah in the way of destruction and deportation. He argues also that this fatal weakening of Edom set the stage for the Nabataean encroachment.<sup>13</sup>

The biblical evidence concerning Edom in the period of the Hebrew monarchy relates that Saul fought against Edom, but there is no evidence that this was more than a brief expedition against a harassing enemy neighbor (I Sam. 14:47). David conquered the Kingdom of Edom, but details of the conquest are almost completely lacking. It is simply reported that "he [David] slew eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants" (II Sam. 8:13, 14).<sup>14</sup> For a period of six months after this initial battle, Joab and his army were engaged in establishing Israelite control of Edom; "for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom" (I Kings 11:15, 16). Although there may have been a great slaughter, this is obviously a hyperbolic statement. Upon the deaths of David and Joab, Hadad, a royal prince who had escaped to Egypt in the time of David's conquest of Edom, returned, evidently seeking to raise the standard of revolt against Solomon. He probably harassed Solomon but never succeeded in throwing off Israelite domination. That Solomon retained control of Edom during the entirety of his reign is evident from the account of his establishment of naval operations centered at

12. *Ibid.*, p. 294, cols. 1, 2. Manasseh is again listed.

13. G. L. Robinson, *Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), pp. 364-65. Such an assumption seems to go beyond the evidence. Edom may well have escaped the wrath of Nebuchadrezzar's army. Concerning this period of Edom's history additional archaeological evidence would be most valuable.

14. Emending the text with the Greek, ἄδρις ἄδρις; cf. I Chron. 18:12, 13.

Ezion-geber (I Kings 9-10), and from recognition that the first account of Edomite independence came in the time of Jehoram of Judah, when a successful revolt was carried out.<sup>15</sup>

For a considerable period of time after David's conquest of Edom, perhaps 200 years, the struggle continued between Edom and Israel-Judah for control of the land of Seir. The Hebrews held the upper hand from David to Jehoram, but there were continual attempts at rebellion by the Edomites. Glueck has set forth the idea that the fierceness of this struggle, which was mutually exhausting on both sides, was one of the contributing factors in the Edomite weakness that resulted in the subsequent disappearance of the Edomites as a separate ethnic and political group.<sup>16</sup> The desire of the Hebrews to control Edom may be traced to three important assets possessed by Edom: the trade routes it controlled, the Gulf of Aqabah seaport, and the natural resources, especially copper and iron, found in Edom but lacking in Palestine proper.

During the reign of Jehoram of Judah the Edomites successfully revolted<sup>17</sup> but were again subdued by Amaziah of Judah, who captured Sela and changed its name to Joktheel.<sup>18</sup> Amaziah's son, Uzziah, pursued to a successful conclusion the attack upon Edom, even capturing Elath.<sup>19</sup> Glueck equates the marked rise in prosperity and peace in Uzziah's time with the control of Edom and the wealth received therefrom.<sup>20</sup> It was in the time of Ahaz that Judah's control of Edom was permanently broken.<sup>21</sup> A weakened Edom was never again to regain her former splendor, and, although forced later to change homelands, she probably retained some measure of independence until the Maccabean period. While Ahaz was king the Edomites were making raids upon Judah for

15. See II Kings 8:20-22; II Chron. 21:9, 10. Intervening references indicate that this was not the first revolt attempted (cf. II Chronicles 20). Other references relate that in the time of Jehoshaphat, "There was no king in Edom; a deputy was king." (I Kings 22:47), that Jehoshaphat controlled Ezion-Geber, the site of the disaster to his navy (I Kings 22:48), and that Edom aided Jehoshaphat of Judah and Jehoram of Israel in a campaign against Moab (II Kings 3:9).

16. Glueck, *Other Side*, pp. 53, 54. If this is true, the exhaustion incurred by Judah in the same struggle may well have contributed to its downfall under the Babylonians.

17. II Kings 8:20-22.

18. II Kings 14:7; II Chron. 25:11, 12.

19. II Kings 14:22; II Chron. 26:1, 2.

20. Glueck, *Other Side*, p. 87.

21. II Kings 16:5, 6, accepting emendations in v. 6, omitting "Rezin" and changing "Aram" to "Edom."

the acquisition of slaves, with the result that Ahaz appealed to Assyria.<sup>22</sup> The appearance of Tiglath-pileser III restored the precarious situation: the Assyrian monarch conquered Syria and received recognition of Assyrian dominance from the regions to the south.<sup>23</sup> Heavy tribute was burdensome; and Edom, along with other states (but not Judah at this time), was encouraged into revolt by Egypt. This revolt was easily subdued by Sargon II.<sup>24</sup>

The biblical records, as well as secular records, maintain almost complete silence concerning the role of Edom following the decline of the Assyrian Empire. Concerning what was happening with regard to Edom in the time of the fall of Nineveh, the death of Josiah at Megiddo, and the defeat of Necho at Carchemish by Nebuchadrezzar, nothing is recorded. Jehoiakim had, meanwhile, begun to reign in Judah about 608 B.C., placed on the throne by Necho of Egypt. He became a vassal of Nebuchadrezzar about the year 601 B.C. It seems that Nebuchadrezzar was busy elsewhere when, after three years of vassalage, Jehoiakim rebelled. But Nebuchadrezzar employed Edomites,<sup>25</sup> Ammonites, and Moabites along with Chaldaean troops, perhaps his own garrisons in Syria, to harass the city of Jerusalem. Jehoiachin, who had succeeded his father as king of Judah when Nebuchadrezzar arrived on the scene to lay siege to the city, surrendered in 597 B.C., and the first deportation from Jerusalem-Judah followed. Peace and subjection to Babylon followed for a brief time. But tribute was tiresome and chafing, and soon trouble was brewing again. Edom along with Ammon, Moab, Tyre, Sidon, and Judah plotted a revolt against their Babylonian overlord. This revolt failed to materialize, perhaps because of the influence of Jeremiah,<sup>26</sup> or because of the discovery that Egypt would not join them, or because Nebuchadrezzar heard of their plans and took prompt measures to forestall the revolt,<sup>27</sup> or perhaps because the conspirators could not agree among themselves.

22. II Chron. 28:16, 17.

23. G. L. Robinson, pp. 360, 361. Robinson mistakenly calls the ruler Tiglath-pileser IV.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

25. II Kings 24:2, accepting the reading of the Syriac, "Edom" for "Aram."

26. Jer. 27:4-11.

27. W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson, *A History of Israel*, 2 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), 1: 438.

As to the part played by Edom and the effect of the circumstances in Palestine on Edom in the 587 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem, the historical records—biblical and nonbiblical—are silent. Assumptions are recorded ranging from one extreme to the other. G. L. Robinson says that the effective end of Edom as a national kingdom came as a result of the sixth century B.C. alliance with Judah and other neighboring nations against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He argues that Edom was conquered in 587 B.C. and that some Edomites were deported from their homeland, but most remained in Edom.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, W. F. Lofthouse contends that Edomites were among the troops used by Nebuchadnezzar in this destruction of Jerusalem and that the callous attitude of these Edomites brought forth the undying hatred of their beleaguered kinsmen.<sup>29</sup> Whatever the involvement (or lack of it) of Edom in the events of 587 B.C., she remained not strong enough to resist effectively the surging desert tribes on the move from Arabia. In the years after the destruction of Jerusalem, with Edom in a weakened state, Nabataean nomads moved in and took over the land of Edom.<sup>30</sup> The Nabataean invasion and consequent move of the Edomites into the Negeb of Judah are especially relevant to the development of Damn-Edom theology, because this may have been one of the causes for the emergence of vehement hatred of the Edomites. Evidence from Aramaic-inscribed vessels found at Tell el-Maskhuta in Lower Egypt suggests that a late sixth- or early fifth-century B.C. date may be assigned to the Nabataean invasion of Edom.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the Edomites in the time of this invasion were absorbed

28. G. L. Robinson, p. 364.

29. W. F. Lofthouse, *Israel After The Exile*, The Clarendon Bible, Old Testament, vol. 4 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 100.

30. There is little evidence upon which to base conclusions relative to the Edomite settlement of the Negeb. Josephus (*Antiquities* x.9,181 f.) relates that in 582 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar made war on and subjugated Ammon and Moab; no mention is made of Edom, cf. Martin Noth, *History of Israel*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (London: A. and C. Black, 1960), pp. 293, 294. At the time of the writing of *Ezekiel* 35, the Edomites were in part of Judah. The only conclusive evidence is that this Edomite migration into the Negeb took place between 587 B.C. and 312 B.C., for in this latter year the Nabataeans were in control of Petra. (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, xix, 94.)

31. The argument in brief is that these Qedarite Arabs, friends of the Persians pushed the Nabataeans who in turn pushed the Edomites. See Isaac Rabinowitz, "Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E. from a North-Arab Shrine in Egypt," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 15 (1956), 2, 3.

by the Nabataeans; others emigrated to southern Judah and the Negeb south of Judah. The Nabataeans built a remarkable civilization of their own in Edom, higher and grander than that of the Edomites. The displaced Edomites, now in southern Judah, are known as Idumaeans, at least from the time of Alexander the Great.

Idumaea is mentioned in the texts of several classical authors<sup>32</sup> but with little detail useful in the reconstruction of its history. The Old Testament apocryphal books, especially I Maccabees and Josephus, are the major sources for this period. In the absence of evidence indicating otherwise, it is assumed that the Jews and Idumaeans existed side by side without major provocation until the time of the Maccabean Revolt. Josephus and I Maccabees relate the exploits of Judas Maccabaeus against the Idumaeans; John Hyrcanus I later conquered the Idumaeans, and henceforth they were technically a part of the Jewish people. Well known is the story of the rise of the Idumaeans, Antipater and his family, to power over the Jews under the Roman Empire. The end of Idumaea probably came with the 70 A.D. destruction of Judaea and Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus.

This brief summary has presented the known historical contacts and relationships between Hebrews and Edomites relevant to this study in hatred between the two nations. It will provide a background against which to examine the Damn-Edom passages.

## II

Within the Old Testament prophetic literature there are several expressions of the anti-Edom bias of the Hebrews. These are found both encompassed in and separate from the collections of the anti-foreign-nation oracles. These passages fall generally within the cursing or judgment type oracles, but there is great variation in the developed literary expressions voicing this cursing of the Edomites.

The most obvious and vehement expression of Damn-Edom theology in the Old Testament is found in the book of Obadiah. This, the shortest book in the Old Testament, has received more

32. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* xix: 95, 98; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, V. xiv; Strabo, *Geography* XVI.ii.2; Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Geography* v.16.10.

attention from exegetes seeking to justify its place in the canon and attempting to glean some moral or spiritual lesson from its verses than from those trying to understand its message and background. Among critical scholars the problem of relationship between Obadiah and Jeremiah 49 has claimed most attention. The message of the book has been pushed aside and ignored. It gives unmistakably and clearly the message: "May Yahweh damn Edom" as the theme of verses 1-14; and "May all the nations—and especially Edom—be damned while Judah is blessed," in verses 15-21.

The unity of the book has been frequently questioned.<sup>33</sup> The most likely division occurs between verses 14 and 15. The references in verses 19-21 argue quite conclusively for a postexilic date for the completed book. The vigor of the condemnation of Edom in verses 1-14, the white heat of hatred, the freshness of wounds revealed demand a date for the composition of this passage near the calamitous event that provoked it. When the possible dates—disasters to Jerusalem<sup>34</sup> in which the Edomites could have so behaved—are considered, the date must be placed within a generation of 587 B.C. The latter portion of the book, verses 15-21, contains nothing indicating an exact date. The tenor of the poetic message points rather clearly to postexilic times. With some arbitrariness confessed, an approximate date of 400 B.C. is assigned to verses 15-21.

The oracle of Obadiah contains a prediction of the punishment that either is to befall or is befalling Edom, a description of the hostility of Edom toward Judah in the day of her distress, and a prediction of the coming of the Day of Yahweh upon all nations, especially on Edom, coupled with the restoration and exaltation

33. The most radical analysis is that found in Theodore H. Robinson and F. Horst, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten*, Handbuch zum Alten Testament, ed. by Eissfeldt (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1938), pp. 109-16.

34. Recorded disasters to Jerusalem are: (1) Shishak's invasion (I Kings 14:25; 16; II Chron. 12:1-12); (2) an invasion of Judah and presumably Jerusalem by Philistines and Arabs (II Chron. 21:16, 17); (3) an invasion by Jehoash of Israel when Amaziah was King of Judah (II Kings 14:8-14; II Chron. 25:17-24); (4) Nebuchadnezzar's invasion in 597 (II Kings 24:10-17); (5) Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion in 587 (II Kings 25:3-21; II Chron. 36:17-21). Julian Morgenstern's fascinating hypothesis of a 485 B.C. disaster to Jerusalem has insufficient historical evidence to support it. See Julian Morgenstern, "Jerusalem—485 B.C.," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 27 (1956), 101-79; 28 (1957), 15-47; 31 (1960), 1-29.

of the house of Judah. The concept of Jewish nationalism is seen in the various parts of the oracles, in the cry for revenge upon the hated Edomites as well as in the restoration and glorification of the Jewish nation. Obadiah gives the most forthright expression of Damn-Edom theology. This, while undoubtedly expressive of bitter hatred, is far more than a fanatical national hatred. The damnation of Edom is based upon the writer's idea of divine retributive justice: supposed blood-kin and neighbors who behave in such a way are certainly in line for terrible punishment. The narrow particularism of the viewpoint set forth must also be recognized. Judah-Israel is Yahweh's chosen people, and the covenant necessitates their restoration as surely as divine justice decrees the punishment of Edom. The faith Obadiah holds expresses itself in a conception of the eschatological reign of Yahweh as king (v. 21). With Weiser, "We may perhaps think of Obadiah as a prophet of salvation in the circles faithful to Yahweh. . . . His oracles give us a supplementary insight into the sufferings and hopes after the collapse of Judah and reveal the association of religion with national aspirations which was one of the characteristics of the prophesies of salvation in Israel."<sup>35</sup>

The oracle attributed traditionally to Jeremiah in his prophecy, 49:7-22, is closely related to Obadiah. That there was some literary relationship is evident. The Jeremianic Damn-Edom oracle stands as one in a series of ten oracles against foreign nations, comprising chapters 46-51.

An outline of Jer. 49:7-22 reveals the content of this expression of Damn-Edom theology:

1. The traditional wisdom is gone from Edom. (7)
2. Calamity will befall Edom. (8)
3. The degree of destruction will be total annihilation. (9, 10)
4. A later addition to the oracle. (11)
5. The coming destruction is certain. (12, 13)
6. Edom's present pride is contrasted with her coming fall. (14-16)

35. Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament, Its Formation and Development*, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 249. More generally on this theme see Gerhard von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 89-99.

7. The coming destruction is with Yahweh's purpose and plan. (19–21)
8. The coming terror will render Edom's warriors ineffective. (22)

This passage in Jeremiah has close parallels with Obadiah. Verse 9 parallels Obadiah 5 and verses 14–16 parallel Obadiah 1–4. There are thought parallels with no significant new element in Jeremiah between verse 7 and Obadiah 8, verse 10a and Obadiah 6, and verse 22b and Obadiah 9a. Verse 8 contains no specific new element. It speaks in general terms of coming calamity. Verse 10 relates how complete will be the exposure and destruction of Edom and adds to previously noted thoughts that the brothers and neighbors of Edom will share its fate. Verse 11 is an intrusion of "sweetness and light" in the midst of a picture of doom, suggesting that the widows and fatherless children of the Edomites will be cared for by Yahweh. In contrast, total destruction is elsewhere the theme of Damn-Edom theology.

The oracle on Edom in Ezek. 25:12–14 is brief, similar in form to the preceding oracles in chapter 25 on Ammon (1–7) and Moab (8–11), and the following oracle on the Philistines (15–17). The denunciation of Edom is stated briefly and in very general terms. The accusation directed against her is that she "acted revengefully against the house of Judah" (v. 12). The punishment decreed is complete destruction and desolation which, significantly, is to be effected by Israel as the instrument of Yahweh's wrath (v. 14).

Chapter 35 of the book of Ezekiel denounces Edom more vehemently and with much more exactness. This oracle precedes a general denunciation of the "rest of the nations" in chapter 36 in which Edom alone is singled out by name. One question that demands consideration in a study of this chapter is, why a second oracle on Edom and not on other nations? The answer lies in the singularly intense hatred of the Jews for the Edomites, especially in the exilic and postexilic periods—a hatred far exceeding their hatred of other nations. Another facet of the answer lies in the fact that "Edom" became a symbolic representation of the enemies of the restored community in general. From Ezekiel comes additional evidence that a Damn-Edom theology was a real and lively part of the life and thought of Judaism in the sixth and following centuries B.C. There is no unanimity on the solutions to problems of

date and authenticity of chapter 35. The chapter is probably a later addition to the text of Ezekiel, but perhaps is built around a genuine nucleus of thought if not of words. Three possibilities are recognized as reason for the presence of the oracle as a reiterative and specific denunciation of Edom: the continuing bitterness and unbounded hatred of Edom for her actions against Judah; the new aggravation of old wounds by the Edomites since the oracle in chapter 25 was composed; and the developing tendency to use *Edom* as a designation of the enemies of the Jews.

The elements included in Ezek. 25:12–14 and 35:1–15 which have not presented themselves in Obadiah and Jeremiah are significant additions to Damn-Edom theology. The attempt of Edom to take possession of Judah's territory, seemingly in the time of the Exile, is brought forward as a reason for the condemnation of Edom. This did come, probably not in the time of the Exile except for scattered Edomite settlements, but soon thereafter as a result of the Nabataean invasion of the old homeland of Edom. The concept that the destruction which is to befall Edom is designed in part to bring the Edomites to a recognition of Yahweh as Lord has been discerned, but doubtfully, in Obadiah. It may occur there in verse 21: "Deliverers shall go up from Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's." This verse has been noted earlier as a late addition to Obadiah, and it probably refers to territorial expansion and control. Thus the concept of a "missionary" purpose in Edom's doom is to be considered as addition to Damn-Edom theology by the writer of Ezekiel 35.

The book of Lamentations, the dirge over the fallen city, Jerusalem, contains the assurance that the same or at least a similar destruction as that which befell Jerusalem lay in store for the Edomites. The passage that contains this assurance, 4:21–22, probably comes from the late exilic (or possibly the early postexilic) period. The rejoicing of Edom over the misfortune of Jerusalem is indicated as the reason for her doom. It is quite noticeable that in verse 22 the concepts of the punishment of Edom and the restoration of Judah are tied together. This passage from Lamentations makes no significant contribution of new ideas to Damn-Edom theology but does contain vehement expression of the characteristic thought of previously noted oracles.

The book of the prophet Joel contains only a brief mention of Edom, and that along with Egypt, for having done violence to the people of Judah and for having shed innocent blood in their land. The passage 2:30–3:21 tells of coming doom and divine judgment upon all the nations, including Edom. Eschatologically, again, judgment on Edom is associated with the restoration of Judah-Israel.

The best-known of the prophetic collections of oracles condemning the nations is that in the book of Amos. The fourth of the oracles on the nations in chapters 1 and 2 is devoted to Edom. In the familiar formula of denunciation in Amos, Edom is “damned” for ill will toward brothers, for pursuing them with the sword, and for retention of anger. The predicted punishment is quite typical of Amos, devouring fire upon Teman and Bozrah. Serious question has been raised concerning the authenticity of this oracle. It is probably to be assigned to the postexilic period in agreement with most other Damn-Edom material. The charges against and punishment of Edom are general and are in line with charges made elsewhere in the anti-Edom oracles in prophetic literature.

The doom and destruction of Edom are spoken of in Mal. 1:2–5. This passage is generally accepted as genuine and is dated with the book of Malachi about 450 B.C. The doom predicted on Edom by Malachi is not of the same vividness and fervor as that of other prophets. In contrast to the love Yahweh has for Jacob, he hates Esau. Esau’s country is laid waste, and, if he tries to rebuild it, it will be destroyed again. The Edomites will be known as the people with whom Yahweh was angry unto hidden ages. The evidence that the reference of Malachi is to the Nabataean encroachment is found in: “I have . . . left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” Seir is usually referred to as hill country; the Nabataean invaders would be desert people. Verse 5 indicates the rejoicing of the Jews upon their vindication in this revenge-satisfying blow which fell upon Edom.

The book of the prophet Isaiah presents many problems to the interpreter in general. One of the specific instances of such problems is the material on Edom. In Proto-Isaiah references are first found to Edom in 21:11, 12. This passage does not belong to Damn-Edom literature.

Chapter 34 of Proto-Isaiah requires treatment as a part of

Damn-Edom theology, although there is no unanimity among scholars in so identifying the chapter. Widely varying dates, views of authorship, and interpretations have been given this poem.

Chapters 34 and 35 are a logical unity in which the doom and destruction of the nations, especially Edom, are contrasted with the blessedness and fertility of Judah. These poems were probably one single oracle not composed by Isaiah of Jerusalem and probably belong to the very early postexilic period, but are pre-Maccabean.

Both Muilenburg and R. B. Y. Scott (who follows Muilenburg) interpret Isaiah 34 as an eschatological poem, of uncertain but late date. Serious questions are raised by them as to whether this oracle spoke of condemnation for historical Edom. Perhaps, they would suggest, condemnation is decreed here for the enemies of Judah, “all the nations” of verse 2, for which the name *Edom* is only a symbol.<sup>36</sup>

That there are mythological elements in abundance in this poem is obvious, and that it belongs in the general classification of eschatological literature is not argued. The form of the poem itself suggests that doom to the nations is the theme and that the mention of Edom in verses 5 and 6 is a device of parallelism: Edom is representative of the nations. How, then, does this relate to Damn-Edom theology? The author wrote at a time when the Damn-Edom oracles were an accepted part of Jewish literature. He wrote an eschatological poem about the catastrophic end of the nations in the Day of Yahweh, and he used the figure of Edom and her destruction, so well known from Damn-Edom theology, to depict what was to happen on that day to the nations of the world.<sup>37</sup> The chapter is not Damn-Edom theology in a historical sense. Damn-Edom theology has taken on the garments of eschatological and, to a small degree, apocalyptic thought. The usage of Edom as a symbol for “the enemy” continues, being used in postbiblical Jewish writings as a designation for Rome, the current enemy.<sup>38</sup>

36. James Muilenburg, “The Literary Character of Isaiah 34,” *JBL*, 59 (1940), 339–65; R. B. Y. Scott, “The Book of Isaiah: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 5: 354–58.

37. C. C. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah, A New Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), pp. 122–24.

38. C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Greenwich Editions, Meridian Books, n.d.), p. 562. Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, trans. by Batya and Chaim Rabin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 24, 25. For the Talmudic use of Edom as a designation for

The doom, destruction, and desolation which are ascribed to Edom in this magnificent poem show that, while there were new developments, Damn-Edom theology was not losing its intensity by the time of this writing. The description of the slaughter of the inhabitants is blood-curdling and vengeful in its picturesque expressions. The devastation and resultant emptiness of the land are portrayed in vivid striking pictures, for instance, "They shall name it 'No Kingdom There.'" Isaiah shows an interesting and significant development in Damn-Edom theology, dating probably from the end of the sixth century B.C. or a little later.

Isaiah 63:1-6 has much in common with chapter 34. In it Yahweh is pictured as coming from Edom,<sup>39</sup> where he has completed a mighty destruction and slaughter, with his garments red with blood-stains. This dramatic poem also belongs to Jewish eschatological literature. It depicts the judgment of Yahweh upon those who incur his wrath, i. e., the enemies of his people. Perhaps Edom here is thought of as the place of the eschatological judgment of Yahweh. This passage belongs to a later time but to the same general thought as does chapter 34.

The expression of Damn-Edom theology was not the exclusive property of the prophets. Psalm 137 gives one of the most repulsive expressions of condemnation of Edom found anywhere. The Psalm is obviously represented in verse 1 as exilic in date, and there is no good reason to remove it far from that time. It is either exilic or early postexilic. The Psalm belongs among the Imprecatory Psalms<sup>40</sup> or the Psalms of National Lament.<sup>41</sup> Mowinckel says that such a regularly repeated psalm of lamentation as this borders on the ordinary psalm of prayer.<sup>42</sup>

Rome see especially in the Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin, 12a, 94a, Pesahim, 87b. In many other places in the Talmud "Edom" is similarly used. *The Babylonian Talmud* edited by Isidore Epstein, 35 vols. (London: The Soncino Press, 1935-1952); see especially the index volume.

39. Attempts have been made to emend "Edom" and "Bozrah" to "red" and "vintager." These are conjectural and should be rejected. See James Muilenberg, "Isaiah: Introduction and Exegesis, Chs. 40-66," *IB*, 5:726.

40. Hardly the only one in the Psalter as claimed by William R. Taylor, "The Book of Psalms: Exegesis," *IB* 4: 638, 639. See A. R. Johnson, "The Psalms," in *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 180. The Psalm is classed as *Mischungen* in Gunkel's analysis.

41. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas, 2 vols. (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1962), 1: 221.

42. *Ibid.*

Strophe 1 (1-3) is a lament on conditions in the Exile. Strophe 2 (4-6) is a combination of a lament and curse called upon the writer if he should forget Jerusalem. Strophe 3 (7-9)<sup>43</sup> is a curse pronounced upon Edom for its glee in and encouragement of the destruction of Jerusalem (and upon Babylon, as the text stands, the destroyer of the city), as well as a call for vengeance: happy is the one who repays her foul deeds, such as by taking the Edomite or Babylonian children (sucklings) and smashing their heads against the rock. Mowinckel says that these last three verses show Psalm 137 to be also a cursing psalm, a prayer for Edom,

whom the Jews hated with all their hearts—to be overtaken by all sorts of disasters. The prayer arises out of the background of the bitter memory of the fall of Jerusalem, when the Edomites seized the opportunity of settling in southern Judea. The prayer finally passes into a direct curse in particularly refined form, namely as a word of blessing on the person who shall inflict the most cruel revenge on Edom.<sup>44</sup>

This passage is accepted as referring to Edom rather than to Babylon. The reference of the final thought in the Psalm is to extermination, especially of the male offspring, thus wiping out the line forever.

There are other brief references to Edom in words of deprecation in the Psalter: 60:8, 9 (identical with 108:9, 10) and 83:6. These brief notices add nothing significant to the understanding of Damn-Edom theology except to witness to its ubiquitous presence in Judaic thought of the exilic and postexilic periods:

The broad concept of the peculiar position of Israel-Judah in the postexilic period: that Israel-Judah is to be blessed while the

43. Verse 8a is probably a later gloss. The omission of the verse will leave three pentametric tetrastichs. The verse intrudes on the theme that condemns the offender, Edom. Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2 vols., International Critical Commentary, eds. Driver, Briggs, and Plummer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), 2: 485. Artur Weiser, *Psalms*, trans. Herbert Hartwell, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 796, interprets the entire Psalm as "Damn-Babylon" thought. W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (1939; London: S.P.C.K., 1953), pp. 547-48, accepts the presence of condemnation of both nations since both were involved in the 587 B.C. catastrophe. He interprets the babes dashed against the rock as referring to Babylonians, contending that here the author has reverted to his main theme.

44. Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 2: 52.

rest of the nations are doomed, is of the same theological pattern as is the damning of Edom. But the anti-Edom bias in Old Testament religion stands apart from the broad concept by virtue of its numerous expressions, its vehemence, and its particular emphasis upon one nation. Its presence, vehemence, and emphasis is found in most every type of Hebrew canonical literature, its absence in the wisdom literature being noticeable. This concept was primarily prophetic, at least in origin, but came to encompass Jewish life and thought to the extent that it became the ready expression for the enemy of God's people.

The presence of denunciations of Edom is evident from this rapid survey of oracular material. The question considered now is that of how to interpret this expression of hatred. Just as Old Testament theology is in general related to history; so Damn-Edom theology is rooted in history.

The existence of animosity in varying, but usually intense, degrees between Israel-Judah and Edom in the Old Testament is amply evident. About the only kind word spoken for the Edomites is concerning their admission into the "congregation of Yahweh" and may well be a late addition to the Old Testament text.<sup>45</sup> Traditionally there was hatred between Hebrew and Edomite, as reflected in the Old Testament text. The Jacob-Esau tradition in Genesis gives clear indication that from time immemorial there had been ill feelings between the people who became the Edomites and those who were the Hebrews. The refusal of the Edomites to give passage to the Hebrews on their way to Canaan from Egypt was, perhaps, instrumental in the development of this tradition. The conquest of Edom by David and its control and exploitation by Solomon and some of his successors was fuel for the fires of ill feeling already kindled. The see-saw struggle between Edomites and Judaeans in the period of the divided monarchies was the sort of situation that makes bitter enemies who take every opportunity to inflict damage and destruction each upon the other. The Edomites and Judaeans appear briefly as potential allies against a common enemy in the period between 597 B.C. and 587 B.C. But this anti-Babylonian alliance never materialized.

The exact role played by Edom in 587 B.C. is nowhere clearly

45. Deut. 23:8, 9.

evident. It seems indicated by available evidence that the Edomites were involved in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Whether they volunteered to aid Nebuchadnezzar or were drafted for this service is not known. The possibility must also be acknowledged that the Edomites may have simply stood by and taken no action to aid the Judaeans in their day of disaster. The Old Testament evidence is that, whether draftees or volunteers, these Edomites exceeded what the Judaeans considered the call of normal duty in their vindictiveness and cruelty in the action against Jerusalem. The suggestion is made (although it is not provable) that the Edomites volunteered for this duty as a result of a combination of circumstances.

Nebuchadnezzar knew that the Edomites had been involved in a plot with these Hebrews to revolt against his imperial control. Volunteering for service in this siege of Jerusalem would afford an excellent opportunity to convince Nebuchadnezzar of their loyalty to him and to gain his support, and they did not really care for these Hebrews, anyway. Perhaps the cause of the Edomite alliances, first with Judah and others, then with Nebuchadnezzar, was that Edom needed help. Pressure was already being felt at home from Arab tribes and perhaps, even at this time, from the precursors of the Nabataean invasions from the Hejaz.<sup>46</sup> That the Edomites did participate, and with a fury and a vindictive spirit, in the 587 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem is clearly evident from the biblical references; and it is to this event and to this participation that most of the Damn-Edom passages ultimately are to be related. Further animosity arose, no doubt, as a result of the Edomite settlement of the Negeb, as far north as Hebron, in the territory that the small postexilic Jewish community hoped and planned to control. The Edomites, now known as the Idumaeans, were probably in southern Palestine as early as the fifth century B.C., posing a threat to the small Jewish community.

Historical evidence makes it difficult to explain the intense hatred of the Jews for Edom unless the Edomites did actively participate in the destruction of the Temple in 587 B.C. Efforts to find another disaster caused by or participated in by Edom have

46. John Gray, *Archaeology and the Old Testament World* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), p. 102.

failed. The best evidence relating Edom to the 587 B.C. disaster is I Esdras 4:45: "Thou shalt also vow to build up the Temple, which the Edomites burned when Judaea was made desolate by the Chaldaeans." Verse 50 of the same chapter refers to Edomite occupancy of Jewish territory.

In view of existing evidence it is suggested that the prominence of Damn-Edom theology in early postexilic Judaism came historically as a result of two factors: 1) Edomite participation and cruelty in the destruction of Jerusalem; and 2) the Idumaeen grasping of traditionally Jewish territory in the south. This Idumaeen settlement of the south land was probably quite gradual and may have covered a long period of time. Exact dates are impossible to ascertain; the process began in the sixth century B.C. and continued for a century and a half or two centuries. It is possible that some Idumaeans were already in southern Palestine upon the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon. If there was open hostility between Jews and Idumaeans prior to the Maccabean period it is not recorded. Friendly relations, however, were not likely.

The development of a Damn-Edom theology in the Jewish community after 587 B.C. was a part of their confrontation with the world in which they lived—characterized as a hostile world. Significantly related to this was their sense of "calling" to be Yahweh's chosen nation. The struggle for self understanding and expression in the postexilic world may be expressed best in terms of the struggle between the "nationalists" and the "universalists." An oversimplification (for such neat compartmentalization of life or thought is *almost always* in error) is: "Do we accomplish our purpose as Yahweh's chosen people by becoming an outgoing part of the world community, teaching them what we know of Yahweh?" or "Do we better fulfill our divinely appointed purpose by trying to be an island of isolated purity in a sea of sin and false religion?" The anti-Edom thought of the Old Testament was the product of the narrow nationalists who labelled the world about them as hostile to Yahweh and his purpose.

Damn-Edom theology is, as already set forth, both a part of a tendency of the Hebrews to hate and condemn their neighbors and a separate phenomenon. Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Philistia,

Egypt, and others are condemned in the Old Testament with some regularity; but none of these approaches the position of Edom in this respect. The literary attestation of the Old Testament is that Edom was the most hated of all Israel's neighbors and, indeed, became a symbol for the enemies of God's people.

It is impossible to set Damn-Edom theology in a pattern of ancient Near Eastern thought. There are insufficient materials upon which to base conclusions that xenophobia was common to other countries of the ancient Near East. Perhaps the nearest parallel to the attitude of Israel toward Edom is found in the Egyptian attitudes toward the Nubians and the Asiatics.<sup>47</sup> These groups were condemned with regularity by the Egyptians. Probably similar attitudes existed at times in the thought and literary expressions of other nations, but such is not probable at the present time. Such literary expressions, especially in their intensity and frequency, were peculiar to Israel-Judah in the ancient Near East, especially in the thought behind them. The hatred of the Egyptians for the Nubians and the Asiatics stemmed from the fact that these two groups presented more or less constant threats to the autonomy of Egypt, to her peaceful and prosperous existence, and to her imperial designs. Israel considered herself a distinctively different nation. More so than nations about her she considered herself called by the one Universal World God as his peculiar people. In the context of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, Israel understood herself to be a special people, enjoying a special relationship with Yahweh. Other nations who did not understand these matters, particularly those who interfered with her attempts to fulfill her divinely appointed purpose, were to be condemned. H. H. Rowley<sup>48</sup> convincingly contends that Israel's view of her election was vastly different from the attitudes of ancient Near Eastern kings who considered themselves the chosen ones of the

47. Pritchard, *ANET*, pp. 230, 238, 374, 445. E. A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia, and Abyssinia*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen and Company, 1928), 1: 23, 24, says of the kings of the 19th dynasty (1321-1215): "In the bas-reliefs painted and sculptured during the reigns, these kings are represented as slaying the 'chiefs of the abominable Kesh [Nubia],' but this every king, from the time of the 1st Dynasty downwards, was supposed to do, and such representations formed part of the stock-scenes which every court painter and sculptor was expected to use."

48. H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), esp. pp. 16-19.

gods. It is granted that at many times the Israelites did not correctly interpret their election as an election to service rather than to privilege, but they were constantly aware that they were the Chosen People.

A compartmentalization of elements in Old Testament thought will not provide the solutions needed for an understanding of Damn-Edom theology. Such an approach has been expressed by Rolland Emerson Wolfe in "The Editing of the Book of the Twelve." In Wolfe's interpretation of the Minor Prophets there were some thirteen editors or redactors who left their particular imprint on this collection. He has determined that the "Anti-Neighbor Editor" was the fifth of the thirteen. This editor's work came in the early part of the fifth century B.C. when the returned exiles attempted to regain Palestine, found harassment at the hands of their neighbors, and resultantly had their jubilant hopes frustrated. Wolfe says:

Some fiery hearted Jew, who felt impelled to give literary expression to this new movement of thought, set himself to the task of composing oracles, which for the most part may be called massas (מסא), against Judah's hated neighbors. While, in the absence of more definite information, it may be assumed that Amos, in the authentic portions of chapters 1 and 2, originated that type of prophecy, it was this Anti-Neighbor Editor who made most use of the massa style of writing and popularized it. While his writings are also found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the major deposit is found in parts of chapters 13-24 of Isaiah.<sup>49</sup>

Wolfe further points out that this editor was particularly bitter against Edom and the inhabitants of the Mediterranean coast.

It must be granted that the anti-Edom bias in Old Testament religion is an aspect of the more general antiforeign nation feeling of postexilic Judaism, but it is obvious that the anti-Edom element was, or at least became, more than simply a part of the general attitude. The wide distribution of antiforeign oracles and especially of anti-Edom oracles indicates that this attitude was held by more than some fiery-hearted Jewish editor or school of editors.

49. Rolland E. Wolfe, "The Editing of the Book of the Twelve," *Zeitschrift für die attestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 12, n.s. (1935), 90-129, esp. 96.

That there was within postexilic Judaism both universalistic and particularistic thought, tendencies, and perhaps even parties has long been obvious to interpreters of the Old Testament. The dating of these tendencies, or movements, is very difficult, if not impossible, in the light of present knowledge of postexilic Old Testament history. It is probable that in the exilic and early postexilic periods the destruction of Edom was a part of the hope of restoration. The destruction of Edom was considered a necessity: the Edomites occupied part of their land. It is fairly obvious that both universalism and particularism existed concurrently, with first one and then the other surging to the fore. Judging from the literature of the period, the narrow, particularistic or nationalistic school of thought was the predominant one; and it was this type of thought that fathered Damn-Edom theology. The complete separation of the two types of thought may be impossible, for, as expressed in the Old Testament, universalism is the reverse of the coin of which nationalism is the obverse. "Hope of judgment upon the pagan world and of vengeance on Israel's enemies is only one side of the attitude of the post-Exilic prophets towards foreign nations. The other is the possibility of their conversion to Yahweh, the God of Israel,"<sup>50</sup> The books of Ruth and Jonah, as well as Isaiah 40-55, with their kinder attitudes towards foreign nations were products of this universalist element in Judaism. It is, perhaps, significant that Edom is not condemned, nor even mentioned in these books.

That the anti-Edom bias in Old Testament religion was a part of this ambivalent postexilic thought cannot be denied. The ready and frequent condemnation of Edom went beyond this, however, and became more than the expression of hatred for Edom. The Edomites had exhibited the ultimate, or near-ultimate, in inimical action against the Jews. They, and their nation, became the exemplification of a nation and a people opposed to the Jews and their nationalistic desires and endeavors as well as what they interpreted to be their divinely appointed mission. Thus *Edom* came to equal the enemy of the Jews. Probably first (although such development cannot be traced with exactness) *Edom* was used as an expression for the neighboring opponents of the Jewish

50. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 417.

state and later became a symbol for "the enemy," and so was used for Rome in postbiblical Jewish literature.

For these doubtless sincere and devout religious leaders and writers of the postexilic period, Edom became the classic example of the enemy of God's people. Probably there is a complex background to this thought: a very ancient tradition and history of hostility, the culmination of this hostility in the despicable behavior of the Edomites in the day of Jerusalem's fall and destruction, and the encroachment of Edom into traditional Jewish territory. To the historical background must be added the post-exilic theological struggles concerning how best to express their role as a chosen nation in a hostile world. Edom becomes the type of the hostile nation and symbolizes the hostile world. This designation of "the enemy" remains in the transition from prophetic to apocalyptic literature and with rich historical overtones graphically expresses to the discerning student of Old Testament thought the abundant hatred of whoever might be, at any moment of history, the accursed "Edomites."