

Jer 49:7-22, The Oracle Against Edom
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H. Van Dyke Parunak

Overview

1. Review of Edom's history

- a) Descended from Esau, elder brother of Jacob, from whom he stole the birthright and later fled to Haran.
- b) Settled across the rift valley south of the Dead Sea, between the brook Zered and the Red Sea. Rocky, desolate territory, with little promise for crops or herds, so they became a merchant people, with Red Sea access for ships.
- c) In the Exodus, Israel took pains to avoid Edom (Deut. 2:4ff).
- d) Balaam prophesied (Num. 24:17-19) that the messianic Star to arise out of Jacob will rule Edom.
- e) Never yet fulfilled completely. David achieved a measure of control, but his descendants were not able to keep Edom under. Edom frequently abused Israel, and even made war against them, invading the land (cf. KD on Num. 24:18 for synopsis).
- f) Other prophecies against Edom deal explicitly with its abuse of Israel: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and the entire book of Obadiah (which Jer here quotes). But Jer focuses on more spiritual issues: as with Moab and Ammon, the big issue is the nation's pride, 16.
- g) There is no promise of restoration to Edom.

2. Structure: Each section highlights an announcement of Edom's "desolation" (13, 17, vb. in 20). Notice also the formal oath or declaration by the Lord in the first (13) and third (20) sections, which also share the feature of using metaphors for the coming judgment. The Lord's oath, emphasizing his sovereignty in the judgment, comes at the end of the first section, but in the middle of the chiastic third section.

- a) 7-13, the Lord uses three paradoxes to outline Edom's coming judgment. At least two of these are posed as *questions* from the Lord. The second (v.9) is a question in Ob. 5.
- b) 14-18, the Lord's *command*, both to the nations who will attack Edom and to Edom itself. The first three verses of this are quoted directly from Ob. 1-4.
- c) 19-22, the sovereignty of the Lord's *counsel* against Edom. (Would be nice to be able to find a link to Ob. in this section.)

A. 7-13, The Lord's Questions

Edom's coming judgment is announced with three paradoxes: worldly wisdom cannot help; the natural tendency of raiders to be satiated cannot help; even a supposed position of favor with God cannot help.

1. 7-8. The Hebrews had great faith in the ability of wisdom to overcome far more tangible circumstances: Eccl. 9:15ff. Edom is famed for its wisdom, yet now it can do little more than hide in a hole before the Lord's judgment.

Teman: the home of Eliphaz, first of Job's counselors (Job. 2:11). Some even think that the whole book of Job comes from Edom. They were traders, and would come into contact with much worldly wisdom. But they will learn (as, sadly, so must we) that such wisdom is no defense against the Lord's judgment.

2. 9-11. If the wisdom of the defenders can't help, perhaps the finiteness of the invaders will. Most people who take something can be satisfied. But Edom's spoilers will be thorough.

a) 9 is adapted from Ob. 5, where it is posed as a question (which AV follows with the first half here). One expects harvesters to miss a little that will serve the poor as gleanings; one does not expect a thief to walk off with everything. Jer's shift to a statement makes the paradox more explicit: these harvesters DON'T leave anything behind.

b) 10-11. Why don't these invaders become sated? Because they are only the instruments of the Lord, and it is he who has determined to strip the nation absolutely bare. No one will be left to care for the widows and children. The only place they can turn will be to Israel's God--and marvel of marvels, he promises to care for all who turn to him in faith!

3. 12-13. There is one hope that might appear to an Edomite. If only they hadn't oppressed Israel all these years. Perhaps they might be able to hide under the special relationship with God that Israel has. One would expect God at least to spare his own people. But even Israel has gone through judgment for its sin. Elect though it be, it is still responsible. How much more then must Edom suffer.

v.12 does not mean that Israel did not deserve to drink the cup of God's wrath. "Judgment" also means "custom, due, manner." Here, "It was not Israel's place" as God's covenant people to drink the cup (nor, of course, to commit the sin that led to that cup). But given that God does not spare even his own, Edom cannot expect to escape.

B. 14-18, The Lord's Command

Now the prophet reports what he has heard. In fact, he has heard two things: a "rumor" or report, and a message sent by the hand of a messenger to the Gentiles.

I perceive that these are different, and refer to two different parts of the following section. There we sometimes see Edom described in the third person as "she" (14b, 17-18) and sometimes in the first person masculine (15-16). The third person references are appropriate to the mouth of a messenger sent to other nations. The first person address is probably the "rumor" or "report" that Jer overhears.

1. 14b. God commands the enemies to rise up against Edom.
2. 15-16. God points out Edom's root sin of pride. She lives in unassailable fortresses in the mountains (the most famous of which is Petra, accessible only by a narrow pathway), seemingly as secure as an eagle's eyrie. Yet the Lord will overtake her there, to prove that she is not secure.
3. 17-18. Finally, as though after the battle, God reports Edom's utter destruction to the nations.

C. 19-22, The Lord's Counsel

God accomplishes his judgment through his creatures, and there is always the danger that the onlookers will lose sight of the Creator in assessing disasters. The final section of this oracle is chiasitic, with the human foes of Edom on the outside, depicted as a lion and an eagle, but with God's ultimate agency emphasized in the inner two elements.

1. 19a. The enemy is pictured as a *lion*. "The swelling of Jordan" is the jungle-like vegetation that grows along its banks, in the tropical climate of the valley. "The habitation of the strong" is an allusion to Edom's fortresses high in the mountains. Emphasizes the strength and rapacity of the invader.
2. 22. The enemy is pictured as an *eagle*. Emphasizes his swiftness and the impossibility of climbing away from him in the mountains.
3. 19b-21. The Lord's ultimate rule.
 - a) 19b completes the picture of the lion. No sooner has the beast of prey completed the kill than the Lord quickly drives him away. Neb may destroy Edom, but he will not rule it. God remains absolutely in control of Edom's destiny, and no other "shepherd" (a common NE metaphor for a ruler) can stand before God.

Recall at this point Balaam's prophecy. Ultimately, Israel will rule Edom, under the kingship of the Lord Jesus.

- b) 20-21. The Lord decrees their destruction; the shepherd boys ("menials of the flock") will haul away their carcasses, their habitation will be made desolate around their ears, and the report of their defeat will be known all the way to their southern border on the Red Sea, whence the ships will carry the news of their shame and humiliation around the world.

Summary

This oracle continues to develop the lessons that we have seen in the others:

1. If God judges his own people, whom he loves and to whose wellbeing he has pledged himself, how much more will he bring judgment on those who are not under his covenant. Implicit in all of the oracles, this is explicit here (12).
2. Though God's judgment comes by the hand of his creatures, he is behind it (13, 19b-21). It is a grievous error to say, "That wasn't God's hand, because it was the hand of man."
3. Though Edom's conduct is hardly savory, the reason that Jer gives for her judgment is not her deeds (as in the other prophets) but her pride (16), as in the case of Moab and Ammon. He is most concerned with people's tendency to trust themselves and not the Lord.
4. Last but not least, v. 11 is a precious example of how even those who oppose the Lord find him ready to receive them, if they will only turn in faith to him.

Hymn: Abba, Father, we approach thee.

Analysis 49:7-22, Edom (see "structure" notes in "Overview" above)

7 LE/):EDOWM

K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT

A. 7-13, The Lord's Questions

coordinated contrasts of proverbial wisdom with the state of affairs. Paradoxes.

1. contrast: Esau's vaunted wisdom with the coming disaster
 - a) coordinate question: Has wisdom vanished?
 - 1) HA/)"YN (OWD XFK:MFH B.:/T"YMFN
 - 2))FB:DFH ("CFH MI/B.FNIYM
 - 3) NIS:R:XFH XFK:MFT/FM
 - b) motivated command p
 - 1) command
 - a> 8 NUSW.
 - b> HFP:NW.
 - c> HE(:MIYQW. LF/\$EBET YO\$:B"Y D.:DFN
 - 2) reason: K.IY)"YD ("&FW H"B")TIY (FLFY/W ("T P.:QAD:T.IY/W
2. contrast: satiety of evildoers with Edom's utter destruction
 - a) Coordinate p (questions in Ob. 5, but not explicit here)
 - 1) 9)IM-B.OC:RIYM B.F)W. L/FK: LO) YA\$:)IRW. (OWL"LOWT
 - 2))IM-G.AN.FBIYM B.A/L.AY:LFH HI\$:XIYTW. DAY./FM
 - b) chiasitic: God's agency about result
 - 1) God's agency in judgment
 - a> 10 K.IY-):ANIY XF&AP:T.IY)ET-("&FW
 - b> G.IL."YTIY)ET-MIS:T.FRFY/W

- 2) Results
 - a> W:/NEX:B.FH LO) YW.KFL
 - b> \$UD.AD ZAR:(/OW W:/)EXFY/W W./\$:K"NFY/W
 - c> W:/)"YNEN.W.
- 3) God's agency in protecting their families
 - a> 11 (FZ:BFH Y:TOMEY/KF
 - b>):ANIY):AXAY.EH
 - c> W:/)AL:M:NOTEY/KF [(FZ:BFH]
 - d> (FL/AY T.IB:+FXW. S

3. contrast: How can God's people be punished and the gentiles escape? interchange p

- a) iu:
 - 1) 12 K.IY-KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - 2) HIN."H):A\$ER-)"YN MI\$:P.F+/FM LI/\$:T.OWT HA/K.OWS \$FTOW
 - YI\$:T.W.
 - 3) W:/)AT.FH HW.) NFQOH T.IN.FQEH
- b) ru: ampl p
 - 1) text: contrast: you will be punished
 - a> LO) TIN.FQEH
 - b> K.IY \$FTOH T.I\$:T.EH
 - 2) ampl: quote p
 - a> quote f: 13 K.IY B/IY NI\$:B.A(:T.IY N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - b> quote:
 - 1> K.IY-L:/\$AM.FH L:/XER:P.FH L:/XOREB W:/LI/Q:LFLFH
 - T.IH:YEH BFC:RFH
 - 2> W:/KFL-(FREY/HF TIH:YEYNFH L:/XFR:BOWT (OWLFM

B. 14-18, The Lord's Command
The Sending of the Enemy

- 1. quote f: two messenger formulas
 - a) 14 \$:MW.(FH \$FMA(:T.IY M"/)"T Y:HWFH
 - b) W:/CIYR B.A/G.OWYIM \$FLW.XA
- 2. quote: two messages, one to the enemies (referring to Edom in 3f), the other to Edom (2m).
 - a) message to the enemies:
 - 1) HIT:QAB.:CW.
 - 2) W./BO)W. (FLEY/HF
 - 3) W:/QW.MW. LA/M.II:XFMFH
 - b) message to Edom
 - 1) 15 K.IY-HIN."H QF+ON N:TAT.IY/KF B.A/G.OWYIM B.FZW.Y
 - B.F/)FDFM
 - 2) ampl p
 - a> text: comment p
 - 1> text: 16 T.IP:LAC:T./:KF HI\$.IY))OT/FK: Z:DOWN
 - LIB./EKF
 - 2> comment <-KF>
 - a: \$OK:NIY B.:/XAG:W"Y HA/S.ELA(
 - b: T.OP:&IY M:ROWM G.IB:(FH
 - b> ampl: contrast p

1> K.IY-TAG:B.IYHA K.A/N.E\$ER QIN./EKF
 2> MI/\$.FM)OWRIYD/:KF N:)UM-Y:HWFH

c) Back to observers again

- 1) 17 W:/HFY:TFH):EDOWM L:/\$AM.FH
- 2) K.OL (OB"R (FLEY/HF YI\$.OM W:/YI\$:ROQ (AL-K.FL-MAK.OWT/EHF
- 3) manner p
 - a> manner: 18 K.:/MAH:P."KAT S:DOM WA/(:AMORFH
 W./\$:K"NEY/HF)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - b> text:
 - 1> LO)-Y"\$"B \$FM)IY\$
 - 2> W:/LO)-YFGW.R B./FH. B.EN-)FDFM

C. 19-22, The Lord's Counsel

The emphasis here is on the twofold opposition: earthly enemies (pictured as lion and eagle), but empowered and controlled by the sovereign Lord.

General grammatical observations, mostly on 19.

1. -HF stands for Edom, as do 3f refs in prev. paragraph
2. The 3ms -EN.W. is "over" it, and the Lord displaces him and installs another of his own choice.
3. The only candidate for this person is the lion of 19a!
4. Then 19b (all but first clause) goes with 20 to assert the Lord's sovereignty over the whole affair, a theme developed further in 20-21.

1. The enemy pictured as a lion

19 HIN."H K.:/)AR:Y"H YA(:ALEH MI/G.:)OWN HA/Y.AR:D."N)EL-N:W"H)"YTFN

2. The Lord's ultimate rule

- a) K.IY-)AR:G.IY(FH):ARIYC/EN.W. M"/(FLEY/HF
- b) W./MIY BFXW.R)"LEY/HF)EP:QOD
- c) K.IY MIY KFMOW/NIY
- d) W./MIY YO(IYD/EN./IY
- e) W./MIY-ZEH RO(EH):A\$ER YA(:AMOD L:/PFNFY S

3. quote p: The Lord decrees their destruction

- a) quote f

20 LF/K"N \$IM:(W. (:ACAT-Y:HWFH):A\$ER YF(AC)EL-):EDOWM
 W./MAX:\$:BOWTFY/W):A\$ER XF\$AB)EL-YO\$:B"Y T"YMFN
- b) quote: coordinate p
 - 1))IM-LO) YIS:XFBW./M C:(IYR"Y HA/C.O)N
 - 2))IM-LO) YA\$.IYM (:AL"Y/HEM N:W/"HEM
 - 3) 21 MI/Q.OWL NIP:L/FM RF(:A\$FH HF/)FREC
 - 4) C:(FQFH B.:/YAM-SW.P NI\$:MA(QOWL/FH.

4. The enemy pictured as an eagle

- a) 22 HIN."H KA/N.E\$ER YA(:ALEH
- b) W:/YID:)EH
- c) W:/YIP:RO& K.:NFPFY/W (AL-B.FC:RFH
- d) W:/HFYFH L"B G.IB.OWR"Y):EDOWM B.A/Y.OWM HA/HW.) K.:/L"B)I\$.FH M:C"RFH S