

Judges Chapter 5 Part 3

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Do you want to renew your mind? Study the Word of God.

Judges 5:4 LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, The clouds also dripped water.

Judges 5:5 The mountains flowed *with water* at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.

These two verses go together. Rather than study them separately, let us look at them together.

Here is the translation from Robert Chisholm which is slightly different.

Judges 5:4 (Chisholm) O Lord, when you departed from Seir, when you marched from

Edom's plains; the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain.

Judges 5:5 (Chisholm) The mountains trembled before the Lord, the One of Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.

Robert Chisholm identifies them as a chiasm:

A. "O Lord, when you departed from Seir, when you marched from Edom's plains

B. the earth shook

C. the heavens poured down

C.' the clouds poured down rain

B.' The mountains trembled

A.' before the Lord, the God of Sinai; before the Lord God of Israel

The middle " C & C' "become the focus. They focus is a storm with pouring down rain. Exactly what happened in Judges chapter 4 and now explained in chapter 5.

I am going to read comments from four different commentators to show you what we are up against. At least three of these men are PhD's. But their explanations are not satisfying to me. When I came across these verses, I figured I might have to just read them, maybe quote a commentator and move on.

Here are comments from Robert Chisholm, who is Department Chair and Senior Professor of Old Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS):

"The theophanic hymn depicts the Lord as marching from Seir and Edom in the south. Since he is subsequently called "the One of Sinai," the implication is that he is coming from Sinai to fight for his people. The

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God of Moses, who once revealed his might at Sinai, was still alive and well!”

It doesn't say much. Why Seir and Edom? Why start with those two places? And why is God coming from Sinai? Isn't He residing in the tabernacle? It would appear that the "Passover" rule is in place. Very frustrating.

Here is Thomas Constable, another DTS professor, on these two verses:

“The prophetess compared God's revelation at "Sinai," when He gave the Israelites His covenant, to His intervention for His people in their most recent battle. She pictured God marching from Mt. "Seir," in "Edom," to Mt. "Sinai," where He appeared to the Israelites in great power, in a storm and earthquake ("the earth quaked ... the heavens ... the clouds dripped (poured) water ... the mountains quaked"; cf. Exod. 19:18; Deut. 33:2).

Again, it doesn't address why Mt. Seir and Edom. The Passover rule.

While we are on a roll, what does PhD Trent Butler say?

“The theophany report is addressed to Yahweh and describes a past action, either from a traditional report of God's coming to Israel's aid from the mountains of Edom (see Deut 33:2) or in a freshly tailored variation making a play on the sounds of Canaanite chariots compared to Yahweh's footsteps and the provision of rain to rout those chariots in battle.”

The guessing game.

One last commentator, Dale Davis, professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary:

“It is difficult to know whether Yahweh's going forth from Seir and marching from Edom refer to his contemporary coming to the conflict with Sisera or whether the reference is to his ancient coming to his

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people in Egypt and his meeting with them at Sinai. In any case, there is a clear hint of Yahweh's delivering Israel from Egypt and preserving them in the desert when Deborah refers to Yahweh as 'the One of Sinai.' There, at Sinai, Yahweh had taken Israel as his own (Exod. 19); there he came and met with them; there he had placed them under his law at liberty. But Yahweh—and this is Deborah's point—is not stuck at Sinai. Rather, the God who decisively came to Israel at Sinai comes again and again to the aid of his people in their present troubles. The God who delivered them at the Sea of Reeds (Exod. 14) can rescue at the waters of Meggido (Judg. 5:19); the God who came to Mount Sinai (Exod. 19-24) comes to Mount Tabor as well (Judg. 4:14-15). Yahweh is not set in historical concrete at Sinai; rather the One of Sinai is mobile, marching forth again and again to rescue his flock.”

This guy is getting closer. It is obvious that the sons of Israel were rescued by Yahweh God at Sinai. But what about Edom.

But, if we ask the right questions praying to God in grace to have the Holy Spirit reveal something useful from this verse, we might actually receive something useful and interesting.

So, what kind of questions should we ask?

If we start with the One of Sinai and the Lord God of Israel, something we are familiar with, we are talking about the sons of Israel, in other words the sons of Jacob. Well then, who is associated with Seir and Edom? Isn't that Esau? Isn't Esau Jacob's "older" brother? Didn't God give Esau that land? Let us investigate now that the Holy Spirit has pointed us in the right direction.

What is the background of Seir/Edom? We will gather together some facts from Scripture and then organize them into some summary points. Bear with me while we gather the facts which may not initially seem to all fit.

Read Genesis 25:19-34. I am pulling out a couple of verses which are important to our current study.

Genesis 25:25 Now the first came out red (Hebrew edom), all over like a hairy (Hebrew seir) garment; and they named him Esau.

The word “red” is in Hebrew “admoni” (transliteration by Biblehub.com). That is from the verbal root “adom” meaning to be red.

The first borne usually carries on the family name, leader of the tribe receiving the double portion blessing.

Genesis 25:30 and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a mouthful of that red stuff (literally “red, this red”) there, for I am exhausted.” Therefore he was called Edom by name.

Genesis 25:31 But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.”

Esau picks up a name, Edom or “red” as a result of this incident. This is parallel to Jacob, Esau’s twin brother being given a name from God, “Israel” as a result of “wrestling” with God. It is the “sons of Israel,” but the “sons of Esau,” not Edom.

Read Genesis chapter 27.

As a result, when it comes time for Isaac to bless his sons, after Jacob received the blessing of the first born by deception, Isaac only has the following for Esau:

Gen 27:38 Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me as well, my father.” So Esau raised his voice and wept.

Gen 27:39 Then his father Isaac answered and said to him, “Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above.

Gen 27:40 And by your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck.”

Gen 27:41 So Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

Esau did not follow the dictates of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham when choosing wives.

Genesis 26:34 When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite;

Genesis 26:35 and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

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Esau chose to marry Canaanite/Hittite women. How could the savior come from him? If Esau was a believer, he didn't walk like one.

Genesis 32:3 Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of himself to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

The Bible does not specifically tell us when and how Esau went to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. But his is an interesting parallel to Genesis 25:25, in the Hebrew.

Listen to Bruce Waltke on Genesis 32:3 looking forward to Judges 5:4 “In the archaic text of Judg. 5:4, “Seir” and the “land [sadeh] of Edom” parallel each other. Sarna comments, “The three Hebrew words seir, sadeh, and edom are deliberately used to evoke memories of the hostile relations with Esau, the one covered with hair (sear), a man of the outdoors (sadeh), of ruddy complexion (‘admoni), who came in from the field (sadeh) and begged for the red stuff (‘adom), and whose hairiness (sa’ir) played a crucial role in the deception that precipitated Jacob’s flight to Laban.”

Deuteronomy 2:1 “Then we turned and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we circled Mount Seir for many days.

Deuteronomy 2:2 And the Lord spoke to me, saying,

Deuteronomy 2:3 ‘You have circled this mountain long enough. Now turn north,

Deuteronomy 2:4 and command the people, saying, “You are going to pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful;

Deuteronomy 2:5 do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, not even as much as a footprint, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.

Here is a fact from the Scriptures: God gave Mount Seir to Esau.

The term “sons of Esau” is like the term “sons of Israel.” Remember, Israel is God’s name for Jacob. As this passages says, Jacob and Esau were brothers, both sons of Isaac.

The future king Jehoshaphat understands that God gave lands to certain people, in this case, relatives of Abraham.

2 Chronicles 20:10 Now behold, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom You did not allow Israel to invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (for they turned aside from them and did not destroy them),

Ammon and Moab are the incestuous sons of Lot, Abraham’s nephew. Mount Seir as we see, belongs to Esau.

The important point is that God gave Mount Seir to Esau! At this point, it is the “sons of Esau.” God apparently did this before the sons of Israel took possession of their own land.

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According to The JPS Torah Commentary on Deuteronomy by Tigav, “To judge from Genesis 36:20, Seir bears the name of Seir the Horite, who dwelt in the area before the arrival of Esau and his family.”

So, if God gave the land to Esau and there were already people living there, then the implication is that God helped Esau either conquer the land or somehow take control over it.

I would be remiss if I didn't at least mention Romans 9:13/Malachi 1:2-3

Malachi 1:2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have You loved us?” “Was Esau not Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob;

Malachi 1:3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and given his inheritance to the jackals of the wilderness.”

Here is comment by Douglas Stuart Ph.D., professor of Old Testament Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary:

“The reference of the rhetorical question is to a history that all Israelites knew well. Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Isaac (Gen. 25:19-34) from whom the nations of Edom and Israel were descended. Clearly, however, the interest of the rhetorical question is not primarily genealogical, but international. It is the historical relationship of the two “brother” nations, rather than the original twinship of Isaac’s sons, that is the focus of Malachi’s oracle. The present situation—the divine rejection of Edom and the election of Israel—got its start in the hostility between the twin brothers (Gen. 27) but came to fruition in the many generations of enmity between the two people groups (Num. 20:14-21), both of whom eventually became settled nations. One might have expected that

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two nations that both traced their ancestry to a common patriarch would have a natural tendency for alliance with one another. In fact, the exact opposite had happened.

A bitter, consistent, and permanent blood feud between Israelites and Edomites characterized all their relationships. If there was one nation that could always, immediately, be identified as Israel's enemy, it was Edom."

Summary:

I. The Sons of Israel were associated with the Sinai (Torah) prior to taking the Land (books of Joshua & Judges). God protected the sons of Israel in spite of unfaithfulness.

II. Sons of Esau are associated with Mount Seir/Edom.

A. Esau was Jacob's "older" paternal twin brother. Genesis 25:20

B. Esau's nickname, Edom, is the result of Esau's encounter with Jacob in which Esau sold his birthright for a portion of "red" stew. Edom = "red." Genesis 25:30-31.

C. Esau lost his "primogenitor" i.e. first born birthright to Jacob. Genesis 25:30-31

D. As a result of Jacob's deception, Esau only got a single portion, not the "double portion," blessing nor leadership of the clan/tribe. Genesis chapter 27.

E. Esau left the Levant and moved to Mount Seir. (Implied by Genesis 32:3)

F. God gave Mount Seir to Esau/sons of Esau. Deuteronomy 2:5.

G. Mount Seir / Edom was originally inhabited by Horrites/Hurrians. The implication is that God helped Esau clear the land so he could possess it.

H. God protected Esau/sons of Esau's land that He gave him/them. Deuteronomy 2:5/2 Chronicles 20:10

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- I. God first gave Esau/sons of Esau their land before Israel went through the Sinai. God acted on behalf of Esau. Deuteronomy 2:5
- J. Israel exited Egypt and spent 40 years in the desert preparing to take the land. Books of the Torah.
- K. The books of Joshua/Judges describe Israel occupying the land.
- L. Now as an anthropomorphism, God/Yahweh “left/went out” of Seir/Edom and left Sinai to free the sons of Israel from this current subjection to the Canaanites. This emphasizes God’s continuing protection of Israel. The great deliverances to both Esau and Israel are the basis of the continuing deliverances by God.

III. Conclusions

- A. God is in control of history.
- B. God acts on behalf of nations as He desires.
- C. God acts on behalf of his people:
 - 1. To discipline them when they turn away from Him and His blessings.
 - 2. To bless them with incredible blessings when they are walking by faith.

IV. If God did the most in establishing two peoples, two nations, He can do the less to discipline and bless His people now. This also applies to us now. God did the most on the cross. Disciplining us and blessing us in time are the “lesser” efforts now.

Judges 5:6 In the days of Shamgar son of Anath -- In the days of Jael -- The ways have ceased, And those going in the paths go [in] crooked ways.

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Here is another surprise. Shamgar was likely an Egyptian mercenary. Jael's husband was not a descendant of Jacob, i.e. not a son of Israel. Why did Deborah mention them?

Shamgar single-handedly struck down 600 Philistines with an ox-goad. The ox-goad was something like a cattle prod. Sounds like an ancient version of Rambo. He, a foreigner delivered Israel.

The same for Jael. She is a hero, or heroine in that she is a deliverer of Israel. Another foreigner delivered Israel. She was a woman. She was a non-Hebrew. Her husband was aligned with the enemy.

Per Chisholm, "The opening verses of the poetic account recall that in the days of Shamgar and Jael the roads in Israel were unsafe and travel was restricted. On the basis of the description in verses 6-7, as well as the invitation to the caravaners in verses 10-11, Scholen concludes that the Canaanite oppression of the highland tribes involved the disruption of caravan trade."

Per Constable, "During "the days of Shamgar" and "Jael," the Canaanites were so strong that the people with the birthright to the land (Israelites) feared to go out on the main "highways." Instead, they traveled the back roads ("roundabout ways") in order to avoid molestation. Peasant farmers could not raise or sell crops because of the Canaanite threat. They stopped working because of the Canaanite oppression."

Here is something to consider. There are several people in the Old Testament who were not sons of Israel who figure prominently in Israel's history. Earlier in the book of Judges there was mention of Caleb and Othniel. They became "sons" of Israel and integrated into the tribe of Judah. But it is possible they were descendants of Esau. God blesses positive volition wherever He finds it. Will He find it in you?

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One last peculiarity with the name “Edom.”

אֶדוֹם

אָדָם

It comes from a root which means to be red:

Those are the same consonants as the word for Adam or man:

אָדָם

Esau/Edom was a manly man, a man knowing the ways of the world with little use for God. Jacob’s life is full of lies and deception. Yet, God could discipline him, get his attention so that he, at times, trusted God. Then God blessed him more than one would expect. Are you ready to be blessed?