

Amos 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:

Analysis

Amos addresses Edom: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever." Edom's crime was betraying kinship obligations. As Esau's descendants, they were Jacob's (Israel's) relatives, yet they "pursued with the sword" and "cast off pity" (Hebrew *racham*—maternal compassion/womb-love). The phrases "anger did tear perpetually" and "kept wrath forever" describe nurturing hatred, refusing forgiveness, cultivating vengeance. This sustained malice particularly angered God. The sin wasn't one-time offense but deliberate, perpetual hostility. Reformed theology recognizes degrees of sin—all sin deserves death, yet some sins are more heinous due to knowledge, relationship, or persistence (Luke 12:47-48, John 19:11, James 4:17).

Historical Context

Edom's hostility toward Israel stretched back to Moses's time when they refused passage through their territory (Numbers 20:14-21). They celebrated Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem, cut off fleeing refugees, and looted the city (Obadiah 10-14, Psalm 137:7, Ezekiel 25:12-14, 35:5). This betrayal during Israel's darkest

hour earned devastating judgment—Edom was eventually displaced by Nabateans, forced into southern Judea (Idumea), forcibly converted to Judaism during the Maccabean period, and disappeared after AD 70. God keeps His word.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does betraying family or covenant relationships constitute particularly grievous sin?
2. What does it mean to "keep wrath forever," and how does Christ's command to forgive contrast this?
3. How does Edom's judgment warn against harboring bitterness and unforgiveness?

Interlinear Text

כָּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	עַל	שְׁלֹשָׁה	פְּשָׁעֵי	אֶדוֹם	וְעַל
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	H5921	For three	transgressions	of Edom	H5921
	H559	H3068		H7969	H6588	H123	
וְאַרְבָּעָה	לֹא	אֶשְׁיבֶנּוּ	עַל				
and for four	H3808	I will not turn away	H5921				
H702		H7725					
		כְּדָפּוֹ		בְּחֶרֶב	אָחִיו		
		the punishment thereof because he did pursue		with the sword	his brother		
		H7291		H2719	H251		
וְשָׁחַת	בְּחֶמֶץ יוֹ	וַיִּטֹּר רַף	לְעַד	אִפּוֹ	וְעִבְרָתוֹ		
and did cast off	all pity	did tear	perpetually	and his anger	his wrath		
H7843	H7356	H2963	H5703	H639	H5678		
וְשָׁמַר כֹּה	נֶצַח:						
and he kept	for ever						
H8104	H5331						

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 28:17 (Parallel theme): For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.

Psalms 137:7 (References Lord): Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

Joel 3:19 (Parallel theme): Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

Malachi 1:4 (References Lord): Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (Parallel theme): Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Deuteronomy 23:7 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.

Micah 7:18 (Sin): Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

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