

Amos 9:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

Analysis

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name (לְמַעַן יִרְשּׁוּ אֶת-שְׁאָרִית אֶדוֹם וְכָל-הָגּוֹם אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שְׁמֵי עַלְيָהֶם) this verse comes within Amos's restoration prophecy (9:11-15), following the devastating judgment oracles. The verb yarash (רָשַׁשׁ, possess/inherit) indicates sovereign claim, not merely military conquest. The she'erit Edom (שְׁאָרִית אֶדוֹם, remnant of Edom) is stunning—Edom, Israel's ancient enemy (descended from Esau), will be included in restored Israel's inheritance. Even more remarkably: **all the heathen, which are called by my name** (kol ha-goyim asher niqra shemi aleihem, כָּל-הָגּוֹם אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שְׁמֵי עַלְיָהֶם—the goyim (nations/Gentiles) bearing Yahweh's name means covenant inclusion.

This is explosive Gentile missiology in the Old Testament. James quotes this passage at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:15-17) to demonstrate that Gentile inclusion in the church fulfills Amos's prophecy, not contradicts it. The Septuagint (Greek OT) translates "possess the remnant of Edom" as "seek the Lord"—possibly reflecting a textual variant or interpretive translation, but the meaning is clear: restored Israel will bring nations into covenant relationship. The phrase "called by my name" signifies ownership and covenant belonging (Deuteronomy 28:10; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 14:9). Paul's Gentile mission realizes this promise: through Christ, the Seed of David (9:11's restored booth/tabernacle of David), all nations enter God's people (Galatians 3:7-9, 28-29; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Historical Context

Historically, Edom remained Israel's enemy throughout the monarchy, gloating over Jerusalem's fall (Psalm 137:7; Obadiah 10-14). That Edom's remnant would be possessed by restored Israel seemed impossible. Yet in Christ, the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile collapsed (Ephesians 2:14). The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15, ~AD 49) faced controversy: must Gentiles become Jews (circumcision, law-keeping) to join God's people? James cited Amos 9:11-12 to show that Gentile inclusion was always God's plan—rebuilding David's fallen tent (the Messiah's kingdom) means gathering all nations called by God's name. The church is that restored Davidic kingdom, encompassing both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Amos's prophecy that even Edom (Israel's enemy) and all nations will be called by God's name challenge ethnic, cultural, or class barriers in the church?
2. What does James's use of this passage (Acts 15) teach about the relationship between Old Testament promises and New Covenant fulfillment in Christ's multi-ethnic church?

Interlinear Text

לֹمַעַן 1. יְרַשְׁתָּאַת שָׁאַר יִתְהַלֵּךְ אֶת־עַדְום
H4616 That they may possess H3423 H853 the remnant H7611 H123 of Edom H3605

נָאָם עַלְיָהּ מִשְׁמִי אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא אֲשֶׁר
and of all the heathen H1471 H834 which are called H7121 H8034 H5921 saith H5002

יְהִי־הָשָׁה עַזְתָּאָתָּה
the LORD that doeth H3068 H6213 H2063

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:7 (Parallel theme): Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 65:1 (Parallel theme): I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

Acts 15:17 (References Lord): That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

Jeremiah 14:9 (References Lord): Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.