

Jeremiah 49:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.

Analysis

For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. This verse pronounces irrevocable judgment on Edom, specifically its capital city Bozrah. "I have sworn by myself" (ki bi nishbati, כִּי בִּי נִשְׁבַּטִי) is God's most solemn oath formula, used when no higher authority exists to swear by (Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13-17). When God swears by Himself, the decree is absolutely certain and unchangeable.

"Saith the LORD" (neum-YHWH, נְאֻם־יְהוָה) is the prophetic oracle formula establishing divine authority. Bozrah (Botsrah, בּוֹצְרָה), Edom's fortified capital in modern Jordan, represents the nation's strength and pride. The fourfold judgment—"desolation" (shammah, שָׁמָּה), "reproach" (cherpah, חֶרְפָּה), "waste" (chorbah, חֲרָבָה), and "curse" (qelalah, קִלְלָה)—emphasizes totality. Archaeological evidence confirms Bozrah's destruction; the site remained desolate for centuries.

"Perpetual wastes" (chorvot olam, חֲרָבוֹת עוֹלָם) indicates permanent, not temporary, desolation—fulfilled in Edom's historical disappearance as a nation. Edom's judgment stemmed from ancestral hatred toward Israel (Esau vs. Jacob, Genesis 27), violence against Judah during Babylon's invasion (Obadiah 10-14), and pride (Jeremiah 49:16). God's judgment vindicates His covenant people and demonstrates that opposition to God's purposes brings certain destruction. Christ,

the greater Jacob (Matthew 1:2), inherits all covenant promises, establishing an eternal kingdom that crushes all opposition (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 19:11-21).

Historical Context

Jeremiah 49 contains oracles against foreign nations delivered circa 605-586 BC. The Edom oracle (vv. 7-22) predicts judgment on Israel's ancient enemy, descendants of Esau dwelling southeast of the Dead Sea. Edom's hostility toward Israel dated to the Exodus, when they refused passage through their territory (Numbers 20:14-21). This animosity persisted through centuries (1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:13-14; 2 Kings 8:20-22).

Edom's worst treachery occurred during Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC). While Judah suffered, Edom rejoiced, looted, and aided the enemy, blocking escapees (Psalm 137:7; Lamentations 4:21-22; Obadiah 11-14). This betrayal during Judah's darkest hour sealed Edom's fate. Babylon conquered Edom around 553 BC (fulfilling Jeremiah 49:13). Later, Nabatean Arabs displaced Edomites, who moved into southern Judea (Idumea). By Roman times, Edomites (Idumeans) had assimilated; Herod the Great was Idumean.

Archaeological excavations at Bozrah (modern Buseirah) reveal destruction layers from this period. The site was abandoned and remained largely uninhabited, fulfilling the prophecy of perpetual waste. Edom disappeared as a distinct people by the first century AD. The complete fulfillment of this specific, detailed prophecy demonstrates Scripture's divine inspiration and God's sovereign control of history. Edom's fate warns all nations: opposition to God's people and purposes brings inevitable judgment (Genesis 12:3; Zechariah 2:8).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does God's oath "by myself" teach about the certainty and unchangeability of His word and promises?
2. How should the historical fulfillment of prophecy against Edom strengthen our confidence in unfulfilled prophecies?
3. What warnings does Edom's judgment offer to nations or individuals who oppose God's people and purposes today?
4. How does God's judgment on Edom relate to His promise to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you"?
5. In what ways does the permanent nature of Edom's judgment foreshadow the eternal judgment warned of in the New Testament?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בִּי	נִשְׁבַּע עֲתִי	נָאִם	יְהוָה	כִּי
H3588	H0	H7650	H5002	H3068	H3588
		For I have sworn	by myself saith	the LORD	
		לְשֹׁמֶה	לְחָרָפָה	לְחָרָב	וְלִקְלָלָהּ
		H8047	H2781	H2721	H7045
		shall become a desolation	a reproach	a waste	and a curse
					H1961
		וְכָל	עַרְיָה	תְּהֵי יָנָהּ	לְחָרָב וְזֶה
		H3605	H5892	H1961	H2723
		that Bozrah	and all the cities		wastes
		H1224			
		עוֹלָם:			
		H5769			
		thereof shall be perpetual			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 34:6 (References Lord): The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the

kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Genesis 36:33 (Parallel theme): And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

Genesis 22:16 (References Lord): And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

Isaiah 45:23 (Parallel theme): I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Isaiah 63:1 (Parallel theme): Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Jeremiah 49:22 (Parallel theme): Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

Jeremiah 44:26 (References Lord): Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth.

Amos 1:12 (Parallel theme): But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

Amos 6:8 (References Lord): The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.