

# Malachi 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**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.** Edom's defiant response to judgment reveals proud self-sufficiency. **We are impoverished** (רִשְׁשָׁנוּ, *rushashnu*) acknowledges their devastation, but **we will return and build** (וְנָשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה, *venashuv venivneh*) expresses determination to rebuild through human effort alone—no repentance, no acknowledgment of divine judgment, just stubborn self-reliance.

God's response is absolute: **They shall build, but I will throw down** (הֵמָּה יִבְנוּ וְאֲנִי הָרַס, *hemmah yivnu va'ani eheros*). The verb הָרַס (*haras*) means to tear down, demolish, overthrow. Human effort against divine decree is futile. This principle appears throughout Scripture: without God's blessing, human labor is vain (Psalm 127:1).

The consequences extend beyond mere failure: **they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever** (גְּבוּל רִשְׁעָה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר־זָעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם, *gevul rish'ah vеха'am asher-za'am Yahweh ad-olam*). Edom would become proverbial for divine judgment—a permanent testimony to God's wrath against those who oppose His purposes.

## Historical Context

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Edom's pride and self-confidence had deep roots—their mountain fortresses seemed impregnable (Obadiah 3-4). When Nabatean Arabs displaced them, Edomites attempted to rebuild, but never recovered their former territory or status. Their permanent desolation contrasted sharply with Israel's restoration after exile. Obadiah prophesied Edom's utter destruction for their treachery against Judah (Obadiah 10-18). The New Testament applies Edom's judgment typologically—Hebrews 12:16-17 warns against being like Esau who found no place for repentance. Edom represents those who persist in rebellion until judgment becomes irrevocable.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does Edom's defiant self-reliance illustrate the futility of human effort apart from God's blessing?
2. What does permanent divine indignation teach about the seriousness of persistent, unrepentant rebellion?
3. In what ways might we exhibit Edom's pride rather than humble dependence on God's grace?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	אָמַר	אֶדּוֹם	רָשָׁע שְׁנוֹ	וְנָשׁוּב	
H3588	saith	Whereas Edom	We are impoverished	but we will return	
	H559	H123	H7567	H7725	
יִבְנֶה	חֲרָב וְ	כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	
They shall build	the desolate places	H3541	saith	against whom the LORD	
H1129	H2723		H559	H3068	
וְ	יְהוָה	יִבְנֶה	וְאֲנִי	אֶקְרֹא	
of hosts	H1992	They shall build	H589	but I will throw down	
H6635		H1129		H2040	
וְ	יִקְרָא	לָהֶם	גֹּב וְ	רָשָׁע הֵ	וְהָעַם
and they shall call		H0	them The border	of wickedness	and The people
H7121			H1366	H7564	H5971
זַעַם	יְהוָה	עוֹלָם:	עַד		
hath indignation	against whom the LORD	for	ever		
H2194	H3068	H5704	H5769		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 25:14** (References Lord): And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

**Ezekiel 35:9** (References Lord): I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

**Isaiah 34:10** (Parallel theme): It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

**Isaiah 11:14** (Parallel theme): But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

**Isaiah 34:5** (Parallel theme): For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

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