

Psalm 83:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;

Analysis

The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes. The catalog of enemies begins with Israel's closest relatives—those sharing Abrahamic lineage. Oholei Edom (אֹהֶל אֶדוֹם, "tents of Edom") refers to Esau's descendants, Jacob's own twin brother's offspring. The Ishmaelites descended from Abraham's son through Hagar. Moab came from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 19:37). The Hagarenes likely refers to descendants of Hagar or another Arabian tribe related to Ishmael.

The irony cuts deep: Israel's closest blood relatives lead the conspiracy. These aren't distant strangers but family—those who should show kinship loyalty instead demonstrate fierce hostility. Edom's hatred particularly violated brotherly obligation (Obadiah 10-14 condemns Edom for rejoicing in Judah's destruction). This familial betrayal adds emotional weight to the psalm's plea. Opposition from strangers wounds; betrayal by family devastates.

The progression matters: Edom (Jacob's brother) → Ishmaelites (Abraham's son) → Moab (Abraham's nephew). Proximity doesn't guarantee loyalty; sometimes nearness breeds contempt. Jesus experienced similar rejection: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The religious establishment (His own people) led opposition against Him. Believers often find fiercest opposition not from secular world but from religious community—those who should recognize truth but instead resist it.

Historical Context

Edom occupied territory south of the Dead Sea, perpetually hostile to Israel despite blood kinship. When Israel requested passage through Edomite territory during the Exodus, Edom refused and threatened war (Numbers 20:14-21). Obadiah prophesied Edom's complete destruction for rejoicing over Jerusalem's fall. The Ishmaelites were nomadic Arabian tribes descended from Ishmael. Moab, east of the Dead Sea, frequently warred against Israel (Judges 3:12-30, 2 Kings 3). These geographical neighbors formed natural alliances based on shared interests in controlling trade routes and territorial boundaries. Their blood relationship to Israel made their hostility particularly bitter—family feuds being notoriously intense and enduring.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why does betrayal by those closest (family, religious community) hurt more deeply than opposition from outsiders?
2. How should believers respond when opposition comes from within the faith community rather than from secular culture?
3. What does Jesus's experience of rejection by "his own" teach about expectations of acceptance even among those who should recognize truth?

Interlinear Text

וְהַגְּרִים: מֹאֲבָן אֶדְם אֶשְׁמָעָל יִם וְיִשְׁמְעָל יִם
The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites of Moab and the Hagarenes
H168 H123 H3459 H4124 H1905

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 5:10 (Parallel theme): And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead.

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

2 Chronicles 20:1 (Parallel theme): It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

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