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# Tsiyon News

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ESAU IS EDOM

Genesis 36

## ESAU IS EDOM



**4 HOUR MIDRASH BLOCKBUSTER!**

*Now this is the history of the generations of Esau, that is, Edom.*

Genesis 36:1

**Edom is historically identified as:**

1. Phoenicians?
2. Babylonians?
3. Romans?
4. Jews?
5. NWO?
6. None of Above?
7. All of Above?

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## Edomites Advance into Judah

Tel Aviv University News

The Bible tells us that the Edomites were Israel's bitter enemies, yet little else is known about this enigmatic people who lived southeast of the Dead Sea. Recent TAU excavations have, however, unearthed archeological evidence for Edomite hostilities. TAU archeologist Prof. Yitzhaq Beit-Arieh examines the implications of Edomite objects recently uncovered in the heart of ancient Judah.

The origins of the Edomites, like those of the early Israelites, remain obscure. They appear to have emerged as a people about the same time as the Israelites during the Iron Age I period (12 - 13th centuries BCE).

The land of Edom lay in present-day southern Jordan, bounded on the north by Wadi Hasa (biblical Nahal Zered) at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and extending south to the Gulf of Eilat. In the Bible, Edom is closely linked to the region known as Seir, where Esau,

the commonly accepted father of the Edomites, dwelt (Genesis 36:8-9; Deuteronomy 2:4-5, 22, 29).

### Unique Edomite pottery finds



Unlike the Israelites, however, the Edomites have left us no literature comparable to the Bible, leaving archeologists to rely on material evidence to piece together their history. The first examples of red Edomite pottery were discovered in 1940 by American rabbi and archaeologist Nelson Glueck, at Tel el-Kheleifeh, a few miles north of the Gulf of Eilat, in modern Jordan. The unique style of the pottery indicates that the Edomites had developed their own independent culture.

The Edomite finds also included ostraca (potsherds with inscriptions) which puzzled archeologists since some letters differed from contemporary Hebrew script. Similar script was found on jar handles which had been impressed with a seal. The seal mentions the principal Edomite deity Qos.

The Bible tells us that Judah and Edom were at loggerheads for many years, probably over control of the strategic coastal area north of the Gulf of Eilat, and Tel el-Kheleifeh appears to have been the most important Edomite site in the region since it controlled the gateway to the southern seas, Africa, the Arabian peninsula and beyond.

Red Edomite pottery dating from the Israelite period, seventh century BCE, has been found at numerous other sites in the Israeli Negev desert. At Horvat Qitmit, in the eastern Negev, archeologists of TAU's Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archeology, led by Prof. Yitzaq Beit-Arieh, uncovered an Edomite shrine where more than 800 figurines, anthropomorphic stands, reliefs and other items including three incomplete inscriptions bearing the name, Qos, were found.



### Biblical enemies

The Bible amply documents the intense enmity between the Edomites and the Israelites. Numbers 20 relates how the Edomites would not allow the Israelites to pass through their territory on the way from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. Both King Saul and King David fought against the Edomites (1 Samuel 14; 1 Kings 11).

Scholars, among them Prof. Beit-Arieh, believe that after the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, the Edomites took advantage of the situation to expand into a severely weakened Judah.

The Biblical account of this expansion into the Negev can now be backed up by mounting archeological evidence. The Edomite shrines at Horvat Qitmit, 'Ein Hatzeva and in the Arava, with their extraordinary cult objects, may mark the path of the Edomite expansion into Judah. In any event, they clearly indicate an Edomite presence in the region connecting Edom and Judah.



Recent excavations unearthed at Tel Malhata, about 3 miles north-west of Qitmit, by the TAU team together with archeologists from Baylor University, Texas, suggest that for a short period the site was a center of an Edomite occupation of the eastern Negev in Judah. Perhaps the most dramatic find is a figurine of a flute player with a double-stemmed flute. Its amazing resemblance both in style and technique to a three-horned goddess found at the Edomite shrine at Qitmit makes it virtually certain that the two figurines were produced in the same workshop - most probably at Tel Malhata. The vast material at these two sites indicate Edomite domination of the region at the end of the First Temple period.

### On the defensive

This new evidence of Edomite expansion into Judah also helps explain the presence of a series of Israelite defense fortresses found at Horvat Uza, Horvat HaDrom, Horvat Anim, Horvat Tov and Arad during the seventh century BCE. Although archeologists have long known that a line of fortified Israelite outposts was erected in the eastern Negev at about this time, the reason for the protective barrier remained a mystery. It is now possible to affirm that these fortresses were built to protect against Edomite invasions, backing up the Biblical references to the conflict between the two peoples with concrete archeological evidence.



"Here is an instance in which the Bible and archaeology splendidly illuminate one another," says Prof. Beit-Arieh. "The Biblical accounts of the relations between these 'unneighborly neighbors' can now be confirmed in large part by archaeological evidence."

Excerpts from the cover story of Biblical Archeology, December, 1996, written by Prof. Yitzhaq Beit-Arieh. <http://www.tau.ac.il/taunews/97spring/edom.html>



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### **From Eliyahu**

The Rabbinical Jews say that Edom is synonymous with both Rome and the Christians. At first blush that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense - but do you know why they say that? I didn't, so I decided to find out. I began digging in all manner of scholarly resources, both ancient and modern, and the more I researched the more obsessed I became. Happily, my hours of research paid off far beyond my wildest dreams, as I unearthed a mountain of astounding information that has remained hidden from most of us for years. As it turns out, the influence of Esau - "Esau is Edom" - has gone far beyond that dried out rock Edom once called home. Just how far beyond will blow your mind! It is absolutely staggering to contemplate how the Edomites continue to exert a powerful, and decidedly evil, influence in the world, right down to our day. This 4 hour midrash blockbuster will answer questions you never even knew you need to ask! Join me, for a wild ride through history and a mind-expanding worldview adjustment, this EBD Bet Midrash.

Blessings and Shalom!

Eliyahu ben David  
[www.tsiyon.org](http://www.tsiyon.org)

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