

# Edomite

(Hebrews *Adomi'*, אֲדֹמִי Sept. Ι'δουμαῖος, fem. plur. 1 אֲדֹמִית Kings 11:1, Sept. Ι'δουμαία; but usually אֶדְם, Edom, put collectively for the Edomites). The name Edom (fully written אֶדְום, red; see Gesenius, Hebrews Thesaur. 1:26) was originally the secondary name of Esau (Genesis 25:30, compare Genesis 25:25; Genesis 36:8), but is used ethnographically in the O.T., his descendants ("children of Edom," בָּנִי אֶדְום being the race who had settled in the south of Palestine, and who at a later period came into conflict with the kindred nation of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 23:7; Numbers 20:14). Comparatively seldom are the appellations children of Esau (Deuteronomy 2:4; Deuteronomy 2:8; 1 Maccabees 5:3), house of Esau (Obadiah 1:18), mount Esau (Obadiah 1:8-9; Obadiah 1:19; Obadiah 1:21), or simply Esau (Jeremiah 49:8; Jeremiah 49:10; Obadiah 1:6), used in Scripture for the Edomites or Idumaea; the people and country are oftener called merely Edom (Numbers 24:18; Joshua 15:1; 2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:14; and especially by the prophets), hence, more fully, land of Edom, (Genesis 36:16; Genesis 36:21; Numbers 33:37), or field of Edom (Genesis 32:3; Judges 5:4). The territory of the Edomites was mountainous (Obadiah 1:8-9; Obadiah 1:19; Obadiah 1:21), situated at the southern (Joshua 11:17; Joshua 12:7), i.e., southeastern border of Palestine (Numbers 34:3), or more particularly of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:1; Joshua 15:21), in the neighborhood of the Moabites (Judges 11:18; Isaiah 11:14; 2 Kings 3:8), and was properly called the land or mountain of Seir (שֵׂעִיר Genesis 26:20; Genesis 32:4; Joshua 24:2; Ezekiel 35:3; Ezekiel 35:7; Ezekiel 35:15; compare Deuteronomy 2:4; Deuteronomy 2:29). See SEIR. Lofty and intersected by chasms in the rocks, it formed a natural fastness (Jeremiah 49:16 sq.; Obadiah 1:3 sq.), yet it was by no means unfruitful (Genesis 27:39). It contained, among other cities, the famous rock-hewn Sela (2 Kings 14:7), and extended from the AEelanitic Gulf to the Red Sea (1 Kings 9:26; 2 Chronicles 8:17). Hence it admits of no doubt that the cleft and craggy region traversed by fruitful valleys, now called el-Shira, which stretches from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and is separated on the

west by the long sandy plain el-Ghor from the desert et- Tib (Seetzen, 18:390, 434; Burckhardt, Trav. 2:683), and bounded on the north by the wady el-Ahsa, which separates it from the land of Moab, near Kerak, in the district of Jebal, is the ancient land of Edom, as Saadias has long ago perceived, for he renders Seir in [Genesis 36:8](#) by the same Arabic name Shera (compare Raumer in Berghaus's Annal. d. Erd. u. Volskerkunde, 1:562 sq.). (See SELA); (See TEMAN); (See UZ); (See BOZRAH).

According to the division in Greek authors, the territory of Edom, Idumaea (Ιδουμαία, a name evidently derived from the Heb.), was reckoned as a part of Arabia Petriea (see Anthon's Class. Diet. s.v.). The early inhabitants of Mount Seir, who were called Horites, were destroyed by the Edomites ([Deuteronomy 2:12](#); [Deuteronomy 2:22](#)), or rather supplanted and absorbed by them. (See HORITE). Already, in the time of Moses, the Edomites showed a hostile feeling towards the Israelites by forbidding them to pass though their territories, and thus subjecting them to the hardship of journeying around it ([Numbers 20:15-21](#); [Numbers 21:4](#); compare [Judges 11:17](#) sq.; see Hengstenberg, Pent. 2:283); an act which Saul successfully avenged ([1 Samuel 14:47](#)), while David subjugated them ([2 Samuel 8:14](#); compare [1 Kings 11:15](#) sq.; [Psalms 60:2](#); [Psalms 60:10](#)), and his successor Solomon fitted out a merchant fleet in the Edomitish harbors ([1 Kings 9:26](#)), although under his reign a partially successful revolt took place ([1 Kings 11:14](#) sq.). In the division of the Hebrew commonwealth the Edomites continued under the sway of Judah (probably by means of viceroys, [2 Kings 3:9](#); [2 Kings 3:12](#); [2 Kings 3:26](#); but compare [1 Kings 22:48](#); [2 Kings 8:20](#)), so that their ports were at the disposal of Jewish commerce to the time of Joram ([1 Kings 22:49](#)), under whose reign (B.C. 885) they threw off their allegiance ([2 Kings 8:20](#)), and maintained their independence by force of arms against several succeeding princes of the weak kingdom of Judah ([2 Kings 8:21](#)). Amaziah ([2 Kings 14:7](#); [2 Chronicles 25:11](#)), in B.C. cir. 836, and also Uzziah ([2 Kings 14:22](#); [2 Chronicles 25:11](#)), in B.C. cir. 802, again reduced the Edomites to subjection; but under Ahaz (B.C. cir. 738) they invaded Judaea ([2 Chronicles 28:17](#)), while, at the same time, the harbor of Elath was wrested from the Jewish

dominions by the Syrians ([2 Kings 16:6](#)). From this time forward, the Edomites, favored by the increasingly formidable attitude of Assyria, and later of Chaldaea, remained in merely nominal connection with the kingdom of Judah, enjoying real independence, until they too at last were forced to succumb to the Chaldaean power ([Jeremiah 27:3](#); [Jeremiah 27:6](#)). The early prophets, nearly contemporary with these events, had already announced Judah's future triumph over these rebellious subjects and persistent enemies ([Isaiah 11:14](#); [Joel 3:19](#); [Amos 1:11](#)); but, after they had made common cause with the foes of Israel at the capture of Jerusalem ([Ezekiel 35:15](#); [Ezekiel 36:5](#); [Obadiah 1:10](#); [Obadiah 1:13](#) sq.), the denunciations of the prophets became still more decisive ([Jeremiah 49:8](#); [Jeremiah 49:20](#); [Lamentations 4:21](#) sq.; [Ezekiel 25:12](#) sq. — compare 35; Obadiah pass.; [Psalms 137:7](#); compare [Isaiah 34:5](#) sq.; [Isaiah 63:1](#) sq.). The Edomites, it is true, likewise felt the ravages of the Chaldaean march ([Malachi 1:3](#) sq.), but they were left in their own land (in opposition to the view of Eichhorn, Hebr. Proph. 2:618, 624; Bertholdt, Einleit. 4:1440, 1626, who maintain that the Idumaeans were politically annihilated by Nebuchadnezzar; see Gesenius, Comm. on Isaiah 1:906: nor are the predictions of the utter desolation of Edom, e.g. [Jeremiah 49:17](#) sq., to be pressed to their extreme fulfillment; see Heinrich, De Idumaea ejusque vastatione, Lips. 1782), and they even rent away a portion of southern Palestine (comp. [Ezekiel 35:10](#)), including the town of Hebron ([1 Maccabees 5:65](#)). During the Syrian rule they continued to evince their old ill will against the Jews ([1 Maccabees 5:3](#); [1 Maccabees 5:65](#); [2 Maccabees 10:15](#); [2 Maccabees 12:32](#) sq.), until they were wholly subdued by John Hyrcanus (B.C. cir. 129), and, by a compulsory circumcision, were merged in the Jewish state (Josephus, Ant. 13:9, 1; 15:7, 9; comp. War, 4:5, 5; yet they were invidiously termed half-Jews, Ant. 14:15, 2). From that time Idumaea continued under a Jewish praefect (στρατηγός, Joseph. Ant. 14:1, 3). One of these, Antipater, managed so to ingratiate himself with the Jewish court, and, during the disputes concerning the Maccabaean succession, wielded the procuratorship of all Judaea, with which the friendship of the emperor had invested him, with such efficiency (B.C. 47), that he eventually secured the supreme

power instead of Hyrcanus II (Joseph. Ant. 14:8, 5). His son Herod became the acknowledged king of the Jews, and founded an Idumaean dynasty in Palestine. Idumaea formed a province of his dominions, and was under the administration of a special governor (ὢρχων, Joseph. Ant. 15:7, 9). Concerning the farther history of this people, we can here only remark, that the Idumaeans in the last Jewish contest acted the same ruinous part with the Jews themselves (Joseph. War, 4:4, 1 and 5; 7:8, 1). The name of Edom or Edomite is to this day hateful to the Jews (Otho, Lex. Rabb. page 196; Lightfoot, Hor. Hebrews page 693). From the time of the overthrow of the Jewish nation, the name of Idumaea no longer occurs, but passes away in the wider denomination Arabia (comp. Steph. Byz. pages 334, 341; Strabo 16:760, 749); since already for a long period the southern part of the ancient land of the Edomites was reckoned, together with its metropolis Petra, to, Arabia, and entitled separately from (the Jewish province) Idumaea (Joseph. Ant. 14:1, 3; 17:3, 2; War, 1:13, 8); so that Idumaea, while on the north it included in addition a Jewish district (compare the term Idumaeon for Jew, especially among the Roman poets, Celsii Hierob. 2:469 sq.), at the same time was contracted in its southern boundary (comp. Ptol. 5:16, 10; 5:17; Strabo, 16:760; Jerome in *Obadiah 1:1*); but this does not affect Biblical geography, and it would be difficult to reduce the point to full historical and topographical clearness (see Reland, Palaest. page 69 sq.), (See ARABIA); (See PETRA).

The form of government among the Edomitish people was, like that of surrounding nations, tribal (compare *Genesis 36:15* sq.), yet they originally (or at least earlier than the Israelites) had kings (*Genesis 36:32* sq.; *Numbers 20:14*; see Tuch on *Genesis 36:9* sq.; Bertheau, Israel. Gesch. page 207), who appear to have been freely chosen from among the clan-chieftains (princes, *Genesis 36:40*; *Ezekiel 32:29*; compare *Isaiah 34:12*, and Gesenius, in loc.; Hengstenberg, Pent. 2:299 sq.), until (in the time of Solomon) a hereditary dynasty had established itself (*1 Kings 11:14* sq.). While the country remained under Israelitish sway, the native royal government was nearly superseded (*1 Kings 22:48*); although under Jehoshaphat mention is made (*2 Kings 3:9*; *2 Kings 3:26*) of a king (viceroy) of the Edomites

(in alliance with him), and from this time they seem to have had an uninterrupted line of kings ([Amos 2:1](#); [Jeremiah 27:3](#); [Ezekiel 32:29](#)). The principal mode of livelihood and employment of the Edomites were commerce by land by means of caravans (Heeren, Ideen, 1:1, page 107; Lengerke, Ken. 1:298; compare [Ezekiel 28:16](#), where, however, the true reading is Aram; see Havernick in loc.), probably to Elath and Ezion-geber, on the Red Sea; the raising of cattle, agriculture, and the cultivation of vines ([Numbers 20:17](#); [Ezekiel 25:13](#)); according to Jerome (Onom. s.v. Fenon), also mining (see C.G. Flade, *De re metall. Midianit., Edomit., et Phoenic.*, Lips. n.d.). Respecting their religion the Old Test. is entirely silent, except that it was some form of polytheism ([2 Chronicles 25:20](#)); Josephus (Ant. 15:7, 9) mentions one of their gods by the name of Coze (Κόζε, ? קָזֵה, the destroyer or ender; see Hitzig, *Philist.* page 265; and compare Epiphan. *Haer.* 55; Lengerke, Ken. 1:298). From the earliest times the wisdom of the Edomites, namely, of the Temanite branch, was celebrated ([Obadiah 1:8](#); [Jeremiah 49:7](#)). See Uz. (On the subject generally, see Van Iperen, *Hist. crit. Edomaeor. et Amalek.* Leonard. 1768; Hoffmann, in the *Hall. Encyklop.* II, 15:146). (See IDUMAEA). *The Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature.* James Strong and John McClintock; Haper and Brothers; NY; 1880.