

Amos 1:11: Will God Do to Lost People Exactly What He Condemned Edom for Doing?

Amos 1:11 tells why God condemned Edom: "...for three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath—because he pursued his brother with a sword, [1] **stifling all compassion**; because [2] his **anger continually raged**, and [3] **his fury flamed unchecked**, I will send fire upon Teman that will consume the fortress of Bozrah."

God planned to judge Edom because they had mistreated the children of Israel. God was concerned with the hostile manner in which Edom had dealt with Israel. **Edom had stifled all compassion**—something not approved by God who is called "the God of compassion". David wrote "But you O Lord are a compassionate and gracious God—slow to anger and abounding in Mercy and reliability" Psalm 86:15. If God were to separate Himself forever from all "lost" people He would Himself be stifling compassion. This would falsify Lamentation 3:22 where it states that God's compassions fail not. It would be strange indeed for God to condemn Edom for stifling compassion if He intends to stifle compassion for lost people "eternally."

The **Edomite's anger raged continually**. If the Bible taught that God intends to exercise His wrath forever against lost people, would He not be doing exactly what He condemned Edom for doing? Fortunately there is no place in the Greek or Hebrew Bible where it is said that God's anger against anyone lasts "forever!" Instead, the Bible teaches that God's indignation is slow to start (Psalm 86:15) and that it definitely has an end (Isaiah 10:24-25, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 103:9, Isaiah 57: 16, and Jeremiah 23:20 for examples.)

The next indictment God leveled against Edom was that **her fury flamed unchecked**. God will not practice unbridled, endless fury. His judgments will accomplish only "what He desires" Isaiah 57:16. One of the reasons he checks or terminates his fury is that otherwise "...the spirit and breath of those standing before Me (those I have created) would grow faint"—Isaiah 57:16. God did not want people to vanish under the impact of His fury. God's attitude differs from Edom's in her treatment of Israel. It also differs from the practice of "unending torment," "unending separation," or absolute annihilation, which are often attributed to Him. It would be peculiar for God to condemn these three actions of Edom if He intended later to practice all of them in His dealings with lost individuals. The Old Testament scriptures prove that God's wrath and judgment will end and the New Testament makes it clear that God will ultimately reconcile all people. We ought to abandon an eschatology that makes God commit the same three behaviors for which He condemned the Edomites.

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