

TEXT: Overview of Obadiah – Paul Apple www.bibleoutlines.com paulgapple@gmail.com

TITLE: *TURNING THE TABLES – WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND – THE BOOMERANG EFFECT*

BIG IDEA:

SELF RIGHTEOUS PILING ON BY ARROGANT BOASTERS IS DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION BY THE GOD WHO FULFILLS HIS PROMISE OF A RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM

*“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head.” (:15)*

INTRODUCTION:

How do we respond when disaster strikes some group of people that is not in our immediate camp? Maybe a church that we feel is apostate and deserving of God’s judgment; maybe a foreign country that has not been friendly to our administration; maybe an ethnic group that differs from us in many respects . . . I am especially thinking of situations where we tend to look down on others in our pride and feel superior . . . as if that group is especially deserving of God’s judgment.

Recent Example: The sudden destruction of much of New Orleans and the surrounding area due to the wrath of Katrina has elicited some self righteous piling on by those who want to paint this event as a simple act of God’s judgment upon debauchery and loose living. When devastation and calamity cuts a swath through such a wide and diverse segment of our beloved country, we must confess our inadequacy at understanding the complex motivation and purposes behind the sovereign outworking of God’s plan for the ages.

This is not a time for simplistic moralizing on any imagined cause and effect basis but for compassion and assistance and humility as we contemplate the frailty of the human condition in general. Both grace and trials fall on mankind in general and times of grief and suffering should serve as a rallying point for the difficulties we face in common in this fallen world. At the same time we should examine our own relationship with our Creator and be renewed in our hope that the God of History will ultimately usher in His kingdom of peace and righteousness.

Those under the calamity should rightly examine their own hearts to see if this is God’s hand of judgment or discipline. But it is a much more murky area to navigate for those who are merely the onlookers. Rather than being quick to point the finger, we must first look to our own standing with God and then respond in compassion and mercy.

Background: The Edomites as descendents from Esau were distant relatives of the Israelites and lived in the mountainous region to the south. They had a history of opposing God’s program for exalting the nation of Israel and making her a light to the world. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded and drove some refugees down their way, they took delight in the plight of their neighbors. Obadiah delivers God’s message of doom and destruction for their arrogance and opposition.

The Edomites occupied the territory east of the Arabah between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah south of the Zered River and north of Eziongeber (Elath). Its eastern boundary was the

Arabian Desert. Edom was also known as Seir after Mount Seir, the prominent tableland that occupied the northeastern part of Edom's territory.

Keathley: The hostility began in an argument over the birthright, but during the time of Obadiah it centered around trade routes. The kings highway (show on map) ran all the way from Damascus to Egypt. Whoever controlled the highway, controlled the flow of goods and became wealthy.

Identification of the Prophet:

Constable: [very helpful resource for this study]

As is true of all the other prophetic books in the Old Testament, the title of this one evidently comes from the name of its writer. "Obadiah" means "servant of Yahweh" or "worshipper of Yahweh," depending on the form (vocalization) of his name in Hebrew, which is debated. There are 13 men who bear this name in the Old Testament, from Davidic to postexilic times, assuming the writer was not one of the other 12. It appears that he was not since attempts to identify him with one of the others have proved unsatisfying. . . . Whoever Obadiah was, he possessed significant literary talent. He employed the skills of imagery, rhetorical questions, irony, repetition, and various forms of parallelism in his brief prophecy.

<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/obadiah.pdf>

Dating of the Book:

Shortest OT book and one of the most difficult to date.

The two dates suggested are 845 B.C. and 586 B.C.

There are some parallel passages in Jer. 49 and the book of Joel – but impossible to tell which draws upon which; whether they both refer to a third source, or whether God is revealing the same language to different prophets . . . not determinative.

Constable: The invasions that seem to fit Obadiah's description of the Edomites' behavior were the one in King Jehoram's reign (2 Chron. 21:12-15 – making Obadiah a contemporary of Elijah and Elisha) and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Most scholars believe the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. is the preferred reference. But the location in the Hebrew canon would argue for the earlier date of about 850 B.C. Does not really impact the meaning and application of the text.

Keathley: It is very difficult to be certain about the date for this book, but primary arguments for a late date seem to center around the idea that the evil perpetrated against Israel by Edom was so bad that only the destruction by Babylon in 586 could fit the description adequately. However, just because a later destruction was worse, doesn't mean that earlier conflicts, destruction, etc. weren't bad too. [especially since the events are meant to be typical of eschatological devastation in the coming Day of the Lord]

If Obadiah is writing after a bad incident in Israel's history, and describes it as being really bad, that doesn't mean a later (and even worse) event is in view because it hadn't happened yet.

I. (:1-9) ARROGANCE AND FALSE SECURITY WILL BE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN BY COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

A. (:1-2) Your Time is Coming and Your Destiny is Shame

1. Reduced to Smallness - "*Behold I will make you small among the nations.*"
2. Tarr'd with Shame - "*You are greatly despised.*"

B. (:3-4) Arrogance and False Security Cannot Escape Certain Doom

1. Arrogance Denounced - "*The arrogance of your heart has deceived you*"

Constable: The outstanding mark of Edom's national character was pride. The Hebrew word for pride (*zadon*) comes from a verb meaning to boil up (*zid*). It pictures pride as water that boils up under pressure in a cooking pot. Similarly the proud person is like a bubble that thrusts itself up but is hollow. Interestingly, the same Hebrew word occurs three times in the account of Esau, the father of the Edomites, squandering his birthright (Gen. 25:27-34).

2. False Security Exposed - "*Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'*"

Carl E. Armerding: Edom's natural defenses were imposing. Its main centers of civilization were situated in a narrow ridge of mountainous land southeast of the Dead Sea . . . This ridge exceeded a height of 4,000 feet throughout its northern sector, and it rose in places to 5,700 feet in the south. Its height was rendered more inaccessible by the gorges radiating from it toward the Arabah on the west and the desert eastwards. In addition to these **natural fortifications**, Edom was strongly defended by a series of Iron Age **fortresses**, particularly on the eastern frontier where the land descended more gradually to the desert.

Guzik: The Edomites boasted in **their natural defenses**. The ancient city of Petra - once the capital city of Edom, known as Sela - had amazing defenses. It is a city carved into the rock, accessible by a narrow canyon almost a mile long. At the end of the canyon there is a spectacular city carved in stone, and seemingly incapable of being conquered by any army.

The Edomites boasted in **their wisdom**. The men of Edom - especially of the city Teman - were noted for their wisdom. The phrase men of the East in the Old Testament often refers to men from Edom, and passages like 1 Kings 4:30 declare the great wisdom of the men of the East. As well, Jeremiah 49:7 says of Edom: Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished? This was another source of pride for the Edomites.

The Edomites boasted in **their alliances** and trusted in their allies - their confederacy, the men at peace with you (Obadiah 1:7). They thought that their alliances made them strong, and they were proud because of that strength.

3. Promise of Destruction - "*From there I will bring you down, ' declares the Lord.*"

Constable: Here the figure of an eagle that was also in view in the previous verse becomes explicit. Even if the Edomites would build their nest as high as the stars (hyperbole), God would bring them down.²⁵ They might have been humanly unassailable, but they were not divinely unassailable. They had proudly boasted, "Who will bring me down to the earth?" (v. 3), but Yahweh replied, "I will bring you down" (v. 4). He would burst their bubble. He Himself declared that He would.

Malachi, who wrote some 400 years later, mentioned that the Edomites were still in existence then (Mal. 1:3-4). By 312 B.C. the capital of Edom was in Nabatean hands, and Edom had ceased to exist as a nation, though Edomites continued to live. They became known as Idumeans.

C. (:5-9) Complete and Sudden Destruction Promised

"in order that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter."

Constable: Thieves robbed houses and grape pickers stripped vineyards, yet both left a little behind that they did not carry off. However, Yahweh's destruction of Edom would be so complete that nothing at all would remain of her (cf. Jer. 49:9-10). There would be no remnant of Edom left (in contrast to the remnant that Yahweh promised elsewhere to leave in Israel).

[vs. 8] God would destroy Edom's famous wise men (cf. 1 Kings 4:30; Job 1:1; 2:11; 4:1; Jer. 49:7; Lam. 4:21; Baruch 3:23) and their understanding by allowing them to fail to detect the unfaithfulness of their allies (v. 7). They would also overestimate their own security (v. 3).

Keathley: [vs. 7] Edom's enemies will be her allies -- The Nabateans were caravan drivers whom the Edomites trusted and traded with. They were their business partners. They were allowed into the city, but they turned against the Edomites and conquered them.

II. (:10-14) THE TABLES WILL BE TURNED ON THEIR MALICE AND ALOOFNESS AND GLOATING AND EXPLOITATION

A. (:10) Their Malice - *"Because of violence to your brother Jacob"*

Guzik: Some sins become worse depending on whom we sin against. It is sin to treat someone else badly; it is worse to treat a brother or sister in Jesus badly. It is sin to speak harshly to anyone; it is worse to speak harshly to your husband or wife.

B. (:11) Their Aloofness - *"On the day that you stood aloof"*

"The one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it is sinning" (James 4:17).

Constable: God cited one specific instance of Edom's violence against her brother, but as I explained in the introduction, which instance is unclear. Edom's treachery against Judah had taken place on a particular "day" in the past. Likewise God's judgment would come on a particular "day" yet future (v. 8). The Edomites' sin was that they failed to help the Israelites in their hour of need (cf. Luke 10:31-32). Instead they stood aloof and watched joyfully as Israel's invader plundered Jerusalem. Enemies passing through a city's gate signified the loss of its self-rule.³² God considered the Edomites as guilty as Jerusalem's invaders because the Edomites failed to help their brethren.

Guzik: Sometimes doing nothing is a great sin. Numbers 32:23 speaks of the sin that will find you out, and the sin it speaks of is the sin of doing nothing.

Progression of sin of Edom:

◆ First they did nothing

- ◆ Then they rejoiced in Judah's distress and calamity
- ◆ Then they took advantage of their vulnerable state
- ◆ Then they joined in the violence against God's people

C. (:12) Their Gloating - "*Do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his misfortune*"

D. (:13-14) Their Exploitation - "*do not loot their wealth*" "*do not ... cut down their fugitives*"
"do not imprison their survivors"

Keathley: This is like people who loot a city after a hurricane or something. If you can have degrees of evil, this is one of the lowest forms of theft. It is taking advantage of another's calamity.

III. (:15-21) THE RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM OF GOD WILL REPLACE THE TEMPORARY DOMINION OF THE EDMITES

A. (:15-16) Big Idea: What goes around comes around – Boomerang Effect

"For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations.

As you have done, it will be done to you.

Your dealings will return on your own head."

Keathley: The references to Edom's destruction would be the near fulfillment and the references to all the nations would be the far fulfillment.

Constable: Edom had her "day" on the Lord's holy mountain, Jerusalem, when she failed to help her brother, Israel. Likewise, all the nations would have their "day" dominating Jerusalem and the Jews, during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). We live in "the times of the Gentiles." Obadiah described these enemies as drinking there in celebration of their dominion over Israel (cf. Exod. 32:6; 1 Sam. 30:16). Though they would celebrate to the point of delirium, God would destroy them, and they would become as though they had never existed. They would drink the cup of His wrath (cf. Ps. 60:3; 75:8; Isa. 51:17-23; Jer. 25:18-18, 28-29; 49:12-13; Hab. 2:15-16).

Guzik: There is a sense in which God's judgment against Edom was just the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3: I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. The Edomites cursed Israel, so they were cursed. If we want to be blessed, we should bless the Jewish people.

B. (:17-21a) Contrast between House of Esau and House of Jacob (flesh vs spirit comparison)

F. B. Meyer: [vs. 17] There are many instances of people not **possessing their possessions**. Such are those who put their plate and valuables into furniture depositories, and for years leave them to neglect; who have shelves of unread, uncut books; who do not realize that coal and iron mines lie under their estates; who never enjoy the wealth of love and tenderness in their friends' hearts; who refuse to avail themselves of resources which are well within their reach.

But too many of God's people are like this. The Father has caused all his fullness to reside in the nature of Jesus; He hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness in Him; He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; in our Savior are treasures of wisdom, of purity, of prevailing power, of love and patience. The Divine Merchantman has come to us to give us gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eyesalve. But we go blundering on in our own selfish, sinful, faltering way. We do not possess our possessions. We do not call into practical use the boundless reinforcements awaiting us, at every hour, within the tiniest beckoning of our faith. We are like the manufacturer who refuses to use the steam-power, though it is laid on into the mill; or the householder who refuses to touch the button of the electric light.

C. (:21b) The Lord's Righteous Kingdom - "*And the kingdom will be the Lord's.*"

Guzik: This note of encouragement may be the central purpose for this prophecy of Obadiah. We wonder if it ever had much of a reading in the streets or palaces of Edom; but it certainly was received as welcome encouragement among the suffering people of God. Obadiah tells all God's people: "Don't worry about those who ignore your need, those who rejoice at your problems, those who take advantage of your crises, those join their hands with others in attacking you. I will take care of them."

Constable: Amillennial interpreters understand New Testament references to Israel as references to the church. They see the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy not in the restoration of Old Testament Israel to future sovereignty in the Promised Land but in the final victory of the church over all her enemies.⁵³ Premillennialists reject this "replacement theology" (the church replaces Israel in God's program) because we believe when God said "Israel" He meant Israel. It is incorrect, we believe, to conclude that because Christians are the spiritual seed of Abraham the church is the spiritual seed of Israel.

As the nation of Edom opposed the Israelites, so the Edomites of Jesus' day (Herod the Great and his successors) opposed Jesus Christ and His followers. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who proved to be the fulfillment of all that the nation of Israel was to be, became the personal focus of Herod's hostility, who tried to kill Jesus in His infancy. Yet Herod was unsuccessful. Likewise all the enemies of Israel, and of Israel's Messiah, will be unsuccessful in doing away with the Savior and will experience destruction themselves for trying to do so.

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Constable:

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Since Obadiah's concern was Jerusalem, and since it seems likely that he lived in Judah, the original people who received his prophecy were probably the residents of Judah. Obadiah wrote to announce coming divine judgment on Edom and to give the Israelites hope by reminding them of the future that God promised them.

"Prophetic oracles against foreign nations, though full of the language of doom, are also implicitly messages of hope for God's people. Such oracles look forward to a time when the

predicted demise of the nation under attack will open the way for the restored, purified Israel to blossom once again as the flower of all God's plantings. Obadiah's message fits this pattern and in some ways even typifies it."(Douglas Stuart)

"In a sense Obadiah is a miniature profile of the message of all the writing prophets." (Walter L. Baker)

"Edom . . . was tenaciously and rather constantly hostile from beginning, i.e., after the exodus, to end, i.e., after the exile. This factor would itself be enough to cause such a small nation to receive such regular, even prominent mention in prophetic oracles against foreign nations. But Edom's prominence as an enemy was additionally noteworthy because of its historical position as a brother nation to Israel (Gen 25). There are, then, at least three factors that made Edom so prominent among Israel's enemies that it could sometimes function virtually as a paradigm for all of them: (1) the sheer chronological length of its enmity as alluded to in Ezek 35:5; (2) the consistency and intensity of its enmity (as in Obad 10-14); (3) the 'treasonous' nature of its enmity (as in Amos 1:11). No other nation quite shared these characteristics. . . of the ancient non-superpowers (i.e., leaving aside Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon) Edom is the subject of more separate oracles against foreign nations (seven [i.e., Isa. 21:11-12; Jer. 49:7-22; Ezek. 25:12-14; 35; Amos 1:11-12; Obad.; Mal. 1:2-5]) and more brief or passing hostile references (four [i.e., Isa. 11:14; Jer. 25:21; Lam. 4:21; Joel 3:19]) in the prophetic books than any other nation." (Douglas Stuart)

OUTLINE

I. Edom's coming judgment vv. 1-9

- A. The introduction to the oracle v. 1
- B. The breaching of Edom's defenses vv. 2-4
- C. The plundering of Edom's treasures vv. 5-7
- D. The destruction of Edom's leadership vv. 8-9

II. Edom's crimes against Judah vv. 10-14

- A. The statement of the charge v. 10
- B. The explanation of the charge vv. 11-14

III. The restoration of Israel's sovereignty vv. 15-21

- A. The judgment of Edom and the nations vv. 15-18
- B. The occupation of Edom by Israel vv. 19-21

Many competent commentators believe that the Book of Obadiah follows the covenant lawsuit form of address that was common in the ancient Near East. In this type of message, which many of the other writing prophets also used, there are certain formulaic sections. These are, most basically, a description of the scene of judgment and then the speech by the judge. This speech includes an address to the defendant (including reproach based on an accusation and a statement that the accused has no defense), the pronouncement of guilt, and the sentence. Niehaus outlined Obadiah on this basis as follows.

I. Title (1a)

II. Description of the scene of judgment (nations arise for battle, 1b)

III. Speech by the Judge (2-21)

- A. Three sentences (2-9)
 - 1. First sentence (2-4)
 - 2. Second sentence (5-7)
 - 3. Third sentence (8-9)
- B. Three pronouncements of guilt (10-14)
 - 1. First pronouncement (10)
 - 2. Second pronouncement (11)
 - 3. Third pronouncement (12-14)
- C. Sentence on the nations (15-16)
- D. Promise of restoration (17-21)

Robert B. Chisholm: Was Obadiah's prophecy fulfilled? By Malachi's time (approximately 450 B.C.), Edom had suffered a devastating defeat (see Mal. 1:1-4), though not of the magnitude envisioned by Obadiah. Obadiah's description of Edom's judgment is probably to some degree stylized and exaggerated. However, the cosmic dimension of the prophecy transcends historical developments and points to an end-time judgment of worldwide proportions. When viewed in this larger eschatological context, Edom serves as an archetype for all God's enemies, who will be crushed by his angry judgment (see also Isa. 34 and 63:1-6)."

David Guzik: Who were the Edomites?

- ◆ The Edomites are the people descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob (Genesis 25:19-34). Esau was nicknamed "Edom" (which means, "red") probably because he had red hair
- ◆ Esau eventually settled in the area of Mount Seir and absorbed a people known as the Horites (Genesis 36:8-43, which refers to Edomite rulers as *dukes* in the King James Version; Deuteronomy 2:12)
- ◆ When Israel came out of Egypt and wanted to pass through the land of the Edomites to enter into the Promised Land, the Edomites wouldn't let them (Numbers 20:14-21)
- ◆ The Edomites opposed Saul and were conquered under David and Solomon (1 Samuel 14:47, 2 Samuel 8:14, 1 Kings 9:26)
- ◆ In the days of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Edom joined with Moab and Ammon to attack Judah, but the Lord fought for Judah and defeated them (2 Chronicles 20:1-27, the famous battle that was led with praise)
- ◆ The Edomites successfully rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8:16-22)

- ◆ King Amaziah of Judah brought them back under subjugation (2 Kings 14:9-11)
- ◆ The Edomites again attacked Judah in the days of King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:17)
- ◆ Centuries later, King Herod the Great (Luke 1:5) was an Edomite
- ◆ They fought side by side with the Jews in the rebellion against Rome in 66-70 A.D. and were crushed by Rome, never to be heard of as a people again. The predictions of Obadiah 1:10 and 1:18 were proven true

David Malick:

Message: The prophet Obadiah proclaimed through a vision that Edom (and the nations) will be completely destroyed because of the evil which it did against its brother during the fall of Jerusalem, and that the Lord will restore a remnant from Judah enlarging her land and making her his kingdom

Outline:

I. Heading: A message came in a vision to the prophet Obadiah, “the servant of Yahweh” v. 1a

II. The Vision against Edom: The sovereign Lord declares that He is going to bring Edom down to a lowly, despised place among the nations through a complete judgment because of the violence which she did to her brother like not aiding him, gloating over his destruction, and actually capturing and killing some of his fugitives vv. 1b-15

A. Judgment Speech: The sovereign Lord declares that He is going to bring Edom down to a lowly, despised place among the nations because of the arrogance of her heart 1b-14

1. Illustration of God’s Sovereign Control: God is described as sovereign over the nations as Obadiah (and the faithful remnant of God’s people) have received a message of Edom’s judgment while an envoy has been sent among the nations with the same message 1b

2. Judgment Speech against Edom: The Lord proclaims that he is going to bring Edom down to a lowly, despised place among the nations because of the arrogance of her heart 2-4

a. Announcement: The Lord promises to make Edom small among the nations 2a

b. The Results of Judgment: The results of Edom being made small among the nations is that she will be despised 2b

c. An Accusation: Edom has been arrogant in her heart as is displayed through her dwelling places 3-4a

d. Announcement: The Lord is going to bring Edom down 4b

B. Expansion of Edom's Judgment: Edom's judgment will be complete as though she had been robbed when her alliances betray her and the Lord destroys her counselors so that her military men are slaughtered 5-9

1. Left with Nothing: Edom will be left with absolutely nothing as if thieves, or grape gatherers had come to her 5-6

2. Useless Alliances: All of Edom's alliances will betray her, by turning her over to her enemies and overcoming her themselves 7

3. Useless Internal Power: The Lord proclaims that He will destroy the counselors of Edom with the result that her military men will be slaughtered 8-9

a. Wisdom: Yahweh will destroy the counselors of Edom 8

b. Military Might: Edom's military will be slaughtered 9

C. The Reason for Edom's Judgment: Obadiah proclaimed that Judah would be destroyed because of the violence which she did to her brother like not aiding him, gloating over his destruction, and actually capturing and killing some of his fugitives 10-14

1. Summary--Violence to Jacob (the Nation): Judah will be destroyed because of violence which she did to her brother Jacob 10

2. Particulars of Edom's Violence: Obadiah identifies the particulars of Edom's violence as not aiding Judah, gloating over her destruction, and actually capturing and killing some of her fugitives 11-14

a. Did Not Aid Judah: Judah was like the Babylonians who carried off wealth, entered the gate of Jerusalem and cast lots for Jerusalem rather than helping her brother 11

b. Gloated over Destruction of Judah: Edom gloated, rejoiced, boasted on the day of Jerusalem's destruction entering into her gate and looting her wealth 12-13

c. Killed and Captured Some from Judah: Edom stood at the road to kill Judah fugitives and imprison her survivors when Jerusalem fell 14

III. The Coming Day of the Lord: Obadiah proclaims that the day of the Lord is near when the nations (including Edom) will be judged with talionic justice bringing destruction for those who destroyed Jerusalem, and blessing for the remnant who was destroyed as it possesses Mount Zion, judges Edom, enlarges its borders, and becomes God's kingdom **vv. 15-21**

A. Judgment upon the Edom and the Nations: Obadiah proclaims that the day of the Lord is coming near upon all of the nations (including Edom) when talionic justice will be rendered bringing destruction for their destruction of Jerusalem 15-16

1. Coming of the Day of the Lord: The day of the Lord is coming near upon all of the nations 15a

2. Application of Talionic Justice: As Edom has done to others, it will be done to her 15b

3. Edom Destroyed: Just as the nations destroyed Jerusalem (including Edom), so shall they (including Edom) be destroyed forever 16

B. Blessing on Judah: Judah will be blessed in that a remnant will have its own possessions on Mount Zion, judge Edom, enlarge its borders and become God's kingdom 17-21

1. A Remnant on Zion: A remnant will be on Mount Zion who will be holy and have its own rightful possessions 17

2. Judah Will Judge Edom:² Judah will destroy Edom as a fire destroys land causing Edom to be given to the inhabitants of the Negev 18-19a

3. Judah's Enlarged Boundaries: Judah will enlarge her boundaries to include the Palestine Plain, the territory of Ephraim and Samaria, and Gilead 19b-20

4. Yahweh's Kingdom Will Judge Edom: Deliverers will ascend the capital of Judah (Mount Zion), judge the capital of Edom, and Judah will be the Lord's kingdom 21

Quotes on Pride:

The Venetian ambassador wrote of Cardinal Wolsey: "I do perceive that every year he groweth more and more in power. When I first came to England, he used to say, "His Majesty will do so and so"; subsequently, he said, "We shall do so and so"; but now he says, "I shall do so and so." But history records how Wolsey's pride went before destruction, and his haughty spirit before a fall.

Napoleon Buonaparte, intoxicated with success, and at the height of his power, said, "I make circumstances." Let Moscow, Elba, Waterloo, and St. Helena, that rocky isle where he was caged until he fretted his life away, testify to his utter helplessness in his humiliating downfall. — **J. B. Gough**

As God hath two dwelling-places, heaven and a contrite heart, so hath the devil — hell and a proud heart. — **T. Watson**

Ray Stedman: Obadiah – Death to Edom!

In the story of these nations you also have the extended story of these two men, Jacob and Esau. God, in a sense, has put Jacob and Esau into an enlarger and blown them up to national size. As the prophet discusses this you can see that the story of these two men continues; Israel is still Jacob and Edom is still Esau.

Jacob and Esau were in perpetual antagonism. We read in the book of Genesis that even before they were born, they struggled together in their mother's womb. That antagonism marked the lives of these two men, and, consequently, the lives of their descendants, the two nations of Israel and Edom.

And as you recall from Genesis, Jacob was mother's darling and Esau was daddy's little man, and there was one unending conflict between the two of them which did not end with the lives of these men. The nations carried on this same conflict, and all the way from Genesis through Malachi there is the threat of struggle and unbroken antagonism between them. In the book of Malachi (remember, Genesis records the beginning of these nations), the last book of the Old

Testament, God says, "I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau." (Malachi 1:2) Why does the story of these two men come to a focus here in this little prophecy of Obadiah? What is so important about these two men and these two nations? Well, that is what the book of Obadiah makes very clear to us. In the New Testament we discover that there is a perpetual antagonism within the nature of the Christian. In Galatians 5:17 we are told that the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; they are opposed to one another.

God is a great illustrator. He is always using pictures for us so that we can understand truth more easily, more graphically. We are children in this respect. We like to have a picture. We would rather see something than hear it, so God has many pictures. He has taken these two men and the subsequent nations that came from them and used them through the Bible as a consistent picture of the **conflict between the flesh and the spirit** -- Jacob and Esau, Israel and Edom.

(This, by the way, is a wonderful key to Bible study. Have you learned to recognize what we might call interpretational constants that run throughout the scriptures? There are certain names and figures, or metaphors and similes that, once used to symbolize a thing, maintain that characteristic and that reference all the way through the Bible, wherever they are used. You know how this is true of certain items, certain material things, like oil. Wherever oil is used symbolically in Scriptures it is a picture of the Holy Spirit. Wine is always a picture of joy in the Scriptures. Leaven is always a picture of evil. These two men, Jacob and Esau, and the nations Israel and Edom, always appear as a picture of a struggle between the flesh and the spirit that is going on in our own lives as believers. Esau lusts against Jacob, and Jacob against Esau; the two great principles are irreconcilably opposed to one another.)

Obadiah turns the spotlight first on Esau, who is the man of the flesh, and Edom, the proud nation that came from the flesh, and he answers the question "Why does God hate Esau?" The trouble with Esau, the prophet says, is this (verse 3):

**The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rock,
whose dwelling is high,
who say in your heart,
"Who will bring me down to the ground?" (Obadiah 1:3 RSV)**

The trouble with Esau is pride. **Pride** is the root of all human evil, and pride is the basic characteristic of what the Bible calls the flesh that lusts against, wars against, the Spirit. The flesh is a principle that stands athwart God's purposes in human life and continually defies what God is trying to accomplish. Each of us has this struggle within us if we are Christians, and its basic characteristic is revealed here as pride. That is the number one identifying mark of the flesh.

Proverbs 6:16 says: "There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him." And what is number one on the list? A proud look. And everything else that follows is a variation of pride. Those that are swift to run after mischief, he that spreads lies and slander and discord among brothers -- all these things are manifestations of that single basic evil, pride. This is the satanic nature which was implanted in the human race; all who are born of Adam have this congenital twist of pride, the independent ego that evaluates everything only in terms of its importance or its unimportance to self. The universe centers around self, the rival god. That is pride. That is Esau; that is Edom. It can appear in our lives in ten thousand ways, but you will find some common expressions of it here in this book of Obadiah.

One way it may be expressed is in **self-sufficiency** (verses 3, 4):

**... who say in your heart,
"Who will bring me down to the ground?"
Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the stars,
thence I will bring you down, says the Lord. (Obadiah 1:3b-4 RSV)**

Here is the man who says, "Nobody can touch me. Who is going to upset me? My plans are all laid out. I am able to carry through what I set out to do." This attitude of self-sufficient ability is a mark of pride. And the Lord says that "though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, yet I am able to bring you down." . . .

Another form of pride is found in this little book, too (verse 10):

**For the violence done to your brother Jacob,
shame shall cover you,
and you shall be cut off for ever. (Obadiah 1:10 RSV)**

Violence is a form of pride; the man who strikes his wife, a child who has been beaten, a baby whose bones have been broken, and who has been damaged internally. What is behind this violence of the human heart? An unbroken ego, a spoiled and cowardly spirit. Pride is centered only on self and it strikes out against anything that dares to challenge its supreme reign in life. I have been in a Christian home and seen a woman with black eyes and bruises on her legs and arms because her Christian husband, who was a Sunday School teacher, had beaten her. Where does this violence come from? It is from Edom. It is the pride of the flesh.

Here is another form of pride (verse 11):

**On the day that you stood aloof,
on the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them. (Obadiah 1:11 RSV) [You just stood and watched.]**

Indifference is a form of pride. I think this is by far one of the major causes of marital difficulty. In the constant stream of people who have come to see me about problems in their marriage, almost invariably, somewhere along the line, I hear the complaint. "Well, he is simply indifferent to me. He doesn't care about me. He ignores me." Or, "She pays no attention to me. She isn't interested in the things that I am interested in." Isn't it strange that these things can be true in Christian homes? And how quickly it comes in after courtship. During the courtship it is, "What are you thinking about? Tell me what you would like?" But when marriage comes, it is, "Where's dinner? Where is the paper? What's on TV?" And the concern is entirely different. Why? Well, Esau is at work -- that's why. The force in human life that God hates is Esau.

There is yet another form of pride that we read about in Obadiah (verses 12,13):

**But you should not have gloated over the day of your brother
in the day of his misfortune;
you should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah
in the day of their ruin;
you should not have boasted
in the day of distress.
You should not have entered the gate of my people
in the day of his calamity;**

**you should not have gloated over his disaster
in the day of his calamity;
you should not have looted his goods
in the day of his calamity. (Obadiah 1:12-13 RSV)**

God charges Edom with the sin of **gloating** as a manifestation of this basic problem of pride. Notice how you hear this so frequently in children who haven't yet learned to cover up what they feel with a subtle varnish of politeness: "Yay, yah, yah, good for you. You had it coming!" Did you ever say that in your own heart about somebody? "You had it coming." You were gloating over them. Adults learn to disguise this sometimes, but it comes out once in a while. You hear that the boss is sick, and you say, "Nothing trivial, I hope." What do you say when someone fails and you hear about it? Do you ever say, "Well, I told you so. I knew that would happen. I expected it all along"? That is the sense of gloating, you see. I remember reading of the hypochondriac who had written on his tombstone the words, "I told you I was sick."

Now, what causes this? Why do we like to rub salt on another's wounds? What is behind this perverse delight we take in another person's failure or his faults? It is Esau in us. The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. In our pride and unconcern we don't care what happens to someone else, as long as everything is all right with us.

Another manifestation of pride is **exploitation** (verse 14):

**You should not have stood at the parting of the ways
to cut off his fugitives;
you should not have delivered up his survivors
in the day of distress. (Obadiah 1:14 RSV)**

When calamity fell, Edom took advantage of it. The Edomites moved in on a fallen people, a captured people, took advantage of the fact that these were fugitives, and used their trouble and their misery to their own advantage. They delivered up the survivors in the day of Israel's distress. They took unfair advantage. God hates it when we utilize another's weakness or bad luck to our advantage.