

Gloating to Destruction

The Book of Obadiah

Outline

- I. What we know about the man Obadiah.
 - A. Nothing!
 1. We do know his name would have been pronounced “Ovahdrah” because there is no “B” in Hebrew.
 - B. The best guess as to when Obadiah was written in around the time of the Babylonian invasion of Judah.
 - C. The distinctive of Obadiah to all the other prophets is that the prophesy is not directed to Israel, but rather an enemy of Israel, the Edomites.
 1. Obadiah is about warning the Edomites of their imminent judgement and destruction from God.
 2. Historically, the Edomites have been an enemy to Israel.
- II. The main message.
 - A. Edom’s downfall is their pride: “Prides leads to destruction” (Prov. 16:18).
 1. Pride in the New Testament: Luke 18:9-14.
 2. Three characteristics of pride in Luke 18:9.
 - a. Prideful people put their trust in themselves.
 - b. They see themselves as righteous.
 - c. They view others with contempt.
 3. Jesus’s principle regarding pride (Luke 18:14).
 - a. ***Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled...but he who humbles himself will be exalted.***
- III. Understanding Obadiah: The context.
 - A. One must understand the historical relationship between Edom and Judah.
 - B. It all begins in Genesis 25 with the birth of Jacob and Esau.
 1. Jacob and Esau were twins, Esau the oldest (by minutes).
 2. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for some “red stuff” = stew, which becomes the catalyst for a contentious relationship affecting generations to come.

- a. Esau is nicknamed “Edom” and Jacob takes on a new name “Israel”; from their descendants evolve two nations—the Edomites and Israelites.
- b. The bitter contentiousness is passed on to their respective nations, all the way up to the time of Obadiah.

IV. The outline of Obadiah is straight forward:

- 1. Verses 1-9 is the edict of judgement on Edom by God.
- 2. Verses 10-14 The reasons for the edict, the lessons for us are there.
- 3. Verses 14-18 The judgement on Edom.
- 4. Verses 19-21 The future kingdom of the Lord.

V. Indictments against Edom.

- 1. They refused to help a “brother” in need.
 - a. Doing nothing can be a sin.
- 2. They gloated over the Israelite’s misfortune.

Gloat – “*To contemplate or dwell on one's own success or another's misfortune with smugness or malignant pleasure.*”

- 3. They took advantage of the Israelites demise.

VI. Take homes:

- 1. If you hold grudges, your own failure is certain.
Vengeance is Mine says the Lord.....You...leave it alone!
- 2. If you are proud and find pleasure in others calamity, your own success will diminish.
- 3. If you think you’re secure in what you’ve earned, erected and created, your situation is sure to change.

Our earthly security—at any time God can strike it down!

"Gloating to Destruction"
The Book of Obadiah

Proving that “*good things come in small packages*”... Please search for the smallest... shortest book of the Old Testament... it is called Obadiah... one of the so called “minor prophets”...the fourth book right of Daniel.... If the minor prophets were named for their length.... Which they are... Obadiah would be the minor-est.

I confess, going through an entire book every Sunday has been my biggest challenge since I’ve been in pastoral ministry...As one used to “expositorially” go through books of the Bible, verse by verse, maybe six to eight verses a Sunday.... To take in an entire book...even though fairly short in length has been an experience.

It’s nice to get down to just 21 verses!... But these 21 verses are not without their challenge... to understand what they are all about... what God is telling us... takes a bit of exploration and diligence..... at first reading you might read all 21 verses and finish by saying.... “*ok, what am I to do with this?*”

Well...for me... this week getting to dive into this short book has been a pleasure...an adventure...illuminating....

As far as the man Obadiah goes... if we didn’t have much information as to who Joel was...or Amos...we know even less when it comes to Obadiah...we had the name of Joels dad at least...we had the specific time of writing for Amos.... We have NOTHING for Obadiah....Obadiah is the least known of all the prophets...

We don’t know where he was born... exactly when this all takes place... all we know is his name... and we know that there is no “B” in the Hebrew alphabet... so his name was not pronounced “Obadiah”...but rather “Ovhadrah”... which in Hebrew means “*servant of Yahweh*”....that’s all we know.

Obadiah appears some twelve times in the Bible... only one of them is this Obadiah and that is the one in this book we’re looking at this morning...there’s a little disagreement as to the exact date of when this prophesy took place...

It appears that this all takes place around the time of the Babylonian invasion of the Southern Kingdom... remember... the northern kingdom was awaiting a severe judgement in the invasion of Assyria.... It would be nearly a complete devastation of Israel...

Apparently that has taken place... Israel has been conquered for around 130+ years and now the Southern kingdom Judah has been invaded or about to be invaded by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.... The great distinction between Obadiah and all the other prophets is that this is **the only prophesy not concerning judgment of Israel/ Judah...**

It is a judgement to the Edomites...the distant cousins of the Israelites... we will uncover all that this morning... Let me begin with a story...Gary Hamrick told this story...I think it represents the background for this small book of Obadiah...

There was this big city slick lawyer who went on a duck hunting trip in Texas... he shot a duck and the duck fell down into a field that belonged to a farmer with a fence around it... just as the lawyer was about to climb over the fence to get his duck.... The farmer showed up in his pick up truck carrying a shotgun...

“what do ya think you’re doing son?”

“I just shot a duck and it landed in your field and I’ve come to retrieve it”

“Well... that duck landed on my field and when it did it became my duck!”

“Well...I’m a lawyer and I’ll sue you for every penny you have if you won’t let me go over this fence and get MY duck!”

“Listen son... you don’t know how it is done in Texas... In Texas we have the three kick rule.”

“what’s the three kick rule?”

“this is how it works son... I get to kick you three times...then you kick me three times... then I kick you three times and you kick me three times... the last man standing gets the duck...that’s how we do things in Texas.”

The lawyer sized the farmer he was much older...the lawyer thought he was in better shape...*I can take this guy easily...alright old man...you go for it!”*

The farmer got out of his truck... gave him a swift kick in the groin throwing him over... kicked his face almost knocking him out...the guys on the ground and he kicks him in the kidneys really hard.... The lawyer... lying flat on the ground... he says...

“I can’t let this ole coot beat me like that” ...he says...Ok farmer it’s my turn!”

The farmer says *“That’s ok...you can keep the duck.”*

What’s that got to do with Obadiah?... it has a lot to do with Obadiah...you see... The Edomites lived by “the three kick rule”...historically...and consistently... the Edomites have been kicking the Israelites while they are down!...God takes note of all that and basically says...

“Edomites...you’re done!”

I’m going to do something different this morning... I’m going to give you the main message of this book up front... and then we’ll look at the book itself... I believe the main message in Obadiah is pride...and the consequences of pride...Proverbs 16:18 says **“pride leads to destruction”**...and pride is what eventually leads to Edom’s destruction.

We all have it... we all are cursed with it being part of Adam’s race... it is pride that is the root behind our sins...It’s Edom’s great downfall...let’s connect all this to the New Testament....let’s begin in the New Testament...Luke 18... Jesus is telling several parables...

In chapter 18 Jesus tells two parables on the topic of prayer...the first one tells us to pray all the time and not lose heart... beginning at verse 10 is another parable about the attitude of prayer... and He compares the self-righteous Pharisee to the lowly tax collector...

The Pharisee is the poster child for pride... the tax collector for humility.

Verse 9 is the transition and introduction to that parable... Jesus says **And He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves... and they were righteous... and viewed others with contempt...**

Just within that verse we see three important things regarding pride... three characteristics:

1. Proudful people put their trust in themselves....a self-sufficiency, “*I know better than anyone else*”

2. They were righteous...that is they see themselves as righteous.... They see themselves as right... and good.

3. They viewed others with contempt... there is a self-appointed critic attitude among them... very critical of others...

Self-sufficiency... self-righteousness... self-appointed critics.... Notice the overuse of the word “self”... those are characteristics of pride... and God hates that... Jesus goes on to illustrate all that with a most familiar parable... let me read it quickly... I want us to get the principle.

Read Luke 18:10-13

Now here’s the principle:

Read verse 14

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled...but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Think about that for a minute... it says EVERYONE.... And this is a promise... exalt yourself you will be diminished... humble yourself... you will be exalted... Obadiah is about a people who were full of pride...*EXALTING ONESELF*... and as a result... they are no longer a people!.... have you ever met an Edomite?

Back to Obadiah...In verse 3 God through the person of Obadiah tells this people **The arrogance of your heart...** arrogance...*Zagon*... pride....**the arrogance of your heart has deceived you**... So the issue here is pride... and as we will see...as we look into pride we will see the *results* of pride...

Part of the problem many have difficulty understanding what Obadiah is all about... is they do not know the background of the people in the book... the prophesy, as I said is to the people of Edom... not the people of Judah...you can’t understand Obadiah unless you understand the history and relationship between the Edomites and the Israelites...

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau who was the twin brother of Jacob...

It all goes back to some very familiar stories found all the way back in Genesis chapter 25...you must have this background to get Obadiah...

Read **Genesis 25:19-25**

Esau comes out and he is red and hairy... the name Esau in Hebrew actually means “hairy”... I tell you the Old Testament names are something aren’t they?... Amos means “burden”... Esau ‘hairy’....

It goes on to tell us that Esau grows up to be a hunter... became his dad’s favorite because dad Isaac loved to hunt game... Esau was an outdoorsman... he was a man’s man... but there was his slightly younger brother...

Read verse 26

Jacob is born *after* Esau... his name literally means *deceiver/manipulator*... Jacob was very different than Esau... Isaac’s wife Rebecca loved Jacob... he was a mama’s boy... I picture Jacob watching cooking shows while his brothers wrestled with bears and lions...

The story goes on... Jacob in the kitchen cooking a stew while Esau is in the woods hunting...

Read verse 29

As trite as this is sounding... this is important... it helps set the stage for everything that is to come...

Read verses 30

This is the name that goes on to name an entire nation... the land of Edom and the *Edomites*...

Esau is starving... famished from the extended times hunting... he wants some of the “red stuff”...

Read verse 31

This really is a big deal... the birthright is important... The birthright always went to the first born... in that day the birthright did three things for the first born: **1. Twice the inheritance** when the dad died... it was valuable... a legal document entitling the oldest to twice the inheritance.

2. The paternal blessing... right before the dad died, he would pray for the oldest and give him a blessing.... **3. The oldest would assume the patriarchy after the dad died**... the birthright was a huge privilege...

Read verses 32-24

Now think about that... [I could have said “*stew about that*” but I didn’t!]... **In a moment of fleshly desire... Esau compromised a very sacred thing**... what happened is in our human nature... this is not necessarily the lesson of Obadiah... but there is an important lesson here for us... during each one of our lives... there will be times we obtain things that would be considered as “valuable”...

DON'T EXCHANGE THINGS THAT ARE VALUABLE FOR THINGS THAT ARE SINFUL... Being hungry and wanting food is not sinful... but what happened to Esau was that **IN THE MOMENT...** his appetite was master over him...

When we let our appetites operate our decisions and actions... we are headed for disaster... a moment of sexual satisfaction for our reputation and testimony... sinful indulgences that last for a short time sacrificing a long term blessing from God.....

Financing a loan at 25% interest to get the boat...you end up paying a long time for something that really didn't last that long...

What Esau did in a moment of weakness actually changed the course of NOT just his life... but the history of the world!... the results of what we will see in Obadiah is related to this exchange of birthrights!....

From that moment on... Jacob and Esau... by the way... now you know why it isn't Esau and Jacob... Esau bargained his position away for a bowl of red stuff... but from this point on there is strife between the twins....and that strife goes on... intensifies for years...

SO Esau is nicknamed Edom.... And all his descendent from then on are called Edomites... Jacob...has an amazing encounter with God... transforms his life...not all at once...and God gives him a new name...Israel...and all his descendants become "Israelites".

*"No longer will you be a deceiver and manipulator.. from now on you will be **"governed by God"** is what the name Israel means... **Who prevails with God**....the twins rivalry went on for years... and what happened is that Esau's people... carried the strife into their lives... and Jacob's people did the same...*

Eventually the twins make up and make peace between themselves.... But their people continue on in their hate for each other...for the rest of Edom's history....described here in Obadiah.....what is important here is to see that the animosity between the twins was transferred to their descendants... the poison between sibling rivalry poisons all the people around them...

The Edomites through history especially...have animosity towards Israel... thus *the three kick rule*... any and every chance they had... they would kick Israel especially when they were down... Remember Israel are God's children... Edom kicks and kicks Israel until God finally says *"Enough!"*....and God sends Obadiah to confront and condemn the Edomites...

The outline of Obadiah is straight forward:

1-9 is the edict of judgement on Edom by God

10-14 The reasons for the edict... the lessons for us are there.

14-18 The judgement on Edom

19-21 The future kingdom of the Lord

Quickly let's look at what God has against Edom in the 1st nine verses...

Read verses 1-4

Edom thinks they are invincible... they think they are safe... they think they are mighty... those dwellings in the clefts of the cliffs is truly impressive... you may have heard of Petra... some of you may have been there.... Petra is where the Edomites lived...

Petra in the Bible is called by its Hebrew name, Sela in Isaiah 16:1 and 2 Kings 14:7. Both Petra and Sela mean "rock," an appropriate name, since much of the city is carved into sandstone cliffs. Petra is located about fifty miles south of the Dead Sea and 170 miles southwest of modern Amman, Jordan.

Petra's main access is via a narrow crevice called the Siq, which winds for about a mile through mountainous terrain....this winding crevice... the way into Petra is less than 10 feet wide in sections... it doesn't matter how large your army was... you're not going to get more than what fits in a 10foot wide crevice...

So...the Siq provided an excellent natural defense for Petra's inhabitants.... For centuries, Petra seemed secure in its unassailable fortress of rock...here in Obadaiah... the Edomites felt very, very secure...

but today its ruins lie uninhabited, in fulfillment of the prophetic word: **"As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their neighboring towns,' says the LORD, 'so no one will live there; no people will dwell in it'"** (Jeremiah 49:18)..... the result of God's judgment as described right here in Obadiah.

Read verses 5-9

Why is all that going to happen?.... they did not heed Obadiah's warnings in the next section

What Obadiah delivers to the Edomites are three warnings... three reasons for God's judgement to fall on them...and three warnings to all of us as well... remember we are all dealing with pride.... they are found in verses 10-13... three indictments against the Edomites.

Read verse 10

This verses connects all that story regarding Jacob and Esau to what's happening here... the people he's talking to are actually distant cousins of Esau... *All the animosity that went on between Jacob and Esau has been carried on and intensified through you... and because you keep kicking your "brother" Israel.... You are going to be judged...you will be cut off forever!*

God connects the two dissenting people as brothers... *you may have issues between the two of you but you are brothers!*

Read verse 11

What God is pointing out to Edom... is the day that Judah fell to Babylon... that “day” was a horrible day for Israel... The overwhelming forces of the Babylonian army came into Jerusalem and desecrated everything...the temple was destroyed... the buildings... the wall... Israel is being taken captive.... Many killed....slaughtered...

(2 Kings 24:11–14).

“The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign and carried off all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the LORD, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the LORD had foretold. He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land”

God noticed that the Edomites were looking on from a distance... and just watched... God is telling them *“You Edomites... you were just as bad as the Babylonians... you did nothing to come to the aid of your **brothers.**”*... We could say it this way... the first indictment against Edom was

1. They refused to help a “brother” in need.

Edom did nothing but stand there and watch their brothers being brutally conquered.... And this brings up the fact that **it can be a sin to do nothing!**...When you see a need or a problem...and it is within your ability to do something about it and you don’t... God holds us accountable.

This kind of sticks us in the heart doesn’t it?... we may think that sin requires us to DO something... we forget that we can sin *by not* doing something.... Have you ever thought about all the things you should have done but didn’t?... did you ever realize that could have been sin?

As I was studying this verse... one commentator linked this verse with the biblical truth that *“your sins will find you out”*... that’s the verse we throw out at someone who is being sneaky and we know they’re doing something wrong or did something wrong... but we don’t know what.... *Your sins will find you out!*

Now... I’m pretty sure that that is true... **your sins will find you out**... but the context we usually use that is not the context of that verse...Most people don’t even know where that verse is in the Bible!...I didn’t until this week.

It’s in Numbers 32:23... the background of that verse is when Israel finally enters the promised land...they were dividing the land amongst the twelve tribes... ten of the tribes settled on the western side of the Jordan river which is known today as Israel....

But two of the tribes liked it better on the other side of the river... in what is now Jordan... so they asked Moses if they could depart from the other ten tribes and set up home in Jordan... this is what Moses said to them:

Read Numbers 32:20-22

You can go over there and live... but if you ever see Israel being attacked by an enemy... you must come over and help defend them... got it? BUT...

Read verse 23

The context of the verse...the idea is that to do nothing is a sin!... and if you just watch when you could do something... ***God will find you out!***... James 4:17 **...to one who knows to do the right thing and does not do it...to him it is a sin.**

The second indictment penetrates ... **Read verse 12**

2. They gloated over the Israelite's misfortune.

You're glad that your "brothers" ... are going through bad times... difficulties... I think each one of us here would have to confess being guilty of this at some time in our lives... when someone you really don't care for... you don't like them... maybe they were mean to you... maybe their personality rubs you wrong...or maybe... their success has made you a bit jealous...

Maybe they are not pleasant to be around... their personality grates on you... they did something bad to you in the past... and something bad happens to them and secretly or maybe not even secretly you are happy about their misfortune...an inside smirk...you gloat.

To gloat by definition is *to contemplate or dwell on one's own success or another's misfortune with smugness or malignant pleasure.*

We may not show it... we may hide it from others... but there is this tinge of pleasure knowing someone is "paying" for whatever they did to you...*they are getting what they deserve... YAY...*

Proverbs 24:17-18 I'm going to read this from the NIV so that it's easier to understand...this is a perplexing verse... **Do not gloat when your enemy falls, when he stumbles do not let your heart rejoice...OR THE LORD WILL SEE AND DISAPPROVE AND TURN HIS WRATH AWAY FROM HIM...**

This is a conundrum... Proverbs is saying... don't be glad when the person who has done evil towards you... has difficulties... because if you do...God's going to be looking at you in disapproval and will turn His wrath away from the offender... God may not see that person's evil that he did to you because he's looking at how you gloated over his difficulties...

SO... I SHOULDN'T REJOICE OVER ONE WHO HAS WRONGED ME...OVER MY MISFORTUNE...IF I'M SURE NOT TO REJOICE...GOD WILL GET HIM!...BUT IF I DO REJOICE GOD IS GOING TO WITHDRAW HIS HAND...SO I SHOULDN'T REJOICE...*BECAUSE I WANT TO GOD TO GET HIM...*BUT I CAN'T THINK THAT THOUGHT BECAUSE THEN I WOULD BE REJOICING ...and God won't stick it to him which is what I'm really after....

Nobody has had more misfortune than Job... and Job wonders if his misfortune was caused by some sin of his... in Job 31:29-30... Job has been evaluating his heart... and he says **If I have been glad at the upheaval of the one who hated me, or exulted when evil found him...** Job is asking if he has been guilty of that... **but I have not given over my mouth to sin by asking for his life in a curse...** so he says he hasn't been guilty of that...but just the fact that he asks that shows his vulnerability in doing so.... Evaluating his heart....

That's exactly what Obadiah is addressing...(35) **Let the Almighty answer me!...**

One more place... just to show you how interconnected all of Scripture is... Psalm 137...The Psalmist is writing at the time...maybe a few years after the Babylonian invasion... reminiscing over Jerusalem...

**(1) By the rivers of Babylon
There we sat and wept.
When we remembered Zion.**

**Upon the willows we hung our lyres
For there our captors asked us about the words of a song,
and our tormentors asked joyfully saying
sing for us one of the songs of Zion.**

**(7) Remember o Yahweh, against the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem
Who said "tear it down! Tear it down!
to its very foundation.**

Edom gloated the misfortune of their cousins Israel.

The third indictment is found in verse 13...

Read verse 13

The Edomites have moved from bystanders watching their brothers Israel being conquered.... To getting up and going into Jerusalem right after the siege had been completed... the Babylonian army had ransacked Jerusalem... and marched out all the survivors as prisoners to take them to Babylon....as captives.

On that day... the Edomites... enter the gates...and they look around and see the devastation... and they themselves feel triumphant... and the picture is they would begin rummaging through the left over spoils..... [When I think of Edomites I think of termites...like termites on wood!]

3. The third indictment is They were selfish, self-centered (looking out for their interests) and took advantage of the Israelites demise.

They went in behind the Babylonians and looted the city... their cousins personal possessions for their personal gain..... God will judge the Edomites...take a look at the judgment... though it is specifically referring to Edom... it is a preview of God's future judgement on all nations... yet to come...

Read verses 15-18

Have you ever met an Edomite?... are there any Edomites in the world today?... no!...in the 5th century BC the Edomites were driven out of Petra by an invading army... they were conquered... eventually verse 18 became history “**so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau.**”

70 AD...we have many historical accounts of the great fall of Israel by the Roman Empire ... what's really interesting is... that as the Romans conquered Jerusalem... guess who came to the aid of the Israelites?....

We don't find this in the Bible... but in the historical record... 20,000 Edomites...attempted to help out the Israelites... instead... the last of them were encircled by the Romans and were burned in fire.... Just as Obadiah prophesied hundreds of years earlier... **For Yahweh has spoken!**

Take homes:

1. If you hold grudges, your own failure is certain.

Vengeance is Mine says the Lord.....You...leave it alone!

2. If you are proud and find pleasure in others calamity...your own success will diminish.

3. If you think you're secure in what you've earned, erected and created... your situation is sure to change....take a look at the residents in Petra today!

My security in the world?—at any time God can cut us down...