

What Bitterness Leads To Edom is Doomed Obadiah 1 – 4

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We have now arrived at the fourth book of the Minor Prophets, the book of Obadiah. This is the shortest book in the Old Testament consisting of only one chapter of 21 verses.

Where it is placed in the Bible makes no sense if you are wanting to arrange the Minor Prophets chronologically.

We have just completed Amos. His ministry was to the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 765 – 760 BC. Both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms still exist. But Obadiah is about the fall of Jerusalem, the exile to Babylon and events surrounding that.

Minor Prophets

- Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC
- Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC
- Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC
- Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC
- Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC
- Micah – Judah 750 – 686 BC
- Nahum – Assyria 661 BC
- Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC

- Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC
- Haggai – Judah 520 BC
- Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

Obadiah 1

“The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord GOD says concerning Edom— We have heard a report from the LORD, And a messenger has been sent among the nations saying, “rise, and let’s go up against her for battle”—” (NASB 2020)

What do we know about Obadiah? Not a lot. We do know his name means “a servant of the LORD; worshiper of Jehovah.” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 187)

There are 13 Obadiah’s referenced in the Old Testament. But knowing if any of them, other than the one referenced in verse 1, is responsible for this book, is difficult to impossible to determine.

There are no quotations from Obadiah anywhere in the New Testament.

We also know this book is specifically to Edom, but there may be more to it. We will learn from our study that he is talking about “Edom’s behavior during the Babylonian deportation that followed the conquest of Jerusalem.” (Wolff 1986, 19)

Could Obadiah have prophesied this hundreds of year before the event? Absolutely. Was he ministering after Babylon’s conquest in 586 BC or before? Good question. There are a couple of views and either one could be correct.

What Do the Rabbi’s Think?

Obadiah was a proselyte of Edomite origin (Sanh. 39b), and is said to have been a descendant of Eliphaz, the friend of Job (Yalk. ii. 549). He is identified with the Obadiah who prophesied against Edom (Ob. 1). It is said that he was chosen to prophesy against Edom because he was himself an Edomite. Moreover, having lived with two such godless persons as Ahab and Jezebel without learning to act as they did, he seemed the most suitable person to prophesy against Esau (Edom), who, having been brought up by two pious persons, Isaac and Rebekah, had not learned to imitate their good deeds. Obadiah is supposed to have received the gift of prophecy for having hidden the hundred prophets from the persecution of Jezebel (1 Kings 18:4). (Singer 1901 - 1906, 369)

Using the date connected with this would mean 848 BC or thereabouts meaning when Obadiah makes a reference to the Day of the Lord (Obadiah 15), he is the first prophet to do so.

There are also those who believe he ministered after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Accordingly, most refer the strong terms of vv. 11–14 to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Some indeed who opt for the early date regard the verses as predictive. But this is to ignore the rhetorical nature of the passage as a dramatic representation of a past event, as the plainer language of vv. 11, 15b reveals. The Edomites were certainly associated with the events of 587, as later recriminations attest, e.g., Ps. 137:7; Lam. 4:21f.; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:5f. 1 Esdras 4:45 preserves a tradition that “the Edomites burned the temple when Judah was devastated by the Chaldeans.” (Allen 1976, 129)

This comment is from the apocryphal book of 1 Esdras. Zerubbabel is speaking to Darius.

1 Esdras 4:43–46

“Then he said to the king, “Remember the vow that you made on the day when you became king, to build Jerusalem, and to send back all the vessels that were taken from Jerusalem, which Cyrus set apart when he began to destroy Babylon, and vowed to send them back there. You also vowed to build the temple, which the Edomites burned when Judea was laid waste by the Chaldeans. And now, O lord the king, this

is what I ask and request of you, and this befits your greatness. I pray therefore that you fulfill the vow whose fulfillment you vowed to the King of heaven with your own lips.” (NRSV)

The destruction of the temple by the Edomites may have some substance to it. (Myers 2008, 56-57)

I like the earlier dating of Obadiah leaning more towards this being the faithful Obadiah who worked for Ahab. But nothing changes in the prophecy contingent upon the view.

One would be detailed prophecy ahead of time, the other a mix of detailed prophecy with some history thrown in.

We do know, this is primarily about Edom, the descendants of Esau, brother of Jacob/Israel.

It is a prima facie exhibit of how bitterness and anger can destroy you if you let it control your life.

We know from elsewhere in scripture that Edom participated with Babylon in the fall and sacking of Jerusalem. “Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!”” (Psalm 137:7, ESV)

Edomites, it is thought, infiltrated the south of Judah and assisted the Babylonians when Jerusalem fell, thereafter continuing to make life difficult for those left in the ruins of Jerusalem once the walls had been destroyed. (Barton 2011, 120)

And then there are the allegations made in 1 Esdras that they were the ones who torched the Temple. Where did this people come from and why are they so angry the Jews to the degree that they become a byword for judgment of the nations, get tied into Mystery Babylon and may be a lesson for today?

We are going to look at what the scriptures say and then add some background from the Aramaic Bible.

This way we can obtain a little better picture about the Edomites/Idumeans.

Genesis 25:19–34

“These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.” When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.” (ESV)

Esau is the father of the Edomites, and his descendants never forgot about the sale of the birthright, or the treachery of Jacob that we read about in Genesis 27 when he stole the blessing from Esau by impersonating him. The origin of the ongoing hatred is seen in this act.

It is possible though that there is much more to the story we can learn by looking at one of the Targums (Aramaic Bible) of Genesis.

Additional detail we do not get in the Hebrew version, but we see in the Aramaic version:

- Rebekah went and sought wisdom from Shem about the pregnancy
- The older will be subjected to the younger as long as the younger followed the law
- Esau was born with hair, a beard, teeth and molars (?)
- Esau became a hunter of animals and men
- Esau is the one who killed Nimrod and his son Henoch
- Jacob was perfect in his works and ministered in the schoolhouse of Eber seeking the Lord
- Isaac loved Esau because of Esau's deception
- Jacob made the stew for his dad to comfort him the day Abraham died, Esau came in and saw it after having spent the day seriously sinning.
- Practiced idolatry
- Committed murder
- Had sex with another man's betrothed wife
- He denied the resurrection
- He despised the birthright

Jewish readers would be aware of that non-canonical background.

Genesis 25:22–34

"The children pushed one another in her womb like men doing battle. And she said, "If such is the distress of one who gives birth, why then do I have children?" And she went to the schoolhouse of Shem the Great to beseech mercy from before the Lord. And the Lord said to her, "Two peoples are in your womb, and two kingdoms (issued) from your womb shall be separated; and one kingdom shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall be subjected to the younger if the children of the younger keep the commandments of the Law. When the two hundred and seventy days of her pregnancy for giving birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came red, like a hairy cloak all over, and they called his name Esau, because he was born fully completed, with hair of the head, beard, teeth, and molars. Then his brother came forth, his hand holding on to Esau's heel; so they called his name Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew, Esau became a skilled hunter (able) to hunt birds and wild beasts, a man who would go out into the field to kill people. It was he who killed Nimrod and his son Henoch. But Jacob became a man (who was) perfect in his works, ministering in the schoolhouse of Eber, seeking instruction from before the Lord. Isaac loved Esau, because there were deceptive words in his mouth; but Rebekah loved Jacob. The day Abraham died, Jacob boiled dishes of lentils and went to comfort his father. Esau came from the country, and he was exhausted because he had committed five transgressions that day: he had practiced idolatry; he had shed innocent blood; he had gone in to a betrothed maiden; he had denied the life of the world to come, and had despised the birthright. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me taste, I pray, of that red dish, for I am exhausted." Therefore they called him Edom. Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today as on the day you are to inherit." And Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die, and I shall not live again in another world; so of what use is the birthright to me or a portion in the world <to come>?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me as on that day." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Jacob then gave bread and a dish of lentils to Esau; he ate and drank, and he rose and went away. Thus Esau despised the birthright and the portion of the world to come." (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1992, Genesis 25:22-34)

I am including this so we have some idea of what the Jews may have been thinking as they read Obadiah.

They would know about the anger and the bitterness and animosity from their brothers.

This we pick up very clearly from the Biblical text.

Genesis 27:36–41

“Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: “Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck.” Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”” (ESV)

Genesis 27:41

“And Esau harbored hatred in his heart against his brother Jacob because of the order of blessings with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said to himself, “I will not do as Cain did, who killed Abel while his father was alive; but his father then begot Seth. Rather, I will restrain myself until the time when the days of mourning for the death of my father come, and then I will kill my brother Jacob, and I will be murderer and heir.”” (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1992, Genesis 27:41)

Got it, bitterness and hatred begin, and it has continued too today.

Esau eventually settled in the area south and east of the Dead Sea in an area near Mount Seir. Today it would be southern Jordan.

The Edomites are descendants of Isaac, they are family, and they never got over what Jacob did. Here are some examples of that bitterness and hatred. They are not Arabs.

- When Israel was in the process of making the final move into the promised land and coming up the Kings Highway south and east of the Dead Sea, Israel asked permission to pass through Edom and were refused. (Numbers 20:17 – 21).
- Edom fought against Saul, but they were conquered under David (2 Samuel 8:14) and Solomon.
- Edom joined with Moab and Ammon to attack King Jehoshaphat but were defeated by God as His people sang praises to Him (2 Chronicles 20:1 – 27).
- They rebelled against Judah when Jehoram was King (2 Kings 8:20 – 22).
- This back and forth went on for years.

Edom sided with Babylon, something Israel did not forget. Thus, what we will see here in Obadiah and what Ezekiel also prophesied in Ezekiel 25:12 – 14.

Later, they became known as Idumeans, spoilers, John Hyrcanus finally subjugated them in 109 BC.

Herod was an Idumean.

2 Maccabees 10:15–17

“Besides this, the Idumeans, who had control of important strongholds, were harassing the Jews; they received those who were banished from Jerusalem, and endeavored to keep up the war. But Maccabeus and his forces, after making solemn supplication and imploring God to fight on their side, rushed to the strongholds of the Idumeans. Attacking them vigorously, they gained possession of the places, and beat off all who fought upon the wall, and slaughtered those whom they encountered, killing no fewer than twenty thousand.” (NRSV)

We will learn that this book is specific to a people and a time, yet it is also a type of what the Lord will do to the nations in judgement at the end of the age. As we have learned in our study of the Minor Prophets so far, they do speak to the current day but also a future day. Obadiah will be no different.

There are some who also believe the first 14 verses may also speak about Mystery Babylon based on some Rabbinical thought and also the non-canonical book, Gad the Seer. In chapter 2 of Gad, there is a reference to Edom being Rome which may open up the door to these ideas.

Gad the Seer

Woe to you, O Edom, that sits in the land of Kittim (Daniel 11:30) [Rome] in the north of the [Mediterranean] sea. For your destroyers will emerge from a terrible nation [Ottoman Empire destroyed the Byzantine Empire]. They will not even leave you a remnant. For you have said: 'I sit on high, and only I have a covenant with the God of gods, for the LORD chose me instead of His holy people, for He abhorred them. And His former people, despised and rejected, did not truly know the LORD [the Father] because they did not know His image [the Son]. We are truly wise and intelligent; we know the LORD and His Law, we know His image [the Son] and presence [the Holy Spirit].' But thus says the LORD: 'Because you rose up in pride to brag about the God of gods, know that you will perish in your conceitedness. (Johnson 2016, 32)

"Obadiah takes the general attitude of Edom towards the people of Jehovah as the groundwork of his prophecy, regards the judgment upon Edom as one feature in the universal judgment upon all nations (cf. vv. 15, 16), proclaims in the destruction of the power of Edom the overthrow of the power of all nations hostile to God, and in the final elevation and re-establishment of Israel in the holy land foretells the completion of the sovereignty of Jehovah, i.e., of the kingdom of God, as dominion over all nations..." (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 227-228)

Outline

- 1 – Introduction
- 2 – 4 Message #1
- 5 – 9 Message #2
- 10 – 14 Message #3
- 15 – 21 Salvation, judgement, the Day of the Lord is near and the Gaza war (1948 – Today)

At one level, verses 1 – 14 are all about Edom, at another level, they are a picture of judgment that is coming upon all of the nations, and then possibly they are also about judgment on Mystery Babylon. Starting in verse 15, we will go into what is the far future for Obadiah, but some of it, for us, is in the recent past, 1948, and continues on into the present.

Obadiah 1–4

"The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord GOD says concerning Edom— We have heard a report from the LORD, And a messenger has been sent among the nations saying, "rise, and let's go up against her for battle"— "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised. The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, The one who lives in the clefts of the rock, On the height of his dwelling place, Who says in his heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?' Though you make your home high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," declares the LORD." (NASB 2020)

At the very beginning of his prophecy, Obadiah tells us point blank that he received this direct from YAHWEH. He has been in the Divine Council and God has given him a specific message to the descendants of Esau.

His prophecy is described as a revelation, a technical term which has to do primarily with seeing a vision, but widened to mean simply a divine communication to a prophet. (Allen 1976, 144)

As we have already seen, Esau and Jacob, even though brothers, hardly acted like it. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. In the family at that time, the one with the birthright was the one who would

be the priest for the family and had the relationship with YAHWEH. Esau did not want to be spiritual, but instead opted for life in the flesh.

Life in the flesh has a distinct meaning for those of us who are believers, we are told in the scriptures that we are to avoid that lifestyle.

Esau opted for that lifestyle. He was oriented to meeting his own desires and he was not interested in being the priest for the family.

We see this contrast of a flesh-oriented life versus one of the spirit-led life in Galatians.

Galatians 5:16–24

“But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (NET 2nd ed.)

These are the two natures of the believer, the new nature and the old nature. They are opposed to each other. Esau pictures the flesh, the old nature, and Jacob pictures the spirit, the new nature. (McGee 1997, 727)

I am reminded of a promise that was made to Abraham in Genesis 12 when YAHWEH first called him to follow Him.

Genesis 12:1–3

“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse**, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”” (ESV)

God meant it when He said it to Abram, He still means it today too. Edom, as a nation, has placed itself on the wrong side of the equation.

Every world power that has controlled and occupied the land of Israel has become a former world power, or has lost power, such as Britain. (Koenig 2006, Kindle Location 66)

Obadiah 1b

“...We have heard a report from the LORD, And a messenger has been sent among the nations saying, “rise, and let’s go up against her for battle”—” (NASB 2020)

When the pronouncement was made by YAHWEH about Edom, Obadiah was one of many who heard it. He was in the Divine Council when it was given, and he lets that slip by using the plural “we have heard...”

This report is from “the Lord,” it is from YAHWEH, the creator and ruler of the universe.

By it Obadiah indicates that he has been commissioned by the Lord Yahweh to deliver the following divine speech. (Raabe 2008, 106)

The message of Obadiah is designed to reassure us. Sometimes justice catches up with evil people in this life; sometimes it doesn't. But justice will be done. It may not happen until this life is over and Jesus returns, but it will be done.

We look at the state of the Christian church in our land and wonder whether anything can arrest its decline. There may be times of revival just around the corner (and surely all Christians will want to pray, in submission to God's will, for such God-glorifying times). Alternatively, such times may lie in the more distant future. It is even possible that we have had the last revival before Christ's return. But he will return. (Thomson 2016, 18)

He is a prophet called by God, he had the interview, and he is reporting what he heard in the council. He is telling what was heard by the entire council when it was pronounced by YAHWEH. This may not be important to Edom, but for the Jew reading this, that provides a key piece of information regarding the resume of Obadiah. He is a Prophet of God and thus on Twitter, he receives the blue check mark next to his name. Validated.

What he hears is not good news for Edom. It is a declaration of war on Edom by YAHWEH. It is also much more than that, He is letting all of the nations know about this.

All of the nations are called to make war on Edom. Edom lives in the flesh, they are a type of the world. For the believer, there is no such thing as peace with the world. "The fact that it is the nations generally that are here summoned to make war upon Edom, and not only one nation in particular, points at once to the fact that Edom is regarded as a type of the power of the world, and its hostility to God, the destruction of which is here foretold." There will never be peace with the world for the believer. This is also reflected with Amalek. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 236)

Amalek, who was born to Esau's son Eliphaz and his concubine Timna, was held up earlier by the Lord as a type of the world.

While the nation was in the wilderness, YAHWEH miraculously supplied water to the nation. This attracted the attention of Amalek who attacked Israel at Rephidim. The event was a miracle. As long as Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed against Amalek, but when he put his hands down, the tide would turn. So, Aaron and Hur came alongside and supported his hands in order for victory to be achieved. The world, Amalek, was defeated only by other brothers coming alongside to help.

Exodus 17:13–16

"So Joshua destroyed Amalek and his army with the sword. The LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in Joshua's hearing; for I will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Moses built an altar, and he called it "The LORD is my Banner," for he said, "For a hand was lifted up to the throne of the LORD—that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (NET 2nd ed.)

The lesson for us is simple, if we want victory over the flesh and the world, it is important for us to have help from brothers and sisters who can come alongside and hold up our hands too.

War will always be the order of the day with Amalek, the world. Amalek is a descendant of Esau. Edom, the descendants of Esau, are a type of the power of the world. Peace is impossible.

God invites others to join in the fight. The report is from "the Lord." "The title identifies Yahweh as the master and ruler of the world, by virtue of which he has the authority to place demands on Edom and the nations and to judge them. Edom together with all nations is accountable to "the Lord Yahweh." (Raabe 2008, 106)

It's bad enough to have God personally say He is declaring war on you, but then to have Him tell everyone else about this declaration...that is bad enough. But it is what He says here, He issues an invitation, an invitation to join in with Him on this declaration of war against Edom.

Edom has mistreated God's people, so God has personally declared war on them and invited the rest of the world to join in. "...And a messenger has been sent among the nations saying, "rise, and let's go up against her for battle"—" (Obadiah 1b, NASB 2020)

Obadiah 2

"Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised." (NASB 2020)

The nation of Edom is going to be judged. It is insignificant, small, vulnerable, incapable of defending itself. "The phrase designates, rather, the insignificant and feeble status that Yahweh has given Edom among the nations." (Raabe 2008, 121)

Historically, God did use multiple nations to humble Edom. They included the Nabateans, the Jews (John Hyrcanus) and the Romans.

Edom though, reflecting a worldly viewpoint, has a pride problem. God is determined to end that problem. He intends to make them small and despised. Both of these terms are emphatic in the Hebrew.

It would not be accidental that other nations would despise her; it would be the Lord's doing. The force of the Hebrew verb refers not to past action but to a certain, future action. Ironically, Edom wanted desperately to be an equal among the nations, but none regarded her as such. (Pfeiffer 1962, Ob 2)

The use of the word "despised" by Obadiah is not a coincidence. Recall again what we see in Genesis 25

Genesis 25:34

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus **Esau despised his birthright.**" (NRSV)

What we see in the scriptures is when God's word is rejected, it is equated with "despising" His word. Nathan the prophet lets us know that David provided us an example of this.

2 Samuel 12:9

"Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites." (NRSV)

When we sin by turning away from what His word says and seek our own will, we are despising Him and His Word. But David realized what he had done and later wrote. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, **you will not despise.**" (Psalm 51:17, ESV)

Thanks to what Jesus did for us on the cross, when we blow it, we can return to fellowship with Him by confessing our sin and repenting of it.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (ESV)

His answer to our despising His Word by our sin, our contrite and broken heart, as the Psalmist tells us, is not something that God despises. He makes the path for us through His Son to return to fellowship.

Edom though, has a serious multigenerational pride problem. Unresolved bitterness and the pride that goes along with it has created a problem for them.

Obadiah 3

““The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, The one who lives in the clefts of the rock, On the height of his dwelling place, Who says in his heart, ‘Who will bring me down to earth?’” (NASB 2020)

Now we get the why – arrogance, pride. This pride has deceived the people of Edom. Pride does that, when we begin to believe the press clippings about us, we are on a dangerous path. This tends to lead to pride which, as we see here, leads us to lie to ourselves about our own self-worth. We begin to think we are more important than we truly are.

In our culture, many of those who act in this manner we lionize as shrewd politicians, or outstanding athletes. But they all have a day of reckoning. There is always someone who is better. But pride blinds to that. We had a guy on our wrestling team in High School who was intimidating. He look as if he had been sculpted from clay. His shtick was intimidation, and that was all he had because he couldn’t wrestle very well.

For the people of Edom, they construction process made use of the naturally rugged terrain to construct buildings and cities that were hard to get to.

This can be seen in the remains of the cities Bozrah and Sela in Edom.

Bozrah



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

The Lord knows what Edom’s reaction will be to the announcement that they are going to be cut down to size: ‘No way!’ But they have been ‘deceived’. That is to say, they have been convinced that something is true when in fact it isn’t. The thing about being deceived is that, by definition, you don’t realize it. (Thomson 2016, 22)

There is one specific individual behind the deception. When we lie to ourselves about ourselves, most of the time, the original idea starts with a suggestion.

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (ESV)

We are owners of deceitful hearts. This is because of Genesis 3 and the fall. All Satan has to do is make a suggestion. We need to be using the shield of faith as a defense, but if there is a chink in the armor.

Ephesians 6:16

“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;” (ESV)

Genesis 3:13

“Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”” (ESV)

Galatians 6:7

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” (ESV)

All of us are prone to being deceived. Marketers know this, political parties know this, the media knows this and so does the enemy.

1 John 4:4

“You are from God, little children, and have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Obadiah 4

““Though you make your home high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

“The modern developed world has become skeptical of any belief that requires “humility” of human beings, rightly seeing that such a belief can become a tool for enforcing subservience to what is not God at all but a human tyranny. Furthermore, most modern people have come to believe that there is a perfectly proper “pride” that human flourishing needs to cultivate: a sense of one’s own (God-given) place in the world that affirms one’s achievements and evaluates them justly.” (Barton 2011, 138)

In God’s eyes, that is pride, it is rebellion, it is despising Him, the work of Christ on the cross and His word. The terms that Obadiah uses here are reminiscent about the pride of another individual.

Isaiah 14:13–17

“For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths. Everyone there will stare at you and ask, ‘Can this be the one who shook the earth and made the kingdoms of the world tremble? Is this the one who destroyed the world and made it into a wasteland? Is this the king who demolished the world’s greatest cities and had no mercy on his prisoners?’” (NLT)

For the people of Edom, no matter how high, how impregnable how defensively oriented they make their homes, God will bring them down. This is emphasized by the final statement in verse 4, “declares the Lord.”

God has declared war on Edom, He has declared war on the flesh, and He will bring the pride of Edom and the pride of man down.

Our only hope is to seek Him while we still can.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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