

The Books of Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah

Lesson 1: The Pride of Edom Brought Low -- Obadiah 1-21

There is a particular kind of satisfaction that is ugly precisely because it feels so good. It is the quiet pleasure we take when someone who has wronged us, or simply someone we resent, finally stumbles. We would never say it out loud, but a small voice inside whispers, "Good. They had it coming." Obadiah is a book about that voice. It is the shortest book in the Old Testament, only twenty-one verses, and almost every line is aimed at a nation that stood on a hill and smiled while its brother was being destroyed.

The nation is Edom, the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. The family feud that began in Genesis between two brothers in one womb had hardened, over the centuries, into a national grudge. Edom lived high in the red rock cliffs south of the Dead Sea, in fortress cities carved into stone, and they felt untouchable. "Who can bring me down to the ground?" was the mood of the place. When Babylon came and tore Jerusalem apart, Edom did not lift a finger to help their brother Judah. Worse, they cheered. They looted. They stood at the crossroads and handed fleeing survivors back to the enemy.

So God sent a prophet with a message that is mostly bad news for Edom and mostly good news for everyone who has ever felt small while the proud seemed to win. The God who sees from heaven had watched it all. He had seen the gloating, the looting, the cruelty dressed up as cleverness. And He announced, in the plainest terms, that pride goes before a fall, that the measure we use will be measured back to us, and that the day is coming when the nations will answer to Him.

This is not a comfortable book, and it is not meant to be. It holds up a mirror. Before we shake our heads at Edom, Obadiah quietly asks whether we have ever stood on our own little cliff, secure and self-satisfied, looking down on someone whose life was falling apart. The good news at the end is breathtaking: the kingdom will belong to the Lord. Not to the proud, not to the cruel, not to the empires that look unbeatable, but to God Himself. For anyone weary of watching arrogance prosper, those final words are pure hope.

Group Discussion: Edom felt completely secure, perched in the high rocks, certain that no one could touch them. Where do people today look for that same sense of security, and why does the feeling of being untouchable so often go hand in hand with pride?

Personal Reflection: Obadiah condemns Edom for standing by, and even gloating, on the day of their brother's trouble. Can you think of a time you felt a flicker of satisfaction at someone else's downfall? What does that reaction reveal about your own heart, and what would it look like to bring it honestly to God?

Read Obadiah 1-21

Study Questions

1. The vision opens with God declaring that He has made Edom “small among the nations” and that they will be “utterly despised” (vv. 1–2). What does it tell us about God that He sets Himself against national pride and arrogance, and how does this opening set the tone for everything that follows?
2. Edom said in their heart, “Who will bring me down to the ground?” (v. 3). Where are you most tempted to feel self-sufficient and untouchable, quietly assuming you have your life secured without much need of God?
3. God says the pride of Edom’s heart has “deceived” them (v. 3), and that even though they soar like an eagle and nest among the stars, He will bring them down (v. 4). How does pride deceive a person, and why is no height of human achievement or security actually beyond God’s reach?
4. Verse 4 pictures Edom nesting “among the stars,” only to be brought down by God. What is one “high place” of accomplishment, reputation, or self-reliance where you would do well to remember that everything you have is held in God’s hand?
5. Edom is condemned not only for what they did but for what they did to family: “because of the violence done to your brother Jacob” (v. 10). Why does God take the betrayal of a brother so seriously, and what does this reveal about His concern for how we treat those bound to us?

6. Verses 11–14 describe Edom standing aloof, gloating, looting, and even handing over survivors on the day of Judah’s disaster. Which of these responses to another person’s trouble (standing aloof, quietly gloating, taking advantage, or making things worse) do you most need to guard your own heart against?
7. At the center of the book stands a sober principle: “As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head” (v. 15). How does this truth about reaping what we sow run throughout Scripture, and how does it function as both a warning and a comfort?
8. Obadiah warns about “the day of the Lord” drawing near on all the nations (v. 15). How does living with an awareness that God will one day call every person and nation to account reshape the way you treat people now, especially those who cannot pay you back?
9. The book ends with a stunning reversal: “the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (v. 21). Edom trusted in fortresses and gloated over a fallen city, but the last word belongs to God’s reign, not to human empires. How is this promise fulfilled in Christ and His church rather than in any earthly, political kingdom, and why does that distinction matter for how we read the prophets?
10. Look back over the whole of Obadiah, from Edom’s proud security to the Lord’s unshakable kingdom. Name one specific way Jesus is using this small book to form humility in you, to soften any gloating in your heart, and to anchor your hope in His reign rather than in anything you could build for yourself.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Proverbs 16:18, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall; Galatians 6:7, do not be deceived, a man reaps what he sows; Luke 14:11, whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted; Romans 12:19-21, leave room for the wrath of God and overcome evil with good; Daniel 2:44, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.

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