

OBADIAH

Lesson 5

Pride And The Day Of The Lord

Obadiah 15-21

I. INTRODUCTION

A. We are concluding our study of the Book of Obadiah today. Of the five messages, this one has been the most difficult to study and preach. I just wish I had more time to teach you why I came up with this particular interpretation of verses 15-21, but for now you will just have to chew on the things I teach you and make some decisions for yourself. Obadiah 15-21 deals with eschatology which is the study of last things. In my opinion, it should be studied last and then none of us can be absolutely sure of our interpretation.

B. Think about this sermon this way. You will probably never hear another message on these seven verses again, and it is an opportunity for you to be exposed to a theological system that you can challenge in your own study in the future.

II. SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

A. Obadiah was a prophet who prophesied against the little country of Edom. Edom's genetic roots were traced all the way back to Esau who was the twin brother of Jacob. Esau hated Jacob because Jacob stole the birthright from Esau. Israel's roots were traced back to Jacob. This animosity between Esau and Jacob developed a hatred between the Edomites and the Israelites over the centuries.

B. Edom's basic problem was pride (3a). ***Obadiah 3a: "The pride of your heart has deceived you."*** Because they had the city of Petra, the strongest fortress in the ancient world, they thought they were unconquerable. They welled up with pride and said, "Who can bring us down?" God took up the challenge and said, "I will bring you down."

C. In verses 5-10 we are told Edom's pride was in its wealth, its alliances, its intelligence and its military. Edom would be deceived by its allies and forced into a situation which would expose their armies to their so-called friends and they would slaughter them, greatly weakening the military of Edom, allowing them to be open prey for the armies of Nebuchadnezzar which would conquer them in 582 B.C. While Edom would survive as a nation for hundreds of years, from this time the nation would be in decline and pass out of existence in 70 A.D. when finally captured by the Romans.

D. In verses 10-14, we are told generally of the sin of which Edom was guilty. They did violence against their blood brother Israel. In their pride and hatred of Israel, they stood by and did nothing as they saw Jerusalem being destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies in 587 B.C. The Edomites went further and

rejoiced and gloated in Judah's fall. With fiendish delight they could not get enough of seeing Israel squirm in their suffering. Then the Edomites became very bold and entered the city as scavengers and looted Jerusalem of what the Babylonians did not take. Yet, they did not stop there. Those Jews fleeing from the ravages of war were encountered at some major crossroads outside of Jerusalem by the Edomites and were killed or sold into slavery.

E. Now in verses 15-21, Obadiah gives the final account of God's judgment on Edom and the surrounding nations. He also tells of God's blessing on Israel.

III. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL'S ENEMIES 15-16

A. The Day of the Lord's Judgment (15a): ***"The day of the LORD is near for all nations."***

1. This is a prophecy concerning the Day of the Lord. This prophecy, as many prophecies, has a near and far fulfillment; it has a location application and a universal application; it has a present fulfillment and a future fulfillment.

2. The Day of the Lord may refer to anytime God judges a nation by entering into world affairs. Any nation facing any judgment could say the Day of the Lord is "near" or "upon" them whether it be the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., the demise of Edom in 582 B.C., the fall of Babylon, the crumbling of Rome, the Civil War in America, World Wars I and II, or the Vietnam War.

3. But the Day of the Lord may also have a future and universal aspect:

1) it will occur when Christ returns in His second advent to fight for Israel (Zech. 14:1-5);

Zech. 14:1-5: "A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olive east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olive will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the day of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

2) it will occur to destroy "the man of lawlessness," the Anti-Christ (II Thess. 2:1-5);

II Thess. 2:1-5: “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man is doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

It will come to destroy a world which is crying “peace and safety” (I Thess. 5:1-2). ***I Thess. 5:1-2: “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”*** The Day of the Lord, then, is future and would occur in a time span covering the Tribulation period, the earthly Messianic kingdom and ultimately the New Heavens and New Earth (II Pet. 3:10). ***II Pet. 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”***

4. Every judgment of the Lord on a nation is a forerunner of, and a guarantee of the great day of judgment at the second advent of Christ. Each little judgment is setting the stage for the final, great judgment. ILLUSTRATION: Earthquake.

ILLUSTRATION: In California, everybody is waiting for the big earthquake. Each little earthquake is just a reminder that the big one is coming and perhaps soon.

5. Edom was about to experience a mighty judgment from God. The Day of the Lord was near; it was upon them. Actually, Edom did not experience judgment until five years after Jerusalem fell. But Obadiah broadens this judgment “for all nations.” In Obadiah’s time, all the nations around Jerusalem and the nation of Israel would be judged by King Nebuchadnezzar (Isa. 34:2).

6. Yet with a telescopic lens, Obadiah seems to look down through history to that final day of the Lord when Jesus returns. This little day of the Lord foreshadows the great Day of the Lord. Edom’s pride was broken and one day world pride will be broken.

B. The Justice Principle in Judgment (15b): ***“As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.”***

1. God’s judgment on Edom would not be based on whim or caprice but on His strict justice. Men would be judged on their works and their works would be found inadequate.

2. The unchanging principle of judgment is: As you have treated others, you shall be treated. God's judgments on Edom corresponded to its crimes. What had been done to Judah would be done to them:

- 1) Edom looted Jerusalem, so it would be looted by Babylon;
- 2) Edom killed Judean fugitives, so it would be slaughtered;
- 3) Edom handed over Judean survivors for slavery to the enemy, so Edom's allies deceived them and sold them into slavery; and
- 4) Edom rejoiced over Judah's losses, so it was covered with shame and destroyed.

3. This is a New Testament principle as well (Gal. 5:7-8). ***Gal. 6:7-8: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."*** If we sow bitterness, we get bitterness in return. If we sow jealousy, we get jealousy as our payment. If we sow hatred, we get hatred in return. Jesus said it another way, ***"He who lives by the sword dies by the sword."***

C. The Completeness of Judgment (16): ***"Just as you drank on my holy hill, so all nations will drink continually; they will drink and drink and be as if they had never been."***

1. When Edom entered the city of Jerusalem, they were involved in a drunken orgy and, perhaps, even inside the destroyed sacred temple of the Jews. These Edomites drank lustily, sang boisterously, danced wildly and cursed profusely Jehovah-God. Why? They were convinced their false gods were superior to Israel's Jehovah-God. At last the Edomites were superior to Israel.

2. Yet, Edom is just representative of all the heathen nations. Any and all nations who opposed God's people will drink the bitter cup of judgment.

3. God's judgment always wipes out proud nations - Babylon, Greece, Rome and most of all arrogant Edom. Edom would be as though it had never been. NOTE. Edom's judgment came in stages. It was conquered by the Babylonians in 582 B.C. and from that time the nation was on the wane. In the 5th century, the nation was captured by the Nabateans from Egypt. Then in 120 B.C., Edomites were forced into Judaism by the Maccabees. And in 70 A.D., the Edomites linked up with the Jews to fight the Roman armies under General Titus. The Edomites hated the Jews and began to fight them before they together could fight the Romans. Thousands of Jews were killed and they were so weakened militarily that the Romans wiped out the remaining Edomites. From that time on they ceased to exist as a nation. NOTE. Today Edom is part of Jordan

and there are little pockets of people who claim their descent back to Esau.

IV. GOD'S BLESSINGS ON ISRAEL'S PEOPLE 17-21

A. A Delivered People (17): ***“But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance.”***

1. Obadiah now contrasts the judgment on Edom and the blessing on Israel. The “but” was music to the ears of the Israelites who at that moment were suffering as they saw Nebuchadnezzar’s armies on the march and the certain doom of Jerusalem. This prophecy gives hope to the Jews who were going into captivity for 70 years in Babylon because of their disobedience to Jehovah-God.

2. To these Jews who were hearing Obadiah’s prophecy, they understood that this prophecy was for them and their generation. While they would be carried into captivity, they would return, Jerusalem would be delivered and set apart once again to God and Israel (Jacob) would possess its inheritance which was the land. NOTE. Every Jew knew the ultimate boundaries of the promised land given by God to the Jews (Gen. 15:18-21). ***Gen. 15:18-21: “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates -- the land of the Kenites, Kezzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.’”*** The land was to extend from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River which as far as we know Israel has never fully possessed these lands even up to this very day. King David’s and King Solomon’s kingdom may have covered these areas, but they never controlled all of it and the countries only paid tribute, and they did not have this land forever. Furthermore, after the 70 year Babylonian captivity, God still promised David the land.

OVERHEAD #1

3. Yet these Jews who heard this prophecy believed they would return to the land and would possess it as it was promised to Abraham. These Jews returned 70 years later under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the nation stayed on the land until 70 A.D. But they never achieved the original dimension of the land.

B. A Victorious People (18): ***“The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau. The LORD has spoken.”***

1. The prophecy says that “the house of Jacob” (Judah of the southern kingdom) and “the house of Joseph” (Israel of the northern kingdom) will be united and together they will make stubble out of the house of Esau, destroying it. NOTE. When did this happen? In the near view, it occurred when the Maccabees in 120 B.C. conquered the Edomites, the descendents of Esau. Yet, the Maccabees never totally conquered and occupied the land of the Edomites. Therefore, it seems as though there is

a far view to this prophecy when Edom will be revived close to the return of Christ to this world, restoring Israel, and Israel will in turn conquer and destroy the Edomites once and for all. At that time, there will be no survivors for the house of Esau. NOTE. This view necessitates a revived or restored country of Edom in the end time. This today does not seem too farfetched. A Berlin Wall comes down overnight and soon we will have a united Germany. Nations are reviving in Eastern Europe. New nations are springing up all over the world. In the Middle East, the only way to stop much of the fighting is to divide certain sections of the Middle East into countries to placate the warring Arabs. Who knows, maybe a little nation of Edom will spring up again?

2. Restored Israel in the final times just before or in the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom, will defeat its surrounding enemies, including Edom (Zech. 12:6). ***Zech. 12:5: “On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.”***

C. A Conquering People (19, 20): ***“People of the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the town of the Negev.”***

OVERHEAD #2

1. Obadiah gives a prediction on the territories to be restored to Israel. This territory will include Philistia, Ephraim, Samaria, Zarephath and Sepharad. No one can really identify Sepharad. Some Rabbinic scholars have said it refers to Spain or France but that is wishful thinking and outside the boundaries of the land given to Abraham. It probably refers to Sardis in Asia Minor. NOTE. This important thing to note is that this territory includes “the mountains of Esau” (Edom). The Jews have never really occupied this territory in history and today it is part of Jordan. When will Israel get this land? In the Messianic Kingdom to be established on this earth by Christ at the second advent. ILLUSTRATION: Biederwolf.

ILLUSTRATION: William Biederwolf commenting on the verses in Obadiah in *The Millennium Bible* says, “Inasmuch as the distribution of the land as set forth in these verses has never taken place, it would seem as though it ought to take place in the future.”

2. The Jews who heard or read Obadiah’s prophecy must have thought they would return to the land and they would occupy all this land mentioned in verses 19 and 20. Why didn’t Israel get all this land as God had promised? Did God promise something and not carry through? Does God always have to keep His word? There is a principle of prophecy that is found in Jeremiah 18 which seems to apply here (Jer. 18:5-10). ***Jer. 18:5-10: “Then the word of the LORD came to me: ‘O house of***

Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?’ declares the LORD. ‘Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.’” God can give warnings of judgment against a nation and if it repents, then God will change His attitude towards them. But God can also make promises to a nation but take those promises back if they do evil and disobey. Now God made promises to restore the land to the Jews in Obadiah’s day when they returned, but they never occupied that land. Why? They were not obedient. God would have restored the dimension of the land as mentioned in verses 19 and 20 if they had obeyed. Yet, what about God’s word? In my understanding, God must keep His promises but He does not have to keep it to any generation of Jews except those who will be obedient. The Jews will become obedient again when Christ returns and the Jews believe on Him and receive the promises of the land in the Messianic kingdom.

3. I personally find it difficult to say these prophecies were all filled in Obadiah’s generation or that they are fulfilled spiritually in the church who evangelized in these areas. All systems have problems. It just seems to me that the futurist system has less problems.

D. A Ruling People (21a): ***“Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau.”***

1. In the near view, deliverers like Ezra, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and Judas Maccabee came on the scene of history to aid the Israelites return to the land after the Babylonian captivity.

2. Yet, in the Messianic kingdom, Edom will be governed by rulers in Israel who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. A Submissive People (21b): ***“And the kingdom will be the LORD’S.”***

1. God’s kingdom rule would be present in Jerusalem in a limited sense under the Maccabees and others, and the people would at least give lip service to a coming Messiah.

2. But Obadiah skips thousands of years and looks down to the end time when Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ will establish His kingdom on this earth (Zech. 14:9-11). ***Zech. 14:9-11: The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.***

The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of

Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.

Then all the Jews will submit to the Lord Jesus Christ as King, Savior and Messiah.

3. There is a time coming when Christ will make all the kingdoms of the world his (Rev. 11:15). ***Rev. 11:15: The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*** When Christ has completed His earthly, Messianic kingdom reign, He will then hand His kingdom over to God the Father and the eternal state will begin (1 Cor. 15:24). ***1 Cor. 15:24: Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.***

V. CONCLUSION

A. What is the Day of the Lord in its broadest sense? It is any day of judgment. Judgment awaits every man after this life (Heb. 9:27-28). ***Heb. 9:27-28: Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*** Yet, the Bible says, "There is no judgment for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). The only way to escape the horrors of eternal judgment is to flee to Jesus Christ, trusting in Him alone to save you.

B. Obadiah's words merely underscore what the New Testament teaches about God's judgment" "It is mine to avenge; I will repay" says the Lord. "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30, 31).

C. God may have planned judgment against you, but if you will repent and turn to Christ, God will change His attitude and receive you into His eternal family.