

OBADIAH
Lesson 4
Pride Has Its Consequences

Obadiah 10-14

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The tiny nation of Edom was filled with pride (3a). It felt superior to all nations, especially the nation of Israel. Edom hated Israel and this animosity went all the way back to the twins Esau and Jacob, from whom Edom and Israel descended. God said Esau, the first born son, would serve the younger, Jacob. Jacob stole the birthright from Esau and Esau and his descendents despised this act. Edom, therefore, was in constant struggle with Israel.

B. Esau was so very proud. It was proud of its military might, its wealth, its relationships (alliances) with other nations and its intelligence. They bowed down and worshipped the god of the mind, completely eliminating Jehovah-God from their thinking. Consequently, God sent derision, a type of political and spiritual insanity, into Edom and it fell. This is always the result of following the god of the mind. The worship of man's intelligence always backfires. ILLUSTRATION: Smartest man.

ILLUSTRATION: There was a minister, a boy scout and a computer executive that were passengers on a plane. The pilot radioed back that the plane was going down. There were three parachutes and four people. The pilot said, "I should have one of the parachutes because I have a wife and three small children," and he jumped. The computer executive said, "I should have one of the parachutes because I am the smartest man in the world and they still need me," and he jumped. The minister turned to the boy scout and with a sad smile said, "You are young and I have lived a good life, so you take my parachute and I'll go down with the plane." The boy scout said, "Relax, Reverend, the smartest man in the world just picked up my knapsack and jumped out of the plane!" Pride of intelligence often backfires!

C. Now in verses 10-14, God puts Edom on trial. He charges them, sentences them and points out clearly the crimes of which they were guilty. Try to imagine a courtroom scene with God as the judge and Edom being arraigned for its crimes.

II. EDOM CHARGED (10a): ***"Because of the violence against your brother Jacob,"***

A. Edom was guilty of violence against Jacob. In verse ten, the term "Esau's mountain" is used, and in this verse the term "Jacob" is used. This takes us clear back to the original conflict between Esau and Jacob. This feud had been going on for centuries.

B. Edom was guilty of violence against his blood brother Israel. Edom was hurtful, oppressive, cruel to Israel. Why? Pride. They felt they were superior to Israel

and had a right as the superior race to judge and do violence to Judah. NOTE. A proud person always brings hurt, pain and oppression to those to whom he feels superior, and sometimes this results in mental or physical cruelty.

C. The specific crime led to Edom's charge, for which they were indicted, of which they were convicted and for which they were condemned is the way they treated the people of God, Israel. The Bible says, "***He who touches Jacob touches the apple of God's eye***". NOTE. Who are God's people today? The church is the spiritual Israel of God and so the church is the apple of God's eye. Those who mess with God's people will ultimately be judged by God. It is risky business to be friends with God's enemies and enemies of God's friends. NOTE. Christian, it is important that you too treat God's people, your brothers and sister, with love, respect, integrity and honor. When you cause pain to a brother, when you hurt a sister by an evil tongue, a shun, an indifferent attitude or whatever, you are messing with God's people. We all need to remember that on judgment day, God will judge all of our acts of sin and attitudes of sin (Rom. 2:16).

III. EDOM SENTENCED (10b)

A. Shame: "***You will be covered with shame;***" -- Edom's shame is in contract with its arrogance, and the shame seems to be a period of time over which Edom was judged by God. Five years after Obadiah made this prophecy against Edom, Edom fell to Babylon (582 B.C.). They declined as a nation from that time on and were forced to become Jews by John Hycanus of the Maccabean dynasty in 120 B.C.

B. Destruction: "***You will be destroyed forever.***" Edom would be destroyed by Babylon, by the Nabateans and by the Maccabees and their final destruction would come in 70 A.D. by the Romans when they would be cut off as a nation and for all practical purposes cease to exist as a nation. Edom's demise was accomplished in stages - like cutting down a huge tree. First the branches are lopped off; then the axe is laid to the root; then the root is pulled up which is the final blow (Ezk. 35:5-6). ***Ezk. 35:5-6: "Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, therefore as sure as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you."*** NOTE. Why this severe judgment? Because of their hostile attitudes towards God's people. We also see that God's judgments are often accomplished in degrees. We should absolutely marvel at the thoroughness of God's judgment. In judgment, the mill wheel grinds slowly but it grinds surely. Any king, government, country, organization or individual person who harms God's people never gets away with it. This is an eternal principle of God which never changes.

IV. EDOM'S CRIMES

A. Sins Of Attitude. Edom's general crime was violence against God's people but now the prophet lays out specifically the sins the Edomites did against Israel.

1. Aloofness (11): ***“On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.”***

A. Babylon’s armies under King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple in 587 B.C. They invaded Jerusalem, plundering its wealth and carrying the Jews into captivity for 70 years in Babylon. The Babylonian military commanders cast lots to divide Jerusalem for plundering and enslavement of people with those zones (Joel 3:3). ***Joel 3:3: “They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.”***

B. This was the most horrible, devastating and demoralizing day of judgment in all of Israel’s history and the Edomites stood by and did absolutely nothing. Eight times “the day” is mentioned. It is called “the day of misfortune,” “the day of destruction,” “the day of disaster,” and “the day of trouble.” Edom allowed their blood brother Israel to be destroyed, not even lifting a finger to help. NOTE. How often do we stand aloof from some person, even maybe a Christian, who has hurt us or caused us pain? We build up a wall around us in our pride and say, “I will do absolutely nothing to help that person. He deserves nothing!”

C. While Edom did not invade Jerusalem - the Babylonians did - they were just as guilty because they did nothing when they could have helped. They were accomplices in the crime and God held them responsible.

2. Condescending (12a): ***“You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune.”*** The Edomites “looked down” upon the suffering Israelites and said, “It serves them right. They never should have been the favored people in the first place!” They went from passively doing nothing to actively looking down on Israel. They were gloating over Israel’s tragedy. NOTE. When we are hurt emotionally by someone, in our pride we may do nothing but in our minds we are saying things like, “He had it coming! I always thought he was a phony! It serves him right.”

3. Rejoicing (12c): ***Nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction.”*** With an intoxication of delight, the Edomites were entertained in an exhilarating fashion to see the Jews in Jerusalem squirming in the fire. Like dope fiends, they could not get enough of Israel’s misery (Psa. 137:7). ***Psa. 137:7: “Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. ‘Tear it down,’ they cried, ‘tear it down to its foundations!’”*** Edomites went from passively thinking, to actively looking down, to enjoying the misery of the Israelites in their great day of defeat. NOTE. When we have been hurt by someone else and we let our pride take over and keep feeding our dislike of that person, we begin to enjoy seeing that person squirm in his misery. We say, “God, sock it to that person who hurt me. Make him miserable. Rub his nose in it!”

4. Boasting (12c): ***“Nor boast so much in the day of their trouble.”*** The word “boast” means “to make one’s mouth large.” Edom became so haughty that

they had a big mouth and bad-mouthed the Israelites in their day of misery. They jeered, mocked and harangued. They had an ungodly glee and a mouth that spilled forth garbage. What were they boasting about? Edom lived in hatred of God's disfavor of them and God's favor towards Israel. The words of Malachi 1:2 haunted them: ***"I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated."*** Edom who had always thought of itself as superior to Israel, finally believed that the tables were turned and Israel was not the favored people. They sensed they were the dominant of the two peoples. They were convinced the gods of "Esau" and "Edom" were better and more powerful than Jehovah-God. Edom was convinced that it was Jacob, not Esau, who was rejected. But how wrong they were! What appears on the surface is not always the truth of the matter. NOTE. When we are hurt by others, we often boast in their downfall. We say, "Destroy him! Wipe him out! Waste his life." What began as passively doing nothing now develops into an activity of fleshy, Satanic hatred. These kinds of attitudes not only come from the flesh but also from the pit.

B. Sins Of Action. Edom's hatred of Israel moved from negative attitudes to positive actions on their part.

1. Plundering (13): ***"You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth."*** After Babylon captured Jerusalem, Edom who was an ally of Babylon, came into the city and began to take whatever the Babylonians didn't want. They became actual partakers in the crime. No longer are the Edomites spectators. They are participants. NOTE. Violence harbored in the heart gave birth to violent acts. Wrong attitudes resulted in sinful actions. NOTE. When people hurt us, if we do not deal with that sin by confession to God and confrontation of the individual, then bad attitudes will develop. If these attitudes fester, then there will be some kind of violent actions displayed by the person who harbored this hatred.

2. Killing (14a): ***"You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives,"*** -- As the Jews were fleeing the city, escaping the Babylonian army, the Edomites met them at some very important crossroads and engaged them in battle, killing some. When the Jews felt they had eluded the Babylonians, their own blood brothers, instead of helping, they cut them down. NOTE. If we don't deal with the sin of hurt, we could end up actually murdering someone physically or at least mentally. Pride and hate can consume us and ultimately destroy us.

3. Betraying (14b): ***"Nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble."*** Those Jews the Edomites did not kill they sold into slavery, a fate worse than death.

V. EDOM'S PROBLEM

A. Edom's problem was pride and its insatiable hatred for Israel, God's people. Yet there seems to be in verses 11-14 a call to repentance. In the words, ***"You should not look down, march through and wait at the crossroads"*** it appears that Edom

could have changed its mind and helped Israel. They could have swallowed their pride and turned to Jehovah-God, and God would not have judged them. But Edom failed to repent.

B. A sovereign, holy, just God who spews out warnings of judgment, also a loving, gracious and merciful God who withholds judgment if men truly change their minds and decide to do things God's way. How practical this is. When a husband and wife are having an argument, they both must swallow their pride, ask God for forgiveness and then ask one another for forgiveness. Pride keeps marriage partners from doing right and hurts not dealt with can do great damage to a marriage. A man who is having an affair with a woman and keeping it from everyone, even his wife, is convicted it is wrong. Why doesn't he repent? He is too proud. He will have to admit wrong; others will find out; he will look stupid. Yet, for him only repentance will solve the problem and turn deep guilt into solid rejoicing. The teenager who has done something wrong and knows it, but refuses to tell her parents, is usually filled with pride. She would have to admit a mistake; her friends would think her stupid; she would look foolish; she would have to admit her parents were right. Pride can lead to awesome problems.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Saved

1. God wants true humility from his people (Mic. 6:8). ***Micah 6:8: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*** What is humility? It is not telling people how humble and bad we are, but it is a recognition of all that we are and have is from God, and we give Him all the glory, praise and honor, taking no credit for anything good we do or anything that happens to us.

2. There is a place for Christians to boast but it is not to toot their own horn but to talk of the greatness of God and His mighty deeds and acts of kindness (Jer. 9:23-24). ***Jer. 9:23-24: "This is what the LORD says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this; that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD."***

3. The end result of true humility as it relates to men is that we will treat people with dignity, honor, respect and love, seeing every person as better than we are (Philip. 2:3-4). ***Philip. 2:3-4: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."***

B. Unsaved

1. Pride often keeps people from trusting Christ for salvation and

pride is an attitude. ILLUSTRATION: Slave.

ILLUSTRATION: There was a slave who was a tremendous Christian and he had a great testimony to his master. His master came to him one day and said, "You know, whatever you've got, I want. You have such peace and joy and contentment, how can I get this?" The slave said, "Go to the house, put on your white suit, come down here and work in the mud with the rest of us slaves and you can have it." "What are you talking about? I could never do that. I'm the master, you're the slave. I'm the householder, I can't do that. That's beneath my dignity." He came back a couple of months later and said, "I can't resist asking you again, what is it you have and how can I have it?" "I told you, go put on your white suit, come down and work in the mud with us, and you can have it." The master was furious again and walked off. Finally, in desperation he came back to the slave again, and said, "I don't care what it takes, I'll do anything." The slave said, "Will you put on your white suit and come down and work in the mud?" The master agreed that he would do even that. Then the slave said, "You don't have to." POINT: The slave knew what was standing between the man and Christ -- pride and self.

2. If you do not know Christ as Savior and Lord, you need to swallow your pride, humble yourself and come to Him in child-like faith saying, "I'm a sinner. I have failed miserably in my own life. I deserve only judgment. But please, God, forgive me for my sins, make a new person in attitudes and acts. Right now, I'm accepting Your Son, Jesus Christ, into my life. From this moment on, I will follow Christ and will seek only to boast in Him."