

OBADIAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. Utter Destruction of Edom Decreed [1-16]

A. Announcement of the judgment (1-9)

1. The decree (1) Edom had sinned against Jehovah, therefore Jehovah will arouse the heathen nations against them.
2. Condition: deceived by pride, despised and debased by Jehovah (2-4) Because of the mountainous terrain that Edom occupied, it thought itself invincible. Obadiah prophesies that Jehovah will bring Edom down. Destiny, doom, and deliverance of nations are in God's hands (Acts 17:26). Jehovah can build up a nation or cast it down.
3. Completeness of the destruction (5,6) As well as being confident in its physical strength and strategic location, Edom was proud of its wealth. A wealth gained legitimately by mining ore deposits and illegitimately by controlling and robbing the caravan trade. Jehovah declared that when Edom is destroyed, there will be nothing left. Edom would be plundered, as it had plundered the caravans and other nations.
4. Treachery of his allies (7) The surrounding nations that had made treaties with Edom in the past would break those treaties. They would have no allies to turn to at the time of their destruction.
5. Failure of his wisdom and might (8,9) With its allies gone, Edom would then lose the counsel of its wise men. The city of Teman in Edom was distinguished for its men of wisdom. Eliphaz came from Teman to comfort Job (Job. 2:11). With God against Edom, its allies and wise men gone, the warriors would be cut off from their refuge and slain.

B. Cause of the judgment against Edom (10-14)

1. Violence and unbrotherly conduct toward Judah (10,11) While pride was certainly a reason for Edom to be destroyed, God had something else against them. They had perpetually mistreated the Israelites, their kinsmen. When enemies had plundered Israel, Edom stood with the enemies. This helps us to possibly place the setting of Obadiah's prophecy (2 Chron. 21:8-18).
2. Warning against such conduct (12-14) Edom is now charged to "look not," "enter not," and "stand not." It is a sin to rejoice in another's calamity or to participate in the cause of that calamity. The sin becomes that more heinous when the perpetrator brags that it will never happen to him! It is also a sin to share in the spoils of a plundered nation. Does this ring a bell for us today? Finally, it is a sin to prey upon hapless fugitives by robbing them or enslaving them for your own gain or the gain of your allies.

- C. Terrors of the judgment: the day of Jehovah (15,16)
Every sowing brings its own harvest. Edom would have their "day of Jehovah."
While this would be a day of terror to Edom, it would be a day of deliverance to God's people. Whether Edom had desecrated God's holy city in a literal or figurative sense, they would be devoured by their own ungodliness. Edom would be completely removed from the face of the earth by Jehovah's divine judgment.

II. Exaltation of Israel: the Kingdom of Jehovah to be Established Upon Mount Zion [17-21]

- A. A remnant to escape to Mount Zion (17)
While destruction is to be found on Mt. Seir (Edom), deliverance will come to Mt. Zion (Israel). Mt. Zion represents a place of protection and worship. The house of Jacob refers to the spiritual descendants as well as the physical ones. We are assured in the NT that Christ rules over the house of Jacob today (Lu. 1:33).
- B. Conquest of Edom (Mount Seir) and surrounding nations (18-20)
The victors would take all of the possessions of Edom. The divided Israel would be united in the final victory. The actual destruction of physical Edom was begun by the Chaldeans, then continued by the Nabataeans who drove them out of their land into southern Judea. The Maccabees then destroyed most of the remnant of Edom (now called the Idumeans) during the first century B.C. Finally, the Romans dispersed the remainder with the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem and their identity was lost forever. Historically, the most notable Idumeans were the Herods. The coming of Christ then, was the sign of the final destruction of Edom. (See Balaam's prophecy, Num. 24:15-24.) Also a comparison of Amos 9:11,12 with Acts 15:15-18 will lend more credence to this thinking. If any Edomites were to escape destruction it would have to be under the auspices of Mt. Zion. When the destruction of Jerusalem came who were saved? History will show that the Christians evacuated before the destruction. Who held Mt. Zion at this time? Spiritually speaking it was Jesus Christ.
- C. Jehovah's universal sway from Mount Zion (21)
None of the captives from Israel would be forgotten either. They would be delivered by "saviors." These would ultimately be the Apostles and evangelists sent by Jesus into the uttermost corners of the world. The kingdom under consideration here is the one prophesied by Zechariah (Zech. 9:10).
In spiritual matters, God's people have always been able to hold dominion over the heathen, even in physical matters the people of the world are bound for eventual defeat.

Applications for Today

- A. v.3 - Pride always goes before the fall.
- B. v.10 - We must have proper attitudes towards our brethren. James 3:14,15; Rom. 12:9- 21; Mt. 5:44-48.