

The Spiritual Blindness of God's Enemies

Obadiah 1

Advent in the Prophets (Obadiah)

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Sunday, December 6, 2015, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois
livinghopechurch.net

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” I’m not afraid of the devil. The devil can handle me – he’s got [weapons] I never heard of. But he can’t handle the One to whom I’m joined; he can’t handle the One to whom I’m united; he can’t handle the One whose nature dwells in my nature.”

– A. W. Tozer

Announcements

1. Welcome to visitors
2. Expositor’s class, 4pm and evening service, 5pm
3. We will have Phil Soen in to preach next week on Dec. 13.
4. New Members class beginning in January.

If you don’t have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **Obadiah**. We are continuing in our series entitled “Advent in the Prophets.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “The Spiritual Blindness of God’s Enemies.”

The theme of the book of Obadiah is spiritual blindness. It could be summarized with St. Paul’s words in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who Is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

The Joy of Sight (Bob Edens)

According to the United Press International, “For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn’t see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. And then, he could see. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and, for the first time, Bob Edens had sight. He found it overwhelming. “I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow,” he exclaimed. “I don’t have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can’t believe red. I can see the shape of the moon – and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is.”¹

¹ United Press International, “After 51 Years of Blindness, Bob Edens Amazed by Color,” March 7, 1981.

Seeing Spiritually

Aren't you glad you can see spiritually? Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see!" I can see! We were once the blind enemies of God, but He's given us sight!

The Spiritually Blind

In the book of Obadiah, we have a prophecy against the spiritually blind.

Have you ever done something so blind? The theme of the book of Obadiah is the blindness of God's enemies. They are going to pay dearly for opposing the living God, but they don't see it!

"The sinner is blind to his own best good, to the great spiritual realities of heaven and hell, to true holiness, to the possibilities in his soul, to the joys and glories of a God-centered life, to the highest motives, to eternal life. Spiritual blindness narrows, and restricts, and darkens the soul."²

In the tales of the Arabian Nights' there is a story of a remarkable ointment which, if rubbed on the eye, makes one see all the riches in the world; the gold in the mines, the diamonds treasured in secret places.³

Listen, Jesus is the Light of the World! Jesus makes blind eyes to see! Without Jesus we are just going through life blind, but through Jesus we can see the true treasure!

Outline

This morning we are going to open our eyes to **four unseen realities** to the lost:

- The Unseen **War**, vs. 1-9
- The Unseen **God**, vs. 10-14
- The Unseen **Day of Judgment**, vs. 15-18
- The Unseen **Victory**, vs. 19-21

The Revelatory Word!

Verse 1 (title), "The vision of Obadiah." This is a revelatory Word from the Lord. It is a prophecy. We need to keep it in mind for the future. Aren't you glad that God's Word gives us vision?! "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (**Psalm 119:105**).

Who is Obadiah?

As we open to Obadiah, we need to ask – who is this prophet and why has he given this prophecy? Obadiah means "servant of YHWH," the covenant name for God. This is the "I AM" who has not only created us, but has entered into covenant with us. In other words, you don't have to be alone in this world. Our God is a covenant God. A covenant is a promise. Our God has promised to save us.

There are thirteen (13) references to distinct men named "Obadiah" in the Old Testament. Because this book is very similar in parts to a portion of Jeremiah (49:14-17), many believe this prophet to be a contemporary with Jeremiah, and likely his "understudy."

² Adolphus Frederick Schaffler. Select Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons (W.A. Wilde and Co.: Boston, 1899), 85.

³ Burton, Richard (2015-11-06). The Arabian Nights: Color Illustrated, Formatted for E-Readers (Unabridged Version) (Kindle Locations 4229-4231). HMDS printing press. Kindle Edition.

Time of Writing – the Captivity

The timing of this letter is so important. Israel had just been taken into captivity, and the descendants of Esau are gloating! “Ha! God’s promises are not true!” “YHWH is not faithful!” These are the blasphemies coming from God’s enemies. We find they are drinking to the destruction of God’s people (**Obad. 1:14**).

This book is all about the **descendants of Esau** who live in **Edom** (*modern-day Jordan*), opposing God’s people. They are blind! They don’t realize what they are doing! They should be blessing God’s people because one day, God is going to send the Messiah through Israel to save the human race, including Edom!

King Herod Hated the Book of Obadiah

The most famous person from Edom, outside of Esau is King Herod. He hated the book of Obadiah. We read in **Matthew 2:1-3**, “...wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled...”

YHWH Has a Message for Us

Verse 1a, “Thus says the LORD God concerning **Edom**: we have heard a report from the LORD...” The warning goes out to the country of Edom, who are the descendants of Esau. The message comes from *YHWH Adonai*, Israel’s covenant God. He is the Sovereign controller of all things, and He has made promises to Israel.

He has a message not only for Edom, but for us, and for the whole world. He will keep His promises.

This message Obadiah is about a war that is brewing – a war that will be against those who oppose God’s people. But the people of Edom, and all unsaved people cannot see the war. It’s a war that is beyond flesh and blood!

I. **The Unseen War**, vs. 1-9.

A Message from an Angel

Now here are the specifics of the message (almost identical to **Jeremiah 49:14-17**).

Verse 1b, “We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: “Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!”

Obadiah heard a message from a messenger, likely an **angel**, given by the Lord. This angel was sent to the nations to stir them up for battle. Israel had been taken. **Edom was laughing**. And now Edom is going to be taken down!

God allowed Obadiah to overhear Him give instructions to an angel! We must always remember that behind the scenes of our natural life, there is a supernatural war raging. St. Paul tells us (**Eph. 6:12**, NLT), “We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and [demonic] authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

There is an unseen war!

God's Tool: Babylon and the Nations

The tool God has chosen to use to humble is the **nations** – specifically King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians and his allies. But YHWH is leading the way. We read in Oba. 1:1a, “Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!”

You Don't Want to be God's Enemy

One thing is important – you **don't** want to be **God's enemy**. You don't want God to humble you, because he has no problem doing so. No human being or nation of men is any match at all for the Lord.

God's Battle Plan: Humble the Proud

We see in verses 2-4 that God's battle plan is to humble proud Edom. It is interesting that God sends an angel to stir up the nations against a very proud nation.

Obadiah 1:2-3

2 Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
you shall be utterly despised.
3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rock,
in your lofty dwelling,
who say in your heart,
“Who will bring me down to the ground?”

Edom's Strength

The real strength of Edom was due to two factors: trade and security.

TRADE: First, Edom (*modern-day Jordan*) was a major crossroads of the reason and therefore had the most important trade route between Syria and Egypt, and they profited greatly from this trade. Trade brought **business**, and Edom's citizens **grew rich** on taxes extracted from the many caravans of ancient businessmen.

SECURITY: The second factor was Edom's natural strength and security. Obadiah says (vs. 3) that the Edomites “lived in the cleft of the rock.” The central area is characterized by red sandstone cliffs that rise to heights of more than 5,000 feet above sea level. These are easily fortified. As a result of having made their home within this natural fortress, the people of Edom were **free to wage war and levy tribute on others** while themselves being relatively free of outside interference.⁴

Edom is said to be impenetrable because it was situated in the rugged mountains, kind of like Afghanistan. They think no one is going to bother with trying to bring them low. But God has a plan.

“It is a difficult area, not easily accessible, and its many crevices and natural strongholds provide excellent places of refuge for the population in time of emergency. A chain of fortresses on the fringe of the desert gave added protection. Thus in both early and later periods it enjoyed considerable strength and independence.”⁵

⁴ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary* (p. 236). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

⁵ Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, 2d ed., trans. A. F. Rainey (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 40.

Esau seemed so lofty because they were just not worth the trouble to take down. But God determines they would be taken down.

The Unseen War of Pride (in Us)

3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rock,
in your lofty dwelling,
who say in your heart,
“Who will bring me down to the ground?”

The Enemy Within

The greatest unseen war that nobody sees is that of pride. It rages in every one of us. Like Edom, at times you and I think we are the center of the universe.

Do you struggle with this ugly and enormous sin of pride? I can tell you that only One Person never struggled with pride, and that was the Lord. All the rest of us struggle every day.

We Have Met the Enemy!

Walt Kelly during the Korean War had a cartoon character that said some famous words in 1952, “We have met the enemy and he is us.” Your greatest enemy is YOU!!

Paul identified where his greatest battle took place in Romans 7:21, “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” A few verse later, Paul named his enemy again: “O wretched man that I am” (Romans 7:24). Our greatest enemy is our ourselves! That's his whole point in Romans 7.

We must understand that our greatest battle is against ourselves!

- **John Owen** said, “The old man is nailed to the cross, he struggles, strives, and cries out with great strength.”
- **Abraham Kuyper** said, “God's child remains the old man's grave digger until the hour of his own departure.”
- **John Owen** also said, “Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.”

How to Get Out of the Enemy's Stronghold

Perhaps the enemy has a **stronghold** in your life. How does the enemy get a stronghold in your life? We allow the enemy to overcome us when we leave the door of sin open. The enemy almost always comes through the backdoor of pride and panic. God tells us to “fear not” 365 times in the Bible. That's one for every day of the year.

But **pride** is the prevailing root of almost all sin. Pride is satanic. Pride is the attitude that I am the standard for what is right. That attitude can be manifested in very ugly ways or very subtle ways. Pride is **deceptive** because the proud person often is blinded to his or her own pride.

Pride is manifested in anger, bitterness, a haughty spirit, a critical judgmental spirit, a spirit that believes you are right.

You can know you are dealing with pride when you feel you are the standard of what is spiritual and good. Or it may manifest itself in anger. **James 3:17-18** says, “wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

James tells us (3:16), “where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”

If there is disorder and chaos in your life, it might be due to pride!

How to Deal with Pride in Your Life

You ask, how can I get rid of pride in my life? It's a lifelong battle, but the first thing you need is Christ. You cannot change yourself. You must have God dwelling inside you. If you are God's child, then begin by...

1. Pray and ask God to illuminate your heart so you can begin to see the fruits of pride in your life. (Study the handout “50 Fruits of Pride”)
2. Ask your family or close friends to point out the fruits of pride in your life realizing your heart is exceedingly deceitful. *Be self-suspicious.*
3. Pray and ask God to **convict** you point by point (Psalm 139:23-24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”) and trust that He will. You don't want or need general condemnation, only specific, godly conviction.
4. Confess your pride to God point by point and ask for his forgiveness. Just as importantly, ask him to cleanse you of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
5. Don't ask God to humble you – the Scripture says to humble yourself (1 Peter 5:6). Humility isn't an emotion; it's a decision of the will to think and act differently.
6. Confess your sins of pride to the family and friends and others you have affected. They can help to hold you accountable and bring the on-going encouragement and correction you will need.
7. Ask God to give you a holy hatred for pride and its fruits in your life. Be continually on the alert. Don't allow pride to grow in your heart.
8. Ask God to give you a **love for anonymity**. Encourage and serve others each and every day. Associate with the lowly. Think much about God and little about yourself. In order to do this, regularly study the goodness and greatness of God.
9. **Be impressed with God** – don't be impressed with yourself. Live to promote the reputation of God and not your own. Find your satisfaction in him and not in your vain accomplishments.
10. Remember **your war against pride** is life-long. It is not a battle won in a day. But as you faithfully put pride to death and put on humility, you will experience greater freedom and more importantly greater conformity to image and likeness of Christ. In so doing, God will be glorified in your life!

Those Who Fight Against God Lose!

As we look at verse 4, we realize that it is futile to fight against God. Who has fought against Him and won? It is futile to continue in your pride. 100% of God's enemies lose. God has a perfect success rate. You don't want to fight against God. Look at the warning God gives to Edom.

No One Can Escape the Lord's Presence

Obadiah 1:4, "Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the stars,
from there I will bring [pull] you down,
declares the Lord."

Where can we escape the presence of the Lord? There will be a day of reckoning, and we will not be able to flee. God is able to pull us down, even if flee to the stars!

The Edomite boast of v. 4 seems absurd next to the power of the Lord. No eagle can fly high enough to escape His hand. If a people were capable of building even among the stars, could they elude there the God whose own dwelling place is in heaven.⁶

Everything Will Be Taken!

When God Judges Edom, he says everything will be taken. He will have no more treasure.

Obadiah 1:5-6, "If thieves came to you,
if plunderers came by night—
how you have been destroyed!—
would they not steal only enough for themselves? [*Thieves don't take everything*]
If grape gatherers came to you,
would they not leave gleanings? [*Grape gatherers don't take everything*]
[*NOT SO WITH ESAU!*]
6 How Esau has been pillaged,
his treasures sought out!"

Edom Trusted Allies instead of God

Obadiah 1:7, "All your allies have driven you to your border;
those at peace with you have deceived you;
they have prevailed against you;
those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you—
you have no understanding."

Assuming that Obadiah writes soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., he would be predicting the displacement of the Edomites from their homeland by the Babylonians. The allies might be the Persians or likely the Babylonians themselves.⁷

They "have no understanding" that "those who eat their bread" i.e. their friends have set a trap for them.

Do You Have any Substitute Saviors?

Ultimately **Babylon** ("those who eat your bread") is a false savior. They cannot deliver. What do you turn to when you are in trouble? It could be a good thing. We turn to our marriage for shelter. That's good to a point but I will never be a true savior for my wife, nor her for me.

Job or money can't save us. Success can't save us. Health surely can't save us!

⁶ Finley, T. J. (2003). *Joel, Amos, Obadiah* (p. 315). Biblical Studies Press.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 317.

How Can I Know My Idols?

Your idols are going to sell you out. They are false saviors that cannot save. You can know what your idols are.

- Where do I go for happiness, peace, and contentment?
- What is more important than personal holiness?
- What am I willing to sin to get?
- What things am I demanding about?
- What do I fear or tend to worry about?
- What do I crave or long for?
- What controls or rules me?
- What do I see as my right?
- What sets me off?
- What angers me?
- What do my thoughts drift to? What private thoughts give me comfort?
- What do I spend too much money on?
- What unanswered prayers make me angry or hopeless?
- What do I have to resist not spending too much money on?

These searching questions will reveal the idols in our lives. If we forsake these idols and find satisfaction in Christ,

What Good is it to Fight Against God?

In this unseen war, we are either for Jesus or against Him. There is no middle ground.

Obadiah 1:8-9, “Will I not on that day, declares the Lord,

destroy the wise men out of Edom,

and understanding out of **Mount Esau** [Bozrah]?”

9 And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O **Teman**,

so that every man from **Mount Esau** will be cut off by slaughter.”

Twin Capitals

God condemns both capital cities of Edom, **Bozrah** (Mount Esau), and **Teman**. If you live in Illinois, it's like saying God condemns both Chicago and Springfield.

Every Knee Will Bow

Those who dare to stand against the Living God will fail miserably. If we fight against God, we cannot win. He has never lost and never will. “Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord!”

We need to get rid of pride.

Surrender!

There is only one way forward! For Edom it would have been to surrender to God. Edom would not humble himself, so God had to cut off this country by “slaughter.”

Enemies of God

There is the unseen war. They do not see God fighting against them. All of us were once enemies of God. If you are not yet in Christ, you are still God's enemy.

Romans 5:10, we were "once God's enemies."

Col. 1:21, we "were alienated from God and were enemies in our minds because of our evil behavior."

I don't want to be God's enemy! That's a war I cannot win!

II. **The Unseen God**, vs. 10-14

We may not see the war going on before us, but it is raging. But there is another unseen consideration here in Obadiah. For those God's enemies, God Himself is unseen.

Remember, we were once His enemies. We were "dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1-3). We were "without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 3).

BLIND TO GOD

The Shortsightedness of Forgetting God

For Obadiah, the story of Jacob and Esau is important. Jesus family is Jacob or his new name Israel. Herod the Great's family is Esau. They are enemies. Jacob and Esau were twins who fought in their mother's womb.

Genesis 25:21-23 introduces us to Jacob and Esau. Isaac and Rebekah are pregnant with twins and Rebekah feels them jostling in her womb. She asks God for a reason. The Lord replies, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger" (vs. **21-23**).

Esau and the Bowl of Lentil Soup

Of course you know how Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup (Gen. 25:29-34). Esau is characteristic of all those who do not know the Lord. He doesn't care about the eternal things. He only lives for the present.

The Shortsightedness of Edom

In our story in Obadiah, we find that God's enemies, the descendants of Esau, are ignoring God. They live as if He doesn't exist. Though Edom ignores God, the LORD is still holding Edom accountable. There will be a payday someday!

The *story* of Obadiah is that the Edomites behaved as enemies of God's people at the fall of Jerusalem, although they should have behaved as brothers.⁸ They feel no responsibility to obey God and be an ally and a brother to God's people. Why? Because they are distracted.

Edom's Betrayal of Jacob

Obadiah 1:10-14, "Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob,
shame shall cover you,

and you shall be cut off forever.

11 On the day that you stood aloof,

on the day that strangers carried off his wealth

and foreigners entered his gates

and cast lots for Jerusalem.

⁸ Field, D. (2008). *Obadiah: A Practical Commentary* (pp. 66–67). Leominster: Day One Publications.

you were like one of them.
12 But do not gloat over the day of your brother
in the day of his misfortune;
do not rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their ruin;
do not boast
in the day of distress.
13 Do not enter the gate of my people
in the day of their calamity [TO LOOT AND STEAL];
do not gloat over his disaster
in the day of his calamity;
do not loot his wealth
in the day of his calamity.
14 Do not stand at the crossroads
to cut off his fugitives;
do not hand over his survivors
in the day of distress.”

Verse 10, they stood by and watched “the violence done to their brother Jacob.”

Verse 11, they “stand aloof...”

Verse 12, they “gloat” over Jacob’s fall.

Verse 13 they “entered the gate” of Jacob / Israel and looted. They took advantage.

Verse 14, they “handed over the survivors” of Israel as slaves in their day of calamity to the Babylonians!

Edom helped hand over the survivors of Israel as slaves to Babylon. Edom should have helped Israel, for Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. But Esau betrayed Israel. And so it is as we look down to the birth of Christ.

Herod and the Bethlehem Slaughter

Years later, Jesus comes to the earth and another descendant of Esau and his country Edom opposes him. Herod the Great was an Idumean, or a descendant of Esau.

Herod is disturbed by the prophecy of a King among the Jews being born. He finds out the prophecy is in Bethlehem.

And just as Edom stood by and mocked and opposed Israel as they were taken into captivity, so when Jesus comes to earth in such a vulnerable way, as an infant, and he finds out the King of kings is to be born in Bethlehem, **Herod is disturbed**, and he eventually puts to death all the baby boys two and under!

BLIND TO TRUE SATISFACTION

The truth is, Herod is disturbed because he worships a false savior of power and riches.

And Jesus’ birth threatens that false savior. We know as Psalm 16:11 says, lasting and full satisfaction can only be found in Christ. We cannot find it anywhere else. David says, in Psalm 16:11, “In thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”

Herod was Rich but Miserable! (History of Herod)

Herod was blind to true and lasting satisfaction, because he was blind to God.

Herod the Great was more than a despicable, brutal ruler. We know a lot about Herod the Great from archaeology and from historians like Josephus. He was a genius builder, architect, engineer, and entrepreneur. One cannot visit Israel without being amazed by Herod's work and wealth. Ruins of his palaces and projects are everywhere. It is quite impressive and amazing.

He was known to do anything to keep His power. He was ruthless, as we see when he slaughtered the Bethlehem baby boys.

You see the only kind of happiness the world can offer you is a temporary happiness. The world is ever changing.

Getting Desire of Your Heart Might be the Worst Thing!

Tim Keller in his book "Counterfeit gods" said this:

“Most people spend their lives trying to make their heart's fondest dreams come true. Isn't that what life is all about, “the pursuit of happiness”? We search endlessly for ways to acquire the things we desire, and we are willing to sacrifice much to achieve them. We never imagine that getting our heart's deepest desires might be the worst thing that can ever happen to us”.⁹

Madonna, Money, and Misery

Herod with all his palaces and power was miserable. I read an article about Madonna, and her greatest shock when she reached stardom was that she was not much happier than when she was poor. She couldn't believe that you can have all this money and fame and success and be so miserable.

Sex and Money and Materialism Cannot Satisfy

Listen, palaces and power and popularity cannot save us. Sex and money and materialism cannot satisfy us. They can only cover our pain. They cannot satisfy us. They are all false saviors.

Live in Fellowship with God

You were created to live in fellowship with God, not to fight against Him or ignore Him. The most satisfying life to live is in joyful fellowship with Jesus!

I think we could say with C. S. Lewis that Herod was “far too easily pleased.” He was pleased with palaces and power, but these things do not satisfy.

C. S. Lewis Quote – Mud Pies

Listen to C. S. Lewis: “If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in [God's Word], it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

God's enemies are blind to the God who is all satisfying!

⁹ Timothy Keller. *Counterfeit gods* (Dutton: London, 2009), 1.

Life with God is Satisfying

Perhaps you struggle with a sin that dominates your life. How can you defeat it? Bring the all-satisfying God into the picture.

Richard Wurmbrand

Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbrand spent 14 years in prison for preaching the gospel. Although his captors smashed four of his vertebrae and either cut or burned 18 holes in his body, they could not defeat him.

He testified, "Alone in my cell, cold, hungry, and in rags, I danced for joy every night." During this time, he turned to a fellow prisoner, a man he had led to the Lord before they were arrested, and asked, "Have you any resentment against me that I brought you to Christ?" His response: "I have no words to express my thankfulness that you brought me to the wonderful Savior. I would never have it another way." These two men exemplify the supernatural joy that can be experienced by believers who live on the edge of horrific suffering with complete fullness of joy.¹⁰

God's Enemies Cannot Dance for Joy!

God's enemies cannot "dance for joy" in suffering. They can only numb the pain with materialism and the empty and temporary delights of a broken world.

III. The Unseen Day of Judgment, vs. 15-18

For so many, the Day of Judgment is unseen. People go about their lives as if there is no meaningful accountability for life. Those who have a conscience put the thought of God far away from them.

But God tells us something striking! "The Day of the Lord is near..." And it's not just upon Edom, but now He says, it's "near upon all the nations" (**vs. 15**).

Retribution on the Day of Judgment

On that day, we read God shall meticulously make payment for all the deeds we have done. **Hebrews 9:27**, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Paul says in **Acts 17:31**, "God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ." If we stand in our own righteousness, there is no hope! We need the righteousness of another!

The Day of the Lord Is Near

"15 For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations.

As you have done, it shall be done to you;

your deeds shall return on your own head.

16 For as you have drunk on my holy mountain,

so all the nations shall drink continually;

they shall drink and swallow,

and shall be as though they had never been."

¹⁰ Richard Wurmbrand. *Christ in the Communist Prisons* (Coward-McCann, 1968), 46.

Drinking on God's Mountain

Apparently Edom drank in celebration of Babylon's victory over Jerusalem.¹¹ They were looking at the here and now. Just as Edom and the nations staggered with drunkenness from the wine of victory as they celebrated their conquest of God's people, they will stagger from the wine of God's judgment.¹² The cup Jerusalem drank would pass into the hands of their tormentors.¹³

The Prophecy that Likely Haunted King Herod

But there was another part of this prophecy that also haunted King Herod. In this prophecy, Israel (here called Jacob and Joseph) will be a fire that will turn Esau to stubble. Remember Herod is the most powerful descendant of Esau at the time of Jesus' birth.

Obadiah 1:17-18, "But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions. 18 The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken."

Jesus Comes in Flaming Fire

This prophecy begins with Christ's first coming, but it is consummated in His second coming. Paul says in **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** that Jesus will come "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Don't Be Blind to Judgment Day

Don't be blind to judgment day. There will be a payday someday. You will either ask the rocks to hide you when He comes, or you will hide in Jesus!

Hide in Jesus! Let Christ be your righteousness.

Herod is Ruthless

Herod was ruthless. Herod had always been ruthless, but in his later years, he was especially terrifying. He murdered his favorite wife, Mariamne, had her two sons strangled, and, as a last act of his long and violent career, had Antipater, another son, executed for promoting himself too precipitously as his heir.¹⁴

¹¹ J. D. W. Watts, *Obadiah: A Critical Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 56.

¹² Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, p. 197). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹³ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 65; B. C. Cresson, "Obadiah," BBC 7 (Nashville: Broadman, 1972), 150.

¹⁴ Boice, J. M. (2001). *The Gospel of Matthew* (39). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Augustus Caesar

Caesar Augustus once said of Herod, it would be better to be one of Herod's swine than one of his sons. Herod was a gentile pretending to be a Jew, and so he would not eat pork. So it is sad that this monster treated his swine better than his own sons.

Herod's Death

Matthew 2:19 speaks very briefly of Herod's death. It just says that he died. But you need to know that Herod's death was horrific. It is said that his bowels were filled with worms. He died an excruciating death. The Jewish historian Josephus also stated that Herod was so concerned that no one would mourn his death, that he commanded a large group of distinguished men to come to Jericho, and he gave an order that they should be killed at the time of his death so that the displays of grief that he craved would take place. Fortunately for them, Herod's family did not carry out this wish.

IV. The Unseen **Victory** (of God & His People), vs. 19-21

Herod the Great was Not so Great

Let's go back to Herod the Great. I want to tell you that Herod the Great was not so great. He was a powerful monarch who built his power on ruthlessness. He's willing to kill infants to retain his power.

We read in **Matthew 2** that Herod was **troubled**. He was troubled at this prophecy. **Matthew 2:1-7**, "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet (*quoting Micah 5:2*):

6 "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.'

You know the rest of this horrific story. In **Matthew 2:16**, "Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men."

Herod knew his Bible. He knew the prophecy of Obadiah. The family of Herod, the Edomites would be brought down. Though he makes their nest in the starts, YHWH will pull him down!

Let's look back at the prophecy of Obadiah. There shall be a kingdom that comes that shall be the LORD's. Let's read about it. Obadiah verse 19.

The Kingdom of the Lord

Obadiah 1:19-21, “Those of the Negeb [ISRAEL] shall possess Mount Esau [EDOM], and those of the Shephelah [JUDEAN FOOTHILLS] shall possess the land of the Philistines;

they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

20 The exiles of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad [EXILE BEYOND BABYLON] shall possess the cities of the Negeb [ISRAEL].

Israel will Reinhabit the Land

Here we see a wonderful prophecy in **Obadiah 1:21**, “21 Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion

to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.”

The “saviors” or “deliverers” probably are returned exiles who make Zion (Jerusalem) the center of government in the day of the Lord.¹⁵

This is a great section of the Word of God for Israel. As surely as God says he is going to bring judgment on Edom (which he has done), so does he say he is going to give deliverance to his own people, bless them, and enable them to possess these territories.¹⁶

The Fulfillment

The immediate fulfillment was during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when they came back into the land. Nehemiah was given power to govern.

Of course, the climax of the fulfillment is when the true Savior is born. This is what Herod was worried about. He knew a King of all kings would be born, and the “kingdom shall be the LORD's” (vs. 21).

The ultimate fulfillment of Christ taking over Edom and the whole earth is when our Lord comes and calls us to Himself.

1 Cor. 15:24-25, “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

Herod Should Have Surrendered

Herod was troubled at this prophecy, and he should be. But he could have submitted himself to the King. Instead he chose to fight against the Lord. That's a foolish fight.

If you are here today and you are fighting against the Lord, you need to give up. You need to surrender.

Jerusalem Troubled

Matthew 2:3 says that “all Jerusalem was troubled with Herod” at this prophecy. Why were they troubled. They weren't looking at the prophecy. They were looking at Herod. They were listening to the voice of Herod.

¹⁵ Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, p. 201). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁶ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary* (p. 255). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

The Voice of God

This morning perhaps you are troubled. You have stopped listening to God. You are instead listening to the voices in this world, or the voices of your own heart.

Isaiah 26:3-4, “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. 4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.”

The Victory is Yours!

Listen saints, don't be downtrodden! The victory is already yours in Jesus! **Romans 8:31-35, 37-39**, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...”

Look at **verse 37**, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper.” (Isaiah 54:17).

Scotland and the Vikings

Every schoolchild in Scotland knows the story of how the thistle saved the country. In the year 1263 when the Scots and Vikings from Denmark were at war, the Vikings managed to land unobserved on the coast of Scotland. Under cover of darkness the Viking invaders removed their boots and crept on bare feet toward the unsuspecting Scottish army.

DEFEAT seemed certain for the Scottish, but then, suddenly from the enemy Viking invaders came a sharp cry of pain shattered the stillness. A Viking had stepped on a thistle and ruined the surprise. The alerted Scots sprang into action and drove the Viking invaders from the country's shores in *victory*.¹⁷

Conclusion – Victory is Guaranteed

Dear saint, for those in Christ, victory is guaranteed. Our Lord and Savior knows His enemies. He will fight them for you. They are minuscule and weak compared to His almighty power.

The lost are spiritually blind to their defeat. **Defeat** is certain for all the Lord's enemies.

If you are in Christ, no one and nothing can ultimately harm you. “No weapon formed against you will prosper.”

Christ will “put all enemies under His feet,” and “He shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords!”

¹⁷ Elizabeth Silverthorne, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations* - 14121