

THREE GREAT BLESSINGS

TEXT: OBADIAH 17

INTRODUCTION:

1. Obadiah is the smallest book in the Old Testament -- just 21 verses. Little is known about the author.
2. John Phillips refers to Obadiah as "the prophet of Edom's doom," and says, "The prophecy of Obadiah is a classic warning against anti-Semitism. The nation that curses and persecutes the Jew will inevitably reap what it sows. The nation that harbors and protects the Jew will surely enjoy the blessing of God (Gen. 12:2, 3)" -- *Exploring the Scriptures*.
3. The Edomites traced their history back to Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. Half the book of Obadiah deals with Edom, and the other part with Israel.
4. The Edomites dwelt in Mount Seir, a mountainous region south of Moab. Today this territory is part of Jordan.
5. When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587 BC, the Edomites participated in the plunder, and gloated over Jerusalem's destruction.
6. Psalm 137:7 says, "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof."
7. When we study (or teach or preach) the Bible, we look for interpretation and application.
8. The promises God made to Israel concerning temporal blessings may be applied spiritually to Christians today.
9. The interpretation of Obadiah 17 is very simple: the book of Obadiah predicts God's judgment upon Edom, and God's restoration of Israel.
10. Spurgeon said, "When God comes forth to punish His enemies He also comes forth to bless His friends. When Pharaoh is overthrown in the Red Sea, it is that Israel may pass onward to Canaan. When Amalek is overcome, it is that Israel may be at peace. There is a black cloud as well as the silvery rain. The acceptable year of the Lord is the day of vengeance of our God. This combination so constantly occurs that the Psalmist said, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment.'"
11. Obadiah says Edom will be judged, and Israel will be restored. "Mount Zion" (verse 17) refers to Jerusalem. There are three

great promises: rescue from captivity; reconsecration to God; and recovery of their former possessions.

12. And we see here that these three great promises can be applied spiritually to Christians today.

I. THERE SHALL BE DELIVERANCE (vs. 17).

1. There is deliverance from sin's penalty; there is deliverance from sin's power; and some day there will be deliverance from sin's presence.
2. Deliverance from sin's penalty means deliverance from hell.
3. Deliverance from sin's penalty means there is no condemnation for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
4. John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
5. No condemnation -- we have been delivered from sin's condemnation.
6. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
7. Furthermore, we have been delivered from sin's power. Acts 26:18 says we have been delivered "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."
8. Galatians 1:4 says Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world."
9. Romans 6:2 says we are "dead to sin."
10. Romans 6:6 and 7 says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."
11. Romans 6:14 says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you."
12. There are three aspects to our deliverance: we have been delivered from sin's penalty. We are being delivered from sin's power.
13. And when we get to heaven we will be delivered from sin's presence (cf. Rev. 21:27; 22:14, 15).

II. THERE SHALL BE HOLINESS (vs. 17).

1. The word "holiness" has disappeared from most churches, but it is a good Bible word; it is found hundreds of times in the Bible.
2. Most preachers don't preach holiness these days, but Bible preachers preached it often.

3. The apostle Peter said, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16).
4. The apostle Paul preached holiness (Romans 12:1, 2). "Holy" means set apart for God. This is sanctification. This is consecration. Paul says, this "is your reasonable service."
5. We often sing:

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

6. The author was a British woman named Frances Havergal. She was a very talented singer and pianist. And she was very scholarly, even becoming proficient in both Hebrew and Greek. Some of her other hymns include *Like a River Glorious* and *Who is on the Lord's Side?*

7. This is how she explained the story behind her famous hymn.

I went for a little visit of five days. There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, "Lord, give me *all* in this house!" And He just *did!* Before I left the house every one had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration, and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another, till they finished with, "*Ever, ONLY, ALL* for Thee!"

8. Romans 12:1 teaches consecration, and Romans 12:2 teaches transformation. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
9. When you are consecrated, there is a great transformation.
10. Holiness is a free gift, just as salvation is a free gift. We are saved by grace through faith; we are justified by grace through faith; and we are sanctified by grace through faith (cf. Galatians 3:1-3).
11. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "It is not justification by faith and sanctification by fighting."

III. THEY SHALL POSSESS THEIR POSSESSIONS (vs. 17).

1. The main difference between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church is Israel will possess their possessions when Christ returns, but we have already received our possessions.

2. We already have it. We just need to appropriate by faith what God has already given to us.
3. The LORD told Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Joshua 1:3).
4. Not "will give you," but "have given."
5. Last week we saw how faithless King Joash stopped smiting the ground, and Elisha the prophet "was wroth with him" (II Kings 13:19).
6. The king stopped short because he did not thoroughly believe the prophet's words. A.W. Pink said, "Most Christians expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little, and are content with little. They are content with little faith, little knowledge of the deep things of God, little growth and fruitfulness in the spiritual life, little joy, peace, and assurance. And the zealous servant of God is justified in being wroth at their lack of spiritual ambition" (*Gleanings From Elisha*).
7. Many Christians do not possess their possessions because of ignorance. I heard a true story about an old woman who lived in poverty in her hometown in Scotland.
8. Years before, her son had immigrated to America. Working hard in the USA, he had become a very successful businessman, but had never found the time to return home to visit his mother.
9. One day a friend sat talking with the old lady in her sparsely furnished little cottage. "Doesn't your son ever send you money to help with your needs?" she inquired.
10. "No," the woman shook her head sadly. "He does write me nice letters, though. And he sends me the most interesting pictures!"
11. The listener was surprised, knowing that the son was quite wealthy.
12. Out of curiosity, she said to the old woman, "May I see the pictures?"
13. The elderly mother proudly brought them out of a drawer. To her visitor's amazement, they were not pictures at all. They were valuable bank notes from America amounting to many thousands of dollars.
14. For decades, this Scottish mother had been needlessly living in poverty because she did not know the value of those "interesting pictures." She owned the bank notes, but she put them away in her drawer where they did her no good.
15. She did not possess her possessions.

16. The Yates Oil Field is a giant oil field in west Texas. The field has produced more than one billion barrels of oil, making it one of the largest in the United States.
17. The land which the field underlies was owned by Ira and Ann Yates. Ira Yates had recently purchased the ranch, and was having difficulty making sufficient profit to pay the mortgage and taxes.
18. On a hunch, he invited Transcontinental Oil Company to explore his land for oil. In 1926, they struck a huge oil reserve, and Mr. Yates became a rich man. He went from being a poor farmer unable to pay his mortgage to a multi-millionaire pumping out over 100,000 barrels of oil a day!
19. He already possessed the oil; he just didn't know he had it. First Corinthians 2:12 says the Holy Spirit has been given to us so "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."
20. Romans 8:32 says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
21. "All things!"
22. First Corinthians 3:21-23 says, "For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."
23. First Timothy 6:17 says God has given "us richly all things to enjoy."
24. Second Peter 1:3 says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
25. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Therefore, possessing Christ is like owning an estate with infinite possibilities: e.g., wealth to be explored, soil to be cultivated, beauties to be enjoyed, and produce to be used."

CONCLUSION:

1. These three great blessings can be described as safety ("But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance"); sanctification ("and there shall be holiness"); and sufficiency ("and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions").
2. Have you been delivered from sin's condemnation?
3. Have you been delivered from sin's power?
4. "And there shall be holiness..." (Obadiah 17). Are you living a holy life?
5. Or are you living a worldly life?

6. "And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (vs. 17). Are you possessing your possessions?
7. We read in Joshua 18:3, "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?"
8. Don't be a slacker?
9. The aim and motivation of the Christian life is to possess the possessions that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
10. This is the secret of the fruitful Christian life -- to possess our possessions. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).