

The Prophets

Lesson #3

Obadiah

Outline

- I. ***The Doom Of Edom (1-9)***
 - A. The certainty of the ruin (1-4).
 - B. The completeness of the ruin (5-9).
- II. ***The Denunciation Of Edom (10-14)***
 - A. For unbrotherliness (10).
 - B. For aloofness (11-12).
 - C. For aggressiveness (13-14).
- III. ***The Day Of The Lord (15-21)***
 - A. The time and nature of Edom's destruction (15-16).
 - B. The restoration of Israel (17-21).

Notes

Obadiah 1-9

- The certainty of the ruin (1-4).
 - Obadiah's prophecy opens with the formal announcement of a message from the Lord "about" or "against" (cf. Psalm 137:7) Edom, a pattern repeated in the following lines.
 - "Edom" represents an alternative name of "Esau," the brother of Jacob (Genesis 36:1, 8, 43; cf. Obadiah 6, 8-9, 18-19, 21). It also denotes the descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:9, 16-17; cf. 36:31, 43), whose blood relationship with Israel is invoked repeatedly in the Old Testament (Numbers 20:14; Deuteronomy 23:7; Amos 1:11; Malachi 1:2; cf. Obadiah 10, 12); and it describes the land inhabited by them (Numbers 20:23; 21:4; 34:3; cf. Obadiah 18-21).
 - In spite of Edom's arrogance and pride, God had made it small among the nations; it was greatly despised. The nation thought of itself as being completely secure in the mountainous stronghold of Seir. However, their destiny lies in the hand of God (cf. Acts 17:26).
- The completeness of the ruin (5-9)
 - Edom took pride not only in his physical strength and strategic location, but also in his wealth, but God had decreed that his destruction would be complete.
 - As "thieves" plunder a household, so "grapegatherers" strip a vineyard. Yet in both cases they leave at least a pittance that escapes detection and plunder. By contrast Esau will be "searched out" with a

terrible thoroughness that leaves nothing (cf. vss. 8-9; Jeremiah 49:9-10).

- Edom had been deceived by his allies with whom he had made alliances, probably both trade and protective agreements and pacts. In time of need, they would turn their backs on Edom.
- Teman was the southernmost of Edom's two chief cities, possibly its capital, and was distinguished for its men of wisdom. Eliphaz came from Teman to comfort Job (Job 2:11; cf. Genesis 36:8-9).

Obadiah 10-14

- For unbrotherliness (10).
 - The noun "violence" denotes both moral wrong and overt physical brutality (cf. Habakkuk 1:2), both of which had characterized Edom's relations with Israel.
 - This goes back to the very origins of the two nations, in the hatred of Esau for his brother Jacob (Genesis 27:40-41). This hatred emerged again in Edom's hostility to Israel after the Exodus (Exodus 15:15; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:4; Judges 11:17-18); and Edom is numbered among Israel's "enemies ... who had spoiled them" before they were defeated by Saul (1 Samuel 14:47-48). It is against this background of aggression that David's later campaigns are also to be understood (2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 1 Chronicles 18:11-13; Psalm 60:1-12). Later in history, Edom also exultation over the destruction of Jerusalem (Psalm 137:7; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 25:12; 35:5, 15; 36:5; Joel 3:19).
- For aloofness (11-12).
 - When Edom should have felt sympathy for his humiliated and suffering kinsman, the Lord charged, "even thou was as one of them," the enemies.
 - In the sight of God, there is no distinction in moral accountability between overt sin and an inner bias toward that sin that permits it to go unchecked (cf. Matthew 5:21-32).
 - The verbs "rejoice" and "spoken proudly" betray the perverted values of this typical enemy of Israel, for whom loyalty to a brother meant nothing.
- For aggressiveness (13-14).
 - In vs. 12 Edom is forbidden to rejoice; now he is forbidden to share in the spoils of God's plundered people.
 - The Edomites stationed themselves at the places where the roads forked or crossed so that they might fall upon the fleeing fugitives, either to rob or slay them or to take them captive to be sold as slaves (cf. Amos 1:6, 9). Edom was not to deliver up to their oppressors those who might otherwise have escaped.

Obadiah 15-21

- The time of the destruction (15).
 - Edom would not escape the "day of the Lord," a general judgment from God which was near upon all the nations. If Obadiah is early, which has been assumed in these notes, then he is the first prophet to use this expression.
 - This day is a day in which God manifests Himself in the overthrow of His enemies. It is a day of terror to the enemies of God but a day of deliverance to the people of God.
- The nature of the destruction (16-21).
 - The metaphor of drinking is commonly used of the experience of judgment and humiliation (cf. Habakkuk 2:15-16). Judah's suffering on God's "holy hill" in Jerusalem has been described as past in vss. 10-14; for Edom and the nations, their suffering is still future at the time of Obadiah's prophecy.
 - Historically, Edom's destruction began with the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar but was not completed by that nation. Between the sixth and the end of the fourth centuries, Edom was invaded by Arabs known as the Nabataeans, a highly gifted people who drove the Edomites out of their land into a region south of Judea. Under the Romans some time during the first century after Christ the remaining Edomites were absorbed by the Arabs and their identity was lost completely.
 - As Zion would be the conquering victor, possessing the territory of her enemies, Seir would become the conquered, the possession of others. The prophecy looks for the Messianic conquest fulfilled in Christ (Numbers 24:15-24; cf. Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-18).
 - The captives of Israel's host who had been carried away into lands throughout the world would not be forgotten. These would share in the redemption and the possessing of their rightful heritage. The "saviours" would be the apostles or evangelists through whom the message would be brought to them. God's people are ultimately triumphant and people of the world are ultimately defeated.