

Introduction

Having announced what God was going to do to Edom, Obadiah then proceeded to defend God's judgment on Edom (Obad. 10-16) by explaining why God was judging them and named five ways in which the Edomites had sinned against the Jews and/or the Lord.

When Edom's founder Esau discovered he was deprived of his father's blessing, he determined to kill his brother Jacob (Gen. 27:41), and this malicious attitude was passed along to his descendants. If you had asked them, "Are you your brother's keeper?" they would have replied, "No! We're our brother's killer!"

Dr Ronald Shultz says that Kings and Chronicles **"show us at least three times when they were against Israel when they should have been by their side."**

1 They stood on the other side

At first the Edomites merely "stood on the other side" (v. 11) and took no part in the work of Israel's destruction. They did not harm the people of Israel, but they did not help them, either. They were outwardly neutral. But as it is impossible to walk in the counsel of the ungodly without eventually becoming a companion of sinners (cf. Ps. 1:1),

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:30-32 answered the question who is my neighbour.

The Edomites should not have just watched as the enemy soldiers cast lots for the spoils, including Jews, who would become slaves.

They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink. Joel 3:3

Instead of assisting their brothers in their plight, the Edomites stood "on the other side" and watched. The Edomites acted like an enemy with hostility instead of behaving like the blood brothers of the Jews that they were. They did not show an ounce of sympathy.

2 The Edomites "gloated" and "rejoiced"

The Edomites did not maintain their neutrality; it was not long before they went a step further:

Not only did the Edomites ignore the plight of the Jews, but also they rejoiced at what the enemy was doing (Obad. 12)

For the Jews, this was a day of destruction and distress; but for the Edomites, it was a day of delight and rejoicing. In their pride, Edom looked down on the Jews and gloated over their misfortune.

This is what the scriptures say of the destruction of Jerusalem

Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. Tear it down, they cried, tear it down to its foundations! Ps. 137:7

Solomon has wise counsel: **"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn His wrath away from him"** (Prov. 24:17-18).

Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of the house of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the LORD.' Ezek 35:15

The Edomites "gloated" and "rejoiced" (v. 12, nasb) at Israel's misfortune. With sadistic glee, they took intense pleasure because their ancient enemies, who always seemed more favoured than they themselves had been, were getting their comeuppance at last! One can almost hear the Edomites' taunting remarks as they "boasted" one to another about the events they were witnessing.

The destruction of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, by the Babylonians was indeed a day of the calamity for the Jews. The Edomites would like to have destroyed them themselves, but it was not in the power. When it was done by a foreign enemy, their gloating and their rejoicing, revealed their true feelings about the Israelites.

God didn't spare the Jews but He would send judgment on Edom in due time.

God sends heavy calamities on those who rejoice in the calamities of their enemies

Whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished. Pr 17:5

3 Looting and assisting the enemy

Edom's third great sin was **assisting the enemy** in attacking the Jews (Obad. 13-14). It was bad enough for people to do nothing to help their brothers, and to stand and rejoice at their brothers' calamities, but when they gave aid to the enemy, that was carrying their ancient "family feud" too far. The Edomites entered the city and shared in dividing up the spoils, thus robbing their brothers of their wealth.

Neutrality became a hostile attitude, and this attitude was succeeded by overt action.

At first the Edomites had merely looked on as the Babylonians looted the city. Finally, however, the Edomites themselves entered the city and began looting on their own (v. 13). They carried off all they could lay hands on.

But

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pasture-land. Ezek 36:5

The gates of my people in verse 13 can mean the gates of any of their cities.

The gates of my people particularly means those of Jerusalem; into which the Edomites entered along with the Babylonians, exulting over the Jews, and insulting them, and joining with the enemy in distressing and plundering them.

According to James Eckhard "the Edomites took part in four plunderings of Jerusalem in 300 years beginning in the ninth century before Christ." ATG p37

The phrase, "in their day of disaster", is three times used in this verse, to show the greatness of it; and as an aggravation of the sin of the Edomites, in behaving and doing as they did at such a time.

4 Murder

Next, the Edomites added murder to theft (v. 14).

Joel 3:19 Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood.

Obadiah said You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.

Some translate **at the crossroads** in v14 as "in the breach"; that is, of the walls of the city. The Edomites posted themselves at these breaches and cut off those who escaped the sword of the Babylonians in the city, and attempted to get away through the breaches of the walls.

According to Maurer **crossroads** translates as "narrow mountain passes", well known to those living in Israel, to escape to the desert, through Edom to Egypt; but the Edomites stood ready to intercept the fugitives and either kill or "deliver them up" to the foe. JF&B

As fugitives would take different roads to make their escape, the Edomites intercepted and stopped them and cut them off; so that those that escaped the sword of the enemy fell by theirs.

At the crossroads could simply mean that the Edomites stood at the forks in the roads, ready to capture the fugitives who were trying to escape; cut them down or turn them over to the enemy conquering Babylonians to be imprisoned or slain. This was exceedingly barbarous and cruel

Pusey writes "In settling their old accounts, the Edomites did all they could to make the downfall of Jerusalem, the capital of their despised foe, complete, even to celebrating inside the Temple enclosure on Mount Moriah (v.16). Revelry and desecration often followed pagan victories. Just as the Romans carried away the sacred vessels from the second temple, so Edom, in her hatred for God's people, regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as a victory of paganism over the worship of Jehovah. The Edomites joined with the Babylonian invaders in desecrating the hill of Zion and held a drunken orgy in the very courts of the sacred Temple on Mount Moriah".

Ezekiel said This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Edom took revenge on the house of Judah and became very guilty by doing so, therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom and kill its men and their animals. I will lay it waste, and from Teman to Dedan they will fall by the sword. I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom in accordance with my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD.' Ezek. 25:12-14

5 Ignoring the impending wrath of God

Edom's fourth sin was that of **ignoring the impending wrath of God** (Obad. 15-16). "**the day of the Lord is near for all nations**" (v. 15), and that included Edom, but Edom was proud and didn't care about what the Lord might do to them.

"The Day of the Lord" is a phrase that describes the time when God will pour His wrath out upon a wicked world, judge the nations, and then establish His kingdom, thus fulfilling the promises made to Israel. However, the phrase was also used to describe God-ordained calamities sent to punish people at any time, and these judgments were foretastes of the future worldwide "Day of the Lord."

Judah's calamity was to be temporary (Ob 17).

Obadiah and his people in Israel knew that their own distress and calamity were deserved. They had sinned and God had promised judgment, as Habakkuk had said. But they also knew that Edom, too, was guilty. Edom should have seen God's judgment on Judah and trembled. She should have humbled herself and repented of her own pride and cried out to the Lord for mercy lest she fall prey to a similar fate (cf. Luke 13:1-5). But instead she gloated. And God revealed to Obadiah that he will not let this sin go unpunished.

The cup of vengeance began with Israel, and went round the nations, according to the prophecy in Jer 25:17. If judgment begins at the house and people of God, it may be expected it will reach to others. Edom had no reason to rejoice at the destruction of the Jews; since they might be assured by that they would suffer a similar fate.

The Jews only drank this cup for a while, during the seventy years' captivity, these nations, and the Edomites in particular would be "continually" drinking it:

The foes of Judah were never to regain their former position (Ob 18, 19). There would not be a trace left of their national existence, it would be as though they had not been--JF&B (Job 10:19; Ps 37:36; Eze 26:21)

Today there are no Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, or Edomites; their names are not heard of in the world, except when they are read in the Bible;

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (a.d. 70), Edom dropped forever out of world history.

All that remains of Petra today is a lonely and desolate ruin. Petra's future is behind her! The future of Jerusalem, however, will be a glorious one.

Obadiah 15

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 7:12). We call this statement "The Golden Rule," and it points out a positive approach to personal relationships.

Obadiah 15 gives the negative side: "As you have done, it will be done to you." Or, as Paul expressed it, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Gal. 6:7). What goes around comes around.

Every thing that the Edomites did to Jacob came back upon their heads. What they did to others is ultimately done to them. God is in control and He does avenge His people. It may seem slow to us but it is sure and certain in His time. God's judgements are true and righteous Rev 16:7

Remember for example Pharaoh ordered all the Jewish boy babies drowned, God drowned the Egyptian army (Ex. 1; 14:26-31). The men who lied about Daniel in order to have Daniel thrown to the lions were themselves thrown to the lions (Dan. 6).

What about our society and the Church today?

As we suffer the international credit crunch and the recession as a nation are we not reaping what we have sowed? So many have been getting rich at the expense of others - whether it was a tea plantation worker in India or a pensioner persuaded into investing in dodgy speculative deals with his meagre savings.

The love of money has indeed proved to be the root of all kinds of evil. And as a result few of those with prominent positions in commerce, business, politics or the civil service appear trustworthy.

We were once a nation built in the foundations of God's Word and yet we effectively have kicked Him out of our schools and courts. Is it any wonder that we have crimes in the schools and no justice in the courts?

We are a nation built on the right to religious freedom and yet we cannot pray where we want or speak our faith when and where we please.

It has got to the extent that even some so called Christians see God as no more than a big Daddy and not the Lord our God, and King of the Universe. Men dare to make merchandise of Him to fleece people in His name. So many treat Him like a big fire escape and a Divine gift dispenser. There is no fear or awe of God. Westernised Christians have largely moulded God into our image thinking He is on 24/7 call just for us.

Many "believers" have no true understanding of sin and just play church. More often than not man is in control of His church and not Him. When church it is not fun anymore or when people feel they are no longer being fulfilled most of them whine, then quit or try a new playground.

Before we can help the world the church must get its own house in order.

Conclusion

Dr Ronald Shultz says; **If we repent of the sins of the Edomites and learn the lessons of the Israelites we will know national and spiritual prosperity. It will make everything good we have had up to now look like a one of those puny appetizers before the grand seven course meal. May God help us to do so!**

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