

Enemies of God Obadiah 1:1-21

Introduction

Obadiah: Turn in your Bibles to Obadiah” (I might as well say “turn to the TOC”). Continuing in the **Minor Prophets**. Not less important *a la* Minor League vs. Major League Baseball. The Hebrew Bible was the Scriptures of Jesus and the Apostles, including these **Latter Prophets** (they are quoted frequently in the NT).

- These “minor” prophets were just as influential in their day as the so-called “major” prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah), they just didn’t leave lengthy books (I think most books are 100 pages too long anyway).

The shortest book in the OT. “Only 21 verses long, readable in 5 minutes or less (only Philemon, 2nd, and 3rd John have fewer words).

- Obadiah means “servant of YHWH” (could be a title; shared other OT people).
- Prophesied *after* the destruction of Jerusalem (Judah): **Babylonian Captivity**, Siege of Jerusalem (think Daniel, etc.).
 - **Contra Assyrian Exile** (north) that happened earlier and the tribes were dispersed, never to reconstitute.
- Only book of the Bible addressed specifically to unbelievers. Previous prophecies warned *the people of God* of their judgment (e.g., Hosea, Joel, Amos). Now God is warning the the nations!

Obadiah says that, the enemies of God will be punished and the people of God will be saved.

- The question is, which am I? Enemy or friend?

1. God Opposes the Proud (vv. 1-9)

¹ The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom: 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!” 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?” ⁴ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD. ⁵ If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night— how you have been destroyed!— would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings? ⁶ How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out! 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. ⁸ Will I not on that day, declares the LORD, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? ⁹ And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

Who is Edom?: Neighboring nation to Israel (E/SE across the Dead Sea). More significantly, Edom is the nation descended from **Esau**. Which means they have a shared familial heritage with the Israelites.

- Esau married Ishmael's daughter (they had the same granddad). Esau married his cousins on his dad's side and Jacob his cousins on his mom's
 - The people of the area, i.e., Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, etc., could take a "23 and Me Test" and get the same results as the Israelites; their family tree is a Palm Tree).
- Rupture between Jacob and Esau in their lifetime (Jacob became the child of blessing) but they ended their lives on friendly terms. Jealousy and animosity carried on between their offspring. Edom thinks, "we got the raw deal; we deserve some blessing."

Babylonian Captivity: God had judged **Israel** (north) through exile and destruction by the Assyrians (733 BCE). Now **Judah** (south) had been defeated by the Babylonians (586 BCE) and sent into exile (think Daniel). Unlike the northern exile, Judah was able to maintain national identity and return to reconstitute the land some 7 decades later.

- (1) Jerusalem suffered under an 18-month siege (the decisive event of the Jewish-Babylonian War). The siege saw many deaths from war, violence, and starvation. Even the King died. In the end, 10,000 people were carted off to Babylon (specifically the wealthy and elite). Many Jewish people fled to neighboring countries to avoid the war.
- (2) The temple was destroyed and the city plundered, beside the economic effect, the psychological and spiritual effect was traumatic.

God rightfully judged his people for their idolatry, but he also, we find out, is judging Edom because of the way they acted in all of this.

Pride is Deceptive: The core attitude of the Edomites that God is judging is their **pride**. **Pride is deceptive**. The pride of your heart has deceived you (wise men... mighty men).

- They thought their naturally fortified city, wise men, and mighty army would protect them from destruction. Esau was always the stronger brother in the Jacob Esau story and, apparently, that military success continued in his descendants.
 - **Nothing can stop God's judgment except God.** *God will and should judge you for sin*, the only hope is to trust in the one who took your sins.

Pride deceives us into trusting the wrong thing.

- Maginot Line (France WW2). Concrete bunkers, underground railway, artillery, AC (!). Germany went around through the Ardennes Forest (Belgium). The Maginot Line became a metaphor for expensive efforts that offer a false sense of security.
- This is what happens when we trust in anything other than God (even the gifts of God).
 - Appearances, intelligence, family, material success, career, charm, hustle, relationships, legacy, morality, goodness, etc. Each false idol will leave you wanting more. **What will you trust in?**

Anything you place your trust in, other than God, will fail you. We were never meant to find security in anything other than God. People learning this the hard way with the current stock market. Based on when I was born, I had only ever seen economic success (90s were booming

economically). Always told that real estate was the best investment, so when the Housing Market bust happened in 2008, I was shocked that real estate could lose value!

- But, what looks like a disaster might be grace. God causes us to despair in worldly things and self-sufficiency so we trust in Christ!

Pride is Destructive: Their pride will bring destruction in more ways than one. (1) God has promised to humble the proud. God will rescue the humble but destroy the proud.

- Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand (Job 40:12). For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low (Is 2:12). “Behold, I am against you, O proud one, declares the Lord GOD of hosts, for your day has come, the time when I will punish you (Jer 50:31). “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt 23:12). But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Jas 4:6). Also qtd 1 Pet 5:5. From Prov 3:34. This is largely the context of Hannah’s prayer in 1 Sam 2 and Mary’s in Luke 1.
- **A prideful spirit cannot exist in communion with God.** So God *will* humble you to bring you to himself. “The essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind” (C. S. Lewis). “Pride is self-consciousness. Humility is God-consciousness. All sin begins with pride.”
 - The root of pride is self-idolatry. Pride seeks to redirect to yourself glory that should go to God.
 - If we try to lift ourselves up (i.e., pride) God *promises* to bring us down (i.e., humble us).

(2) God often uses our very pride as the *means* to humble us. The things we rely on will often be the things that bring us down. 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. The Edomites trusted in their alliances with ungodly nations and *surprise* those alliances would bring them down.

- The career you hope in will consume you. The drug you rely on will destroy you. The relationship you sacrifice for will use you and discard you

Humility is the Way: Pride is offensive to God because it sees us as sovereign rather than him. It says that we’re responsible for our success rather than acknowledging that all we have is a gift from him. Pride is antithetical to the character of Christ.

- The only one who rightfully can be proud chose the path of humility. He humbled himself to save us. Humility is the way of Christ, it is the way of the gospel, and it is the path to which all believers are called to walk.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:5-11).

- The gospel is the **model** of our humility but is also the **means** by which God humbles us.
 - No one who recognizes their sin and experiences God's grace, can reasonably walk around proud. "I am more sinful and flawed than I ever imagined yet loved and accepted in Christ more than I dared hope" (Keller).
- Imagine your worse moment (it is that bad), but God loved you then! "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).
 - The gospel humbles us because everything we have is a gift of God but it also gives us confidence because God cannot fail. Our humility is not despair and our confidence is not arrogance because it is all from God and to God. Humility provides fertile soil for the growth of the gospel in our lives.

2. God Punishes the Enemies of His People (vv. 10-14)

¹⁰ 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, 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; 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.

Real Violence: Their attitude was pride and their actions were violent. The enemies of Jerusalem were more considerate than the Edomites (cf. Joel 3:19, Amos 1:11). This was a **real siege and a real battle and the real fall** of Jerusalem. When the Israelites tried to flee, the Edomites were waiting to kill them and steal their stuff. When Jerusalem fell, they were eager to plunder the town.

- They knew better! As "sons of Abraham" they should have helped their neighbor, not exploited their weakness. "Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you" (Num 24:9).
- They kicked her while she was down, rather than helping. They took advantage rather than assist. They saw Judah's conquest as an opportunity for self-enrichment.
 - "When a person is in the bondage of pride, he takes whatever opportunity he can to exalt himself over others" (Piper).

Gloat: Getting successful off of the failure of others is not the gospel way. We do not need others to fall in order for us to succeed (**scarcity mindset**). The Edomites should have seen the deserved judgment of God on Israel and repented, but instead, they gloated. "Nations, adults, and little children have this in common: apart from the grace of God we all tend to derive pleasure from another person's failure" (Piper)

- Even churches and ministries can feel this way. We don't need other churches to fail so we can succeed. A win for one of us is a win for all of us. "A rising tide raises all ships." Even though God's people were experiencing God's judgment, the attitude of Edom should never have been smug or prideful. **When we see someone fall to sin, we should not rejoice.** ¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezek 33:11)
- "Grant that I may know with inmost affection to mourn with those who sin... that, so often as the sin of anyone who has fallen is made known to me I may suffer with him and not chide him proudly but mourn and weep" (Ambrose).

Comfort: This should also be a comfort to you. **If** you belong to Christ (i.e., Heidelberg Catechism: What is your only comfort in life and death? That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ) then when someone opposes you, they are opposing him.

- Opposing God's people is opposing God. When Saul was persecuting the early church, Jesus asked, "Why are you persecuting **me**" (Acts 9:4).
- This should be a great comfort for those who have been sinned against and should terrify any who sin against God's people.

3. God's Judgment is Certain (vv. 15-16)

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.

Judgment is Coming: Judgment is coming for all people. Not just Israel, not just Edom, but for all the nations. There is certainty to God's judgment: it shall be done, nothing can stop God from executing justice (e.g., Jude). ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Pet 4:17). ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Heb 9:27).

Pray for Justice: Justice is good. We long for a day for God to punish all wickedness, to restore justice and peace to his creation. We want justice, we long for justice, we pray for justice, we work for justice. The day of the Lord can't come soon enough! **I long for that day.**

- But this should also give us pause. We should reflect and ask: **What guarantees me salvation rather than judgment? What makes me think I will escape judgment?**
- If justice means I'll get what I deserve and I'll reap what I sow, then I need to be brutally honest about it.

Enemies: Edom is a representative of the nations who are opposed to God and his people (Edom cf. Adam = humanity). They are "the world" in some sense. They are "enemies of God."

- The Bible shows that God has enemies: **Satan** (1 Tim 5:14-15), **death** (1 Cor 15:26), and **us** before Christ.
 - Paul says that everyone, before faith in Christ, is an “enemy” of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Rom 5:10).

All of us have **earned** and **deserve** judgment (not salvation) because all of us have sinned. Our punishment is not based on the severity of our sin (necessarilly) but on the holiness of God.

God’s infinite perfection means every sin separates us infinitely from him.

- There is hope: ¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph 2:1-10)

4. God’s Salvation is Available (vv. 17-21)

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah 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 shall possess the cities of the Negeb. ²¹ Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD’s.

Good News: God will judge sin, but in his grace, he offers to take that judgment on himself rather than put it on us. “There is no refuge from God, only refuge in God.”

- God has promised to protect his people in the refuge of his holy city. There is good news! God’s people can be saved. **Judgment is coming but** (as we’ll see even more clearly next week in Jonah), **salvation is available to all who would repent and believe.** Repentance requires humbling yourself, not trusting in yourself but trusting in God.
- The Minor Prophets have a strong word of judgment (because sin is that serious) but all of them point to the hope of salvation.

God's People: Such salvation comes only to those who are God's people. But God's people are not just ethnic Israelites. In fact, ethnicity is not what defines an Israelite.

- We see this in the OT: Tamar (Jethro is a Midianite, Tamar is probably not an Israelite, Ruth is a Moabite, Rahab is a Canaanite, and so on).
- ⁶ “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel” (Rom 9:6). ²⁶ For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal 3:28-29). Scripture makes clear what was pointed to in Hosea (1:10, 2:23): ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” ²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” (Rom 9:25-26).
- Through faith in Christ, you are adopted into the family of God, rescued from the judgment of God, and given life in the Kingdom of God.

You can go from being an enemy to being a friend. ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God (Jas 2:23). What makes friendship with God spectacular is that we were enemies, yet he made it possible to be friends. He found us, he died for us, he rescued us.

Kingdom of God: And the kingdom shall be the LORD's. The rule of Christ and your salvation go hand in hand. Jesus came as King. If you want salvation then it means you can't be king of your own life. Many people want the blessings of the Kingdom but are unwilling to let Jesus be King. If he's King, then he sets the standards, the rules.

- You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

This is why RH believes in membership. The church is not the exact same thing as the KoG but it should be the place on earth where the values of God's kingdom are on display.

- We expect members, by God's grace, to display the values of God's kingdom, to prioritize the commands of Christ, to sacrifice for the cause of Christ.
- We are not trying to build a church of consumers (consumers will desert you at a moment's notice). **Church is not convenient.** It's not a hobby. It's a community that lives by a totally different allegiance and value system.

Conclusion:

Dividing Line: So the “day of the Lord,” the “judgment of God,” the “kingdom of God” is either the most encouraging news or the most dreaded (“Your dad's coming home” vs. “Wait until your dad comes home”).

- You either long for Jesus or you fear him. You either live for that day or for the fleeting pleasures of the here-and-now. You either pursue his justice or seek your own. **Which are you?**