

Compassion For Lost People
May 31, 2015
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Obadiah 1-4,10-17

- A question about human nature (since we're all human): **How do we often feel when *something* really bad happens to *someone* really bad?** Not, how Jesus WANTS you to feel. We'll get to that. **How do we feel? What do we often say in order to rationalize having those feelings?** *"They had it coming to them. They got what they deserve!" "Their just deserts." "Their comeuppance."* Ever say that about someone? Ever at least think it?
- Sometimes justice is served and people DO "get what they deserve."
- By the way, this is NOT a lesson about throwing away justice. We serve a just God.
- Sometimes it's not about justice, when bad things happen to someone we don't like.
- Still, deep inside we get that little feeling of glee. *"They got what they deserve for being a jerk."*
- Let's turn things around. What if God looked at all of us and said: *"They had it coming?"*

The big idea: When it comes to paying for our sins, we ALL had it coming. "There is none righteous...not one." But, God in His mercy provides an escape called grace. We must have the compassion of Jesus for the souls of bad people, because to God we're ALL bad people.

- The prophesy of Obadiah touches all the evil emotions and actions you can think of: Greed; revenge; deception; animosity; lust; murder; hatred.
- And it all started with two brothers in one family. Two brothers who literally struggle with each other in their mother's womb. They became two nations that hated each other until one of the nations was wiped off the map.
- It won't take long to understand Obadiah's prophesy...it's the shortest of the prophets.

Obadiah 1-4 (NLT)

This is the vision that the Sovereign Lord revealed to Obadiah concerning the land of Edom.

Edom's Judgment Announced

We have heard a message from the Lord
that an ambassador was sent to the nations to say,
"Get ready, everyone!

Let's assemble our armies and attack Edom!"

2 The Lord says to Edom,
"I will cut you down to size among the nations;
you will be greatly despised.

3 You have been deceived by your own pride
because you live in a rock fortress
and make your home high in the mountains.

'Who can ever reach us way up here?'
you ask boastfully.

4 But even if you soar as high as eagles
and build your nest among the stars,
I will bring you crashing down,"
says the Lord.

- The nation of Edom were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob.
- Remember a few weeks ago we talked about how God chose Jacob over Esau to be the forefather of the nation of Israel. If you read Genesis 25-28 you learn their story.
- Isaac, the son of Abraham...pleaded with the Lord because his wife was unable to have children. The Lord answered and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. But the twins struggled with each other in her womb. It was WWF inside Rebekah! So she asked The Lord, "*Why is this happening to me?*" And the Lord told her, "*The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son.*"
- We could talk about "mama's boy" versus "daddy's little man"; their complexion; or lentil stew. But, the bottom line is they both became nations and never got over hating each other.
- The Edomites did some bad stuff to Judah (Israel). We'll look at that.
- Verses one and two: **How was God orchestrating judgment on Edom? What does that say about God's sovereignty?**

- **What does verse three say was Edom's biggest problem? Why were they that way?**
- **What does God say about them in verse four?**
- We talked about PRIDE a few weeks ago. Let's see what scripture says about it.

Proverbs 16:5 (ESV)

5 Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord;
be assured, he will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 26:12 (ESV)

12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Jeremiah 9:23 (ESV)

23 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,

Galatians 6:3 (ESV)

3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Proverbs 16:18 (ESV)

18 Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 6:16–19 (NKJV)

16 These six things the Lord hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren.

Ray Stedman wrote:

“Proverbs 6:16 says: “There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him.” And what is number one on the list? A proud look. And everything else that follows is a variation of pride...all these things are manifestations of that single basic evil, pride. This is the satanic nature which was implanted in the human race; all who are born of Adam have this congenital twist of pride, the independent ego that evaluates everything only in terms of its importance or its unimportance to self. The universe centers around self, the rival god. That is pride. That is Esau; that is Edom.”

- **Why is pride such a fundamental evil? How is pride different than healthy self-esteem?**
- **Is “self-love” wrong for a Christian? What did Matthew 22:39 say about it?**
- **Here’s a riddle: How can being legalistic about pride in others become a pride problem for you? How can pride hinder having compassion for the soul of someone who’s been really terrible to you?**
- Back to the Edomites. What did they do that made God come down on them so hard?
- Edom’s pride manifested itself in a lot of bad behavior toward God’s nation Judah.
- You see some bad things were happening to Judah because of THEIR sin against God.
- The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and kidnapped or killed most of the people.
- The Edomites said: *“Judah got what they deserved!” “God chose them over us and now the Babylonians are rolling over the land of Judah, killing, stealing, plundering, and taking the people away as slaves. Let’s don’t just watch, let’s get in on this!”*
- Look at what God said (through Obadiah) to Edom. Verse 10

Obadiah 10–14 (NLT)

Reasons for Edom’s Punishment

10 “Because of the violence you did to your close relatives in Israel,*

you will be filled with shame
and destroyed forever.

11 When they were invaded,
you stood aloof, refusing to help them.
Foreign invaders carried off their wealth
and cast lots to divide up Jerusalem,
but you acted like one of Israel's enemies.

12 "You should not have gloated
when they exiled your relatives to distant lands.
You should not have rejoiced
when the people of Judah suffered such misfortune.
You should not have spoken arrogantly
in that terrible time of trouble.

13 You should not have plundered the land of Israel
when they were suffering such calamity.
You should not have gloated over their destruction
when they were suffering such calamity.
You should not have seized their wealth
when they were suffering such calamity.

14 You should not have stood at the crossroads,
killing those who tried to escape.
You should not have captured the survivors
and handed them over in their terrible time of trouble.

- The Edomites not only stood by as the nation of Israel was destroyed, they participated in the destruction.
- God made a promise to the nation of Israel: *"I will make you a great nation; I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you..."*
- **How does this speak to what's going on these days in the middle east?**
- God punished Edom for their actions against Israel. One day these verses will apply to nations we know about today. Look at verse 15.

Edom Destroyed, Israel Restored

15 "The day is near when I, the Lord,
will judge all godless nations!
As you have done to Israel,

so it will be done to you.

All your evil deeds
will fall back on your own heads.

16 Just as you swallowed up my people
on my holy mountain,
so you and the surrounding nations
will swallow the punishment I pour out on you.
Yes, all you nations will drink and stagger
and disappear from history.

17 “But Jerusalem* will become a refuge for those who escape;
it will be a holy place.
And the people of Israel* will come back
to reclaim their inheritance.

- As we wrap up, let’s make this personal. As verse fifteen says: *“The day is near... God will judge the nations.”* Think of a person who’s been terrible to you. I mean horrible.
- If they are not a believer and follower of Christ, they’re facing God’s judgment.
- One day will God say to you and me that we *“stood aloof, refusing to help them”*?
- *“But God, they had it coming!”* God says, *“So did you.”*
- **How could we come to the rescue of that person regarding their eternal destiny?**
- **What did Jesus tell us to do for our enemies? How did he model it?**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrote of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:44,
“This is the supreme demand. Through the medium of prayer we go to our enemy, stand by his side, and plead for him to God”
(The Cost of Discipleship, trans. R. H. Fuller [2d rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1960], p. 166).

So, What’s the Takeaway?

Proverbs 24:17 (ESV) warns us...

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,

- That's true in every day life. It's ESPECIALLY true with ETERNAL life.
- When it comes to paying for our sins, we ALL had it coming.
- But, thank God, in His mercy He provided an escape called grace.
- Whether it's a personal word or just a fervent prayer, this week how can I not just "stand aloof" as people die without Jesus?
- We need to have the compassion of Jesus for the souls of bad people. Because to God, unless we're covered by the righteousness of Christ, we're ALL bad people.