

Obadiah; Jer. 49:7-16; The Battle of the Brothers I. Judgement on God's Enemies II. Restoration for God's People

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we return to our series on the OT Minor prophets, this morning we come to the shortest OT book. This book may be one of the least known as well. The book of Obadiah deals with the relationship between brothers- this prophecy is an oracle about the twins born to Isaac and Rebekah- the two sons named Jacob and Esau. As you know, the children of Jacob were called the son of Israel- while the descendants of Esau are the Edomites as we find our text today. The land of Edom was located to the South-East of the Dead Sea- in a hilly and arid place. Now the conflict between these two brothers is generational- it started already in Rebekah's womb- but the LORD had promised- the older will serve the younger. Jacob had stolen Esau's blessing and birthright- while Esau had planned to kill his brother in retaliation. But the prophecy in Obadiah comes in the context of another conflict. Obadiah's name means "One who serve the LORD" and he lived around 580BC. The reason this date is important is because Obadiah spoke after Babylon had attacked and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC but before the fall of Edom to the Babylonians in 553. So it is in this period after the destruction of land of Israel- and before the destruction of the land of Esau- that we find ourselves. Today we consider this theme: The Lord's servant- Obadiah- speaks of the coming destruction of God's enemies.

### **I. Judgement on God's Enemies**

In our first point we find the judgment of God's enemies in the promised destruction of the Edomites. Obadiah opens with a vision or a prophecy concerning the fall of this nation- the neighbors and kin of God's people. Now why was God going to destroy them- what had they done to kindle His wrath? Well, there are various sins mentioned in our text. In v. 3 we read of their pride. They boasted in their own powers- thinking that whatever ill happened to others it would never happen to them. As the old Proverb says, pride goes before the fall. Next there was a self-reliance- a dependence and trust in their

own abilities and their own defenses. As a nation, they were built on a mountain plateau. They were surrounded by cliffs on every side- seeing themselves like eagles safe in their nest. Their cities were out of reach- their nation secure behind this natural fortress. No one can touch us- we are out of reach. But perhaps the greatest sin of these people was their complicit act of encouraging the destruction of Jerusalem. They gloated as v. 12 says- when the Babylonians surrounded the city of Jerusalem they were standing there- praising and encouraging Babylon to destroy the city. Burn it down- they chanted! Here, let us help you as you destroy the city! Remember that this was their own kin- they were from the same father Abraham and Isaac. Yet they rejoiced when Israel was defeated- and even participated in the violence. They entered the city in v. 13- they partook of the plunder and looted the city. They were partners with the Babylonians in v. 11- adding their hands to the casting down of the stones. And one final sin- in v. 14- they refused to help the refugees. They stood at the cross roads- they captured any resident of Jerusalem as they tried to flee- and they brought them back to the Babylonians. They did not show mercy. Thus they were complicit to the murder of citizens or the enslaving of their neighbors. They did not show pity. It is one thing to stand back when someone is being attacked- it is another to encourage that attack- and still worse to participate in that attack. Although the Babylonians were an instrument of wrath in God's hands to chastise His people- it was not Edom's place to join in. The mentality of the Edomites was this- the enemy of my enemy must be my friend. But was that so? Was Babylon a friend to trust? No- as we see in v. 15 God is going to return their actions on their own head! This theme of returning a person's actions on their own head runs through this section. As I said in the introduction, Babylon is going to come back in 533 and they will do to Edom what Edom did to Judah! God is going to return on the Edomites their own deeds. So what will happen to Edom is this- they will be deceived by their allies in v. 7. For betraying the Israelites who were their blood relatives- they themselves will be betrayed! Their supposed friends will become their foes. Their land will be stripped bare as v. 6 says- they will have nothing left! For stripping the land of Israel and plundering the city of

Jerusalem- they themselves will be stripped until nothing is left! For cutting off the refugee and refusing to provide shelter to the survivors of Jerusalem- their own mighty men will be cut off and killed in a slaughter in v. 9. As Proverbs 26 says, if you dig a pit you yourself will fall into it. Or as Luke 6 says, the measure you use against others will be used against you. But even in this destruction of Edom we catch a glimpse of something larger. In talking sides with the Babylonians, Edom made herself an enemy of the LORD and His people. As Jesus said to Saul in Acts- why do you persecute Me- when he had been persecuting His people. If you take your stand against Christ and His church- if you battle against God's people- you can rest assured that God will repay! As Rom. 12:19 puts it- leave room for the wrath of God- vengeance belongs to our God- He will repay! This is a warning for God's enemies- kiss the Son or be terrified by His wrath- but it is also a comfort for God's people! Justice will be done! The end of v. 1 in our text speaks of a Day when the LORD will rise up for battle- we read of this Battle in Rev. 19 where the Son rides out to battle against the Beast and the False Prophet. Those who are not for us are against us- those who are not aligned with Christ are against Him and will one day face His wrath! A Day is coming- the Day of the LORD- when this justice will be executed on all nations as v. 15 puts it. So fear the Lord- kiss His King- or you too will face His fury! And for those who do know the Son- who are God's people- we can rest on this certain return and justice! We can bow down in holy fear- waiting on Him- knowing that our God will make all things right- and the enemies of the church along with every force of evil as LD 48 says- everything that conspires against His word- will be destroyed when His Kingdom comes.

## **II. Restoration for God's People**

Now that we have considered the warning and rebuke for the Edomites, in our second point we consider the restoration for God's people. Remember that the fall of Jerusalem in 586 is a past event- the destruction and famine- the plague and sword are past and fulfilled events. The city and the temple are in ruins- but is this the end of God's people? No- not at all! There is good news found in a future

reversal! Although Israel is currently a pilgrim and stranger- living in a foreign land- one day there will be a return and a restoration! There are some who will escape as v. 17 says- a remnant who will be holy. And these exiles will return to the land of the promise as v. 20 says- to possess that land and the cities. Now this promise was fulfilled in part when Cyrus issued a decree in 538 BC as recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. But there is a greater- larger fulfillment that has yet to come. There is a partial fulfillment that has already occurred- but there is as Heb. 11:16 says- a better country to come. There is yet a heavenly city- a new Jerusalem promised by God to His people. And the final restoration is under an appointed leader- this time called a Savior in v. 21. Obadiah speaks to saviors going up to Mt. Zion. Now a savior is anyone who was chosen to lead and deliver God's people- notably those who would deliver from oppression and bring deliverance. Like the Judges of old- people who would rescue God's people. Now some of these people- these saviors- are already known- like Ezra, Nehemiah- the High Priest Joshua and Gedaliah the governor. Even Cyrus was called the chosen instrument who was anointed to issue a decree of liberation. But we can't read about a Savior coming up to Mount Zion without thinking of the perfect and final Savior- Jesus Christ. Listen to Rev. 14:1- then I looked and behold, on Mt. Zion stood the Lamb. John refers to the Lamb who would stand and rule on the Mount that once held the Temple of God. It is this Savior who will rule over the Father's Kingdom- establishing the people of God- placing this whole world under His dominion- as He brings down the heavenly Jerusalem to this earth. It is this final and ultimate kingdom which fills God's people with hope- both in the OT and today. As I said before, Obadiah is witness to an epic battle. A battle between two brothers- 2 nations and even two kings. When Jesus was yet a little babe, His life was in grave danger. Herod the Great- who was an Edomite- who was from the line of Esau- tried to find this King of the Jews to kill him in Mt. 2! Who would win? The kingdom of Satan led by Herod- Esau's son- the false king? Or Jesus- the son of Jacob- the perfect Israelite and the true King? What Obadiah saw in part- we now see fully- even more clearly as we see the perfect Savior who has come, who has won the victory and who

will return to rule over all! The Mountain of Esau would fall- never to rise again- while Mt. Zion would be established- firm- to never be shaken again!

To conclude, Obadiah gives us a small picture of the Battle between good and evil- between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Although it may appear that God's people are harassed in this life- although the church suffers trials and tribulations today- one day those tears will be wiped away and our sorrow will be turned to joy! On the flip side, those who enjoy a life of ease – living their days with plenty today while rejecting the true King- will find themselves in a wretched state when this Savior returns. One day under the perfect King, God's people will inherit the land and dwell in the city of their God! For this day the church waits as she cries out- come Lord Jesus!