

Obadiah 1-4, 8, 10, 15, 17-18, 21
Minor Prophets Summer Series 2015
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Obadiah – The Prophet of Humility

One day last week, I had to run over to Aldi's on 27th Street. There were just a few things that I needed to pick up for us at the house. As I was going east on Rawson, there was a vehicle that was following very close behind me. You could tell that the driver was in a bigger hurry than I was. When he finally got a chance, he took it. He zipped right past me. As he went zooming past me, there was this thought that went through my mind: *I hope there is a Franklin officer sitting up ahead on Rawson.* As I watched the pickup truck that went zipping past me get stuck behind another driver, he soon was forced to slow down again as he came up on another vehicle. But then I spotted the Franklin officer sitting along the side of the road about where the construction is starting on Rawson. There was a part of me that was disappointed because he was no longer speeding when he went past the officer. I thought: *I wish that other vehicle hadn't been there, because I'm sure he wouldn't have gotten away with speeding down the road.*

Ever felt like that? (I probably shouldn't have thought like that. There have been times that I have been saved by another vehicle in front of me.) You ever felt like that about God? We look at the world around us, and we think: *Don't you care, God? Why do you keep letting people get away with doing wrong in this world? Aren't you concerned, God? Why do you keep letting people roll right over you, God?* I think, that is how God's people thought about the Edomites at the time of Obadiah.

There was a long history of animosity between Israel and Edom. The two nations originated out of two brothers, Esau and Jacob, the grandsons of Abraham. Esau had become very jealous of his brother, Jacob, when Jacob took the birth rite their father intended for Esau. Jacob runs away out of fear of Esau. 20 years later Jacob returns to meet his brother. Over those 20 years, things had changed for both Jacob and Esau. God had been at work and had blessed Esau that he no longer held a grudge against Jacob. (Genesis 33:4) In fact, God had blessed both Jacob and Esau so much that the land they were living in couldn't support the size of their flocks. Finally, they needed to part ways.

Over time, the descendants of Esau developed into a country named Edom. The descendants of Jacob would settle in Egypt following the invitation of Joseph at the time of a famine. God would bless the descendants of Jacob into a great nation. It was such a great nation that Moses would lead them out of Egypt towards the Promised Land. As the descendants of both nations grew, so did their animosity toward each other grow once again. After Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he asked Edom if they could peacefully pass through their nation as a short cut to Canaan. Edom refused. Israel didn't rebel, they listened to God when he told them in Deuteronomy not to attack Israel because they were their brothers.

But Edom didn't listen to God. They didn't look at the children of Israel as their brothers. Over time, they would attack Israel. If they weren't doing the attacking, they were cheering Israel's enemies as they would attack Israel. They continued to belittle Israel. They made life miserable for Israel. By the time of Obadiah, hundreds of years later, Israel was frustrated, hurt, sometimes angry, but mostly just sick of suffering from the Edomites. People were wondering: *Why doesn't God do something. Why doesn't God knock these Edomites, who had become very proud in opposing God's people?*

Obadiah now comes to Israel and assures the children of Israel that God had heard their cries. God was now going to remember his people. Obadiah tells them that now God promises: **"See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the Lord.**

Edom had become rich and powerful. The area around them doesn't look like much, there were several factors that contributed to Edom's prosperity. They had rich deposits of copper and iron. Their biggest source of wealth, however, is that they controlled one of the most travelled trade routes in the world. This unique position allowed them to charge

whatever toll they wanted to charge. There wasn't anything anyone could do about it. Edom knew it. They had become proud and arrogant.

But that was all about to come to an end. Obadiah assures God's people that God was going to bring the ultimate dose of humility to this proud and arrogant nation. That is the danger of pride. Pride elevates a person to think that he is above God. It claims that a person can live without any help from God. It insults God. It says to God: *I am the master of my fate; I am the Captain of my soul.* Then God comes along and says: **"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."** (Proverbs 16:18)

That was the message of humility that Obadiah was bringing to the Edomites. **"But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance. The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau." The Lord has spoken. ... And the kingdom will be the Lord's.**" God was going to take care of his people. No more were they going to get away with opposing God.

What a comfort those words are to us: **"The Lord has spoken. And the kingdom will be the Lord's!"** Don't worry about all that other stuff that is going around you in this world. God says to you: **"And the kingdom will be the Lord's!"** It isn't all about them. It's all about Jesus – who loves us. It's about a God who right now is guiding history to benefit us. He has already proved that by sending his Son to die for us. Our sins are paid for. We have eternal life in Jesus. Trust it. Believe it. **"The kingdom will be the Lord's!"**