

### The Nation of Edom Denounced For Pride

#### Obadiah 1:1-9

Obadiah verses 1-9 - *"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, saying, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle."*

*<sup>2</sup>"Behold, I will make you small among the nations. You shall be greatly despised. <sup>3</sup>The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high. You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'*

*<sup>4</sup>Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," says the Lord.*

*<sup>5</sup>"If thieves had come to you, if robbers by night - oh, how you will be cut off! - would they not have stolen till they had enough? If grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings?*

*<sup>6</sup>"Oh, how Esau shall be searched out! How his hidden treasures shall be sought after!*

*<sup>7</sup>All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border. The men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you. Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it.*

*<sup>8</sup>"Will I not in that day," says the Lord, "even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau? <sup>9</sup>Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter."*

#### Background Notes

Obadiah is sometimes called the "minor" Minor Prophet for an obvious reason: it's the shortest book of the Minor Prophets! In fact, it is the shortest book in the Old Testament. But Obadiah is not the shortest book in the Bible. Two books in the New Testament - 2 and 3 John - are the shortest books in the whole Bible.

We don't know much about the prophet Obadiah other than what's written in his small book. The name "Obadiah" means "Servant of the Lord." It seems that Obadiah lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. He prophesied judgment against the nation of Edom.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's the twin brother (Genesis 25). So the people of Israel and Edom were closely related, and that's why God held the people of Edom especially responsible for their treatment of Israel. Even though it was a brother nation, Edom actually fought against Israel. Moreover, Edom did not come to Israel's aid when other enemies attacked her. This was wrong, and God held Edom responsible.

The Edomites had settled in the mountainous region called Seir, south of the Dead Sea, in what is now southern Jordan. Edom had become a proud nation. Their capital was the well-fortified mountain citadel that later became the ancient city of Petra.

You can visit the ghost city of Petra today. It's a popular tourist attraction, especially after the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* made it famous. The magnificent ruins of this once-proud city are entered through the "Siq," a spectacular narrow canyon that cuts between towering walls of sheer rock. However, the city has long been deserted. The nation and people of Edom have all disappeared, in fulfillment of God's prophetic word through the prophet Obadiah.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. God hates the sin of pride.

Proverbs 8:13 says, *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate."* God hates the sin of pride.

Pride was the sin that led to Satan's fall. Listen to God's pronouncement of judgment on Satan in Ezekiel 28:14-15: *"You were the anointed cherub who covers. I established you. You were on the holy mountain of God. You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, until iniquity was found in you."* And verse 17, *"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor..."*

The nation of Edom had become a very proud people. In their well-protected mountain dwelling places, they thought that no one could bring them down - including God! But God hates the sin of pride. Verse 3: *"The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high. You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'"*

The sin of pride is very subtle. Pride is deceptive: *"The pride of your heart has deceived you."* An example: we just finished the first semester at Emmaus Bible College. Suppose one student asked another, "What grade did you get in Dr. Dave's Old Testament Survey course?" If that student got an "A," he or she will most likely say, "I got an A." But if that student got a "D," he or she will most likely say, "Dr. Dave gave me a D." Did you note the subtle difference? Rarely is it the other way around! Why? **Pride!**

Whether it's in the area of intellect, or appearance, or athletic ability, or wealth, or whatever, pride misleads us. It is deceptive. The Bible says so. Often we're unaware of how proud and self-centered we really are. Pride glorifies self rather than God.

Pride and self-sufficiency keep a person or a nation from coming to God. In fact, pride tries to get rid of God. Why is God banned from the secular classroom today? Why is the Big Bang Theory of the universe's origin taught as fact? Why does the theory of evolution reign supreme for the origins of life? The reason is that people don't want God. They want to run their own lives. They don't want to acknowledge responsibility to their Creator, or their need for a Savior. They're self-sufficient and proud. And **God hates the sin of pride.**

## 2. God judges the sin of pride.

Because of her pride, the nation of Edom would be judged: *"Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be greatly despised" (v2).* And verse 4: *"Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," says the Lord.*"

Verses 5 and 6 reveal that Edom's destruction would be complete, *"If thieves had come to you, if robbers by night - oh, how you will be cut off!- would they not have stolen till they had enough? If grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings? Oh, how Esau shall be searched out! How his hidden treasures shall be sought after!"*

When thieves come at night, they don't take everything – they take only the valuables. And when vineyard keepers gather grapes, they don't harvest every single last grape. But the Lord said that when Edom would be destroyed, **nothing** would be left! All her hidden treasures would be found and taken. Edom's pride would be completely cut down.

Not only would her wealth, but her wisdom would also be plundered. *"Will I not in that day," says the Lord, "even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau? Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter" (v8-9).* Teman was another prominent city of Edom. Has this prophecy of judgment against Edom come true? Yes, it has. Edom is gone. It is no more.

God used other nations to destroy Edom (v1). The Nabateans were Arabian tribesmen who conquered Edom. Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC the Nabateans deceived the Edomites into making an alliance with them, and then forced the Edomites out of their mountainous strongholds. *"All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border. The men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you. Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it" (v7).*

So the Edomites, who were deceived by their pride in their impregnable fortifications, were deceived by the Nabataeans. By the way, it was the Nabateans that carved Petra's much-photographed "Temple" or "Treasury," and other rock buildings. These buildings are carved right into the red sandstone cliffs of Petra.

Most of the Edomites were forced out to the west, where they became the "Idumeans," living in the southern parts of Israel. King Herod the Great was an Idumean. During the inter-testamental period, the Maccabees subdued the

Idumeans, forcing many Idumeans to be circumcised and follow Judaism. Under the Romans, the Idumeans were further conquered and diminished. Thus the Edomites faded from history, fulfilling of God's prophecy through Obadiah. God judges the sin of pride.

What a teaching for us! God not only *hates* the sin of pride - **He must and will judge the sin of pride**. Are you proud? Is the sin of pride harbored in your heart and mind? Do you think you're self-sufficient and can run your own life, so you don't need God? You cannot hide this sin from God.

This teaching is not only for unbelievers - it's for believers as well. God judges the sin of pride.

## Practical Application

### Remember what happened to Humpty Dumpty!

"Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall; Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again."

That nursery rhyme probably had political implications when it was written, but we can certainly apply it to the results of the sin of pride. Humpty Dumpty was sitting high and mighty on his wall – but then he had a great fall!

Proverbs 16:18 says, *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."*

God has built this principle into His moral universe, and it holds true in all areas of life. It happens in politics, in business – and even in ministry! Pride goes before a fall.

As the saying goes, there can be "pride of face, pride of race, and pride of grace." Think about it, and then let me ask you once again, "Are you hiding the sin of pride in your heart?" Be careful. Like the Edomites, you may be deceived. You may be wearing a mask of humility as you look at people around you in church and in your community, but you're inwardly despising some people, and looking down on others. In your heart, do you think you're better, or more holy, or more theologically correct? Are you a proud person? If so, watch out!

1 Peter 5:5-6 says, *"...clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.'"* How much better it is to be exalted by God, than to be cut down because of our foolish pride! Let the nursery rhyme remind you of this truth.

Remember what happened to Humpty Dumpty!