

Obadiah

a commentary

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Obadiah 1 The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.”

“The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom: We have heard tidings from Jehovah, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, saying, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.” (ASV)

“vision” — hazon — “a masculine noun meaning a revelation by means of a vision, an oracle, a divine communication. The primary essence of this word is not so much the vision or dream itself as the message conveyed. It signifies the direct, specific communication between God and the people through the prophetic office or the collection of such message” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 325 — **hereafter noted as BC**); “A sight (mentally), i.e., a {dream} {revelation} or oracle” (Strong); “vision...oracle, prophecy (divine communication)” (Brown Driver Briggs, **hereafter noted as BDB**).

“rumour” — semuah — “a feminine noun referring to a report; news; a rumor. Literally, it means what is heard, a passive participle from sama, to hear, to understand. It refers to a report or announcement of news, a report of something, even a rumor” (BC, p. 1,160); “feminine participle, something (heard), i.e., an announcement” (Strong); “report, news, rumor” (BDB).

“ambassador” — *siyr* — “a masculine noun meaning an ambassador, an envoy, a messenger. It describes a person appointed to represent someone else or his nation faithfully” (BC); “a hinge (as pressed in turning); also a throe (as a physical or mental pressure); also a herald or errand doer (as constrained by the principal)” (Strong); “envoy, messenger...pivot of door, hinge...pang, distress” (BDB).

Hebrews 1:1 states, “**GOD, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.**” The emphasis is that GOD had spoken. These were not the desires of someone who hated Edom so as to fantasize about its destruction. GOD had determined that the people of Edom had gone so far beyond the boundaries He had set for their behavior, that they must be destroyed. Obadiah was simply the messenger of GOD’s will in this matter.

The name “Obadiah” means “*servant or worshiper of Jehovah.*” This is all one knows about this prophet, other than the fact that he spoke faithfully for GOD and that he was persecuted for being a faithful spokesman (Acts 7:52). (The Edomites would persecute him for speaking against them and their destruction. The Israelites because he foretold their Babylonian captivity.) Though there are other men mentioned in the Bible with this name, the Obadiah of this text cannot positively be identified with any of them.

The subject of Obadiah’s prophecy was Edom. The nation of Edom descended from Esau. Thus, Israel and Edom were related, tracing their ancestry back to Abraham. Why then was there so much animosity

between these two peoples? The trouble went all the way back to Genesis 25:23. Rebekah gave birth to twins who represented two nations. That there would always be strife between them was seen in verse twenty-two. When Jacob returned from self-imposed exile, it appeared that these two nations would live in harmony, though separately. But, the hostility harbored by the Edomites manifested itself many years later when GOD brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage. When Israel asked for permission to pass through their land on the way to Canaan, even offering to reimburse them for anything they used, the Edomites denied the right-of-way. Maybe their distrust went all the way back to what Jacob had done in obtaining the birthright and blessing from their father Isaac. As the years went by, Israel and Edom were often found to be at war with one another. The aggressor was almost always Edom. One of the great lessons of this book is that GOD will eventually destroy those who oppose Him and His people. That fact is both terrifying to those who oppose Him and comforting to those who obey Him.

Obadiah said that GOD had spoken on the matter he wrote about. One should consider that a rumor (report) is either true or false depending upon its source. When the source is GOD, the thing spoken of will surely come to pass.

“an ambassador is sent among the heathen” How this was done on this occasion is not known. The fact that GOD has used other nations to accomplish His will in the past is still true today. When a nation needs to be punished because its cup of iniquity is overflowing, GOD almost always uses another nation to accomplish that punishment. Consider Assyria versus the ten tribes of Israel or Babylon versus Judah. One sees the same

thing in the book of Judges, where GOD used the nations surrounding Israel (on numerous occasions), to punish her when she stopped faithfully serving Him and instead turned to idols. However GOD accomplished sending ambassadors to the heathen nations to get them to rise up against Edom, the result was that the mission was accomplished — they did His will.

Obadiah 2 “Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.”

“Behold, I have made thee small among the nations: thou art greatly despised.” (ASV)

“small” — qatan — “*an adjective meaning small, little, insignificant, unimportant*” (BC, p. 991); “*Young, small, insignificant, unimportant*” (BDB).

“despised” — bazah — “*a verb meaning to hold in contempt or to despise. The verb means to hold in disdain, to disrespect*” (BC, p. 125); “*to disesteem*” (Strong); “*to despise, hold in contempt, disdain*” (BDB).

The tense of this passage is future perfect. It is as if the events written had already occurred. In the mind of GOD they had. What He had determined would come to pass!

As far as numbers are concerned, Edom had become a small nation by the time of this revelation. Yet, at the time Obadiah wrote, though small in number, the Edomites held a position of power. They lived south of the Dead Sea in an extremely rugged area known as the Arabah.

“The Arabah was noted for its steep canyons, impregnable mountain strongholds, and well

protected caves” (Hailey, p. 32).

Couch gave further information on the defense capabilities of this land.

“From the standpoint of its defenses it enjoyed one of the most favored geographic positions. It was situated in the mountains, and could only be reached with extreme difficulty from any direction. Its main approach was through a narrow gorge with high rock walls on either side, and with places so narrow that two horsemen could hardly pass side by side. A very few men could virtually hold off an army. Edom indeed dwelt in ‘the cleft of the rocks’” (p. 131).

Edom was in the position of being able to control one of the leading trade routes of its time. Those who controlled these routes often collected “taxes” (extortion for safe passage) from the caravans and became rich because of their strategic positions. No one likes to pay tribute, plus the riches they gained would have caused envy from those extorted. As will be learned in the following passages, Edom came to think more highly of itself than it should have. No doubt it flaunted its position and wealth. The Edomites thought that there was no one who could overthrow them. In their pride, they forgot about GOD.

Obadiah 3 “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?”

“The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?” (ASV)

“pride” — zadon — “a noun meaning

presumptuousness, pride” (BC, p. 991); “*arrogance*” (Strong); “*pride, insolence, presumptuousness, arrogance*” (BDB); “*means pride, haughtiness, arrogance, insolence, rebelliousness. This kind of pride presumes to have more authority than is warranted*” (Zodhiates); “*pride, insolence, presumptuousness, arrogance*” (BDB).

Self-deception is one of the greatest problems and faults of mankind. It is so easy to deceive oneself into thinking that he is better than others around him and to see others’ faults without recognizing one’s own inadequacies or sins. That is why it is so important to honestly look into one’s own heart.

“Examine (“try” – ASV) yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove (“test” – NKJV) your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates” (2 Corinthians 13:5)?

Edom had deceived itself into thinking that its position was so powerful and secure that no one could successfully attack it and bring it down. What caused the people to think this way? Pride! One of the problems with pride was expressed by the psalmist.

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after GOD: GOD is not in all his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4).

Pride causes one to view himself as the center of knowledge; therefore, he will not look for the ultimate knowledge to be found in GOD. The person filled with pride does not feel a need for anyone else, certainly not GOD. The person filled with pride fills himself with thoughts of himself, not GOD. Pride will cause one to believe himself greater than GOD Himself. Jeremiah also spoke of the pride of Edom and how it would lead

to its destruction.

“Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 49:16).

The Bible is indeed full of warnings about pride.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:23).

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever” (1 John 2:16-17).

Obadiah 4 “Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.”

“Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah.” (ASV)

The eagle has long been a symbol of great power and invincibility. A study of this term in the Scriptures will bear this out. The eagle soars above the earth at astounding heights; yet, it sees the smallest movement of prey. It swiftly descends upon its prey, striking without warning. It is said that many of the dwelling places of the Edomites were so well hidden in the rocks that an enemy could be almost on top of the Edomites without knowing they were there. From these locations,

the Edomites could strike at the enemy with quick and deadly results.

The eagle makes its nest in high places, many times among the rocks that are almost inaccessible to man. Its nest is a place of safety and security. There the eagle feels invincible. The Edomites felt this kind of security. GOD tells man in this context that no matter how great he thinks he is, no matter how invincible he may feel, GOD can bring him down (See Proverbs 16:18 again). GOD will bring down those who exalt themselves and feel no need for Him. Here one should remember Nebuchadnezzar, who thought everything he had accomplished was due to his own abilities. He felt invincible. He forgot, or did not understand, that it was GOD who placed him in the position as king of the greatest empire known to man until that time. It was GOD who gave him the abilities to govern and accomplish great deeds. GOD forced Nebuchadnezzar to realize that there was indeed One mightier than himself, One who had enabled him to be “great.” Note then what Nebuchadnezzar said.

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (Daniel 4:37).

Man today needs the same lesson Nebuchadnezzar, Edom, and others have learned down through the ages — pride leads to destruction. Christians also need to learn this lesson. E.B. Pusey quoted an ancient writer whose words should be carefully contemplated in every generation of Christians.

“They who boast of being Christians, and are on that ground self-satisfied, promising themselves eternal life, and thinking that they need not fear

Hell, because they are Christians and hold the faith of the Apostles, while their lives are altogether alien from Christianity, are such Edomites, priding themselves because they dwell in the clefts of the rock. For it sufficeth not to believe what Christ and the Apostles taught, unless thou do what is commanded” (Pusey, p. 356).

Obadiah 5 **“If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?”**

“If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!), would they not steal only till they had enough? if grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes?” (ASV)

“robbers” — sadam — “a verb meaning to be burley, to ravage, to destroy, to oppress, to assault, to spoil, to lay waste, to devastate. The primary meaning of the verb is to devastate or to destroy” (BC, p. 991); “to be burley; to be powerful; to ravage, destroy; to be violent, act violently, use violence; to oppress; to rob, plunder; to be laid waste” (Zodhiates); “to deal violently with, despoil, devastate, ruin, destroy, spoil” (BDB).

“cut off” — damah — “a verb meaning to cease, to cause to cease, to be silent, to destroy” (BC, p. 991); “to cease, to rest, to be silent, to be quiet, to make an end, to destroy, to lay waste, to desolate, to be destroyed, to be cut off, to

perish” (Zodhiates); “*to cease, cause to cease, cut off, destroy, perish*” (BDB)

Some have suggested that the difference between “thieves” and “robbers” in this passage is that thieves come secretly or steal secretly, whereas robbers are more open about what they do. A study of the word “robbers” (above) shows that it means to destroy or devastate. The contrast is between one who would take some things from you and one who would destroy you. If either of these cases exist, one would consider himself to be in a terrible condition. The greater contrast being shown is the difference between what man would and could do and what GOD could do and had already determined would be done to Edom.

“fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Matthew 10:28).

GOD had determined to cause the devastation of Edom to be so great that it would cease to exist. Edom would only exist in memory in the annals of history. This would not be accomplished in one lifetime or by one particular event, but GOD would cause it to happen. Their total destruction came about by successive nations’ conquering them and destroying them until finally (in events which followed the destruction of Jerusalem) the Edomites completely disappeared from the earth.

The difference in the destruction is further illustrated by the picture of the grape-gatherers who would not get all the grapes as they harvested. Some would be left for those who would glean the fields. But when GOD caused men to harvest what they reaped, there would be nothing left. The destruction He brought would be absolute (“cut off”).

Obadiah 6 “How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!”

“How are the things of Esau searched! how are his hidden treasures sought out!” (ASV)

“sought out” — hapas — “a verb meaning to search for, to disguise oneself. It refers to searching out, looking for something with one’s mind and imagination; or it denotes something sought out, such as valuable booty or spoil in war” (BC, p. 2660); “to search, search for, to search out, disguise oneself” (BDB).

“hidden things” — maspon — “a masculine noun referring to a hidden treasure. It refers to the wealth and power of the kingdom of Edom (Esau) in its mountain strongholds” (BC, p. 657); “hidden treasure, treasure” (BDB).

“sought up” — baah — “a verb which means to cause or swell or boil up; to seek, to ask, to request. This verb describes a swelling of water; or a rising of desire or interest. In the later interpretation, the verb is also used in the passive form, to be searched (out), with the implication of being ransacked or plundered” (BC, p. 149); “to cause to bubble up, to boil, to cause water to swell; to desire, covet, demand, ask, to bulge, to project; to be searched. It suggests a search for what is covered or sealed. This was the Hebrews’ way of expressing absorption” (Zodhiates); “to seek out, swell, cause to swell, boil up, enquire” (BDB).

Almost every scholar this writer researched made

comments that the statements in this verse are really questions or statements of amazement that this could actually happen to Edom. Here was a nation that, because of its physical surroundings, was considered to be impregnable. How could its cities be destroyed and all of its wealth taken away? To the human mind of that time, which left GOD out of the picture, and which only viewed the physical, this simply could not happen. Later, Babylon would suffer the same fate. While surrounded by an enemy, Babylon would feel so secure that it would be involved in a wild drunken party, while Cyrus captured the city without a “shot being fired.”

The capital of Edom was Petra, a perfect setting to store the plunder and “taxation” it had collected. The text shows that the destruction of Edom would begin when an enemy took control of it and took all of its wealth. A raiding party would only take away a part of the wealth. Pictured in this text is a conqueror who would remain in the city long enough to search out and discover all of the secret places where wealth would be stored. Nothing would be left behind.

“The hidden things of Edom would be thoroughly sought out and searched for. The wealth of the proud people would be completely confiscated, and the nation would be totally plundered; it would be helpless before its enemies” (Hailey, p. 33).

Obadiah 7 “All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him.”

“All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee on thy way, even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread lay a snare under thee: there is no understanding in him.” (ASV)

“confederacy” — beriyt — “a feminine noun meaning covenant, treaty, alliance, agreement. The word is used many times in the Old Testament. Its basic uses are outlined here. It describes covenants, or agreements between and among human beings” (BC, p. 165); “determination, stipulation, covenant” (Zodhiates); “covenant, alliance, pledge” (BDB).

“brought” — salah — “a verb meaning to send forth, to send away; to let go; to put” (BC, p. 1146); “to send, send away, let go, stretch out” (BDB).

“border” — gebul — “a masculine noun designating a border, boundary, or territory; barrier, wall” (BC, p. 178); “border, territory” (BDB).

“wound” — mazor — “a masculine noun depicting a trap, an ambush. It indicates some kind of ambush or ruse prepared against someone. Some suggest a net in a figurative sense” (BC, p. 590); “net, trap” (BDB).

“understanding” — tebunah — “a feminine noun meaning understanding, insight. It occurs primarily in the Wisdom Literature and is associated with both wisdom and knowledge;

and is contrasted with foolishness” (BC, p. 1211); “understanding, intelligence...the act of understanding...the faculty of understanding...the object of understanding” (BDB).

All of the treaties that Edom had made were worthless. All through the ages, men have relied on treaties with others to promote their safety in times of distress. History teaches that “allies” often cannot be trusted when the chips are down. When they were needed the most, Edom’s allies sent their ambassadors away instead of honoring their treaties and helping Edom.

Edom’s “friends” were not really friends at all, but had only feigned peace. They were like many who are only friends as long as they can gain something for themselves. These may very well have been partners in trade. Instead, when the time came that Edom needed its allies most, not only would they not help her, but they also turned against her.

In the East, eating a meal with another presents an almost sacred obligation of friendship between the participants. Even a bitter enemy was protected against harm while going to, eating with, and leaving the quarters of his enemy. Edom’s friends who ate at her table, who benefitted from her alliance and goodwill, laid secret plans which would destroy her. Notice the “wound” (“*trap, ambush*”) was laid “under thee.” This suggests the idea of a snare, or a hole with a net, carefully laid and camouflaged to hide it from the intended victim. Edom did not sense any danger as it continued its foreign alliances. Then the trap was suddenly sprung, and it was too late. As Edom’s pride had caused it to feel secure, the sudden change of circumstances caused nothing but panic and an

overwhelming sense of doom. Edom had foolishly relied upon agreements with men for protection instead of GOD. It should have sought GOD as the only source of true peace and security. After all, did Edom not have Abraham and his knowledge in its background? The events recorded here remind this writer of another passage found in First Thessalonians 5:1-6.

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Since Obadiah wrote against Edom, predicting its destruction, it would seem that the Edomites probably knew of this prophecy. GOD has never kept his declarations secret when it comes to destruction. Since this was probably the case, why did not Edom turn from its destructive course? From a study of Jonah, one knows that GOD is just and would change a decree of doom to one of grace, compassion, and pardon upon repentance and change of life. Like many of all time, Edom's pride had blinded it to reality. Pride caused the people of Edom to believe that they were invincible and, like the builders of the “Titanic” may have even declared that *“Even GOD cannot sink this ship.”* In the present case, they probably believed that GOD did not really mean what He said. How many over the centuries have fallaciously believed the same thing? They may even have thought that, because they were descendants of Abraham, GOD would not destroy them. The Israelites

of Jesus' day thought they could live like they wanted instead of the way GOD told them to live. They thought that because they were the seed of Abraham, they would be saved in the end. Jesus gave those prideful Israelites what must have been a stunning declaration.

"think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9).

This belief is very much alive today in groups which call themselves Christians. Christian, do you believe that having been baptized, GOD will not punish you eternally? Do you believe that you can live as you choose and He will not destroy you in Hell, because you are his child?

"we must all (Christian and non-Christian – RK) appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10, emphasis mine, RK).

"be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing

out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:1-7).

Obadiah 8 “Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?”

“Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?” (ASV)

“destroy” — abad — *“a verb meaning to perish, to be lost, to wander, or, in a causative sense, to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. It is used to signify God’s destruction of evil, both threatened and realized”* (BC, p. 1); *“there are more than fifty Hebrew words which have been rendered by some syn. of ‘destroy,’ ‘destruction,’ or ‘perish.’ Abad is one of the most important. It is also translated ‘escape,’ ‘fail,’ ‘flee,’ and ‘lost’ in the kjv. It is generally used of persons when it is signifying death, but it implies desolation when used of lands”* (Zodhiates); *“perish, vanish, go astray, be destroyed”* (BDB)

“wise” — hakam — *“an adjective meaning wise. This word is used to describe one who is skilled or experienced... The wise person is the one who learns; one who heeds rebuke; and who speaks properly”* (BC, p. 336); *“it means wise, intelligent, prudent, experienced, clever. When used substantively, it is a wise man, a philosopher, a*

magician” (Zodhiates); *“wise, wise (man), skillful, shrewd, learned, prudent”* (BDB).

“understanding” – See “understanding” on page 15 of this commentary.

The counselors of Edom were apparently well known for their wise advice.

“That Edom was known for its ‘wise men’ is evident from Jer. 49:7; Isa. 19:11; 29:14 and especially from the fact that Eliphaz, the ‘wise man’ who was the ‘friend’ of Job was from Teman (Job 2:1, etc.)” (Butler, p. 125).

Keil and others do not believe the phrase “destroy the wise men” means that they were to die. In looking at the definitions given above, however, the Hebrew word seems to weigh heavily in favor that they would be killed. Further, if an enemy overcame them through deceit (v. 7), then it very well could be that these men were assassinated, etc. Even if that were not the case, GOD could cause them to lose their ability to think properly (destroy their wisdom). In connection with this thought, one might remember Second Samuel chapter seventeen. One remembers there that David was fleeing for his life from Absalom. One of David’s wise men and chief counselors, Ahithophel, gave Absalom very wise advice on how to totally defeat David. But another of David’s advisors was also available to Absalom. Unknown to Absalom, Hushai was still loyal to David. Though his counsel was wise, Ahithophel’s very wise counsel was defeated by the advice given by Hushai. No doubt, GOD was behind the advice given by Hushai to protect David and probably made it appealing to Absalom (to his eventual utter defeat). It is probable that GOD, through His providence caused

confusion and conflicting advice among the counsel of the wise men of Edom. But be assured, GOD's hand was involved!

Obadiah 9 “And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.”

“And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one may be cut off from the mount of Esau by slaughter.” (ASV)

“dismayed” — *hataat* — “a verb meaning to be shattered, to be dismayed, to dismay, to shatter, to scare. The base meaning is probably breaking or shattering like a bow; or of the drought-cracked ground...it is also used with a intensive and causative meaning to scare, to terrify, or to dismay” (BC, p. 394); “to be broken, abolished; to be afraid, be dismayed, be confounded, be alarmed, be in fear, be in despair; to be crushed; to terrify. The meaning ranges from a literal breaking to destruction, to demoralization, and finally to panic” (Zodhiates); “to be shattered, be dismayed, be broken, be abolished, be afraid” (BDB)

“cut off” — *karat* — “a verb meaning to cut off, to cut down, to make a covenant” (BC, p. 528); “to cut off (e.g., a covenant), cut out; to cut off a part of the body (e.g., head, hand, foreskin), maim, castrate; to cut down trees, cut down idols; to root out; to eliminate, kill, destroy; be felled; to be consumed; to be exiled, to be destroyed; to withdraw, be withdrawn” (Zodhiates).

Teman and Petra seem to have been the two great cities of the Edomites, Teman being south of Petra. These two fortresses, nestled in the high rocks and cliffs, were considered impregnable. But, if their armies were caught in the open, they were as vulnerable as any other army. With the loss of wisdom in their leaders, mistakes and miscalculations would be made in tactics which would hurt the military and its operations, making them vulnerable to defeat. Edom was betrayed by its friends and deceived by its own pride — destruction was imminent.

Teman is used in this text to signify all of Edom (the part for the whole). It would be cut off, but not just cut off — the cutting would be by the slaughter of its mighty men and of its citizens as a whole. Slaughter is destruction on a large scale. This shows the total destruction (elimination) of the Edomites from the world.

It has been noticed that Edom, especially Petra and Teman, were important stopping places for travel from the East to the West. This made the Edomites extremely rich and powerful. He who controls trade can control the world. So what happened? It was noticed that they were betrayed and their wisdom taken away. Deception played a major role in their eventual destruction.

The major events in their destruction were as follows. On a large scale, it began with the Chaldeans. Shortly after they conquered Judah, the Chaldeans conquered all the nations around Judah (which included Edom). At some time after this destruction, the trade routes which had so benefitted Edom unexpectedly moved to the north. This writer has observed many small towns in the USA which have withered away because a new road was built around and away from

them, which diverted the traffic. This diversion of traffic also diverted those who spent money there as they passed through, and the towns then dwindled away. The third great event in their destruction was when John Hyrcanus defeated them.

“John Hyrcanus subdued Edom entirely from 129 B.C., even compelling them to submit to circumcision, and submit to the Mosaic law”
(Coffman, p. 252).

By the time of the Romans, there were relatively few Edomites left. In fact, at that time they were known as Idumeans. Yet, they held some power, as Herod the Great was an Idumean — appointed by and under the control of Rome. Around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, they were wiped out by the Romans.

“The few who remained were lost among the Arabs; so that the Edomites were cut off forever”
(Keil, p. 376).

Obadiah 10 “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.”

“For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.” (ASV)

“violence” — hamas — “a masculine noun meaning violence, wrong. It implies cruelty, damage, and injustice” (BC, p. 351); “it is violence, oppression, wickedness, wrong, unrighteous gain. The kjv also has; ‘cruelty,’ ‘unrighteousness,’ ‘false,’ ‘injustice,’ ‘violent dealing,’ ‘damage.’” (Zodhiates); “violence, wrong, cruelty, injustice” (BDB).

“cover” — kasah — “a verb meaning to cover, to clothe, to conceal” (BC, p. 515); “to cover, conceal, hide” (BDB).

“for ever” — olam — “a masculine noun meaning a very long time. The word usually refers to looking forward but many times expresses the idea of looking backward. It may cover a given person’s lifetime; a period of many generations; the time of the present created order; time beyond this temporal sphere, especially when used regarding God” (BC, p. 813); “it is what is hidden (i.e., to the vanishing point); time immemorial, time past, antiquity, from the most ancient times (Gen. 6:4; 1 Sam. 27:8; Ps. 25:6; Is. 63:16; Jer. 2:20; 5:15); eternity, the distant future; duration, perpetual, without end, always, everlasting time; lifetime” (Zodhiates); “long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world” (BDB).

It would seem that brothers over the ages have always had their fusses with one another. That is not what is under discussion in this passage. Brothers may fuss with one another, but let someone else attack one of them and watch them join forces against that invader. Brothers should (because of natural bonds) come to the aid of one another.

In looking at the histories of Edom and Israel, one sees the hostility that existed from the time of Jacob and Esau. It mushroomed during the time of Moses, when the Edomites refused to let their brother pass through their land. Though their hatred toward Israel was quite evident, the Israelites were forbidden to

despise the Edomites.

“Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land” (Deuteronomy 23:7).

Esrael was to treat Edom with brotherly respect. This was seen in the instructions GOD gave the Israelites when they were marching toward Canaan and needed to pass through the borders of Edom.

“And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink” (Deuteronomy 2:4-6).

The Israelites were to deal uprightly, fairly, with the Edomites, taking nothing from them. Why? Because they were their brethren.

When did the violence spoken of in this passage take place? The exact time cannot be confirmed. Upon studying all that could be found, this writer believes it most probably happened during the events of Second Chronicles chapter twenty-one.

“Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons” (2 Chronicles 21:16-17).

There are those who believe that Obadiah was speaking of the destruction brought upon Judah by

Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans. It seems, to this writer, that this text has a clear vision of something which occurred before Obadiah's time, before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Further, it will be noticed from the original language in verses twelve through fourteen that Obadiah spoke about the future event of the destruction by Babylon. Those who make Obadiah's words refer to Babylon as past tense may be doing so in an attempt to eliminate prophetic utterances from GOD's word.

Because the people of Edom had acted wickedly against Judah, shame would cover them. The Edomites had betrayed their brother and taken sides with Judah's enemies. Their shame would be like a dark cloud overshadowing them wherever they were scattered and lasting until they were "cut off for ever."

Obadiah 11 "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them."

"In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them." (ASV)

"stoodest" — amad — "a verb meaning to stand, to rise up; to take one's stand" (BC, p. 843); "to stand, remain, endure, take one's stand" (BDB).

The primary picture being given in this verse is of the sin of taking the side of one's brother's enemies. One does not necessarily have to do something physical against someone to join forces with the enemy. Cheering them on from the sidelines also counts as

siding with the enemy. Consider a like passage from Romans 1:32.

“Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Edom’s sin was more than simply cheering on the adversaries of Jerusalem. As the text clearly indicates, the Edomites took an active part in the violence against their brother, Jacob.

In reading this section of Obadiah, this writer cannot help but think of Saul of Tarsus.

“as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And He fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:3-5).

The principle which Obadiah revealed is the same as the one in the above passage. When one takes the side of the enemies of GOD’s people, he becomes the enemy of GOD Himself. To mistreat GOD’s people is to mistreat GOD. To sin against GOD’s people is to sin against GOD.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD” (James 4:4).

Whenever this conquest of GOD’s people took place, Edom took its stand with the enemy. When one looks at the conquest of Israel by the Assyrians, he will notice that GOD did not let those who brought evil against His people go unpunished. GOD in turn brought them low by another nation. When Babylon later brought captivity and evil upon Judah, GOD

promised that it in turn would be brought low by an enemy nation. This was true, even though GOD's people needed to be disciplined. Edom had taken the side of GOD's enemies, and it too would suffer the consequences. Psalm 137 deals with those who conquered Judah, and in it, particular mention is made of Edom, who stood by at Jerusalem's calamity. Note Edom's words, as recorded by the Psalmist.

"Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof."

Edom joined in the destruction of Jerusalem, the carrying away of its people, and the dividing of the spoils. GOD would not allow Edom's rejoicing in this evil to go unpunished.

Obadiah 12 "But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress."

"But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of distress." (ASV)

It would appear that the ASV (above) is the correct rendering of this passage. The KJV uses the past tense here, but the Hebrew uses the imperfect tense in this verse and those which follow (vv. 13-14).

"The imperfect conjugation was traditionally thought to convey incomplete and primarily future events" (Zodhiates).

Obadiah dealt with the past actions of the Edomites toward Jerusalem. Beginning in this verse, he turned to warn them against doing the same thing in the future.

The future would bring the destruction of Jerusalem by the hand of the Babylonians. Its people would be taken into captivity, and its wealth would be taken away. Edom was being warned not to continue as it had in the past by joining the enemies of its brethren. Edom was being given one more chance to change its ways. Yet, using His ability to look into the future, GOD knew it would not heed the warning. How many times over the ages have parents warned a child not to get involved in certain actions because of the forthcoming consequences of such actions, only to have their child ignore the warning?

The Edomites, as they had in the past, were going to take delight in Judah's calamity. As pointed out earlier in this study, because of their pride, they thought the promised destruction for ill behavior could not happen to them. Their partner Babylon would turn on them and do the same thing to Edom that it did to Jerusalem.

Obadiah 13 "Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity;"

"Enter not into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye hands on their substance in the day of their calamity." (ASV)

One should remember that the verbs in the Hebrew are all rendered in the "imperfect tense." "Enter not into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity" (ASV) To enter into the gate equates to being one of the hosts

of the enemy.

“look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity” (ASV). “Do not sit in the distance enjoying and rejoicing over the spectacle of Jerusalem’s destruction.”

“neither lay hands on their substance in the day of their calamity” (ASV) “After the battles are over, do not loot the city like a scavenger.”

Though these actions had been true in the past, the warning is *“Do not repeat them in the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem.”* There is little doubt that Obadiah was speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians. Do not participate in any way!

Obadiah 14 “Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

“And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress.” (ASV)

“crossway” — pereg — “a masculine noun indicating a crossroad, a fork in the road. It refers to a place where roads meet and thus where many people will pass by” (BC, p. 923); “parting of ways, breaking in upon, plunder, crossroad” (BDB).

“remain” — sariyd — “a masculine noun meaning a survivor. This word comes from the verb sarad, meaning an escape” (BC, p. 1199); “survivor, remnant, that which is left” (BDB).

Again, remember that the Hebrew verbs in this passage are in the “imperfect tense,” signifying that future events are under discussion.

“And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape” (ASV). *“In the day of calamity, do not stop anyone who escapes the destruction of Jerusalem.”* Further, the phrase “to cut off” indicates destroying or taking their lives. *“Do not aid the enemy by destroying those who might escape.”*

“deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress” (ASV) The first part of this verse shows that they were not to destroy those who survived, and the last half of the verse shows that they were not to turn any survivor over to the invader to be destroyed. In other words, these three verses (12-14) are saying, “Do not aid the enemy in any way against your brethren.”

Obadiah 15 “For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.”

“For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head.” (ASV)

“reward” — gemul — “a masculine noun indicating recompense, benefits, something deserved, dealings, doings” (BC, p. 207); “dealing, recompense, benefit” (BDB)

The “day of the LORD” refers to any time in which GOD’s power is manifested in vindicating the righteous and bringing punishment upon His enemies (also the enemies of His people). This day of the Lord was to fall upon the “heathen.” Who are the heathen? In the time

of the Israelites, it was anyone who was not one of them. In the Christian age, it is anyone who is not a Christian. This passage is not talking about the final day of judgment, although the principle for such is there. It speaks particularly about Edom and those who brought destruction on Jerusalem. Those who delighted in the fall of GOD's people.

"as thou hast done, it shall be done to thee." The Bible often shows this principle in different ways.

"Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel" (Jeremiah 50:29).

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"
(Matthew 6:12).

"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Edom would receive what it had given to others. Considering the final judgment, one must remember that what he does in this life will be the basis upon which he is rewarded with either eternal Heaven or eternal Hell.

Obadiah 16 "For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."

"For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall

drink, and swallow down, and shall be as though they had not been.” (ASV)

The entire book of Obadiah is a condemnation of Edom. In verses twelve through fourteen, GOD warned the people not to repeat their sins against their brother, Jacob. In verse fifteen, GOD announced the impending destruction of Edom. Verse sixteen is a continuation of that thought.

The picture is drawn in the text of celebration because of victory. The forces allied against Israel had celebrated upon GOD’s holy mountain. What they did not realize was that the enemies of GOD’s people are His enemies, too. One cannot win a war against GOD. The context draws the picture that what the evil one has done will come back upon him. Edom may have exalted in the defeat of Judah, but in the end, Judah would return. Not so with Edom. When Edom’s time for destruction came, there would be nothing left. For all intents and purposes, Edom disappeared from history; it is no more. Not a single person can be found today who can trace his history back to the Edomites. The silent wail of their chief two cities (Petra in particular), stands as testimony to this fact.

Years after the time of Obadiah’s prophecy, Malachi wrote about them.

“I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness” (Malachi 1:2-3).

Why was Esau destroyed so that his dwelling places were fit only for the habitation of “dragons” (“jackals” – ASV, NKJV)? Because Esau was “profane” (Heb.

12:16), and his descendants were exactly like him. They lived for the moment like the animals; they lived for the physical reality only. Spiritual things held little value to them.

All the nations who allied themselves against GOD's people would be destroyed, and it would be as if they had never existed. All who are allies against GOD's people (in any age) are doomed to drink deeply from the cup of GOD's wrath until they are destroyed.

Obadiah 17 "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions."

"But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." (ASV)

"deliverance" — peleytah — "*a feminine noun meaning deliverance, something delivered, a remnant*" (BC, p. 903); "*they mean a deliverance, an escape, or a remnant. The word is used to refer to the remnant of God's people*" (Zodhiates); "*Escape, deliverance...escaped remnant*" (BDB).

"possess" — yaras — "*a verb meaning to take possession, to inherit, to dispossess, to drive out...the word is used usually in connection with the idea of conquering a land*" (BC, p. 478); "*to seize, take possession of, possess; to inherit; to occupy; to drive away, expel; to take away; to be an heir, to disinherit, to dispossess, be dispossessed; to become poor, make poor; to devour*" (Zodhiates); "*to seize, dispossess, take*

possession of, inherit, disinherit, occupy, impoverish, be an heir" (BDB)

"possession" — moras — "a masculine noun indicating a possession, an inheritance" (BC, p. 586).

Verses seventeen through twenty-one are a contrast to what has gone before them. Edom's destruction represents the destruction which all who oppose GOD (and His people) will suffer. Now the book of Obadiah ends with a section which predicts victory.

There will be a remnant ("deliverance") who will enjoy the blessings of GOD. The remnant would be from the house of Jacob. One of the mistakes often made is that people expect this prophecy to be fulfilled literally. This is not speaking of the literal return of Judah, i.e., Israel, to the land and its physical domination over the nations. It goes back to the promise made to Jacob which one notices below.

"behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD GOD of Abraham thy father, and the GOD of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:13-14, emphasis mine, RK).

This was the same promise which had been given to Abraham (Gen. 18, 22) and to Isaac (Gen. 26). Indeed, the descendants of Abraham had grown to be a mighty multitude, and they had received the land which GOD had promised them (Joshua 1:13; 11:23).

"the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He

sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein” (Joshua 21:43, emphasis mine, RK).

The promise was made to the patriarchs that “in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 28:14). This was the promise of a Messiah. That is what the text of Obadiah seventeen through twenty-one is speaking about. This text is not speaking about the return of Judah from Babylonian captivity (though that would be accomplished). It looks ahead to when the inheritance promised to Jacob and his seed would be fulfilled.

The place of escape for GOD’s people would be Mount Zion.

“The prophets used Mount Zion to mean the place where GOD would manifest His salvation — in other words the Messianic kingdom (the church). Mount Zion became the symbol of Messianic deliverance, peace, security and realization of the promises made to the fathers (patriarchs). The prophets were not intending that all they predicted of Mount Zion would be fulfilled literally — their predictions of the glorious things that were to happen there were intended to be fulfilled in the Messiah and His kingdom. This is plainly apparent when one compares just a few scriptures (Isa. 33:17-24; Ezek. 34:11-31; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6; Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:5; Isa. 59:20-21; Rom. 11:25; and especially, Gal. 4:25ff; Heb. 12:22-24)” (Butler, p. 134).

The blessing promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (all families being blessed) was never fulfilled until the Messiah (Jesus) came and set up His kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Notice the word studies

above regarding the words “possess” and “possession.” This verse clearly shows the descendants of Jacob inheriting their inheritance. All who are in the Messiah’s kingdom (the church) are the spiritual descendants of Jacob and are enjoying the blessings promised.

Obadiah 18 “And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.”

“And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall burn among them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining to the house of Esau; for Jehovah hath spoken it.” (ASV)

“remaining” — sariyd — “a masculine noun meaning a survivor. This word comes from the verb sarad meaning an escape...it is often used with the negative to describe total desolation, i.e., there were no survivors” (BC, p. 1199); “it refers to a survivor who escaped from a great slaughter (Num. 21:35; 24:19; Deut. 3:3; Josh. 8:22), a fugitive, a remnant, one who is left, the remaining one” (Zodhiates); “survivor, remnant, that which is left” (BDB).

Two houses are mentioned in this passage: “the house of Jacob” and “the house of Joseph.” It is believed that “the house of Jacob” represents the southern kingdom of Judah and that “the house of Joseph” represents the ten northern tribes of Israel. In keeping with the thoughts of the previous verse, this would appear to be a representation of Jew and Gentile in a united kingdom. It is interesting that the majority of

commentators recognize verses seventeen and following as speaking of the Messianic time and fail to recognize the connection between Jew and Gentile uniting in one kingdom (church) — “Mount Zion.”

It is during the time when the Messianic kingdom has its beginning that the Edomites will be so destroyed that there will not be a single survivor (“remaining”).

“Historically, Edom’s destruction began with the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar but was not completed by that nation. Between the sixth and the end of the fourth centuries, Edom was invaded by Arabs known as the Nabataeans, a highly gifted people who drove the Edomites out of their land into a region south of Judea. The Maccabees brought them under subjection in the second century when Judas Macabeus slew some twenty thousand of them. John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) subjugated the remnant of the nation, forcing them to accept circumcision and nominally to accept the Jewish religion. Under the Romans some time during the first century after Christ the remaining Edomites were absorbed by the Arabs and their identity was lost completely. The Herods, descendants of the Edomites, were Edom’s chief contribution to history; certainly, this is nothing of which to boast” (Hailey, p.37).

In all of this, one should see the victory which belongs to GOD’s people through the Messiah and His church. This is a matter which brings hope to the soul, as one looks around and sees the forces of evil apparently enjoying success in the struggle against righteousness. In the end, GOD’s people will exist in victory (heaven), while the forces of evil (like Edom) will be vanquished

(as if they never existed) in the fiery depths of Hell.

Obadiah 19-20 “And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.”

“And they of the South shall possess the mount of Esau, and they of the lowland the Philistines; and they shall possess the field of Ephraim, and the field of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captives of this host of the children of Israel, that are among the Canaanites, shall possess even unto Zarephath; and the captives of Jerusalem, that are in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South.” (ASV)

These passages show the spread of GOD’s people by capturing and subjugating the nations around them. Those who want to make these passages literal see this as a coming kingdom, which they say has not come yet. This kingdom, they say, will literally allow the Jews to conquer the world. But these passages do not speak of a literal kingdom. If they did, then this would have taken place after the Babylonian captivity. Since the time of David and Solomon, Israel has never again risen to world prominence as a conquering nation and never will.

When one considers the nations as representing sin which was conquered by the Messiah, then the picture becomes complete. The compass directions given in the text represent the spreading of GOD’s kingdom,

which was a foreshadowing of what one finds in Acts chapter one and following.

“ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The Messiah’s kingdom has the power to bring one from the captivity of sin to the captivity (freedom) of the Christ.

Obadiah 21 “And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.”

“And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Jehovah’s.” (ASV)

“saviours” — yasa — “a verb meaning to save, to help, to deliver, to defend. The underlying idea of this verb is bringing to a place of safety or broad pasture as opposed to a narrow strait, symbolic of distress and danger” (BC, p. 484); “originally, this root was believed to mean ‘to be open, wide, free.’ It is the opposite of tsaMrar, to camp. In other words, when one has plenty of room in which to move, he feels safe and secure. YaMsha, means, therefore, to be delivered, saved; to get help; to deliver; give victory; to help; to take vengeance; to preserve” (Zodhiates); “to save, be saved, be delivered...to be saved (in battle), be victorious” (BDB).

“judge” — sapat — “a verb meaning to judge, to govern. This word, though often translated as judge, is much more inclusive than the modern

concept of judging and encompasses all the facets and functions of government: executive, legislative, and judicial” (BC, p. 1186); “to decide, judge (to give justice or equity, Ps. 75:2, be an arbitrator; to administer the right; to vindicate; to litigate; to condemn; to contend (with the notion of punishing; to punish the guilty; to govern, rule; to be judged; to be condemned; to go to law, plead; to defend; to execute (judgment)” (Zodhiates).

“LORD’S” — yehowah — “a noun meaning God. The word refers to the proper name of the God of Israel, particularly the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses” (BC, p. 426); “the covenant name of God most prominently known in connection with His relationship with the nation of Israel; also known as the Tetragrammaton” (Zodhiates); “Jehovah — ‘the existing One;’ the proper name of the one true God” (BDB). Read in the original this name cannot be pronounced, because there are no vowels in the word — yhvh.

Hailey believes the “saviours” of this passage refers to the “*apostles or evangelists through whom the message would be brought*” (p. 39). When looking at the definitions above, the underlying idea of the word “saviour” is bringing one to safety — the church. This the Son of GOD did by bringing truth to the world and by disseminating it through the apostles and all who take that saving word to the world. This reminds one of the words of Psalm twenty-three.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth

me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

The church is the place of safety where all of GOD's people find safety through their faith and reliance upon Him Who provides safety from the enemy of sin. The book of Obadiah shows that victory is assured — **ALL BELONGS TO JEHOVAH!**

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