

Judgement Precipitated by the Ungodly

by Aaron Dunlop

The sermon explores the judgment of God on Edom, highlighting the Edomites' malice toward God's people, mockery of God's people, marauding of God's property, and murder of God's people, which precipitate the judgment of God.

Duration: 38:18

Scripture: Leviticus 19:18, Obadiah 1:10-14, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Romans 13:9, Galatians 6:1, James 2:8

Topics: "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses three important lessons that can be learned from the text. Firstly, the world has a deep hatred for godly individuals, even if they may not physically harm them. The preacher shares a personal experience of witnessing a change in demeanor when giving a gospel card to an ungodly person. Secondly, the sermon emphasizes the seriousness of the malice and mockery directed towards God's people, stating that it is equivalent to murder in the heart. Lastly, the preacher describes a scene of distress and escape, where the Israelites are fleeing from their enemies. The sermon concludes by highlighting the punishment that awaits those who stand in the way of God's people.

Transcript

Turning again to the book of Obadiah, I have updated the outline. I've added a few points, changed a point here or there. It's the same basic outline, but just minimal changes.

So just be aware of that, and I printed, we were out of them anyhow, so I printed some up tonight. Obadiah, and we'll just read tonight from the verse 10 to the verse 14, since we're going to have a time of fellowship afterwards. I don't want to prolong our meeting.

Verse 10. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob's shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever. 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.

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.

Nor shouldst thou have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yea, thou shouldst 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. Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossroad 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. The section of the book that we come to tonight forces us to consider the historical setting of the book. I have not dealt with the historical setting of the book as yet.

I'm not going to deal with it in any length tonight. But this section of the book forces us to consider its historical setting. When did this actually happen? When did the Edomites enter into Jerusalem? When did they stand on the other side with their enemies? When did they take of the substance of Israel? When did they do all of this? And this section of the book in particular forces us to consider that.

The nature of the prophecy of Obadiah is somewhat an appendix, if I can use the word, an appendix to the scripture as a whole. In the sense that it deals indirectly with the dealings of God with his people Israel. This prophecy concerns a nation that is, for the most part, outside of the redemptive flow of history.

They are a heathen nation. And apart from the fact that they are the children of Esau, the brother of Jacob, which testifies against them in this prophecy, there is nothing directly to add to the nation of Israel or to the plan of God in salvation. Don't get me wrong, this prophecy is important to scripture.

It is part of the redemptive flow, but it is indirectly associated to that. They are prophesied against here only in relation to their destruction and in relation to the defense of God's people, the defense of Israel. And I say all this to make the point that it is exceedingly difficult to pinpoint or to pin down a date for this prophecy.

First of all, because Obadiah does not identify his time frame. And secondly, because Edom is mentioned only briefly and sporadically by the other biblical writers. Edom was not directly associated in the flow of history that dealt with the Messiah.

They are indirectly associated, and so the other writers in the Bible sporadically and very briefly mention Edom at all. There are numerous opinions as to the dating of this prophecy. Most of the commentators that I have would say that they are pre-exilic.

That is, that Obadiah was prophesying before the exile. And he was looking forward to these things that Edom were going to do and had done. Some of the older commentators, such as Calvin and the Puritan writer Marbury, would say it as during the exile.

That Obadiah experienced these Edomites coming into Jerusalem himself. He saw them, and the language that we have read this evening, verses 10-14, would certainly indicate that. Where he sees here these Edomites coming in, and it is as though he is watching them in unbelief and surprise at the gall of the Edomites coming in.

And he is saying in his prophecy, then, thou shouldst not have done this, thou shouldst not have done this, thou shouldst not have done this. If you watch the footage of the twin towers, and the airplanes flying into those towers, and as we watch that footage even today, it is shocking. And it sends a chill up the spine just to see, and to understand that somebody actually did that, and made that attack.

But if you watch the footage of people who watch that on the day, and they are standing in unbelief, and surprise, and fear, and a great hatred against this enemy who would come in and do that. And many think that Obadiah is prophesying during the exile, when he is just fresh from seeing what Edom did. There are a few conservative commentators, for the most part, liberal commentators will put this at post-exilic, after the exile.

When Israel has come back, and now these writers are writing after the exile. Let me say this, for a commentator to say that, I would be very careful about that individual. Liberal commentators and liberal scholars want to put Obadiah and other prophecies after the exile, because they do not believe in the prophecy.

Either the prophesying, or the fulfillment of that prophecy. And so they say that Obadiah is writing his prophecy after the fact. This has actually happened, now I am going to write it after the fact, I am going to write it in prophetic language.

I reject that completely. That is a liberal, the language of an unbeliever. This is a prophecy of what God was going to do to Edom in the future.

And many of the prophecies, many of the prophets, liberal scholars will put way into the 400's and 500's B.C. After everything that happened, after Cyrus had left the Israelites back. And they do that because they are trying to deny the actual fulfillment of a prophecy. The Holy Spirit deemed it unnecessary to date this prophecy, and we must view it in light of that.

And I believe therefore that a decision, that a decisive date is unimportant. That is, we do not have to come down on one side or the other to catch the spirit of this prophecy. I personally believe it is pre-exilic, it is before, and I have reasons for that, biblical reasons for that.

But we cannot be dogmatic. The Holy Spirit deemed it unnecessary and unimportant for us to know the dates. But what we need to understand, we need to know and to catch the spirit of the prophecy.

And I think among all the commentators, Carl Kyl of Kyl and Delitzsch, who maintained an early date, catches the spirit of the prophecy of this book. And I want to read you what Carl Kyl said in the 1800's. The warning of Obadiah 12-14 is only intelligible on the supposition that Obadiah has not any particular conquest and plundering of Jerusalem in mind.

Whether a future one or one that has already occurred. But regards this as an event that not only has already taken place, but that will take place again. That is to say, on the assumption that he rises from the particular event to the idea which it embodied.

And starting from this, he sees the existing case as subsequent from all cases. That is, Obadiah or Edom has come in, they have pillaged Israel. Obadiah is prophesying of something that they have already done.

But the spirit of Edom, the hatred of Edom against Israel is embodied in that attack. And so he is speaking of an attack that has already taken place perhaps, but attacks that will take place in the future. The spirit of Edom.

And I think Carl Kyl caught this here. And the Lord would have us to understand in these verses, and the spirit of the book is that Edom had this continued, unrelenting, persistent hatred of God's people. And the carrying out of repeated acts against Israel in their hatred.

I think that is important. Rather than just pinning a date on it and saying here is the date, and everything revolves around this date. I don't think that is what the Lord would have us do.

It is for this reason that I have entitled this section of the book, Judgment Precipitated by the Ungodly. Judgment Precipitated by the Ungodly. That is, the Edomites brought on the judgment of God themselves.

They hastened it, if you like. They added to the judgment of God. God did not judge Edom here simply because of his pride.

God did not judge Edom simply because of his confidence that we have already seen in the verses 2-9. God did not judge Edom simply because they thought they were secure, sitting on top of Mount Seir. God judged Edom for its actions against God's people.

The judgment of God was precipitated not by what Edom thought, but by what Edom did. Not by what they thought, but by what they did. We have already seen that judgment is prepared in the ungodly.

That is in their heart, and we have seen that from verses 2-9. But here, God is judging them because of what they did, and he lists and catalogs this list of sins. The first thing I want us to notice tonight in regards to this judgment precipitated by the ungodly, is the malice toward God's people.

The malice toward God's people. It was an inbred hatred and a malice in the heart of the Edomites for Israel. Now, Edom might well have objected to Obadiah's charge.

They might have come back to Obadiah and excused themselves and stood off from this destruction of Israel by saying that they did not incite it, that they did not begin it, that they did not instigate it. That it was the Assyrians, they might have said that we just stood and watched. They might have come to Obadiah and said it was the Egyptians or the Arabians or the Philistines or the Assyrians who come in.

But here in this section, the Lord brings his case to a decisive conclusion. And he lists this list of hard evidence against the Edomites. In verse 14, he comes to his conclusion.

And then in verse 15, he comes to his judgment, the day of the Lord. This list of sins, they are guilty first by association and they are guilty second by action. Look at the verse 11, the end of the verse 11.

The last line, even thou wast as one of them. Even thou wast as one of them. This is the emphatic.

The Lord is saying these nations come in, they did what they had to do, they pillaged the place, they murdered. And the Lord says to Edom, even you, even you who ought to have had a common religious bond, even you Edom who ought to have had a common familial bond, your family, even you Edom who ought to have a bond because you were neighbours living in the vicinity of Israel. But the Lord says, even you Edom were as one of them.

And the Lord is emphatic here, verse 13, half way down the verse. Yea, thou shouldest not have looked upon them. The same emphatic idea is in the verse 13.

You also, you also stood on the other side. You stood on the other side, on the opposite side. Here is the Lord's perspective on this whole sad working of Edom.

Verse 11, the first line. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side. The day that thou stoodest on the other side.

They should have been merciful. They should have been friendly with Israel. But now they have associated themselves with the enemy and their malice.

And they are standing on the opposite side. They are opposing Israel. And God said, even you stood on the other side.

They are guilty by association. That leads us to say in passing, we ought to be careful who or what we associate with. We ought to be careful to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Because this is the perspective the Lord has. Association with something brings us into guilt to some level. The Lord's prohibition is in the language of verse 11.

And the following verses. He speaks to the Edomites in a language of prohibition. Thou shouldest not.

And I want us to understand that he brings to bear here the relation of the law of God. The relation of the law of God that was written on their hearts. Was written on their hearts.

And we see this in this section. That the Edomites break the second table of the law. We remember we saw a few weeks ago that in the first section they are breaking the first table of the law.

They have all these things that they are putting before the Lord. The pride of their hearts. The confidence.

Their confederacy with the ungodly. Their wisdom is up forefront in their minds and hearts. That is before God.

And they are guilty first of all of breaking the first table of the law. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart. The second table of the law is broken in the second section.

Because they do not love their neighbor as themselves. And that is key to understanding this section of the book. Because the Lord now is dealing with something they ought to understand.

Something that is written on their hearts. And when he says thou shouldest not have. Thou shouldest not have.

Thou shouldest not have. He is assuming that they knew that they shouldn't have. But Edom here sins.

In verses 10 and 11 there is this general application to them. That they stood on the other side. And they were as one of them.

One of the enemies. But verses 12 through 14 we get into specifics. And he deals with specifics.

They sinned in the heart. Verse 12. Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother when he became a stranger.

Thou shouldest not have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their calamity. They rejoiced. They sinned in heart.

They sinned with their eyes. They looked on them. They looked on them.

They sinned with their tongues. They reeled against them. They mocked them.

And they sinned then in verses 13 and 14 with their hands. They took what they should not have. And so you see here that the Edomites are guilty of all kinds of sins.

They have broken the law of God. This malice towards God's people. Secondly, not only is there a malice towards God's people, but there is this mockery of God's people.

Verse 12. This mockery of God's people. Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger.

Thou shouldest not have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. Neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have looked on.

Thou shouldest not have rejoiced. Thou shouldest not have spoken proudly. And here are three lines of poetry that begin in the same way and end with a synonymous term.

They were aliens separated from God. Israel, it is true, God was punishing Israel. They had become as aliens to God.

God had taken himself away from them. He had withdrawn from them. They were aliens.

They were in destruction and distress. And these three echoing cries, Brings us to the depths of pain that Obadiah felt not only for his own people, but I believe for the Edomites. Because if we are going to say that Edom should have loved Israel, I believe that Obadiah as a man of God and prophesying against the Edomites, Obadiah is prophesying in love.

And when he says, Thou shouldest not have, Thou shouldest not have, he is feeling the pain not only for Israel, suffering under them, but he is feeling the pain for Edom, who are going to be punished for their sins. Obadiah is not gloating over God punishing the Edomites. It is difficult for us to see our loved ones suffer.

It is difficult for us to see anyone suffer, but in particular our loved ones. And often after a long and painful illness, it has been said that by those who have seen their loved ones suffer a long and painful illness, that they are glad the Lord has taken them home. Their suffering is over.

Because it is hard, it is hard for us to look on our loved ones suffering. Here however the Lord speaks of the Edomites who coldly looked on. Verse 12, They looked on at the suffering of their brother Israel, without heart, but cold and callous in their heart, and they looked on.

The construction that is used here to indicate is a staring at, they stared at them. Psalm 22 verse 17, the Lord says, prophetic messianic Psalm, I may tell all my bones, and they look and stare at me. Speaking of the Lord on the cross.

The same word, the same construction is used for those who stared on the cross at Christ. They stared at him. They mocked him.

The same idea is of these Edomites with the people of God. Staring at them and mocking and cold and callous. And furthermore the Lord says they rejoiced.

And beyond that they spoke proudly against him. And so the sins mount up in the heart and in the action of the Edomites. Here then is this mockery of the people of God.

Not only is Obadiah spelling out the destruction of Judah. He is speaking here of Judah under the punishment of God. God has withdrawn himself.

He has made Israel as aliens. Verse 12, as aliens, as a stranger. The Lord withdrew from them.

But it spells out the destruction and the punishment of Edom. Israel might have been cut off for a time. Israel might have been cut off for a time by God in chastisement.

As a father would chastise a son. But Edom for its looking proudly on, for its gloating and for this pride acting big over Israel. The Lord says they are cut off forever.

Verse 10, they are cut off forever because of the mockery of God's people. Then there is the marauding of God's property. The marauding of God's property.

They pillaged the place. They stole. It was Churchill in the Second World War who said, in defeat, defiance, in war, resolution and in victory, magnanimity.

Here we see that the Edomites were not content to see the invaders destroying Israel. Edom had to march in with them. And pillage the place.

And gloat over it. And the Edomites followed in the wake of the enemies. And they joined in themselves as the enemies of Israel.

And there is interesting extra-biblical evidence to indicate that Edom actually went in to Jerusalem, the city, and burned the place. Ezra chapter 4 verse 45. Which is an apocryphal book.

It is not a biblical canon. But it gives an interesting history of biblical times. We read, Thou also hast vowed to build up the temple which the Edomites burned when Judah was made desolate by the Chaldeans.

Marauding, pillaging the place. Verse 50. That the Edomites, speaking here of return, that the Edomites should give over the villages of the Jews which they held.

So the Edomites had moved in. They were living in the villages where the Jews had once lived. And now, after the fact, they are talking about giving it back.

Thy, God says, was as one of them. But Edom was worse than the Assyrian. Worse.

Not only because of his knowledge of God. But because of his relationship to Israel. For the violence against thy brother Jacob.

It is interesting that some commentators, in verse 16, we read, For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually. We are speaking here, we are going to get to this passage a little later on. But we are speaking here of the Edomites drinking of the wrath of God.

God is going to, it is a biblical concept of drinking of the wrath of God. And some commentators think that the line, the first line, For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, speaks of the Edomites going into the temple and taking the holy vessels and gloating and partying with the vessels of the temple. And blaspheming God with the very vessels of God's holy temple.

That may be true. That may be true. But it is certain that they went in and they plundered and they took.

Verse 13. What was not theirs. They laid their hands on the substance of Israel.

This brings us then to the last point. Verse 14. The murder of God's people.

The murder of God's people. You see the climax. It is certain that mockery of God's people and the malice towards God's people is murder in the heart.

Because sin is a spiritual thing. It is not merely in the action. And when they had malice, and when they harbored and held malice in their hearts, it was murder in their hearts.

But here God brings it to a conclusion. And he says in verse 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. Murder. There they stood in the way of escape.

In the crossway. This brings us to the climax of Eden's sin. As verse 15 brings us to the climax of punishment.

And here the picture is of the Israelites. And if you can get the picture of the Assyrians or the Chaldeans or the Babylonians or whatever army marching into Israel. And women and children fleeing from the city into the side roads around about the city of Jerusalem.

Fleeing into the woods and the desert round about. They know the side roads. They know the little pathways.

The Assyrians don't. The Chaldeans don't. They live distant.

Far distance away. But they have marched into Jerusalem. And those who are escaping have a hope that they are going to get out of the city before the Assyrians get them.

And as they make it down the hill from Jerusalem. As they make it into the paths and the byways of the countryside. There the Edomites are standing waiting at the crossways.

Where the paths open out into the wilderness. Where the paths open out into the woods. There the Edomites who lived in the vicinity knew the roads and knew the ways.

They knew the partings of the ways. And those little tributary of roads where the Israelites would have found safety. Edom was waiting on them to slay them.

Thou shouldst not have stood in the crossways to cut off those that did escape. Edom's hatred for God's people here. Cutting off those that did escape.

They were not content to destroy the city. They wanted blood of men, women and children. Blood thirsty Edomites.

And for this the Lord says in verse 10. You shall be cut off forever. For those who did escape.

And for those whom they did keep alive. They delivered them up again. Neither shouldst thou have delivered up those that did remain.

In the day of escape they delivered them up to their enemies. Not only cutting off life from some. But cut off hope from others.

Cutting off hope and escape. Psalm 37 verse 7. Remember O Lord the children of Edom. In the day of Jerusalem who said raise it, raise it even to the foundation thereof.

Edom marched in with the Assyrians and with the other armies. And cried with malice and venom in their hearts. Raise it, raise it even to the foundation thereof.

In Lamentations chapter 4, 18-22 and Ezekiel 25, 12-14 and Ezekiel 35 also. Verses 1-15 you get an account of this. What Edom did.

Because of their hatred and murder of God's people. They had a malice for God's people. They had a mockery of God's people.

They marauded God's property. They murdered God's people. Verses 10-14 of Obadiah tell a sad tale of hatred against the people of God.

And against the God of Israel. There are three things briefly that I want us to learn from this tonight. Very briefly.

Number one, the world hates the godly. The world hates the godly. We've said over and over again that this is a perfect type.

And a perfect picture of the ungodly heart. While they may not be murdering God's people. And while there may not be blood in the streets of Victoria tonight.

Let me tell you that the ungodly individual hates the godly. To some degree. I had an individual in my study or my home the other day.

An ungodly man. And we talked about business, whatever we were talking about. And before he went I gave him a gospel card.

And his demeanor changed. In a flash. His demeanor changed.

His attitude changed. Oh yes, there was commonality as we talked as human beings. There's a commonality as we stay in the business or secular world.

But you reveal a heart that is changed by the God of heaven. To one who is the child of the devil. And you will see a change of heart toward you.

Because the world hates the godly. Is this not what the Lord said regarding his own brothers? The other children of Mary. The world cannot hate you.

This is before they were believers. The world cannot hate you but it may hate us. Because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil.

The world cannot hate you if you are an ungodly person. But Christ said it hates me because I testify of it. The world cannot hate you because you profess no principle.

Principle that is opposing to the world. But once you profess a principle that is in opposition to the spirit of the world. And to the spirit of the devil.

You will find opposition. They that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. Will suffer persecution.

John chapter 15 verse 19. If you were of the world the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world.

But I have chosen you out of the world. Therefore the world hates you. These are the words of Christ.

The world hates the godly. The Christian. The world is no friend of Christianity.

No matter what facade they might put up before us as Christians. There is this hatred of the godly person. Secondly the Christian can sometimes act like the world.

The Christian can sometimes act like the world. We have to apply this passage to ourselves as Christians. And I think if we applied it to ourselves as believers.

We would get a very stark awakening. That we are often guilty of acting like the world. This is what we learned this morning in the Sunday school hour.

That the Corinthians. Paul says to the Corinthians. That you were sanctified.

That you were chosen in Christ. You are saved. You are born again.

But you are not acting like saved people. And we often have this hatred or this malice in our hearts. Towards the people of God or towards others.

We often have a mockery in our hearts. I am not talking merely of jesting. But I am talking of a mockery and a malice in the heart.

Which is murder. Which is murder. In the heart.

Even for God's people. Even for God's people. And we see a brother or a sister in Christ who is struggling.

And because they have done something on us. We say well slap it into them. They had it coming.

There is a malice in our hearts because they have wronged us. Or done something to us. They don't even have to wrong us sometimes.

Before we get our guard up. Before we have this malice towards them. And we say in our hearts well they had it coming.

They deserve it. Rather than taking them and working with them. And dealing with them as God has dealt with us.

In love. We like the Edomites stand on the other side. In the day of their calamity.

In the day that the Lord has made them a stranger. These descriptions of Israel's distress are instructive and important. And they are calamitous for the people of God.

There are times that we go through struggles. And there are times that the Lord chastises his people. And I am not talking of an individual who is wayward.

I am not talking of an individual who is persistent in sin. And yet calling himself a Christian. And yet wants to associate with the church.

I am talking about the individual here who is walking with God. And who slips. Who slips.

And falls into sin. Who is taken. As Paul said in Galatians.

Who is taken in a sin. As Paul says brethren. If a man be overtaken in a fault.

Ye that are spiritual restore such an one. In the spirit of meekness. Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.

That is what we are speaking of. We ought to speak out against sin if a person is persistent in it. And we ought to as Paul says in other places.

Withdraw ourselves from certain individuals who are persistent in sin. But when a brother or sister has been overtaken. Has been taken from behind if you like.

And tripped up in sin. We ought to restore them in the spirit of meekness. Considering ourselves.

Lest we also be tempted. Let him that thinketh he standeth. Take heed lest he fall.

How often we have stood on the other side. And opposed. And mocked.

And malice. Not only does the world hate the godly. Not only can a Christian act sometimes like the world.

But I wanted to say last day that God looks out for his people. God looks out for his people. Adam here looked on in derision.

But God looks out for us. The world looks on us in mockery. And the world looks on us in derision.

And malice and murder in the heart against God's people. But God who holds everything in the palm of his hands. Is looking out for us.

And this is the encouragement of this entire prophecy. Yes we have dealt with the sin of Edom. We have dealt with the judgment of God upon Edom.

And we will deal next week again with it. But when we come to verse 17. We are going to see that God has a plan and a purpose for the people of God.

And so when we look at this prophecy in its entirety. When we look at this prophecy as a whole. We see that these people, these Edomites are judged by God.

Why? Because of their sin. Yes. But they are judged by God because God is defending his people.

He is looking out for them. And God has looked out for us. He is praying for us as John chapter 17 verse 15 tells us.

I pray not that thou shouldest keep them out of the world. But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. He is praying for us tonight.

Our suffering saviour is praying for his people. Believer he is praying for you. Believer he has suffered for you.

And he suffers with you. Because he has touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He prays then that we may not be taken out of the world.

But that we may be kept from the evil. Let's bow in prayer.

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