

FEASTING ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Faithful in Justice

Obadiah

INTRODUCTION: Great to see you! Those here in person, those who have joined us online, thank you for your faithfulness.

When people take a tour of Israel and Jerusalem, they often add a side excursion into Jordan to a mountainous desert region to see the ruins of a once powerful city. It was the capital of a nation that occupied a land area a little smaller than the state of New Jersey. But tourists visit this ancient site in order to gaze in amazement at the stunning architecture that remains in this isolated place, although it has been uninhabited now for nearly twenty centuries. Although this nation had dealings with Egypt, Israel, Judah, Moab, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome, after the population was extinguished near the end of the first century, it was forgotten by historians. In fact, for many years, historians argued that the stories of this nation and city were mere myths and legends and ridiculed the Bible because it speaks of this nation as both real and powerful. But in the 1800's the ancient city of Petra was rediscovered. Petra was the capital city of Edom, and did you know that one entire book of the Bible is devoted to a message to and about this once lost kingdom?

That prophetic word comes from the smallest book of the OT called Obadiah. It contains only 21 verses and therefore is not divided into chapters. Thirteen Obadiah's are mentioned in Scripture, but we cannot tell with certainty which, if any of them, is the one who wrote the prophecy of this book.

Why would God send and preserve a book of Scripture to and about a nation that does not even exist today? Because God is sovereign even over nations, and He is faithful to warn us of His judgment.

In the prophetic words of Obadiah, there is an important message to us, both to us as citizens of our country and to us as individuals, regardless of what our country does. God is faithful in justice.

I. GOD IS FAITHFUL TO WARN NATIONS, AND THE UNITED STATES NEEDS TO HEED THIS WARNING.

Obadiah 1-2, 4, 9 NKJV 1 The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom (We have heard a report from the LORD, And a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"): 2 "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised. 4 Though you ascend as high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," says the LORD. 9 Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, To the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau May be cut off by slaughter.

And why was God sending such a strong word of judgment upon this nation and her people?

A. The reason for God's judgment is because of the sin of Edom.

1. Her pride

Obadiah 3 NKJV The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'

Have we not as Americans felt ourselves, our country, to be invincible ever since we won WW2?

I hope that one of the benefits of the pandemic is that we as a nation and we as individuals see our vulnerability. Sadly, I do not see much evidence that it is causing much repentance or stirring of faith.

2. Her confederacy with God's enemies

In the U.S., how quick is the media and some politicians to jump on the bandwagon against a Christian.

3. Her violence against God's people

Obadiah 10 NKJV "For violence against your brother Jacob, Shame shall cover you, And you shall be cut off forever.

It is one thing for a nation to have those who commit violence and murderers among its population. Every nation does. It is another thing for the nation to say, "That's OK." Or to look the other way.

Folks, God is pro-life, not only for babies in the womb, but for shop keepers tending their stores, people walking the streets, and policemen trying to protect the people of their city.

Paul tells us in Romans that one of the primary reasons He appoints civil authority is to restrain evil. When a nation refuses to do this work, God has less reason to keep that government viable.

4. Her rejoicing over evil and especially over the destruction of Jerusalem**5. Her stealing**

Obadiah 13 NKJV You should not have entered the gate of My people In the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction In the day of their calamity, Nor laid hands on their substance In the day of their calamity.

6. Her murder of the innocent as they tried to escape

Obadiah 14 NKJV You should not have stood at the crossroads To cut off those among them who escaped; Nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained In the day of distress.

7. Edom did all of this when Nebuchadnezzar made his fatal assault on Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The Edomites rejoiced at the destruction of Judah. When some of the Hebrews

tried to escape, the Edomites aided the Babylonians in rounding them up and turning them over for captivity or death. When the Babylonian army went back home, the Edomites further plundered the land.

B. The judgment on Edom

1. Not only did God pronounce judgment on Edom through Obadiah but also through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos, and Ezekiel.
2. The record of God's judgment is written in the rocks of Petra and in the landscape of the desert that once was Edom.
3. After Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the inhabitants of Edom were also destroyed, never to be heard of again as an independent nation or people.

The final verses of Obadiah contrasts God's judgment on Edom with

C. God's grace for Israel

Obadiah 17, 21 NKJV 17 "But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, And there shall be holiness; The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. 21 Then saviors (deliverers) shall come to Mount Zion To judge the mountains of Esau, And the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

And of what importance is this message today?

1. **God will execute His justice upon nations as He has declared.**
2. **The way to escape the wrath of God's justice is to be a recipient of God's grace.**
3. **That truth is the essence of the Gospel.** Yet some states like CA are trying to close the mouths of the only ones proclaiming grace and the message of the gospel!

But my friend, there is another, very pertinent message in this book that we would not get if we read only this book. But when we read this book along with the rest of the Scripture, we see that there also is

II. THE INTERNAL LESSON

A. Tell story of Jacob and Esau, including the selling of the birthright.

1. Perhaps you have wondered why the selling of the birthright was such a big deal. But remember that Isaac was the promised seed through whom the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant would be fulfilled. This grand privilege would normally pass to the eldest, to Esau. But Esau was willing to sell it for a pot of stew.
2. Jacob became the father of the nation of Israel, chosen by God's grace.
3. Esau became the father of the nation of Edom, who like their ancestor lived their lives in the flesh, caring nothing for the things of God.

B. Israel was the nation fathered by Jacob and pictures the life in the Spirit.

1. Not because of Jacob's goodness, but because of God's grace - He was chosen.
2. Romans 8:9 NKJV But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

C. Edom was the nation fathered by Esau and pictures the life lived in the power of the flesh.

1. Hebrews 12:16 NKJV lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.
2. Living in the flesh produces the same kinds of things in our personal lives as it did in Edom's national life:
 - a. pride
 - b. confederacy with God's enemies
 - c. violence, cruelty, injustice against people
 - d. rejoicing over evil
 - e. stealing
 - f. destroying the innocent

D. The NT tells us about a war between the flesh and the spirit.

Romans 8:5-8 NKJV 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Folks, listen. A born again Christian can be carnally minded. We can have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, but not allowing Him to control us.

There is a difference between **the indwelling of the Spirit** – which means **the Holy Spirit lives in us,**

And **the filling of the Spirit** – which means **the Spirit controls and empowers us.**

That is why we are instructed in the NT to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-25 NKJV 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ...

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

CONCLUSION: How are you spending your life? If you do not have the Holy Spirit living in you, come to Christ.

If you are in Christ, you have the Holy Spirit. But are you living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, filled with the Spirit? All of those things mean living under the control of the Holy Spirit who lives inside the believer.

Some believers today need to repent of living in the flesh and for the flesh.

Some who have nothing but the flesh need to come to Christ.