

your very eyes. In 150 A.D. the Roman emperor Trajan all but obliterated the Nabatean people from the face of the earth.

QUIZ

1. How complete will be God's judgment against Edom?
2. How was Edom's downfall finally brought about?
3. How does God destroy the wisdom of Edom's wise men?
4. Why would the mighty men of Teman be dismayed?
5. How was God's Word, that Petra would become the habitat for wild beasts, finally fulfilled?

THE JUSTICE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON EDOM

TEXT: v. 10-16

- 10 For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 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.
- 14 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.
- 15 For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall turn upon thine own head.
- 16 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.

QUERIES

- a. How were the Edomites and the descendants of Jacob brothers?
- b. When did the Edomites do violence to the people of Judah?
- c. Why does Obadiah write of the day of Jehovah upon all nations?

PARAPHRASE

And why is all this judgment to come upon you? Because of the violent wrong you did to your brethren the Israelites. Now you shall be completely overwhelmed with shame, powerless to help yourself, utterly and forever destroyed as a nation. For you stood aloof, high in your rocky cliffs on the other side of Jordan, not only refusing to help Israel in the days when foreign invaders carried away his treasures and supplies and divided up the booty of Jerusalem amongst themselves, but you joined in with these foreigners in plundering and became the same as these despicable foreigners. You should not gloat over the disaster of your brother; you should not rejoice over the affliction of the children of Judah when they are destroyed; do not boast of your security in the day of distress. Do not invade the land and villages of my people and plunder them in the day of their calamity; do not look with scoffing upon the affliction of my people in the day of their calamity; do not rob and steal the treasures and supplies of my people in the day of their calamity. Do not stand at the crossroads capturing those of my people who escape, delivering the captured into slavery to foreign nations. For the day of Jehovah's revelation of His majesty and omnipotence when He overthrows all ungodly powers by the establishment of His kingdom the church, when He shall despoil the principalities and the powers and make a show of them openly triumphing over them in it is near: and as the worldly powers of darkness have plundered and shed the blood of my people so they shall be recompensed; the downfall of the enemies of God's people will be accomplished in that day. For as they have desecrated and despised my dwellings and my people, so shall all powers and philosophies that are opposed to God taste the bitter cup of defeat, shame and judgment and they will be utterly defeated when He takes captivity captive.

SUMMARY

The prophet enumerates the specific crimes against God's elect of which Edom was guilty. He then, using Edom as typical of all that opposes God, pronounces God's judgment upon worldly power and unbelief in the form of the "day of Jehovah."

COMMENT

v. 10 FOR . . . VIOLENCE . . . TO THY BROTHER JACOB, SHAME SHALL COVER THEE . . . Wrong or violence is all the more heinous when committed against a brother and the Israelites (Jacob) were

brothers to the Edomites (Esau). We recall others sinning against their own; Joseph and his brethren; Ammon and Tamar; Saul and Jonathan; David and Absalom. The strong ties of blood between the Edomites and the Israelites should have impelled the Edomites to give aid to the oppressed people of Judea, but quite to the contrary, they not only gloated over the plundering of their cities and villages but joined in with the enemies of the Israelites. While the hatred of the Edomites for the Israelites, beginning with their progenitor's hatred for his brother (Gen. 27:41), increased over the centuries, the Israelites were commanded in the law to conduct themselves in brotherly attitudes toward the Edomites (Deut. 2:4-5; 23:7). We should not be surprised at the judgment of shame and "cutting-off" pronounced upon the Edomites for their actions toward their brethren. God pronounced prophetic judgment upon Canaan for his evil toward Noah his father (Gen. 9:24-29), Jacob prophecies certain judgments upon the descendants of his sons (Gen. 49:1ff). The shame of defeat and destruction at the hands of the God of Israel was to come upon this proud, rich and unconquerable people. Their wisdom would be turned into foolishness, their bravery would be turned into cowardice, their proud nation would be turned into an exiled group of desert-dwellers, despised by the Jews.

v. 11 . . . THOU STOODEST ON THE OTHER SIDE . . . STRANGERS CARRIED AWAY . . . FOREIGNERS ENTERED . . . CAST LOTS, THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM. Not only did the Edomites "stand on the other side" watching with glee the plundering of the city of Jerusalem and other Judean villages by marauding tribes of Arabians and Philistines, they joined in the desecration of God's holy mountain and thus became an enemy of God in their actions against God's people. They are like those who later "hated God's anointed without a cause" (cf. Jn. 15:25; Psa. 35:19; 69:4). There are those today who need to know that hatred of God's church and His people is hatred for God. Opposition to the church is declaring war on God (cf. Jn. 15:18; I Jn. 3:13). The church is the militant body of Christ engaged in a great spiritual conflict (cf. II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20). Those not on God's side, members of His church, are His enemies. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity (war) with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). Obadiah is the first of the literary prophets to state this as a principle but all the others from Joel to Malachi teach the same principle.

v. 12 LOOK NOT . . . REJOICE NOT . . . NEITHER SPEAK PROUDLY IN THE DAY OF DISTRESS . . . Obadiah uses the perfect tense to indicate that such events had not only already taken place but that they will take place again. Starting from particular historical events which had already transpired Obadiah sees in them all subsequent events of a similar kind. What Edom has done and what has befallen Judah is typical of the future development of the elect of God and of the attitude of worldly principalities toward them until the coming conquest of the Messianic kingdom. Edom's attitude was one of jealous, spiteful, vengeful rejoicing at the calamities of Judah. Keil quotes Ewald, ". . . the selection of the time of a brother's calamity as that in which to rage against him with such cunning and malicious pleasure, was doubly culpable."

v. 13 ENTER NOT . . . LOOK NOT . . . NEITHER LAY YE HANDS ON THEIR SUBSTANCE IN THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY." The Edomites evidently joined in with the invaders of Jerusalem and other Judean cities in pillaging and despoiling and carrying off their possessions. Pillaging was much more common an accompaniment of invasion in that day than it is now. Yet God considered it, in this case, an affront to Him because it was done to His people. Some day, just as God's retribution came upon Edom, all His enemies will be judged for their pillaging, plundering and persecuting of the servants of Jesus Christ through the ages (cf. Heb. 10:32-38).

v. 14 . . . STAND THOU NOT IN THE CROSSWAY, TO CUT OFF THOSE OF HIS THAT ESCAPE . . . The extent of Edom's hate and spite is seen in this verse. They had been, and undoubtedly would be in the future, guilty of fortifying the crossroads, mountain passes and ways of escape against the Judeans fleeing the ravages of the Arabians and Philistines and other marauders, capturing the fugitives and selling them into slavery or delivering them into the hands of their enemies (cf. Joel 3:5-6; Amos 1:6-9). God holds men and nations accountable for contributing to the tribulations of His people in any age. God's word condemns aggression but commands rulers to be "a terror to those of bad conduct." It is wrong to instigate war for aggressive purposes but it is right to defend against aggression, (cf. Rom. 13:1ff; I Pet. 2:13ff).

v. 15 FOR THE DAY OF JEHOVAH IS NEAR UPON ALL THE NATIONS . . . This phrase, ". . . the day of Jehovah," or ". . . the day of the Lord," is one of the distinguishing features of the prophetic literature. It is imperative that the reader know the meaning of this

phrase if he is to rightly interpret the message of the prophets. We shall make extensive comments on this phrase here. In prophetic literature, the Day of Jehovah generally denotes *any great manifestation of God's power* in judgment or redemption. The exodus from Egypt, the locust plague of Joel's day, the captivities, the restoration in the days of Ezra, the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom (the church), the destruction of Jerusalem—are each called, "The Day of Jehovah." The one great Day of Jehovah (which all judgments and redemptions of Jewish history typify) to which all prophets point is the climactic crisis in the history of God's scheme of redemption which involves the conquest of all opposition and the complete triumph of God and His covenant people. This, of course, is the complete work of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 2:2-5; 9:1-7; 11:1-16; Amos 9:11ff, etc.) when He shall have "taken captivity captive" (Eph. 4:8) and have "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him," (Col. 2:14-15). The prophets speak of the Day of Jehovah as a day of blessing to those who are right with God, but a day of judgment and terror to those who are not. Every "day of Jehovah" experienced by the Jews (each of which symbolized the age when God would accomplish His goal of judgment and redemption in the Messiah) was a time of judgment for those who had been unfaithful to the covenant but a day of vindication and redemption for that faithful remnant. The coming of the Messiah is prophesied in terminology depicting judgment (Mal. 3:1—4:6). Jesus spoke of His first coming as a "judgment" as well as a "redemption" (cf. Jn. 9:39; 12:31-33; 3:16-21; Matt. 10:34-39). We quote from *Bible Commentary, The Minor Prophets*, by Dr. Theodore Laetsch, pub. Concordia, pgs. 203-205:

"The Day of the Lord is that day appointed by the Lord as the Day of Judgment, a day of vengeance unto all unbelievers, of everlasting salvation unto all that have accepted Him as their Redeemer. This term comprises not only this one day, but also all its manifold heralds and forerunners and the eternities following upon the Last Day. Every visitation, every judgment of the Lord, be that a just penalty for the enemies of His kingdom or a gracious visitation for the members of His Church on earth, is a forerunner of, and a guarantee for, the final Day of the Lord. These individual harbingers of the Last Day form as it were the rays diverging from the focal point, the Last Day, towards which they at the same time converge. Therefore every judgment of God upon the

wicked world is in a certain sense and to a certain extent a Day of the Lord, presaging the great Day of the Lord, whether it be the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., or the annihilation of Edom, or the fall of Babylon, or the Civil War, or World War I or II.

"... It is therefore not mere poetic license nor a misconception on the part of the prophet when he speaks of the Day of the Lord as coming upon all the nations or upon Israel. The judgments visited upon the nations during the centuries of history are an integral part of the Day of the Lord, which extends like a volcanic range throughout the history of sinful mankind and will reach its final consummation on the Last Day, when time shall be swallowed up by eternity.

"The same applies, of course, to all manifestations of God's grace, everyone of which flows from that unfathomable sea of divine goodness and love which shall be revealed in its full perfection on that great Day of the Lord."

And so Obadiah announces this Day is near upon all the nations. What Edom has sown, she shall reap! As she has despised and plundered God's covenant people so she shall be despised and overthrown by God.

v. 16 FOR AS YE HAVE DRUNK UPON MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, SO SHALL ALL THE NATIONS DRINK CONTINUALLY; Edom stands as a symbol or type of all the enemies of God's covenant people. All world powers or worldly-minded people who are enemies of God (represented in Daniel and Revelation as the Beast and his worshippers) shall drink the wine of God's wrath (cf. Isa. 51:17, 22, 23; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10). As the nations mock and desecrate God's church so shall they be mocked and desecrated at His hand, beginning with the establishment of His kingdom.

QUIZ

1. How were the Edomites "brothers" to the Israelites and how were the Israelites commanded of God to behave toward the Edomites?
2. To what extent did the Edomites participate in the plundering of the people of Judah?
3. How did the Edomites treat those Israelites who escaped the attacks upon their cities and villages?
4. What is the "Day of Jehovah?"
5. How shall the Day of Jehovah come upon all nations?