

- B. Certainty of it in spite of proud past and present fortifications  
v. 2-4
  - C. Extent of it—complete annihilation, v. 5-9
- II. Justice, v. 10-16, of God's judgment
- A. Edom did violence to and stood aloof from God's people in times of distress, v. 10-11
  - B. Edom gloated over, boasted, rejoiced, looted and cut off the fugitives of God's people in their day of distress, v. 12-14
  - C. Edom and all peoples who are enemies of God's elect will reap what they have sown, v. 15-16
- III. Jubilance, v. 17-21, God's elect will be victorious
- A. They shall receive and possess the covenant blessings of Jehovah, v. 17, 19, 20
  - B. They shall conquer their enemies, v. 18
  - C. They shall reign as the redeemed, v. 21

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CERTAINTY OF EDOM'S JUDGMENT

TEXT: v. 1-4

- 1 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.
- 2 Behold, I have made thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised.
- 3 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?
- 4 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.

### QUERIES

- a. Why and how did Jehovah send an "ambassador" among the nations calling them to battle against Edom?
- b. Why did Edom's dwelling place make them proud?
- c. How would God bring them down from their "nest"?

## PARAPHRASE

The revelation God gave to Obadiah in a vision concerning the nation of Edom: Jehovah has sent His people good news and He has sent His "ambassador" among the Gentile nations with a command, saying, Attention! I command you to do battle against Edom at My direction. To Edom Jehovah says, I have set My mind to reduce your nation to obscurity among the nations of the world and to cause your name to be greatly despised. Your seemingly impregnable dwelling place and fortifications, high in the mountain cliffs, have made you haughty and proud. But your pride has deceptively blinded you and caused you to boast, Who shall ever conquer us—no one shall ever bring us down?! But the great God Jehovah announces, Even if you build your fortifications as high as the eagle flies, or place your nest even higher up in the heavens among the stars, I, Jehovah God, will throw you down into defeat and judgment.

## SUMMARY

In spite of invincible fortifications the Omnipotent God will defeat Edom making it despicable and obscure among the nations. God will use other heathen nations to serve His purpose with Edom.

## COMMENT

v. 1 THE VISION OF OBADIAH. The Hebrew and Greek words for *vision* all come from root words having to do with seeing. Through visions God revealed truth in a pictorial form. These visions came at various times (both day and night, Dan. 10:7; Acts 9:7; 10:3; Gen. 46:2) and in various ways (asleep at night or awake in the day, in dreams or trances). In the O.T. false prophets feigned visions and were denounced by the true prophets of God (Jer. 14:14; 23:16; Ezek. 13:7).

CONCERNING EDMO; see comments on Edom in Introduction and comments on verse 3 below. What Obadiah writes concerning Edom is specifically claimed to be a divine revelation from Jehovah. God breathed forth this prophecy. Obadiah was the instrument—not the originator.

TIDINGS FROM JEHOVAH, . . . LET US RISE UP AGAINST HER IN BATTLE; The prophet uses the editorial "we" and includes himself among those who (the nation of the Jews) heard the prophetic "tidings." These "tidings" of the protection of God by the overthrow of His enemy Edom were designed to be a consolation to the elect as well as a warning to Edom. In the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible the

word we know as *Jehovah* is written by four consonants YHWH. The ancient Jews held the name of God in such veneration and reverence they decided that the best way to avoid using the name with irreverence was not to use it at all. At least they determined never to fill in the correct vowels and give the word the correct pronunciation. Tradition says that the only occasion on which it was actually pronounced in those days was when the High Priest uttered it on his annual entry into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. So the original pronunciation was forgotten among the Jews. The Masorettes (about 900 A.D.) probably attached to YHWH the vowel points of the word that was supposed to be pronounced in place of YHWH, *Adonay*. Due to the nature of the first consonant of *Adonay* (meaning Lord), the first "a" became an "e" so the name in the text then became *YeHoWaH*. The Jews knew that *YeHoWaH* was an artificial form and continued to pronounce the word *Adonay*, but during the Middle Ages some Gentile scholars in the Church began to treat the artificial form as a real name. Because the language of these scholars transcribed "Y" as "J" and "w" as "v" the name became *JEHOVAH*.

How did God send an "ambassador" among the Gentile nations commanding them to come against Edom? Probably this is only personifying the fact that God sent these nations His command in some invisible, mental form, into the hearts and minds of the heathen rulers. However, He could well have sent one of His angels or one of the angels who ministered to the different nations (cf. Dan. 10:13, 20). The main point of emphasis is that God does use heathen nations to serve His purpose (cf. Is. 10:5-19; 44:28—45:6; Jer. 51:20-23; II Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). God is even portrayed as the "general" over His army of locusts when He brings judgment upon Judah in the days of Joel (Joel 2:11). So God called forth the Babylonians and the Romans and others to reduce Edom to ultimate oblivion. For an extended discussion of God's activity in the events of history see Special Study No. nine, page 93, entitled, "Prophetic Philosophy of History."

v. 2 MADE THESE SMALL; As was mentioned in the Introduction to this book, Nebuchadnezzar scattered the original Edomites and reduced them to a small, despised people who were forced to inhabit the barren, hostile desert of southern Palestine known as the Negeb. The Edomites soon ceased to exist. Their original homeland, southeast of the Dead Sea, in Mt. Seir came to be inhabited by Arabians later known as Nabataeans. For centuries now even the Nabataean civilisation has perished from the earth and the territory of Petra (Edom) stands in

complete desolation testifying to the certainty of God's prophetic word. We shall have more to say of the history of this territory in the next two verses. The perfect tense is used in verse 2 where the future is portrayed as taking place in the present. Keil and Delitzsch say, "The perfect . . . describes the resolution of Jehovah as one whose fulfillment is as certain as if it had already occurred."

V. 3 PRIDE . . . HATH DECEIVED THEE; O THOU THAT DWELLEST IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK; We present here a description of the "rock" (Petra) by George L. Robinson in "The Twelve Minor Prophets" pub. by Baker Book House, page 66-67:

"For situation and natural beauty Petra is unique among the cities of earth. To describe it adequately is well-nigh an impossibility. Its location, deep down among the mountains of Seir, surrounded on all sides with richly colored rocks of simply matchless beauty and grandeur, renders it a 'wonder of the desert.' One enters the wierd but attractive city enclosure by a narrow gorge, over a mile long, called the *Sik*, or cleft. This defile is one of the most magnificent and romantic avenues of its kind in all nature. A tiny stream flows under one's feet much of the way. The chasm is both narrow and deep, often-times so contracted as to be almost dark at noonday. The rocks which bound it are tinted most beautifully with all the colors of the rainbow. On emerging from it into the great hollow basin, (which is over a mile long by two-thirds of a mile broad), the explorer is confronted by rock-hewn dwellings, tombs, temples, and other cuttings on every side. Several hundreds of these, most of them doubtless mausolea originally, still remain, all carved literally out of the solid sandstone rock. The ruins of a castle and of buildings and the arches of a bridge, and columns, still stand scattered over the bottom of the city's site. The colors of the rocks add immensely to the attractiveness of the place. The deepest reds, purple, orange, yellow, white, violet, and other colors are arranged by nature in alternate bands, shading off artistically into one another, curving and twisting in gorgeous fantasies according to the infiltration of the oxides of iron, manganese, and other substances which so often produce in sandstone rocks color varieties of special beauty. The entire city and its environs are one immense maze of richly colored mountains and cliffs, chasms, rocky shelves and narrow valleys, gorges and plateaus, shady dells and sunny promontories, grand and beautiful; just

the ideal of beauty and protection for a fortress of trade and commerce to satisfy an oriental nomad."

THAT SAITH . . . WHO SHALL BRING ME DOWN TO THE GROUND?; Edom's pride and boasting rested on her assumption of strategic impregnability. One explorer of the territory has stated that a handful of men stationed in the *Sik* could easily hold off a whole army of invaders. The solid stone cliffs were not only perpendicular, they furnished no niches for scaling them at any place. Her self-satisfied security also found credence in her position along the heavily traveled trade route of that time. Through its weird ravines passed camel caravans headed for Egypt and the Mediterranean where their goods were eventually shipped to Greece and Rome. Dromedarians from everywhere paid customs duties and tribute at the gates of Petra for the privilege of passage and protection. As a consequence the inhabitants of Petra assumed commanding importance on trade routes, its citizens were prosperous, its coffers bulging with gold and silver. Its wealth was reputed to be fabulous. Edom's presumptuous boasting in her defenses and her wealth reminds us of many nations, both past and present, whose proud necks have been bowed by the Omnipotent Ruler of the Universe.

v. 4 HIGH AS THE EAGLE . . . NEST . . . AMONG THE STARS; There are a number of references to the eagle as representing power, swiftness and invincibility (cf. Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11; Ps. 103:5; Isa. 40:31; Jer. 4:13; Dan. 7:4; Matt. 24:28). The hyperbolic figure of "setting one's nest among the stars" is used by other prophets to express human pride (cf. Amos. 9:2ff and Isa. 14:13ff).

## QUIZ

1. What is a "vision"?
2. What is the significance of God's tidings for Israel?
3. Why was an "ambassador" sent among the "nations"?
4. How was Edom "made small" and "despised"?
5. Describe the "dwelling" place of Edom.
6. What, besides her dwelling place, probably gave Edom cause for pride?

## THE EXTENT OF EDMON'S JUDGMENT

TEXT: v. 5-9

- 5 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?