

“THE KINGDOM SHALL BE JEHOVAH’S”

SERMON ON OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

- I. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETING THE PROPHETS
 - A. N.T. passages
 1. Acts 3:17 ff; Heb. 12; Lk. 1:67 ff
 - B. Times coloring
 - C. Covenant Background
 - D. Double Emphasis (Judgment/Redemption)
 - E. The Unifying Focal Point
- II. BACKGROUND TIMES
 - A. In the times of Jehoshaphat, Obadiah was sent out to revive the spirit of true worship in the land by exposition of the law (II Chron. 17:7)
 - B. Then in Jehoshaphat's son's time (Jehoram), Edom revolted from Judah's rule over her and joined, probably, with the Arabs and Philistines in pillaging the villages of Judea and the city of Jerusalem (II Chron. 21:16-17)
 - C. But even when Jehoshaphat brought religious reform to its peak in Judah in Obadiah's earlier days, J. made a fatal mistake.
 1. He made military alliances with the pagan king Ahab of Israel and permitted his son Jehoram to marry Ahab & Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah
 - a. Athaliah brought idolatry and wickedness with her to Judah
 - b. Jehoram murdered his brother and quickly slipped into idolatry
 - c. Jehoram suffered and died unlamented from a horrible disease sent by God . . . his sons were all murdered, except Ahaziah, by the Arabians
- III. OBADIAH'S WRITTEN MESSAGE
 - A. Vengeance upon the enemies of God's faithful covenant people
 - B. Ultimate victory for the faithful covenant people when Jehovah would rule in His kingdom
 - C. The covenant people would possess the kingdom with Jehovah

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IV. EDOM

- A. Means "red" from Esau. Country also called Seir after the mountain plateau area between Dead Sea and Gulf of Aquabah (Petra)
- B. Some evidence that original inhabitants were Horites, cave-dwellers, Gen. 14:6
- C. Edomites and Israelites, though blood brothers, were bitter enemies.
 1. Edomites refused passage to Israel during wanderings
 2. Saul, David, Solomon all fought against them and subjugated them
 3. When Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. by Nebuch. the Edomites were scattered and forced to flee to the Negeb deserts of Palestine. There they became known as Idumeans
 4. In 325 B.C. an Arabian tribe known as the Nabateans inhabited Petra
 5. In Maccabean times, John Hycanus subdued the Idumeans and forced them to accept Judaism
 6. When the Romans took over Palestine 64 B.C. the Edomites were also conquered
 7. From Idumea came Antipater, the Father of Herod the Great . . . When Jerusalem was destroyed 70 A.D. the Idumeans disappeared from history

V. TEACHING OF OBADIAH

- A. Two fundamental prophetic elements which have universal Messianic significance
 1. Judgment of Edom which prophetically prefigures the larger judgment of all the nations as they are enemies of God's kingdom with the establishment of the universal Messianic kingdom
 2. The downtrodden covenant people restored to their land out of which shall come the Messianic kingdom, that to which all Israel's history pointed, when "the kingdom shall be Jehovah's"

Even as Daniel was to say later, "And in the days of those kings (enemies of the covenant people, Rome), shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . it will stand forever." (Dan. 2:44)

When the Messiah came, all other kingdoms were judged and defeated. Israel's mission was to achieve a spiritual conquest of all the nations.

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DISCUSSION

I. JUDGMENT UPON EDM, ENEMIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE,

v. 1-9

A. Announcement of Judgment by God's prophet

1. An ambassador is sent among the nations
2. How did God do this?
 - a. In many and various ways God did and still does announce judgments and speak to heathen people
 - b. He "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to let the Jews return to Judah
 - c. He used locusts to call Judah to repentance
 - d. God speaks in natural catastrophies warning mankind that "his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been made." Rom. 1:18-20
 - e. Sometimes God sent spokesmen like Jonah, Daniel and others to heathen nations
3. Ambassadors or messengers are still sent today among the nations in both forms
 - a. There are the natural judgments of God upon mankind warning of the terrible judgment to come finally, typhoons, earthquakes, famines, plagues
 - b. There are his prophets: every Christian who has ever spoken a word of judgment to his neighbor is a prophet of God

B. Certainty of Judgment in spite of proud past and present fortifications, v. 2-4

1. Description of Edom's proud and present fortifications
 - a. Edom was a monarchy before Israel, rich in material goods, wisdom of leaders was renowned
 - b. The entrance to her fortifications were so narrow that a few men could stand off a whole army
 - c. SO EDM RESTED SECURE IN HER OWN PRIDE. ONE IS REMINDED OF SO MANY OTHER GREAT EMPIRES WHO WERE ENEMIES OF GOD RESTING IN THEIR PRIDE . . . ASSYRIA (Isa 10), BABYLON, GREECE, ROME, GERMANY

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. . . AND NOW WE HEAR PEOPLE BRAGGING ABOUT
THE MILITARY AND SCIENTIFIC POWERS OF AMERICA
. . . THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH

2. But God replies, do what you will but I will bring you down
 - a. God has at His command a whole universe of ways to bring nations to their knees:
 - b. Natural disasters; plagues; other nations; angels; movements of peoples; etc.
 - c. With Edom it was a combination of many things
 - (1) Other nations subjugated them
 - (2) Their allies deceived them and trapped them and drove them to the border!
 - (3) Later the caravan route was moved and the place became totally uninhabitable

ANY ONE OF THESE THINGS COULD HAPPEN TO ANY NATION WHO SETS ITSELF AGAINST GOD AND AGAINST HIS PEOPLE IT HAPPENED TO GERMANY, AND IT WILL HAPPEN TO RUSSIA! IT MAY HAPPEN TO AMERICA!

- C. The extent of God's judgment—complete
 1. Even thieves usually leave something behind
 2. The harvesters, taking pains to harvest every possible bunch of grapes, leave something which is later gleaned
 3. BUT WHEN GOD REDUCES A NATION NOTHING IS LEFT . . . EDOM BECAME A PLACE WHERE JACKALS, AND OWLS RESIDE

THE CALAMITY WHICH CAME UPON EDOM WAS SO SECRETIVE, SUDDEN AND COMPLETE NONE OF THEIR WISE MEN HAD WISDOM TO OFFER IN DEFENSE OR HELP!

HOW MANY OF THE GREAT EMPIRES OF THE PAST ARE ONLY A MEMORY . . . THEIR GLORY AND GREATNESS RECORDED IN ONLY A FEW WEATHERED AND WORN RELICS OF THE PAST!

II. THE JUSTICE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT, v. 10-16

- A. First, Edom was Israel's brethren according to fleshly descent. THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE ATTACKS UPON GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE WAS INEXCUSABLE
 1. Recall others sinning against their brethren
 - a. Joseph's brethren; Saul and Jonathan
- B. The strong ties of blood between the two should have impelled Edom to give aid to the oppressed Jews
 1. But now they stood aloof . . . watching with glee
 2. Not only so but they became like one of the invaders

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FOR THOSE WHO SEE RIGHTEOUSNESS BEING OPPRESSED AND DO NOTHING . . . STAND ALOOF, THEY ALSO BECOME THE ENEMY OF GOD!

C. Edom gloated over, boasted, rejoiced, looted and cut off the fugitives of God's people in their day of distress

1. The Edomites joined in the desecration of God's holy mountain; they trapped Israelites trying to escape and sold them into slavery; THUS THEY BECAME OF GOD'S PEOPLE THEY ARE LIKE THOSE WHO LATER "HATED GOD'S ANOINTED ONE WITHOUT A CAUSE."

THERE ARE THOSE TODAY WHO NEED TO KNOW THAT HATRED FOR GOD'S PEOPLE AND HIS CHURCH IS HATRED FOR GOD/ OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH IS THE SAME AS DECLARING WAR ON GOD. THE CHURCH IS THE MILITANT BODY OF CHRIST ENGAGED IN A GREAT SPIRITUAL CONFLICT. THOSE NOT ON GOD'S SIDE, MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH, ARE HIS ENEMIES (Jas. 4:4). Friendship with the world is enmity with God.

D. Edom and all peoples who are enemies of God's elect will reap what they have sown, v. 15-16

1. Obadiah has used perfect tense in past descriptions to indicate that such events had not only already taken place but will take place again.
2. Starting from particular historical events which had already transpired Obadiah sees in them all subsequent events of a similar kind.
 - a. 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.

THOSE WHO HAVE VENTED THEIR WRATH UPON GOD'S PEOPLE WILL DRINK THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH

THOSE WHO HAVE TORMENTED THE CHURCH AND GIVEN HER NO REST WILL BE CAST INTO HELL WHERE THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT GOETH UP FOREVER AND THERE WILL BE NO REST DAY OR NIGHT!

3. The Day of Jehovah upon all the nations
 - a. Explain what Day of Jehovah means
 - b. THIS DAY WAS A DAY OF WRATH FOR GOD'S ENEMIES BUT A DAY OF GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE . . .

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SO IS ANY SUCH DAY OF THE LORD . . . BOTH ACTS OF GOD ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE SUCH DAY . . . EVEN WHEN SAINTS DIE IN A DAY OF JUDGMENT ON EARTH IT IS CALLED BLESSING FOR THEM! EVERY GREAT JUDGMENT ON EARTH IS A DELIVERANCE AND PROTECTION TOWARD SUSTAINING THE CHURCH UNTIL THE END!

E. They shall reign as the redeemed, v. 21

1. Saviours (those who are ambassadors of THE Saviour) taking His gospel to all the world enlarging His kingdom shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mt. Esau
2. THE LAST PHRASE IS MAJESTIC! ALL KINGDOMS ARE UNITED IN THAT ONE KINGDOM AND GOD IS ALL IN ALL.
 - a. This began when the "One Shepherd" united all God's sheep in "one flock" (Ezek. 34; Jn. 10) and will find its consummation when the Saviour appears the second time,

NOT TO DEAL WITH SIN BUT TO SAVE THOSE WHO ARE EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM (Heb. 9:28)

3. God's goal, as Obadiah sees it, is the fulfillment of God's covenant promises

IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER THIS IS THE CLOSING NOTE OF ALL THE LITERARY PROPHETS . . .

HOW IS THIS TO BE DONE?

- a. Victory of God over every foe
- b. Unbroken fellowship between a people finally made holy to the Lord and their everpresent God
- c. A new covenant which does not supplant but fulfills the old

AND GOD REACHES THIS GOAL THROUGH A SERIES OF SUCCESSIVE ACTS OF JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION CLIMAXED IN THE JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION BY THE MESSIAH, AND CONSUMMATED AT THE SECOND ADVENT OF JESUS!

III. JUBILANCE; God's Elect Will Be Victorious, v. 17-21

A. They shall receive and possess the covenant blessings v. 17, 19, 20

1. God will extend His strong right arm of salvation and victory to the covenant people, making Zion a place of escape
2. Zion was the church of the Old Testament in that the fellowship of the faithful (the remnant) would give birth to the church

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3. ZION BECAME THE SYMBOL OF MESSIANIC DELIVERANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY. ZION BECAME THE SYMBOL OF THE REALIZATION OF ALL THE PROMISES GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM. PAUL EQUATES "JERUSALEM" WITH "ZION" IN GALATIANS 4.
4. THE PROPHETS WERE NOT INTENDING THAT ALL THEY PREDICTED OF MT. ZION WOULD BE FULFILLED LITERALLY. MOST OF WHAT THEY PREDICTED WAS TO FIND ITS FULFILLMENT IN THE MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM.
5. A holiness which God would give would also come along with this deliverance. Other prophets spoke of the "Holy Way" to come in the days of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 35; Ezek. 36:25ff; Zech. 13:1).
6. Jacob possessing his possessions was never completely fulfilled until the coming of the Messianic kingdom.

In v. 18-19 the covenant people are told they will possess even that which was never promised them—the territory of Edom. They were never intended to possess this territory literally. The covenant people of God (the Christian Church) now possess this territory in a figurative sense in that members of that heathen territory have been converted and made members of the universal kingdom of God.

- B. They shall conquer their enemies, v. 18
1. How will this be accomplished?
 2. In Num. 24:17-18 it is prophesied that Edom would be a possession of Israel when the "Star comes forth out of Jacob and the scepter out of Israel." This points to a fulfillment in the Messianic age!
 3. Amos 9:11-12 reveals that when the family of David is restored to the throne, not only will the remnant of Edom be possessed by the covenant people but all the nations will be conquered and possessed by them.
 4. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS FOR IT HAS APOSTOLIC SANCTION. IT BEGAN ITS FULFILLMENT WHEN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN ACTS 2:1ff, WHEN BY THE GOSPEL HEATHEN WERE DELIVERED FROM THE REALMS OF DARKNESS AND TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S DEAR SON!

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5. SO THE BOOK OF ACTS (chap. 15 esp.) RECORDS THE FULFILLMENT OF OBADIAH v: 17-21. THE CHURCH (the true Mt. Zion, cf. Heb. 12:22ff) IN ITS VICTORIOUS CONQUEST OF THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF UNBELIEVERS TODAY IS STILL POSSESSING "EDOM" (representative of God's enemies).

CONCLUSION

I. WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED AND PROPHESED HE IS MOST CERTAINLY GOING TO FULFILL

A. No empire, however rich or strong is going to thwart His purpose

B. Not even the gates of Hades shall prevail against His kingdom

II. WHETHER YOU WILL BE CONQUEROR OR CONQUERED . . . YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY DEPENDS UPON WHERE YOU STAND IN RELATION TO GOD'S WILL AND PURPOSE AND HIS KINGDOM!

A. Aloofness, gloating, active opposition to it will mean your destruction

B. Obedience, faithfulness, being a saviour among the nations will mean you will rule with Him

HE HAS CONQUERED ALL DOMINIONS, POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES IN CHRIST, DESPOILING THEM AND MAKING A SHOW OVER THEM OPENLY . . . THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST HAVE ALREADY CONQUERED (Read Rom. 8:31-39).