

### Obadiah 1 (3) – Your Pride Has Deceived You

Obadiah is the shortest book of the Old Testament, and it's not quoted in the New Testament, but its message still rings true. The prophet was delivering a message about the destruction of the nation of Edom. And that message is this: Pride is the sin that destroys people. It deceives them into thinking that they don't have to obey God. That they are getting away with their sin. They sink further and further into rebellion, and further and further away from repentance. They may still claim God, yet they don't see the truth.

You may be getting away with it for now, but you won't forever. And then what has been coming will take you by surprise. Proverbs 29:1 says – *He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.* This is what happened to the nation of Edom. They had been warned many times, but they didn't listen, and they were destroyed. And this is what happens to sinners who refuse to repent. And to those who call themselves Christians, but they don't actually trust God. They trust something else.

Edom was located to the south of the Dead Sea. The area was very rocky and that provided ideal military advantages for protection. Its capital was the famous Petra, a fortress carved out in a mountain. And they thought that because of their rocky fortress they would always be safe. Also, they were able to mine many rich minerals out of their mountains, so they had no financial worries. And since Edom was located on a major trade route, they had made friends with other powerful nations. It is no wonder that Edom became a powerful nation. But because of its pride, it's no wonder it fell.

Edom was related to Israel as Esau was related to his brother Jacob. But the Edomites refused to give Moses safe passage through the wilderness (Numbers 20:14-20). King Saul fought with Edom (1 Samuel 14:47). King David made them his subjects (2 Samuel 8:13-14). King Solomon put down their revolt (1 Kings 11:14-22). Jehoshaphat defeated them in battle (2 Chronicles 20:22), but Jehoram lost control of them (2 Kings 8:20-22), and they helped the Babylonians take Jerusalem (Lamentations 4:18-22).

Edom had fortresses, finances, and friends. So, they didn't fear God. In an earthly sense, they were as secure as you could be. But it was a false security, and it was all about to come crashing down. The prophets Isaiah (34:5-9), Jeremiah (49:7-22), Ezekiel (25:12-14), Joel (3:19), Amos (1:11-12), and Malachi (1:2-5) all speak of the wrath of God on Edom. But pride makes you trust your experience more than the word of God. Edom didn't listen, and all of her wealth was plundered. All her alliances were broken, and the nations who had helped Edom broke their covenants. Edom was driven out of Petra. And eventually, Edom was driven out of the earth completely.

Vs.10-14 – Here is an awful picture of Edom's pride. When foreigners invaded Jerusalem during the reign of King Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:8-20), instead of coming to Israel's rescue, Edom stood and watched. More than that, they rejoiced at their ruin. They even participated in the pillaging. As the people fled, the Edomites captured them and turned them over to the enemy. Their lack of love and their bitterness was evident. They were blinded by their success, and they actually turned on the people who should have been their closest allies. And they took up alliances with people who were going to turn on them. That is what pride will do to you.

What are you trusting in instead of obeying God? What do you think is protecting you from having to obey God? That is what you are trusting in. And it is pride. And in vs.3-9 you see the things that were a source of pride for Edom, the things that God would bring to ruin. These are things that will not save you from yourself. Pride will ruin you. The things people think will save them from dealing with sin are deceiving them. Be sure your sin will find you out. And if you don't deal with your sin, God will deal with you.

Your position won't save you (vs.3-4) – No matter how high you climb up the economic, social, or political ladder, no matter how invincible you think your position is, you can be taken down. Pride in your position will keep you from being humble. Pride comes before a fall, and when you are against God, his word, and his people, the higher you fly, the harder you fall. Satan was higher than any created being. But his pride brings him down to hell.

Your possessions won't save you (vs.5-6) – The prophet says what's coming to plunder you is more than a band of thieves would take. Even people that would come to get your fruit would leave some behind. But you will be utterly destroyed! You're not going to lose a lot. You're going to lose everything! What you treasure will be manifest, and if things have you mastered, if they are your pride, they will make your life a never-ending search for more of what only God can bring, true security and significance. What does it profit someone to win the world and lose their soul?

Your people won't save you (vs.7) – You might be in the popular crowd. You might be influential. You might run with the big dogs. You might have a lot of sinful friends in your corner. But sin is not your friend. You may feel like you are getting something out of it, but your relationship with rebellion needs to be changed into a relationship with repentance.

Yes, you can be friends with sinners, of course, but you aren't supposed to be partaking in sin with them. If that is so, and yet you are truly God's child, then there will come a day when they will turn against you (cf. 1 Peter 4:3-4). Stop partaking in sin with them; remember that partners in crime are still criminals. Deliberately defiant sin will make you a fool. Making up your own rules, and making excuses for sin will destroy your discernment.

Listen to the first Psalm – *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Your perception won't save you (vs.8) – People think that their intellect, their intuition, their worldly wisdom can help them know when it's time to get right. And until then, they can just do what they want and even call it godly.

But you can't pull one over on God. People think they can just do things the way they want to, and still serve God, but that is idolatry. You may feel like you can reason or scheme or think your way out of any situation, but the devices of the scammers and schemers and sinners will be destroyed. It is pride that makes you trust your experience more than the word of God. But the Bible tells you many times not to be wise in your own eyes.

Your power won't save you (vs.9) – You can't play with sin and win. It will bring you down to bitter despair. Pride can ruin everything in your life. You can get so dismayed that even delights are made to be despairing. You won't even know what to do. Your strength will be slaughtered.

God's enemies will be destroyed (vs.15-16) – The “day of the Lord” is a phrase that describes the time when God will pour out his wrath on a wicked world, judge the nations and establish his kingdom, fulfilling the promises he made to Israel. This phrase was also used to describe God-ordained calamities sent to punish people at other times. These judgments were a foretaste of what will eventually come in the final “Day of the Lord”. Edom will be repaid for what they did. Just as the Edomites punished their enemies, so God would punish Edom. The whole nation of Edom would be destroyed. The self-deceiving pride of their own hearts led to their own destruction. Anyone who suffers the wrath and judgment of God does so because of their own sins. People go to hell because of their own pride, their own obstinate, willful rebellion and unbelief.

God's people will be delivered (vs.17-21) – “possessing their possessions” refers to Israel and the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. That is what we seek to do by the grace of God in our Christian life, to take hold of the promises of God, believing in our eternal inheritance, and walking with God by faith in this life. Edom represents a fortified and prideful foe of God's people. And here we see the promise of consecration (vs.17), conquest (vs.18-20), and conclusion (vs.21). We are set apart by God to be his own possession, his own inheritance. We are always led in triumphal procession behind King Jesus. And we will rule and reign with him in glory forever.

So, it comes down to you today. You are either on the side of destruction or the side of deliverance, one of God's enemies or one of God's people. Trusting in God's word, or trusting in your own wisdom. In other word, you will either be full of pride, or filled with God's Spirit.

Now you might not feel like you're full of pride. And you might be right if you are a truly a Christian, and truly struggling with sin, in humility, with repentance, and hungry for holiness. Fighting against pride is a big part of the Christian life. But if you think that you don't need God, or that you don't need to ever repent, or you won't fight against pride, or even attempt to discern it in your own life, if you think that your sin isn't actually sin, or that grace is a license to sin, then full of pride is exactly what you are. And your position, your possessions, your people, your perception, and your power will not be able to save you from the wrath of God against your sin.

But there is one position that can save you. There is one possession that can save you. There is one person who can save you. There is one perception that can save you. There is one power that can save you. That position is to be in Christ. That possession is to be the possession of God. That person is Jesus. That perception is the grace of God. That power is the Holy Spirit.

Pride is the great deceiver. It makes you think that you are justified in holding unforgiveness against other people, while asking for forgiveness from God. Pride makes you think you're safe because of your success, or whatever it is you take pride in. Pride makes you trust your experience more than the word of God. Pride makes you say, "God knows my heart", when his word is telling you the trouble in your heart.

So, what now? Tell God that you hear him telling you that your pride is your problem. Ask God to forgive your prideful heart, and to give you a new heart. Thank God for Jesus, who has paid for your sin, by living the perfect life, with no pride, and by dying in your place on the cross. And praise God for the promise that he will forgive your sin, save your soul, and grant you eternal life. Don't be deceived. Repent, and believe the gospel.