

## **OBADIAH 1:1-4 - DECEIVED BY PRIDE**

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### **I. Obadiah 1:1-4<sup>1</sup>**

#### A. Obadiah 1:1-4

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"): "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised. 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?' 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.

### **II. Who is Obadiah?**

- A. Here we read a strident declaration by a prophet named Obadiah against someone named Edom. But just who is Obadiah and who is Edom whom he preaches against?
- B. The name "Obadiah" means "servant of God." Although there are several other individuals by this name in the Old Testament, this individual does not appear to be one of them.
- C. We don't know where he was born, to what tribe he belonged, his occupation or even the exact time in which he lived [Finley:299, Ironside:125, Unger:1813].
- D. As to when he lived:
  1. We can only infer the time period from the contents of his prophecy.
  2. In verse 11, Obadiah mentions Edom's cooperation with "strangers" who carried Israel captive, when "foreigners" entered the gates of Jerusalem (Oba. 1:11).
  3. Early View<sup>2</sup>
    - a) Obadiah written as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and is describing Edom's participation in one of a number of incidents from as early as 850 B.C. to as late as 735 B.C. (2Chr. 21:8-10; 25:14-24; 28:17).
    - b) Yet none of these early incidents appear to completely correlate to all that is related here by Obadiah.
  4. Late View

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<sup>1</sup> In the interest of size, sermon illustrations have been omitted.

<sup>2</sup> The following factors have been offered in favor of the early view: (1) Edom is referred to by Obadiah as having more than one ally (Oba. 1:7,11); (2) the position of the book in the Hebrew canon; (3) the Philistines, which are pre-exilic foes, are mentioned [Unger:1813]; (4) the Babylonian captives in 586 were not taken westward (Oba. 1:20, NASB, HCSB) [Freeman:141]; (5) Amos (760) and Jeremiah (627) may show an acquaintance with Obadiah [Freeman:141].

- a) Obadiah written in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. – shortly after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- b) Statements in Oba. 1:10-14 more naturally fit with the severe overthrow of Judah by Babylon and the subsequent captivity of the southern kingdom [Bullock:260].
- c) Evidence from the apocryphal book 1 Esdras preserves a tradition that the Edomites burned the temple when Judah was devastated by the Babylonians.<sup>3</sup>
- d) Close parallel with Jeremiah 49:7-22 which is known to have in view the Babylonian period [Feinberg:125].

### III. Who is Edom?

- A. Edom refers to the nation composed of the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob.
- B. Pairs of names for brothers which we need to be familiar with. Both of them are the sons of Isaac:
  1. Jacob = Israel
  2. Esau = Edom
- C. Prior to their birth, when the twins were struggling in their mother's womb, God revealed to Rebecca (Genesis 25:23):
 

"Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And *the older shall serve the younger.*"

  1. The history of these two brothers—Esau and Jacob—constitutes both a lesson and a test.
  2. The *lesson* concerns God's sovereign choice.
    - a) It is said, *the older shall server the younger*. We observe that this is a reversal of the normal birthright where the older has precedence over the younger. Thus, God chooses to favor one of the brothers in a way which purposefully runs counter to the accepted norm.
    - b) When discussing the sovereignty of God, Paul writes concerning the birth of these brothers (Rom. 9:10-13):
 

. . . when Rebecca also had conceived by one man (ἐνὸς κοίτην<sup>4</sup>), [even] by our father Isaac (for [the children] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."
    - c) Notice several things that Paul emphasizes.

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<sup>3</sup> "Thou also hast vowed to build *up* the temple, which the Edomites burnt when Judæa was made desolate by the Chaldees" [Lange:85].

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'one sexual act' – the brothers were *twins*.

- (1) Conceived by one *man*. The term "man" is a euphemism. The underlying Greek says, "by one sexual act" or "by one conception." Paul's point is not just that they had the same father, but that they were conceived *by the same action at the same point in time*—they were twins.
  - (2) Why is he making this point? Because he is emphasizing how much alike the origin of the two brothers are, yet how far apart they stand in the election and subsequent blessing of God.
  - (3) To the degree Paul emphasizes their similarity he elevates God's sovereignty and undermines our erroneous tendency to reject God's work of election in the lives of those whom He has chosen.
  - d) In the context, Esau (who is Edom) comes to represent a child "of the flesh" who is not a child "of the promise." He is a physical descendant of Abraham, but not in the line of inheritance for the blessings—the promise—which went to his brother Jacob.
  - e) The lesson: God sovereignly chose between these two brothers. His will and intention for blessings and promises are wrapped up in the destiny of Jacob (who is Israel).
    - (1) It is not about 'fairness' from man's limited perspective.
    - (2) It is all about the will of God and His plan in history.
3. The *test* concerns mankind's reaction to God's sovereign choice.
    - a) In the context of this passage in Romans, Paul is teaching about God's sovereign choice of those who will be saved.
    - b) This interweaves with a discussion of His chosen nation Israel.
    - c) By the time Paul reaches Romans 11, he is concerned that gentile believers may have an overly inflated view of their own role in God's plan for history by denying His continued purpose in unbelieving Israel.
  4. Thus, these two brothers represent a great divide—a fence between two types of people down through the ages.
    - a) Esau/Edom – those who, although they know God's sovereign choice of Jacob, continue to reject this reality and stand opposed to God's electing plan in history.
    - b) Jacob/Israel – those who accept the sovereignty of God and His right to bestow blessing as He wishes. Those who desire to be in-step with God's purposes as they are working out in history.
  5. The significance of Jacob vs. Esau has large spiritual implications as we shall see. Edom, in particular, will come to represent those gentile nations which ultimately array themselves against God's choice of Israel.
- D. The line of Promise
1. Through the confluence of sin by Esau, Jacob, and their mother Rebecca, the line of promise from Isaac fell to Jacob. Esau's sin was that he lightly esteemed his birthright

and sold it to his brother for some lentil stew (Gen. 25:34). Rebecca's and Jacob's sin was the deception of Isaac which resulted in him giving his blessing to Jacob, the younger, rather than Esau, the elder (Gen. 27).

2. Here again we see the unceasing sovereignty of God. Does he condone sin? No! Can sin thwart His plan? No!
  - a) It is important that we learn to read the Bible carefully. Much of what is recorded herein is *descriptive* rather than *proscriptive*. That is, it records what people did and how God accomplished His will *despite their sin*. The fact that God works within history populated by sinful humans must not be construed as an endorsement of their actions.
- E. Isaac's blessing of Jacob's Genesis 27, said in part:

" . . . may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. *Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you.* Cursed [be] everyone who curses you, And blessed [be] those who bless you
- F. When Esau discovered that the blessing had gone to Jacob, he urged his father Isaac to rectify the situation. Yet Isaac—recognizing the hand of God in all that had transpired—said: "*Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?*" He went on to say, "By your sword you shall live, *and you shall serve your brother*, and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck."
- G. Does this mean that Jacob was more worthy than Esau? No. Does it mean that God condoned the sinful means by which this turn of events came about? No. It is all about God's sovereign election and purposes amidst sinful human history.
  1. As H. A. Ironside observed, "Who was so unworthy as cowardly Jacob, and who, from certain worldly standpoints, was more to be admired than the apparently brave and magnanimous Esau?" [Ironside:126].
  2. Here we see one of the great lessons of this passage: election by God concerns *grace*—the undeserved favor of God. All who would come near to God and walk like God must come to understand grace: the radical idea that sinful humans are granted that which they neither earn nor deserve.

- H. After Isaac dies, Esau threatens to kill Jacob so Jacob flees to his uncle Laban in Haran. It is there that Jacob marries Leah and Rachel who, along with their maids, give birth to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- I. Although, after many years, Esau and Jacob are reconciled (Gen. 33), Scripture records ongoing animosity and mistreatment of the descendants of Jacob by the descendants of his brother Esau. This plays itself out as animosity by the nation of Edom toward the nation of Israel.

#### **IV. Edom's Mistreatment of Brother Jacob (Israel)**

- A. Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through its country when they were in a vulnerable position after having escaped from Egypt.
  - 1. Numbers 20:17-21  
'Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.'" Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my [land], lest I come out against you with the sword." So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing [more]." Then he said, "You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.
  - 2. If you want to incur a curse from God, simply turn a blind eye to the sufferings of Israel in her time of need. All the more so if you are a virtual family members—the Edomites having descended from Israel's brother Esau.
- B. Later, during the reign of king David, portions of Isaac's prophecy came to pass when Israel subjugated the Edomites (2S. 8:14).
- C. Thereafter, Joab conducted a six-month campaign against the Edomite males (1K. 11:14-25).
- D. There followed ongoing animosity and Israelite control of Edom under various kings (1K. 22:47; 2K. 8:20-22) [Finley:305].
- E. Perhaps the most egregious event, which seems to have been the event Obadiah has in view, came during the last days of the southern kingdom.
  - 1. Edom joined with Judah and numerous other allies in a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Jer. 27:1-11), but when Nebuchadnezzar descended on Jerusalem, Edom encouraged its razing.
  - 2. Not only did Edom participate in looting of the city, she also slaughtered Jewish refugees or turned them back over to the enemy.
  - 3. The psalmist wrote (Ps. 137:7):  
'Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, "Raze [it], raze [it], to its very foundation!" '

- F. This then, forms the historic background behind the pronouncement against Edom found in the book of Obadiah.

## V. Purpose of the Book

- A. At least Twofold<sup>5</sup>
1. To describe the divine judgment of Edom historically.
  2. To describe the coming judgment of the nations of the world because of their continued hostility toward God's purposes for the earth in relation to His chosen nation Israel.
- B. The Judgment of Edom.
1. It appears that the initial judgment of Edom occurred prior to the writing of the book of Malachi (composed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC)
    - a) Malachi 1:2-4  
"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' [Was] not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, and *laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.*" Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places," Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever."
    - b) Edom was attacked by a coalition of Arab tribes in about 440 B.C.<sup>6</sup> By the year 312, their homeland was dominated by the Nabataean Arabs [Bullock:256]. The Edomites were then displaced to southern Judea which the Greeks called Idumaea.
    - c) One such Idumaeon plays a significant role in the New Testament demonstrating a continued opposition to the plan of God—we know him as Herod the Great who slaughtered the male children in Bethlehem in his attempt to kill the young Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Edom's punishment will come in two parts. First, in the general course of history the nations will rise up against her (Oba. 1:2-9). Second, in the future day of the Lord, which will witness God's wrath against all the nations and the establishment of His kingdom on earth, the Lord Himself will blot out the descendants of Esau" [Finley:312].

<sup>6</sup> [T]he initial onslaughts upon Edom were due to a coalition of Arab tribes, led doubtless by Qedar, whose king Geshem was to be one of Nehemiah's adversaries c. 440 B.C. [Allen:131].

<sup>7</sup> During the Maccabean period John Hyrcanus subdued them, imposing upon the Edomites (Idumaeans) Jewish law and circumcision. Julius Caesar appointed Antipater, an Idumaeon, procurator of Judea in 47 B.C.; and Herod, his son, became king of Judea in 37 B.C. The Idumaeans joined in the rebellion against Roman domination in A.D. 70 and suffered the fate of the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. From this time, the Edomites disappear from history [Freeman:142].

2. The final judgment of Edom occurs in conjunction with the coming judgment of the nations of the world because of their hostility toward God's purposes for the earth through His chosen people Israel.
  - a) Although Esau (who is Edom) was the brother of Jacob (who is Israel), his descendants steadfastly refused to accept God's sovereign choice, blessing, and destiny for Israel.
  - b) Edom, then, represents those nations which are out-of-step with what God is doing in history and either willingly or ignorantly opposing His will.<sup>8</sup>
  - c) As goes Edom, so go the nations of the world in their rejection of God's choice of Israel and her divine promises.<sup>9</sup>
  - d) The eventual judgment of all nations by God in the final "Day of the Lord" – which we know as "The Great Tribulation," is set forth in the latter portion of the book (Oba. 1:15-21).

C. Having discussed the background of the events connected with the book, we now return to consider the passage before us.

## VI. Exposition

### A. Verse 1

1. The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom . . .
  - a) Why was the message given to Obadiah in a *vision*?
  - b) Because the divine perspective often differs from what can be seen in the present.
  - c) At the time of Obadiah's vision, Jerusalem lay in ruins and the sons of Esau's brother, Jacob, had been judged by God and taken captive to Babylon.
  - d) From a *human* perspective Jacob was down and out while Esau remained safe and secure in his mountain hideaway.
  - e) The same may be said at any given point in history: "it isn't over yet!" That which appears to us as secular history must be interpreted through the lens of Biblical revelation in order to understand how God is moving the nations of history inexorably toward a final curtain call.
  - f) Nations which appear to dominate regional or world affairs in one period of history are often found to be of little consequence in the next. Their longevity on the stage

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"Edom . . . stands as a type of all those who oppose the purposes of the Lord. This is made plain by the shift in perspective at vv. 15-21, from Edom alone to Edom and all the nations. . . . Whatever Obadiah says about Edom applies equally to any nation that sets itself against the Lord and His people." [Finley:309].

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Edom will come to represent "God's judgment against the Gentiles to its fullest extent" [Finley:311].

of history is determined by God's larger purposes and their obedience to the light which they are given.

- g) What the Lord God was to say through Obadiah was contrary to how things appeared at the time. Yet behind the scenes, God's sure declaration to Rebecca, Isaac, and other prophets concerning the fate of Esau were working themselves out.
  - (1) God had told Rebecca in Genesis 25:23:  
"Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And *the older* [Esau] *shall serve the younger* [Jacob who is Israel]."
  - (2) God had prophesied through Jacob's father Isaac in Genesis 27:  
"Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. *Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you.*"
  - (3) Isaac had also prophesied over Esau:  
"*you shall serve your brother . . .*"
  - (4) We must stand in faith during the period of delay between the predictions made in the Word of God and their fulfillment if we are to effectively represent God.
  - (5) Here, Obadiah describes the judgment of Edom at a time when his words seemed completely out-of-step with the historic reality.
- 2. 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"
  - a) Obadiah declares that those who hear from the Lord have become aware that the tide of Edom's fortune is about to turn.
  - b) A messenger has been sent among the nations to incite them to rise up against Edom to accomplish God's judgment.
    - (1) God's use of different nations to accomplish His judgment is a frequent theme in Scripture.<sup>10</sup>
    - (2) Such nations are typically unaware of the role they are serving in the sovereign plan of God. They see themselves as acting independently and by their own motives.
    - (3) The messenger that God would send to instigate the attack of Edom need not be a human agent. Most often the messenger is found to be a spiritual influence originating from God.
    - (4) God's ability to motivate kings and nations to accomplish His will is irresistibly compelling.

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Concerning God's use of nations for judgment see Deu. 28:33,36-37,49-52; Jdg. 2:14, 3:8,12; 4:1-2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1; 1K. 11:14,23; 2K. 15:37, 18:11-12, 21:13,21; 24:2; 1Chr. 5:26; 2Chr. 12:2-5; 21:16-18; 24:23-24; 28:5; 33:11; 36:17; Ne. 9:30,37; Isa. 5:26; 10:5; Jer. 4:7,16; 5:14; 6:22-24; 8:16; 10:22; 25:9; Eze. 11:9-10; Joel 2:11,25; Amos 6:14.



- (a) Concerning Gog of the land of Magog, God says in Ezekiel 38:  
"I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company [with] bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. . . . On that day it shall come to pass [that] *thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan . . .*"
- (b) Pharaoh made an "independent" decision to pursue Israel which led to his burial in the Red Sea. Yet it was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 14:4).
- (c) Joel informs us, in chapter 3 of his book, how the nations of the world will one day "decide" to gather in the Valley of Jehoshaphat—but they will in fact be led there by God (Joel 3:9-13).
- (d) We know this because John informs us in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Revelation of the means by which the nations of the world will be gathered to do battle against God: they will be unknowingly influenced, even deceived, by unclean spirits (Rev. 16:13-14).
- (5) In a similar way, the Arab nations which would descend upon Edom almost certainly had no understanding that they were acting as God's agents in fulfilling Biblical prophecy.

#### B. Verse 2

1. I will make you small among the nations: You shall be despised.

- a) Here we see the law of retribution. To the degree Edom had exalted herself she would be debased. Since she had despised Israel, she herself would be despised.
  - (1) One reason that Edom would be despised is because she had brought a curse on herself in her opposition to Jacob. God had said through Isaac in Genesis 27: "Cursed [be] everyone who curses you [Jacob], and blessed [be] those who bless you!"
  - (2) Esau, as patriarch of Edom, had intimate knowledge of the blessing God had bestowed upon his brother Jacob. Of all people, the Edomites should have known better than to oppose those chosen by God.
    - (a) To whom much (light) is given, much is required.
    - (b) Because he was Jacob's brother, Esau is judged especially harshly in his treatment of his brother. Thus, Edom's opposition and ongoing hatred of Israel brings about her own curse.

#### C. Verse 3

1. The pride of your heart has deceived you . . .

- a) Here is the "power of pride" at work: the power of pride is its *ability to deceive*.

2. Pride dangerously distorts the perception of the prideful.

- a) Proverbs 16:18 states:  
Pride [goes] before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.
  - b) The destruction and fall which follow after pride are brought about, in large part, by the self-deception which attends the prideful.
    - (1) It is the one sin most unlikely to be detected by its practitioner.
    - (2) As one man observed, "Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the one who has it."<sup>11</sup>
  - c) Perhaps the ultimate example of the deceiving nature of pride upon the prideful is shown in the temptation of Jesus by Satan. Satan, a mere angel, urges God incarnate to worship him. Think of it: a creature—part of the creation—asks the Creator for His worship. This perverse distortion of reality is a sober illustration of depth of madness possible when great intellect swells with pride.
3. 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?'
- a) Edom's geographical inaccessibility contributed to her pride—she had come to view herself as beyond the reach of attackers.
  - b) The region of Edom<sup>12</sup> was difficult to access and provided numerous hiding places and strongholds.
    - (1) "Edom was located south of the Dead Sea, being bounded on the north by the Wadi Zered. The other borders are uncertain, but the country did encompass much of the rugged terrain between the deep Arabah depression on the west, the desert on the east, and the Gulf of Aqaba on the south. According to Yohanan Aharoni: 'It is a difficult area, not easily accessible, and its many crevices and natural strongholds provide excellent places of refuge for the population in time of emergency.' " [Finley:314].
    - (2) Edom occupied an area with "a granite [mountain] range, from fifteen to twenty miles in width, running north and south, with steep cliffs, as much as two thousand feet in height" [Unger:1817].
    - (3) The phrase, "Clefts of the rock," hints at the geographical inaccessibility of Edom in that the word for "rock, is also the name of the capital city, Sela."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Uncle" Bud Robinson [Morgan:633].

<sup>12</sup> Formerly inhabited by the Horites, the sons of Seir (Gen. 36:20-30), which the Edomites dispossessed (Deu. 2:12,22).

<sup>13</sup> Previously this had been identified with modern Petra (which also means "rock" in Greek), but more recent archaeological research places it farther to the north at the modern village of Sela, about two and a half miles northwest of Bozrah [Finley:315].

- c) Is it possible to read past this passage without considering the significant parallels between Edom in Obadiah's day and our own nation today?
- (1) Like Edom, we consider ourselves to be a great nation.
  - (2) Like Edom, we exalt in our own pride.
  - (3) Like Edom, we consider ourselves to be militarily superior to the dangers imposed by other nations.
  - (4) Like Edom, we are blind to our developing spiritual, moral, and now economic bankruptcy.
  - (5) Like Edom, the understanding of our wise men has become foolishness.
  - (6) Like Edom, we have had great light concerning the Biblical role of Israel in the plan of God.
  - (7) Most fearfully, like Edom—who should have known better—we are faltering in our support for God's chosen nation. As the Biblical foundation of our nation continues to erode it is likely we will find ourselves among the "Edoms" of the world—the ignorant gentile nations which ultimately turn against Israel and are among those opposed to God's work in history.
- d) The realization of our own dangerous predicament in light of the judgment of Edom is perhaps the most valuable lesson we can take away from our time today.

D. Verse 4

1. "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.
  - a) In a similar way in which Satan has lost perspective that he is but a mere creature, Edom's pride caused here to trust in her own geographical resources and abilities.
  - b) God uses hyperbole—literary exaggeration for emphasis—to remind Edom that there can be no escape from His judgment.
  - c) Even if the height of her rocky crags and fortresses extended to the *stars* it would be of no avail. For all points of the universe are equally accessible to God's hand of judgment.
  - d) A nation might have the best aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, encryption technology, and supercomputers—all to no avail when the hand of God intervenes to bring judgment.
2. There is no escape from divine chastisement, as Amos relates so well (Amos 9:2-4, concerning Israel):  
"Though they dig into hell, From there my hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, From there I will bring them down; And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, From there I will search and take them; Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;

Though they go into captivity before their enemies, From there I will command the sword, And it shall slay them. I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

3. In a parallel passage, Jeremiah relates that the "eagle" of Edom will prove to be no match for the eagle of God (Jeremiah 49:22):  
"Behold, He (God) shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread His wings over Bozrah; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs."

## VII. Summary

- A. This short passage in a little-known book of the minor prophets has much to teach us:
  1. God holds nations responsible for their treatment of His elect. No matter whether it appears otherwise, He will eventually intervene to bring justice upon those who mistreat His chosen ones:
    - a) Be they the descendants of Jacob, the nation Israel.
    - b) Be they the sons of Abraham by faith, born-again Christians.
  2. Pride and independence from God lead to blindness and eventually, the judgment of God.
    - a) All that we have is a blessing from God. All our capabilities and talents are God-given. When we begin to trust in our abilities and ignore their source, we are on the road to deception . . . a deception which will certify our own downfall.
    - b) The great danger of this deception is the blindness which attends it. The imminent fall of the prideful is not apparent until after-the-fact because of the inability to see how things *really are* at the time of danger.
    - c) In my view, this is where our own country is today—wandering blindly at the edge of a precipice while continually boasting of our power, the "power of pride." We've turned the Biblical teaching concerning pride on its head and now endorse pride as a virtue.
    - d) Meanwhile, a true Biblical virtue, *humility*, remains in desperately short supply.

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