



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Obadiah 1:1-9

"The Prophet of Edom's Doom"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our subject for tonight is Obadiah, "The Prophet of Edom's Doom." And so I'd like for you to turn to the book in the Old Testament. It is, as you probably all ready know, the shortest of the books of the Old Testament. It is one of the minor prophet of the minor prophets no doubt. Obadiah is a name that means "the servant of Jehovah" or "the servant of Yah". And in order to make it confusing there are about twelve other people in the Old Testament who have the name Obadiah. So I guess that was the Johnson of the Old Testament, or the Smith, or something like that. [Laughter]

We know very little of Obadiah. The only thing that we really know about him is that which we may imagine and infer from this brief prophecy of twenty-one verses. He has been called by one Bible expositors, "The prophet of poetic justice." And I think that it is true that as you read the prophecy of Obadiah you get the impression that the word of God as it was for Jeremiah was for him a hammer that breaketh in pieces the objects against which it was directed. He had a great concern, a great burden, and he is a prophet of diving judgment.

There is really a debate over the value of this book and probably in your first reading of this book you have wondered about the value of it yourself. One well known student of it has said, "Brevity is not always the soul of wit for Obadiah was the briefest of

prophets yet he uttered no sentence which is cherished." So what he has said is that Obadiah really has written a very brief prophecy and it contains nothing. On the other hand, someone else has said, "Among all the prophets he is the briefest in number of words. In the grace of mysteries he is their equal." Of course, as we approach the word of God we immediately think of the words of Scripture which say, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction and righteousness that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished, completely fitted out for every good work." And so if we do believe that the Bible is the word of God then we approach this book as a book inspired of God and therefore profitable to us. And we may expect to find some of the prophet I'm sure if we study it just a little bit.

Now, I think it is always helpful to know the date at which a book was written and the circumstances out of which it arose. But fortunately for us it's not always necessary to understand the major message of the book. And in the case of Obadiah, it's very difficult to be sure of the historical situation out of which this book arose. Most of the students of Obadiah have said that the prophet either wrote around 587 B.C. when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Chaldeans, or it was written about three hundred years before that around 850 B.C. when Jerusalem was sacked in the reign of Jehoram.

Now, if you notice as you look at the minor prophets they begin with Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah. So Obadiah stands toward the earlier in the list of the prophets and originally this list was designed to represent a chronology of these minor prophets. So if that is true in the case of Obadiah then we would probably on the basis of that I think probably that earlier date of around 850 B.C. during the reign of Jehoram would be the date of this prophecy. And furthermore, if we look at the imperatives of verses 10 through 14, I'm looking by the way at the New American Standard Bible in the Authorized Version, they're not imperatives, the verbs of these verses. But if you look at these

imperatives of verse 10 through 14 and take them as references to the future then it is also probable that this book was written very early. But I say fortunately, we do not depend upon the date for a full understanding of this prophecy. I'm so glad that's true.

You often hear people say when they're teaching the word of God, now, it's important, in fact some even go so far as to brashly suggest it's essential to understand this prophecy or this book that we know the date of it. But unfortunately, there are many many sections of the word of God for which we do not know the date. And fortunately, God has not limited his meaning to the date. Many of the Psalms, for example, we don't know the circumstances in which they were written. It would help if we did, perhaps, but fortunately the meaning is not dependent on something like that. We don't all have to be New Testament and Old Testament critical scholars in order to understand the major messages of the word of God. Now, that's very comforting. Some of you don't seem to be comforted by that at all. Perhaps you're all New Testament and Old Testament critical scholars and so it doesn't mean anything to you. But it does to me and I'm glad that I don't have to know every fact about the background of these books to profit from them.

Well now let's look at our book, the prophet of Edom's doom, and in the first nine verses the prophet sets forth in prophecy form the ruin of the nation of Edom. Now, he is a prophet with an overmastering concern and this overmastering concern is, I think, illustrated by the brevity with which he gets to the point. And it is a prophecy directed against the nation Edom which was a historical enemy of Israel though related to Israel as we shall see in just a moment.

Now, we begin with the first verse,

"The vision of Obadiah, Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom -- we have heard a report from the Lord and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, Arise and let us go against her for battle. Behold, I will make you small among the nations. You are greatly despised. The arrogance of you heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts

of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, Who will bring me down to earth? Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord. If thieves come to you, if robbers by night, oh how you will be ruined. Would they not steal only until they had enough? If great gatherers came to you would they not leave some gleanings? (He means, of course, that's what they would do, but I'm not going to even do that.) Oh, how Esau will be ransacked and his hidden treasures searched out. All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border (It was incidentally the custom of people with whom the nations had alliances when they visited those people for consultations. It was the custom for those whom they were visiting to go back with them to the borders of the nations from which they had come, and that's what is eluded to here.) All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border and the men at peace with you will deceive you and over power you. They who eat your bread will set an ambush for you. There is no understanding in him. "Will I not on that day?" declares the Lord. Destroy wise men from Edom and understanding from the mountain of Esau, then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman, (That's a city in Edom.) in order that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter."

These opening verses introduce the theme, verses 1 through 3. And as you can see right in the beginning this is a divine speech of doom. Now, it's directed against Edom and I think we need to understand what Edom refers to in order to understand the force of this prophecy. When you take your Old Testament and turn back to Genesis chapter 36 and verse 1, Genesis chapter 36 and verse 1. Now, in the first verse of Genesis chapter 36 we read, "Now, these are the records of the generations of Esau." Now, notice that is Edom. So Edom is a name for Esau and Edom the land is the place where the descendants of Esau lived. Now, of course, the mention of Esau to any student of the word of God brings up again the history of Jacob and Esau, and we think immediately of,

"Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated," showing that there is such a thing as the distinguishing love of God. And we think of the origin of Jacob and Esau in Genesis chapter 25, and their birth, and the prophecy the elder should serve the younger. And all that arose out of the relationship that Esau and Jacob have, we think immediately, too, of the time when Esau came in famished and when Jacob was cooking his pottage because he was so hungry he sold the birthright to Jacob.

Now, Jacob is not a very lovely character, of course. Jacob is a very disagreeable kind of character. And Edom was the kind of man that probably would have appealed to us. He probably would have played for the Dallas Cowboys, and we probably would have been much impressed with him because he was a man of the open air, whereas Jacob was a kind of man who liked to stay around the house. But there was one great difference between Jacob and Esau, Jacob was a man of faith and he was a man in process of being sanctified. And he hadn't gone very far along the road, that's true. [Laughter] And Esau was a man who appealed to the men of the world and the men of the flesh, but he didn't have any faith and he bartered away his birthright which meant nothing to him for some present gain to eat some of that Lentil pottage. And then later on remember when Jacob had ultimately to pass through Esau's country. They had a kind of agreed peace but there was no real love between the two.

And finally, when the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt remember they came to the land of Edom to pass through the land of Edom. The story is told in Numbers chapter 20, "And they came up to the borders of Edom and asked for permission to go through. Now, mind you they were relatives of them because the children of Israel are related to the Edomeans. They are the descendants of Esau and the others are the descendants of Jacob, the twin brothers. And remember the king of Edom would not let them go through. Moses pled with them. They said, "No, you will not be able to go through." And God had some very strong words to say about Edom. And the rest of the Old Testament is a history of the struggle between the men of the spirit who are the

descendants of Jacob and the men of the flesh who are the descendants of Edom. And as you probably know we come into the New Testament and the struggle is still going on because King Herod was an Edomean. And Herod [unintelligible] so that the struggle continues on into the New Testament when we read here then, "Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom," there is a great deal of history in the past and a great deal of history in the future. Esau and Esau's kingdom is in view.

"Thus says the Lord God," now you know when we look at the Bible we think the Bible is the inspired word of God. And if somebody says to us, "Why is the Bible the inspired word of God?" One of the first things that we say is, and incidentally one of the first things we ought to say is, "The first reason for believing that the Bible is the inspired word of God is that it claims to be the inspired word of God." Now, the man of the world says, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You say the Bible is inspired because it claims to be inspired. Now, that's no evidence. That's no proof." Well, now wait a minute yourself. Suppose the Bible did not claim to be inspired. Well then we would be very very careful about affirming its inspiration if it didn't claim it.

It's true a man may lie and therefore we cannot say this is the only reason that we believe the Bible is the word of God. But when we put a man on a witness stand he may be a liar, that's true, but he also may tell the truth. And so the Bible is either the word of God or it is not. It claims to be the word of God twenty four hundred times plus, someone has said. We have expressions like, "Thus saith the Lord," or, "It stand written," or things like this. Now, these are important evidences for the inspiration of Holy Scripture. And so we look at the Scriptures and we say it is either what it says it is or it is not what it says it is. And when we look at the Bible and we see the kind of book the Bible is, which condemns falsehood and gives us the purist form of ethics that the world has ever seen, even its enemies acknowledge that. Then if the Bible is not the word of God and yet it thousands of times claims to be and presents this magnificent system of

ethics then we have an internal contradiction that we could not possibly explain. How could liars produce a book like the Bible?

Now, this is only the first reason for believing that the Bible is the word of God, but it is an important thing. "Thus saith the Lord God," this is patently a claim that what this book contains is the mind of God. Now, that I think is important. He says this is concerning Edom. We've all ready said something about this. Now, Edom was the land that was south of the land of Palestine. Edom means red, incidentally, and Esau's name was red. Whether it was red because he had red skin or red hair, or whether it was red because the pottage was red, or whether it was called Edom because of the red sandstone cliff that are characteristic of that southern part of the land of Palestine we do not know. We know that Esau, whose name was red, ultimately settled in Mount Seir and in that area is the land of Edom.

Now, we read on and we read, "We have heard a report from the Lord and an envoy has been sent the nations saying, Arise and let us go against her for battle. Behold, I will make you small among the nations. You are greatly despised. The arrogance of you heart has deceived you." And then he says in the second line of verse 3, "You who live in the clefts of the rock." Now, that's an interesting statement because today we have rediscovered the city of Petra. Now, Petra is a very famous place now. It has been called in a poem by John William Bergen, known for his works on texture criticism, "The rose red city half as old as time". And one of the remarkable discoveries of archeology has been the discovery of the great temple in the city Petra which was the capital city of Edom and also the discovery of the vilest forms of worship that characterized that land. And here they are described as those who live in the clefts of the rocks. The cliff dwellers were characteristic of that part of the land. Some of you in this room, I know, have been there and you have seen it for yourself.

The Lord goes on to say, "Who say in your heart, Who will bring me down to earth?" They are cliff dwellers and they are full of pride and they think because of the

way they dwell that no one can penetrate their impenetrable fortress. And incidentally, when it is said of them that they dwell in the clefts of the rock and they say in their hearts, "Who will bring me down to earth?" it reminds us, does it not, of those things that are said of Lucifer in Isaiah chapter 14. In the fourteenth chapter of that prophecy remember Isaiah writing about the king of Babylon says,

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn. You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations, but you said in heart, I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God and I will sit on the Mount of Assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high. Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Chio [ph] to the recesses of the pit"

I don't like those words too well that they have used to describe the king of Babylon. I think the Authorized Version is much more impressive in its rendering. But nevertheless, it is a picture of the king of Babylon who himself is a type of satan, and the same kind of language is used here. So you see that in the Old Testament we have a kind of progression from some of the enemies of Jerusalem like Babylon, and then the individual enemies like Esau and their descendants, and the struggle that goes on between the plans and purposes of God and the people of God and the plans of satan and the people who belong to satan. We are truly involved in a warfare between heaven and earth, and here we have again a manifestation of it.

Now, in verses 4 through 9 there is described the catastrophe that is to come. I want you just to notice a couple of things before we go on. "Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord." And then in the sixth verses he says, "Oh, how Esau will be ransacked and his treasures searched out."

What is the trouble with Esau and what was the trouble with his descendants. Well, they have forgotten the doctrine of God. And what is the doctrine of God? Well, the doctrine of God includes the doctrine of his being and his attributes. What are some of the attributes of God? Well, one of the attributes of God is his omnipresence, that is that he is everywhere. So how foolish it is for a nation, how foolish it is for a people to say, "I'm going to have my nest among the stars and no one will be able to touch me here." You have forgotten the omnipresence of God. If you think for one moment that you can live in such a way as to escape the judgment of God then you have forgotten the doctrine of God. If you think for one moment that you can think things that God does not know about, you have again forgotten the doctrine of God. You have forgotten his omniscience. So how foolish it is for anyone to think that he can escape the eye of God, that he can escape the principles of the divine dealing with men. How foolish it is to think that we can get away with anything. We cannot.

It's good to remember those fundamental principles of the doctrine of God, the kind of God he is. So that was their real trouble, they had forgotten the doctrine of God. Men can keep a good eye on you, how much more the Lord? Richard Voombrought in his story of how he was held captive in Romania says that he was put in a cell and kept on a constant surveillance. At night they would take the bed out of the cell. The only thing he had was just a chair to sit on. He said he would sometimes sleep maybe thirty or forty minutes. And I think he said it was about every thirty minutes the lock in the door would click just to keep him awake. And when it clicked an eye from the guard would appear in the keyhole to look at him, and if he saw that he was sleeping he would open the door and come in and shake him awake in order that he not sleep. Now, that's what men can do to keep the attention of men. How much more the Lord? You think we can escape his divine judgment? How foolish it is to think that we can get away with anything. But our God is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, self-existent, all of those

other things that mark him out as a super human being. We cannot escape anything. Every flitting thought is well known by God.

Well now let's turn to the reason for this terrible ruin that is going to come to Edom. Why are they going to be destroyed as they are? Verse 10 is the topic sentence for this section,

"Because of violence to your brother Jacob," isn't that interesting? See the Lord remembers these relationships. Jacob and Esau, twin brothers, and their history is entwined together. It is as late as Matthew remember, I'm sorry as late as Malachi remember. The text or Scripture will say, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." Just look at the history. You've asked me do I really love you? Look at the history of Edom. Look at the history of Jacob. You'll see I've loved you and you'll see that Edom or Esau was not in my plan. Well this is the theme of verses 10 through 14. The reason that Edom faces ruin and catastrophe is because of the violence that they have done to their brethren Jacob.

Now, the attitude to Israel is set forth in verse 10 through 14 and let me just read these verses,

"Because of violence to your brother Jacob you will be covered with shame and you will be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem you too were as one of them. You didn't help your brother, you stood off like the enemies. Do not gloat over your brother's day (Now, he's looking down into the future, you see, and looking on two hundred and fifty years or so later at the destruction of Jerusalem.) Do not gloat over you brother's day, the day of his misfortune. Do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction. Yes, do not boast in the day of their distress. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over

their calamity in the day of their disaster and do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster, and do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives. And do not imprison their survivors on the day of their distress."

Most of these things they did do at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and also at other times in the history of the nation Israel. Now, we could if we had the time stop here and just notice the anatomy of the damning sins of Edom because they're all here. He begins with lust and then he moves to malice, he speaks of pride, "Yes, do not boast," in the twelfth verse, "in the day of their distress." Incidentally, the Hebrew says, "Don't make your mouth great," that is don't play the part of one who has a big mouth. Don't boast. Pride then presumption, greed, aggression, it's no wonder that in Ezekiel chapter 35 the prophet there speaks of the perpetual hatred of the Lord for Edom. Now, after this description of what is of the reason for their ruin, their attitude toward Israel, in verse 15 and 16 the prophet turns to the future and the ray of vision which has to do with Edom now broadens out to include all the nations. Let's read verses 15 and 16,

"For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done it will be done to you, your dealings will return on your own head because just as you drank on my holy mountain all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and become as if they had never existed."

He describes them as having one great big time of carousel and then destruction is to come. But notice now we have the word the day of a term, "the day of the Lord". What does the Bible mean when it refers to "the day of the Lord"? "For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations," now there have been a number of different studies done on the day of the Lord and of course there are differences of opinion over what does the term the day of the Lord mean. But I think that most would agree that the term

the day of the Lord includes the event that surround the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. The time of the climax of the judgment of the tribulation period in the future, the time of the Second Advent, then the time of the kingdom that follows the Second Advent, the kingdom of one thousand years upon the earth, the millennium, and the events that immediately follow the kingdom period, the final uprising described in Revelation chapter 20, and the inception of the new heavens and the new earth. And those expressions of the Old Testament "the day of the Lord" and then "in that day" you will find all of those things concluded. So the day of the Lord is a future day of judgment and also kingdom that ultimately issues in the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, he says the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. Well, of course, that would lead us to ask the question, "Well, now what a minute, the day of the Lord has not come yet. It's been hundreds of years since the prophet Obadiah prophesied and not only has it been hundreds of years but we don't have anything in the immediate future to indicate that the day of the Lord is nigh at hand. The catching up of the church has not even taken place yet, so how can he write near? Was he wrong? Did the prophet speak not unto inspiration when he said the day of the Lord is near? What do we mean when we say near in the sense of the prophetic word?" Well, probably we mean something like imminent; that is, it may come at any moment. We don't mean it must come at any moment. That's evident from the Biblical teaching in the Old Testament as we see here and also in the New Testament. So the term really means something like it is imminent, it may come. Now, it so happens we know that the day of the Lord has not come and it's been a long time.

One of the students of the Book of Obadiah, a very good student has said, "Now, when we say that a prophetic event is imminent just what do we mean?" The following illustration is helpful. With a little care one may balance a heavy book on the edge of a table. There the book remains poised. Let the room remain absolutely quiet and the book may stay there indefinitely yet at any moment a slight jolt may cause it to fall. No

one can predict the precise instance of its drop for its fall is imminent. So it is with the next event in the prophetic schedule. He says, "The rapture may come in our day or it may linger far beyond our time. Not itself, the day of the Lord, it is the vestibule of that day. Once it occurs the time of judgment by which Obadiah and other prophets so unitedly speak will surely begin." Well at least we can say this, that what he means when he says that the day of the Lord is near is that it is imminent. It may come. Now, the facts of history have shown us that it has been, it is now still a future event.

Well, let's turn to the final section which is verse 17 through verse 21 and the restoration of Jacob, "But," verse 17, isn't it interesting in the Bible how so many places begin with a "but" and then unfolds God's wonderful dealings with us? We have many of these instances in the New Testament particularly. "But," or nevertheless and we are introduced to the divine side of catastrophe and difficulty. In the Book of Ephesians one occurs to my mind in the second chapter, and this kind of "but" is the kind of "but" that we have here. In Ephesians chapter 2 the Apostle Paul writes, "Therefore remember that formally you, the gentiles in the flesh, you were called uncircumcision by the so called circumcision which is performed in the flesh by human hands, remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus you who formally were far off have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ." So "but" or "but now" and we are introduced to one of the adversities of God, and these adversities of God are usually very significant. And this one is significant here, "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape and it will be holy."

Now, here we have the beginning of Obadiah's prophecy of the Messianic kingdom. The first thing that he states is that there will be on Mount Zion those who escape. In other words, the day of the Lord is coming but nevertheless the day of the Lord is not going to touch a significant group of people and they shall reach Mount Zion in safety. He speaks of the remnant that shall come through the time of the great

tribulation and shall be given the kingdom promised in the Old Testament, so there is deliverance. Then he states in verse 17, "and it will be holy," that is Mount Zion will be holy. This is possibly rendered, "and there will be sanctuary there," but holiness is the idea.

Now, we have to read the newspapers constantly and one of the things that our politicians keep speaking about is peace. My goodness, how sick do we really get listening to our prophetic politicians telling us how they're going to bring peace on earth. And surely the most gullible man in the world is a man who believes one of those things that they say. "We're now going to have peace. We're going to have peace." Now, we know from the study of Scripture that there is no peace apart from the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And another thing we can say since the stress here is on holiness, there is no peace table at which we shall ever sit that means permanent peace at which the Lord Jesus Christ and his truth is not present as well. There can be no peace if there is no holiness in this world. No peace. So surely Christians should not believe these false prophecies of our politicians. I must say I evidently I am very old because I am very tired of the language of our politicians. "And it shall be holy," and I don't see any evidence of great movements of holiness in the Democratic Party or in the Republican Party or in any of the other parties today.

Now he says, "And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions." Now, we said at the beginning of this message that one of the students of Obadiah said, remember, that in this prophecy of Obadiah he uttered no sentence which is cherished. Now, I challenge that because I don't think there is any more beautiful expression than this, "And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions." What does that mean? Well, that means they will appropriate. They will enter into the personal experience of the things that are theirs through holy Scripture. What more beautiful expression than that? And what a great practical application it has to possess our possessions. As Christians that, of course, is the aim and motivation of the Christian life, to possess the possessions that we

have in the Lord Jesus. It is the secret of the fruitful Christian life to possess our possessions. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. The whole story of our sanctification is the experience of possessing these possession that our by virtue of that which Jesus Christ has done for us. This speaks of the sufficiency of the Lord for Israel in the day of their kingdom.

Now, when we read here that the house of Jacob will possess their possessions we are not to understand by this that the house of Jacob is reference to the Church of Jesus Christ. I made an application of that expression, "possess their possessions," but the text of Scripture says the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. Now, the house of Jacob is not the Christian Church. The house of Jacob is the nation Israel. The reference is to the nation Israel to whom the great promises of the Old Testament were made. It's the house of Jacob that shall possess the possessions. We don't read the Bible correctly if we look at, "the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions," and read the church shall have her blessings. We may make an application because God deals with Israel in a similar way as that way with which he deals with us. But it's the house of Jacob that shall possess their possessions. What are their possessions? Well, their possession include the land, include a throne, include a worldwide kingdom among other things. So they shall possess them. They shall have their land. They shall have their kingdom. They shall have their throne. David shall sit upon the throne. Our Lord Jesus is David's greater son.

Robert Lewis Stevenson was not known for his biblical knowledge but in his latter years he studied the Scriptures and became a rather unusual student of the word of God. And he made a very interesting statement which has been recorded by a missionary who was on one of the islands in the Pacific with Mr. Stevenson in his last days. He said this, "I cannot understand how you theologians and preachers can apply to the church, or multiplicity of churches, Scripture promises which in their plain meaning apply to God's chosen people, Israel and to Palestine and which consequently must be still future. The

prophetic books are full of teachings, which if they are interpreted literally, would be inspiring in a magnificent assurance of a great and glorious future. But which, as they spiritualized, become farcical as applied to the church. They are a comedy. So when we read here, "On Mount Zion there will be those who escape. It will be holy. The house of Jacob will possess their possessions," we are to understand this as a great and glorious prophecy of Israel and her great future.

Fred Glabine and his book on Obadiah has said that this prophecy of possessing one's possessions reminds him of an experience that he had in the Catskill Mountains where he went for a summer vacation. He said as he was on in one little town, that was rather insignificant town, as he traveled back and forth on one of the roads he was impressed with a beautiful little house which he saw. He said it had just been redone and it was very beautiful and very attractive, and as he kept going back and forth on the road that passed by he noticed it day after day. But then he began to notice that there were a couple of strange things about it. He said he looked at the front door, it was always shut and the shades or blinds on the front door were clothes. And then he looked at the windows and they were all closed. The whole house looked as if it were closed up. So he said he began to inquire about it in the little village and he discovered that the people who had done over the house, or built the house, did live in the house but they were so proud of their house that they didn't want the sunlight to come in because the sunlight would do damage to the floors which had been just recently fixed.

And furthermore, if people came through the front door they would dirty up the floors and dirty up the house. And even the man who built the house had to go in the back door and so did his wife, and the facts were that they spent all of their time in the kitchen because they didn't want to disturb the rest of the house. In other words, they didn't use their house at all they just admired it. That's the way a lot of people are with their Bible doctrine. They admired Bible doctrine. They admire the beauties of the word of God. They admire the beauties of the doctrine of the atonement. They admire the

beauties of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the local church, all of the other doctrines of the word of God. They just admire them. They don't appropriate them. I'm afraid a lot of us are like that living in the kitchen with all these great possessions in the rest of the house.

Now then, he goes on and we must close, I'm almost getting in the habit of finishing at 8:15. That would be bad. [Laughter]

"Then the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau will be a stubble and they will set them on fire and consume them so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau for the Lord has spoken. Then those of the Negeb (that's of the south country) will possess the mountain of Esau."

Those of the Chafila (the Philistine Plain) also they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria and Benjamin will possess Gilead."

Isn't it interesting that God's solution of the Palestinian problem is given right here in the word of God. And the striking thing about it is that Israel's going to get it all. They're getting Edom's territory here. Now, I know that if I were one of those Edomites I might not like this, but nevertheless that's what God says. And he concludes in verses 20 and 21, "And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath and the exiles of Jerusalem which in Sepharad will possess the city of the Negeb. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion.

Now, the plural here is probably a reference locally to the individual deliverers, but ultimately is a reference to the Lord Jesus and the host of those who shall rule and reign with him. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau and the kingdom will be the Lord's. So the ultimate issue of Esau and his unbelief is the Herods. The ultimate issue of Jacob and his faith is the coming Messiah the Lord Jesus and the victory lies with the line of those who belong to the promise of God.

Well, the lessons that come to use from this prophecy of Obadiah include the great sin of pride, for that was the sin that led to the downfall of Esau and Esau's descendants. You know, we don't really understand how great pride is as a sin do we? Let me give you an illustration. Suppose I were to say to you concerning some mutual friend, "He's really a great man but he's proud." You probably wouldn't think anything about it. But if I should say to you, "He's really a good man but he's a thief." You'd probably say, "Now, wait a minute. What do you mean? A man cannot at the same time be a good man and a thief, can he?" But the statement, "He's a good man and yet a proud man," we let that by because we don't really realize how great the sin of pride is in the eyes of God, the arrogance of independence of the Lord.

And then, of course, this illustrates the struggle between the flesh and spirit. And finally, I do want to close a little ahead of time, finally we have a beautiful illustration of the faithfulness of the Lord to his promises. Negatively where is Edom today? Edom doesn't exist. Positively Israel shall have their blessings. And the final answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is given us right here in the prophecy of Obadiah. That shall be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus comes at his Second Advent. It's a great thing to be rightly related to him and to know that our future is secure because of that. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this brief prophecy which so beautifully tells forth the faithfulness of Thy word. And we pray Lord that we may bring our own lives under the judgment of holy Scripture. Search out the pride that exist in our hearts. And Lord we ask, too, that Thou wilt enable us to possess our possessions in Jesus Christ for Thy glory. For Jesus' sake. Amen.