

The Hope of Deliverance for God's People

Obadiah 1: 15-21

Ps. Too Teh Hsin

The Edomites were being condemned for the sin of pride and mistreatment towards their brother nation. The Israelites' future looked bleak at that time. Where could they turn to? What future did they have? We are presented with the same questions when we are surrounded by troubles. We look for a hope that can carry us through dark times.

1. Hope of Justice

Sin ruined the perfect world that God had created - there is disease and death and conflict and murder because of sin. We might respond to injustice and sin through revenge and rage, but it is often a recipe for self-destruction. The Edomites descending into violence and pride was a prime example – eventually there was nothing left but judgment (v15) - *'For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.'* This is the judgment day for Edomites. The day of judgment is terrifying for those who are being judged, but a joy for those who see their oppressor being judged. If we are mistreating someone by misusing our power, let's repent before it returns to our own head. Now, the day of the Lord is also found in the two minor prophets Joel and Amos, wherein it is characterized by darkness and gloom. Obadiah gives a different dimension to it, likened to the drunken orgy on God's holy mountain, where people were celebrating evil as if there was no God.

Little did they know that they were about to drink the cup of divine wrath. Trust God to punish injustice as vengeance belongs to God. We need to watch out for any vengeful wrath in our own heart, and we ought not to inflict physical, emotional or reputational harm on someone who did injustice to us. Only a just God can punish injustice without causing more injustice.

2. Hope of Blessings

God reverses the fortune of Israel (v17) by blessing them in 3 ways - *But in Mount Zion there shall be those who **escape**, and it shall be **holy**, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own **possessions**.*

a) As Israelites escaped from earthly enemies, we escaped from sin and death (*Rom 6:23*).

b) Without holiness, we don't see God. Journeying towards holiness is a journey towards sanctification. We lower our pride to allow the Holy Spirit to confront our sins and examine our hearts to turn to God.

c) Israelites reclaimed the land that was lost (v17-20). The Bible promises spiritual treasures to God's children, but are we ready to take possession? (*Romans 8:28, Joshua 1:9, Psalms 23:1*). All things work together for our good, we need not be frightened as He is with us wherever we go, He is our shepherd.

3. Hope of Restoration

God gives his people the hope of full restoration where everything will be

perfect once more. God engineers the events of history for us. Obadiah affirms the Israelites in v20 that God had allocated land for them in the promised land. Jerusalem would be the center of prosperity and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. There is a future kingdom of the Lord for us, a new heaven and a new earth (*Rev 21*), back to paradise, everything restored and no more tears and pain. We must remember that the way we live now is controlled by what we believe about our future. Future glory is greater than our bucket list of worldly items to accomplish. In Christ, we have a greater future, only because Jesus was covered with darkness on the cross so we can have light in the presence of God. In Paul's words, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Let's commit to live transformed lives in Him.