

The Book of Obadiah

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(1992 and 1970 Studies)

The following notes on the Book of Obadiah were compiled from Bible studies led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992 and 1970. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

(Studies led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992 and circa 1970)

Before actually commencing the study, we would like to consider some historical background that is essential for understanding verse 1.

The Book of Obadiah is fourth in the listing of the 12 minor prophets. Generally speaking, the listing is in chronological order with the exception of Obadiah, which stands out like a sore thumb as not fitting the sequence. Although no specific king's reign is mentioned to pinpoint the time setting and Obadiah's relationship to the chronology of the kings, internal evidence in the book helps us to know when Obadiah gave his message, as will be seen.

We think the reason Ezra, who superintended the compilers of the Old Testament, inserted Obadiah after Amos, rather than much further on, is that this book concerns only Edom (or Esau) from beginning to end. Moreover, it seems to be a sequel to the prophecy of Amos, part of which pertains to Edom, and provides more details with regard to that message of rebuke. In the last chapter, Amos 9:12 states, "That they [Israel] may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen [nations], which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this."

Almost all Bible commentators connect Obadiah 1:1-3 with Jeremiah 49:14-16 because the language is nearly identical. "I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD" (Jer. 49:14-16). The question is, Who prophesied first? Did Obadiah get these thoughts from Jeremiah, or vice versa? We feel that Jeremiah, being the major prophet the Lord used for a long period of time, prophesied first. In the comparable starting verses, Jeremiah said "I," whereas Obadiah said "we," speaking belatedly and meaning himself and Jeremiah. Obadiah's message was declared after Jeremiah was off the scene and was down in Egypt. Thus Obadiah was in a position to carry on with the prophecy against Edom.

In Jeremiah 25:1, the prophet wrote, "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon." Jeremiah 1:1-3 tells the period covered by his prophecy: "The words of Jeremiah ... To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month." Josiah reigned for 31 years. Therefore, if Jeremiah began his ministry in the 13th year of that reign, he prophesied for the remaining 18 years. Jeremiah 25:1 states that Jeremiah continued to prophesy in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus far Jeremiah's ministry was $18 + 4 = 22$ years long. At the end of the Book of Jeremiah are clues that the prophet was still on hand in the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. "And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah ... that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison" (Jer. 52:31). The 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity corresponds with the 43rd or 44th year of Nebuchadnezzar. To repeat: Jeremiah prophesied for 22 years up to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned for 45 years. In the 43rd or 44th year of King

Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah was still on hand, and the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity corresponds with Nebuchadnezzar's death because Evil-merodach, the king's oldest son, succeeded to the throne at that time. The first act of Evil-merodach was to show kindness to King Jehoiachin of Israel by releasing him from prison and bringing him up to the king's table.

Thus, to calculate the length of Jeremiah's ministry, we add 22 + 45 for a total of 67 years. Moreover, as the son of a priest, Jeremiah was in the priesthood and would not have started his ministry until age 30 (Jer. 1:1). If 30 years are added to 67, we can conclude that Jeremiah had a long ministry and was at least 97 years old when he died. He was in Israel for much of his ministry, then he went down to Egypt with the vinedressers, and finally he elected to go to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar came to Egypt and killed the vinedressers. In other words, the king spared Jeremiah, and in Babylon the prophet wrote the Book of Lamentations, which tells about the mourning Israelites who were there. In captivity, the Jews were told to sing a song, but their reply was, "How can we sing a song in a foreign land under these circumstances?" (Psa. 137:1-4). Jeremiah was an eyewitness.

The fact that Jeremiah chapter 52 lists the number of captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar each time he invaded Israel shows that the prophet had access to the archives of the king of Babylon. We believe that Jeremiah handed over his records to Daniel because when Daniel prayed at the end of the 70 years, he realized the captivity, or desolation, God had predicted through Jeremiah had been accomplished (Dan. 9:2).

In summary, Obadiah copied Jeremiah, just as Micah had previously copied Isaiah (compare Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3).

Jeremiah 25:9,11 reads, "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them [1] against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and [2] against all these nations round about [Ammon, Moab, Edom, etc.], and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.... And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

The various nations that were involved in the judgment are mentioned in Jeremiah 25:19-26. "Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them." The name *Edom* stands out. Jeremiah had a commission to pronounce a judgment against all of these nations, among whom was Edom. Notice also the last clause: "The king of Sheshach shall drink after them." The king of Sheshach was the king of Babylon, referring to the Chaldean people, who will drink the cup of judgment *after* all of the other nations. Nebuchadnezzar was God's "servant" in punishing the other nations, but in the end, the king of Babylon himself would be punished, that is, after the 70 years were accomplished (Jer. 25:9).

Jeremiah 25:28 reads, "And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink." When God spoke to the various nations through Jeremiah, He told them to *willingly submit* to the king of Babylon. If Judah had obeyed, the land would not have become a desolation. Since *none* of the

nations obeyed, all were captured, with the spared individuals being taken into captivity in Babylon. Some of the peoples were told they could return to their homeland after the 70 years (for example, Moab and Ammon). However, neither the Philistines nor Edom were given this promise because of the antitype as Christendom, which will be utterly destroyed. The prophecy of the Book of Obadiah concerns Edom from start to finish, so that will be the focus.

Incidentally, the fact that the Philistines were not promised a return to their homeland suggests that the Gaza Strip will become part of Israel in the Kingdom. Non-Israelites who live within the borders will be nominal subjects of Israel.

Jeremiah 27:1-3 reads, “In the beginning of the reign of ... [Zedekiah—see verses 3, 12, and 20] the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah.” Note: Some King James margins make the correction “Zedekiah” based on context.

As instructed, Jeremiah made all these yokes, one for each nation. We believe he then proceeded as follows. The kings from all these nations communicated with each other by sending ambassadors, or messengers, with letters and correspondence. For example, if the king of Edom had something to say to the king of Israel, he sent a messenger. When an ambassador came to Israel from a foreign nation, Jeremiah gave him a wooden yoke and a judgment message. Upon returning home, each ambassador told his king that he had been insulted by a strange person in Jerusalem who put a yoke on his neck and uttered a denunciation. By using this technique, Jeremiah ensured that the prophecy against each nation was carried back to the respective king.

Jeremiah kept one wooden yoke on his own neck and tried to persuade the king of Judah to submit to the king of Babylon. The message was, “Put your neck under the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar so that your land will not be spoiled.” Then along came a false prophet, Hananiah, who took the yoke off Jeremiah and smashed it (Jer. 28:1-11). Hananiah called Jeremiah a false prophet and prophesied that within two years, Nebuchadnezzar would restore Jehoiachin and that there would be peace. Jeremiah next made a yoke of brass and said to Hananiah, “Try to break this yoke! Now we will see who is the true prophet. You are going to die this year because you are a false prophet” (Jer. 28:12-17 paraphrase). And Hananiah did die within that year. Now the yoke had become an irrepressible conflict, meaning that the judgment had passed the point of no return. Judah would surely go into Babylonian captivity because Zedekiah would not obey the message. (Zedekiah listened to Jeremiah but would not carry out the instructions.)

The above introduction helps to explain the purpose of the Book of Obadiah and what the prophet’s commission was. Jeremiah was now off the scene, being down in Egypt. Therefore, Obadiah picked up the strain and carried it forth, using part of Jeremiah’s message as well as that which God commissioned him, in a fresh sense, to deliver to the Edomites.

Obad. 1 The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.

The name Obadiah means “Servant of Jah [God].” Not much is known about the prophet, although some clues are in the context. Obadiah had a “vision.”

The Book of Obadiah concerns only Edom. Of the ambassadors who went back to the various nations, one returned to Edom, and Obadiah recognized this fact. Jeremiah, the original prophet, was called “a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5). He was given a commission to prophesy doom to all the surrounding peoples—Ammon, Moab, Edom, Egypt, Tyre, etc.—as well as to the ten tribes, who were already in captivity, and to Judah. Similarly, Paul was commissioned to preach the gospel “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Thus verse 1 refers back to the judgment message given by Jeremiah to the ambassador of Edom. Obadiah would now elaborate on that message.

“We [Jeremiah and Obadiah] have heard a rumour [confidential information] from the LORD.” God originated this information, and He let certain individuals know what He intended to do. Then the trusted individuals, such as Obadiah, transmitted the information to the public. Such confidential information should make us bestir ourselves to righteousness.

“An ambassador is [was actually] sent among the heathen [nations]” with the message “Arise ye, and let us rise up against her [Edom] in battle.” The pronoun “us” refers to the fact that former allies of Edom assisted Nebuchadnezzar in his conquest of Edom. The allies were treacherous, speaking to Edom as friends while, at the same time, plotting Edom’s downfall. The allies were instrumental in capturing all of the inhabitants, for Edom differed from other nations in that the people dwelled in high caves. Consequently, their capture seemed *impossible*, for who would climb up and do battle in all of the caves? Edom’s capture was *retribution* for what had been done to Israel, *God’s people*, in 606 BC. Edom was then Petra (Sela), and both words mean “rock.”

Jealousy was a factor among the allies, who had already been taken captive. Realizing Edom was the last nation to fall because of its inaccessibility, they plotted a strategy, as will be seen.

The antitype of the message “Arise ye, and let us rise up against her [Edom] in battle” is mystic Babylon’s (or Christendom’s) destruction at the end of the age. Other nations will “arise”; that is, they will be stirred up against Christendom and thus fulfill the word of the Lord.

Obad. 2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

Although the thought is expressed in past tense, Edom had not yet been made small. God was saying, “You, Edom, are small in the eyes of the nations that have been taken captive and are under a yoke. They greatly despise you because they are jealous of your freedom.” In other words, the other nations were seeking revenge. Though previously confederate with Edom, they now agreed on the strategy of *feigning* a confederacy against Babylon, whereas they were actually plotting against Edom. Thus these nations were saying, “Let us rise up against Edom” (verse 1 paraphrase). Although involved, the king of Babylon could not go up into the crags and crannies, as subsequent verses will show.

Obad. 3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

“The pride of thine [Edom’s] heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock [of Petra], whose habitation is high.” Petra is entered by a narrow ravine with high cliffs on either side and hence was easy to protect, so the inhabitants felt impregnable. Thus Edom’s pride was based on a feeling of security. The people’s attitude was, “We are up high in these caves. Who will come up here and bring us down to the plain? Who will humble and abase us? Not even the king of Babylon would do such a thing.”

Comment: Verse 3 reminds us of the Adversary, and his masterpiece of deception has been the Roman Catholic Church, a pillar of Christendom.

Reply: The Second Pyramid also comes to mind, as mentioned in Zechariah 4:7, “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” Satan, too, will be brought down in the eyes of others (Isa. 14:13-19). He is likened to the “king of Tyrus [Tyre]” in the Book of Ezekiel, which also speaks of the kingdom of Tyre, making a comparison with the Adversary’s role and his chief instrument, the Papacy. One part of chapter 28 deals with Satan as an individual; the other part pertains to the false Church and its role. Teman is similar with regard to the reputation the Arabians had for wisdom.

Obad. 4 **Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.**

“Though thou [Edom] exalt thyself as the eagle [who flies high and majestically].” From its high vantage point, the eagle can spot all of its enemies yet be out of their reach. Eagles are heavy in weight but have exceptionally strong wings with which they can soar with great ease. They are proud and noble birds in the wild but miserable in captivity.

Not only were the Edomites high in the security of their cave fortresses and strongholds in Petra and thus seemingly inaccessible, but they were high-minded. Edom set her “nest among the stars,” but what was God’s intention? He emphatically declared, “I will bring you down.” In antitype, Papacy is secure in its habitation.

The “eagle” is Papacy, full of pride and boastfulness, calling itself the “rock” upon which Jesus built his Church and claiming that the “gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The boast of the Roman Catholic Church has been, “I sit [as] a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Rev. 18:7).

Obad. 5 **If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?**

Thieves usually take only the most valuable items, but there would be utter destruction with Edom. A thief steals the items he can carry and then leaves, wanting to get out safely. In a vineyard, the grape pickers gather the easy-to-get clusters and leave a portion behind. Under the Law, Israel was required to leave some grapes for the poor to glean (compare Jer. 49:9). But even if the grape pickers were not considering the poor, they could not wait for every grape to ripen, so they picked only the clusters that were convenient. The analogy was that Edom would be stripped bare of its treasures. When judgment was visited, nothing would be left behind; the spoilage would be complete.

Obad. 6 **How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!**

One route from Egypt to Damascus went up the east (or far) side of the Dead Sea through Edom. From their caves and cliffs, the Edomites looked down on the approaching caravans and picked the time and moment to successfully raid them. However, in time, lest they kill the caravan traffic entirely by forcing it to take the other route, the Edomites set up “collectors” in the defiles, or mountain passes, to get money to assure safe passage. Thus, while sitting on their behinds, the Edomites got rich by preying on the caravans.

“How are the [hidden] things of Esau searched out!” (see Jer. 49:10). The accumulated riches were stored high up in the caves. God was saying, “Your wealth will be ferreted out and stolen

so that you will be stripped bare.”

Natural Edom had these literal experiences. Edom was condemned because the people did not help their brother, the Jew, when an attack came but instead gloated over the defeat. The Edomites, who were Arabs, were guilty of duplicity. Therefore, Edom was “searched out.” Petra and Mount Edom in the Judean foothills in the southern Negev are empty and desolate; their treasures are gone.

Q: One of the two major structures carved into the cliffs of Petra is called the “Treasury.” Does that structure date back to this period?

A: No, the Treasury belongs to the later period of the Nabataeans. Previously, the Edomites stored their riches at a higher level. Near the temple, a stairway consisting of little niches in the rock goes way up high, above the Treasury, to the caves where the Edomites secreted their riches.

The buildings of Petra are not occupied today. What was once a proud city is now desolate. Long ago Petra was looted of its material goods. King Nebuchadnezzar began the looting, being able to penetrate Petra’s formidable cliffs.

In the antitype, Edom is a picture of Christendom. Edom is another word for Esau, who, like Christendom, sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, a morsel of food (Gen. 25:29-34). Similarly, the professed Christian world, nominal spiritual Israel, has despised the meat of truth and prophecy and has instead sought temporal rewards, honors, pleasures, rank, and power. At one time, Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, but as time went on, many Christians became nominal, being interested in earthly dominion, riches, and power instead of waiting for the Lord to give Kingdom reign and honor at the Second Advent. Thus Esau is a picture of Christendom, which sold its birthright, and the true Church is pictured as a woman who fled into the wilderness, seeking solace and comfort from the Lord and waiting for his due time (Rev. 12:14).

Papacy sits on the throne of God and dwells in the temple of God (2 Thess. 2:3,4). The pope shows himself that he is a god, yet the system will be destroyed. The thought in Obadiah is similar. Rome boasts itself as being the “eternal city,” but Papacy will be cast into the “lake of fire burning with brimstone” to never again revive (Rev. 19:20).

Catholicism has always boasted that it will not be destroyed, but verse 6 shows the system will be searched out and made desolate. An example of being “searched out” in our day is the questioning of Papacy’s doctrines. In addition, Papacy’s deeds and liberties of tax exemption, etc., are being “sought up [out].” The discontent is still muted, but we get glimpses of what will come on a large scale. Papacy is adapting its organization to fit the needs of society, and the people are still stupefied today. In due time, however, they will question Papacy’s role, authority, and mission in life.

It is a *miracle* that we know the truth about the nominal Church system, for the Adversary has a great blinding power (2 Cor. 4:4). Only by the grace of God have our eyes been opened. The system is like a religious opiate over the minds of the people.

All of Christendom’s worshippers will cease to exist one day by ceasing their professions. Antotypically speaking, Edom will not be restored. Nothing is stated in Scripture about the Edomites returning to their former land—it is not that they cannot return, but as a type, the information is purposely missing. The *spiritual* picture is that Edom is doomed for destruction forever.

The primary lesson of the Book of Obadiah is a judgment message against a class, against the nominal Church, against Christendom. However, a side lesson pertains to the true Christian. Unfortunately, some individuals who consecrate sell their birthright for temporal rewards and thus lose the prize of the high calling. Among true spiritual Israelites are some who sell their birthright and thus become part of the Great Company class or even go into Second Death.

Obad. 7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him.

Verses 7-14 are a unit and should be considered together. In the “day of distress,” in 606 BC, the Edomites looked on their “brother Jacob” with a scornful and mocking attitude as those of Judah were taken captive and Jerusalem was destroyed (verses 10, 12, and 14). From the mountains, the Edomites gleefully watched the scene unfold below.

Enmity existed between Esau and Jacob even in the womb. Although Esau came out first, Jacob pulled him by the heel (Gen. 27:34-41). Moreover, Jacob was appropriately named, for *Jacob* means “supplanter,” and he eventually obtained the birthright. Esau was given a subordinate promise but was not satisfied. In fact, so great was the enmity between Esau and Jacob that Jacob fled for his life way up north to Haran and settled there. Esau’s hatred for Jacob was similar to that of Cain for Abel. A spiritual illustration exists here; namely, Cain and Esau picture the nominal class, whereas Abel and Jacob represent the more favorable class.

While Jerusalem was being laid waste, certain things happened. Jews who tried to escape left the city and started to run to the nearest higher ground to evade the soldiery, but Edomites blocked the way, turning them back into Nebuchadnezzar’s army so that they were captured and killed. In addition, Jews who were living in Edom were delivered up to Nebuchadnezzar. The Edomites, kinsmen of Judah, looked on, aloof and mocking, and collaborated with the enemy, whereas Esau and Jacob were supposed to be brothers. The same spirit was shown in recent times when Arabs cheered as SCUD missiles were falling in Israel and exploding.

“All the men of thy confederacy [those who were formerly *friends* of Edom]” turned against Edom as conspirators and performed the arduous task of going up into the cliffs to search out the riches and bring the Edomites down “to the[ir] border” for capture and death. As the Edomites came down from their caves and fled to the desert, these former friends pointed out their escape route to Nebuchadnezzar. In other words, the pendulum would now swing. Just as the Edomites had stopped the Israelites who were trying to escape destruction and helped King Nebuchadnezzar apprehend them by pointing out the direction of flight, so former friends would treat Edom similarly. Hence Edom would get retribution.

The antitype with Christendom will be the same situation. What civil power and the nominal Church have done—and will yet do—to God’s true people will be visited upon them in retribution. Christendom will have to experience the same shame, humiliation, and dishonor that was heaped upon true Christians down through the Gospel Age. Papacy will be unmasked, and skirts will be pulled from the harlot’s face (Jer. 13:22,26; Nahum 3:5).

Q: In regard to the antitype, verse 7 mentions the coming “confederacy,” in which some will be at peace with spiritual Edom and in a close relationship. Verse 1 says, “Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.” Do both verses refer to the same element?

A: Yes, these former friends will become turncoats.

Q: Will they be the eunuchs within the system, or are they the outside nations, for trouble will come from both sources?

A: It is true that the eunuch class will turn against the woman. In addition, the same ten horns that support Papacy will turn and rend the system. Revelation 17:12,13 says that the ten nations will agree to give their power to the beast for one hour. Later the same nations will turn and destroy the woman and the beast (Rev. 17:16). Verse 1 is talking about the *insiders*, the eunuchs, for Nebuchadnezzar is not mentioned there. Verses 1 and 7 are talking about those who were formerly *confederate* with Edom.

“All the men of thy [Edom’s] confederacy have brought thee even to the border [to the brink of destruction, to a moment of crisis or decision making].” Verse 7 alludes to the future confederacy of Papacy with Protestantism, which will not last. Part of the nominal Church’s future trouble will come from some involved in establishing the confederacy. The Protestants will be more or less innocent dupes, for Papacy will be the schemer.

Matters will get so serious that they cannot be ignored. The conservative forces will clamp down on individual liberty in a strong confederacy. When a justifying cause occurs, they will capitalize on it. The conservative forces are just biding their time for a backlash movement they can take advantage of. Laws have already been passed to be used as expedient.

Part of Papacy’s trouble will come from within, as shown by the pictures of (1) Jezebel painting her face and then the eunuchs throwing her out the window (2 Kings 9:30-33) and (2) the waters of the Euphrates drying up (Rev. 16:12). When the “great city” divides into three parts, the union of beast, dragon, and false prophet will come apart (Rev. 16:19). The governments will disassociate themselves when they see that this church-state union does not work, but it will be too late to prevent what they really fear. The religious elements will be dealt with first.

A “eunuch” cannot have children. Accordingly, priests in the Roman Catholic Church are forbidden to marry, for they are to be thoroughly consecrated to the *system*. In fact, one of the signs for recognizing the “man of sin” system is that it would teach the prohibition of marriage for its priesthood. This requirement is the false counterpart of the sincere Christian who dedicates his life to the *Lord* and *voluntarily* decides to live a celibate life. With the Christian, celibacy is *optional*; with the false system, it is *mandatory*. Some of the eunuch class of the false system will be instrumental in tearing it down. Not only will the civil powers and the Protestants disassociate themselves from Papacy, but some of its own priesthood and hierarchy will do likewise at the time of its destruction.

“They that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee.” This statement refers to the eunuchs who will betray Papacy (as Judas betrayed Jesus). When conditions are ripe, open rebellion will take place within the Church of Rome itself. A few priests here and there are bold today, but most are still in hiding—they are not obvious—at the present time. “The men [the eunuchs] that were at peace with thee have deceived thee [they will help to destroy Papacy].”

“There is none understanding in him [of it].” Even though the eunuchs will lament the conditions, they will not see the hand of the Lord in them, preparatory to the doom of Papacy. When the sentiment of the masses is sufficiently strong against Papacy, the “hidden” eunuchs will become bold. Encouragement will come from the outside. When Jehu asks, “Who is on my side? Who is with me?” (2 Kings 9:32), the more timid eunuchs will speak up. The action of the eunuchs (as traitors) will be a counterpart of Judas in the false system.

Obad. 8 Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?

Jehovah will “destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau.” Those considered wise by the false Church and the world will be unable to justify their position. Their lack of wisdom will encourage dissent. The unclean froglike spirits will work for a while, but afterwards people will realize that the “Inquisition” is occurring all over again (Rev. 16:13,14). Those who are honestly duped into thinking Papacy has reformed will be angry when their eyes are opened, and they will help to destroy the system.

The feet members proclaiming and giving their lives for truth will help to open the eyes of the people. Samson is a good picture, for he was blinded by Delilah. Of the two applications the Pastor gave for the Samson picture, the following is the better one. Samson represents the blinded masses, not the true Church. The masses have been duped and rendered powerless, and the authoritarian hierarchy has always discouraged the democratic form of government. Only when democracy became inevitable in certain parts of the world did Papacy jump on the bandwagon and go along with it.

As the masses get understanding and feeling (shown by the hair growing longer on Samson), they are becoming stronger and are developing a sense of their rights, although they are still blind at present and do not have *spiritual* insight. They just know that their work and drudgery have gone for revenue and taxes to feed the false Church and to support the system, and they think of the injustices that have been done to them. In due time, a “lad,” picturing the true Church, will guide Samson’s hands around the two pillars, representing Papacy and Protestantism (Judg. 16:26). The *little youth* (the feet members) are nobodies. They have no power and are not political, but at that time, they will guide the “hands” of the masses so that Samson will pull down the beast and the false prophet.

Understanding will depart from Papacy. Other pictures show that antitypical Edom will seek wisdom from the Lord and get no answer (King Saul and also King Ahab with the prophets of Baal are examples in the type). In the Micaiah picture, the king of Judah saw that everything was one-sided and asked for a *real* prophet (1 Kings 22:2-23). There was one true prophet, Micaiah, and many, many false ones. Micaiah said the false prophets would deceive the king into entering the battle where he would be defeated. The false prophets seemed to have wisdom, but it was all in the wrong direction. They even suspected the wisdom was false but went along with it anyway, showing they will *abandon principle* in the antitype.

Obad. 9 And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

Teman was a land of wisdom, but the people did not know where the wisdom came from, and ancient Edom was known for having shrewd Arabs with business acumen. Thus, spiritually speaking, nominal Christianity has been “wise” all down the Gospel Age, but their wisdom is considered a mystery. For example, the people are told that the Trinity is a mystery and that no one is supposed to understand it. Priests tell the people to simply obey because the Church is responsible for their conscience, but the time is coming when the public will see wisdom depart from Papacy and Protestantism. When the public becomes indoctrinated with practical (not spiritual) truth, they will tear down the ecclesiastical system.

“Every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.” In natural Edom, people were summarily and violently put to death. In antitype, the wise men will cease to represent religion by dying to their *former profession*. Although they will not necessarily die as individuals, there will be violence and many deaths. The false religious leaders will die to their *former condition* as cardinals, bishops, etc. In the Time of Trouble, they will deny their background, just as many religious leaders did during the French Revolution, but their denials and disguises will fail for

the most part. For example, it is difficult to disguise and eradicate a life of comfortable living and pose as a farmer. Speech, mannerisms, and uncalloused hands will betray the clergy.

Isaiah 34:6 is related: “The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.” Obadiah’s emphasis on “every one” being cut off shows that *all* of the tares will be burned as tares. Their profession to be wheat will cease.

Q: What was the relationship between Teman and Edom? Teman’s wisdom is alluded to in the Book of Job in connection with Eliphaz the Temanite, and it is mentioned in Jeremiah 49:7.

A: Teman, a city south of Petra, was a stronghold, or citadel, of renown that was identified with Edom. Teman was noted for *wisdom*. Hence in antitype, it symbolizes that those who are wise in the eyes of the world will be brought to naught. For instance, the United States government goes to Papacy, which has a reputation for “wisdom,” to find out what is happening in Europe and to learn about all the intrigue. For a specific example, President Reagan collaborated with the pope in order to save Europe from communism. He sent machinery and money to bolster the Solidarity (union) Party in Poland, which was successful. Because of the religious fervor of hundreds of different nationalities, the Vatican has an extensive, unparalleled grapevine with information being continually channeled in—far greater than that of any secular government. The Vatican has ears and a tremendous network of information through priests, monks, nuns, and civil servants in many, many countries. Israel’s network of information is marvelous, but Papacy’s is greater. All the wisdom of the Vatican will be brought to naught.

Obad. 10 For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

In the natural application, the Arabs have great animosity against the Jews, even though they are kinsmen. Jacob and Esau were brothers, but hatred developed between them and has existed ever since.

“Jacob” usually refers to natural Israel but not always, for context determines the application. Here the application of spiritual Jacob and spiritual Edom is as follows. Jacob represents the true seed, or true Christians, and Edom pictures the false seed. Although particular hatred and violence were directed against Jacob during the Inquisition, more refined persecution has gone on continually. Jacob represents the seed that God blessed, for Esau did not get the chief blessing. Had Esau been faithful, he would have received that blessing, but he sold it. The Esau class has had great hatred for the Jacob class throughout the Gospel Age. Just as Jacob was interested in the spiritual inheritance, so the true Church class has been interested in spiritual things, while the Esau class has given up the spiritual for the temporal and the acquisition of wealth.

Not only has violence been committed against true Christians down through the Gospel Age, but it will be used against the feet members in the near future. At that time, antitypical Edom (Papacy) will betray itself for still having the “Inquisition spirit.” When Jezebel manipulates circumstances to have the antitypical John the Baptist’s head cut off, the public will see the spirit of the mother system as being instrumental in producing the violence.

Obad. 11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.

Verse 11 was fulfilled in history with regard to Edom's attitude toward Israel when the latter was attacked by enemies. Edom remained aloof, did not help, and even laughed and rejoiced (see verse 12).

The primary emphasis of Obadiah's prophecy is to give information to the true Christian. In the Inquisition, the Roman Catholic Church rarely did any of the butchering itself. In fact, that religious system played the part of intercessor—what a mockery! When one of the faithful(?) communicants betrayed his parents or a friend, a *civil* trial was held. The Inquisition was made the sword of the state. Meantime, the clerical authority was on hand to “forgive” in case of “repentance.” The Catholic Church remained on the sidelines, waiting for a confession of guilt, and the state applied the torture. However, the responsibility lay with the church system, for hatred was incited in sermons. Ostensibly, civil power was the executioner, but the Church of Rome was the real executioner. The state, an unconsecrated and worldly element (“strangers”), was made the instrument, or sword, of the Inquisition. The Church of Rome was two-faced, manipulating the executions but posing as an intercessor and friend, ready to forgive.

Obad. 12 But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.

Obad. 13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity;

Verse 13 describes something else the Edomites did. When those of Judah were taken captive, the Edomites went in and robbed their possessions. For these actions, Edom would receive retribution. In antitype, the false Church took advantage of the situation and confiscated the lands of true Christians who were executed, and so did the state. As Christendom has done to others, so shall it be done to Christendom.

The Edomites should not have “rejoiced” over the destruction that was visited on the Jews “nor ... laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity.” They went into Israel and pillaged what they could get.

Obad. 14 Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

Jews who were farsighted either through marriage or business, or because they heard about Nebuchadnezzar's coming, fled very quickly. An example in modern times is that many wealthy Jews left Germany before Hitler began the extermination, for they could see what was coming. His master plan was laid out in his book *Mein Kampf*, so when he got into power and the people's dedication to him was evident, these wealthy Jews changed their properties into jewelry and gold and left Germany. Similarly, as 606 BC approached, some of the Jews fled to Edom when they saw what was happening with Nebuchadnezzar, for in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, he had a great victory over Egypt. In addition, Jews who remained until the trouble of 606 BC fled down wadis and entered caves in the Judean hills in an attempt to avoid destruction. In both cases, the Edomites watched and made sure the Jews did not escape. In antitype, the Roman Catholic Church *participated* in the evil, even though they were onlookers.

Thus history plays a role in understanding prophecy. We should have utter confidence in the accuracy of Scripture and not in the writings of men and “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20). Those who do not have confidence in the Bible as being the last word will not see matters as

accurately regardless of their intelligence.

Obad. 15 For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

The burden of the Book of Obadiah is to condemn Edom, whereas Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other books focus on multiple peoples and nations, with only a certain portion applying to Edom. Obadiah follows the Book of Amos, of which the last few verses deal with Edom. Thus the Book of Obadiah seems to be a continuation of the same theme but with more explicit detail.

“For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen [the nations].” This statement suggests that the character of the book changes somewhat with verse 15. Obadiah originally declared this book, or prophecy, sometime within a five-year period after the destruction of Jerusalem in 606 BC. But now verse 15 is giving a twofold application. One application would take place shortly on the nation of Edom as it existed at the time of Obadiah. However, the language prefigures what will occur in the near future at the end of the Gospel Age.

“As thou [Edom] hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.” (1) As literal Edom did to the nation of Israel, so *retribution* would come. The sarcasm and derision heaped upon natural Israel at the time of its destruction in 606 BC would return upon Edom’s own head. (2) As antitypical (or spiritual) Edom has done, and will yet do, to true Christians, so *retribution* will come to Papacy or Christendom, depending on the perspective, which has persecuted God’s true people all down the Gospel Age. A law of retribution will go into effect at the end of the age. The system is doomed for destruction, for it must give way for Christ’s Kingdom and his arrangements of the future.

Obad. 16 For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

“For as ye [Edom] have drunk upon my [God’s] holy mountain.” Back in the type, the Edomites stood on the Mount of Olives and watched the destruction of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar’s army. Not only were they elated and cheering, but after the army had laid waste the city, the Edomites plundered it like hyenas and jackals.

Spiritually speaking, Papacy has prematurely claimed to set up the “holy mountain,” the Kingdom of God, and to rule with a rod of iron. During much of the Gospel Age, Papacy has been the counterfeit Kingdom of God, reigning in God’s and Christ’s stead and blasphemously taking the emoluments of praise that are due to the Father and the Son. For example, the pope was carried in a chair and has been greatly revered with cardinals kissing his toe when they get their red hats. The pope has accepted homage that belongs to Christ as the Head of the Church. The leaders of the system have “drunk,” or enriched themselves, in power, pleasure, honor, and glory—but all that will change.

“So shall all the heathen [the nations] drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down [stagger—RSV], and they shall be as though they had not been.” Just as Edom in the type rejoiced at the downfall of natural Jewry in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, so when Edom fell, the other nations, as a group, watched and rejoiced as Edom became the object of scorn and derision. Thus the situation was reversed, and Edom had to drink the bitter dregs of the cup.

The same principle applies to the antitype; namely, Papacy will have to drink the bitter dregs, and others will rejoice. In fact, all nations will have to drink the cup of God’s fury, but they will

first rejoice at the downfall of antitypical Edom, which will never rise again (Isa. 63:6; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 19:20). When literal Babylon (picturing mystic Babylon) was cast into the river Euphrates, it was never to be resurrected or revived. The same is true of spiritual Edom. Incidentally, verse 16 is a faulty translation in both the King James and the Revised Standard. The lesson is that as Edom has done unto others, so others will do unto her. It will be a reciprocal action against Papacy.

In antitype, verses 15 and 16 pertain to the Gentiles, the nations, who will be involved in the judgment of the whore. As a harlot, the Roman Catholic Church bedecked herself with jewels and enticed the world to be her paramours. Kings and princes befriended her, but the time will come when this old beguiling art of hers will no longer work, and governments will look upon her as an old hag. They will cease to be interested in her. In desperation, she will offer to act for free, not for “money” as in the past, but they will hate her (Rev. 17:16). Previously, nations and kings paid dearly for any involvement with the Catholic Church, but at the end of the age, she will plead in desperation for their help and they will spurn her.

Wrath and indignation will be factors because the people will be fed up. The heathen will be instrumental in the judgment visited upon Christendom. As the Pastor said, the “worst of the heathen” will be an element within Christendom that is not sympathetic to the harlot. This element not only will be rabble but also can be very intellectual. However, just as this element will have no compassion for Christendom, so the same thing will happen to them. When they are in distress, no one will befriend them, for the wave of popular opinion will be against them.

In the Jezebel picture, the dogs represent Gentiles who will act without conscience or restraint, and the eunuchs threw her out to them (2 Kings 9:31-37). Jehu did the beckoning; that is, he inspired the radicals to act. Thus three elements are shown in this picture.

Verse 16 is a play on words. It is like being at a feast in ancient times when suddenly the king dropped dead, being a victim of poisoning planned by a conspiracy. Under the church-state arrangement, the nations and the religious factions will be companions, but the time will come when it is apparent that things are not working out as hoped. Those who are unsympathetic will connive; that is, some who eat bread at the same table will have ulterior motives and be instrumental in Papacy’s downfall, but they themselves will also be judged. Suspicious rivalries, jealousies, and intrigues will occur with spiritual Edom as the major target. The wrath of all the others will be against Edom because she had no sympathy in the day of “Jacob’s” distress.

All in the church-state arrangement who attend this feast will get drunk (poisoned), for each will be jealous of the others. Edom will be the main target, but all will receive judgment, for all nations have to drink the cup of the Lord. Because of what was (and will be) done to “Jacob” (true Christians), this punishment will come on Edom and all of the heathen.

Jeremiah 25:26 reads, “And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth [will be made to drink]: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.” The king of Sheshach will drink *last*. This prophecy is usually misunderstood, for in antitype, “Sheshach” is not spiritual Babylon. Usually Babylon represents Christendom, but, as here, it can also picture a non-Christian element.

Another picture shows Babylon as the “hammer” that brings down the false Jerusalem (Christendom). Just as natural Babylon tore down natural Jerusalem, which was not living in harmony with the Lord, so antitypical Babylon (Islam) will be the hammer and sickle of the Lord to visit judgment on the city called by His name, the false Jerusalem. That king will fall *last*—after he has destroyed Papacy. Why? Because the hammer will take credit for the destruction and not realize that the Lord was behind the destruction. God will allow the Muslim

element to succeed, but when they boast, it will be their turn for destruction. And so Sheshach represents the Islamic element, which will be dealt with after Christendom's clerical element.

Other prophecies show the religious, or clerical, element being destroyed first, so it would nullify many Scriptures to try to use Jeremiah 25:26 regarding Sheshach to prove that Papacy goes into destruction last. First will come the destruction of the religious element of Christendom. Then will follow the destruction of the civil element.

The people who are violent in society—anarchists, nihilists, Muslim terrorists, etc.—are represented by the king of Sheshach. Accordingly, the Lord's Great Army will be composed of revolutionary radicals throughout the world (see Hab. 1:6-9; Joel 2:11). The terrorist element in the various nations throughout the earth will work like a ferment and eventually create anarchy. The purpose of this worldwide condition will be the overthrow of the Western world.

Scriptures on Edom

The purpose of citing the following Scriptures is to get an insight into what will happen when the Kingdom is established, even with regard to literal Edom.

1. Psalm 137:7

“Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.”

God will remember literal Edom's reaction to Jerusalem's besieging in 606 BC. Edom rejoiced in and encouraged the destruction.

2. Lamentations 4:21,22

“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked.

“The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.”

Jeremiah was writing about the sins that natural Edom committed against natural Zion (Israel). He prophesied that God would make Edom drink the cup of retribution and bitterness.

3. Psalm 83:1-6

“Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

“For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

“They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

“For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

“The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes.”

A future Arab confederacy against Israel will include those in Transjordan (Edom, Moab, and Ammon). Psalm 83 shows that a *unique* thing will happen along natural lines in the future—something that has not happened in the past. *All* of Israel’s enemies, *all* who are hostile to Israel (predominantly the Arab nations), in that part of the world (Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Ammon, Moab, Edom, etc.) will join forces against that tiny nation. In the past, one, two, or three nations at a time have fought Israel, but here all of them will conceive a *united* plan to *annihilate* Israel, to put that nation out of existence. Psalm 83, which will occur first, is not referring to Gog and Magog but to the traditional enemies of Israel. This Psalm is the prayer of those Jews who realize, at that time, that they will be utterly destroyed unless God helps them, and that prayer will be answered.

4. Jeremiah 49:7-22

“Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?

“Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him.

“If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.

“But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not.

“Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

“For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it.

“For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.

“I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle.

“For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men.

“Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

“Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.

“As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

“Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?

“Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them.

“The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea.

“Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.”

We are getting familiar with an accumulation of statements in Scripture that pertain to Edom. This passage from Jeremiah has some similarities to the Book of Obadiah. Much of this citation was fulfilled in the past by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Edom was one of the later kingdoms to be destroyed because its peculiar strategic location made its capture almost impossible. Therefore, details are given of the destruction. Edom, which is below the southern end of the Dead Sea on the other side of the Jordan River, is still desolate today except for a few bedouin. Its former cities, such as Teman, Bozrah, and Seir, no longer exist. Other Scriptures like Isaiah 63:1-6 apply spiritually, but Jeremiah 49:7-22 is mostly literal, the small portions about Bozrah being the exception and having a dual application. Jeremiah was saying that Edom would be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and would not have any cities henceforth.

After Edom was destroyed, the Nabataeans moved into Petra, removing any hope of the Edomites coming back. Subsequently even the Nabataeans went out of existence despite their civilization with a water supply and cisterns, their temple, etc. In the early 1800s, a traveler on a camel discovered the ruins of Petra, which eventually became a tourist center. Even the Jews marveled at the Nabataeans' irrigation and advanced development, but Petra became desolate.

5. Isaiah 34:5-10

“For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

“The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

“And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

“For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

“It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.”

Portions of this citation are given a spiritual application in the *Fourth Volume*, but there was also a natural application, which is described figuratively with terms such as “soaked with blood,” “pitch,” “brimstone,” and “smoke.” Although “the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion” is yet future, for Christendom will be destroyed forever as a religious system, we should also read this prophecy as a natural picture to see what happened to Edom as a land. Edom has been desolate for many centuries.

6. Isaiah 63:1-6

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

“For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

“And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”

This text is a spiritual picture only, even though it uses the names Edom and Bozrah. Some of the other pictures are all natural, natural and spiritual, or all spiritual. The spiritual application is adequately covered in the *Volumes*.

7. Isaiah 11:13,14

“The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

“But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.”

This *natural* picture is yet future in fulfillment. We know it is future because Israel still has enemies. “The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim” because they will be *one united* kingdom. The two sticks, the northern and the southern kingdoms, will become one nation, the nation of Israel (Ezek. 37:20-22).

Ephraim and Judah will “lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.” This prophecy shows that the Palestinian enmity will cease. The suggestion is that Edom and Moab will be brought under subjection by Israel—and not through dialog. Ammon is Amman, the present capital of Jordan, and Moab and Edom are in the nation of Jordan. Ephraim and Judah will have something to do with bringing them into subservience.

8. Ezekiel chapter 35

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

“Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it,

“And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.

“I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

“Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end:

“Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: since thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.

“Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.

“And I will fill his mountains with his slain men: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword.

“I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there:

“Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.

“And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume.

“Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.

“As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.”

This chapter covers a lot of history. Mount Seir and Idumea are symbols of the kingdom of Edom. When Jerusalem was laid waste in 606 BC, Edom rejoiced. The prophet Ezekiel was saying that those of Edom would get a dose of their own medicine, which they did receive in part, but verses 14 and 15 show that *more retribution is yet future*. “Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the *whole earth* rejoiceth [in the future], I will make thee [Edom] desolate. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou *shalt be desolate*, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.” Of course these two verses can have a double application, but from the natural standpoint, they suggest that the kingdom of Edom will be made a physical, literal memorial like the cemetery of Hamon-gog (Ezek. 39:11-16). Down near the Jordan River in Israel, a plot of land will be set aside as a graveyard to bury the corpses of the Gog and Magog battle. Then, in the future, visitors to Israel will look down and see the Valley of Hamon-gog, where the Gog forces were buried. It will be a perpetual cemetery, an everlasting memorial, for yet-to-be-created people on other planets to view. The history of earth—why Jesus came here and died—will be a lesson for all eternity. The upper recesses of Edom will also be a perpetual memorial.

Just as the false Church systems (the beast and the false prophet) are to be destroyed forever, never to be resurrected, so Edom as a *land* will be perpetuated as a memorial of the desolation of the spiritual. When the whole earth is rejoicing in the Kingdom Age, the Edomites will dwell elsewhere, not in Edom, for that land is designed to be a memorial.

9. Ezekiel 25:12-14

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

“And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.”

Edom, Teman, and Dedan (the one in Edom) will be made desolate. God remembers what they did—He remembers when His enemies rejoice over the destruction of the righteous. Jesus expressed the same principle when he said that it would be better for the one who stumbles the least of his true brethren to have a millstone put around his neck and be cast into the sea, for although he would die, he could have a resurrection (Matt. 18:6). Hence those who *truly* stumble the consecrated in a *responsible* sense incur a penalty of Second Death. In other words, this would not be a case of hurting someone’s feelings, for people with exaggerated minds are often offended by things that should not trouble them, especially when another party is properly discharging a responsibility. However, those who lead a true child of God to stumble will get Second Death. Thus we can see how the Lord considers those who are near and dear to Him from a spiritual sense and even from a natural sense, that is, with regard to the natural kingdom of Israel. God abhorred the taunting and rejoicing against Israel in 606 BC.

Comment: Another clue or proof that Edom’s literal desolation is future is that *Israel* will be the instrument for the retribution, whereas in the past, Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument.

Reply: Yes. The vengeance will be recognized as God’s, but Israel will be the instrument used. Past judgments were viewed as just losing a battle, not as God’s judgment, but the future situation will be different.

Whenever Edom’s judgment or desolation is mentioned, there is no indication of a return from captivity. With severe judgments on Moab, Ammon, Egypt, and other nations, a return to the land is usually included. Therefore, this *omission* with Edom is significant as a form of *emphasis*. Other nations will be reinstated at a later time after judgment but not Edom.

10. Joel 3:18,19

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

“Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against

the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.”

Notice that Edom will be a “desolate wilderness,” whereas Egypt will be a “desolation.” Other Scriptures show the contrast even better. To repeat, the reason is because Edom rejoiced at Judah’s misery and helped the enemy. “Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.” Hurting the Lord’s people is like touching the apple of God’s eye (Zech. 2:8). If we stuck our finger into someone’s eyeball, that person would remember the incident for the rest of his life. Therefore, what Edom did was like sticking a finger in God’s eye, and God remembers what was done.

Comment: Isaiah 19:22 states that God will smite and *heal* Egypt. When this Scripture is combined with Joel 3:19, the emphasis is on Edom’s being a desolate wilderness *forever*.

Reply: There is no promise anywhere of a return or a healing of Edom. Few people realize *how much* God has against Edom. Obadiah, an *entire* book, though short, is about Edom.

Comment: How beautifully natural Edom’s not being healed fits the spiritual picture! “Egypt,” representing the world, will be healed but not “Edom,” the nominal religious systems.

11. Amos 1:11,12

“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:

“But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”

This passage calls attention to the bitterness, animosity, and hatred that persist toward Israel by the Arabs. Incidentally, Uz is also identified with Edom. Teman, Bozrah, Idumea, Seir, Uz, Esau, and Dedan are all in Edom. Seir was a mountain as well as a kingdom.

12. Malachi 1:4,5

“Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

“And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.”

Notice that *Jehovah* “hath indignation for ever” against Edom.

Obad. 17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

“But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance.” Mount Zion can be considered either literally or spiritually, but in a practical sense, it ends up being located in Israel. The saviors will come from spiritual Zion, but the scene of victory and deliverance is down here, so whichever perspective we take—where the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant originates or where it happens—Jerusalem will be the focal point.

“And there shall be holiness.” With the King James marginal alternate, verse 17 starts with “But upon mount Zion shall be they that escape, and it shall be holy”; that is, the deliverance of the Holy Remnant at the time of the earthquake will be upon mount Zion (Zech. 14:4,5).

There will be both deliverance and holiness in the sense that the Kingdom will start right away with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. “Holiness” implies righteousness, purity, a setting apart. No more “strangers” will be there (Joel 3:17). In other words, when the Kingdom is set up, Jerusalem will be so associated with reverence and devotion that only those who are in the right heart attitude, desiring salvation, will want to enter the city. Jerusalem will be a city of devotion, not a city of commerce, trade, and traffic (Ezek. 11:18; 20:37,38). A condition of holiness will be created so that all will know “The LORD is there” (Ezek. 48:35). Purging, separation, and salvation are all involved in setting the stage for a holy Jerusalem. There will be no more corruption in the government or in the priesthood. Jerusalem will be the embodiment of *holiness*.

“Mount Zion” can be considered the Church in the Kingdom, the spiritual phase in the highest sense. But after the earthquake, there will also be a literal Mount Zion north of Jerusalem, upon which Ezekiel’s Temple will be built.

“And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.” Jacob (the nation of Israel) will enlarge its borders in the future to include Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, part of Jordan, etc. Hence this expression pertains to the land God has deeded to Israel and thus is a prophecy of the future expanded borders. Natural Israel shall repossess that which rightfully belongs to them according to God’s promises.

Obad. 18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.

“And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble.” Verse 18 refers to the Arab conflict a little prior to Jacob’s Trouble, as mentioned in Psalm 83. Esau (Edom) is the “stubble” that will be burned by the fire and flame of the houses of Jacob and Joseph. The house of Joseph will be like the match that makes the house of Jacob a torch. “In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:6). The Arab conflict of Psalm 83 will occur in the near future but before Jacob’s Trouble.

The “house of Esau” will burn rapidly, as stubble, until everything is devoured and nothing is left. *Natural* Edom is desolate today, but the major thrust is yet future. The houses of Jacob and Joseph are to burn the house of Esau. The thought is that the *land boundaries*, not individuals, will be consumed so that Israel’s borders will be enlarged.

The “house of Jacob” and the “house of Joseph” are both mentioned, as if to say that in the Kingdom, Israel will be a *united* possession. All of the tribes will have their place and get their inheritance, not just the ten tribes or only the two tribes.

And there is another reason why Jacob and Joseph were both mentioned. When Joseph and Benjamin, both sons of Jacob, are considered together, Joseph represents the Little Flock, and Benjamin pictures the Great Company. Of the two sons, Joseph was the more important and the favorite. Thus the “house of Jacob” is natural Israel, and the “house of Joseph” is The

Christ, Head and body, glorified and beyond the veil. The match that will be struck will originate with the *spiritual* class.

“And they [the houses of Jacob and Joseph] shall kindle [a fire] in them [the house of Esau], and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.” None shall remain of the house of Esau. There is an unusual mixture here of the natural and the spiritual.

Jeremiah 49:10,13,17 shows that in order to be a sign in the Kingdom Age, Edom will *literally* be *perpetually laid waste*. The land will be desolate. “But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not.... For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.... Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.” Obadiah 15, with regard to the day of Jehovah being “near upon all the heathen,” shows that the time setting is the end of the age, yet future, and not circa 606 BC.

The Holy Remnant will be involved in defeating those who are hostile to them, particularly their blood brothers of the Semitic line going back to Shem through Ishmael and Esau. In other words, there were two divisions off the main stem: the Ishmael line and later the Esau line.

In summary, verse 17 shows the end result—that there will be holiness in Jerusalem and that Israel will get her rightful territorial possessions. Then verse 18 is a flashback, giving details of how the holiness and expanded borders will come about. Prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, judgment against Edom, Egypt, and certain other nations will occur in warfare against Israel. After the Kingdom is established, judgments against disobedient nations will take another form, such as the withholding of rain (Zech. 14:16-18).

Obad. 19 And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

Obad. 20 And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.

Verses 19 and 20 describe future expanded borders of Israel in all directions: south, west, east, and north. This expansion will take place over a period of time. These two verses, which are tied in with verse 17, help to explain Israel’s possessing her own “possessions,” or land.

“And they [the house of Jacob] of the south [Beer-sheba and the Negev] shall possess the mount of Esau.” The Edomites occupied the Negev south of Hebron and the Dead Sea area. For a long time, they controlled the desert. Obadiah was saying that the southern portion of Israel will be greatly enlarged, stretching into what is now desert. After that area is occupied, the nation will shift over to the east, where Israel will possess the parts of Edom that are on the other side of the Arabah, which is low land at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

Enlarged borders will start with Israel’s victory over its enemies in Jacob’s Trouble. Then, as the nation grows in population, especially from generations coming back from the tomb, more and more land will be essential. Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza, and part of Edom will all be appropriated in progressive developments in order to accommodate the increased population following the inauguration of the Kingdom.

“They [the house of Jacob] of the plain [shall possess the land of] the Philistines.” The “plain” is the Shephelah, a portion of Israel with no distinct boundaries. The Jews of this topographical land configuration, which is between the coastal plain and the mountains, will shift over to the west and occupy what is now called the Gaza Strip. In other words, the people of Judah will spread to the east into Edom and to the west into former Philistine territory.

“And they [the house of Jacob] shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and [even] the fields of Samaria” to the north. The “fields of Ephraim” are the same as the “fields of Samaria,” for Samaria was the capital of Ephraim. Thus there is a play on words—as if to say, “the fields of Ephraim, that is, the fields of Samaria.” (In the New Testament, the Greek word *kai* is similarly used to mean “even,” although it usually means “and.”) The duplication refers to the northern part of Israel, particularly Samaria, in which a foreign element now lives in Israel proper. All the restraints that have been put on Israel by the United Nations, plus other pressures to make concessions to the Arabs, whom the Jews defeated in past wars, will be lifted in the Kingdom. Wealthy Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have not helped their own people financially, for they want the sores to continue to fester. Conditions will completely change in the Kingdom, for Israel will belong to the Jew. However, the Jews will have to respect the rights of individual “strangers” in their midst—but on a new basis.

Incidentally, those who were *born* in Israel, whether Arab or Jew, will come forth from the tomb in Israel in the Kingdom. They will live in Israel but on another basis, for the land will be apportioned differently with new divisions. Arabs will be sprinkled amidst Israelites as citizens, all having the same constitution. Because these Arabs were born in Israel, they will be guaranteed an occupancy, but they will not be clustered in conclaves. All—Jews and Arabs—will be under the New Covenant.

“Benjamin shall possess Gilead.” As the people come forth from the tomb, Benjamin’s territory will be too small, so land will be given that is contiguous to themselves. Thus Benjamin will burgeon out into what is called Jordan today. Jordan is an artificial state that was created recently in history. Prior to its creation, the land was occupied by various tribes under different bedouin chiefs.

Why was Benjamin singled out to receive Gilead? Benjamin was only one tribe—and an insignificant tribe at that. Perhaps the statement was written from a poetic standpoint, for although the tribe that was almost wiped out will not necessarily occupy all of Gilead, it will, with other kinsmen, have a possession there (Judges 20:35–21:23).

“And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath.” “Canaan” is an indefinite term that can apply to any land between Egypt and northern Israel, for the land that the Canaanites occupied over the years has shifted. Here the land of the Canaanites is related to Phoenicia, which is Lebanon to the north. Incidentally, Elijah was in Zarephath, which is in Lebanon. Only a thumbnail sketch of land expansion is given here in Obadiah, but other Scriptures show that Israel will eventually possess all of Lebanon.

“And the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south [the Negev].” Sepharad refers to Jews who live in Syria and Iraq, reaching up into the land bordering Turkey. The Jews who are held captive in this area will be transported to Israel to live in the Negev region, which will “blossom as the rose” (Isa. 35:1).

Obad. 21 And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.

The *plurality* of “saviours” is shown here. These “saviours” are The Christ, Head and body (a multitudinous seed), who will come out of Zion and rescue Israel (the Holy Remnant) at the last moment. Thus true Christians in glory will be instrumental in saving natural Israel. Also, the Ancient Worthies will be raised, so the nucleus of the Kingdom will be holy. The power will come from Zion, the spiritual phase of the Kingdom. Verse 21 is an insertion about “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

The statement “saviours shall ... judge the mount of Esau” has the following double application:

1. The Christ will permanently destroy mystic Babylon (Christendom) as a system. The Book of Obadiah is based on the *literal* kingdom of Esau, which has overtones of a *spiritual* application to Christendom. Then spiritual Israel will take control of natural Israel.
2. Truth will prosper in the Kingdom, and all false religions will cease, including Christendom, which rules in Christ’s name, and Islam, which believes in Allah. No longer will there be any false religions that profess to be the revealed religion of God. The “mount of Esau” embraces all false religions of Christendom and the Muslim world.

“Mount Zion is the *true spiritual* phase of the Kingdom. A proof text is Hebrews 12:22, which states that we are approaching Mount Zion. Spiritual and natural Edom will both be judged. When these specific judgments take place, the Kingdom will be in control *with authority and power*: “And the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.” Not only will mankind then realize that God has taken control of earth’s affairs, but His control will be visibly demonstrated.

Q: If verse 17 is tied in with verse 21, using the *literal* application of Mount Zion for both, would these verses be a confirmation, a second witness, for Zechariah 14:4,5 about an earthquake splitting the Mount of Olives to rescue the Holy Remnant?

A: Yes. The natural application is the sparing of the Holy Remnant as they flee to Azal.

Comment: “And the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.” What a powerful ending to the Book of Obadiah! Both literal and spiritual Edom will pass away.

Reply: The Book of Zechariah ends similarly with the thought of holiness in Jerusalem and the Temple. “In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”

December 2005 Addendum

The “mount of Esau” is usually considered to be symbolic of Christendom, but it also has an application to the Muslim power. More than just Esau’s children were east of Jerusalem. The Ishmaelites, Esau, and Keturah all went eastward originally, but their subsequent history shows that some then went a little north and some a little south to fill the huge desert of the Arabian peninsula. Thus Kuwait, Qatar, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, etc., are all Muslim today.

Therefore, Obadiah 21 identifies primarily the Muslim element. When considered in a composite way with the others, Esau is usually regarded as being more or less representative of the Muslims. In the same way, Ephraim was only one of the 9 1/2 tribes of Israel west of the Jordan River, but it was the leading tribe. Therefore, Ephraim, which has three different applications, can refer to (1) an individual, (2) a tribe, and (3) all ten tribes of northern Israel.