

# Obadiah 10-15

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[ 0 : 00 ] Overly, page 772. And we'll be looking tonight at just verses 10-15. Just those six verses.! This is our second part. We looked at the beginning two weeks ago now, and we'll finish off next week.

If you watch, actually before we do, let us pray. Father, we do pray that you'll be with us. We pray that you'd help us to focus in this heat, and we pray for a breeze to keep us awake and to help us. And we pray for that breeze of your spirit as well to apply it deeply to our hearts, that we might be fed from your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, if you watch any sort of crime dramas or legal dramas, you know, dramas about TV shows about lawyers or anything like that, there will always be sort of two fights at the end. It will always be... The second one is always in the courtroom, but round one is on the street, where maybe they're just arresting the criminal, or two lawyers just happen to bump into each other on the streets while they're grabbing coffee.

And there will always be some sort of an argument. It always finishes off with one second, I'll see you in court. And that's sort of round one, where they sort of, they swear up to each other.

[ 1 : 22 ] And that's basically what we saw last time. That was that initial attack on the pride that Obadiah was giving against this nation called Edom. And round two is what we see here, where we are in the courtroom.

The first round is all about telling the baddie what you've got coming at him, and giving him a good talking to. But round two is when the charges are formally read out and dealt with.

Last time we were in that round one, and Obadiah told proud Edom, a neighbouring nation of Israel's, what they've got coming. And here we're going to see in detail what they did wrong. Last time we were in that round one.

As a trap underneath you. You both sit in your hearts, asking who will bring me down, in verse three. And Yahweh's answer in verse four is, I will bring you down. And I don't care how high up you are.

[ 2 : 49 ] In round one on the street, Obadiah was giving a little blow to their hubris. And now it's time for the charges to be read out. So that's the first thing we need to look at.

We've got three things to see tonight. And first thing, Obadiah is telling them, you were less than a brother. That's his main message to Edom. That is the basic gist of the charge. You were less than a brother.

Verse ten, violence has been done to your brother Jacob. And rather than standing with them, you stood against them. Maybe remember from last time, I mentioned that the Edomites are the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother.

And just as Jacob and Esau themselves had a bit of a difficult relationship, it remained like that for centuries between their people. In Numbers 20, which is the next part we'll be looking at in Paul's series in Numbers, just as Israel was coming out of Egypt and they needed to pass through Edom to get to Canaan, Edom said no and threatened them with the sword if they tried and forced them to go the long way around.

In 1 Samuel 22, some of us have just studied that in home groups and maybe others will come to that soon, you meet a rather unsavory character called Doeg, the Edomite, who does some pretty atrocious things to the Israelites.

[ 4 : 15 ] And although it is a sibling rivalry, God has been maintaining that it is a sibling rivalry. In Deuteronomy 23, he does put in the law, you shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother.

So there is this close relationship that they're supposed to have as nations. And yet, although Israel was Edom's brother, Edom had constantly spat in Israel's face.

Obadiah is probably referring here to the exile of Judah into Babylon in 586 BC. It's the exile that we referred to in the psalm that we heard at the opening of our worship and the psalm we sung, Psalm 137.

And there was that line, and there wasn't it, that the Edomites were saying, tear it down, tear it down. As they watched the Babylonians invade, they were rooting for them, saying, yeah, bring him down. And so, it's likely that Obadiah is talking about this period of time.

If not, it certainly applies. It could have been any other time, actually, but it probably is talking about this. And while Judah was under siege, instead of acting like brothers, Edom acted like any other nation.

[ 5 : 30 ] The summary of the charge you'll find in verse 10 and 11, and the climax of that summary you'll find at the end of verse 11, you were just like one of them.

You were more like strangers than brothers. Judah was under siege, and what did you do? Verse 11, you just stood there.

Foreigners broke in and pillaged the city, and what did you do? You came and joined in. And then verses 12 to 14 give us more details about what they did.

It's in this repeated phrase, do not, do not. What he's doing, though, is describing things that they had actually done. Verse 12, we learned that what had started with an approving look at what was going on, we've got the word gloat, and it's more sort of looking on it with approval.

And so what started with that took root in their hearts as they rejoiced, is the next couplet in verse. And that rejoicing turned into loud-mouthed boasting.

[ 6 : 37 ] God's people were suffering, just here in verse 12, misfortune, ruin, and distress. And when that news story came up on their feed, on their Twitter or their Facebook, whatever it is, in this brother nation Edom, they clicked like.

And they went from there to an all-out street party. And not only did they celebrate, verse 13, they joined in. They joined in the trouble.

So in verse 12, you'll see in each of the couplet, he describes the day in a different way. But in verse 13, he says three times, in the day of their calamity. And that word calamity in the ritual is actually very similar to the word Edom.

And so it's as if he's kind of saying, Edom, you made yourself a part of the problem. This was the day of your Edom, which basically means your calamity.

And so Edom, you went in and you gloated, you had a good look around and all this chaos. And you looted the place. Instead of helping in their calamity, you took advantage of God's people.

[ 7 : 51 ] Not only that, but in verse 14, it gets even worse. You went from not helping, to hoarding, to hurting.

You stood at the crossroads to cut off anyone trying to escape. And any survivors you found, you handed over to the invaders.

You were less like brothers and more like strangers. Cold, callous, cowardly, strangers. That is what they have done to Israel.

God's chosen holy people. That is what Edom, the people of Esau, did to the people of Jacob. And so the penalty is clear in verse 10.

You cut off my people. You will be cut off forever. And actually, very cleverly in the original, you can see that lots of words that he uses look similar to the word cut off.

[ 8 : 54 ] So it's as if this sentence echoes throughout the whole passage. This word cut off. You will be cut off forever. And what that means is, if you want to live like less than a brother, that is how I'll treat you, is what God is saying.

If you want to treat my people as strangers, then you're strangers to me too. When my people sin, then yes, I will chastise them.

They will hurt. And yet, I will not cut them off forever. I chastise them to bring them back. But you I will cut off forever. So there's a really clear difference here that God is making between people who are near to God's people and people who are part of God's people.

There's a saying that you might sometimes hear that God has no grandchildren. It's a way of saying to those who have been raised in the church or in Christian families that there is an importance of believing the gospel yourselves.

And what we're seeing here is God has no nephews either. It's not enough to merely be friendly with the church. To just come along occasionally, get involved with some of the activities, and think

that is enough.

[10:16] You cannot come to know God as an uncle. So when you quite like and you want to visit occasionally, if you try to live like that, then it is clear from here that you will eventually drift off and you will end up cut off.

You will be a danger both to yourself and to the people of God. It's not enough to have been heavily involved even in the past. Esau was, you know, he was a grandson of Abraham.

That's pretty close to the people of God, isn't it? But it's not enough. If you're not in the church, if you're not submitting to the discipleship of King Jesus as a member of his body, no matter how many Christian friends you might have, no matter how much you might preach in Jesus' name even, even do miracles in his name, as Jesus himself says, at the last he will say, go away, I never knew you.

So that's the first thing Jesus is telling them. You became less than brothers. You cut yourself off from the family, and so I will cut you off. Second, we need to know that this is more than just a courtroom.

So it seems you were less than brothers is the message to Eden. And we need to know that this is more than just a courtroom. In this country, we expect a courtroom to deliver justice in a way where you have a judge who is impartial, who looks at the facts, and who looks at the laws, and who makes a ruling.

[11:52] Our symbol for justice in this country and many others is literally a lady with heraldic pair of scales and a blindfold. And that's a good way of organising justice because we don't want our own personal prejudices and biases to get in the way.

So that's an okay way to organise it the way we do it. But in the West, generally, and any description of the West is going to be a generalisation, isn't it? But we tend to think more in terms of guilt and innocence and punishment and reward.

Sometimes you might hear missionaries who have gone from the West to maybe an Eastern country say, oh, it's so hard to explain Christianity, it's so hard to explain the cross, it's hard to explain Paul to them because they don't think in terms of guilt and innocence, they think in terms of shame and honour.

That might be true to a limited extent. But it's equally true of us that we actually need to gain a better understanding of shame and honour ourselves. It's not just we need to export a sense of guilt and innocence, we need to understand shame and honour ourselves.

Let's see in verse 10. This is what will happen. Shame will cover you. And probably the thing we've got missing in our understanding of guilt and innocence is just how personal good and evil are.

[13:19] The world around us firmly believes, and sometimes we'll actually argue explicitly, that good and evil are abstract, impersonal things.

You don't need God to explain or to be the foundation of good and evil. And the world is dead wrong. But often we just swallow that anyway, don't we?

And yet, doing good means, by its definition, doing what pleases God. Whether or not you believe that's what it means, that is what it means, biblically.

It's not just ticking a box. It's not even ticking God's boxes, but it is doing what pleases him, personally. And so doing evil is what displeases him.

Good and evil are deeply personal, relational ideas. And so this isn't just about giving Edom a sentence, just giving them, telling them they are guilty of a crime.

[14:23] But it's about covering them with shame for doing what has displeased God. You'll see the repeated do not that I pointed out earlier, verses 12 to 14.

It is literally do not, is what he's saying, but in a sense you could sort of loosely translate it as how could you? How dare you? How dare you gloat over the day of your brother?

How dare you rejoice over the people of Judah? How dare you boast in the day of distress? How dare you enter the gate of my people?

How dare you gloat over his disaster? How dare you loot his wealth? How dare you stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives? How dare you hand over his survivors in the day of his distress? How dare you God is not a blindfolded judge? He is personally furious. I think C.S. Lewis made a genius movie making Aslan a lion in his Narnia stories.

[15:31] There's that wonderful rhyme that you hear in the stories, wrong will be right when Aslan comes in sight. At the sound of his roar sorrows will be no more.

When he bears his teeth, winter meets its death. And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again. We've seen him in the first part we looked at as if he was bringing out his teeth and claws to tell them what the punishment was.

And in this section, he is roaring. He is covering his enemies in shame. And Obadiah, it's very poetic and very great artistic genius in the way he's presenting it.

He fills it with lots of really harsh sounds in the original. So it sounds like a really harsh sermon. You can always hear God roaring in his preaching. This is personal.

You won't just be punished given a sentence by some judge who couldn't actually care less what happened but there's the law so you have to do it. No, he's saying I hate what you did to my people and I will put you to shame.

[16:42] This is more than just a courtroom. This is God putting these people to shame. So they were less than brothers and this is more than a courtroom and so the final thing we need to see is that it's about more than just Eden.

There's that time you may remember in school and maybe for some it's more recent than others. You're in class and the head teacher comes in and the head teacher needs to give somebody a row.

Sometimes the head teacher knows who he or she is giving a row to you and sometimes it's just shouting at whoever did this. It happened quite a lot in my school. Primary school but high school as well.

My year was born in 86, 87 so we were called the Chernobyl generation. The headmaster actually one year came in to an assembly and declared that the devil was in our midst.

But there's those times when the headmaster is there and he's telling everyone off and you didn't actually do this thing this one time but you know that you're guilty of pretty much the same thing.

[17:49] You just didn't get caught that time. You get that horrible sinking feeling of shame that actually I know I'm guilty of this as well. And there's a really important sense in which this passage is a word of comfort for God's people.

Obadiah is preaching at Edom so that he can be overheard by Israel. God assuring his people that he will get Edom for what they have done to them. But we also can have that sinking feeling of I know that I'm guilty of something similar myself.

We know what it's like to be unloving. Don't we? We all know what it's like to choose to do the unloving thing or just to fail to do the kind thing.

Maybe a Christian friend is being made fun of. Maybe at work probably within the church with your church friend and then you just stood there.

It's that time you joined in with the gossiping or the slandering of a brother or sister in Christ. The time you laughed at someone's misfortune or just didn't care. We all know what it's like to be unloving, to betray our friends, to betray God's people.

[19:10] So what do we do? Knowing that this is at Edom but it's about more than just Edom.

Where do we look? Well we need to look at the very worst instance of mistreatment there ever was.

the worst betrayal bearing there was in Jesus as he was betrayed and taken to the cross and covered in shame himself.

But Jesus was betrayed by two men wasn't he? There were two men that betrayed him. There was one man that gave him away to the Pharisees who Satan had entered him and he betrayed him with a kiss of all things and he fell to his doom.

He was cut off forever and yet there was one more who betrayed him. He saw Jesus suffering and just stood there and did nothing. He stood aloof and three times denied Jesus.

And yet his end was so different wasn't it? Because on that day of the Lord you see in verse 15 the day of the Lord is near upon all nations and as you have done it shall be done to you.

[20:29] Your deeds shall return on your own head. That happened to Edom. It happened to Judas as he had done as he had cut off Jesus and so he was cut off from Jesus and his deed returns on his own head.

And on that day of the Lord that is what began at the cross that was a first glimpse of that day of the Lord what happened was instead of it being poured out on the nations instead of it being poured out on Peter as he had done it was done to Jesus Peter's deeds returned on to Jesus head Jesus was covered with shame he was covered specifically with Peter's shame with all of his people's shame for the sins they had committed against God for the betrayal that we've committed it and so after

that resurrection day that angel said to the disciples go and tell the disciples which was said to the women in Mark's gospel go and tell the disciples but not Peter that's not what it says is it go and tell the disciples and especially Peter

Jesus had covered himself with Peter's shame so that he could call Peter back get the disciples and make sure Peter comes he probably thinks he shouldn't be coming make sure he comes to Galilee and there was that wonderful pursuing do you love me do you love me you know I love you Jesus was betrayed by these two men and so there was that one possibility you couldn't just be cut off and yet you could accept this wonderful mercy that although we can see the seeds of this evil in ourselves we can know God to be so merciful as he calls us do you love me and we can be part of his people once more so are you ready to hear those words are you ready to meet him will you meet him as a traitor who will be cut off forever or will you meet him as one who has been pursued by him pursued by God and ask do you love me what will be your answer will you be ready to say yes

I trust that you had my shame covering you I deserve all the shame but I will trust that all my shame went on you because that is my only hope and I thank you for that great mercy that you show me if that is not your case then I urge you to pray that pray it with us as we pray this as we come to close so let's pray our father in heaven we acknowledge that we do deserve to be covered in shame for the ways that we have betrayed you and for the ways with which we have mistreated the lord Jesus and your people we know what it is like to be unloving to be traitors we feel that seed of sin in our hearts and father we want to repent of that we are sorry for that we pray that any pain we may feel may never be a permanent cutting off but just your loving hands chastising us we pray that we would never dare keep you or your people at a distance but come to know you as our father the one whom we love and the one whom we know to be loving us and to have pursued us bring us into that saving knowledge of the lord Jesus and your mercy we ask in Jesus strong name amen