

Obadiah: The Lord Will Have His Day

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Going Where Obadiah Takes Us

Jeff Mulzon, where are you now? 26 years ago, Jeff transferred into the sophomore class of Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School from “public high.” One really had to wonder what he was doing at a Christian school. Jeff used profanity freely. He railed mercilessly on “the nerds.” He had vulgar things to say about the girls. He managed to stay on the “bad side” of the teachers and spent more than a few sessions in the principal’s office. It was incredible that he made it through an entire school year at Kettle Moraine, and surprised no one that he wasn’t back for his junior year.

“Good riddance!” “What was a kid like that doing at our Lutheran high school?” Those were certainly the sentiments expressed about Jeff. But God had a purpose for him to be there. God loved Jeff. God sent his Son to die for Jeff and redeem him. God wanted him to be confronted with his wickedness and the divine punishment it was bringing on him. God more than anything wanted to welcome back a penitent Jeff as his son (prayerfully he has).

Such is our just and gracious Lord. Such is the message that rings out clearly from the 21 verses of Obadiah, the Bible’s shortest book. In it, the Lord beckons us to consider where the “Jeff Mulzons” are today: the troublemaker you grew up with, the young adult friend who was always pushing and exceeding the limits; the irreligious family member or acquaintance who isn’t shy about making cynical remarks about the church; many right around you so caught up in this material world that they’re oblivious to their heading for hell. What might still be said to them? What might still be worked in them to escape God’s punishment? In Obadiah, the Holy Spirit also has us look at ourselves. He bids us to take another painful look into our own hearts for the rebelliousness that God so terribly condemns, so that he might also graciously purify. His purpose, as always, is to sanctify us along with all the elect for “the day of the Lord.”

1a. Judgment on Edom: From the Lord (verse 1)

“Connecting to the context” of a Bible book helps us connect it to our lives in the way that God desires. In Obadiah, the Holy Spirit apparently guides us away from the prophet it is authored by, and even a definite timeframe in which he wrote it. The effect is to make us more attentive to the people of Edom and the Lord’s dealings with them.

This opening verse raises many questions without answering them, here, or anywhere else in Scripture. There are no clues whether the prophet Obadiah (literally “servant/worshiper of the Lord”) is one of the other 9 mentioned in the Bible or yet another. We don’t know what kind of vision Obadiah’s was, whether he “was in the spirit” or simply “saw in his mind” what he was to pen. We can only guess at the “we” who heard the Lord’s message. Was “an envoy” literally dispatched by the Lord like Elijah to Hazeal and Jehu (1 Kings 19:15-16), or was the “Ruler of the Nations” simply influencing military policy against Edom in a number of countries?

Rather than spend too much time on questions we can’t answer, the first verse sets our mind on what we can say. The “Sovereign Lord,” Adonay Jehovah, has declared war on Edom and will use a coalition of earthly powers against it. A theme of imminent judgment is set. What’s so striking is that Obadiah was inspired to use the tetragrammeton (“the LORD,” NIV) each time he refers to God, in spite of this theme. We’re reminded that in that name there is both a “jealousness” to punish as well as to save (“The Lord, the Lord . . . forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished” Exodus 34:6 & 7¹).

¹ Hoerber, *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (1986) pp. 135-136 (all Bible quotes in this paper taken from this Bible)

In a pastor's counsel with the sinner (starting with himself), addressing the sin and pointing out God's punishment for it is not pleasant. We want to get to the good part, God's absolution. But not too fast. "The Lord" would have us dwell on him as the one who both punishes and forgives. He wants there to be a keen awareness of his power to punish sin so that Godly sorrow results. Then, having convicted and prepared the heart, the Holy Spirit will surely use the message of our Lord's atoning death to confirm the cancellation of every sin and its punishment.

The Lord calls out warning to Edom, especially in verses 2-14. A key verse to understanding God's just anger against it is Obadiah 10: "Because of the violence against your brother Jacob . . . you will be destroyed forever." The prophets abound in pronouncements of judgment on Edom (Isaiah 34:5-15; 63 :1-6; Ezekiel 25:12-24; 35 :115; Amos 1:11-12; Malachi 1:2-4). We learn from Obadiah some of the reasons why. Their atrocities towards Judah were shocking; their hardness towards the Lord infuriating. Additional notes on Edom are helpful in understanding its cruelty against Israel, as well as offering some possibilities as to the time when its sins occurred.

Notes on Edom

1. Esau (Edom) despises his birthright (Genesis 25:29-34)
2. Isaac's "blessing" on Esau: "away from the earth's richness, live by the sword, will throw off his (brother Jacob's) yoke" (Genesis 27:39-40)
3. Esau/Edom settles in "hill country of Seir" (*see map*) (Genesis 36:8)
4. Edom refuses passage to the Israelites heading to Canaan (Numbers 20:14-21)
5. Edom conquered by King David (2 Samuel 8:13-14)
6. Revolts vs. King Jehoram and routes Judah in battle - approx. 850 B.C. (2 Kings 8:20-22)
7. Probable participant in plundering of Jerusalem & Jehoram's palace by Arabs & the Philistines - approx. 845 B.C. (2 Chronicles 21:16-17; Joel 3:19)
8. King Amaziah of Judah defeats Edom & captures its principal city Sela - approx 795 B.C. (2 Kings 14:7)
9. Involved with the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem - approx. 586 B.C. (Psalm 137:7; Ezekiel 35:10; Lamentations 4:21-22)

It was shortly after the 6th century B.C. that the Edomites was driven from their territory by the Nabataeans (settling just to the west in the Negev). Their new land became known as Idumea. In the mid 2nd century B.C., the Maccabees re-conquered the Edomites but not for good. About 100 years later, the Idumean Herodians reasserted power over Judah with Roman backing.²

There is wide disagreement among commentators on the date of Obadiah. Based on two incidents (#'s 7 & 9 above) when Edom was involved in violence against the Jews, the book may have been written as early as 845 B.C. or as late as 500 B.C. The presenter of Obadiah might use either time as a historical setting as long as he or she is careful not to state Obadiah's date as "Bible fact." As stated before, this may be the Spirit's encouragement to focus not so much on "when things happened" as on "what."

1b. Judgment on Edom: Proud People Brought Low (Obadiah 2-4)

No matter how humble you are, pride is something to be guarded against. While the Bible speaks of "boasting in the Lord," it also warns that "Pride goes before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). The Lord zeroed in on Edom and its pride, "'Though you soar like the eagle. . . from there I will bring you down,' declares the Lord" (Obadiah 4). One of the things that had "puffed up" the Edomites were their mountain fortresses. The "hill country of Seir" included rugged mountain terrain where its people could hole up in "clefts of the rock" (Obadiah 3). El Quaida and the Taliban in the mountains of Afghanistan (and Pakistan) come to mind today.

² 2 Krueger, pp. 1-2, 4

As the NIV footnote points out, “the rock (verse 3)” in Hebrew is “Sela.” It may be a wordplay on the name of one of Edom’s virtually impenetrable fortresses (Sela is mentioned in a couple of places in Scripture to denote Edom, much like Samaria often is used for Northern Israel - 2 Kings 14:7; Isaiah 16:1). Sela was the site that later became known as Petra. The place is a square mile basin surrounded by steep mountain walls. Its only approach is a path (sometimes as narrow as 12 feet) through a mile long canyon with rock walls 200 feet high³. Caves and cisterns in the rocky terrain allowed for ample storage of supplies and water.

Such mountain strongholds gave the Edomites the feeling that they could never be conquered⁴ (see illustration). Sinful pride that had puffed them up proved to be most deceitful (Obadiah 3). It had pitted them against an enemy that they couldn’t stand against, the Almighty Lord of hosts. Rock walls are no match for him. The highest of highs that Edom’s pride had elevated it to would now be turned into the lowest of lows by the Lord (note the numerous times this is stated in Obadiah 2-4: “make you small,” “be utterly despised,” “bring you down”). There was no doubt about Edom’s doom.

Sinful pride is deceitful. It leads us to review over and over again “what we were able to do.” It is responsible for our one-sided conversations about our families or our interests. It is eager to assert who or what we know. Pride blocks the view of our own frailties and sins. It stifles continuous words of thanks that should be spoken to God. It creates the feeling that we have everything under control, that we’re secure because of earthly circumstances. Arrogance blinds us as Christians to the fact that pride is a problem for us. In the process, it sets up the idol of me in our lives at the expense of our devotion to and trust in God. It creates hostilities between us and the Lord who justly will not tolerate any other god than himself. Obadiah’s words against Edom’s pride were meant to condemn ours. God intended for his words to be almighty battering rams against the strongholds of pride that others build. They are an urgent warning of the certainty of unimaginable lows (the depths of hell) that the Lord must bring as a punishment for sinful pride.

1c. Judgment on Edom: The Totality of Its Destruction (Obadiah 5-9)

Edom’s pride was not only in its mountain strongholds. It extended to its agricultural and monetary treasures (verses 5-6), its strategic alliances with other countries (verse 7), its wisdom (verse 8), and its longevity as a nation (verses 9-10)⁵. In this next section, the Lord presents Edom with an unbelievable scenario to it and the nations that knew it: not a single edible grape left on its fertile hillsides; handsome homes all looted; every trace of treasure hidden away in caves, gone! There was great wealth. Edom was a crossroads of trade. The King’s Highway from Damascus ran north to south ending at Ezion-Geber on the eastern branch of the Red Sea. At this bustling port, another trade route ran west across the Sinai to Egypt. Edom was not a secluded mountain state. It was a “New York” or a “Netherlands” that took in lucrative duties on trade flowing through it. Other nations forged alliances with Edom to ensure their products would get to market. These treaties helped to solidify the hold Edom had on its control of trade.⁶ Yet, God would somehow “tap it all off.” The fulfillment of this came during the 400’s B.C. when the Nabataeans (Arab clans) displaced the Edomites from their land.

But how could such a thing happen, when Edom was situated so securely with its fortresses and alliances? In two words: the Lord. Edom’s destruction wouldn’t come on it “catastrophically” like it had the Canaanites. God would work through normal occurrences. Wise leaders (Job’s friend and counselor Eliphaz the Temanite apparently came from Edom, Job 2:11) Edom had relied on for victories on the battlefield and control of trade routes would be confounded by the Lord (Obadiah 8). To their shock, the foreign allies Edom had counted on for support wouldn’t even allow refugees to cross the border (verse 7, literally “your allies will dismiss you at the border). The ambassadors they had ratified treaties with by “eating bread” would now be a

³ Spaude, pp. 8-10

⁴ Tenney, *The Zondervan’s Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, (1976), Vol. 4, p. 740

⁵ Laetsch, p. 205

⁶ Laetsch, p. 198

“trap for them,” and even a source of deep despair (literally verse 7 is translated, “they set your bread (of a treaty) as a wound for you”). Somehow “warriors” dug in behind impregnable rock walls would be slaughtered by their adversaries (also Amos 1:12). A parallel judgment on Edom in Jeremiah 49:7-22 is strikingly similar in imagery and utter destruction. It serves to drive home the horrible point. God would muster every earthly force possible against the Edomites in a way that the U.S. can only dream about bringing against terrorists. And the effect would be unbelievably devastating.

In regard to another ancient world player, Persia, God states this: “I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things” (Isaiah 45:7). In the context of judgment, we may couple Hebrews 10:31: “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” When the all powerful Creator of the universe turns his almighty force against sinful man, there is utter devastation. It’s like the swath of debris left by a tornado. The Lord doesn’t need to unleash forces of nature to destroy. He may wither the sources of strength that are so supportive: intelligence, mental fortitude and natural ability, physical health and strength, earning power and enormous financial assets, legal guarantees and heartfelt promises, family support and close friendships. He can easily sweep them away.

This is great comfort to God’s children, just as Obadiah’s words may have brought solace initially to the people of Judah. They had suffered greatly from Edom’s atrocities (verses 10-11) and apparently were still suffering (verses 12-14). God knows and cares and acts, powerfully and effectively, when evil people mistreat and hurt his children. Even if God’s power against evil isn’t evident, it’s at work and will deliver totally.

Verses 5-9 of Obadiah are another way that the Holy Spirit sharpens the cutting edge of the Law. Tell someone that they’ve done wrong, even sinned, and it may not have much effect. Tell them what they have to lose (everything!), that God will make sure that they do, and their hardness may begin to crack. This is the stern, ultimate result of sin. “You could lose your job (your ministry), and worse, your chance to work for God.” “Family members are going to be alienated, but that’s not all: this will alienate you from God.” “You could go to prison for that! You could go to hell for that!” If there is the inclination to cling to sin and oppose God, Obadiah’s evidences of God’s total destruction against impenitence should get a person’s attention. As devastating as the earthly destruction God may allow or even bring, it cannot compare to the everlasting destruction of a person’s soul and body in hell. God’s pictures of specific and total punishment for sin in Obadiah and the rest of Scripture are an effective weapon. Earthly treasures completely gone and a “worm that does not die” (Isaiah 66:24)—such descriptions of God’s punishment are his demolition tools against the most stubborn of sinful wills.

1d. Judgment on Edom: For Crimes Against Judah (Obadiah 10-14)

It’s sickening to hear news reports of brutal acts carried out by one person against another. It’s even more shocking to hear that a family member committed them against their own flesh and blood. This is the hardness the Lord points out about Edom’s sins against its “brother Jacob” (Judah). Was it during the 800’s (B.C.) when Arabs and the Philistines ransacked Judah, when they carried off palace treasures and King Jehoram’s wives and sons? Was it almost 300 years later in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar razed Jerusalem and took prisoner the nation’s finest? In either case, the Edomites were accessories to the crime. As enemies closed in for the kill on Judah’s capital, its inhabitants would have looked desperately for help from any quarter. Would the distant blood ties between their ancestors Jacob and Esau mean anything? Not in the least. Edom “stood aloof” (verse 11) while the carnage took place. Quite a picture of the coldness and hardness of these peoples’ hearts!

Edom didn’t remain aloof. It was bad enough for them to celebrate and gloat over Judah’s demise (as Americans we might think of the hurt of Palestinians celebrating 9-11). The Edomites went so far as to plunder Jerusalem left defenseless by its destroyers. Their death squads watched and waited for refugees and mercilessly executed them. The immediate prohibitions⁷ in verses 12-14 indicate Obadiah’s addressing a current and

⁷ Weingreen, p. 77

continuous sin. “Don’t look down,” “don’t seize their wealth,” even “stop waiting at the crossroads.” These Edomites were cold, hardened killers. Unlike many of the nations condemned by God’s prophets for cruelties against Judah, there seems a chance that the Edomites may have been on hand to hear or learn of Obadiah’s cries against them. And yet, even though the prophet enumerated their sins and the totality of God’s imminent judgment on them, they seemed unfazed.

Obadiah’s hearers may not have caught on, but God gives us the opportunity to meditate on his seer’s emphasis. Starting in verse 11 and continuing through verse 14, “b’yom,” “in the day of,” occurs ten times. We hear God counting up the opportunities Edom had to show mercy to its brother nation and instead chose heartless acts of cruelty. We hear God building on each “in the day of” to a climax in verse 15 when it will be Edom’s day (really the Lord’s day) for judgment.

The shunned spouse who pleads, “I didn’t do anything to deserve this;” the parent who’s struggling to come to grips with the son or daughter who doesn’t want anything to do with them; the perplexed church member (or pastor) who can’t understand the coldness of along-time delinquent; there’s a heart prick for each of them in these verses. Was it their aloofness, their neglect, their lack of love that has led to the coldness now being shown to them in return? Is this a warning for “the aloof” (for me?) to “pull the plank from your own eye?” Is this an occasion to confess the sin of being “an accessory” to the sins that have plagued these people by absenting one’s self, when support from a Christian brother or sister was so badly needed?

There’s more law here. God knows every one of the sins of those who remain impenitent. If their sins don’t disappear to the cross through faith, then God’s punishment in hell is mounting with each cruelty. Callousness towards conscience and God’s Word of warning may even bring God’s judgment of a hardened heart already now. Such a person should not be ignored or neglected. We shouldn’t think that “nothing will get through to them, so why even try?” In Obadiah, God took the time to enumerate specific sins and to point out their cruelty, for people who appeared to be a lost cause. Every soul is priceless to God. Every soul is one he died to redeem. We will keep pointing out sins, we will announce their cruelty, and leave it up to God as to how he will use our pronouncements of sin.

2a. The Day of the Lord: Damnation & Deliverance (Obadiah 15-18)

At a place of business the day of reckoning has come. There can be no more delays. Decisions must be handed down. For some, it will be very bad news; for others, very good. So it is with “the day of the Lord.” This often used phrase in Scripture (Isaiah 2:12ff; Isaiah 13; Joel 2:1-11 & 28-32; Joel 3:18-21; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:5-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) “refers to a time when God carries out his will--either in judgment or redemption.”⁸ Life destroying earthly events thousands of years from the end of the world are compressed on the pages of Scripture with final judgment on the wicked. Conversely, “the day of the Lord” also marks dramatic events in which God’s people experience his salvation on earth and finally in heaven. The “day of the Lord” spans thousands of years and calls attention to many events in which there is decisive destruction and deliverance of the Lord. As Obadiah’s prophecy reaches its culmination, along with the deep dread of God’s punishment on the impenitent (now expanded to all nations) shines his Gospel light of rescue for his people.

Obadiah uses familiar pictures of judgment: drinking the wine of God’s wrath (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17 & 22; Jeremiah 25:15-29; 49:12; Habakkuk 2:16; Revelation 14:10; 16:19) and being consumed by fire (Exodus 15:7; Isaiah 10:17; 29:5-6; Nahum 1:6 & 10; Malachi 4:1; Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17). God will even use his “house of Jacob” as a “fire” and a “flame” to administer his justice. What comes to mind are Esther, Mordecai, and Jews across the Persian empire executing God’s people’s enemies. The Lord’s punishment was also carried out against “the house of Esau” when David, Amaziah (see “Notes on Edom,” page 2) and finally the Maccabees defeated Edom. On The Last Day, this consuming fire will come from believers like the Ninevites as they stand in judgment against those who had rejected Christ (Matthew 12:41). In each case, the result is total annihilation in hell. Yet on that same “day” the house of Jacob that includes both believing Jews and Gentiles

⁸ Spaude, p. 21

(Isaiah 2:3 & 5; Isaiah 14:1; Luke 1:33) will possess its inheritance. This means heaven for the “house triumphant” as well as kingdom riches the Lord promises to his “house militant.” Obadiah expands on these in the closing verses.

Of special significance is the Gospel promise of deliverance in Obadiah 17. Literally it reads, “But on Mt. Zion will be those who have escaped, and it will be holy.” Scenes of Solomon’s Temple being desecrated in the destruction of Jerusalem would have weighed heavily on the hearts of the Jews. This place had been “holy to the Lord.” This was where they gained their sinlessness and their acceptance before God through the mediation of priests and sacrifices. But once the Temple was gone, along with it vanished any hope God’s people had of ridding themselves from their rebelliousness and uncleanness. And yet, God holds out to them in Obadiah’s prophecy the hope that they could still be holy. This holiness had to come from another source, and it would: from the Holy One, their Messiah. Here Obadiah bids the house of Jacob (including us today) to look with joy on the saving righteousness that comes alone from Jesus (Psalm 22:22-31; Isaiah 53; Isaiah 61:1-3 & 10; Luke 4:17-21). It was Jesus living his life free of the impurity of sin and his dying to transfer his righteousness to his people that brings holiness and joy before God in “the day of the Lord.”

Obadiah’s clarity in picturing damnation and deliverance are the dynamite of God’s counsel to all made filthy by sin. What comes to mind are the many instances of stubborn sin: in the self-righteous prospect, in the defensive church member, in family members who won’t take blame, in our own hearts that can’t own up to what we have done. The day of the Lord looms large at such times. Do we really want to drink the cup of God’s wrath, one that will fill us with eternal death? Do we really want to suffer the flames of hell that will sear body and soul for eternity? “The Lord has spoken” (Obadiah 18). What power there is for breaking through rock hard hearts! We have witnessed such power in the change of heart, the sorrow and fear over what has been done.

And then the day of the Lord shines out escape from sin’s sadness and doom! There’s holiness to be had. We can be just like God, we can be acceptable to him in spite of haunting consciences. God declares us holy by Jesus living it for us, by his dying a death that paid for every last sin, by his rising again so that we might believe we’re holy. What relief and joy; what salvation there is, in pronouncing, “you’re holy because of Jesus,” to the one who lingers with guilt, and to ourselves. It’s such holiness that allows us to live humbly but confidently with heads up. We look boldly to the Lord for all the blessings of his inheritance granted in this world. We look eagerly to the skies for the day of the Lord when we will stand blameless before his judgment seat, when we will begin our eternal celebration in his glory.

2b. The Day of the Lord: The Remnant of Edom Reclaimed (Obadiah 19-21)

We can see the Old Testament hearers of Obadiah dreaming of what it will be like to have the borders of Israel expanded again to their former size under King David and Solomon. We can hear their hope-filled voices talking of the return of relatives as distant as Sepharad (Sardis, Asia Minor). We note that Zionists today mistakenly interpret these verses as well, as God’s promise of a powerful political Jewish state.

But this is not the “governing” (shaphat) that God and his people will do on earth. Jesus made that abundantly clear. The Lord promised to extend his gracious rule of faith to all nations through the Gospel of the Savior. As the Israelites were taking possession of the Promised Land, God was already looking forward to this spiritual kingdom. Balaam’s prophecy in Numbers 24:17-18 is especially striking: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth. Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong.” Of course, these words apply to the Son of David who would “reign over the house of Jacob forever” (Luke 1:33). Jesus “governs” the lives of believers with his grace, his truth, his peace. Those “from Mt Zion” (the Church) who speak the Gospel “deliver” spiritually from the axis of evil: the Devil, the world, and our sinful flesh (and finally death).

It’s interesting to track the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem after Pentecost. In a number of ways, its ripples gradually extended to the areas mentioned in Obadiah 19-20: Philistia (Acts 8:40), Samaria (Acts 8

17), Zarephath (Acts 11:19), and Sepharad/Sardis (Revelation 3:1).⁹ Could God's kingdom even include Edomites, after such rampant wickedness and unbelief in their nation? Obadiah appears to state that this will be the case in verse 21: "Deliverers will go up from Mt. Zion to govern the mountains of Esau." Isaiah supports this in chapter 16:1 when he cites Sela (Edom) "sending lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land." Again in Isaiah 42:11-13, Edomites are pictured worshiping the Lord after he has triumphed over them in battle. They have been freed from their oppression of sin and unbelief

By allying themselves to the Jews in the first century A.D., the Idumeans were wiped out by the Romans and ceased to exist as a nation. Yet, even before this, under the Maccabean takeover of Edom's country and culture, and with the Herodians bringing Idumeans to Jerusalem, there was ample opportunity for the Gospel to work "in Edom." We might imagine people of Herod's court investigating further into the inquiry of the Magi, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2). It's very likely that people come to Jerusalem from Idumea would have witnessed Jesus perform miracles, preach his soul-winning Gospel, even die on the cross. What a gracious God the Lord is! He doesn't desire hell's punishment on anyone, no matter who they might be. He works things out physically and especially spiritually so that the message of Jesus as Savior is heard and believed, even by those who seem like they could never be included in his kingdom. What an apt closing for Obadiah: "And the kingdom will be the Lord's." The power to rule and the glory is his.

This is a lesson that we do well to review every day. "Deliverers will go up from Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau." We are those deliverers equipped with the saving message of the Gospel. There are many Jeff Mulzons, those who seem like they could never be reached, who don't want to be reached. But God still desires fervently that they be rescued from their wickedness, and will bring some of them into his kingdom. We dare not lose faith in the saving power of law and gospel simply, clearly, and Biblically stated. We need to be on the look out every day in the Bible for specific and illustrative ways that God communicates sin and the Savior like here in Obadiah. Such words need to be put into practice in the way we apply God's condemnation and forgiveness first to ourselves, and then to our Christian family at home and in the church. We can't shy away from those who are openly hard towards God and towards Christians. What chance do they have of being saved? The same chance as those Edomites, the same chance as we who were born with identical sinful and stubborn hearts. Rather than shaking our heads at their sinful attitudes and actions; rather than giving them little chance if any of believing, let's open our lives and our mouths in ways that will bring them to the Lord. Let's pray "thy kingdom come" for them and then let it come through us.

⁹ Laetsch, p. 212

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