

PROPHETS: LESSON # 1
“THY NEST IN THE STARS”
Obadiah 4

INTRODUCTION:

The eagle builds his nest so high that it is almost inaccessible by man.

- The Edomites were just such a nation of “eagles” when it came to their pride.
- The term “Eagle’s Nest” would seem to stand as the reason for, or basis of, pride. That’s because the eagle’s nest is built high, seemingly out of reach of enemies. Haughtiness and pride cause feelings of self-security as well as “being above” everyone else! We generally become proud when we conclude, for some vain reason, that we are something special -- unlike anyone else.
- Whatever the reason (position, job, achievements, strength, looks, wisdom, wealth) the resultant pride is the same for all. It varies only in degree.
- PRIDE: Either reasonable or excessive self-esteem.
- In fact *some* pride is good and healthy to possess:
 1. It builds our self-image, thus, eliminating depression.
 2. Motivates to excellence in any work.
 3. Result of a good conscience for doing what is right
 4. We can rejoice because we are pleasing God.

CHALLENGE: Having *reasons* for pride or “nests” is not the problem. Rather placing these nests in the stars (*excessive pride*) is the challenge we face.

LOOK AT SOME “NESTS” THAT ARE OFTEN EXALTED “TO THE STARS:”

- I. PIOUS** - Religious devotion that lapses into a “more-righteous-than-thou” attitude. It can also be manifested with a “martyr complex” -- wanting others to notice and praise your abstinence, lack of wealth, lack of health, the tough circumstances you have in life.
- A. **Matt.23:1-12** - Scribes and Pharisees actions are rebuked. Today we can become so confident of our salvation that we let our daily lives fall into rationalized sin: “deceived by pride.”
- B. **I Pet.3:8-9** - Must show love, not disgust for those not as “righteous as we are.”
- II. RICH** - Here our hope and trust gradually defects to our wealth & achievements. We often excuse our heavy work schedule as being “for the family or the Lord.” Yet in reality we are neglecting both.
- A. **Prov.23:4-5** - *“Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings, like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.”*
- B. **I Tim.6:5-11, 17** - Pride in riches will neglect “treasures in heaven.”
- III. INTELLECTUAL** - Deceptive pride in intellectual prowess leads to a distortion of God’s truth. Others refuse to accept the simplicity of the Gospel or even the existence of God.
- A. **Rom.1:21-25** - Intellectual pride of man was one reason for God rejecting man.
- B. **I Cor.1:18-21, 26** - Regardless of man’s reasoning or wisdom, God has chosen the simple and uncomplicated Gospel of Christ to save man.

IV. DOMINANCE - Military might , physical power, or personal strength often become the object of faith and trust for some. Thus, arrogant boasts are made of one's (personal, national) powers with "no need of help from anyone."

- A. **Obadiah 3-4** - Might of Edom would be brought down to destruction.
- B. **Isaiah 14:13-20** - The might of the king of Babylon would be brought down.

V. EMBELLISHMENT - Good looks or beauty become the source of excessive pride.

- A. **I Pet.3:3-4** - Outward adorning okay, but emphasis should be placed on inward clothing--meek and quiet spirit.
- B. **James 2:1-4** - Pride can result in "paying special attention" to another who looks better or dresses better than others.

WHICH OF THESE ARE "OUR NESTS?" If "exalted to the stars," they can prove destructive.

DANGERS: *"Though you build high like the eagle, though you set you nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD. Obadiah 4*

PRIDE keeps us from:

1. Listening to others
2. Seeing how we really are
3. Admitting our errors
4. Seeking God for help

Such will result in our humiliation and destruction, **Job 20:6-7** (Zophar)

SOLUTION: *HUMBLE yourselves before God; place your "nests" a lot lower.*

READ: **James 4:7; I Peter 5:6; Proverbs 27:2**

CONCLUSION:

- Excessive pride is very deceptive and destructive because it is an abuse of something which is good.
- ALL of us must strive diligently to be aware of Satan's attempts to exalt our nests "to the stars." It brought clear destruction to Edom as prophesied by Obadiah. Pride can also be OUR demise, IF we do not repent. Examine YOUR heart today and humble yourself before the living God!

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPHETS

Lesson 1 --- “Thy Nest in the Stars”

1. Are all forms of pride sinful? Explain.
2. Whose PRIDE was the Lord dealing with in this lesson and what were some of the manifestations of it?
3. The five points in this lesson depict some of the “nests” that often bring about self-examination. Name some others, with comments.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
4. Explain the statement found under “CHALLENGE” in the introduction: “Having *reasons* for pride is not the problem.”
5. Which, if any, of these nests had been problems of Judah and how did they affect their relationship with God?
6. Explain how each of these points may have been “eagles nests” in someone you’ve been personally acquainted with and tell what you consider to have been the resolution as it exists today. [No names please! Just some practical illustrations/applications of points.]
 - a) Pious
 - b) rich
 - c) intellectual
 - d) embellishment

“GOD IS NOT MOCKED”

Gal.6:7

INTRODUCTION:

In **Obadiah 10 & 15**, GOD is clear in pointing out that Edom’s haughty spirit and evil deeds against his brother-nation, Judah, were going to be repaid in like manner against them -- by their own confederates (friends), **vs.9**.

- Thus, the unalterable law of God rings true again, “*What one sows, that will he reap.*” Brief explanation: “sowing”= planting the seed; “reap”= harvesting the crop. If you plant corn; you harvest corn. You cannot plant beans and harvest carrots.
- Down through time, including today, this principle demands our attention. Even as Christians, during times when we think God doesn’t see, hear, or care what we do, this principle is ALWAYS true!
- In **Gal.6:7-9** Paul warns us that we “*be not deceived, for God is not mocked;*” **His law of sowing and reaping still stands fast.**
- To “Mock” means “to turn up the nose at; to ridicule, be evasive, or try to outwit.”

GOD’S PRINCIPLE: “*Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*”

I. SOW Seeds of the Flesh -----> Reap CORRUPTION

Gal.5:19-21

Will & Dictates
of the Flesh

(Inferior or worse condition; destruction)

1. Lusts
2. Cruelty
3. Violence
4. Hate

It is a sobering fact that even divine forgiveness does not fully alter this law. Many still reap the harvest or consequences of evil sown.

II. SOW Seeds of the Spirit -----> Reap ETERNAL LIFE

Gal.5:22-23

Will & Dictates
of the Spirit

(Blessing NOW and more in future)

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Long-suffering
5. Kindness
6. Self-control

Now both guilt and penalty for our sins are remitted--NO eternal death for us.

III. “DO NOT Be Deceived; God Is NOT Mocked.”

- A. An occasional sowing of the seed of the Spirit will NOT offset or overcome the harmful effects of many sown seeds of the Flesh.
 1. Occasional attendance; giving; studying; helping others
 2. If we are not careful, worldly attractions will choke out the message of God.
- B. The formality of sowing seeds of the Spirit does NOT make either the sowing or the seeds genuine.
 1. Some “pretend” to play church or Christian...when it is convenient.
 2. “Reaction Formation”: Cruel or hard in business and personal affairs; but generous in church, giving, teaching, etc. Here is one who continues to sow BOTH seeds of the Flesh and seeds of the Spirit thinking that the latter will balance out or cancel the former.
 3. One must first STOP sowing seeds of the Flesh, and then sow ONLY seeds of the Spirit before his fruit is pure and genuine. “God is not mocked.” **Gal.5:24-26**
 - a) Must consciously admit errors -- cruelty, violence, deception...

- b) Must consciously work against sin
- c) Must seek and identify the seeds of the Spirit
- d) Must then sow only these seeds before a pure harvest of spiritual fruit will be made...and eternal life realized.

CONCLUSION:

- We all need to be more aware of this important principle of God; if we sow a crop of wild oats when we are young, it will lead to a harvest of grief and sorrow for years to come. **DO NOT BE DECEIVED!**
- Instead, channel your desires into proper activities that not only bring us happiness and well-being now, but also **GLORIFY GOD**---sowing the seeds of the Spirit!

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPHETS

Lesson 2 --- “God Is Not Mocked”

1. To whom does the principle of this lesson apply?
Why?
2. We know this principle is true in the physical realm, but how can it be always true in the spiritual realm?
 - a) cf. What about athiests/ other ungodly people who raise the biggest crops when they farm? Get the best jobs at the factories? Receive the greatest monetary rewards?
 - b) cf. What about sincere Christians who are sick, or poor, or ugly?
3. What can possibly be the purpose of evil people prospering or good people hurting? Doesn't this violate the text? Please explain.
4. How can christians in their actions “*be deceived*” or be “*mocking God*?”
5. When in life is the best time for someone to sow their “wild oats,” and WHY?

PROPHETS: LESSON # 3
MT. ZION: GOD'S PLACE OF REFUGE
Obadiah 17-18

INTRODUCTION:

- The reading shows that the faith of the prophet is FIRM in Divine Providence, even though the fulfillment might never be in his lifetime. This is only one of many examples both in the New and Old Testaments where in time of judgment, God ALWAYS provides a place of refuge or deliverance for those who will turn to Him.
- Here in Obadiah, the Lord shows that the remnant of Judah will be exalted in deliverance on Mt. Zion, while the corresponding Mt. Seir of Edom would be utterly destroyed.

**THROUGHOUT THE AGES, MOUNT ZION HAS BEEN
GOD'S PLACE OF DELIVERANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE**

I. MT. ZION: A PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- A. Jerusalem was built on several hills, the highest of which was Mt. Zion. Initially a Jebusite stronghold, it was captured by David and renamed the "city of David," 2 Samuel 5:6-9.
- B. Its original meaning is unknown, but later scholars thought "citadel" could well apply as its meaning.
- C. The name "Zion" was later extended to include the site of the Temple (Mt. Moriah) and became equivalent with God's dwelling-place. See Isaiah 4:5; 8:18; Jeremiah 31:6; Micah 4:7, and most notably Isaiah 2:2-3.
- D. Zion eventually came to encompass the concept of God's presence in deliverance.

II. MT. ZION: A SYMBOLIC DESCRIPTION

- A. Presence of God - Psalms 9:11 - "*Sing praises to the LORD who dwells in Zion...*"
- B. The Remnant - Micah 4:7 - "*I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever.*"
- C. Salvation, Deliverance - Joel 2:32; Isaiah 46:13 - "*And I will grant salvation in Zion...*"
- D. Comfort, Security, Refuge - Psalms 48:1-14 - Read this inspired description.

III. MT. ZION: A SPIRITUAL DESCRIPTION -- Hebrews 12:22-29

- A. City of the living God
- B. The heavenly Jerusalem
- C. Church of the first-born (Christ and Christians)
- D. God's place of deliverance for people today is STILL Mt. Zion, that is, the Body of Christ (the Lord's church).
- E. In spite of the trials and afflictions we confront each day, because we run not with the world in the same excess of riot, we will be exalted in DUE time, 1 Peter 5:6.

CONCLUSION:

- Obadiah speaks very highly and confidently of the Lord's providence in delivering His Faithful. Edom's fall and Israel's exaltation (return to Canaan from exile) DID take place.
- Hopefully, this will encourage us to be more steadfast in service & more reverent of God. Remember, God WILL deliver us IF we remain faithful and "do not throw away our confidence," Hebrews 10:35-39.

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPHETS

Lesson 3 --- “Mt. Zion: God’s Place of Refuge”

1. What **great event** had probably just happened at the writing of Obadiah and what was the “reason” for it?
2. When was the “reason” for the great event in question # 1 resolved and what was the result of it?
3. Whom did the “house of Esau” represent and what did their attitude toward God and His people seem to be?
4. What were some of the aspects of PHYSICAL Mt. Zion and how might it’s attributes indicate it could be a place of “refuge?”
5. List four (4) things/reasons why Mt. Zion might be suggested to be a SPIRITUAL place of refuge, and be ready to explain your answers.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
6. How is God’s providence exhibited in the texts of this lesson?
 - a) Physically:
 - b) Spiritually:

PROPHETS: LESSON # 4
“THE DAY OF THE LORD”
Read the 3 Chapters of Joel

INTRODUCTION:

- The theme of Joel centers on “*the day of the Lord.*” So prevalent is it to his thoughts that he mentions it 5 times in a book of only 73 verses (**1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14**).
- Both the day of the Lord’s harbinger (Locust plague) and its reality are used to motivate people to return to God BEFORE the day arrives.
- Elsewhere the day is termed: “*Day of Judgment*” & “*Day of Visitation.*” All the same.

TWO DESTINIES AWAIT MANKIND IN THE INEVITABLE “DAY OF THE LORD”

I. DESTRUCTION AND DELIVERANCE - A Description

- A. Destruction - **Joel 2:2, 10-11; 3:12-16a** “*A day of darkness and gloom...the sun and the moon grow dark, the stars lose their brightness...*”
- B. Deliverance - **Joel 2:12-13, 32; 3:16b-17, 20-21** Blessing, salvation, hope, strength, Cleansing, “*Rend your hearts, not your garments and return to the LORD your God.*”

II. PHYSICAL JUDGMENTS

- A. **Isaiah 13:6-11** Doom of Babylon **Isaiah 14** Doom of Assyria
Isaiah 15 Doom of Moab **Isaiah 17** Doom of Damascus
Isaiah 18 Doom of Ethiopia **Isaiah 19** Doom of Egypt
- B. ISRAEL - **Joel 2:1** ----- Fulfillment to come **Acts 2:16, 20-22a**
- C. Yet, the Remnant would be saved - **Joel 2:32; Isaiah 27:12-13** which alludes to **2:2**

III. SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT

- A. There will be a world-wide judgment (**Acts 17:30-31**); ALL nations; ALL people
1. God’s Word is proven reliable and true in the previous “days of the LORD.”
 2. Thus, they stand as assurance of the eternal judgment to come - **2 Cor.5:10; 2 Pet.3:7-13.**
- B. To the LOST - The “Day of the Lord” will come as a thief in the night - Unexpected, Unprepared - **1 Thess.5:2-6.**
- C. To the SAVED - The “Day of the Lord” will offer deliverance and hope fulfilled...to those Prepared, **2 Thess.1:7-10.**

CONCLUSION:

- The physical judgments are the surety of the spiritual judgment to come. NOW is the time to repent; to turn to God in order to escape the great destruction.
- Some might ask why the message in Joel seemed to emphasize the negative over the positive. The reason (like so many today) is that sin had deceived them into thinking that “things were okay.” Read the words of Amos to those complacent pleasure-loving Israelites - **Amos 5:18-20**
- Let us not be deceived. It is as Paul wrote “*NOW is the acceptable time; behold NOW is the day of salvation.*” **2 Cor.6:1-2** (Quoted from **Isaiah 49:8**) Have you made YOUR preparations for the “Day of the LORD?”

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPHETS

Lesson 4 --- “The Day of the Lord”

1. **BRIEFLY**: Please tell what your understanding is of “the day of the Lord” and explain why you came to this conclusion.
2. Has “the day of the Lord” happened all ready, or is it yet to be? Please explain your answer.
3. How has/does/will “the day of the Lord” appear(ed) to different people?
4. Will there be any “CHANGES” effected for us at our “day of the Lord?” If so, what?
5. What are some of the misrepresentations and wrong expectations in the religious world concerning “the day of the Lord?”
6. What do you feel that “the day of the Lord” holds in store for you personally? [Not necessary to write your answer down, but think on what you might suggest by way of discussion.]

A Study of
the
Goodness and Severity
Of
God

as revealed by

HIS PROPHETS

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