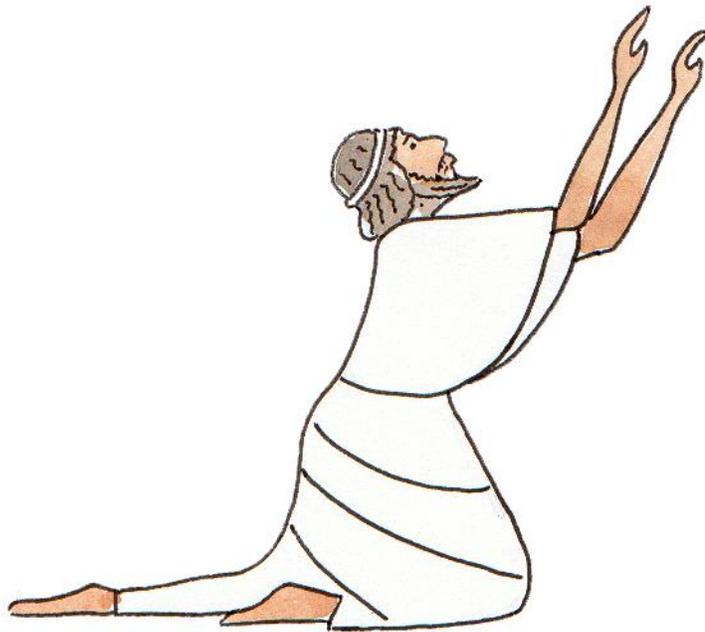


MAJORING ON THE MINORS: OBADIAH



*A study of the minor prophet
by
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Majoring On The Minors - Obadiah

"The Pride Of The Edomites"

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Obadiah 1-21

1. ***God's Trouble For Esau (verses 1-16)***
 - (a) ***They were proud***
 - (b) ***They weren't their brothers' keeper***

2. ***God's Triumph For Jacob (verses 17-21)***
 - (a) ***Flesh and spirit***
 - (b) ***Tables turned***
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There's the book of Joel, then the book of Amos and the book of Obadiah, just before the book of Jonah. So it's sandwiched - one chapter - only one chapter long and sandwiched in between the book of Amos and the book of Jonah. So you don't need to panic this evening because we're looking at one book - it's only one chapter long - and we're going to read the whole book together and we're going to try, by the Lord's help, to get the message that He would have for us this evening.

Verse 1 of Obadiah: "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. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. 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? 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. If thieves come to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? If the grape gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes? How are the things of Esau searched out! How are his hidden things sought up! 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. 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? 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. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. 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. 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. 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; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway", or across the way, "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. 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. 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. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. 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 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. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even to Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's".

Seems very complicated, doesn't it, as we read it together for the first time there this evening? But hopefully as we come to it, by the help of God, the Holy Spirit will reveal what He has to say to us.

The year that we are looking at this evening, where Obadiah was written, is the year 586 BC. Now I don't expect you to be au fait already, as we've been majoring on the minors, with all these dates, but save to say that it works backward. We go up the years - we're at 1999, we're almost at the year 2000 - and we're going forwards: 1999 then 2000, 2001, 2002. But when you go into the Old Testament and you go before the Lord Jesus Christ was born, in other words you change from the year of our Lord AD to BC, 'Before Christ', you begin to go backwards. The higher the number of the year, the longer back it was - OK? The higher the year the longer back it was. We are at 586 BC, that is the date. The place that we're looking at this evening is the city of Jerusalem and the event that we will be looking at is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian armies. Now we've already been there, for in the past weeks we looked at the book of Habbakuk, and for seven studies we looked at how this nation of Judah was taken from their homeland, from their home city of Jerusalem, they were taken as captives away to Babylon for seventy years captivity in that place. That's where we are now. The children of Judah are still in Jerusalem, they're still in their land and the study that we're going to look into through the prophet Obadiah this evening is just as this people, this city of Jerusalem, is being sacked - it's being raped.

The prophet, is the prophet Obadiah. Now if you were to take your concordance as you went home this evening and looked at the name Obadiah, you would find that there are twelve Obadiahs in the word of God, twelve mentions of the name Obadiah. Every single one of them we know very little about, because the name Obadiah means 'the servant of the Lord'. We don't even know if this was his real name, it may have been just a title that he had taken to himself to display that, as a prophet of God in this book, and all the other eleven Obadiahs, that all of them were men of God, they were believers of God and they were servants of God. You know as we've studied together the minor prophets, we found out about Haggai and we found out about Habbakuk that we know very little about them. We know very little about their background, even what tribe they're from, about their mother or father, or even their everyday profession, we don't know where they've come from or how they lived, and Obadiah speaks to us of that, that he was a prophet of God, his name simply said 'the servant of the Lord' - but we don't know anything about him. I don't know about you, but I think that is beautiful, because do you know what that tells me? It tells me this: that God is not as much concerned about the messenger of the Lord as He is about the message of the Lord.

Oh, my mind goes back to John the Baptist convictingly. And I see him there and he is asked the question as he stands in the wilderness, as a voice on his own crying as a testimony making way for the Lord coming, he's preparing the ground for the Christ to arise, and they flock to him and they ask: 'Are you the Christ? Are you the one we've been waiting for?'. And he says: 'There is One coming after me whose latches of His shoe I am not worthy to loose. I baptize you with water but He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire'. Listen to what he said, 'I must decrease and He must increase'. You see that's the voice of the prophet of God. And any prophet of God that talks about 'me, my and mine and everything that I have done and all the achievements that I have had in my life' is not the true messenger of God, because he is taken up more with the messenger than the message.

But as we look into this book, I want us to see the history behind what is going on here. And if you could try and picture it for a moment in your mind - if you can close your eyes it might help you to try and picture the scene that is before us. And what we can see by our mind's eye is an army round about Jerusalem, soldiers gathering around its walls, and they are plundering the walls, they have come into the city, there is fire, there is smoke rising from the midst of it, they are slaying the people, there is rape, there is pillage, the city is burning in embers. But we see something else, because within the city and around the city we see a group of people that are not being harmed. We see a group of neighbouring people, citizens who are called the Edomites. And as the children of Judah, as their flesh burns, as the cry of the children comes out of the walls of that city, as they're destroyed, as the whole of the holy city is wrecked, this nation, this people, these citizens the Edomites, are standing around idly by, watching as it all goes on. But they're doing more than that, they're not simply passively standing by, but the word of God would lead us to believe that they are actually shouting, taunting, encouraging the Babylonians as they're sacking the city, to burn the city, to destroy the city, to do their worst to the city, to leave not one rock or stone upon another, not one Jewish life alive. How do we know that? If you were to go back to Psalm 137 and verses 7 to 9 you would hear the cry of the Edomites - picture them as they stand round Jerusalem, they're shouting 'Raze it! Raze it!', they're calling, 'Dash their little children against the stones! Wipe them out, make sure that not one Jew survives!'.

Who are this people the Edomites? My, if we were to look and go into the history of the word of God and find out who these awful people, this treacherous cruel people were, you know it would surprise us. Because, believe it or not, the Edomites are the brothers of the Judeans. Those that are doing these terrible things, these neighbours that are standing round, they are the Edomites, they are the descendants, the word of God tells us, of Esau, Jacob's older brother. Now it's important that we understand this - because if you don't understand this, you're not going to understand the rest of the book.

So turn with me for a moment to Genesis chapter 25 - and we're going to take time this evening to lay the foundations of this book. Genesis chapter 25...and we read here about the birth of Jacob and Esau. Genesis chapter 25 and verse 21: 'And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them'.

Do you see the history? Jacob and Esau are brothers. Esau is the eldest brother and as they were in their mother Rebekah's womb she knew that there was a war going on, she thought that a world war had broken out within her belly! There was all this fighting going on - the babies, the twins were kicking at one another - and she went to the Lord as a woman of prayer, and she got on her knees and she says, 'Lord what's going on?'. What did the Lord say? 'There are two nations within thy womb, two nations.' And then she knew that day when she was in the pangs of birth and when she was giving birth and Esau came out first and he was red, he was ruddy that's why they gave him the name Esau. And then after him came his brother, his younger brother Jacob, but as he came out of the womb, he was holding onto the heel of his brother Esau.

Jacob means 'twister', it means 'grasper'. And indeed we know throughout the whole book of Genesis, that right throughout it he was a twister all right and he grasped at everything he could get. He tried to get everything by the strength of his arm, and by his wit, rather than the promise of Almighty God. And if you were to look at Esau outwardly speaking, and you were to look at Jacob, you would see that Esau was the strongest. Esau probably was the most handsome, he looked to be the better man, the man with more potential, the man with more promise, rather than scheming, wicked Jacob. Yet do you remember what

happened between those two? Throughout all their lifetime they bickered, they struggled, they strove one against another and from the very womb when Jacob was grabbing hold of the heel of Esau, you remember then one day Esau came out from hunting and he was starving! And there was Jacob with a bowl of lentils, a bowl of pottage, and Esau sold Jacob his birthright for that food. And Jacob was using his head, he thought if I can get the birthright of the firstborn son, then I have everything. Not only did he get the birthright, but you remember a little down the road, he duped his own father Isaac out of the blessing of the firstborn son. When he dressed up in the camels hair, and he went with the smell of the earth upon him and he asked his father Isaac - pretending he was Esau - for the blessing of the firstborn son, and he forfeited his older brother out of it. Isn't that right? Oh, clever Jacob. The twister Jacob always got the upper hand.

Do you know what the word of God says - and I want us to grasp this, this evening. Do you know what the word of God testifies? It testifies, to our astonishment, that it was not Esau's strength, it was not Esau's intellect, it was not Esau's hunting ability or the fact that he was the firstborn son, or even the fact that in the light of his brother Jacob he was innocent, that commended him to God. Listen, the word of God says that: God loved Jacob, and God hated Esau. Now what do I mean by that? Well I don't mean anything by that, first of all because God's word says it. What does God mean by that, when it says God hated Esau does it mean that He hated Esau? Of course it means that He hated Esau, that's what it says isn't it? He hated Esau. Some people would say, 'I can't understand this, this is a mystery, how could God hate someone like Esau?'. Listen my friend this evening, the mystery and the unfathomable thing is not the fact that God hated Esau, but the mysterious thing is the fact that God loved Jacob. Isn't it? Sure God has a right to hate us all, hasn't He? We're sinners in His eyes, we've rebelled against Him, He's a right to hate us. And He does hate sin, and the wrath of God abides on the sinner unless they repent of it. But the mystery of the Gospel, the thing that we cannot understand is this, that the God of Jacob is our refuge. Isn't that wonderful? It doesn't say the God of Esau, it doesn't say the God of the strong, the God of the wise, the God of the good, the God of the moral, the God of the theologically apt, it doesn't say that - but praise God, for my sake, it says the God of Jacob is our refuge.

These two were rivals throughout their life. And they weren't just two problem brothers and they didn't just become two problem nations, but I want you to see this evening that there is something more within the word of God than that. You see, Edom was the nation that came from Esau - and the Hebrew word 'Edom' simply means 'red'. And if you were to look at Genesis 25 that we're at for the moment and verse 25 you see that the first came out red, Esau, when he came out of his mothers womb, was red, that's why they called him Esau. And then as you look down further: 'And Esau', verse 30, 'said to Jacob', when he came in from the field hungry, 'Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom'. Oh, he was red and he was ruddy and hairy all over, but he was given - he was christened this name 'Edom', 'Red', because he sold his birthright for a moment's earthly pleasure.

You know this little book of Obadiah, if you turn back to it, it deals with the oldest sin on the face of God's earth. For it deals with the sin of pride. God, primarily, is speaking here about the pride of the Edomites - now think about this! We minimize pride today in our lives, don't we? Adultery is the worst sin you could commit, homosexuality or sodomy is awful - we have all these 'top ten' of abominable sins in the sight of God, but do you know something, believer or unbeliever? The worst sin that you can commit before God is the sin of pride, for it is the seed of all sin. And Obadiah speaks in his message about pride. Pride: the sin that turned an angel into a devil. Pride: the sin that depopulated the very realms of Heaven. Pride: the sin that emptied the beautiful, idyllic, peaceful Garden of Eden. Pride: the sin that brought the Saviour to the cross and made Him bleed and die as a necessity for forgiveness. Pride: the sin that keeps the sinners heart closed to the salvation of God and keeps him on a bound road to an eternal hell. Sin. Pride is that sin that populates hell.

And Obadiah verse 2 says this: 'Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen' - pride is a sin that is found in the smallest creature that you could imagine. Now think about this for a moment. The little child, and I don't know what age they get to, it varies from one to another, but maybe it's one, or maybe it's before it, or maybe it's the age of two and they start their tantrums and they start crying because they want something, and they stamp their feet, and they wave their arms - and deep down in that lovely child, a beautiful innocent looking child, is sin in the depths of its being, and it's pride. And even in the smallest of us - and maybe this is the supreme irony, that the smaller we are the more prideful we are. And Obadiah says to the Edomites, 'You're small, and I as the Almighty God have made you small, yet in all your smallness, in all your insignificance you are so full of pride'. And if pride was the first sin, the first murder was of a brother. Isn't that right? And as we look into this book here in the book of Obadiah, we have a continuation of a family feud right from Genesis chapter 25 of pride, of murder and of hate.

So Obadiah comes as God's messenger with God's message, and his first thing that he says to them is this: that God has trouble for Esau. God has vengeance and is declaring vengeance upon these people of Edom - why? First of all, because they were proud. Look at this with me from verses 1 to 16. Now Edom means 'red', doesn't it? I've already said that to you, the word Edom means 'red'. But the word 'Edom' is derived from the Hebrew word 'Adam'. And the Hebrew word 'Adam' is synonymous with the word 'man'. So, in other words, when you read in the Old Testament scriptures that God made man, the Hebrew word often is 'Adam'. That's what Adam means. But 'Edom' is derived from the word 'Adam', and as you look at the word of God and you look at their forefather Esau, and you look at all the Edomites, and you look at the portrayal of the Edomites that you find here in the book of Obadiah - oh, you can see so well the old Adamic nature that was in them!

Esau was a man of the earth, wasn't he? Isn't that what it says? He was a man of the earth, he was a farmer, whereas Jacob was a man that stayed at home. And Adam means an earthly man, Esau was of the earth, profane, proud, filthy, cruel. You can see it in the very fact that when he came in from the field, the very thing that he should have held as dear to his heart - his very birthright - he sold for a bowl of lentils. Sold his heavenly pleasure, the right to become a father of a nation, for one little earthly measel. You can see it between Esau and Jacob all through the Old Testament, can't you? You can see all their bickering and fighting, that Esau speaks of the earth, it speaks of the old Adamic nature. And the Edomites here within the word of God - we even see it as Moses was wandering through the wilderness for the forty years, it's recorded in Numbers chapter 20, that as they were going to and fro that the Edomites wouldn't even let them wander through their land. Oh, they were holding this grudge, and they weren't going to let go of it, they had that old Adamic nature within them, full of sin and they were passive to the need of the Judeans. He was passive, Esau, as his brother to Jacob, and as the two nations - they didn't care what was going to happen to Judah, didn't care. And the sad thing that we find within this little book is this, that now their passive callousness and apathy and unconcern had given way to something greater. It had given way, as it often does in our old Adamic sinful nature, to an act of alliance with Jerusalem's destroyers and enemies. Do you see it? It was a small step, but oh it was a devastating step.

Now I want you to look and see how the old Adamic nature is very clearly seen within them. Look at verse 3, God says: 'The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock' - God says right away that you have pride in your heart, 'Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock'. The capital city of Edom was the city of Petra, and you'll know that in the Greek language Petra means 'rock' - and that capital city of Petra was actually carved out of the side of a great mountain. And the Edomite nation, and the Edomite army, prided themselves in the fact that none of their enemies could get at them because they were in the cleft of the rock. And their impregnable nature, militarily and politically speaking, added to a spiritual pride within the depths of their souls. 'Who shall bring me down to the ground?', they say, verse 2. That led to a defiance before God, that they said like them that built the Titanic, 'Not even God can sink our ship'!

Does that not speak of man today? Oh, they're so proud in all their achievements, everything that they have done, but they can't just leave it with pride, their pride leads to defiance and they have to challenge God, they have to fight Him to a match - who is the greatest, whether man or God? In verse 4 we see their ambition: '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'. They said: 'We're going to soar like an eagle and not even God Almighty's going to keep us back. We're going to set our name across the stars, we're going to rise high, we will defy all things, all men, all gods' - their ambition had no bounds. And we look at verse 10, we see that they hated those that loved God: 'For thy violence is against thy brother Jacob'. You see, Jacob was following in the promises of God, and the Edomites - those who had the father of Esau - didn't like it. They didn't like that these were the children of promise, and like the world today they're fighting, they're laying their hand on those that are the children of God, the children of promise. They hate those that love and live for God. And then verses 11 to 14, we see there that there was awesome cruelty - and we'll look at it a little bit later - but their cruelty, the sin that was in the depths of their old Adamic nature, led to their actions of cruelty to their very brother. And in verse 3 we see that they deceived themselves: 'The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee'.

Oh friends, isn't this such a picture of the sinner? The unconverted sinner is ambitious in all his ways. He thinks his life is impregnable, that no one will take his life from him, he has pride in the depths of his being, he has defiance, he hates those that love God and anything to do with God. The cruelty across our world is rampant, yet he is deceiving himself, and the word of God says in Corinthians - not just here - that the god of this world has blinded their minds. And their own pride, like the pride of Satan their father that fell before them, has blinded them to their nature. And we see here also in verse 2 that it's detestable to God - He detests such pride, they are greatly despised in His sight, and all the pride of mortal men in our world today is an abomination to God. And eventually they will be defeated by the sons of God, and eventually they will be destroyed by an Almighty God! We have to move on, but let me say this: pride is so sinful, pride is of the old man, the old Adamic nature and Christian, pride ought to have nothing in you. What have you to be proud about? Paul, the greatest Christian perhaps that ever lived, said: 'I boast in nothing, except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. The Christian prerogative is not pride, but we read in 2 Chronicles 7 and verse 14 that God says, 'If My people', not exalt themselves but, 'humble themselves and pray', that's the prerogative of the child of God. Humility.

But let's look, not only was God against them because of their pride, but because they were not their brother's keeper. If you look at verse 7, it talks about a confederacy - in other words these Edomites were not simply standing idly by around as Jerusalem was being sacked, but they had made a confederacy, they had allied themselves with Judah's enemies. Verse 10 and 11 you see that it says that they stood on the crossway, they stood on the other side, they did nothing, and through their passivity in doing nothing, the word of God accuses them of taking part in the crime.

Do you remember the good Samaritan in Luke chapter 10? And there was the Levite and there was the priest that walked by and watched the Samaritan that was lying bathed in blood, but God - the Lord Jesus Christ, God in flesh - accused them of being guilty of the crime through their passivity, their idleness, their standing by and doing nothing. And God was saying to Esau, God was saying to the Edomites, 'Your brother Jacob here is being sacked by Babylon and you stand by and watch it all happen!'. Verse 12 says that not only that but they were rejoicing at the downfall of their brother. Proverbs says: 'Rejoice not when thine enemy stumbles' - let alone their brother! Their brother was being murdered in the streets and they were crying at the sidelines, 'Raze it up! Raze it up! Let not one of them live!'. And in verse 3 we see that they were looting, they robbed the wealth in the city. In verse 14 we see that they actually hindered the escape of the Judeans, any of them that escaped they actually rounded them up and handed them over back to the Babylonians! In verse 16 we see that when it was all finished they got to the wine vats and they got full, they drunk themselves drunken in celebration as to what had happened to their brothers. Oh! How sinful Adam is. Isn't that true?

But what is it for the Christian? The Christian is this, the Christian is that we put on the new nature - that we don't have, we try to put to death the Adamic nature - and we let the new man in Christ Jesus reign within our souls. And the Christians doctrine is simply this: that we are to rejoice not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth. In Philippians 2 we're told to 'esteem one another better than ourselves'. And in the book of 1 John chapter 3 and verse 17, this is a verse that we all need to learn here: 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'. Let us not be, as the children of God, guilty of not being our brothers keeper.

But you see there's something more here. Not only was there God's trouble for Esau but there was God's triumph for Jacob. You see there is a spiritual message within the book of Obadiah. And as we dig deep within this little book of only 21 verses, we can see a deep, spiritual, typical representative message, a picture, that God wants to get across to you and I. You see Esau and Jacob were more than brothers, and the Edomites and the Judeans were more than nations, but they are two opposing forces within the whole of the word of God. What are they? They are the flesh and the spirit. Esau was very handsome, wasn't he? He was strong, he was good-looking, he had everything going for him outwardly speaking, externally speaking, everything was on his plate. Jacob was the twister, Jacob was the one who stayed at home, Jacob did everything wrong, but who was it God chose? It was Jacob! Our God is the God of Jacob, for our God is the God of grace and what God was saying is this: 'I choose you not because of your merit. I choose you not because of your goodness, or anything to do with the externalities of your being, but I choose you because I want to. That's all. I choose you because it is My choice'.

Oh, that astounds me, the grace of God, that we - praise God! - that we have the God of Jacob. That our salvation is by grace through faith, nothing more, nothing less, our salvation all down of history has been this: grace alone, grace alone. But all history, this contention and this war between Esau and Jacob, there was more than that, you see. If you go through the word of God and especially the Old Testament you see that there are pairs of sons, many times throughout Scripture, and let's think about it for a minute. There's Cain and Abel, wasn't there? And one was spiritual and one was carnal, fleshly. Cain was carnal and Abel was spiritual and Cain rose up against Abel and slew him. And you find throughout all of history that them that are twice born are persecuted by them that are once born. Isn't that right? Cain wanted the religion of culture, he wanted the religion by his own hands, by his own works, by the flesh, he was an Edomite, so speaking. He was a father, an ancestor of Esau who would write his name to the same doctrine: a doctrine of a bloodless, redemptionless Gospel.

And then you have another couple, Ishmael and Isaac and what about them? You remember that Abraham was ninety-nine and he was walking around thinking: 'This is some promise of God. Ninety-nine years of age and my wife's not too far behind and here we've been promised a child at my age! And He's called me - He's changed my name from 'father' to 'father of many'! And I'm ninety-nine years of age!'. And his wife Sarah says, 'Come on do something about it, here's my handmaid Hagar, take her, sleep with her and rise up a seed to your name - do something about God's promise'. And he went and he lifted that Hagar and he slept with her, and he rose up a seed - Ishmael - and Ishmael was cursed and his seed was cursed ever since, why? For he was the child of the flesh, and not of promise. That's religion of the flesh and God hates it, and then after Ishmael and Isaac there's Esau and Jacob. Speaking of Jacob, he is the child of promise. But Esau spoke of all that was external, he looked right, on the outward appearance he was acceptable, but in the depths of his soul there was the old Adamic nature that says: 'I'll do it my way'. Edom means 'red'. And if you look at 'red' throughout the whole of the word of God, you'll find a red horse, you'll find a red dragon, you'll find a scarlet woman and a scarlet beast - and none of them are good.

How are you living? Are you not saved? I hope you're not trying to do it by the flesh, because that's the biggest mistake you could ever make. That's the mistake Cain made, that's the mistake Ishmael and even Abraham made at first, it's the mistake that Esau made, to think that by your hand you can merit the grace of God, you can merit salvation or forgiveness, you can merit the smile or the shine of God - you can't do it! It's only the blood of Christ, that's all!

Are you saved, Christian? You know in the same way that you're saved by grace, you have to live by grace. It's not getting saved by the blood of Christ and then trying your best all the way from there, that's not what it is. That's what the Galatians tried to do, 'Oh, we're saved by the cross but you've got to keep on going, you've got to do more than that'. It's not a saved and lost matter, that's from the depths of hell and don't believe it, it's all of grace, all of grace. Maybe you're a backslider here this evening and you're like Esau and you've sold your birthright in Christ for a bowl of the fleshly pleasures of this world. Have you?

The world will always want the blood of the church of God. It's interesting to know that Herod, all the Herods within the New Testament were Edomites. Did you know that? Do you remember the first Herod that we read of and he tried - and we'll be thinking of it at this time of the year - he killed all the young Jewish boys in Jerusalem. Why did he do it? So that the Christ would be extinct - again Herod, an Edomite, a man of the flesh, a man of Esau, a man of the Adamite race, he's there trying to kill the Son of the Spirit. Another Herod, another Edomite and he's taking the head off John the Baptist, the one who would clear the way for the Son of the Spirit. And then you read of another Herod and he's killing James the brother of John because he's preaching the message of the spirit and not the flesh. Oh Christian, you can see it even today, that the Arabs at this moment of time have their hand around the throat of the Jew and it still goes back to Genesis chapter 25.

Christian look at all of history, look at your Bible, look and learn that the flesh can bring nothing to you, it's only the spirit. And you have it in Galatians chapter 5, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh - and if you're a true believer you'll have this 'atomic bomb' of a war going on within your soul, of who's going to win out, but the glorious thing is this - as Paul declared in the book of Romans - that we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. And if we walk in the spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

Have you submitted to God, Christian? Someone asked on one occasion, 'Why does D.L. Moody have such a monopoly of the Holy Spirit?', and the man rightly turned around to him and said: 'Sir, you couldn't be further from the truth, the Holy Spirit has a monopoly of D.L. Moody'. What about you friend, how much does God have of you?

You see not only was this eternal battle, typified here, between the flesh and the spirit, but the tables were going to be turned, because God says in verse 15, He says in verse 5 to 6, verse 10, verse 18, verse 7 - indeed right through all His description of the Edomites - that God was going to treat them the way that they treated the Jews. God was going to turn the table, they had betrayed them and they would be betrayed by their allies. They had robbed them and they would be robbed by their enemies. They had let them be destroyed by the Babylonians and the Edomites would be destroyed by the Babylonians one day. Edom was going to reap what they'd sowed. That is the spiritual law that we have looked at in the past weeks as we have majored in the minors: that we reap what we sow, good or bad. And that's not just personal, it's national. I don't think it's a coincidence that in the Second World War there was a certain amount of poetic justice. That the enemy got their just deserts - and was it altogether without significance that, when Britain was forced from the European mainland first at the north in France at Dunkirk and then from the south from Greece, that they were made to stand by and watch as the Germans and the Russians, the two nations which officially and more blatantly than any others had blasphemed the name of God, stood and slaughtered each other? Because God turns the tables.

Now let's finish quickly, by looking at the man from Petra. And turn with me in closing and finally to Isaiah chapter 63. And this is a well-known passage of Scripture to all of you. Isaiah chapter 63: 'Who is this', verse 1, 'that cometh from Edom', note 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 winefat? I have trodden', he says, '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'.

He is coming from Edom, he is coming from Bozrah, and Bozrah is the ancient name for the capital of Edom - Petra. Do you see it? The enemies of God, no matter who they are, if they're red Russia or red Edom, there's one that's going to come out of their coasts and out of their capital cities covered in red and it's going to be our Saviour. And He's not covered in the red of His own blood, but He's covered in the blood of them that have rejected Him. Isn't this a sobering picture?

One day the flesh is going to be defeated, and the world, the flesh, and the devil by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's already done it for the believer at the cross, but our old nature still raises its head from day to day, but - hallelujah! - there's a day coming when it will be put to the grave for good and there'll be no resurrection for it.

A doctor once asked the significance of God's touching Jacob's thigh upon the sinew. And do you know what he said? He replied that the sinew of the thigh is the strongest part of the human body. And a horse, two horses could scarcely tear them apart. Friend, God has to break us at our strongest part, the strongest part of our fleshly life if He's going to bless us and if He's going to have His way with us. And the secret of an unsatisfied life lives in an unsundered life.

'Nearer, still nearer, Lord to Thy breast.
 Draw me, my Saviour so precious Thou art.
 Fold me, oh fold me, close to Thy breast,
 Shelter me safe in that haven of rest'.

Let us pray: Lord, we know within our hearts that old Adam, old Adam is so much there. But yet we know that, if we're born again of the Spirit of God, we have a new nature. Lord, help us to feed the new and to starve the old. And help us Lord to walk in the spirit and to live in the spirit, oh God, and please to die in the spirit and to be taken up to glory. Oh Father, what a day that will be, when our death will be final in the flesh and our life will be full in God. Bless us Lord, and help us to be doers of the word as well as hearers this evening. For Christ's sake. Amen.

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