

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor A. Schultz
August 4, 2013 Pentecost 11.
Obadiah v.1-9**



The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom: We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!" Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD. If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night—how you have been destroyed!—would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you would they not leave gleanings? How Esau has been pillaged, his treasure sought out! All your allies have driven you to your border; those at peace with you have deceived you, they have prevailed against you; those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you—you have no understanding. Will I not on that day, declares the LORD destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

People of God—rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Imagine you died—you wake up in Heaven. The first person you meet is dressed like a shepherd in a burgundy gown—with a shepherd's staff in his hand and a long salt and pepper beard. He says, "Let me introduce myself. I'm Obadiah—by the grace of God—yes, thee

Obadiah. I was just wondering in your fight of faith back on earth – which part of my scroll was the most practical help to you in your fight of faith?” And then he humbly smiles. What would you say? Would you say, “I just couldn’t choose. I found it all truly inspired and inerrant!” He would say, “That’s a very good Wisconsin Synod answer. You guys really nailed that verbal inspiration and inerrancy stuff...but please be more precise!” And you say, “Chapter 2!” And he says, Aaaaaaaah! There is only one chapter. There are only 21 verses! You never read it – did you?!” And you have to admit you didn’t! So – this afternoon or evening – before you go to bed – open your Bible and read just 21 verses of Obadiah. Then – “If I should die before I wake...” – and the first person you bump into his wearing that burgundy gown – and says, “Yes, by the grace of God – thee Obadiah...” You can say, “I was just reading your scroll. It was wonderful – especially that warning about the example of proud and arrogant Edom!” This morning we are going to look at the opening verses of Obadiah. We will:

Learn A Lesson in Humility From Obadiah

I. The LORD resists the proud

II. But gives grace to the humble.

Edom – the place where the descendants of Esau lived. Remember Abraham and Sarah were told by the three visitors that by that time next year – Sarah would give birth to a son – remember? That son Isaac – whom Abraham and Sarah loved so much. Then the LORD told Abraham to take Isaac – his only son whom he loved – to take him to a place where the LORD would show him – and sacrifice his son as a whole burnt offering. And Abraham was made strong enough by the LORD to do that. Figuring if the Savior would be descended from Isaac and the LORD told him to sacrifice Isaac – then the LORD must be going to raise Isaac from the dead! That was a very powerful faith – to believe that – and so? Fast forward Isaac sends his servant Eleazar – to find him a wife – and that wife was Rebecca. Remember Rebecca was expecting twins – Jacob and Esau – who were anything but identical. Jacob and Esau who pushed and shoved and kicked each over – in their mother’s tummy even before they were born!

God's Word says, ²² The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." ²⁴ When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. ²⁶ Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. ²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Genesis 25:22-28 ESV There was trouble and it only got worse. The time came when it was clear – humanly speaking that Isaac was going to die soon. So Jacob and his mom worked out a play whereby they fooled Isaac into giving the blessing – the powerful Gospel promise to be part of the Savior's family tree in a most direct way and it worked! **Esau came by Isaac and His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son your firstborn Esau." Then Isaac trembled very violently and said "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and has taken away your blessing." Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?..Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."** This was terrible, too, so Jacob had to run literally for his life! You remember the Bible history – Jacob working for Uncle Laban and marrying Leah and then Rachel – and having "hugs

and kisses” with Leah’s maidservant Zilpah and Rachel’s maidservant Bilhah – and wrestling with the Lord through the night and being reconciled with Esau – kind of?

Fast-forward! The descendants of Esau – the Edomites – were good at holding a grudge. When the children of Israel – their cousins – were on their way from all those years of sore bondage and slavery down in Egypt – to the promised land – the most direct route would take them right through Edom! The children of Israel didn’t just stomp their way through. They very politely asked permission. **14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: “Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the hardship that we have met: ¹⁵ how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time. And the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers. ¹⁶ And when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. ¹⁷ Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from a well. We will go along the King's Highway. We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.” ¹⁸ But Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through, lest I come out with the sword against you.” ¹⁹ And the people of Israel said to him, “We will go up by the highway, and if we drink of your water, I and my livestock, then I will pay for it. Let me only pass through on foot, nothing more.” ²⁰ But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against them with a large army and with a strong force. ²¹ Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory, so Israel turned away from him.** Numbers 25

Again and again the LORD was patient with the people of Edom – all the way to the days of the Babylonian Captivity for the children of Israel – before the LORD finally came crashing down in discipline on them. Hence the message of Obadiah. **The vision of Obadiah.** The vision – Hebrew *chazah* very literally *to see*. What Obadiah saw – he saw because the LORD showed it to him. This is not the clever imagination and creativity of

Obadiah – this is God’s Word! The Holy Spirit breathed into Obadiah the very Words he wrote down. Without mistake, without error, without contradiction – this law and gospel will build up our faith. It is sufficient and effective.

The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom: we have heard a report from the LORD... The LORD – the great I AM – the Holy One of Israel – He changes not, the same yesterday and today and forever! This is the Savior God who loves us always the same. People – change all the time. We are different today from yesterday. Tomorrow we will be different, too. Little children shoot up during the summer. Little grandmas and grandpas shrink. They get shorter and shorter. Our hair changes color. Our skin changes – the back of our hands get spots and wrinkles – our joints swell and sometimes ache. We change. Part of being a Christian means to change – to grow in faith – grow in Christ. We change. We do better. We recognize our weaknesses and shortcomings and move to do better – much better – to the glory of Jesus our Redeemer!

The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, “Who will bring me down to the ground?” Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD. The people of Edom lived in the penthouse – they lived on the high ground – safe, secure, fortified, protected. They were smug! Their hearts were filled with pride! Sound painfully familiar? It was reported the other day if your family was \$34,000 it would mean you were among the top 1% in the whole world. We live in a world where many people own the T-shirt on their back or the gym shorts they wear – no shoes, no socks. I don’t think we appreciate that. We have washers and dryers for our clothes while billions of people literally take their clothes down to the river and literally beat their laundry on stones – then spread their clothes on shrubs to dry them in the sunshine and breeze. Billions of people eat their food with their fingers – maybe they own a tin bowl and a tin cup – like you might use camping – and we have automatic dish

washers and get all bent out of shape – if there are – heaven forbid – little spots on our glasses! We have refrigerator/freezers with filtered water and ice – cubes or crushed all without opening the door! We have shoes. We have different shoes for different sports – golf shoes, basketball shoes, bowling shoes, baseball shoes, running shoes, walking shoes, dress shoes, shoes for cutting the lawn, flip/flops, slippers, hiking shoes, boots for in the snow, work boots with steel toes, and more. We have literally heaps of shoes in the bottom of our closets. We have shoes. We have all kinds of screens – lap tops, I-pads, I-pods, smart phones, GPS to tell us when to turn so we don't get lost. We have fast food and restaurants. We have snooty coffee – more dollars for a cup of coffee than billions of people have for food for a whole day or more! We have wall to wall carpet or hardwood floors – huge flat screen TVs with surround sound to play our Blu-ray 3-D DVDs and on demand movies – so that it's pretty much true – you can watch any movie or TV show you want – any time you want – without commercials – pause, fast forward and rewind even live TV and still we complain. We are pretty smart – and so? At the same time we take more and more pain relievers – we have acid reflux and indigestion – high blood pressure – the abuse of drugs and alcohol – and tobacco. We become addicted to almost everything. Meanwhile our marriages and our families are under siege! There is spiritual danger all around. Of all the sins our Heavenly Father hates – pride – arrogance – has to be one of the worst – because we put ourselves where Jesus belongs and that's horribly wrong!

Though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD. If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night – how you have been destroyed! – would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings? How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out! ...will I not in that day declares the LORD destroy the wise men out of Edom and understanding out of Mount Esau? It doesn't matter how rich and famous and powerful we might seem in this world. If we become proud and arrogant and self-serving and self-righteous our Heavenly

Father can bring all our earthly success literally crashing down around our ears. Only by the grace of God – will we be spared God’s crushing Judgment!

What was wrong with Edom? It was all about attitude! Edom had an attitude of spiritual arrogance and indifference! It’s called a bucket list – the list of things you want to do before you kick the bucket. Do you actually have one – a list of things you want to do? Do you have a list of places you want to go – people you want to meet – things you want to do? Do you? I would really like to eat a bowl of noodles with chop sticks by the Great Wall of China. I would like to see the Blue Man Group – with all their percussion instruments made out of PVC. I would like to build a model sailing ship with little cloth sails – then put it into a big glass box. I would like to make a little table – then make three drawers – each in a box – to stand on top of that table. I would like to read the 100 greatest books ever written – 100 greatest short stories ever written. I would like to see the 100 greatest paintings ever painted. I would like to go to Maine and Vermont, to Alaska and Hawaii. I would like to plant 3 more apple trees so I could say I have my own orchard! Do you have a bucket list? How about read the Bible cover to cover? How about to find an unbeliever and tell them about Jesus? How about to do like Martin Luther suggested--memorize the letter to the Romans? How about think of someone famous – that doesn’t believe in Jesus and write them a letter and tell them about Jesus! I think I should write to Dr. Charles Krauthammer and tell him about Jesus. And then pray for Dr. Krauthammer. He knows so much about so many things – but doesn’t believe in Jesus – the one thing needful! We need to wake up every morning focused on the day of grace God has set before us. What are we going to be – what are we going to do – to glorify and share Jesus? We need to be thinking all the time – since Jesus has taken all my sins away – how can I show appreciation for that Amazing Grace by sharing it? Living and sharing Jesus’ love – in my role – with my responsibilities – is very very important. Amen!