

Chapter 1 • God's Judgment on Edom

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Tonight, we are going to be in the book of Obadiah so open your Bibles there, please. If for no other reason but to find it. Obadiah is one of those books that's very easy to skip right past because it's actually the shortest book in the Old Testament.

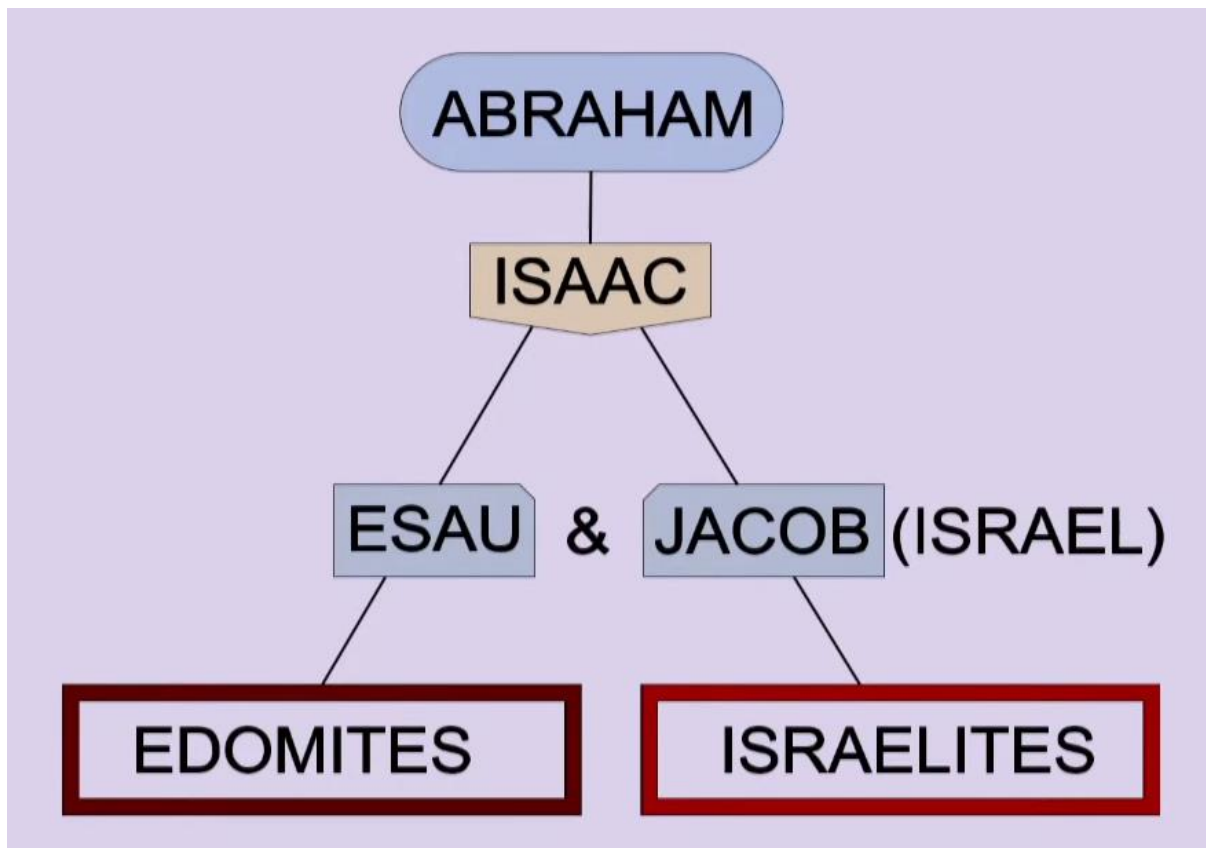
Now for those of you who know the order of the books of the Bible; you might be wondering why we're doing or turning to Obadiah tonight and skipping over the book of Amos because we just finished Joel. Don't read too much into it. It's really more of a timing issue than anything else. We're going to pick up with Amos after we finish Obadiah; so, we're just going in just reverse order for just tonight. And so, that's what we're doing.

So, let's pray. Dear Father, we open our hearts to you tonight in the name of Jesus and we pray for your grace. And as always Lord, your grace that we seek as we get into the Word because we know that without that, Lord, we struggle to make any sense of what the Word has to say. And we also, Lord, need your strength and courage to put the Word into practice in our lives. So, we pray that you'd help us to do that. We ask it in Jesus' precious name, amen.

Show of hands, how many of you had a brother, have a brother, had or have a brother? Yeah, quite a few. Any sibling rivalry ever? Kind of goes with the territory, doesn't it? I've mentioned to you guys several times that I have a brother and he's older and liked to kind of beat on me. This book is about the extension, I guess, of sibling rivalry. It started with sibling rivalry. We'll talk about that.

But this is an interesting book, not just the shortest book of the Old Testament. But also unique in the sense that it doesn't address the Israelites. This book wasn't given to the Israelites. It was a book addressing the Edomites. Who were, of course, Israel's neighbors, and not just neighbors, but also relatives. Let me give you a little historical context in the form of, kind of, a flowchart that I want to show you here where the Edomites came from.

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You have Abraham, the father of the Jews. He and Sarah were ultimately given a promised child by the name of Isaac. Isaac, then along with his wife Rebecca, had twins and those twins were Esau and Jacob. You'll remember that Jacob, of course, was later named Israel after he wrestled with the Lord (referring to **Genesis 32:22-32 ESV**). And you've got Esau, who is the father of the Edomites.

Kind of interesting how he got his name, either frankly, both of those names. You remember that when Esau was born, he came out and he was hairy, and so they named him hairy (referring to **Genesis 25:25 ESV**). That's what Esau means. It means hairy. He came...he was born, and they said, "He's hairy." So, they said, "Well, then that's his name." It seems kind of strange to me, but he was also...we know that he was also red and hairy (paraphrasing **Genesis 25:25 ESV**). He was like a red-haired man, and red played into other aspects of his life.

You'll remember that Esau was a man who was a man of the open field, the open, the outdoors (paraphrasing **Genesis 25:27 ESV**). He was a man's man. He would've had a four-wheel drive and a rifle on a rack in the back window if he were born in our day and age. And he liked to hunt; he liked to be outdoors; he

smelled of the outdoors. I'm assuming that's a good (smell), Isaac thought it was a good smell. But he was a man who came in one time from hunting, and he was famished.

And his brother, Jacob, was not necessarily a man of the outdoors. He was a man who liked to stay close to home. I guess if he lived today, he would've enjoyed watching HGTV and doing things like that, and cooking. And he was cooking some stew and it was red stew, you'll remember (paraphrasing **Genesis 25:29-30 ESV**). And Esau was famished, and he said, "Gimme some of that stew." And Jacob said, "Well, first sell me your birthright." And Esau said, "Well, what good is my birthright if I die of starvation? All right, it's yours." And essentially the Bible tells us that at that point, he despised his birthright (paraphrasing **Genesis 25:31-34 ESV**).

Now, as we read through passages like that, we kind of tend to go, "What is that all about?" Well, a birthright was a big deal; because you see, Esau was the firstborn, and as the firstborn, he had that birthright, which essentially guaranteed him the greatest share of his father's estate. I say estate, whatever his father would leave behind, he would get a double portion. And he would carry on the name, he would be the one who would carry on his father's name. But he despised it because of his fleshly appetites. He desired to take care of a temporary fleshly need. And he despised the things that were of greater value and God noticed. And taking this red stew, that name red also stuck, and that is the Hebrew word Edom.

And so, the descendants of Esau, the red-hairy man, were the Edomites. And there was not a good relationship between Jacob and Esau because, as you know (paraphrasing **Genesis 27 ESV**), Jacob went on to deceive their father into giving the blessing to him in the place of his brother Esau. He did it with his mother's help and she dressed him up to feel and to smell like his brother, Esau. By this time, Isaac had pretty much lost all eyesight and it was time to give the blessing, that was to be given to the eldest son, and so they concocted this plan to go in to give him some stew that she made and get the blessing. So, she put goat skins on his arms, because he was a smooth man whereas Esau was hairy, and put goat skins on his neck, dressed him in Esau's clothes. Probably had him roll around in the dirt so he'd smell like the earth or something, I don't know. And he deceived his father.

And that was true to Jacob's name because you'll remember that Jacob, Ya'aqōb, as it would be pronounced in the Hebrew, means deceiver. And he was true to his name, just as much as Esau was true to his name as hairy. Well, there was...as the descendants of these two nations grew over the years, there

were frequent wars between the two of them, and that was certainly a problem for these nations.

But this prophecy was given to Obadiah, shortly after Israel had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of one of their enemies. We don't know which, it could very well have been the time the Babylonians came and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Some Bible teachers and scholars believe that it was, although we're not exactly sure because this book isn't dated.

But apparently, according to what we read in this prophecy, this rebuke that is given to the nation of Edom, while some of the Israelites were trying to escape the battle and run for their lives, the Edomites actually caught them and delivered them over to their enemies. Not only that, but the Edomites even took over some of the abandoned Judean villages and began to call them their own.

And as we go through this short prophetic book, it's going to be very clear that the actions of the Edomites were something that God not only took notice of but also very much disapproved of. And this prompted the Lord to speak through the prophet Obadiah. And we're going to see in this book that there are going to be essentially two primary messages. It's a very simple book. It's very short. It's a very simple...it's a simple message, but there is simply essentially a two-pronged message that God wants to convey to the Edomites.

And that is number one, the Lord was going to punish them to the degree that they would cease to be a people, and that's a very serious sort of a thing. But the second thing the Lord wanted to make clear to the Edomites was that the very nation that they despised and worked against, the Israelites, would actually be restored and blessed in the days, months, and years to come.

So, it begins like this in verse 1, *"¹The 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: (and here's that message) "Rise up! Let us rise against her (that's Edom) for battle!"* So, this verse, or this prophecy begins with a word of the Lord saying that God has sent a message, to the nations, saying, "Rise up against Edom and go up against her in battle."

So, the Lord has decreed warfare for the nation of Edom, and now He goes on to speak to the Edomites. He says, *"² Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised. ³ 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?"*

The Edomites, I don't know if you're aware of that geography of where the nation of Edom once resided, but there were rock formations there in the land of Edom that provided, I guess a benefit when it came to times of warfare or mounting a defense, I suppose. If an enemy came against the Edomites, they were able to get up into the clefts of the rocks and be able to put together a very good...If you know anything about warfare, you know that being above your enemy is always a very positive sort of a thing. It gave you an advantage, and the Edomites had that advantage, when warfare times came, to the point that it became a prideful issue to them, and they saw themselves as essentially invincible.

But notice what God says in response to that in verse 4, *“⁴Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord. And then He says this. This is interesting, ⁵ 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?”*

And what God is going to go on to say here, He's making the point that if plunderers come, they come and they get what they need. And if somebody comes even to get the grapes off the grapevine, they're going to gather what they need, but they're going to leave gleanings behind.

He's going to make the point; that the enemies, the armies, that God has calling to come against them are not going to do that sort of a thing. They're going to be very complete in their destruction of Edom, and that's why He says in verse 6, *“⁶ How Esau has been pillaged,...*” Notice that He calls this ancient nation by the name of their forefather now, *“⁶ How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out! ⁷ 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.⁸ Will I not on that day, declares the Lord, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? ⁹ And your mighty men shall be (destroyed) dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.”*

Now, I want you to notice beginning here in verse 10, the Lord begins to outline the reasons for this coming destruction. And verse 10 is important *“¹⁰ Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, (there it is right there) shame shall cover you, (and I want you to really take note of this next phrase) and you shall be cut off forever.* Take note of that. We're going to come back to that. Verse 11, *“¹¹ On the day that you stood aloof, (and I want you to take note of that*

statement because the Lord is still bringing accusation repeated “on the day that you stood aloof”) *on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.*”

In other words, you were like one who did that damage. And do you know why? Do you know what the Lord is accusing them of doing here? He's accusing them of doing nothing. He's accusing them of doing nothing, and now He's going to hold them accountable. Notice He says, “¹¹...you stood aloof...”

It's really interesting, isn't it? When we think about all the sins that a person can commit, we often don't think of the idea that you can actually sin by doing nothing. And that's what...there were things that Edom also did that He's going to hold them account accountable for, but also because they did nothing. It is possible to sin by doing nothing when you see a need and you don't make any move to take care of it. Let me remind you of what James said in James chapter 4, verse 17. He said,

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James 4:17 (ESV)

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

And remember, sin means missing the mark, so you could just put that in there. So, James is saying whoever knows what the right thing is to do and fails to do it, for him, he missed the mark. He missed the mark of God's will related to that particular situation.

And so, what does God go on to say in verse 12? “¹² *But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress.* ¹³ *Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity; do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity.* ¹⁴ *Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; (and that means literally capturing those who are running for their lives. He says) do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.*”

And those are the things that the Lord has against Edom. But He says this in verse 15, “¹⁵ *For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.*” And so, the Lord is reminding Edom, and frankly reminding every nation of the world, in this verse 15, that there is a day of reckoning coming for all nations, not just for the Edomites. The day of Reckoning came for the Edomites. But

there is a day of reckoning come for all nations when the day of the Lord appears, and He says very clearly here that your deeds will return upon your own head. So, what you've sown you'll reap.

Verse 16, *"¹⁶ For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually;..."* What does He mean by this? He's basically using an illustration and saying, as you went up on the holy mountain of the Lord and you drank in celebration, you will now, you and all the other nations, will drink of the cup of God's wrath. That's what He's saying. In fact, He goes on in that verse and says, *"¹⁶ ...they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been."*

This idea of drinking the cup of God's wrath is something that we've seen in several places in the Word of God. You might remember in the book of Jeremiah, let me put this one on the screen:

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Jeremiah 25:15-16 (ESV)

Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them."

So, there's that reference to the cup of wrath. And of course, we even remember reading about that in the New Testament when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Check out Matthew chapter 26 where it says,

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Matthew 26:39-42 (ESV)

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

And obviously, this is illustrated language, and Jesus is making reference to the cup of God's wrath, once again; which He of course drank for us. And so, this is illustrative language that is often used in the Word of God. And now that God has informed Edom of their doom; He goes on to speak of how Israel will remain a nation even though they have been attacked, mercilessly many times, and will go on to receive a blessing.

Verse 17 says, *“¹⁷ But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.”* And by the way, that's no small statement right there when it says that, *“...Jacob will possess their own possessions.”* It may sound like a small statement, but ever since the nation of Israel came into the land under Joshua, they have struggled to maintain hold of that land.

And there have been constant enemies, to this day, wanting to divide the land, take the land away, and they've never, well, I got to be careful about saying never. They have rarely possessed all of the land, which God originally allotted them, to receive as the promised land. Rarely, I think under Solomon, they possessed like the most land that they ever did at any one time, but it was constantly coming and going and so on and so forth. And yet God says there is a day coming when they will possess their own possessions. And again, that's not a small thing for God to say. It hasn't happened yet. So, we're still talking about something that's future, but they are going to possess their own possessions, one day, and there will be none to take those away.

Notice how He goes on verse 18, *“¹⁸ The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor (and I want you to take note of that too, no survivor) for the house of Esau, (and then I want you to notice these last words) for the Lord has spoken.”*

And whenever God says, *“for the Lord has spoken”*, boy I tell you, I mean that is the final word. That is it, right there. And God has just said right there, (paraphrased) *“there will be no survivor.”*

“¹⁹ Those of the Negeb (and that's an area in the South) shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah (and that's the lowlands) shall possess the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim (and that then would be Ephraim, would be the name that God often used for the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And so, He's saying that they shall also possess that northern land) and the land of Samaria, (and that's really that similar area.) And Benjamin (the smallest of the tribes) shall possess Gilead.”

Now, do you remember what Gilead is? (Referring to **Deuteronomy 3:12-13**) When the Nation of Israel came into the land, there were two and a half tribes that liked the land on the east side of the Jordan. That wasn't land that God originally was going to give the Israelites; that wasn't part of the promised land, but when they came over and before they crossed over the Jordan, these two-

and-a-half tribes decided they liked living in that area. And they were the tribes of Ruben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

And they said, they in fact...(Referring to **Numbers 32**) They asked Moses' permission, they said, "Can we stay here? Can we just set up our homes and leave our families? and Can we just...can this be our home?" Because they had conquered the kings that ruled over that land, even though it wasn't part of the promised land.

Well, you'll remember (Referring to **Numbers 32**) that Moses gave them permission; with one condition, He said, "Fine, you can live in this land on this one condition. You help your brothers clear the land that God has allotted for them, and if you will do that, you can then after that's finished, go back to your families, live there and this will be your land." And they agreed, of course.

Isn't it interesting? So, we come back to this idea of brothers and how brother's ought to have a relationship to take care of one another and so forth. Of course, that didn't happen between the descendants of Jacob and Esau. It should have, but it didn't. But it's interesting how this all plays into it. And now God says that there's coming a day when the little, tiny tribe of Benjamin will have all of Gilead, that whole area. Isn't that interesting?

Verse 20 goes on to say, *"²⁰ The exiles of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the Negeb. ²¹ Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."* (repeats) "and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

Once again, we're looking toward a time in the future when, and probably the millennial kingdom; when these things will come to their full fruition, and you'll remember that the millennial kingdom is that time period that happens after the great tribulation, and that is the time period when Israel will live in peace, finally; when the land will not be under dispute, they will possess their possessions, and when they will possess beyond their possessions even as we have read in these last few verses.

But I want you to remember how I asked you to take special note of a section of verse 10. Look back with me in verse 10, in your Bible. This is when the Lord is calling attention to the things that Edom had done. And He said, *"¹⁰ Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever."*

I don't know if anyone here, well, if anyone ever tells you that they've met an Edomite tell them that's not possible because there are none left. They're gone. There are no Edomites remaining and whatever Edomites remained actually lived until the time, shortly after the time of Christ, and the rest of the Edomite population was consumed when Rome came against Jerusalem and destroyed the city and destroyed the temple. And whatever remaining Edomites lived during that time perished and they have since disappeared from history.

But before that, I want to tell you about a man who caused tremendous grief in the nation of Israel. (Referring to **Matthew 2:1-15**) He was a man by the name of King Herod. He was appointed by the Roman government to be king over the land of Judea, and this king heard through the grapevine. That some men, from a foreign country, had come into his land in search of a child king, and they were following the signs in the heavens.

And so, Herod got ahold of these men and had them come to speak to him, and he told them that he wanted them to search out this newborn king so that he could go also and find this king and pay homage. But of course, we know that Herod had other plans, and when he was thwarted, ultimately, in his attempts to find out anything about that baby, this king, and you know him from the Bible (referring to **Matthew 2:16**), ordered a decree to slaughter all of the baby boys. not just in Bethlehem, but in the vicinity of Bethlehem.

We don't know how many baby boys died in that slaughter, but I'm sure it was many. The reason I tell you about this man is because Herod was an Edomite. He was a descendant of Esau. Now, you might hear the name Idumaeen, to describe his heritage, because Herod was also Idumaeen, but that's simply the Greek word for Edomite. And we can see that even then, the Edomites were doing terrible damage and coming against the work of the Lord in a terrible and cruel, and vicious way.

So, what's our takeaway from all of this here tonight? Well, I asked you at the beginning, "How many of you had a brother?" and I know from being raised with a brother that sometimes during those close years when you're living in the same home, maybe even sharing a room, you tend to look on your brother as more of an enemy than anything. And that's often the way it was, in my household.

There were sometimes I wanted to wring his neck. I just couldn't, because he was stronger than I was, but he vexed me many times. And often that is the case between brothers. They become enemies. And we see this in the descendants of Jacob and Esau. And there is a great temptation, even if we're not talking about

a brother; but there is a great temptation, as it relates to enemies, when we see something happening in their life, that is negative, to kind of rejoice and to think to ourselves, “Well, they're finally getting theirs. It took some time, but they're finally getting theirs, and I'm really glad,” and it happens.

I'll never forget it, many many years ago, about 30 years ago or more, I talked with a woman who had someone in her life that she greatly disliked, I mean, greatly disliked. And she told me in a time of honesty and confession that she struggled praying for this person, for fear that her prayers might get answered and this person might get saved and would not then come under the wrath of God. She was afraid that would happen. I'm afraid he might get saved and then he's not going to get his due.

I understand the idea behind that. You know it doesn't take a whole lot for me to say, “I get it. I know what that's like.” So, what do we find in the Word? Let me show you Proverbs chapter 24 verses 17 and 18 these are important verses.

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Proverbs 24:17-18 (ESV)

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the LORD see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.

So you see what the Lord is doing here in the Book of Obadiah, concerning the nation of Edom, is what He holds all of us to; as it relates to how we respond to those in life who have made our lives miserable, or who have hurt us, or offended us, or gotten under our skin, or whatever you want to say that might put this person at odds with you in some way, shape, or form.

The Word to you and me is very simple. Do not let your heart be glad when things bad start to happen to this individual, because the Lord is going to notice, and the Lord will be displeased. And the Lord may in fact turn his anger away from your enemy and look instead to you. And that is the message that we're being given here, and that's the thing that we have to...we have to recognize, and understand, and remember when those sorts of times come; because it is 100% the flesh, the sinful flesh, that wants my enemy to suffer, 100%.

You know it's interesting when we read through the Book of Job; Job spends a great deal of time defending himself to his “friends”. Notice he says here in Job chapter 31,

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Job 31:29-30 (ESV)

“If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him (I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse)”

And of course, that passage goes on in kind of a run-on sentence, but you can see that this was something that Job recognized and knew and understood. That it would be wrong for him to rejoice at the ruin of his enemy and to, as he says, (paraphrased) “exult when evil overtakes him”. He recognized that would be a wrong thing to do because God would notice.

So this is kind of all about kicking somebody when they're down. You guys understand that's the M.O. of the enemy, right? I mean, that's what Satan does. Satan never looks at you and you go through a rough time, and he never says, “Oh, that's too bad. I'm really sorry that you're having a bummer of a day. I'm going to...I'm just going to lay off for a day or two. I'll tell you what, I'll give you 48 hours to kind of bounce back from this, and then I'll get back to making your life miserable. But I can see that you are kind of going through a rough one here, so we'll hold off guys. Hold off this family for a bit.”

Satan's never had that thought one single time. Whenever you're down, he'll race and make it worse. Race to where you are and exacerbate the situation as much as he possibly can, and that is why this is such a heinous thing in the eyes of the Lord. It is the opposite of God. The heart of the Lord is mercy and not standing aloof.

We were just talking about this in our study of 1 Peter as we were going through the second part of 1 Peter chapter 3. Peter was giving instruction to the believers, who were being persecuted, about how to live with situations of persecution. Difficult situations of life. (Referring to **1 Peter 3:8**) And he talked about not returning a curse with a curse, or bringing revenge against their enemies who are hurting them, but instead to respond with blessing.

And that's hard. And you got to understand that's never going to come from you. If you're going to try to dredge that up from inside of you; you're going to be waiting a long time. That's going to come from God in you. That's the only place that's going to come from. He's going to give you the strength. He's going to give you the impetus. He's going to give you the heart desire to do that, but you have to yield to it. And if you...and you can choose not to, you can yield instead to the flesh. You can be just like Esau and yield to the appetites of the flesh and give into those instead of the matters of eternity.

But of course, we lose something when that happens. Just like Esau lost something very important. So, this is a really challenging, important book for us to go through. As short as it is, it's got a powerful lesson about loving our enemies. I remember the words of Jesus. **(Matthew 5:43-44)** ⁴³ *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’* ⁴⁴ *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”* who spitefully use you, once again, that's not going to come from the flesh. It's not going to come from your humanity. That's going to come from the Spirit of God.

So, let's take some time. Let's just pray. Heavenly Father, in this short study tonight, we have learned some important things to take into our daily life, and it's unfortunate, but there's probably an enemy for each one of us. Someone in life who has hurt us, or offended us, made us angry, rejected us, ignored us, abused us, been cruel to us at some time in our life. And Lord, we confess to you right now that the flesh wants nothing more, but to get even and to exact revenge, Lord, we confess that as the very kind of thing that the enemy would do, the enemy of our souls. And we don't want to follow that example. We want to follow your example and we want to heed the Word of God tonight. So, we pray that you would help us to do that, Lord. And we want to start tonight by praying for our enemies and praying for those who have hurt us.

We choose tonight, to pray. That act, that simple act of obedience, to pray. To pray for our enemies, to pray your blessing over our enemies. In the name of Jesus, we pray that blessing. And Lord, even though we may do it out of clenched teeth and with a heart that just isn't really totally into it, help us to get to that place, one day, where we can pray for those people, and really mean it, and really truly mean it when we say, “Lord, bless them. Bless them. Fill them with good things. Pour out your mercy upon them.”

Lord, help us not to rejoice when our enemy falls, whoever that enemy may be, and however deserving we may think that fall is in their life. Help us not to rejoice, but to pray. We thank you for this reminder tonight. Simple, though it may be, important it is, and we pray these things in Jesus' precious name, amen.