

News & Notes

Sunday, November 22, 2009

Remember in Prayer: Arland Anderson; Mary Baily; Kian Boswell; Sue Daniels; Avery Frazer; James Grogan; Twyla Hanisco; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; John and Deliah Mann; Carl Perkins; Lowell Poff; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Katherine Shaw; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the families of Kenneth Campbell and George McLeroy.

Pantry item for the month of November is deodorant.

Conner James Bennett was welcomed home this past week.

Ashland Events: Today: Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM; November 29: Fellowship meal following morning service and early afternoon service at 1:00 PM;

Area Events: December 4: Lectureship at the Charleston congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Nadab and Abihu

PM: Alexander, the Coppersmith

For the Record (November 15, 2009):

Attendance: 71 Contribution: \$1329.00 Budget: \$1459.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"Note Those Who So Walk"

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

Obadiah — God's Wrath toward the Edomites

Jeremy Northrop

The history of Obadiah goes back to the womb of Rebekah in Genesis 25:22-23. Rebekah was pregnant with twins — Jacob and Esau — and the Lord prophesied that the two boys in her womb were representative of two nations. The two nations which were represented were Edom and Israel. The Lord said that the older (Edom or Esau) would serve the younger (Israel or Jacob). Just as Esau hated Jacob, so Esau's descendants hated Jacob's descendants or Edom hated Israel. During the time of the wilderness wanderings, the Israelites were to pass through Edom and the Edomites would not let them do so (Numbers 20:14-21). God punished Edom by forcing them out of their land.

During the time when Obadiah was written, it was beginning to be the end of a dark time for Israel. Judah had fallen. Edom was arrogant during the fall of Israel. Their arrogance, however, would not last. Some have aptly divided the book into two sections: (1) the destruction of Edom (verses 1-16) and (2) the exaltation of Israel (verses 17-21). The overall point is that God was going to protect His people and His church was going to come about through Christ who would come through the Israelites. Just because Israel had temporarily fallen, it does not mean that God would not carry out His ultimate plan for them. Obadiah is a reminder (a harsh reminder) that God is still in control and protects those who belong to Him.

God, through Obadiah, explains the punishment or fall which will happen to Edom. He even tells them why they will fall — they were full of pride and arrogance (verse 3). They will not survive for they had become mighty in their own eyes. They obviously were not mighty in the eyes of God (verse 4-5). They had made alliances for friendships with other nations but the other nations were not going to be able to help them (verse 7). Obadiah prophesies how long they will be cut off from God — forever (verse 10). Another reason for their calamity or the coming fall of the Edomites was because they rejoiced in the affliction of Israel (verses 11-12). Three times — verses 12, 13, and 14 — Obadiah uses the phrase, “you should not...” In short, they did what they should not have done and were to be punished because of it.

In contrast, the people of God (the Israelites) would be delivered. The first word of verse 17 is ‘but.’ This puts the remainder of the book in contrast to everything written up to this point. A new age will dawn for Israel — an age in which they will be holy and will overtake (indeed, devour) Edom. They shall have Edom’s possessions (verse 17). They will be the fire which devours Edom (verse 18). They will possess the land of Edom (verse 19). While this section teaches that Israel will be exalted, it also continues with the previous line of thought that Edom will be overthrown. Ironically, Edom will be overthrown by Israel. This book dedicates itself to prophesying about the destruction of Edom. In fact, it is the only book dedicated solely to content about Edom. Unfortunately, it is not positive content.

There are several good applications which can be found in reading the book of Obadiah. Interestingly, the exhortation to repent was never offered to the Edomites in this prophecy. While it was too late for the Edomites, it is not too late for those who read the prophecy concerning them. Implicitly given is the exhortation to the reader to repent before it is everlastingly too late. It was too late for the Edomites. It is not too late for people today (see 2Corinthians 6:2).

Closely akin to this is the nature of God. He is a God of patience and longsuffering (see 2Peter 3:15). Yet, the day is coming when His patience will run out. Concerning the time

when God’s patience runs out, no one knows (Mark 13:22). When that happens, there will no longer be any opportunity for people to seek God or make themselves right with God. There is uncertainty in death and in the second coming of Christ. Man does not have control over either. Thus, now is the time to prepare for the coming judgment of God.

Then, God’s people cannot idly sit by while the innocent or less fortunate are being plundered. Edom rejoiced in the calamity which had befallen Israel. Obadiah rebuked them for it (verses 11-12). Paul exhorted the church to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10). James told Christians to be concerned about the widows and orphans (James 1:27). This is not the only purpose for the church but God has always exhorted His people to take concern in those who are not as fortunate. The church should be benevolent (Ephesians 4:12). There is little doubt people will take advantage of this work. However, the abuse of others toward the work should never stop the work.

Another lesson can be found in considering a person’s attitude toward those who are less fortunate. Edom found joy in the persecution and depravation of Israel. Obadiah rebuked them for such (see verses 12-14). Jesus said it this way: “...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). The Edomites should never have found joy in their enemies being overpowered. Today, Christians should never seek or desire ill toward anyone even those who hate them. Instead of joy in the misfortunes of others, it should be the opposite.

Finally, there is a lesson about justice. The calamity and hardship which the Edomites wished and inflicted on Israel was to be done to them (verses 15-16). There are New Testament passages which teach this very same principle (Matthew 5:7; 7:2; Luke 6:38). Christians will give an account and be judged the way they have judged. May Christians everywhere learn from God’s wrath against the Edomites. While God is a God of grace and mercy, it is also true that God is a God of justice (Romans 3:25). He will have His way with His world. Christians then need to seek the conditions to find God’s favor.