

**Key Passage: Obadiah 10; Micah 7:18**

Key Thought: The Sovereign Lord has compassion and a desire to rescue that extends to the ends of the earth.¹

Read Obadiah 10 & Micah 7:18. Two truths that hold together.

The Bad News in Obadiah:

1. Romans 3: everybody is doomed. And that is the message one would get if you read the first half of Obadiah or the first half of Micah without the larger context of who God is.
2. Edom was the southeastern neighbor of Judah. Edomites were descended from Esau, Jacob's twin brother. And you know how Jacob and Esau had a difficult relationship? Well...it didn't get better. Israel and Judah (Jacob's kids) had long dominated Esau's kids. But now...Esau's grandkids saw the trouble Jacob's grandkids were in (with the Babylonians) and tried to make life more difficult. They offered no help when Judah was attacked. They danced on what they thought would be Judah's grave. They looted

¹ This lesson summarizes or quotes Michael Williams, *How to Read the Bible through the Jesus Lens*, pp. 125-28, 133-36. These notes are compiled from 4 principal sources. In addition to Michael Williams book, notes are also derived from Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences*, Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, and H. H. Drake Williams, *Making Sense of the Bible*.

Judah, and anybody who tried to flee the city was handed over to Babylon...by the Edomites (Obadiah 11-14). Edom didn't worry about retaliation from a weakened Judah. After all, Edom was in a mountain stronghold, they had made alliances with the nations around them, and they were proud of their own wisdom (Obadiah 3-8).

3. But Edom made one little mistake. They didn't factor in Israel's God. God had told a promise to Jacob and Esau's father—Abraham: whoever curses my people, I will curse him (Gen 12:3). To insult God's children is to insult God himself. And there is no mountain stronghold too great for God to pierce. No one smarter than He. And no alliance that can thwart His will.

4. The punishment: complete annihilation. "Because of the violence you've done...you will be destroyed forever" (Obadiah 10). This judgment was a signpost of a God who would then turn and make a reckoning, judging "all nations" because of their crime, pride, and inhumanity to man (Obadiah 15-16).

The Bad News in Micah:

1. Micah does his preaching during the time of Isaiah and Hosea, and sees that judgment is coming to both Israel and Judah. God explains why his people have to suffer, and why he is just in allowing it to happen. Like a law court, God testifies against his people. And his arguments are right and would sway any jury. They had broken covenant...badly! No justice. No mercy.

2. In chapters 1-3 and 6-7, God lays out the coming judgment. He calls witnesses to the stand:

Property barons who enrich themselves at the expense of their own countryment (2:1-2)

Opportunists whose moral compass is stuck on greed (2:8-9)

Government officials using their power to enrich themselves on the backs of those they govern (3:1-4)

Self-appointed prophets and corrupt priests who are ready to preach health and wealth as long as the offering plate is full (3:5-7, 11)

Dishonest businessmen who use every trick to extort more profit (6:10-12).

2. The judgment: you were supposed to represent justice. So now, you will face justice. You will be handed over to ruin (6:16).

3. Fulfilled: God's people conquered and removed from the land by Assyrian and Babylonian forces. But surely there is more to this—a foreboding judgment against all the injustice of the world.

The heart of the problem is in Micah 6:8. All God wants—all he ever wanted: do justly; love mercy; and walk humbly with God. Justice, mercy, and humility. Can't find it here. Not permanently. Yet 3 things you find completely in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Go back to Romans 3. The story of what we look like to God—outsiders (like Edom) or insiders (like Israel) is not a good one. When we stand on our own merits. But what if we see humanity through Christ’s merits? Not only do we find hope, we begin to see Edom not as our enemy; but as our brother. We see the Samaritans and even the Gentiles. But this can only happen if God commutes our sentence. And that can only happen if somehow the penalty of our injustice was paid. Then and only then could we receive a mercy far beyond our imagination.

And so Paul says that’s exactly what happened (Rom 3:21ff). Notice: witnessed by the law and the prophets.

The prophecy of Micah actually alternates. Chap 1-3 and 6-7 are all about judgment. But in chapters 4-5, and the end of chapter 7 he sees the vague outlines of a coming restoration promised by a God who will not let you go.

-He sees a coming day of restoration far beyond just Israel and Judah. “Many nations” coming to the Lord to learn his ways (Micah 4:2), led by a just and merciful shepherd (Micah 5:2-5). With such a leader, all those of many nations will be one community, living securely and eternally (Micah 4:4-5). Seen partially when a Persian king allowed them to return to their land. But surely there is a greater fulfillment than this: when the just and merciful shepherd of all arrives. Micah says so, claiming one coming from Bethlehem will “be our peace” (Micah 5:2, 5).

Obadiah is far more grim from beginning to end; but he ends his prophecy with this one line: “and the kingdom shall be the Lords” (Obadiah 21). And what does a kingdom look like when His will is done on earth just as it is in heaven? A people full of grace and mercy. A life-giving kingdom. We see people from every tribe and every nation welcomed in, sitting at the same table, where Jew and Gentile, Samaritan and Edomite, finding their primary identity in God alone. And all getting God’s loving protection as if every single person was God’s one and only son, and thus heirs according to the promise.

If God’s judgment was the final word, who among us would escape God’s wrath? Apart from God’s mercy and compassion we would not. But what if...what if God’s mercy and compassion was the end of the story?

Here is Micah 7:18:

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives transgression...you do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy” (Micah 7:18)

In Obadiah, Israel was being oppressed by their own relatives. So was Jesus (John 1:11). Israel's own relatives were handing them over to be executed. Same thing happened to Jesus. And what was Jesus' response? 1 Pet 2:23—no retaliation. He left it with God. And God took care of it. He condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus, allowing no condemnation to fall on those who trust in the Father. See 1 Pet 3:18. Jesus bore our judgment so we can experience God's mercy. As Romans 3 puts it, God could become both Just and the Justifier.

And so now that is our story: Do not repay evil for evil...leave room for the wrath of God (Rom 12:17-19). He will repay. If vengeance, it is his right. But what if he shows mercy; will we be ok with that?

There are two ways that "the kingdom will be the Lords." Way 1: Everybody else gets destroyed. Way #2: Everybody else turns to God and chooses to belong to his way. The first way is up to God as righteous judge at the end. In the meantime, it is up to us to live and persuade so that all may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Micah 4:2 is our dream, vision, and goal. Because of Micah 7:18.