

“When the Nations Gloat...”

Rev. Hobie Wood

Series: *Minor Prophets*

Bible Text: Obadiah 10-15, 17-18

Preached on: June 14, 2026

Christ Presbyterian Church

Physical Address: 801 Roper Dr. Clarkesville, GA 30523

Website: www.cpcclarkesville.org

Online Sermons: www.cpcclarkesville.org/sermons

If you have a Bible, you can be making your way to the Old Testament book of Obadiah. First time I've ever heard that name in a church, pretty sure, possibly the first time for you. Obadiah, if you want to find it, go to Matthew, take a left and go backwards several places and you'll find it there eventually. If you've been with us over the summer, you know that we're taking one week on each of the minor prophets. Those are the short books at the very end of the Old Testament. And today we're in the very, very short book of Obadiah. It's one chapter. He was a prophet most likely, we think, just before the Babylonian captivity, which was that period where the people of God were sent off for their sins into exile in Babylon. But interestingly, Obadiah's prophecy doesn't talk to God's people about their sin. Plenty of other prophets do that. This one addresses one of their neighbors, and we'll see why. So we're going to read verses 10 through 15, and then verses 17 and 18. And remember, this is God's word, and God's word is for us, God's people.

10 Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.

11 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.

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; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.

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.

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.

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 for the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Would you pray with me.

We ask for your help, our Father, as we look now at your word, we don't want to presume arrogantly to be able to stand over your word and master it and figure it out, but rather, would you help us by the Spirit to sit under your word and hear from you and understand not only with our minds, but Lord, we would be whole people who hear and believe and respond. We ask for your help in that, in Christ's name, amen.

You've heard the saying, you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. Common phrase. Usually that's a statement that people throw out about the importance of making sure that you choose good friends, which sure, that's important, but the other side of it is that no matter how hard you might try, you cannot outrun the fact that you came from a family for good and, of course, for bad.

I had the blessing of growing up with a lot of cousins, and we got along really well for the most part. We had great times together when we were kids. We had this strong sense of shared history, and we don't see each other now that we're adults, but when we do, we can reconnect rather quickly because of that bank of positive shared history from our childhood. I've talked to enough of you over the years to know that you have shared history with some of your family as well, and it's of a very different sort. When you go to the family reunion, there's just a cloud of tension and weirdness that hangs in the air, or you just don't talk to those people at all anymore because the shared history includes something, something that happened, some kind of conflict or a betrayal. Over the years, things simmer. The hard part about family is you didn't choose them. You're just biologically related to them forever.

What do you do when your family becomes your enemy? Let's spread it out a little bit. What do you do when the person who was your close friend is now the person who has sided with your enemies and is now piling on? It's not supposed to be that way. Suffering and dealing with enemies is hard enough, and it's so much harder when those enemies, they're close. If you know Jesus, you have enemies, and they want you to fail, and that's hard enough, but it's much harder when the people who are supposed to be loyal to you are the people who pile on and try to extend your misery.

That's the theme in the book of Obadiah. The people of God are facing enemies, but the enemies are close. They're cousins. They're brothers. What we see here is that the Lord promises to take care of all of our enemies, distant or close, but we're going to have to wait on Him to do that. To help us figure out how to wait on the Lord to deal with all of our enemies, let's look first at what are the actions of an enemy, just so we can make sure we can identify them properly. What is an enemy going to do to us? The actions of an enemy. Then let's look at the actions of our Lord. That's the two points, if you like points.

The actions of an enemy.

This is a prophecy that is not against Israel. It's against this country called Edom, and if you look at a map in the back of your Bible, it's to the kind of southeast, this way for you, in your Bible. Edom comes from the name Esau. They are the descendants of the guy named Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, which is in Genesis 25. If you remember that story, these are the twins that were born to Jacob and Rebekah, and it was rivalry from the start. You might recall that Jacob came out of the womb holding the heel of Esau, his older brother.

You might recall that Esau was a man of quick temper and passions. He sold his birthright as the firstborn, and the birthright as the firstborn was that you get the share of the wealth, and you get the position in the family as the patriarch. He sold all of that because he came in from the field in a hungry rage, and his brother was making a red stew, and he says, give me some of your red stew, and Jacob tricks him, and he sells his birthright.

In fact, the book of Genesis says that Esau despised his birthright, and interestingly in Obadiah, in the first part here, in the first few verses, God says that he will make Esau's descendants despised, just like Esau despised his birthright, deliberate play on words. In Genesis 25, it says that Esau wanted some of that boiled up stew, is what the literal Hebrew says, and in verse 3 it says that Esau, Edom, has become prideful, and the word for pride there is this word for boiled up. So Obadiah is trying to say, as it went with Esau, so it goes with Edom, his descendants.

They are just like him, and this contentious relationship can really be traced throughout the entire Old Testament. If you read through the Old Testament, you're going to see a time when God delivered his people Israel out of Egypt, and they were making their way through the promised land, and to get to the land, they needed to go through the country of Edom, and God had told them, I'm not giving you any of their land. Don't ask for it, they're not part of your conquest, just go to the land, and so Israelites come to the Edomites and say, we don't want your water, we don't want your food, we just need to get through your land to get to our land that God has promised us, and the Edomites come out of the gate armed and spoiling for war, ready to destroy them.

God told Israel in Deuteronomy, do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother, and yet throughout the story, Edom is abhorring Israel. You remember my least favorite character in the Old Testament, Doeg the Edomite, Doeg the Edomite who betrayed David, David is running from Saul, and this Doeg the Edomite rats him out, and in the process of ratting out where David is and his location, he gets Saul to kill all the priests in this town called Nob. It's a disgusting story, and it's Doeg.

There's another time when the Edomites cast off their tribute that they've been paying to Judah under the reign of King Jehoram, but really the time that was the worst is the time when Israel was down, and Israel has been told by God, you're going into exile, I'm done, it's over, I'm sending you to Babylon. So they're in a bad spot, and instead of sympathy, instead of loyalty, Psalm 137 records how the Edomites, as Babylon was destroying Jerusalem, Edomites are standing on the sideline yelling out lay it bare, lay it bare, down to the foundations, meaning take them out.

Obadiah describes it in our passage with even more detail, verse 10, he says, Edom did violence to Jacob. They stood aloof on the day that strangers carried off Israel's wealth. They didn't help, they became like the enemies, verse 12. They gloated in the day of his misfortune, they rejoiced in their ruin. They boasted in the day of their distress, and instead of acting like a brother, they act like a Babylonian.

It would be one thing to just sit on the sideline and be passive and say nothing. That's not what happened. They stood at the crossroads, in verse 14, and they waited for an Israelite who happened to escape the clutches of the Babylonian army to be running back across and going back to a place of refuge, and the Edomites would see that person who had escaped and they would go and snatch him and take him back to the Babylonians. Active participation with the enemy.

For clarity, the Israelites were not great people. They had broken faith with the Lord in tremendous ways at this point in history, and God was bringing the curses of the covenant on them. He told them in the book of Deuteronomy, if you disobey me, all of these curses will come upon you. I will send you away. You'll lose the land. But the problem is the Edomites took pleasure in the downfall of God's people.

That is how you know they're an enemy. Taking pleasure in the downfall of God's people, gloating when things fall apart, helping bringing them down, loot their stuff, seek their harm.

Do you know that you have enemies? Do you know that? I'm not talking about just in your workplace or in the world. I'm saying if you belong to Jesus, do you understand the opposition that you face? There are these categories the Bible gives us that you're opposed actively by the devil, who the Bible assumes is very, very real, and the world and all of its systems against you. Then you have this problem of your own sin. Still there.

I think that we tend to think that sometimes the world is a good and safe place, and it's not. Or we assume that it's just a physical universe, and yet we're told there are spiritual powers who want you to fall. And then we have the things that we do that are against God ourselves. Maybe in Habersham County, someone told me they had been out of town, and they came back, and their comment was, man, I just didn't know how much of a bubble we live in here. It's safe. It's kind of sane. And that's true. And I'm not saying that we shouldn't feel very grateful about that. We should give thanks if we feel like we're in a safe bubble in the world. And even the bubble is not as safe as we think it is. You have enemies, even if they're not as loud here as they are in other places.

And do you know what your enemies are doing? Right now, they're waiting. They're waiting for you to be weak, and they're waiting for you to make a mistake, and they're waiting for you to stumble and to prove that you're just as human as everybody else. And then they are going to pile on. How fast does social media respond to the fall of another Christian leader? How fast do they jump on it and say, well, I could have seen that come and told you so. Look, another one.

Where's your Christianity now? It's so fast. You don't even have to wait. It's there. There's delight when a Christian falls. There's gloating. There is a chorus of lay it bare, lay it bare down to the foundations. And let me say this to you, if you're a student or a young person and you live in the bubble, this may be a shock to you. It may be a shock to you to know that there are places in the world when they kill a Christian, there is a community wide celebration because another one has died. That happens all around the world.

We have enemies because we belong to Jesus. Yes, sure, our enemies might be more subtle. In your workplace when you let the word slip that you shouldn't or you do the thing that doesn't represent Jesus very well. You may never hear your coworkers say, ha, see, he's just like me. What a great Christian. He may never say that to you, but it's there.

The world is antagonistic against the people of God. And this is especially true when they came from us. It's especially true when they grew up in the church. It's especially true when they grew up inside the same family that you grew up in and yet they departed from the Lord. Family members, friends who've turned from the Lord will often turn against those who profess Jesus. And they're just constantly waiting to trap you in your words, constantly waiting to condemn you to make you feel like you're the worst Christian that's ever existed.

Many of you know this personally. You've shared your stories. Your family member has told you, you're such a hypocrite. You're part of the problem. You're hurting people. And it could be because they took a cheap shot when you had an unfaithful moment. And it could be because you were trying to be faithful. It goes both ways.

I had a situation recently where I wasn't doing anything wrong. I was in a conversation with somebody who I think they were being influenced by a substance. And in the course of this not good conversation, they told me, I'm glad you're not Jesus. Now presumably because they didn't think that my words and actions matched Jesus' words and actions, and I'm not very smart and fast on my feet. And if I had had the presence of mind, I would have been quick to say, you're right. I'm glad I'm not Jesus too. I really need him. I'm a little bit of a mess, but I didn't. So 1,100,001 moments when Hobie was not fast enough to make the good response. But he took that opportunity to say, you call yourself a Christian. You are nothing.

An enemy will use your profession of faith against you. They'll gloat when you fall. They'll wait till you're weak and then they'll pounce. And they'll try to help the opposition. And Jesus knew it better than we do. He knew it well.

He came to his own and his own didn't receive him. They received him not.

He was opposed not only by the Jewish leadership, but by the Roman leadership.

He was opposed by the crowds.

He was betrayed by one of his closest twelve.

And then at his crucifixion, the other 11 deserted him. They're gone. They're not there.

People gloated and they wagged their heads at him. And they rejoiced at his downfall. And they lied and they bore false witness so that they could help the people who were opposing him. Bring him down. Lay it bare. He knows. He experienced it. And he was perfect.

Now, why should we think that we're going to encounter anything different than that? Especially when we are not perfect. And we do have those moments of faithlessness. And God disciplines us.

Is it your expectation in faithful moments and especially in faithless moments that the enemies of God will pile on?

Moreover, if everyone is thinking well and speaking well of you, I'll just throw this out there. Is it possible that our profession of faith is too watered down and lifeless to offend?

That's not a call for anybody to be unnecessarily shrill or cruel or prickly. But it's a worthwhile question. Faithfulness to Jesus entails opposition. Faithlessness to Jesus entails opposition. We should know it. Because there are these other moments, and this is the hard part, there are these other moments when we act like the enemy.

We should know the actions of an enemy because we act like them sometimes.

What about those times when we are cheering against brothers and sisters for worldly reasons? You ever found yourself cheering against a Christian, a brother or sister, because you just don't like them. Or they're not like you. Or they're strange. Or their theology isn't perfect. Or they're just not doing it right and they kind of fall apart and you find yourself thinking quietly to yourself, yep, just as I suspected. Oh no, we've become, we've got the actions of an enemy flowing out of our hearts.

We have to be able to recognize the actions of our enemies, recognize the actions of an enemy within yourself. But really what we need to see more than that, we need to see what will God do against his enemies and ours. So let's talk about that second half of the sermon here.

The actions of the Lord.

This is a prophecy against Edom, and God through Obadiah is announcing judgment on Edom. So look at what he'll do in verse 10. He says he will cover them with shame.

Now that's a really interesting phrase because humans have shame which needs to be covered. Go back all the way to the very beginning. When Adam and Eve, after the first sin, they realize that they're naked and they are ashamed. They're exposed. They've been cut off in some new way from the presence of the Lord and from each other. And it's God who comes to them and he covers them with animal skins to cover not just their nakedness, He's covering their shame.

It's a prefiguring, a prototype of the gospel where when you come to faith in Jesus, he takes you in your exposure of sin and he covers your shame with the robe of his righteousness and perfection. But in this situation, for these who have no shame, God will make shame their permanent clothing. He will clothe them and cover them in shame forever. He'll cut them off forever. He says they'll be cut off from the Lord, from the land of the living. They'll be cut off as a culture.

I would ask you, how many Edomites have you ever met in your life? You're sitting at zero, just like me. They're not here anymore. They're gone. They have been actually cut off.

Look down at verse 15, God tells them *the day of the Lord*, which if you've been here with us, there's that phrase again, three prophets so far, three times the day of the Lord is mentioned. He tells them *the day of the Lord is near*. It's upon all the nations, including Edom. And in fact, what happens to Edom will be the paradigm for what happens to all nations that oppose God and his people. And he says, what will that day look like? He says, as you have done, it shall be done to you. Your deeds shall return on your own head.

So to the Edomites, as they have gloated, others will gloat at their downfall. As they stood aloof while others pillaged the people of God, they would be pillaged and others would stand aloof. As they rejoiced and boasted in the distress of God's people. Others will rejoice and boast in their distress and so on. This is called retributive justice. It's retribution. It's the person who digs a pit for someone to fall in, but they fall in it themselves.

And if you read through the Bible, God often operates this way. His justice on his enemies is often using the standard that they themselves have set. Jesus mentions this in his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Don't judge as if you were God, because God will judge you against the same standard you're using against other people.

Retributive justice helps us understand this. God gets it right. When he executes justice, he'll get it right. The punishment will fit the crime. People will get exactly what they deserve. We don't have to worry about it. He won't overdo it. He won't underdo it. He'll get it right. After all, he did the same for his own people. Israel worshiped the gods of the nations. And God would send Israel to the nations where they could worship the gods of the Babylonians as much as they wanted. He gave them exactly what they wanted. They turned and trusted the armies of other nations rather than God himself, and so God would let them be destroyed by the armies of other nations. And God himself would make sure it happened. He's just.

Thankfully, he's merciful. Look at verse 17. This is the pivot of the prophecy in Mount Zion. There would be those who escape. This is the place of God's dwelling Mount Zion, Jerusalem. That place will be called holy. And there would be a time when the House of Jacob would have all of their stuff again. They would possess their possessions because all their stuff had been taken. This is a vision of restoration.

You'll notice that the Edomites, when an Israelite escaped, would go get him and take him back to Babylon so that they wouldn't escape. And then if you look down at verse 17 in Mount Zion, there shall be those who escape. So there will be people of the people of God will escape from his wrath and justice. If you look at verse 18 at the very end, there shall be no survivor. There shall be no escape for the House of Esau. They're not going to make it. And the Lord will even use his own people as the fire to burn them up.

God would bring his people back from exile at some point in history. That's true. You can read about that in the Old Testament. But the things that we're reading about here at the end of Obadiah wouldn't be fully complete until the end of all things. If you read Revelation, it's the angelic armies of God pouring out justice on all of his enemies forever. The people of God are built up. It's a new Jerusalem that's holy and perfect, and everybody has all the stuff they need. It's just it's a picture of rightness.

But before we get to that, there's this critical stop that we have to make first. You probably understand why God would destroy his enemies. That makes sense.

Why would he ever bless his people when they should be sent into exile? Why would he do that?

Why would he be gracious to his people when they are just as sinful as the surrounding nations?

Why would he ever be kind to his people when they know, they know more and they still chose to go against him? Why would he be kind to them?

We've acted like enemies. Shame should cover us. We should be cut off. We failed to keep God's law. But as we stop in the Gospels, we see a God who puts on a body like ours. And on the cross, that body is uncovered and exposed to shame and scorn when he deserved no shame and no scorn. So that we can be clothed and covered forever by his righteousness and perfection.

We see a God who puts on a body and was cut off from the shining face of God in his humanity as he hung on the cross, so that we will never be cut off and will know his face shining toward us forever.

There were foreigners and Romans who cast lots for his clothing, just like the Babylonians cast lots for the city of Jerusalem. All who passed in front of him gloated and rejoiced and boasted. And he died under the wrath of God Almighty for sinners, raised in power and glory, coming to judge the living and the dead.

Have you ever thought of this? When your eyes see Jesus next, he's not on a cross. He's not a humble Galilean peasant walking around. He's the king and nobody has to be told that he's the king. And he's riding a horse and he's in triumph. He's exalted and he's come in to make a war.

That's what our eyes see when we see him next. And that's where we need to end this passage. When you encounter Jesus and you will, friends, you will. How will you encounter him? Will you face him as an enemy or will you face him as a friend? If you're his enemy, he will hold you to account. And it's really bad news.

And if you're here and you're not yet a Christian, this is what I would ask you to consider. If you think that the world should be just and there should be justice in the world. OK. Yes. Agreed. Start in your own house. Start with yourself. And start asking yourself the question, OK, what about my life? If God holds me to account, how will I hold up? And let's just be as simple as possible.

Have you loved God with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength?

Have you loved him exclusively and not given your affections to any other God, any other deity, any other idol? Let's be even more simple.

Have you loved your neighbor as yourself?

There are only two ways it can go for us. The actions of our Lord are consistent. He'll crush his enemies and he'll bless his people. The only way to become one of his people is to realize, oh, I have failed incredibly in both of those categories. I have not loved God perfectly, and I've certainly not loved my neighbor as myself. And I need the only one who never failed, which is Jesus Christ. Put your faith in him. If you've not believed in him, we'd love to talk more with you about that.

If you're here and you're a believer and you have enemies, here's the call for you. Wait. Nobody likes that. Children hate being told, yeah, 30 more minutes, yeah, one more hour. Children hate waiting. You know who hates waiting worse than children? Adults. We hate it. We hate it so much. That when I'm suffering in this life through all sorts of internal and external things, the call for me is to wait on the Lord. He'll fix it, but you're going to have to wait. No, fix it now. We're going to have to wait. We want to be vindicated and we're going to have to wait on God to vindicate us.

I had what I thought was a friend once tell me this person had heard that I became a Christian and the phrase was, this was right after 9-11, that you are essentially exactly like the people who

bombed the World Trade Center. You are just like the Taliban because religion is what's wrong with the world and you're part of it. Everything within me just wanted to write a diatribe to explain myself. This side of heaven, I will not be vindicated. I have to wait. You have to wait.

You're going to be the object of scorn at times. Sometimes it's going to be your fault. Sometimes it's not. You're going to have to wait on him to defend you.

You're going to experience shame in our world because of your sins and the sins of other people and the gospel offers you the covering that you need now and yet it won't be fully complete until later.

You're going to have to get used to being a minority, and you're going to have to get used to not getting your way, and you're going to have to get used to not being the person in power, and you're going to have to get used to not being understood and not being treated in good faith, and you can't fix it yourself, and no politician has the power to fix it for you. It can't be done.

You're going to have to wait on the Lord. We're going to experience discipline from him. Every time Israel tried to fix their own issues, they couldn't make it happen and it blew up in their faces and until the Lord decided to bring them back, it wasn't going to happen. If you're tired of fighting the same sins, you're in and you're out. Keep fighting, hate your sin, repent of it, work on endeavoring after new obedience, all of those things and you're going to have to wait on the Lord before you can be fully sinless.

It's not going to happen in this life but as surely as Jesus died and was raised on the third day, he'll come again to judge the living and the dead and he'll handle it, all of it, but you're going to have to wait on him. Your enemies won't stop in this life. They'll try to make everything harder, more miserable and worse.

Resist the urge to be like them. It would be easy to do the actions of an enemy against our enemies but you and I have something better. We have a God whose actions will handle it all and he'll bless us as people, and it's been guaranteed by the death and resurrection of the one who was betrayed and opposed all the way to death for us and he was raised and he wins and therefore so do you. Wait. Let's pray together.

Lord, you know we don't like waiting and we don't like suffering and we certainly don't like suffering when we're the ones in the wrong and it's hard to live with enemies and yet Lord you know our enemies. You know what they're doing. You know what they will do. You know what they can do. Nothing happens apart from your gracious and providential care over us. So would you give us faith in the Lord Jesus who suffered and who died and who was raised and help us to wait trusting in his full vindication. Lord, we praise you that you know how to take care of our enemies and you know how to take care of us. So help us we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

****Portion of scripture read before sermon—John 19:23-24**