

earth. As a specific example of this power, mention is made of the *waters of the sea* which have been made subject to Him more than once (Exodus 14: 16-31; Jonah 1: 4, 15; Matthew 8: 26, 27).

Verse 7. The children of Israel are named in a group with a number of heathen nations. That is for the purpose of showing the vast power of the Almighty, and to indicate the dependence of the whole world upon the independent God.

Verse 8. The comparisons and figures of speech are dropped and the literal prediction of the fate of the nation of Israel is stated. *Saving*, etc., refers to the remnant that was to be left after the captivity was ended (Ezra 2: 64).

Verse 9. This verse has the same subject matter as the preceding one, only it is expressed in figurative language. The heathen nations are the sieve and God was going to use that means of separating many of the people of Israel. In literal actions a sieve retains the good grain, while the dwarfed and otherwise objectionable particles will drop through and fall to the ground. The prediction of the verse is that none of the *grain* among the people of Israel would fall.

Verse 10. The context will justify the insertion of a word between this and the preceding verse, making the present one read: But, *all the sinners of my people*, etc. The particular *sinners* referred to were the false prophets who belittled the idea that any danger was threatening the nation, and who were all the time preaching "peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6: 14).

Verse 11. *That day* denotes the time when the nation of Israel will have received its chastisement at the hands of the heathen. God promised to restore the service that had been interrupted by the exile. *Tabernacles of David* is a phrase used in the sense of the regime that started with that great patriarch, the first ruler of Judah.

Verse 12. Israel had previously been troubled by these peoples, but the promise is that it will be favored by the Lord and the downtrodden people will rejoice.

Verse 13. The prosperity that was to return to Israel was to be prompt and great. The strong expressions of this verse are rather figurative, yet they are a true picture of the speed

with which the blessings of God would come to the land.

Verse 14. *Bring again the captivity* means that the captivity will be reversed, and the Lord's people were to be brought out of it. They also were to be restored to their own land to produce and enjoy the crops of the soil.

Verse 15. *No more be pulled up* applies to them as a nation, for Israel was never moved bodily out of Palestine after the return from captivity. The nation was finally subjugated by another government and the power of the same was taken from it, but it took place while living in its original territory.

OBADIAH

Verse 1. The book of Obadiah is the shortest one in the Old Testament and is one of the minor prophets. There are two main subjects treated in the book; the denunciations against Edom and the return of Israel from the captivity. According to verse 11 the book is to be dated about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. *Vision of Obadiah* means that he was shown a picture of the doom of Edom. *Rumour* means an authentic message from the Lord, not merely some floating speculation as the word usually denotes. An *ambassador* is a herald or messenger who is sent out from an authoritative source to deliver a decree. Such a messenger had been sent out among the nations concerning the land of Edom and Obadiah had heard about it. The gist of the *rumour* or message was that the nations were to rise up and be arrayed against the doomed people.

Verse 2. *Among the heathen* might imply that Edom was not one of the heathen as he is said to be *among* them. However, the word is also rendered "nation" in many places and it is so used in this one. The original word means any group or nation of people regardless of what religion they profess. This verse means that the Edomites were doomed by the Lord to become one of the smaller nations and to be looked down upon.

Verse 3. I shall make a quotation from an authentic work of reference concerning Edom: "Edom is emphatically a land of mountains. On the west, along the side of Arabia, is a line of low limestone hills. Back of these rise higher, igneous rocks [emphasis mine, E. M. Z.], surmounted by variegated sandstone, of peculiar color,

2,000 feet high. The eastern side of the mountain slopes gently away into the Arabian Desert. But, though rough, the land is rich, and the terraced hillsides have in all ages been bright with vegetation, and its people have been prosperous . . . Mount Seir was first settled by the Horites, or Horim, like the inhabitants of Palestine a people of unknown origin. During the later patriarchal age it was conquered and possessed by Esau, the brother of Jacob, and ever after occupied by his descendants, the Edomites . . . They joined the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar in the destruction of Jerusalem, for which the later prophecies and Psalms gave them bitter denunciations . . . The Edomites, or Idumeans, south of Palestine, were conquered by the Maccabean princes and incorporated with the Jews, B. C. 130, and the Nabathean kingdom was annexed to the Roman Empire, A. D. 105."—Rand-McNally Bible Atlas, page 45. This quotation will explain the phrase *clefts of the rock* in this verse, and it also will show the fulfillment of predictions in the other verses about the downfall of the Edomites. The reader will therefore do well to take notice of its contents, for it will be referred to again.

Verse 4. The pride and self-exaltation of Edom is the subject of this verse. The Lord has no objection to a nation's desire to be strong and self-supporting, but He will not tolerate pride in either nations or individuals.

Verse 5. Moffatt's translation renders the words in parenthesis by, "What a downfall is yours!" The thought is that the ruin predicted to be coming on Edom will be so great and complete that even the Lord is caused to make an exclamation. It will be even more complete than the work of thieves in looting a place. They would at least have stopped when they had what they wanted for themselves, and hence there would have been *some* [margin says "gleaning."] grapes left. But when the Lord gets through with the chastisement of Edom there will be nothing left.

Verse 6. This verse is another prediction in the form of an exclamation, and corresponds with the thought of the preceding paragraph.

Verse 7. *Men of thy confederacy* has reference to the allies of Edom. When the test comes they will turn against him and drive him to the border, which means that Edom will be driven to the last extremity. It frequently hap-

pens that the professed friends of a man will reverse themselves and become his enemies. The last two words of the verse are rendered "of it" in the margin, and both Moffatt and the American Revised version agree with it. The idea is that Edom's professed friends were weaving a web around him and he did not have the good sense to realize it.

Verse 8. *That day* refers to the time when the overthrow of Edom was to take place. The nation as a whole was to be ruined, but also its wise men were to be shown to be unable to preserve the country by their leadership.

Verse 9. *Teman* was a district located by or adjoining the land of Edom if not a part of it. *Mount of Esau* is equivalent to "Mount Seir" (Genesis 14: 6). The *mighty men* means the leaders upon whom the inhabitants of the country of Edom relied for guidance. Their apparent wisdom will be exposed and they will be left overwhelmed with dismay.

Verse 10. The relation of *brother to Jacob* was a bodily one (Genesis 25: 25, 26), and their descendants are referred to in history and prophecy as if they were meant personally. The two groups were always regarded as being in a state of hostility against each other; especially the Edomites against Israel.

Verse 11. The various works of reference differ as to whether this verse is history or prophecy. I do not believe it makes any difference as far as its truthfulness is concerned, for Obadiah was writing by inspiration (verse 1) of God, and with Him all is an absolute "now" as to its surety. The truth of the matter is that Edom took pleasure from the misfortunes of his brother Jacob, and also participated to some extent in connection with those misfortunes. An important principle is expressed in this verse by the first and last groups of words: *In the day that thou stoodest on the other side . . . even thou wast as one of them*. Even had Edom taken no physical part in the misfortunes of Israel, the fact of his standing on the side opposite him, *the other side*, would have included him among the enemies of his brother; this principle is taught by Jesus in Matthew 6: 24; 12: 30. There is no "neutral" ground in questions of right and wrong, but every man is either for or against that which is right.

Verse 12. The date referred to in this verse is evidently the time re-

corded in 2 Kings 25, for then it was that the kingdom of Judah was destroyed. *Became a stranger* means the inhabitants of Judah were carried away into a strange land (Babylonia). *Looked* is from *RAAH* and among the many words with which it is rendered in the King James version are approve, enjoy, gaze, regard, respect and think. These translations together with the preceding verse, suggest that Edom *looked* with delight upon the miseries of his brother. That alone would have him the object of God's wrath, but we shall see that he did not stop with the pleasure of his eyes at gazing at the misfortune of Israel.

Verse 13. *Not entered . . . day of calamity.* It is proper to show a friendly spirit for one in distress, but his home should not be invaded at such a time by morbid curiosity seekers. The context indicates that Edom entered and *looked* on the affliction of Israel with eyes of satisfaction. But he did not stop at that; instead, he took advantage of the distressed state of affairs to seize upon some of the valuables present.

Verse 14. Edom further opposed Israel by blocking the road by which he might have escaped from the invader. And there were some who were remaining in the home land, whom Edom helped in some way to be taken over by the enemy forces.

Verse 15. *All the heathen* implies that other people besides the Edomites were to feel the wrath of God. That was true in more than one sense, for in overthrowing that one nation, others were given an indication and warning of what was to be the fate of all kingdoms of the world that followed practices displeasing to God.

Verse 16. Drinking a cup figuratively means to partake of some experiences, either pleasant or unpleasant (Psalms 23: 5; 116: 13; Jeremiah 25: 15; Matthew 20: 23; 26: 39). Edom was destined to drink the cup of God's wrath because of his assaults upon His *holy mountain*, and also the other nations were to feel the wrath of the Lord.

Verse 17. This verse introduces the second of the main subjects mentioned with the comments on verse 1, the return of the people of Israel from captivity. Other verses following will continue to predict some of the returning fortunes of the nation, including its retaking of certain lost territory.

Verse 18. *Fire and flame* are used figuratively of the glowing recovery

of the people of God from their depressed state, and of the downfall of their old enemy, the *house of Esau* which means the Edomites. This nation was to be utterly overthrown as a separate ruling power as already predicted in this book.

Verse 19. The mention of *the south, mount of Esau, plain, the Philistines*, etc., is to indicate the various settlements that were to be observed when the Jews repossessed the land of Palestine after the return from exile.

Verse 20. This verse continues the subject started in the preceding one.

Verse 21. It is not a rare thing for the prophets to pass from a prediction of favor to come to fleshly Israel, and prophesy some good fortune to come upon spiritual Israel. (See Isaiah 1: 29 with 2: 1-4; 4: 2, 4; 40: 1-4; Ezekiel 21: 24-27.) This is very understandable, for even the New Testament system of religion was introduced into the world through the Jewish nation, and they were the first to accept the Gospel. So this verse is a prediction of the kingdom that was to be the Lord's and "stand for ever."

JONAH 1

Verse 1. The book of Jonah is composed almost wholly of history. The only prophecy it contains is that of the threatened destruction of Nineveh (chapter 3: 4), which was to be only forty days in the future. But he is called a prophet in 2 Kings 14: 25 and Matthew 12: 39, hence we know that his work entitled him to that classification. We have no details of his work outside of this book except what is briefly mentioned in the first reference above and the allusion to his preaching by Jesus. And the Old Testament reference gives us the information as to the general date of his life and work, for he gave instructions to Jeroboam II who reigned in the 10-tribe kingdom of Israel about 800 B. C., which was a century before the Assyrian captivity of Israel. This verse says the word of the Lord came to Jonah, so we see that his work was by inspiration of God as far as his writing and teaching was concerned.

Verse 2. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, the power that God intended to use in the chastisement of the kingdom of Israel at a future date. This capital city was located on the east bank of the Tigris River. It had become so wicked that the Lord wished to have it improved