

Obadiah 1:2-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/obad/obad-1/obadiah-12-4/>

Though Edom prides herself in her great wealth and impregnable rocky highlands, the LORD will bring her down and cut her off forever.

With the word *Behold*, this section resumes God's speech, which was interrupted after the citation formula "thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom" (v. 1b). That means that the vision announced at the very opening of the book begins here. The vision begins with the particle *behold*, a term often used to describe an event about to take place. In Obadiah, the LORD used the particle to introduce some significant events that will cause a reversal of Edom's fortunes.

In Obadiah's day, Edom prided herself in her great wealth (Obadiah 1:6). But God stated that He would humble her: *I will make you small among the nations. You are greatly despised.* The adjective *small* refers to something insignificant or unimportant (Deuteronomy 1:17; 1 Samuel 20:2). It is a symbol of weakness (Amos 7:2). Its use here demonstrates how God would diminish Edom's sociological status among the nations, causing her to be *greatly despised*; that is, to be treated with contempt or to be considered unimportant (2 Samuel 6:16). Edom will experience shame and humiliation.

Edom also prided herself in her impregnable rocky highlands. But the LORD would bring her low. He said, *The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place.* Edom thought she was invincible because of her geographic position. The region of Edom is a mountainous land, filled with mountain peaks. The peaks rise as much as 5700 feet above sea level. She also has sharp crags, caves, and clefts in which military armies could find refuge.

To explain Edom's arrogance, the LORD quoted her words directly. She used to *say in her heart, Who will bring me down to earth?* The implied answer is "Nobody." Edom asked this question to express her conviction regarding her invincibility. In essence, she was saying, "Nobody can bring me down to earth." She thought her fortresses made it difficult for her adversaries to penetrate the land and cause damage to the country. But her self-exaltation was far greater than her actual position among the nations. Her arrogance was short-lived because the all-powerful God would bring her down.

Therefore, the LORD provided the answer to Edom's question: *Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down.*

An *eagle* is a powerful bird with a wingspan up to seven and a half feet. It hunts high in the air and swoops down on its prey at great speed. In Bible times, the *eagle* was known for its keen eyesight, power, and sharp beak and talons (Deuteronomy 14:12). Since the *eagle* builds its nest in high places, the LORD used the imagery for Edom.

Edom used to think she was built *high like the eagle* and *set her nest among the stars*. She believed she established herself in places too high for men to climb. But “the things that are impossible with people are possible with God” (Luke 18:27). There is nothing too difficult for God (Jeremiah 32:27). Therefore, He stated that He would bring Edom down at the appropriate time. Even though Edom’s “*nest*” was high *like the eagle*, even as high as *the stars*, it would still be brought down. Edom trusted in their own strength. They were arrogant and abusive to their brother Judah. They would be judged by being given what they wished upon others.

Biblical Text

² **“Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
You are greatly despised.**

³ **“The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,
Who say in your heart,
‘Who will bring me down to earth?’**

⁴ **“Though you build high like the eagle,
Though you set your nest among the stars,
From there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.**