

Obadiah 1:5-7

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/obad/obad-1/obadiah-15-7/>

The LORD will use foreign nations to pillage Edom's resources and remove her from her land.

The prophet Obadiah began to ask a series of questions to demonstrate how completely Edom would be destroyed. He wrote, *If thieves came to you, if robbers by night—O how you will be ruined!—Would they not steal only until they had enough?* Thieves break people's buildings and steal their belongings (Hosea 7:1). They usually steal what they consider valuable and easily portable, leaving unwanted items behind. But Edom's greedy invaders would not just pillage enough for their needs. They would carry away everything.

Obadiah also wrote, *If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings?* The book of Deuteronomy tells us that landowners and harvesters were to gather the grapes of their vineyard once. They were not to go over those *grapes* and pick the clusters that they had overlooked. Any leftover was “for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow” since they were the most unfortunate groups within the Israelite society (Deuteronomy 24:21). However, Edom's invaders would not leave anything behind. Their annihilation would be complete.

As the LORD described Edom's future devastation, He stated, *O how Esau will be ransacked, and his hidden treasures searched out!* The name *Esau* stands for the nation Edom, as *Esau* was its founder. Esau was also called Edom (Genesis 25:25; 36:1, 8, 19). Edom means “red.” According to the book of Genesis, *Esau* was named Edom because he had red hair and because he sold his birthright to Jacob for some stew that Esau called “red stuff” (Genesis 25:30).

To be ransacked means to look through something thoroughly in a rough way. Indeed, Edom's greedy conquerors would destroy her land and carry her wealth away. Even her *hidden treasures* would not escape the voracious conquerors. Their goal would be to destroy Edom and carry everything away.

The nation Edom was prosperous. But the LORD through Obadiah addressed Edom directly, telling her that her pride would be short-lived: *All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border. And the men at peace with you will deceive you and overpower you.*

The term translated as *allied* is literally “men of covenant.” It refers to other nations that were friendly to Edom. In the ancient Near East, treaties between neighboring nations were common. Kings would establish a mutual agreement to encourage trade and protect one another as equal partners (1 Kings 5:10–14). Such treaties would cause the parties to be at peace with one another. But Edom's *men allied with you* (also called, “men at peace”) in whom she had confidence would become her foes. Edom would be trapped.

The LORD emphasized the treachery by adding, *They who eat your bread will set an ambush for you.* The statement *they who eat your bread* refers to Edom's friends and *men who are allied*. In the ancient world, sharing a meal with someone was a hospitality custom that established the

basis of a peace agreement. This custom also appears in Psalm 41, in which the psalmist declared, “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9). This psalm foreshadowed Jesus being betrayed by Judas (Luke 13:21-26).

Similarly, those who established peace treaties with Edom would turn against her and betray her. They would plan the treachery so well that Edom would not be aware of it. The reason is that *there is no understanding in him*. That is, Edom had no wisdom to detect the trap. This is likely due to her arrogance (Obadiah 1:3). She will therefore experience deception.

Biblical Text

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They who eat your bread
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(There is no understanding in him.)