

Devotion 34:

**Our Father Is An Avenger**

Obadiah

*“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”*

Rom. 12:19

It is fitting that this attribute of our Father would follow on the heels of His being just and righteous, for vengeance follows justice. The single chapter book of Obadiah is about our Father’s warning Edom that He will repay them for gloating over Judah’s downfall.

The land of Edom is descended from the people of Esau. You might recall that Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob. The offspring of both houses lived in hostility with each other for centuries. And now during the Babylonian captivity, Edom was swelled with spiteful pride toward Judah.

Our Father, however, solemnly warns Edom that her negligence, her sin of omission, will come back on her own head:

*“Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble.” 10-12*

Our Father’s words go beyond that of Edom though:

*“The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.”*

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For the children of Israel and of Judah, it must have been quite humbling to experience captivity and the downfall of their glorious kingdoms. For people of such rich history and of such fantastic deliverances by our heavenly Father, it must have been particularly ignominious to fall to shame in front of conquered neighbors. And sinful humans like to kick one who is down. Yet, our Father reigns in our natural inclination toward vengeance:

*“Do not say, ‘I’ll pay you back for this wrong!’ Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.” Prov. 20:22*

*“For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold*

*Zion's cause.*" Is. 34:8

*"For we know him who said, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* Heb. 10:30

Now one might wonder why we should wait for the Lord to get vengeance. Why can't we? If we think about it, I think we'll discover why. Man's revenge is not just. The sinful flesh will seek vengeance and then some. The repayment demanded will be more than "an eye for an eye."

The martyred saints in heaven, those "under the altar," understand this notion full well. Listen to their wisdom and worship:

*"And I heard the altar respond: 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.'"* Rev. 16:7

Interestingly, these words come in the midst of our Father's sending forth his angels to pour out His bowls of wrath on the earth in the end times.

I believe this attribute is appreciated more fully by those believers who have truly suffered for the name of Christ. Their voice will be loud and long in our heavenly home as they praise our Father who will avenge their mistreatment by the wicked and the evil. Praise God! Our Father is an avenger "*who does not leave the guilty unpunished.*" (Ex. 34:6)