

Obadiah 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity;

Analysis

Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity—God specifies Edom's crimes during Jerusalem's fall. "Entered into the gate" (תָּבוֹא בְּשָׁעָר, tavo vesha'ar) suggests either gloating entry as spectators or active looting. The phrase repeats "in the day of their calamity" (בַּיּוֹם אֵת, beyom eidam) three times, emphasizing this particular moment when Edom should have shown compassion but instead exploited vulnerability.

Yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction—not mere observation but gloating over suffering. The Hebrew תְּרֵא בְּכָעֵת (tere vera'ato) implies malicious viewing, taking pleasure in misfortune. **Nor have laid hands on their substance** (וְאַל-תִּשְׁלַחַנָּה וְכַיִלּוּ, ve'al-tishlachnah vecheilo)—actively stealing from the devastated. This triple indictment—gloating presence, malicious observation, and opportunistic looting—reveals Edom's moral depravity. Proverbs 17:5 warns: "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Edom's response to covenant relatives' catastrophe earned divine retribution.

Historical Context

When Babylon besieged Jerusalem (588-586 BC), Edom apparently cooperated—cutting off refugees (v. 14), looting ruins, celebrating destruction. Psalm 137:7 captures Jewish anguish: "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." This betrayal was especially heinous given the blood relationship. Rather than helping relatives in crisis (as Torah commanded—Leviticus 25:35-36), Edom exploited their calamity. This teaches that God sees how His people are treated in times of vulnerability and holds others accountable. The principle applies today: how believers respond to others' suffering reveals character and invites either divine approval or judgment.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when others (especially those you dislike) face calamity—with compassion or secret satisfaction?
2. In what ways might professing Christians 'loot the afflicted' by exploiting vulnerable people's suffering for personal gain?
3. How does Christ's identification with suffering people (Matthew 25:31-46) challenge indifference or exploitation of those in calamity?

Interlinear Text

אַל	תִּבְאַל	בְּשַׁעַר	עַמִּי	בַּיּוֹם
H408	Thou shouldest not have entered	into the gate	of my people	in the day
	H935	H8179	H5971	H3117
אַיִלּוֹן	אַל	תְּרַא	גַּם	אָתָּה
of their calamity	H408	yea thou shouldest not have looked	H1571	H859
	H343	H7200		
בְּרֻבָּעַת וְ	בַּיּוֹם	אַיִלּוֹן	תִּשְׁלַח	חִנְחָה וְאַל
on their affliction	H3117	H343	H408	nor have laid
	H7451		H7971	
בְּחִיל וְ	בַּיּוֹם	אַיִלּוֹן		
hands on their substance	H3117	H343		
	H2428			

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 1:15 (Parallel theme): And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

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