

Obadiah 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

Analysis

Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape—Edom's cruelty exceeded gloating and looting; they actively murdered refugees. "Stood in the crossway" (תַּעֲמֹד עַל־הַפֶּרֶק, ta'amod al-happereq) means positioning themselves at escape routes, mountain passes where fleeing Judeans would travel. "To cut off" (לְהַחֲרִית, lehachrit) means to kill, destroy, eliminate. They hunted down survivors who escaped Babylon's slaughter.

Neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress (וְאַל־תִּסְגֵּר שְׂרִידָיו בְּיוֹם צָרָה, ve'al-tasger seridav beyom tzarah)—not merely killing refugees but capturing survivors and delivering them to enemies for execution or slavery. The Hebrew סָגַר (sagar) means to hand over, betray, imprison. This was ultimate treachery: using kinship knowledge to hunt relatives, then betraying them to executioners. Amos 1:11 condemns Edom for pursuing "his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity." Such cruelty demonstrates total moral bankruptcy deserving severe judgment. Christ taught that final judgment includes accountability for how we treat vulnerable people (Matthew 25:41-46).

Historical Context

When Jerusalem fell, many Judeans attempted escape through the Judean wilderness toward the Jordan Valley or Dead Sea region—territory Edom controlled or knew well. Instead of providing refuge (as kinship and Torah commanded), Edom hunted them down. Some captured refugees were apparently handed over to Babylonians for execution or enslavement. This monstrous cruelty—combining ethnic kinship knowledge with murderous hostility—constituted unforgivable sin in God's eyes. The parallel today: professing religious people who exploit vulnerable populations (refugees, persecuted minorities, the poor) rather than helping them face divine judgment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Edom's active participation in hunting refugees challenge mere passivity or indifference toward vulnerable people?
2. In what ways might Christians today 'stand in the crossway' blocking escape for persecuted or desperate people?
3. How does Christ's teaching about judgment based on treatment of 'the least of these' (Matthew 25:31-46) apply to refugee crises and human trafficking today?

Interlinear Text

וְאַל	תַּעֲמֹד	עַל	הַפֶּתַח	לְהַכֹּת יָת	אֶת
H408	Neither shouldst thou have stood	H5921	in the crossway	to cut off	H853
	H5975		H6563	H3772	
פְּלִיט יוֹ	וְאַל	תִּסְגֹּר			
those of his that did escape	H408	neither shouldst thou have delivered up			
H6412		H5462			
שְׂרִיד יוֹ	בִּי וּמִ	צָרָה:			
those of his that did remain	in the day	of distress			
H8300	H3117	H6869			

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