

# Obadiah 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?

## Analysis

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**If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough?** God employs ironic comparison—even thieves leave something behind. The Hebrew (גַּנְבִּים) (gannavim, "thieves") and (שְׁזָדִים לְלַיְלָה) (shodedei laylah, "destroyers of night") would take only what they could carry or wanted. The parenthetical exclamation "how art thou cut off!" (אַיִן נִצְמַתָּה) expresses astonishment at the thoroughness of Edom's destruction.

**If the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?** (אַמְ- im-botzrim ba'u lakh lo yash'iru olelot). Leviticus 19:10 and Deuteronomy 24:21 commanded grape harvesters to leave gleanings (עֶלְלִות, olelot) for the poor and foreigners. Even harvesters practicing Torah justice would leave remnants. But Edom's judgment will be total—divine wrath leaves nothing. This principle appears throughout Scripture: God's judgments are thorough and complete (Jeremiah 49:9-10 applies this same imagery to Edom). The New Testament warns that final judgment will be comprehensive—separating wheat from chaff with nothing escaping (Matthew 3:12).

## Historical Context

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This verse emphasizes the unprecedented thoroughness of Edom's coming judgment. While human conquerors—whether thieves or armies—typically leave remnants (either from inability to take everything or from mercy/oversight), God's judgment on Edom would be exhaustive. Historically, this was fulfilled as Edom was gradually but completely displaced, absorbed, and obliterated. The Nabatean conquest left no independent Edomite nation; their forced conversion under the Maccabees erased their distinct identity; Rome's destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) eliminated even their Idumean remnant. Archaeological evidence shows Edomite sites systematically abandoned and never reoccupied—silent testimony to judgment's totality.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the completeness of God's judgment on unrepentant sin contrast with human justice that often leaves loopholes or remnants?
2. What does this verse teach about the certainty and thoroughness of divine judgment for those who persist in rebellion?
3. How should the knowledge that God's judgments are comprehensive (leaving no escape) motivate evangelism and personal holiness?

## Interlinear Text

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אִם	לִלְכֹּד	שְׁאֵלָה	אִם	לִבְנֵי	שְׁאֵלָה	אִם	לִבְנֵי	אִם	אִם
H518	If <b>thieves</b>	came	H0	H518	to thee if <b>robbers</b>	H7703	by <b>night</b>	H349	
H1590		H935					H3915		
הַיְלָדִים	בְּלֹא	יִגְנְבּוּ	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	יִגְנְבּוּ	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	אִם
how art thou cut off	H1820	H3808	would they not have stolen	H1589		till they had enough	H1767		H518
בְּצִדְקוֹתֶךָ	בְּאֵלֶּה	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	בְּלֹא	
if the <b>grapegatherers</b>	came	H0	H3808	to thee would they not leave	H7604				
H1219		H935							
עַלְלֹות:									
some <b>grapes</b>									
H5955									

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 49:9** (Parallel theme): If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleanings of grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.

**Deuteronomy 24:21** (Parallel theme): When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

**Isaiah 17:6** (Parallel theme): Yet gleanings of grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.