

Obadiah 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!

Analysis

How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up! This verse continues the ironic contrast—Edom's hidden treasures, supposedly secure in mountain fortresses and secret places, will be thoroughly plundered. The Hebrew נֶחֱפֶסוּ עֵשָׂא (nechpesu Esav, "how searched out is Esau") and מַצְפֻנָּאִים (matzpunav, "his hidden things" or "treasures") emphasizes meticulous investigation. The verb חָפַס (chafas) means to search thoroughly, to examine carefully—nothing remains hidden from God's judgment.

Edom's geography featured countless caves, gorges, and hiding places where wealth could be concealed. Petra's rock-carved treasury (Al-Khazneh) symbolizes Edom's confidence in hidden security. Yet God declares all will be exposed and taken. This principle pervades Scripture: nothing is hidden from God (Hebrews 4:13), and what people conceal will be revealed (Luke 8:17, 12:2-3). The rich fool who stored up earthly treasures discovered they provided no security when God required his soul (Luke 12:16-21). Only treasures in heaven are truly secure (Matthew 6:19-21).

Historical Context

Edom's wealth came from controlling trade routes between Arabia, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, plus copper mining in the Arabah. Archaeological excavations reveal sophisticated water systems, impressive architecture, and evidence of prosperity. Yet all this—including hidden treasures in remote caves and fortifications—was

eventually lost. When Nabateans displaced Edom, they inherited these sites but not necessarily all hidden wealth. The prophecy's point: no earthly security, no matter how cleverly concealed, escapes divine judgment. What seemed permanently secured was thoroughly plundered and lost.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'hidden treasures' (secret sins, concealed wealth, private idols) might you trust in that won't withstand God's searching examination?
2. How does this verse challenge the modern obsession with financial security, privacy, and protective measures?
3. In what ways does Christ offer the only truly secure 'treasure' that cannot be searched out and taken in judgment?

Interlinear Text

אֵי יָרַח	נִחְפָּשׁ וְ	עֵשָׂא	נִבְעָ וְ
H349	searched out	How are the things of Esau	things sought up
	H2664	H6215	H1158
מִצְפְּנָיו:			
how are his hidden			
H4710			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 49:10 (Parallel theme): But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not.

Psalms 139:1 (Parallel theme): O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

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