

Obadiah 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

Analysis

And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. After destroying wisdom (v. 8), God targets military might. "Thy mighty men" (גִּבְוָרִים, gibborekha) refers to warriors, heroes, champions. "Teman" (תֵּמֶן, Teman) was a prominent Edomite city, grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:11), symbolizing Edom's strength and wisdom. "Shall be dismayed" (יָחַת, yechattu) means terrified, shattered, broken in courage—not just defeated but psychologically destroyed before battle.

The purpose clause "to the end that" (לְמַעַן, lema'an) reveals God's intention: comprehensive destruction. "Every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter" (וְכָרַת-אִישׁ מַהֲרָ עֲשֵׂו מִקְּטָלִ) total annihilation through violence. The verb כָּרַת (karat) means to cut off, destroy, eliminate. This isn't partial defeat but complete obliteration. The principle: when God judges, neither wisdom (v. 8) nor military strength (v. 9) provides escape. Psalm 33:16-17 declares: "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is vain thing for safety." Only God saves (Psalm 3:8).

Historical Context

Edom's warriors were formidable—mountain fighters defending nearly impregnable positions. Yet military prowess couldn't prevent gradual

displacement, conquest, and eventual extinction. Teman, specifically named, was utterly destroyed—archaeological excavations show abandonment and decline. This fulfilled prophecy exactly: Edom's mighty men were dismayed and cut off. The same pattern appears throughout history: militarily powerful nations (Assyria, Babylon, Rome) eventually fell. True security rests not in military might but in covenant relationship with the Almighty.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What forms of human strength (military, economic, technological, physical) do people trust for security that will ultimately fail?
2. How does God's judgment expose the futility of confidence in human power rather than divine grace?
3. In what ways does Christ demonstrate true strength through apparent weakness (the cross), overcoming through self-sacrifice rather than military might?

Interlinear Text

וְיִחְתַּבֵּל	גָּבֹר יְהֹוָה	וְתִימָּן	לֹמַעַן	יִכְרַת
shall be dismayed	And thy mighty	men O Teman	H4616	may be cut off
H2865	H1368	H8487		H3772

אֵלֶּא אֵשׁ	מִן הַר	עֵשֶׂל	מִקְטָל:
to the end that every one	of the mount	of Esau	by slaughter
H376	H2022	H6215	H6993

Additional Cross-References

Amos 1:12 (Parallel theme): But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

Ezekiel 25:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

Jeremiah 49:22 (Parallel theme): Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

Genesis 36:11 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

Job 2:11 (Parallel theme): Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

Jeremiah 49:20 (Parallel theme): Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them.

Jeremiah 49:7 (Parallel theme): Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?