



Fillmore Study Bible

ASV text—Metaphysical Bible Links—Charles Fillmore Footnotes

Fillmore Study Bible—Obadiah

Pride, Betrayal, Judgment and Retribution— Spiritually Understood



God appearing to
Obadiah in his dream
(France, 13th century).

When read literally, Obadiah, the shortest book of the Old Testament, is about pride, betrayal, judgment and retribution. In this oracle, Obadiah describes how Edom, a people ethnically related to Israel, failed to help when Israel was overrun and at the mercy of the Babylonians. Edom did so because of their pride. Edom was a wealthy nation. Not only did Edom fail to help, Edom actually profited from Israel's capture. In this oracle, Obadiah envisions that Edom's pride and betrayal will lead to judgment and retribution.

[But here is another way to read the vision of Obadiah.](#)

When read metaphysically, the process of pride, betrayal, judgment and retribution is an internal process. My sense is that this is how Jesus might have read the oracle. I believe Jesus would have grieved the pride which was all too common then and seems to be all too common today. But when we consider the betrayal, judgment and retribution described in Obadiah's vision, it is likely that Jesus saw something other than cruelty, pillage and slaughter. Most likely he saw betrayal, judgment and retribution from a perspective of high spiritual understanding and a consciousness of love.

A few months ago, I sent out a post entitled [Can there be peace in Unity?](#) which introduced a book, *The Anatomy of Peace—Resolving the Heart of Conflict*. The book describes a way of being that shifts our focus from culture, institutions and politics to the experience of the sacredness of people, particularly the sacredness of people with whom we cannot agree. The book explains that we cannot get to a consciousness of the sacredness of people because we are constantly betraying the guidance of our own higher nature, which we know in Unity as our Christ nature. We are, according to the book, in a state of self-deception that leads us to constant self-betrayal.

That Edom was prideful and that she betrayed Israel is nothing new. It is a story that we need to remember each Memorial Day, when we honor those who gave their life because of our inability to see the sacredness of all people.

So here is an interpretation of Obadiah's vision of pride, betrayal, judgment and retribution from a high level of spiritual understanding. It is based on [Fillmore Study Bible annotations for Obadiah](#) compiled by Eduardo Rodriguez and framed using *The Anatomy of Peace* as an internal guide.

Pride. Obadiah declares in verse 3: *The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee*. The Fillmore annotations in the Fillmore Study Bible explain pride in this verse as follows: "Edom was located on higher elevations in the mountains of Seir; Edomites thought very highly of themselves and superior to the Israelites. Metaphysically, sense thoughts seem more important than spiritual ones and thus can be easily prioritized."

What happens when an opportunity emerges to provide assistance to someone in need? Nearly every day I am given an opportunity to help someone with their computer, to give a dollar to a panhandler at the stop light, to praise a minimum wage restaurant worker who messed up my order, to take a phone call from someone who read my blog, to give up a seat for an elderly person, to encourage a kid who needs attention, and to forgive the gal who cut me off in the parking lot.

When these opportunities come our way, we then have a choice: to follow the guidance of a loving heart or to turn away from someone in need. As the Fillmore annotation says, all too often "sense thoughts seem more important than spiritual ones and thus can be easily prioritized." We fail to act because its too easy to follow sense thinking.

Betrayal. We might assume that the betrayal in this story is Edom betraying Israel. But take another look at verse 3: *The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee*. Who was deceived? Not Israel. Rather, it was Edom who betrayed herself; Edom was self-deceived by her own pride.

Self-betrayal and self-deception are related. We might think that self-betrayal follows self-deception, but that is not the case, according to *The Anatomy of Peace*. Self-betrayal is a choice to follow sense consciousness. Once made, we shift to justifying our choices and those justifications are in the form of self-deception. Our justifications are self-deceptions that protect ourselves from the uneasiness we encounter by choosing to act in cruel or unloving ways.

The primary justifications we make are "I deserve (this or that)", "I am right (and you are wrong)", "I can't (because I'm not capable)" and "I am too hurt (to help)." It's important to distinguish needs from justifications. These four statements are not about our needs. They are about why we are justified in not helping someone in need. Before we get too

philosophical about distinguishing needs from justifications, I would only ask how Jesus might have made the distinction. In my mind, it's a subtle difference, but clear.

Judgment. Obadiah describes three judgments of the Edomites in verses 7, 8 and 9. They are:

1. A loss of Peace. Obadiah writes, "The men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee." We begin to feel uneasiness in our decision to not lend assistance.
2. A loss of wisdom and understanding. Obadiah says in in verse 8 that Jehovah will: "destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau." When peace is lost, we soon find ourselves with diminished wisdom and understanding.
3. A loss of prosperity. In verse 9, Obadiah says that "thy mighty men, O Teman (the subconscious store of substance and good)" ... shall be "every one may be cut off from the mount of Esau by slaughter."

Those of us in metaphysical religion will recognize all three of these judgments as having an inner nature. The loss of peace, wisdom, understanding and subconsciousness store of substance are constrictions of the soul, which lowers consciousness. *The Anatomy of Peace* describes such judgement as "being in the box", a state in which we find ourselves unable to act in loving ways, thereby perpetuating hostility, blindness and poverty.

Retribution. Obadiah declares (verse 15): "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee" and in the final passage he repeats four times the idea that Edom's victims "shall possess" what Edom has taken. It just may be that thinking we can get away with cruel and heartless acts is the biggest self-deception of all. As Jesus said, "thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing."

But paying the last farthing, according to Jesus and according to *The Anatomy of Peace* is not monetary compensation. The term "shall possess" is, according to the Fillmore annotations, "metaphysically, a description of change in consciousness culminating in higher forms of thought overcoming those of sense consciousness."

The Anatomy of Peace describes numerous examples where hatred and impossible disagreements about culture, politics and religion are overcome by a "change in mindset", a euphemism for "way of being", which we know in Unity as a change in consciousness.

I am well aware of the metaphysical principle that life works from within to without; that what we harbor in consciousness is ultimately made manifest in our physical life. **But I have also come to a deep conviction that simple, subtle choices we make in life have the capacity to shape consciousness in profound ways.**

When our choices are selfish, we find that, like Adam and Eve, we feel a need to make fig leaves—justifications—to cover choices made from pride, laziness and greed.

But when we make willful decisions to help someone in need, even when we are in a state of cynicism or fear, we then we discover the hand's ability to train the heart. This is the Anatomy of Peace.

Mark

Memorial Day Weekend, May 26, 2019



We now have four books annotated in the Fillmore Study Bible. Eduardo Rodriguez, a pilot and a student of Christian metaphysics from Sanford, Florida, recently sent me annotations for Obadiah. [He is member #2 of The Fillmore Bible Society.](#)

Thank you, Eduardo!



 Fillmore Study Bible—Obadiah by Mark Hicks.



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