

In addition to standing up when there is an issue of right or wrong at stake, Christians must also stand up for the Gospel of Christ and His teachings.

“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”
(Jude 3 NASB)

Even Christianity itself must be defended today. It is becoming more and more popular to speak out *against* Christianity. That trend can not go unchallenged by Christians. Nor can it go unchallenged by Christians when the Bible is defamed and referred to as a book of fables. There are now — even those who *profess* to be *Christian*, openly denying that the Bible is the *inspired* Word of God. That *must* be challenged when the opportunity presents itself.

When Obadiah told the Edomites that the Sovereign Lord said they had done *violence* to their relatives by standing aside without helping, it shouldn't be difficult for Christians to compare the Edomite's behavior to their *own* when they stand aside without helping while millions around them are doomed to be lost for all of eternity. Sin kills just as surely as bullets — except that sin kills for eternity.

“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
(Matt. 10:28 NASB)

A lessons we can learn from Obadiah is that inaction *is* violence. *Silently* walking away from those who are in Satan's snare *is* to do *violence* against them — eternity is at stake for those people. Edom was condemned by God for doing *nothing* — for *failing* to take action when they *should* have.

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Will God hold *us* responsible for the souls we see every day and yet take no action? *Will* He consider our inaction as violence toward them? Will the love demonstrated by God when He sent His Son to die on the cross for *our* salvation allow us to be silent and do nothing while others perish. Does God expect us to have the *same* kind of fearless love for lost souls that would cause a mother rescued from a burning house to *run back inside* to rescue her child?

The small book of Obadiah teach us that there is a judgement that will result from *inaction*. The Edomites suffered a consequence because of their *inaction*. Will there be a consequence that will result because of *our* inaction? Is allowing souls of men and women to be taken by Satan for eternity the *greatest* violence of all?

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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Inaction Is Violence

“The vision of Obadiah.—

This is what the Sovereign Lord says about Edom — We have heard a message from the Lord: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, ‘Rise, and let us go against her for battle — See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised.’” (Obadiah 1:1-2 NIV)

“You did violence to your relatives, the Israelites, so you will be covered with shame and destroyed forever. You stood aside without helping while strangers carried Israel's treasures away. When foreigners entered Israel's city gate and threw lots to decide what part of Jerusalem they would take, you were like one of them.” (Obadiah 1:10-11 — New Century Version)

The book of Obadiah is only 1 chapter long. God apparently didn't need many words to foretell of the utter end of the nation of Edom. Who was this Edom that God spoke of through his prophet Obadiah? And why was Edom to be destroyed forever?

Edom means “red” and was the name given to Esau, the first-born son of Isaac and twin brother of Jacob.

“When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.” (Genesis 25: 24-25 NASB)

The country which the Lord subsequently gave to Esau was therefore called Edom and his descendants were called Edomites.

“So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom” (Gen. 36:8 NASB)

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau and Israel was the descendants of Jacob.

We know from the Scriptures that Esau had much hatred for his brother Jacob for fraudulently obtaining their father Isaac's blessing. That hatred had apparently not subsided since Numbers 20:14-21 tells us that the Edomites refused to permit the Israelites to pass through their land.

“Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: ‘This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, but when we cried out to the Lord, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. Please let us pass through your country. We will

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not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory.' But Edom answered: 'You may not pass through here; if you try, we will march out and attack you with the sword.' The Israelites replied: 'We will go along the main road, and if we or our livestock drink any of your water, we will pay for it. We only want to pass through on foot — nothing else.' Again they answered: 'You may not pass through.' Then Edom came out against them with a large and powerful army. Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned away from them."

In the first several verses of Obadiah the prophet lists some of the reasons that Edom would come to an end. Verse 3 tells of their pride

"The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?'" (NIV)

The Edomites had such great pride in themselves that it distorted their view of not *only* themselves but also their view of others as well as of God. Their pride had caused them to trust in things that were really not all that strong — things like their natural defenses, their riches, their military might, their alliances and their wisdom. But while *many* things were amiss in Edom, the one single crime that is laid to their charge is the one listed in verses 10 and 11 of Obadiah 1. In those verses God clearly told Obadiah that there would be a consequence because of the *inaction* of the Edomites concerning Israel. God viewed their *inaction* as *violence* against Israel.

God has not *changed* His view concerning the *inaction* of those Edomites *since* we see that same lesson repeated in the New Testament in the book of James.

"Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." (James 4:17 NASB)

This verse clearly says that remaining silent in the face of sin — whether because of fear or apathy or any *other* reason one might conjure up — is sin! Perhaps the most common reason many Christians remain silent today in the face of sin is "political correctness." The purpose of much of the political correctness in today's society is generally to eliminate *social* pressure — social pressure that would otherwise result from *resisting* evil rather than embracing it. An over abundance of political correctness being practiced today makes it much easier to sin and feel very little guilt *for* that sin. If we look more closely at Obadiah and the Edomites, we can discern that passive *inaction* progresses into *active* evil. For example — notice the progression from *inaction* to *active evil* in these verses.

Verse 11 of Obadiah —

"On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them."

They stood aloof — they were completely passive and non-committal. They did nothing more than *observe* what was going on.

Then in verse 12 —

"You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble."

They began to gloat — they started to feel superior. They developed a "they deserve it" attitude.

On to verse 13 —

"You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster; nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster; nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster."

They found a way to profit from the devastation of others — they gleaned the spoils that resulted from the calamity of others.

And finally verse 14 —

"You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble."

They actively participated — but stayed at the fringe of the violence.

All it takes to allow Satan to establish his rule in the hearts of mankind is for Christians to remain silent and do nothing — stay aloof — practice political correctness — don't upset any apple carts — be certain that everyone *likes* them. Christians are *responsible* for projecting God's image on earth. We can see from Obadiah that God doesn't *want* us to remain silent when there is an issue of right or wrong at stake. Modern day "rules" such as political correctness attempt to *shame* Christians into silence when *God* might very well consider that silence to be *violence* toward those that could otherwise be saved. Christians should not allow themselves to be intimidated by the Devil and his schemes. There is moral decay all around us because many Christians are choosing to remain silent rather than make a difference. Many Christians are reluctant to speak out against immoral TV shows that constantly contain offensive language as well as story lines portraying all sorts of sinful behaviors as normal. They are reluctant to write letters to their political representatives when bills are presented that oppose Biblical teachings. They are reluctant to let co-workers and friends know where they stand on moral and social issues — *even* when *given the opportunity* to do so by those around them. Christians should realize that Edom was condemned for not fighting when they *should* have. Christians also however must exercise wisdom to realize that there *are* times when neutrality might be required. Proverbs 20:3 states —

"Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel."

The part that requires wisdom is determining when one is contending for the faith, standing up against evil, defending brethren or just plain *quarreling*.