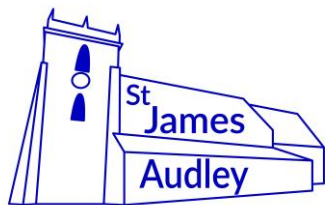




# Bible Reading Notes

January 2022 – 1 John & Obadiah



## How to use these Bible Reading Notes:

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you feed on God's word a little and often and allow it to change your life. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever you left off – it doesn't matter if it's the wrong date.

Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake. Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you each day.
2. Pray. Ask God to help you understand what he says.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the Bible passage (use a good translation of the Bible like the NIV).
  - *'Read' tells you which verses to read.*
  - *'Apply' shows how it affects you.*
  - *'Pray' suggests ways to talk to God about it.*
4. Pray about what you have read.
5. Look for a chance to share with someone what God has been saying to you.

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*These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets.*

*Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'Add Subject → Biblical prayers & devotions → Real Food.'*

*If you have any problems, email [info@prayermate.net](mailto:info@prayermate.net).*

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> January

We'll start 2022 by reading 1 John – a letter written by one of Jesus' closest disciples.

Read 1 John 1v1-4

- What (or who) is John talking about and 'proclaiming' in v1-2?
- What does he say about it?
- Why does John think he's a good person to talk about it?
- What does John want to happen as a result of talking about it? (v3)

Apply

- How does John's experience help give us confidence about what we're reading?
- What should our goal be as we read 1 John? (Remember John's aim in v3).

Pray

Thank God for the confidence you can have in this letter (and the rest of the Bible.)

Pray for a closer experience of fellowship with the Father and Jesus as you read 1 John this month.

## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January

On Sundays in January we will pause to look at four Psalms called 'songs of ascent'. They were sung by Jews as they journeyed to Jerusalem to worship God at the temple. They all encourage us to think what it is for humans to approach the God of the universe.

### Read Psalm 130

- What situation is the psalmist in? (v1)
- What does he want? (v2)
- Why does he not take that for granted? (v3)
- What has the Psalmist realized about the problems facing him? (v4-8)
- Why is that good news? (v7-8)

### Apply

- Do you take God's love for and forgiveness of you for granted?
  - Do you think you could stand if the Lord kept a record of sins?
  - Do you wait for the Lord in hope? Or do you act, assuming God is pleased with you?
- What are you most looking forward to? What are you hoping will happen? How does this Psalm change the way you think about that?

### Pray

Pray humbly to the God who knows all of your sin, asking for forgiveness so that he will listen to your prayers.

Pray for God's help to trust him to sort out the problems of your life and the world rather than you.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January

Today John continues thinking about the idea of fellowship with God that we saw on Saturday.

Read 1 John 1v5-7

- What do you think it means that God is light? (Imagine walking into a room when it is pitch black, and then switching on a light)
- What does 'walking in the darkness' mean? Why does it matter if we are 'walking in the darkness'?
- What happens if we walk in the light? (v7)

Apply

- In what areas of life might you be living without God's light?
- What would it mean to walk in God's light in those areas of your life?
- How might thinking this way change the way you relate to God and other Christians?

Look at the end of verse 7 again. As we think about our sin, it's so important to remember what Jesus has done for us. That should lead us to prayer...

Pray

Praise God that there is no darkness in him.

Say sorry to God for areas of life where you have been walking in darkness, and ask for God's help to change. Thank God that Jesus' death purifies us from sin. Pray that walking in the light would bring you closer to other Christians this week.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January

There were people in John's day who claimed that they were good, and that God was happy with them. It's the same today, both outside and inside the church.

Read 1 John 1v7-2v2

- How does John respond to people claiming to be good? (v8)
- Why can't it be true? What does this claim say about the person who makes it? (v10)
- What will happen if we admit to God that we aren't good but are sinful? (1v9, 2v1-2)
- How can we be sure that God will forgive us? Why would God be faithful to forgive us? Why just? (v7, 9)

Apply

Perhaps you are happy to say that you were a sinner, in the past.

- What sins do you need to confess now?

Walking in the light isn't just a private thing, but it's done in fellowship with other Christians (v7). That means admitting sin needs to happen not only with God, but also with other Christians.

- Who in your church can you confess your sins to?

Perhaps you're scared to admit how much sin there really is in your life.

- How does verse 9 help you with this fear?

Pray

Spend some time saying sorry to God for all the sin in your life, and asking him to forgive you and get rid of it. Praise God that he's promised to do just that!

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January

Yesterday we saw that real Christians admit their sin. Today we see another thing that all real Christians do.

Read 1 John 2v3-6

- What do people who know Jesus do? (v3, 6)
- What can that not mean, remembering yesterday's passage? (It might help to re-read 1v8-2v2)
- How does confessing our sin to God change us? (v5)

Apply

It's possible for someone to both claim that they don't have sin, and to not be living by Jesus' commands. In fact, it's only as we understand Jesus' commands that we see our sin.

Try and think about Jesus' commands to you...

- Perhaps you can't think of many. This passage ought to challenge you to find out what they are!
- Perhaps you can think of loads. Think about how you can keep them today.

Pray

Living 'as Jesus lived' is an impossibly tall order. But God has promised that he's gradually enabling us to do that. Pray for his help to do it more today!

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January

Sometimes John can be a bit confusing – he says one thing and then the opposite. Today is a good example. He wants to make us confused so that we'll stop and think carefully.

Read 1 John 2v7-11

- What is John's 'command' to his readers? (Hint: v9-11 point us in the right direction...)
  - How is this command old?
  - How is this command new (that is, how has Jesus added new force to it, v8)?
- How does this shed new light on the idea of 'walking in the darkness' (v11)?

Apply

Think of the people in church you find hardest to love. Perhaps someone has wronged you.

- Is there anyone you are holding a grudge against? Anyone you wouldn't want to sit next to? Anyone you wouldn't have over for tea?
- Think about what Jesus has done for them, and how he feels about them. Look at v10-11 again.
- How can you show love to that person (or those people) this week? Today? Right now?

Pray

Ask God to give you a new love for your brothers and sisters. Pray for them right now.



## Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January

At this stage, John breaks off into a poem. Most of us find poetry a little bit more work to understand. So today especially pray for God's help before reading.

Read 1 John 2v12-14

John writes pairs of encouragements to 3 different groups. The most important thing is not who each group are, nor the difference between the encouragements he gives to each - Probably the 3 groups are meant to cover the whole church family, and these encouragements are true of every Christian.

The key thing to think about is the encouragements themselves, and how we can be encouraged by them.

- What has happened to Christians? Why? (v12)
- What is the result? (13a, 14a, 14b)
- What is the relationship between Christians and the devil? Why? (v13,14c)

Apply

These encouragements are designed for every Christian - how do they make you feel?

- If forgiveness comes to Christians 'on account of his name' rather than because of something you do, how does that reassure you?
- If you know the Creator of the universe, how does that lift your eyes from day-to-day problems?
- If you have the weapon which defeats the devil inside you, how does that strengthen you?

Pray

Thank God for all he's done for and in you.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January

Today we see that Christians are commanded to love – but not to love everything!

Read 1 John 2v15-27

- What are Christians not to love? (v15)
- What does that mean? (v16)
- Why aren't they to love those things? (v17)

Apply

- What sort of things in the world tempt and trap your brain?
- Whatever they are, v17 will be true of them if they are 'of the world'. How is v17 true of the things that tempt you?
- For the Christian, love for the Father is meant to replace love for the world. How does the Father give you whatever you're looking for in the things you've been thinking about?

Pray

Pray for God's help to see things from an eternal perspective, and so to choose him instead of the things of this world.

## Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January

This Psalm is written by the great king David, who achieved lots of very impressive things in his reign.

### Read Psalm 131

- How does David think about himself? (v1-2)
- David had to concern himself with governing the country and international affairs. What sort of 'great matters' or 'wonderful things' did he not concern himself with?
- What does it mean to be like a satisfied infant with God? Is that natural for David, or an active choice? (v2)
- What will this sort of attitude lead to in God's people? (v3)

### Apply

- What do you think it looks like for you to have a proud heart before God? What sort of attitude would you come to reading the Bible or listening to sermons with? Or to prayer? Or to situations you find yourself in?
- What about if you calmed and quieted yourself like a weaned child? What would that look like?
- How can you start to move from one to the other today?

### Pray

Say sorry to God for where you've acted proudly towards him. Pray for his help to rely on him like an infant relies on their parent.

## Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January

John said on Saturday that 'the world and its desires pass away' – and today he tells us that now is the time of the end of the world...

Read 1 John 1v16-23

- What does John say marks out 'the last hour' that we've now been in for 2000 years? (v18)
- What is an anti-Christ? Why is the name appropriate? (v19, 22, 23)
- John talks of 'belonging to us' – what does that mean? (v19-21)  
(Note: 'anointing' here means God's choosing and giving the Holy Spirit)

Apply

- When have you heard people who claim to be Christians denying the Son?
- What does that show about them? (v23)
- How does knowing that help you not to be unsettled in your own faith – even if others follow in their path?

Pray

Pray for those who deny Jesus to repent and be saved. Pray for God's help for yourself to stick to the truth you know.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January

Today John helps us navigate a world filled with lies about God and how to live.

Read 1 John 2v24-28

- What is the repeated command in these verses? (v24, 27, 28)
- Why might that be difficult? (v26)
- In what sense do they not need teaching? (v27)
- Why is it so important? (v25, 28)

Apply

The Christians John was writing to had people who had been part of the church introducing new teaching that was distorting the gospel – so John writes to reassure them and encourage them to continue in the true gospel.

- What might stop you remaining in Jesus?
- What makes you worry whether you're on the right track?
- What sort of teaching does this passage encourage you to listen to, and what to ignore?

Pray

Thank God that he has chosen you and taught you about Jesus. Pray for his help to stick with Jesus and to recognise false teaching.

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January

Do you think righteousness runs in the family? John does...

Read 1 John 2v29-3v3

- What has happened to a Christian? What family do they now belong to? (2v29, 3v1)
- What will happen to a Christian? (3v2)
- What does that mean for life now? (3v3, 2v29)
- How will others respond? (3v1)

Apply

- Take a moment to think about 3v1. How does it feel to know that you are God's dearly loved child?
- What will make you more like Jesus? (3v2) Think about the ways that Jesus is righteous. (2v29)
- What one thing can you do today to copy Jesus?

Pray

Turn 3v1 into a prayer of thanks to God. Pray for God's help to copy Jesus today.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January

John goes back to talking about those had 'gone out' from the church and were now spreading false teaching.

Read 1 John 3v4-10

- Bearing in mind what John said in 1v8 – '*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves*' – what can John not be saying in this section?
- How much should Christians care about sin and why? (v5, 8, 9)
- How is John trying to help them with this teaching? (v7)

Apply

- How should someone's 'private life' affect whether you listen to what they say? Why?
- What sorts of things about a church leader should make you listen to them? What sorts of things should make you ignore them?

If we care deeply about sin, we will notice more and more of it in our lives, and will feel worse and worse about ourselves. This passage isn't designed to make us feel bad, but to reassure us. If we care deeply about sin and others don't, we might worry we are wrong.

- How does this passage encourage you?

Pray

Thank God that Jesus 'appeared so that he might take away our sins.' Pray for God's help to see who is on Jesus' side and who is undermining his gospel.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January

How do you think the world will feel about you if you live well?

Read 1 John 3v11-15

- What does John say the answer to the question above is? (v13)
- How does the story of Cain murdering his brother Abel help us to understand why? (v12)
- Is it possible for real Christians not to love their church family? (v14-15)

Apply

- How does it feel to be hated? Do you expect to be hated? How does this passage help us deal with being hated for being Christians (or 'righteous')?
- How do you feel about the other Christians you know?

Look at v14-15 again. It isn't saying we're never annoyed by one another, or do things against one another (otherwise all the commands to forgive each other would be pointless). But like with human family, how we deal with those difficult situations will reveal love or hatred.

Pray

Pray for God's help to endure the world's hatred. Pray for God's help to love other believers, and thank him for the love for other believers that he has already put into your heart.



Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January

Our society is totally confused about what love means. None of us is immune to that confusion. Today's passage teaches us about real love.

Read 1 John 3v16-18

- What is the benchmark for love? (v16)
- What must a bare minimum of love involve? (v17)
- What does loving 'with words or speech' look like? What does loving 'with actions and in truth' look like? (v18)

Apply

- How have you received love?
- How could you demonstrate love today? What Christian brother or sister do you know who is 'in need'? (If nobody, how can you find out?) How can you help?

Pray

Thank God for his love towards you in Jesus. Pray for that love to infect and fill your heart.

## Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January

As Jewish worshippers approach God's presence in the temple in Jerusalem, this song takes them back to the beginnings of the temple. Today we're looking at the first half of the Psalm and what David did.

Read Psalm 132v1-10

- What was so good about what David wanted? (v1-5)
- David's son Solomon eventually built the temple to house the ark of God (v8). Who were the people hoping to meet with when they arrived at Jerusalem? (v6-8)
- What two qualities does right worship include? (v9)
- Why do the people think they can come before God? (v1, v10)

Apply

- When we come before God, what (or who) makes us think he will welcome us? Does that shape the way you pray?
- The 'anointed one' (v10) means God's chosen king – something God promised to David to provide forever. How can we see that God has delivered on that promise?
- How can we imitate David and Jesus in our priorities (re-read v3-5)?

Pray

Praise God for Jesus and his self-denial. Thank him that all his promises are 'yes' in Jesus. Pray that God would glorify himself, even if that means life gets harder for you. Ask God that today would be an experience of God's intimate presence in your life by his Holy Spirit.

## Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January

Do you ever worry if your faith is real? John knows that this is a struggle for true believers, and in today's passage he helps us to have confidence.

Read 1 John 3v19-24

- What is John helping his readers to do? (v19)
- What if we feel too sinful for God? (v20)
- What if we don't feel too sinful for God?! (v21-22)
- How complicated is being a Christian? (v23-24)

Apply

- How can these verses help you when 'your heart condemns you'?
- Is this assurance for everyone?
- Do you know what it feels like to have your heart 'at rest in his presence'?

Pray

Thank God that his love does not depend on our feelings. Pray for God to help you know the joy and security of his salvation. Pray for his help to keep believing and loving to the end of your days in this world.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January

We live in an age where everyone seems to have a different interpretation of the bible, and we're told that's ok. What does John think about it?

Read 1 John 4v1-6

- How are real Christians meant to respond to teaching? (v1)
- How can they do that? (v2-3)
- What else distinguishes true teaching and false teaching? (v6)  
(Hint: the 'us' is the bible-writers.)

Apply

- What do you think you need to do when listening to Christian teaching to 'test the spirits'?
  - How can you use the test in v2-3?
  - How can you use the test in v6?
- There are a lot of different Christian opinions out there. Does it matter whether someone is right or wrong?
- If you are in the minority about something, how does it feel? How does this help?

Pray

Pray that God would help you to 'test the spirits'. Thank God that his Spirit in you is more powerful than evil spirits trying to lead you astray. Pray for your church leaders to teach what is in accordance with the Spirit of truth.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January

John comes back to one of his great themes: love in the Christian community.

Read 1 John 4v7-12

- Why are Christians to love each other? (v7-8, 11-12)
- What does a lack of love for Christians reveal? Why? (v8)
- What is God's love like? What did it cost? What did it achieve? (v9-10)
- What will Christians loving like God achieve? (v12)

Apply

- Our love can only spring from God's love for us (v10). Spend a moment thinking about the most painful thing you've ever done for someone else or someone else has done for you – and then think about the pain that Jesus went through for you.
- How might loving other Christians today be costly?
- God's love brought eternal life to us (v9). How can you loving others bring life to them, with non-Christians or with Christians?

Pray

Thank God for his great love for you and for other Christians in your church. Pray for that love to fill your heart, and ask for God's help to love others when it's painful.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January

John wants to 'drive out fear' from true followers of Jesus. Here, he starts to sum up lots of where we've got to so far.

Read 1 John 4v13-21

- What two ways can Christians be confident of eternal life? (v13-15, v16)
- If someone doesn't have those things, can they be a Christian? (v18, 20)
- What will happen on the day of judgement for a Christian? (v17)
- What effect does that have now? (v18)

Apply

- Are you acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God? Are you seeking the best for other believers? If yes, where does John say that comes from? What does that mean for your future?
- Think about all the things you're worried about for today, or this week, or this year. Compare them to the millions of years of things to come after the day of judgement. How does 'perfect love drive out fear' for you?

Pray

Thank God that his love means you don't need to be afraid of anything because of the certain hope he's given you. Pray for this perspective at times when you're tempted to get bogged down in worry and fear.

## Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January

Today John finishes summing up everything we've seen about what it means to be a true Christian and introduces the next great topic: faith in Jesus.

Read 1 John 5v1-5

- What 3 things do people do if they have been 'born of God' and are now God's children (v1, v1-2, v2-3)?
  - John weaves a web of relationships between those three things. How do they relate to each other? Is it possible to have one without the others?
- What does it mean to 'overcome the world', and why is that certain for the believer? (v4-5)

Apply

John is very keen that we understand what marks out a real Christian, and that every Christian has a certain 'victory' over anything the world can throw at them (v4).

- If you believe that Jesus is God's Son, and generally love Christians and try and live by what Jesus says – how should this make you feel? Pray to God with thanks!
- If you either don't believe, or have no love or don't want to obey Jesus, how does this make you feel? Perhaps now is the time to change...

Pray

Thank God for the reassurance he's given you that you are his child, and he has won the victory for you. Pray for more and more of all these things in your life as you grow up as a child of God.

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January

John has repeatedly assured us that those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God can be confident of eternal life. But how can we be sure about Jesus?

Read 1 John 5v6-12

- Who (and what) are the three witnesses that John calls to the witness stand? (v6-8)
  - What events in Jesus' life might the first two be about? (v6,8) Why do you think John uses these words to talk about them? (Hint: what do we do in church involving 'water' and 'blood')
  - How has the Spirit 'testified'? (v6, 7, 9) In other words, where do we hear the Word of God?
- Why is it so important to believe what the bible says about Jesus? (v11-12)

Apply

- What should baptism and the Lord's Supper make us think and feel according to this passage? Next time you're at church and either of those happen, try and remember verse 11.
- How does this change the way you read the Bible? Imagine you're reading an Old Testament passage. If this is the testimony of the Spirit, what is he testifying about? What, or who, should you be looking for in the passage?

Pray

Thank God that Jesus came to earth as a physical person so we could know him, that he died on the cross so that we could be friends with God, and that we have the Spirit's voice in the Bible so that we can believe in Jesus.



## Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

The second half of Psalm 132 tells us the other half of the story of when David promised to build God a house – it focuses on what God did.

Read Psalm 132v10-18

- How does God reply to the prayer of v10? (v11-14)
- What is it like for those among whom God lives? (v14-18)

Apply

- Who is the king ruling over God's people now and forever?

God no longer lives in a physical temple – instead, the Bible describes his people, the church, as God's temple.

- How does that bring v14 to life for you?
- What does that mean for your life if God is with you? What do you think might be the spiritual fulfilment of v15 for Christians?

Pray

Praise the one whose 'head is adorned with a radiant crown'. Thank God that he has chosen to live among us forever, and for the blessings that he showers on his people.

## Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January

Today's passage is very short and very sweet. John tells us what he's so excited about.

Read 1 John 5v13-15

- What is John's big reason for writing this letter? (v13)
- Why is that so exciting for John? (v14-15)
  - What is God's attitude towards us? (v14)
  - What implications does it have for our prayers? (v15) Does that mean God never says no, whatever we ask? Look carefully at what we might ask for in v14.

Apply

- As you think back over what John has written, how have you been encouraged that you have life?
- How excited are you about prayer? Why? How can you increase in excitement like John (think of v15)?
- How can we pray 'according to his will'?

Pray

Think of three specific things God wants in your life or the lives of those around you. Pray for them.

Thank God that he always hears us, and that we can be confident he will always do what is best for us. Pray for help to pray according to his will.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January

As John reassures us about the life that we have, it will always make us aware of those who aren't living in line with that life.

Read 1 John 5v16-17

- What two different sorts of sin does John say there are?
- What 'sin' leads to death? From everything we've learnt, what means that someone can't have eternal life? Where does life come from?
- What 'sin' does not lead to death? Who does John say commits these sins? How should Christians react?

Apply

- What should our reaction be when we see someone commit a sin, perhaps against us? How is that different from how we naturally react? What should we want for them?
- What can we and can't we pray confidently for our friends and family who are rejecting Jesus?

Pray

Think of those you know in church who are really struggling with sin. Pray for them, confident that God will grant them life.

Think of those you know in church whose sin *you're* really struggling with. Pray for them, confident that God will grant them life.

Think of those you know who are rejecting Jesus. Pray for them, in the hope that God might be merciful and change their heart.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January

As John comes to the end of his letter, he wants to leave us with both a reassurance and a new direction ringing in our ears.

Read 1 John 5v18-21

- How does John describe Christians in v18? How does he describe Jesus? Why?
- What do we need to be reassured about in v18? Why? (v19)
- How do we know we're safe? (v20)
- Idols (v21) are things which aren't Jesus that we might trust in. In other words, they are not 'the true God'. Why are we to be so wary of them, given what we've just seen in v18-20?

Apply

- Where do you feel vulnerable to 'the world, the flesh and the devil'? How can you be safe?
- What sorts of things might you look to instead of Jesus to give you confidence and life (or in John's words, what idols are you tempted by)?

Pray

Praise God for revealing Jesus to you as true God and eternal life.

Thank him that we are his dear children, and he will keep us safe from the devil. Ask for his help to keep yourself from putting your confidence in anything but Jesus.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January

Over the next few days we will be getting to grips with the shortest book in the Old Testament: the hard-hitting poetic prophecy of Obadiah.

Read Obadiah v1-4

Three characters are introduced in v1; Obadiah (the prophet), the Sovereign LORD (who speaks through Obadiah), and Edom (the country the prophecy is about). Edom is another name for Esau (who appears in Genesis 25), and the country of his descendants is named after him. His brother was Jacob, also known as Israel – and his descendants became God's country. The two countries were often enemies, like the brothers were hundreds of years before.

- Who is the real author of this book? (v1, v4) How is this emphasised?
- Edom rejected God and didn't believe in him. How does God feel about Edom? (v1-2)?
- Why do they think they are safe? What's the problem with that? (v3-4)
- What will happen to them? (v4)

Apply

- What sort of things make people in the non-Christian world around us think they are safe?
- How does God feel about that pride?

Pray

Pray for non-Christians you know who think they are safe to see how fragile their lives are. Say sorry to God for where you have found your safety in things other than Jesus. Thank God that he has made you safe in Christ.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January

The next section of Obadiah's prophecy focuses on God's promise to destroy Edom. And he drives the point home that there is nothing worse than getting on the wrong side of God.

Read Obadiah v5-10

- How does Edom's fate compare to being burgled? (v5-6)
- How would God's judgement come? (v7) Why is that so painful?
- Who will the punishment include? (v8-9)
- What will be the result in the end? (v10)

Apply

- How do you feel about the idea of God judging his enemies?

If you look on a map, you won't find Edom. The judgement has happened. When God promises to destroy, he does it.

- Think of those who are wreaking havoc in our day – perhaps ISIS or North Korea. What will happen to them? How does that affect the way you watch the news?
- Think of those closer to home who are rejecting God. How does the prospect of God's judgement falling on them make you feel? What can you do about it?
- Think of your own rejection of God, and the judgement you deserve. How does it make you feel about what Jesus has done for you?

Pray

Thank God that he will deliver on all his promises, including the destruction of his enemies. Thank God that he punished Jesus instead of you. Pray for God's mercy on those you know who are rejecting him.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January

Obadiah reveals why Edom is facing God's anger, and it reveals something about God's people.

Read Obadiah v10-14

In these verses, God's people are called by the name of their ancestor, Jacob, their capital, Jerusalem, and the country, Judah.

- What had happened to God's people? Who did it? (v11)
- What had Edom done? (v11, 12, 13, 14)
- Why does God care about what Edom did? What does that reveal about his feelings for his own people?

Apply

God's protective love for his people leads to this terrible anger for their enemies.

- How does that comfort you if you are one of his loved people?
- What sorts of things are you scared that people might do to you if you speak out about your faith? How does this protective love help you with that fear?
- How does it help you to copy Jesus and 'pray for those who persecute you'?

Pray

Thank God that he loves you enough to care about everything that others do to you. Pray for anyone who is giving you a tough time for following Jesus.

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January

Our final Psalm this month challenges the way we think about church.

Read Psalm 133

- How does David describe unity between God's people? (v1)
- How close together are God's people in? (v1)
- What does he compare this unity to in v2 and 3?
- Both of these things come from above and 'run down' or 'fall'. Where might this suggest unity between God's people comes from?

Apply

- Is unity between you and other believers in your church family something you value as good and pleasant?
- What other things do you want more than unity? Getting your own way (for you or maybe your children)? Or being in charge/powerful in your church?
- Is there a person you find it hard to be united with? Have you asked God to help you do this?

Pray

Thank God for where you see Christians living together in unity in your church. Ask him for help where you can see disunity in your church.



Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January

Obadiah ends his prophecy against Edom with a bigger picture of God's plans for justice.

Read Obadiah v15-21

- Why does everyone (including us in 21st century Britain) need to hear Obadiah's warnings to Edom? (v15)
- What is the essence of God's justice? (v15)
- What does God's justice mean for his people? (v17, 18, 20)
- Who will run the new government? (v21)

Apply

- What will it be like for sinful people when Jesus returns to judge?
  - How do you feel about all wrongs being judged one day?
- What will it be like for Christians when Jesus returns to judge?
- What will it be like for everything to run according to God's laws?

Pray

Praise God for his plan for justice. Pray for your mind to be filled with hope, especially when life is difficult. Pray for others who are in danger of being on the wrong side of this judgement.