

DECEITFUL PRIDE

Joe Slater

Solomon warned that *“pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Proverbs 16:18). Through Obadiah, the Lord pronounced doom upon the proud Edomites. Their pride had deceived them in at least two ways.

First, they vainly supposed that their strategic location, particularly the city of Petra, high in the rocks, made them impossible to conquer. Access to Petra required going through a narrow fissure in the rock for over a mile. Any invaders could be spotted and killed easily. *“Who will bring me down to the ground?”* they asked (v. 3). God answered: *“Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down”* (v. 4).

Edom’s pride also deceived them into thinking they could abuse other people and get away with it. The Lord was particularly offended by Edom’s *“violence against your brother, Jacob”* (v. 10). Israel and Edom were closely related, being the descendants of Isaac’s twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Abusing anyone would be wicked enough, but oppressing your kin, especially when God had chosen them to be His covenant people, was outrageous.

We would never let pride deceive us as it did Edom. Or would we? We’re the USA! We have the best military, supermarkets loaded with food, and liberty unsurpassed. We don’t need God – we’re invincible! (How long will God tolerate perversion and slaughter before He says, “I will bring you down!”?)

Individually, do we think God doesn’t care when we mistreat others? Perhaps we treat church members well, but what about folks we don’t know? From the teen who serves our food to the tech who fixes our car, it’s too easy to make them the victims of our frustration. Our pride makes us feel entitled to unload on them.

Let us beware, lest pride deceive us!

Mom’s Lap

As I have watched each of my four children grow up, one of my favorite things has been to see each one of them sitting in my wife’s lap while in church. Since my children are all spread out in ages, each has had their turn in Mom’s lap until they were too old or too big to sit there. Now there is a grandchild to sit there.

There is just something beautiful and special about seeing your child sitting in Mom’s lap during church services. Many times our families are so busy throughout the week that mother and child rarely have a special time to bond in peace. But at least three times a week, that lap is open to the child for a total of several hours. There is no better time spent together than in worship of the very Creator of mother, child, and the special lap.

What a blessing! It’s a blessing to me, the husband and father, to see such a wonderful sight – to have such a special wife and mother who not only wants to be in God’s presence, but wants to share that with her children in a powerful way.

It seems that Mom’s lap was specially made for such occasions. Surely all children feel this way. Mom’s lap has just the right natural folds and cushions. It is always “just right” for the child. God certainly knew what He was doing when He created Mom and her lap. In Mom’s lap, a child always finds comfort, peace, strength, and simply a great place to rest. And added to that, seeing Mom’s faith in action will have eternal rewards for the child (see Proverbs 6:20-22).

What an example to all the world – a mother caring enough for her child to be in God’s presence for worship and study. Actions do, indeed, speak louder than words.

--Shawn Deree (Thayer, MO)

Soul Protection

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, ASV).

The email from my credit card company was frightening. "We noticed unusual activity on your account. Please review the transactions below and confirm that these purchases were made by you or an authorized user." I recognized one transaction, but not the other three.

I quickly called the telephone number and spoke with a representative. "You have our wallet protection service," she said. "You will not be charged for these purchases you did not make." I breathed a huge sigh of relief as she told me a replacement card and account number would be overnighted to my address.

How quickly we panic when we perceive a threat to our worldly goods. However, we have a possession much more valuable than our money, our house, or our car. It is our soul, and it is so precious that Jesus gave His life to save it.

Through Christ we have what I like to think of as soul protection. It is a way to retrieve our souls from hell fire when we sin. God's forgiveness, so free and abundant, is waiting for us when we confess our sins to God and repent. Unlike wallet protection, it is free to all who follow Christ.

Like getting a new credit card and account number, it is a new start, an opportunity to not have to pay for our sins!

What gratitude we should feel as we consider what could have happened. We could have been lost for eternity. Who delivered us out of the body of this death?

Thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord and His sacrifice for us and His protection for our soul.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)