

Obadiah

Judgment on Edom

I. Introduction to Obadiah

Obadiah is the thirty-first book of the Old Testament and is fourth among the Minor Prophets. Obadiah is named after its author whose name means, “servant of the Lord.” Obadiah was a common Old Testament name; there being at least twelve biblical characters named Obadiah.

Nothing else is known about Obadiah except that he was an 8th Century prophet along with Jonah, Hosea, Isaiah, Joel and Micah.

Talmud suggests he was the servant of Ahab from 1Kings 18:3. Calvin claims he was a witness of the fall of Jerusalem. However, these opinions are nothing more than speculation.

Obadiah’s message concerned both Israel and Edom. Edom is located slightly east of Israel in what is today known as Jordan. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob and son of Isaac and Rebekah.

While Israel spent 400 years enslaved in Egypt, the descendants of Esau established themselves in Edom. Although God considered the Edomites as the brothers of Israel, they were a constant irritant and threat to Israel.

Judges 11:16-17	They refused Israel passage through Edom during the Wilderness Years
1Samuel 14:47	They joined forces and did battle against Saul
2Samuel 8:14	They were subdued under the reign of David
2Kings 16:5-6	They occupied lands within Israel’s borders during the monarchy period

Obadiah declares Edom will fall to their enemies because of pride and wickedness. He saw in a vision, an angelic messenger rallying the nations against Edom. His prophecies were fulfilled in history.

580 B.C.	Nebuchadnezzar’s forces attacked and defeated Edom
550 B.C.	Nabataea Arabs, once allies with Edom, turned on them and drove them out of their capital city; Malachi 1:3 may refer to this event
312 B.C.	They were defeated by Alexander the Great
175 B.C.	Josephus records that Edom was defeated by the Maccabees and most were converted to Judaism.

“Adam Clarke’s commentary, Matthew Henry, and Jamieson, Fausset and Brown all see the prophecies against Edom as being fulfilled partly by an invasion by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in the early 6th Century B.C., and partly by the Maccabees. Jeremiah 25:21 specifically predicts the humbling of Edom by Babylon, the same power that conquered Jerusalem 5 years before the destruction of Edom.”

Edomites do not exist today. The descendants of Esau were scattered and no record remains.

II. Outline of Obadiah

Obadiah divides into two sections by subject.

Section 1 Chapter 1:1 – 16 Message to Edom

Section 2 Chapter 1: 17 – 21 Message to Israel

Section 1 Chapter 1:1 – 16 Message to Edom

“ . . . I will bring you down.” Obadiah 1:4

An army will defeat Edom because of their *pride* and *wickedness*.

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Pride

Pride of Location Edom's capital was built into the mountain giving them a sense that no enemy could defeat them. The narrow mountain passes and rough terrain made war with Edom very difficult.

Pride of Wealth The King's Highway, a trade route from Egypt to Damascus was controlled by Edom; giving the nation great wealth.

Pride of Relationship Their wealth bought them many allies

Pride of Worldly Wisdom Edomites were known in the ancient world for great wisdom.

None of these things could deliver the Edomites in the day of the Lord.

Wickedness

Verse 15 "For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head."

Application

It is quite common for the people of God to be surrounded by the enemy, as when the Israelites were boxed in by the Egyptians. From a natural perspective things looked quite bleak until the Lord spoke to Moses and declared, "And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.'" (Exodus 14:13-14)

And again in 2Kings 6:16-17 The Syrian forces surrounded the city of Samaria Elijah answered his servant, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed, and said, 'Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elijah."

"Edom did not have to hear judgment; they could have been like the many in the Word of God that were praised for their actions. The choice is ours, we can choose to trust Christ, live to please Him and hear Him say, "Well done" OR we can ignore Him, live for self and rest under the judgment of God."

Section 2 Chapter 1: 17 – 21 Message to Israel

"Possess your Possession"

Israel failed to possess all that was given them.

"Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed." Joshua 13:1

". . .from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines--the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; . . ." Joshua 13:3

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We do the same and neglect our possessions; but what are our possessions?

Forgiveness of Sin

Without coming to Christ for forgiveness, we are not a child of God.

But there is more than forgiveness . . .

Victory of Sin

“We are more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37).

“Do not let sin reign. . .” Romans 6:12

Power to Serve

“. . . desire the best gifts.” 1Corinthians 12:31

Have you prayed through the gifts in 1Corinthians 12 asking God to equip you? Have you stepped out where gifts can be used?

III. Why Study Obadiah

The story of Esau illustrates a life without regard for eternity. Esau is most remembered for choosing a bowl of soup over his birthright. He exemplifies the man who will choose the temporal over the eternal. Obadiah reveals the end of that road: the soup is gone and so are the Edomites, but eternity lasts forever.

How can we live for eternity?

Store up treasures in heaven. There are only three eternal things: God, His Word, and the soul of man. Live to impact others for eternity.

Leave a pattern for others to follow. Pilgrim's Progress Book 2 exemplifies this when Christian's live was a pattern for his wife to follow.

IV. Type of Christ

Verse 21 “. . . Saviors shall come to Mount Zion. . . “

“The term “saviors” (moshi'im) or judges is used of those God raised up to rescue his people from oppressive foreign powers.

The term is broad enough in scope to include all the political and spiritual leaders who arose later to deliver the people of God.

The work of the Maccabees during the inter-testamental period may be in view.

These saviors, however, were but shadows of that greatest of all Saviors, even Jesus.

Obadiah 1:21 “Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.”