

Book of Obadiah

Study BIBLE



Introduction

Book No	31
Name	Obadiah
Written By	Obadiah
Testament	Old
Category	Minor Prophets
Date Written	Approx. 853 - 841 BC
Place Written	Israel
Audience	To the people of Israel and Edomites
Purpose	To show that God judges those who have harmed his people
History Covered	853 - 841 BC
Chapters	1
Verses	21
Key Verse	For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. (1:15)
Key People	❖ Edomites
Key Places	❖ Edom

Purpose of the Book

God, too, has children—men and women whom he has chosen as his very own. There have always been individuals marked as his, but with Abraham he promised to build a nation. Israel was to be God's country, and her people, the Jews, his very own sons and daughters. Down through the centuries, God meted out discipline and punishment,

but always with love and mercy. God, the eternal Father, protected and cared for his children.

Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, is a dramatic example of God's response to anyone who would harm his children. Edom was a mountainous nation, occupying the region southeast of the Dead Sea including Petra, the spectacular city discovered by archaeologists a few decades ago. As descendants of Esau (Genesis 25:19–27:45), the Edomites were blood relatives of Israel, and like their father, they were rugged, fierce, and proud warriors with a seemingly invincible mountain home. Of all people, they should have rushed to the aid of their northern brothers. Instead, however, they gloated over Israel's problems, captured and delivered fugitives to the enemy, and even looted Israel's countryside.

Obadiah gave God's message to the Edomites. Because of their indifference to and defiance of God, their cowardice and pride, and their treachery toward their brothers in Judah, they stood condemned and would be destroyed. The book begins with the announcement that disaster was coming to Edom (1:1-9). Despite their "impregnable" cliffs and mountains, they would not be able to escape God's judgment. Obadiah then gave the reasons for their destruction (1:10-14)—their blatant arrogance toward God and their persecution of God's children. This concise prophecy ends with a description of the "day of the LORD," when judgment will fall on all who have harmed God's people (1:15-21).

Today, God's holy nation is his church—all who have trusted Christ for their salvation and have given their lives to him. These men and women are God's born-again and adopted children. As you read Obadiah, catch a glimpse of what it means to be God's child, under his love and protection. See how the heavenly Father responds to all who would attack those whom he loves.

Obadiah forcefully addresses the matter of relationships. How easy it is for those we know best to become the objects of our most bitter resentment. Logically, Edom should have sided with Judah against Babylonia, but years of hatred caused emotions to override good sense. Such fractured relationships almost inevitably result from personal pride, pride that prevents our seeing the error of our own ways, pride that builds barriers to block the way to reconciliation. The Book of Obadiah calls us to confront the incredible cost of pride, and to realize that the importance of preserving our pride fades into oblivion when we must stand face-to-face with an angry God and

try to justify our arrogance. The book calls us to repent of our pride, to seek reconciliation in broken relationships, and to model a life-style of forgiveness and acceptance. See Matthew 5:21–26.

The prevailing theme of Obadiah is well stated by Paul in Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Or, in the words of Obadiah himself, “As you have done, it shall be done to you” (v. 15). Retribution is a reality. God is just, and He will punish injustices perpetrated against other people, both individuals and nations. The Lord takes very seriously the covenant promises He makes. In Genesis 12:1–3 He had promised to bless those who bless His people and curse those who curse them. The Lord so closely identifies Himself with His people, that to curse His people is to curse Him, to reject them is to reject Him. Edom’s end then foreshadows the fate of all who abuse the people of God. The Lord is determined to keep faith with His people, even when His people are faithless and disobedient.

And He will keep faith—in spite of appearances. The desecration of Jerusalem and the people of Judah sent a message to the world of Obadiah’s day: The God of Israel had been defeated by the gods of Babylon, Edom, and the other oppressing nations. But that was a false message, because appearances can be deceiving. In His sovereignty God uses circumstances to accomplish His purposes, to purify and protect His people. As Lord of all the Earth He was already masterminding Edom’s doom, announcing victory in the face of smoldering defeat, and controlling the course of the future in order to accomplish His plan. The Lord who did all that for Israel is the Lord who still works for His people today.

Overview

- ❖ 31st book of the BIBLE, Old Testament, 4th of the 12 minor prophets and 9th of the 17 prophetic books
- ❖ The Book of Obadiah is the only one chapter book in the Old Testament.
- ❖ Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament.
- ❖ Obadiah probably lived in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- ❖ There are thirteen Obadiahs in the Old Testament.
- ❖ No kings are mentioned in Obadiah.
- ❖ Some believe Obadiah may have been a contemporary of Elisha.
- ❖ Obadiah may have been the earliest of the writing prophets.

- ❖ Edomites were descendants of Esau.
- ❖ Edom means “red” because of the color of the stew Esau traded his birthright for.
- ❖ Edomites lived in the mountainous area of Seir, south of the Dead Sea.
- ❖ The Edomites were bitter enemies of the Jews.
- ❖ Edom refused Moses’ request to allow the Israelites to pass through their land on their way to Canaan.
- ❖ The Edomites opposed Saul but were subdued by David.
- ❖ The Edomites fought against Jehoshaphat.
- ❖ The Edomites rebelled against Jehoram.
- ❖ In time Edom was controlled by Assyria and Babylon.
- ❖ In the 5th century B.C. the Nabateans forced the Edomites to leave their native country.
- ❖ The Edomites moved to the southern part of Palestine and became known as the Idumeans.
- ❖ Herod the Great was an Idumean.
 - Became King of Judea under Rome in 37 B.C.
 - Herod killed the male infants in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus.
- ❖ The Idumeans took part in the rebellion of Jerusalem against Rome and were defeated along with the Jews when Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- ❖ It is of interest to note that while the Edomites applauded the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., a number of them died trying to defend it from the Romans in 70 A.D.
- ❖ Obadiah prophesied that:
 - Edom would be “cut off forever” (10).
 - “And no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau” (18).
- ❖ With the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., they disappeared from history

Hebrew Names of GOD used in Obadiah

NA

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

The “day of the LORD” (v. 15) and the kingdom of God (v. 21) proclaimed by Obadiah anticipate the entry of Jesus Christ into the world. The prophet’s announcement that

“the kingdom shall be the LORD’s” (v. 21) is a theme that occupied much of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

Nowhere in Obadiah is there specific reference to the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God. His working, however, must be assumed. He serves as Obadiah’s source of inspiration, as the One who imparts the “vision” (v. 1) that constitutes Obadiah’s message. In addition, although not specifically identified as such, He functions as the One who instigates the judgment of Edom, calling forth the nations to rise up against the enemy of God’s people. Though God uses human agents to carry out His justice, behind it all is the working of His Spirit, pushing, prompting, and punishing according to the plan of God.

Mega Themes of Obadiah

JUSTICE

Obadiah predicted that God would destroy Edom as punishment for standing by when Babylon invaded Judah. Because of their treachery, Edom’s land would be given to Judah in the day when God rights the wrongs against his people.

God will judge and fiercely punish all who harm his people. We can be confident in God’s final victory. He is our champion, and we can trust him to bring about true justice.

PRIDE

Because of their seemingly invincible rock fortress, the Edomites were proud and self-confident. But God humbled them and their nation disappeared from the face of the earth.

All those who defy God will meet their doom as Edom did. Any nation who trusts in its power, wealth, technology, or wisdom more than in God will be brought low. All who are proud will one day be shocked to discover that no one is exempt from God’s justice.

Life Lessons in Obadiah

Truth	Lesson
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<p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>One aspect of growing in godliness is learning to reject the sin of pride. The Edomites gave themselves over to pride, which led to deception, which in turn led to their destruction. As God’s people, we are called to walk in humility, acknowledging and submitting to God’s superiority and sovereignty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Do not allow pride to deceive you, as it did the people of Edom. They falsely believed that their superior position and fortifications made them invincible. Learn from their fatal error. ❖ Humble yourself before the Lord, and make Him your refuge and your fortress.
<p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>The Book of Obadiah gives a clear picture of God as the vindicator and defender of His people. It is reminiscent of Ps. 57:1–3 when David says, “And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by” and, “He reproaches the one who would swallow me up.” Take refuge in the Lord.</p> <p>Know that He loves you and will vindicate and defend you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand that God does not sit idly by while His people are being attacked. God is present in the midst of persecution, and He is faithful and just to defend us. He sees, He remembers, and He will take action in His time.
<p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>Holiness is one of the defining points of God’s people. Edom is represented by stubble, while Jacob is represented by fire. God’s people are to be consumed and marked by the fire of God’s holiness so that the stubble of pride, deception, greed,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Seek and pursue holiness. Welcome the fire of God’s holiness in your life. Ask God in His mercy to burn up the dry and lifeless or activity that He considers stubble in your life. Understand that God wants you to live in holiness so that you will be able to possess fully all He has for you (1 Cor. 3:12–15).

<p>betrayal, and rebellion can be burned up and overcome in our lives. God desires that we walk in the full possession of our inheritance in Him.</p>	
<p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>Faith is the confident belief in what you cannot see (Heb. 11:1). Obadiah's vision came to God's people in the midst of grief, barrenness, and hopelessness.</p> <p>Jerusalem was devastated and the temple destroyed, yet God spoke of hope, inheritance, and restoration—promises that could only be seen through eyes of faith. God's word to you today, even in the midst of barrenness, is the same. He is able to save, restore, and heal you no matter how bad the circumstances look. Set your eyes on the Lord and put your faith in God, for whom nothing is impossible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Know that God is able to restore, heal, and redeem regardless of the devastation. In these verses, God promised to give the Israelites the places their enemies had taken from them, as well as those where they had been held captive. ❖ Put your faith in the Lord; believe that He desires to restore you fully and that He has a plan and a purpose for your life (Jer. 29:11).

Praise Points in Obadiah

- ❖ His attentiveness to the plight of those who suffer unjustly (1:2-14)
- ❖ His righteousness, which ensures judgment for the wicked (1:15)
- ❖ His promise of restoration for his people (1:19-21)
- ❖ His sovereignty over all the earth (1:21).

Worship Insights in Obadiah

- ❖ We cannot please God when we remain unreconciled to our brother or sister (1:12).

- ❖ We cannot please God while harboring pride in our heart (1:3).
- ❖ God's judgment is certain for those who commit evil deeds (1:15).
- ❖ We can rejoice that God's people will eventually be restored (1:21).

An Outline of Obadiah

I. A Vision of the Enemy: [Oba 1:1-16](#)

- A. Identifying the Enemy
- B. The Anatomy of the Enemy
- C. The Judgment of the Enemy

II. Deliverance from the Enemy: [Oba 1:17-18](#)

- A. Deliverance on Mount Zion
 - 1. After the Exile
 - 2. After the Cross
- B. The Character of the Delivered
 - 1. Holiness
 - 2. Holy Living
- C. Possessing Our Possessions
 - 1. Possessing the Prepossessor
 - 2. Claiming What Is Ours
- D. Fire and Flame
 - 1. The Fire that Destroys
 - 2. The Fire that Purges and Illuminates

III. Victory Over the Enemy: [Oba 1:19-21](#)

- A. Judgment Is the Lord's
- B. The Kingdom Is the Lord's