

OBADIAH—“*The Kingdom Shall Be The Lords*”

INTRODUCTION—Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament (third shortest book in the Bible). Short in length but huge in its message.

Date: Shortly after the Babylonian conquest of Judah in 586 bc (v. 11).

Author: 13 different Obadiah’s in the O.T. (common name).

- Obadiah (1:1) = “Obad” (servant) “I” “ah” (Lord) “servant of the Lord,” or “serving the Lord.” O.T. parents liked to give their children names that made reference to “the Lord” (Daniel; Ezekiel; Michael; Israel, Jeremiah; Zechariah; Isaiah; Nehemiah, Hezekiah, etc.)
- Obadiah was a contemporary prophet of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Some of Jeremiah 49:7-20 reads similar to the first part of Obadiah.

Subject (1:1): God’s prophecy of the doom of Edom (also called Seir) for their participation with Babylon in attack upon Judah. Edom was complicit with Babylon’s attack upon their “brethren” (Judah).

Purpose (v. 15). To illustrate the law of recompense—What goes around, comes around.

Key Words: *pride, brother* (vs. 10, 12).

Key Phrase: “...*the kingdom shall be the LORD’S*” (v. 21).

Key Verses: vs. 3-4, 15

Map of Edom: Edom was the region that is present day Jordan.

Historical background: The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 25:30), the twin brother of Jacob. Animosity existed between Jacob and Esau their entire lives. The rivalry continued between the two nations that came from them—Esau/Edom versus Jacob/Israel.

1. Struggling before birth (Gen. 25:22-26). Esau means “red/hairy.”



2. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew (Gen. 25:29-34).
 3. Jacob conned his father into giving him the blessing (Gen. 27).
 4. Esau vowed vengeance and became Edom (Gen. 27:41; 36:1, 8). One Esau became over 250,000 “Esaus,” and that is Edom.
 5. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel (Gen. 35:10).
 6. After 400 years in Egypt, the children of Israel came out of Egypt and headed for Canaan, the promised land. When they came to Edom, the Edomites refused to let them pass through their land (Num. 20:14-21).
 7. God forbid Israel to attack the Edomites because they were brethren (Dt. 23:7).
 8. There were frequent conflicts between Edom and Judah over the next 850 years (1 Sam 14:47; 2 Sam 8:13-14; 1 Kings 11:15; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 24:7).
 9. The bitter rivalry culminated with Edom’s participation with Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem.
- ➔ The prophecy of Obadiah deals with how this family feud between Esau/Edom and Jacob/Israel would finally end with Edom’s destruction.

I. **The PROPHECY of Edom’s destruction** (vs. 1-16 Cf. Jer. 49:7-20).

A. The REPORT of it. (vs. 1-9).

- ➔ v. 1—God spoke to Obadiah by a vision (Heb. 1:1). The word “*rumour*” is a report, whether it be true or false. In this case, the “*rumour*” was from God, therefore true. God sent his “*ambassador*” with a call to battle against Edom.
- ➔ v. 2— “*I have made thee small...*” God cut them down to size.
 - Edom was a small nation (population wise) and never defeated any nation. All they could do is gloat and revel in the misfortunes of others, like they did when their brethren Israel suffered at the hands of Babylon (Ezek. 35:11).
 - **God despised Edom.** Why? Because Esau despised the birthright (Gen 25:34 cf. Heb. 12:16-17). The word “*despise*” means to esteem as worthless or with contempt.

BIRTHRIGHT: The birthright was very valuable.

- The man who had the birthright possessed the covenant with God. Would be in the lineage of the coming Messiah.
- Priest / head of the family. He represented the family before God. He had a relationship with God.
- Double portion of the inheritance.
- Entitlement to the Abrahamic blessing.

But these blessings were future. Esau did not want to wait. He wanted his carnal appetite to be satisfied NOW. Esau's god was his BELLY! By selling his birthright, Esau was saying, "I would rather have a bowl of stew than have a relationship with God."

- Esau preferred the satisfying the flesh over the spirit. Jacob prioritized the spiritual over the flesh.
- Esau took the SHORT look (Heb. 12:15-16). Jacob took the LONG look (He saw things the way God sees them).
- Esau chose the temporal over the eternal. Jacob chose the eternal over the temporal. Esau sacrificed the *permanent* (his birthright) on the altar of the *immediate* (physical hunger).

1. Their **deceptive** pride (v. 3). Pride leads one to think he is greater than he is. Pride, in its essence, is living independently of God. This is how Esau lived. [NOTE: There is no record of any deity that the Edomites worshipped.]
 - This is why God hated Esau (cf. Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13)—God hates pride (Prov. 6:16-19)
 - See their "self-exaltation" (v. 4). This was the original sin of Satan (Isa. 14:13-14 cf. Luke 14:11—"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased...").
2. Their **defensible** position (v. 3a). They believed their mountain fortresses impregnable to enemy attack. The narrow canyon leading into Petra insulated them from invasion.

3. Their **defiance** (v. 3b)
 4. Their **downfall** (v. 4). Obadiah predicts the extinction of Edom. "*Thou shalt be cut off for ever*" (v. 10), "*There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau*" (v. 15).
 5. Their **desolation** by thieves and robbers (vs. 5-6 cf. Jer. 49:9-10). Unlike a common thief who steals only what he is looking for, Edom would be stripped bare, and left with nothing.
 - Edom was very wealthy from tolls charged to travelers who passed through their land on the "Kings Highway" (major trade route).
 - Edomites would hide their most precious possessions in the crevices in the rocks. The robbers would find them.
 - It is a picture of the judgment seat when all the hidden things will be brought out into open (Mt. 10:26; Luke 8:17; 12:2; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 6. Their **double-cross** by their allies (v. 7).
 7. The **destruction** of the people (vs. 8-9).
- B. The **REASON** for it (vs. 10-16). God's indictment on Edom.
1. Persecuting his brother, Jacob (v. 10 cf. Ezek. 25:12-14; 35:1-9).
 2. Cooperation with Jacob's enemies (v. 11).
 3. Gawking at Jacob's defeat (v. 12).
 4. Rejoicing at Jacob's captivity (v. 12 cf. Ps. 137:7; Ezek. 35:15).
 5. Boasting over Jacob's distress (v. 12 cf. Prov. 8:13).
 6. Plundering of Jacob's possessions (v. 13)
 7. Cutting off Jacob's escape routes (v. 14).

POETIC JUSTICE (vs. 15-16):

- Edom had indulged in treachery against Judah (vs. 11-12); therefore Edom will perish by the treachery of confederates (v. 7).

- Edom seized the chance to rob Judah (v. 13); therefore Edom will be robbed and stripped bare (vs. 5-6).
- Edom showed violence against Judah (v. 10); therefore Edom should perish by slaughter (v. 9).
- Edom sought the utter destruction of Judah (vs. 12-14); therefore Edom will be utterly destroyed (vs. 10, 18).
- Edom sought to hand over and dispossess the remnant who sought to escape (v. 14); therefore the remnant of Jacob will possess the land of Edom (v. 19).

II. The PROMISE of Judah's deliverance ("BUT..."—vs. 17-21). This is in the future "*day of the Lord.*" Nothing in these verses has been fulfilled... yet.

A. The COMPLETENESS of it (vs. 17-20 cf. Rev. 11:15, 15:4, Zech. 14:9; Ps. 72:8).

1. Edom's destruction is portrayed as a fire raging across a field consuming everything in its way. Edom was completely destroyed.

2. Israel's borders will expand to include the land of Edom according to God's original land grant promised to Israel (Gen. 12:6-7; 15:18-20; Num. 34:1-15; Josh. 1:2-4; Ezek. 47:13-20).



3. In the Kingdom, Edom will be completely assimilated into the restored nation of Israel. Esau will finally be subservient to Jacob as prophesied (Gen. 25:23; 27:40).

B. The CONSECRATION in it (v. 17). No more idolatry as before they were taken captive. Jesus will rule in holiness!

- C. The COMFORT in it (v. 21). This promise would be a great encouragement to Israel in it's affliction.

ILLUS—The Nazi's overran France in WW2. The French Resistance fought against the Nazi's in guerrilla warfare. Suppose you were a member of the French Resistance fighting along side of other Frenchmen you believed were your friends. Then came a day when a member of the French Resistance betrayed your group to the Nazi's. Many of your friends were killed and you are captured and imprisoned. At that point what do you need to hear that would encourage you? You need to hear, "D-Day is coming! The Allies are coming to free you." This is what verse 21 is saying. It may look dark as Israel is betrayed by Edom/Esau and captured by the Babylonians. But Obadiah has some encouraging words, "...*the kingdom shall be the LORD'S*" (v. 21).

ILLUS—Comforted by the promise of the rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

ILLUS—Comfort in the tribulation for Israel (James 5:7-8; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20)

SUMMATION: PRACTICAL LESSONS for us today (2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 15:4; 2 Cor. 10:11).

1. You reap what you sow (v. 15 cf. Gal. 6:7). This is a proven law!
2. Pride is deceptive and very difficult to detect in yourself (v. 3). My biggest spiritual struggle is with myself and my pride. I am often my own worst enemy.
 - Pride disguises itself with good works. "I read 10 pages of Scripture every day." "I lead 3 people to Christ this week." "I spend an hour a day in prayer." "I tithe of all I possess."
 - Pride blinds you to your own faults and leads you to think too highly of yourself. Most of the time we are not even aware it has a stronghold in our life (Jer. 17:9; Rev. 3:17).
 - Examples: A secret desire for praise or compliments. Self-congratulatory comments. False humility—Seeking to make people

think you are humble. False piety—Seeking to make people think you are more spiritual than you are. Failing to give the credit to those whom it is due. Blaming others for your failures. Over confident in one's abilities (Peter).

- Prayerlessness is another manifestation of pride.
3. Esau is a picture of a Christian who walks after the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).
 4. Warning about mistreating Israel (Gen. 12:1-3).
 5. Beware of mistreating your brothers in Christ (vs. 10, 12). Jacob was Esau's twin brother, like it or not!
 - The Bible commands us to love the brethren (Lev. 19:18 cf. 1 John 2:7; 3:11-17; 4:20-21; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; Gal. 6:10).
 - I am ashamed of the times I mistreated or was unkind to a brother or sister in Christ. I am truly sorry for not helping one of my brothers or sisters in the Lord when I could have. How I regret ever speaking of another believer with scornful words.
 6. Don't gloat over God's judgment of others, lest His judgment fall on you as well (v. 12; Prov. 24:17-18 cf. 17:5).
 7. v. 17—Christians need to possess their possessions (both spiritual and material). Too often a person's possessions possess them. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, but we must possess them for them to benefit us (cf. Joshua 18:3).

The Promised Land belonged to the Israelites but they had not possessed their possessions. A poor man may have oil on his farm but not know it. If he knew he had such a treasure he immediately tap into his resources. He must possess his possessions.

God gives us spiritual oil wells (Eph. 1:3), but He does not pump the oil for us. All things are ours in Christ (1 Cor. 3:21-22), but we must possess them. Appreciating what is yours never makes you rich, but appropriating it will.
