

Obadiah

Bible Study

Background

Obadiah means: 'servant of the eternal'

No mention of who he was...nor is it dated

Most scholars put the date in the 500's BC after the destruction of Jerusalem in 585

Book concerns the nation of **Edom**

Edom is another name for Esau

(Genesis 36: 8) "So Esau dwell in Mount Seir.
Esau is Edom"

Jacob and Esau were the **twin sons** of Isaac, grandsons of Abraham...

long history of a **feud** between Jacob and Esau

Genesis 27:41

So Esau **hated** Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then **I will kill my brother Jacob.**"

Feud between Jacob and Esau:

Shortly after the Red Sea crossing in the wilderness:



Exodus 17:8

⁸Now **Amalek** (Esau's grandson) came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

¹³So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword

¹⁶for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord *will have* war with Amalek from **generation to generation.**"

On the way to the promised land:



Numbers 20:14

¹⁴Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh **to the king of Edom.** "Thus says **your brother Israel:** 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us,

¹⁷Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway;

¹⁸Then **Edom said to him,** "You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword."

²¹Thus **Edom refused** to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him

Background cont.

The book is prophecy for **the end time**:

(v. 15 key verse) “For the day of the Lord upon all nations is near”

Obadiah shows what the “day of the Lord” will be for Israel’s enemies...

Joel 3:19
“Egypt shall be a desolation,
And **Edom** a desolate wilderness, **Because of violence *against* the people of Judah**, For they have shed innocent blood in their land.”

Two themes in the book of Obadiah:

1) The destruction of Edom—the greatest enemy of Israel

2) The vindication and restoration of Israel

Obadiah is a **prophecy** against Edom partly because of their participation in the destruction of Jerusalem in some way...both anciently and in the future

Map of Ancient Near East



(Genesis 36—descendents of Esau)

The descendents of Edom **today**:

v. 35 “Chief Teman”

“Ottoman”—Ottoman Turks

Some modern Turkey today

Some Edomites were carried away as
captives to Babylon

Edomites to be cruel to Jacob’s
descendents before Christ returns

v. 36 “Chief Amalek”

Palestinian Arabs

Edomites scattered in Iraq and Syria

Obadiah 1:14

You should not have stood at the crossroads
To cut off those among them who escaped;

Nor should you **have delivered up** those
among them who remained In the day of
distress

Other prophecies against Edom:

Jeremiah 49: 7-22



Jeremiah apparently used some of Obadiah's prophecy (under inspiration)

Isaiah 21: 11-12;
34: 1-17
63: 1-6

Ezekiel 25: 12-14;
35: 1-15

Amos 1:11-12

Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of **Edom**, and for four, I will not turn away its *punishment*, **Because he pursued his brother with the sword**, And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually, And he kept his wrath forever.

¹² But I will send a fire upon Teman, Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

Malachi 1:2-4

² "... *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?*" Says the Lord. "Yet Jacob I have loved;
³ But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."

⁴ Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places,"

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.

Verse 1

“Thus says the Lord God”—God’s words
“**concerning Edom**” (specifically)

A “messenger has been sent among the nations”— sent by God to stir up the nations to **war against** Edom

(last part v. 1)
“Arise, let us rise up **against her** for
battle”



Historically when the Assyrians
... and later the Babylonians came against
Edom (580 BC)

➤ Will be a future fulfillment

Verse 2

“**Behold**, I (God) will make you small among the nations”

“You shall be greatly **despised**”

→ God would do this by the nations aroused
against Edom

Hebrews 12:16

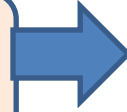
lest there *be* any fornicator or *profane person* like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

Verse 3

“The **pride** of your heart has deceived you” —will cause his fall

➤ Edom is symbolic of this world’s pride

“you who dwelt in the clefts of the rock”



Edom--A land of high mountain fortresses and dwellings

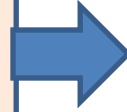
The rock-hewn city/fortress of Petra located high in Edom
(Heb.) *Sela*= rock....(Greek) *Petra*= rock

“Whose habitation is high”



Some of the mountain peaks in Edom reach over 6,000 feet

“You say in your heart, who will bring me down to the ground”



Edom’s haughtiness and pride : they thought themselves impregnable and invincible

Verse 4

“You ascend as high as the eagle....set your nest among the stars—even though they set themselves high above, God says:

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

“From there I will bring you down”

Verse 5 (describes: Edom to be cut-off, laid bare)
“If thieves come to you, robbers by night” (Irony)

“Would they have not stolen till they had enough?”

They steal what they want...they don't take everything

“if grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings?”

They leave gleanings—and the vineyard is not bare

Jeremiah 49:9-10

⁹ If grape-gatherers came to you, Would they not leave *some* gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, Would they not destroy until they have enough?

¹⁰ But I have made Esau **bare**; I have uncovered his secret places,[£] And he shall not be able to hide himself. **His descendants are plundered**, His brethren and his neighbors, And he *is* no more.

But Edom will be bare

(middle of verse)

“Oh, how you will be cut off!” —Edom will have nothing after they are brought down

Verse 6

“Oh, how Esau shall **be searched out!** *How* his **hidden treasures** shall be sought after!

Petra—was a great market of middle eastern trade

Completely plundered—everything...everyone

Its precious treasures will be looted

Verse 7

“All the men in your confederacy
Shall force you to the border”

“All your **allies** will turn against you and help to push you out of your land”

“The men at peace with you
Shall deceive you and prevail against you”

“They will promise peace while plotting your destruction”

“Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you”

“Your trusted friends will set traps for you”

“No one is aware of it”—they won't see it coming

Verse 8

“Will I not **in that day**, says the Lord”

“Even **destroy** the wise men from Edom,
And understanding from the mountains of
Esau?”

Edom had a reputation for wisdom...a
crossroads of communication with Babylon
and Egypt

No strategy will work...won't grasp
what is going on

Verse 9

The powerful, men of Teman will be confounded

They will be helpless to prevent the slaughter

Verse 10

“For violence against your brother **Jacob**”

“violence”—denotes physical and **moral** violence

Verse 10

“For violence against your brother Jacob”

Verse 10 (last part)

“And you shall be cut off forever”

Edom lost its national identity under the Romans

Verse 11

(describes the moral violence against Jacob)

“you stood on the other side” when
foreigners entered his gates”
➤ refused to help

The fall of Jerusalem:

“And cast lots for Jerusalem—even as you
were one of them”

Verse 12

(describes attitude of his brother’s
captivity)

“**Gazed on:** (Gloated over)

“**rejoiced over**”

“**spoken proudly**”

➤ As they were led captive to a foreign land

Psalms 137:7

Remember, O Lord, against *the sons of Edom*
The day of Jerusalem, Who said, “**Raze it, raze it,**
it, To its very foundation!”

Verse 13

“**entered** the gate of My people...”

“In the day of their calamity” ... “should not have gazed (gloated over) their affliction”

Verse 13 (last part)

(paraphrase) “You yourselves went into the land of Israel in the day of his calamity and looted him. You made yourselves rich at his expense”

Verse 14

(Paraphrase) “You stood at the crossroads and killed those trying to escape; you captured the survivors and returned them to their enemies **in that terrible time of his distress**”

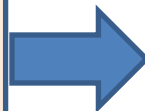
Jeremiah 30:7

Alas! For that day *is* great, So that none *is* like it; And it *is* the time of Jacob’s trouble,.

Verse 15 (time frame of the prophecy)

“For the **day of the Lord** upon all the nations is near” —the core of Obadiah’s prophecy

“As you have done (to Israel), it shall be done to you”



Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also **reap**.

Verse 16

“For as you **drank** on My holy mountain, So shall all the nations **drink** continually”

An action from the **past**

A **future** action

(Expositors) “The metaphor of drinking is commonly used of the experience of **judgment** and **humiliation**”...(to Edom)

(last part v. 16)

“And they shall be as though they had never been”= as though they had never existed

(Paraphrase) “You drank my cup of punishment upon my holy mountain, and the nations round about will drink it too; yes drink and stagger back and disappear from history, no longer nations any more”

As a result of rejoicing over the destruction of Jerusalem in the past and future those nations will drink the cup of God’s judgment

Verse 17

“Mount Zion”—where God rules

“there **shall be** deliverance”—from danger

“salvation” (margin)—because God’s holiness
will be there

“house of Jacob **shall** possess their
possessions”

➤ **the conquest** of the holy land

Verse 18

“house of Jacob and Joseph (Israel) a fire... and flame”—that set Esau aflame—shall be stubble

“And **no survivor** shall remain of the house of Esau”...for the Lord has spoken

➤ God’s judgment on them

There will be opportunity for them when they are raised in the second resurrection

Revelation 20:5

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

Verse 19 (future: “shall possess”)

(Paraphrase) “Then my people who live in the Negev shall **occupy** the hill country of Edom; those living in the Judean lowlands shall **possess** the Philistine plains, and **repossess** the fields of Ephraim and Samaria. And the people of Benjamin shall **possess** Gilead”



“Possess” **and** the geographical and ethnic descriptions reflect back to Israel’s conquest of Canaan

Verse 20

Concerns the redistribution of the “holy land” to the **returning captives** of Israel and Judah

Zarephath—extreme north

Sepharad—extreme south

(Expositors) “In short the land seen by Obadiah as promised to a reunited Israel in the “day of the Lord” is the land originally given to the twelve tribes”

Verse 21

“Then saviors (deliverers) shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau”

Daniel 7:22

until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of **the saints** of the Most High, and the time came for **the saints to possess the kingdom.**

Where God rules and his Holy presence will be

“To judge the mountains of Esau”—Edom will be set low—as an example to the nations

2 Corinthians 10:5
“casting down arguments and **every high thing** that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,”

v. 21 (last part)

“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s”

(NSB) “These were Obadiah’s last words against all human arrogance, pride and rebellion”

Revelation 11:15
Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The [£]kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

Lessons from the book of Obadiah:

1) Pride and high position mean nothing

2) Stand up for and love our brother

Proverbs 24:17

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;

3) God judges all according to their works