

THE DAY OF THE LORD FOR ALL NATIONS
PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: OBADIAH
Obadiah 15-21

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The struggle began in Rebecca’s womb—between the twin brothers Jacob and Esau. It continued between their descendants, the nations of Israel and Edom. Twice the Edomites refused to come to the aid of their related nation Israel—first, as Israel was wandering in the wilderness (Nu 20:14-21); second, during the time of invasion. For opposing God’s people, Obadiah condemns Edom and pronounces its final destruction.

B. TITLE

1. HEBREW

- *Obadyah* = “worshiper of Jahweh”—or—“servant of Jahweh”

2. SEPTUAGINT

- *Οβαδιου*

3. LATIN

- *Abdias*

C. PLACE HEBREW BIBLE

1. PART OF 15 LATTER PROPHETS—TRUE ‘PROPHETIC’ BOOKS OF THE OT

2. FOURTH OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

3. IS IT THE SHORTEST BOOK IN THE BIBLE?

a. Yes—shortest—in chapters and verses

- **Obadiah**—one chapter (OT)—21 verses
- **Jude**—one chapter (NT)—but 25 verses
- **Philemon**—one chapter (NT)—but 25 verses

b. No—not shortest—in words of original languages

- **Jude**—461 words
- **Obadiah**—440 words
- **Philemon**—335 words
- **II John**—245 words
- **III John**—219 words

D. AUTHORSHIP

1. ATTRIBUTED TO OBADIAH—**1:1**

2. AUTHORSHIP NOT DISPUTED BY MODERN SCHOLARS

3. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- a. No information is given in Scripture
- b. Probably
 - 1. Lived in Judah—since prophesy is about Edom's treatment of Jerusalem/Judah
 - 2. Not of royal or priestly lineage—no mention of his father's name
- c. Identity *might* be determined by looking at setting/history (below)

E. DATE AND SETTING

- 1. NO KINGS OR DATES MENTIONED
- 2. KEY HINTS ARE FOUND IN **verses 10-14**

10 *Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever.* **11** *On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem—you too were as one of them.* **12** *Do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; yes, do not boast in the day of their distress.* **13** *Do not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster.* **14** *Do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress.*

- a. Jerusalem was defeated and plundered
- b. Edom was independent of Judah
- c. Edom helped in Judah's downfall
 - 1. Gloated and helped loot Jerusalem
 - 2. Killed Judean fugitives and imprisoned survivors
 - 3. Edom's actions are confirmed elsewhere in the OT
 - **Lam 4:21**—will be punished for rejoicing at Judah's calamity
 - **Ezek 25:12**—will be punished for avenging themselves on Judah
 - **Ezek 35:10**—will be punished for trying to possess God's land

3. FOUR POSSIBLE SETTINGS/DATES

- a. **926 BC—I Kgs 14:25-26**
 - 1. **Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak** looted temple and Rehoboam's palace

2. **Unlikely** setting—because Edom was still a vassal of Judah
- b. **848-841 BC**—**II Chr 21:16-17**
 1. **Philistines and Arabians** invaded and looted Jehoram's palace
 2. **Possible** setting
 - a. Edom did rebel then, and opposed Judah—**II Kgs 8:20-22; II Chr 21:8-20**
 - b. Prophecy here—the Philistine plain will be possessed by Jews from the foothills—**v19**
 - c. **790 BC**—**II Kgs 14; II Chr 25**
 1. **King Jehoash of Israel** invaded Judah
 2. **Unlikely** setting—Obadiah calls the invaders 'foreigners' and 'strangers'—**v11**
 - d. **586 BC**—**II Kgs 24-25**
 1. **Nebuchadnezzar** defeated and destroyed Jerusalem—burning the temple and palace, and tearing down the walls
 2. **Possible** setting—but consider the following factors
 - a. *Likely* factors
 1. Edom was not a vassal of Judah at that time
 2. Nebuchadnezzar did carry off their wealth—**v11a**
 3. Plea of the psalmist in an exilic Psalm—in Babylon

Ps 137:7—*Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom, the day of Jerusalem, who said, "Raze it, raze it to its very foundation."*
 - b. *Unlikely* factors
 1. Nebuchadnezzar would not have 'cast lots' for Jerusalem—**v11b**
 2. Obadiah does not indicate such total destruction of Jerusalem

F. POSSIBLE IDENTITY OF AUTHOR

1. ELEVEN OR TWELVE OBADIAHS ARE MENTIONED IN THE OT
2. SEVEN ARE PRE-EXILIC—FOUR OR FIVE ARE POST-EXILIC
 - a. Pre-exilic
 - **I Chr 7:3**—fourth generation after Issachar—contemporary with Moses
 - **I Chr 12:9**—one of David's 'mighty men of valor'—from the tribe of Gad
 - **I Chr 27:19**—father of Zebulun's tribal chief, Ishmaiah—under David
 - **I Kgs 18:3**—officer in Ahab's palace—hid prophets in cave (874-853)

- ▲ Later Jewish tradition said he was the prophetic author of *Obadiah*
- **II Chr 17:7**—official sent by Jehoshaphat to teach law in Judah (869-848)
- **II Chr 8:38**—12th gen. descendant of Saul (9th cent?)—(**I Chr 9:44**)
- **II Chr 34:12**—a Levite overseer of temple repair under Josiah (640-609)

b. Post-exilic

- **I Cor 9:16**—one of *first* Levites who to re-settle in Jerusalem (**Neh 11:17**)
- **Ez 8:9**—a priest and head of household who returned with Ezra (c. 458 BC)
- **Neh 10:5**—priest in Nehemiah's time who signed covenant of renewal (c. 444 BC)
 - ▲ Possibly the same priest in **Ez 8:9**
- **Neh 12:25**—gatekeeper during the priesthood of Joiakim, under Zerubbabel
- **I Chr 3:21**—descendant of David through Zerubbabel

3. IF SETTING WAS MID-9TH CENTURY PHILISTINE-ARABIAN INVASION

a. Author's identity might have been

- **I Kgs 18**—officer in Ahab's palace—according to later Jewish tradition
- **II Chr 17**—official sent by Jehoshaphat to teach law in Judah
- **II Chr 8**—12th gen. descendant of Saul (9th cent?)

b. He also would have been

- Contemporary of Elisha
- The first writing OT prophet
- The first of 9 prophets—to proclaim 'the Day of the Lord'

4. IF SETTING WAS AFTER BABYLONIAN DESTRUCTION

- ❖ Author might have been—any of the five post-exilic Obadiahs

G. STYLE

STYLE PROPHETIC VISION EXPRESSED IN POETIC FORM

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. HISTORY OF EDMON

a. **Esau** and **Edom**

- Named '**Edom**'—for red stew—for which he gave birthright—**Gen 25:30**
- Esau moved to Seir—where his descendants absorbed the Horites
- Edomites—are the descendants of Esau—**Gen 36:1**
- Capital Sela (Petra)—built into rock cliff—seemed virtually impregnable

b. **Edom—vs—Israel**

- Refused passage to Israel—on their way to Canaan
- Fought Saul
- Subdued by David and Solomon
- Fought against Jeshoshophat
- Rebelled against Jehoram
- Re-conquered by Amaziah
- Regained freedom against Ahaz

c. **Edom and other nations**

- Under control of Assyrians, then Babylonians
- Displaced by Nabataeans
- Moved to southern Palestine—became Idumeans

d. **Idumeans**

- King Herod—Idumean—married Mariamne, granddaughter of Hyrcanus II (Hasmonean ethnarch)—to secure claim to throne
- Joined Jews in rebellion against Rome—defeated 70 AD by Titus
- Afterward—they disappeared from history

v10—*cut off forever*

v18—*no survivors shall remain of the house of Esau*

2. OTHER OT PROPHETIC ORACLES AGAINST EDM

- a. **Isaiah 21 and 34**—followed by salvation of Zion in Isaiah 35
- b. **Jeremiah 49:7-22**—is remarkably similar to Obadiah's oracle
- c. **Ezekiel 25 and 35**—followed by salvation of Israel in 36-37
- d. **Joel 3**
- e. **Amos 1**
- f. **Malachi 1**

3. THE DAY OF THE LORD—18 TIMES IN THE OT—BY 9 PROPHETS

- a. **Isaiah**—3 times—**2:12; 13:6, 9**
- b. **Jeremiah**—1 time—**46:10**
- c. **Ezekiel**—2 times—**13:5; 30:3**
- d. **Joel**—5 times—**1:15; 2: 1, 11, 31; 3:14**—and 'that day' **3:18**
- e. **Amos**—2 times—**5:18, 20**

- f. **Obadiah**—1 time—**1:15**
- g. **Zephaniah**—2 times—**1:7, 14**
- h. **Zechariah**—1 time—**14:1**
- i. **Malachi**—1 time—**4:5**

I. THEMES

1. JUDGMENT AND DOOM TO EDOM

- a. For its arrogance and pride—**vv3-4**
- b. For its opposition to God's people—**vv10-14**

2. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

J. OUTLINE

v1a INTRODUCTION

vv1b-4 EDOM'S ARROGANCE

vv5-9 EDOM'S JUDGMENT AND DOOM

vv10-14 EDOM'S OPPOSITION TO JUDAH

vv15-18 THE DAY OF THE LORD

vv15-16 JUDGMENT AGAINST ALL NATIONS OPPOSING GOD

vv17-20 RESTORATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

v21 THE KINGDOM OF GOD

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

15 *For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.* **16** *Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and become as if they had never existed.* **17** *But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.* **18** *Then the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau will be as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken.* **19** *Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, and those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And Benjamin will possess Gilead.* **20** *And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the cities of the Negev.* **21** *The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's.*

III. EXPOSITION

A. GOD EXPECTS RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ALL PEOPLE

1. HIS CHILDREN—DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM
 - a. Not just Israel—i.e. Jacob
 - b. But also his brother—Esau—i.e. Edom
2. AND NATIONS NOT DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM
 - Strangers and foreigners—who have sacked Jerusalem—**v11**

B. JEHOVAH RULES OVER MORE THAN JUST JUDAH/ISRAEL

1. IF HE WERE GOD ONLY OF ISRAEL
 - He would not expect Edom to listen to Him
 - Or assert His authority to punish them
2. BUT HE HOLDS EDOM ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACTIONS AGAINST JUDAH—**vv10-14**

C. ACCOUNTABILITY—WILL COME IN THE DAY OF THE LORD—**vv15-16**

1. IT WILL BRING PUNISHMENT FOR JUDAH'S ENEMIES
2. IT WILL BRING VINDICATION FOR JUDAH
3. PENAL CHARACTERISTICS—OF THE DAY OF THE LORD
 - a. **Imminent**—*draws near*
 - b. **Universal**—draws near *on all the nations*
 - Edom—and all nations that have plundered Judah
 - c. Punishment will **fit the crime**—*As you have done, it will be done to you*
 1. Apparently Edomites and other nations drank in celebration of Jerusalem's fall
 2. So they will drink from the cup of God's wrath

All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow
 3. Cup of God's wrath—a theme in **Isaiah 51** and **Jeremiah 25, 49**
 - d. **Persistent and Total**
 1. They will drink—*continually*
 2. No living history—*become as they had never existed*
 3. Finally—no future for Edom—*there will be no survivor of the house of Esau*

D. GOD'S PEOPLE WILL TRIUMPH AND RESETTLE THE LAND

1. THE HOUSE OF JACOB WILL BE RESTORED TO ITS POSSESSION—v17

- Jerusalem will be rebuilt and Judah restored

2. JUDGMENT WILL COME THROUGH THE FIRE OF BOTH KINGDOMS—v18

a. Symbolic language

- *House of Jacob*—symbolizes Judah
- *House of Joseph*—symbolizes Israel

b. Fulfilment of this prophecy

1. Historical and actual fulfilment—in the past

- Could have taken place—only if this was a 9th century work
- Jerusalem/Judah were rebuilt and restored
- And both kingdoms survived until the 8th and 6th centuries

2. Future or spiritual fulfilment

- It would be a post-exilic work
- Because Israel has not been restored
- But it could point to fulfilment in unified kingdom of the New Covenant

3. RE-OCCUPATION OF THE LAND

a. God's people will repossess the land—vv19-20

- Every direction—southeast, west, north to northwest, northeast

b. They will recover all their former territory

1. From the **South**—probably **Judah** will do this—v19

- Out of the wilderness—Negev—they will take Edom
- From the lowlands—they will take Philistia and southern Israel
- Benjamin—will take the land east of Jordan (Gilead)

2. **Israel** exiles—will take the north—beyond the borders of Canaan—v20

3. **Jerusalem** exiles—probably from Media (Babylonia)—will take the south—v20

E. THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD WILL BE ESTABLISHED—v21

1. THE KINGDOM WILL BE THE LORD'S

a. The Lord will again possess the land

b. Possibly implying—eschatological return to His theocratic rule

c. Probably implying—return of Judah's rule—under Jehovah

2. ESCHATOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

a. Eventually—God's kingdom will come

b. He will reign over all the peoples of the earth

c. His kingdom will never again be destroyed