

Obadiah

Edom's Destruction for Opposing Judah

Edom's Destruction			Day of the LORD	
Verses 1-14			Verses 15-21	
Judgment on Edom			Blessing on Judah	
Proud Esau Defeats Defenseless Jacob			Powerful Jacob Defeats Humbled Esau	
Edom's Contempt & Crimes			Edom's Condemnation & Calamities	
Past			Future	
Author	Judgment	Reasons	Destruction	Possession
Inspired Title 1a	Humbling Prophesied 1b-9	Judgment for Injustices 10-14	Judgment on Modern Enemies 15-16	Blessing on Modern Israel 17-21
c. 845 BC				

Key Word: Edom

Key Verses: *Judgment on Edom:* (God to Edom) "Because of the violence against your brother Jacob [Judah], you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever" (v. 10).

Blessing on Israel: "Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion [Jerusalem] to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the LORD's" (v. 21).

Summary Statement:

Destructions of both Edom in the near future and all nations on the day of the LORD will come as God's judgment for their opposing Judah, but Judah can be comforted with a promise of blessing due to God's protection in the Land Covenant.

Application:

God judges the prideful who try to destroy His people.

God "does unto you" as you have "done unto others" (v. 15).

Obadiah

Introduction

- I. **Title** The name Obadiah (עֲבַדְיָה, עֲבַדְיָהּ) means "servant of Yahweh" (BDB 715d), being a derivative noun of a Hebrew word for servant (עָבַד). His name is significant in that his prophecy relates to Edom, which worshiped *other* gods.

II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** As Obadiah was a common name, at least twelve Old Testament men were named Obadiah. Some of the likeliest candidates for this prophecy include: (1) Ahab's servant who hid the prophets of God in a cave (1 Kings 18:3 and Talmud *Sanh.* 39b; ca. 845 BC), (2) Jehoshaphat's official sent out by the king to teach the law in the cities of Judah (2 Chron. 17:7; ca. 860 BC), (3) Josiah's temple repair overseer who was a Levite (2 Chron. 34:12; ca. 620 BC), (4) Ezra's leader who returned from the Exile (Ezra 8:9; ca. 458 BC), or (5) a priest involved in the revival of Nehemiah's time (Neh. 10:5; ca. 445 BC). The best evidence supports the first Obadiah above (see "Occasion" below).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The superscription of the book is no help in identifying the author as it simply reads, "The vision of Obadiah" (1:1a), which mentions neither his father's name, home region, or the reign of a king. Obadiah remains an obscure prophet who probably lived in the southern kingdom and did not come from a royal or priestly line.

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** The book itself gives little help in determining its date, which is why the candidates for Obadiah above range from the fifth to the ninth century! The only indication of date is the recent invasion mentioned in verses 10-14, which is explained below under "Occasion." The best evidence suggests a date of approximately 845 BC.
- B. **Recipients:** While Obadiah prophesies of the destruction of Edom, the mention of Jerusalem (vv. 11, 20; "Mt. Zion" in vv. 17, 21) and Judah (v. 12; "Jacob" in vv. 17-18) indicate that the prophecy was originally delivered to the southern kingdom and not to Edom itself.
- C. **Occasion:** The Edomites, descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, rejoiced (v. 12b) over a major foreign invasion that had recently occurred in Judah (vv. 12b-13). They even took advantage of the situation by standing by without helping (v. 11), looking down on Judah in arrogance (vv. 12a, 13b), taking some of the spoil for themselves (v. 13c), and ambushing survivors to give to the enemy (v. 14). The difficult issue is determining which *specific* calamity has overcome Judah. Four possibilities exist (*TTTB*, 251-52):
1. In 926 BC, Shishak of Egypt plundered both Jerusalem's temple and palace during Rehoboam's reign (1 Kings 14:25-26). However, this view is unlikely for the Book of Obadiah, since Edom was subject to Judah in 926 BC, whereas verses 10-14 indicate that Edom was independent.
 2. About eighty years later (848-841 BC under Jehoram), the Philistines and Arabs looted the palace (2 Chron 21:16-17), and Edom revolted, becoming a bitter enemy (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chron 21:8-20), which is a description fitting Obadiah's (vv. 10-14).
 3. In 790 BC, King Jehoash of Israel invaded Judah (2 Kings 14; 2 Chron 25). This cannot be the invasion spoken of by Obadiah since verse 11 refers to *foreign* invaders.
 4. In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon completely destroyed Jerusalem's city and temple (2 Kings 24-25), which was encouraged by the Edomites (Psalm 137:7). This view is popular among liberal scholars and evangelicals (Carl Armerding, *EBC*, 7:351-52; Leslie Allen, *NICOT*, 129-33, Chisholm in Zuck, ed., *Biblical Theology of the OT*, 397).

However, this late date does not seem likely since: (a) Obadiah does not indicate a complete destruction (admittedly an argument from silence), (b) Nebuchadnezzar, in his arrogant despotism, would not have "cast lots for Jerusalem" with anyone (v. 11), (c) Obadiah does not mention Nebuchadnezzar or Babylon by name which is characteristic of the other prophets, (d) Nebuchadnezzar left no fugitives such as those mentioned in verse 14 except Zedekiah and his

party who were soon captured, (e) Joel 2:32 (590 BC) quotes Obadiah 17 (see below) and (f) the Hebrew verb forms translated "You should not..." (vv. 12-14) warn Edom against repeating *again* what she had already done which would be impossible following Jerusalem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar.

Although one cannot be dogmatic, the second view seems to marshal the best evidence, especially since the oldest known Jewish tradition identifies the Obadiah of this prophecy with the Obadiah of Ahab's reign (Talmud *Sanh.* 39b). It also seems very possible that the Philistines, Arabs, and Edomites would have cast lots to designate the parts of the city for each to plunder (Baker, *BKC*, 1:1454). This early date would make the author a contemporary of Elisha and the earliest of the writing prophets.

IV. Characteristics

- A. Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament canon, at only 21 verses long.
- B. Obadiah is the earliest of the prophetic writings.
- C. Although not quoted in the New Testament, three other Old Testament prophets quote from his short prophecy. Dependence is hard to determine, but one statement in Joel 2:32 refers to Obadiah 17 as what "the LORD has said," thus showing Obadiah's priority chronologically. The quotations or allusions by other prophets are as follows:

<u>Obadiah</u> 845 BC	<u>Amos</u> 755 BC	<u>Jeremiah</u> 604 BC	<u>Joel</u> 590 BC
1		49:14	
2		49:15	
3-4		49:16	
5		49:9	
6		49:10	
8		49:7	
9		49:22b	
9-10	1:11-12		
10			3:19
11			3:3
14	1:6		
15			1:15; 2:1; 3:3-4, 14
16		49:12	
17			2:32; 3:17
18	1:12		
19	9:12		

- D. Judgment against Edom appears in more OT books than judgment against any other nation (cf. Isa. 11:14; 34:5-17; 63:1-6; Jer. 9:25-26; 25:17-26; 49:7-22; Lam. 4:21-22; Ezek. 25:12-14; 35; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; 9:11-12; Mal. 1:4), but Obadiah is the *only entire book* devoted to Edom's destruction.

Argument

Obadiah prophesies a message of judgment upon Edom as a comfort to the people of Judah who have seen Edom gloat over the recent devastation of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Assyrians. The first part of the prophecy (vv. 1-14) describes Edom's downfall for committing injustices towards Judah so that Judah might be comforted with Yahweh's vengeance upon its behalf. The LORD invites the nations to judge Edom (v. 1a), describes the fall of the nation from its pride (vv. 1b-9), and delineates the reasons Edom is to be judged (vv. 10-14).

In the second division of the vision (vv. 15-21) Obadiah relates how, because of God's commitment to His people, *all* nations which opposed Judah will be judged (vv. 15-16) while Judah will experience His blessings of holiness, enlarged territories, and victory over Edom (vv. 17-21)—probably used as a symbol of all nations which oppose God by opposing His people.

Synthesis

Edom's destruction for opposing Judah

1-14	Edom's destruction
1a	Inspired title
1b-9	Humbling prophesied
10-14	Judgment for injustices to Judah
15-21	Day of the LORD
15-16	Judgment upon opposers of Judah
17-21	Blessing upon Judah

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

Destructions of both Edom in the near future and all nations in the day of the LORD will come as God's judgment for their opposing Judah, but Judah can be comforted with a promise of blessing due to God's protection in the Land Covenant.

- I. **The way the LORD responded to Edom's pride, shown in injustices to Judah, was to destroy them as a comfort to Judah with His protective hand (1-14).**
 - A. Obadiah declares that his vision concerning Edom is from the LORD to encourage Judah that God will sovereignly and irrevocably protect His people by destroying Edom (1a).
 - B. The LORD describes Edom's destruction, aided by deceptive allies and involving a humiliating slaughter and plundering (1b-9). Note the Fulfillment: The Nabateans, around 500 BC, were invited to an Edomite banquet but deceived, slaughtered, and plundered the Edomites.
 1. God describes Edomite destruction by the nations as being brought low in humiliation from arrogant dwellings high in the rocks and as a fallen eagle (1b-4).
 - a) God invites the nations to come and judge Edom (1b) [fulfilled as the Nabateans, Jews under John Hyrcanus, and Romans under Titus all annihilated the Edomites].
 - b) God describes the Edomites' destruction as being brought low in humiliation from their arrogant dwellings high in the rocks (2-3).
 - c) God compares Edom being brought low to the fall of an eagle whose nest is in outer space (4).
 2. Invaders will plunder Edom's wealth (5-6).
 3. Edom will be totally deceived and overpowered by its allies (7).
 4. Edom's people will be slaughtered—the wise, the warriors, and the common people (8-9).

- C. The LORD specifies the reason for Edom's judgment as doing injustices to Judah in order that Judah might be comforted by God's protective hand (10-14).
 - 1. The LORD prophesies the ultimate shame and destruction of Edom as a nation for its injustices done to Judah (10).
 - 2. The LORD lists the specific ways Edom did injustices to Judah to justify His judgment upon the nation (11-14).
 - a) Rather than helping Judah in trouble [when the Philistines and Arabs attacked], Edom participated in dividing the plunder of Jerusalem (11).
 - b) Edom looked down on Judah in arrogance and took some of the spoil for itself (12-13).
 - c) Edom even handed over survivors to the enemy (14).

II. The way the LORD will respond to end-time nations who oppose Judah will be to bless His people with His faithfulness to the Land Covenant (15-21).

- A. The day of the LORD will be God's judgment upon all nations that have opposed Judah so that God's law of retribution will be accomplished (15-16).
- B. The day of the LORD will be God's blessing upon the modern nation of Israel in holiness, expanded boundaries, and victory over Edom due to God's commitment to the Land Covenant (17-21).
 - 1. Modern Israel will be characterized by holiness in its own land (17).
 - 2. Modern Israel will triumph over Edom [Jordan] like fire consumes wood, leaving only stubble (18).
 - 3. Modern Israel will have enlarged boundaries that even encompass those of Edom [Jordan], Philistia [Gaza Strip], Samaria [West Bank], Gilead [Jordan], Zarephath [Lebanon], and the Negev [southern Israel] (19-20).
 - 4. The LORD through modern Israel will govern the area formerly occupied by Edom (21).
 - 5. Note: Since Judah has never possessed these enlarged boundaries, this prophecy must await future fulfillment (at the return of Messiah) when the modern nation of Israel trusts in Christ.

Note: Since Judah has yet to possess these enlarged boundaries, this prophecy must still await future fulfillment (at the return of Messiah) when the modern nation of Israel trusts in Christ.

History of Petra

Biblical Significance

About 262 kilometers south of Amman (SE of the Dead Sea) lies the city of Petra, “the rose red city half as old as time.” Just to the north is Ain Moses, a spring with a large rock considered by Muslims as the rock which Moses struck (Num. 20:8-13). (The real rock is 100 miles west in Israel.)

Petra lies within the rugged mountains of Edom. Aaron died and was buried on one of these mountains called Mount Hor (Num. 20:23-29). Petra was probably the land of the ancient Horites (Gen. 14:6), a non-Semitic people now known as Hurrians. After Esau migrated to this area, he and his descendants (Edomites) presumably drove out the Horites (36:20, 21, 29).

Petra is also called Sela (Isa. 16:1; cf. Jer. 49:16-17). King Amaziah of Judah conquered Edom, and, presumably Petra as well (2 Kings 14:7). Petra is also probably the place that the future godly remnant will flee in the Tribulation after the Abomination that causes Desolation is erected in the Jerusalem temple of Antichrist (Matt. 24:15-21; Rev. 12:14-17; Isa. 16:1-4).

Chronology

2000 BC	Horites occupy Petra during Abraham's time
1900	Edomites conquered the Horites
797-779	Amaziah of Judah occupies Sela and renames it Joktheel
650	Nabateans (Ishmaelites) pay tribute to Assyria
312	Antigonos Monophthalmos captures Petra, but is waylaid by the Nabateans in a night attack, and his army is destroyed
312-63	Nabateans maintain independence and control the spice trade despite the efforts of the Seleucids (Greek rulers) and Maccabeans (Jewish rulers) to control them
63 BC-AD 106	Nabatean autonomy, but more or less dependent on Rome
AD 106-400s	Roman province of Aracia annexes Petra

Points of Interest

“Petra” means “rock” in Greek—an appropriate name as the city is carved out of rock passageways.

1. The Siq: One enters the city through a one-kilometer narrow crack in the rock called the Siq, where on either side the sandstone cliffs rise from 70-100 meters! This single entrance made the city almost impossible to conquer. The only time after Obadiah when the city was conquered was through Nabatean trickery rather than military defeat (cf. notes, 597 on Obad. 1-9).
2. The Aqueduct cut into the Siq served as the city's water supply.
3. The Treasury (Arabic *el Khazneh*) is the most imposing landmark, standing two stories high at the end of the Siq. The lower story has six impressive Corinthian columns. This site is where Indiana Jones fought his last battle in Hollywood's “Raiders of the Lost Ark.”
4. The Monastery (Arabic: *Ed Deir*) is a huge, 55-meter-wide and 47-meter-high face carved into a rock wall. Some believe it first served as a temple but was later converted into a Christian church in the third century. AD.
5. The Triumphal Arch is only partially standing, but opens into a flagstone-paved road of ancient public buildings: the baths, marketplace, gymnasium, and palace.
6. The Tombs show how bodies were buried straight into the carved wall.
7. The Altar (Arabic *al Madhbah*) stands high on a hill as a fifteen-by-six-meter rock-hewn platform. It also features two obelisks that are over six meters tall and are connected to ancient pagan rituals, including human sacrifices.