

OBADIAH

Author:

The Bible tells us nothing about Obadiah. He is not the same person as the government official of the same name who lived in the days of Elijah and Ahab (1 Kings 18:3-16), or any of about a dozen other men in the Old Testament named Obadiah. His name means “Worshipper of Jehovah” or “Servant of Jehovah”.

Date:

Probably sometime about 845 BC.

Theme:

The punishment that will come on the people of Edom because of their acts of violence against Israel.

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¹The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord God says concerning Edom;
 We have heard a report
 from the LORD,
 and a messenger has been sent
 among the nations –
 Arise, and let us go up against her
 in battle.
² “See, I have made you small
 among the nations.
 You are greatly despised.
³ The pride of your heart has
 deceived you,
 you who live in the clefts of the rock,
 whose home is in the heights,
 who says in his heart,
 ‘Who will bring me down
 to the ground?’
⁴ Though you exalt yourself like
 the eagle,
 and though you set your nest
 among the stars,
 I will bring you down from there”,
 says the LORD.
⁵ “If thieves came to you,
 if robbers at night
 (oh, how you will be cut off!),
 would they not steal only until
 they had enough?
 If grape pickers came to you,
 would they not leave some grapes?
⁶ Oh, how Esau’s land will be
 searched out!
 How his hidden treasures hunted!
⁷ All the men of your confederacy

will bring you to the border.
 The men who were at peace
 with you will deceive you,
 and prevail against you.
 Those who eat your food prepare
 a wound for you.
 He has no understanding!”
⁸ The LORD says,
 “In that day will I not destroy
 the wise men out of Edom,
 and understanding out
 of the mountain of Esau?
⁹ And your mighty men,
 O Teman, will be dismayed,
 so that everyone belonging
 to the mountain of Esau may be
 cut off in the slaughter.
¹⁰ Because of your violence
 against your brother Jacob
 shame will cover you,
 and you will be cut off forever.
¹¹ “On the day that you stood
 on the other side,
 on the day strangers took
 his forces captive,
 and foreigners entered through
 his gates and cast lots for
 Jerusalem,
 you were like one of them.
¹² But you should not have watched
 on the day of your brother,
 on the day that he became
 a foreigner;
 nor should you have rejoiced
 over the children of Judah

¹ “*Vision*”– Isa 1:1; Gen 15:1.

“*Edom*”– for other prophecies concerning this land and people see Isa 34:5-15; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11-12.

² They were a very proud people, so God would humble them. They thought they were great, so He had made them small. See Prov 3:34; 6:16-17; Jam 4:6-10; 1 Pet 5:5-6; Ps 18:25-27; Isa 2:11-18.

³ “*Rock*” (*v* 3) – the capital city of Edom was located among rocks and cliffs and they were sure that no enemy could take it. They forgot about God the Almighty One.

⁵⁻⁶ Edom’s enemies would deal with them in a much worse way than thieves and robbers. They would leave nothing behind.

“*Grapes*”– Deut 24:20-21.

⁷ Edom’s friends and allies would prove false and treacherous and deceive the people. God would use this means of destroying them.

⁸ Edom was famous for men of worldly wisdom – Jer 49:7 (Job’s friend Eliphaz was a native of an Edomite city – Job 2:11).

“*Destroy*”– their wisdom would not be able to save either the country or themselves.

“*Esau*”– another name for Edom. See Gen 25:29-30.

⁹ Teman was a tribe descended from Esau. It gave its name to the region it occupied in Edom.

¹⁰⁻¹⁴ Here is the principal reason why God would send destruction on Edom. When Israel was attacked by enemies Edom was glad and actually took part in destroying Israel.

“*Brother Jacob*”– Edom was Jacob’s brother (Gen 25:24-30). So Edom and Israel were brother nations. This is what made their joy over Israel’s destruction worse than it would otherwise have been.

“*Forever*”– Ezek 35:9.

¹¹ “*One of them*”– Esau was like one of Israel’s worst enemies.

¹² To be glad at the destruction of a brother is devilish and those guilty of it will have to face God’s judgment. Here was a whole nation guilty of this.

- on the day of their destruction;
nor should you have spoken proudly
on the day of distress.
- ¹³ You should not have entered
through the gate of my people
in the day of their calamity.
Indeed, you should not have looked
on their affliction in the day of
their calamity,
or laid hands on their wealth
in the day of their calamity;
- ¹⁴ nor should you have stood
at the crossroads to cut off
those among them
who were escaping;
nor should you have delivered up
those among them
who remained in the day of distress.
- ¹⁵ “For the day of the LORD is near
on all the nations.
It will be done to you as
you have done.
Your payment will return
on your own head.
- ¹⁶ For as you drank on
my holy mountain,
so all the nations will drink
continually.
Yes, they will drink,
and they will swallow,
and they will be as though
they had never been.
- ¹⁷ But on mount Zion there will be
deliverance,
- and there will be holiness,
and the house of Jacob will possess
their possessions.
- ¹⁸ And the house of Jacob will be a fire,
and the house of Joseph a flame,
and the house of Esau will be
stubble,
and they will set them on fire
and consume them.
And no one will remain
of the house of Esau,
for the LORD has spoken”.
- ¹⁹ And those of the south of Israel
will possess the mountain
of Esau,
and those of the plains the land
of the Philistines,
and they will possess the fields
of Ephraim,
and the fields of Samaria,
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.
- ²⁰ And the returned captives
of this host of the children
of Israel will possess the land
of the Canaanites as far
as Zarephath,
and the captives from Jerusalem,
who are in Sepharad,
will possess the cities of the south.
- ²¹ And saviours will come up
on Mount Zion to judge
the mountain of Esau.
And the kingdom will belong
to the LORD.

¹³ “Laid hands on their wealth”— they jumped on a suffering people and made their sufferings worse.

¹⁴ They were determined that none of their “brother” nation should escape, so deadly was their malice and hatred.

¹⁵ “Day of the LORD”— Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14.

“Own head”— here is a theme that runs throughout the Bible (Ps 7:15-16; 18:25-27; Jer 50:29; Ezek 35:11; Hab 2:8; Gal 6:7). This will be true of both individuals and nations.

¹⁶ “On my holy mountain”— the mountain where Jerusalem is. The Edomites celebrated Israel’s defeat with drinking parties. But Edom and many other nations would have to drink something other than alcoholic beverages at the time of the day of the LORD. See Jer 25:15-29; 49:12-13; Rev 14:10. ¹⁷ Joel 2:32; Amos 9:11-15; Rom 11:26-27.

“Their possessions”— Gen 13:14-15.

¹⁸ Ezek 25:12-14; Zech 12:6. God will treat Edom as Edom treated Israel, and will use Israel as the instrument in its destruction.

¹⁹ People of Israel will occupy the land of Edom. This has not yet taken place, but as sure as God’s Word is true it will yet happen.

“Philistines”— at that time a people along the Mediterranean coast west of Israel.

“Gilead”— a region east of the Jordan River. Israel does not now possess it.

²⁰ “Zarephath”— 1 Kings 17:9. The location of Sepharad is uncertain.

²¹ The center of authority and, apparently, the capital of the coming kingdom will be Jerusalem. And the kingdom of Israel and the rule over the nations will belong to the LORD – Isa 2:1-4; 11:10-16; Ezek 48:35; Joel 3:20-21; Zech 14; Rev 11:15.

