

## **Introduction**

The book of Obadiah is the "most" minor of all the minor prophets. In fact, it is the shortest book of the entire Old Testament. All of the background that we need will be provided for us in the book itself, so let's jump in...

### **1:1-2 Obadiah**

The name "O-bad-YAW" means, "Servant of Yahweh." There are over a dozen guys in the Bible with this name, but this is the only verse which mentions this man. And so the Lord has chosen to focus us in on the message rather than the man.

### **Concerning Edom**

In the very first verse, we see what Obadiah's prophecy will focus on: Edom.

The Edomites were direct descendants of Abraham and Isaac. Remember that Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was older, but God had chosen Jacob as the inheritor of the promises to Abraham and Isaac.

Esau got the name "Edom" from the time that he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. He told his brother, "give me a bowl of that red stuff." The "red stuff" in Hebrew is "Aw-DOME", so they started calling him "Ed-OME."

The descendants of Edom were the Edomites. They settled into the land to the east and south of Israel. They were neighbors and they were brothers. Unfortunately, they acted neither neighborly nor brotherly to the Israelites.

### **Let Us Go Against Her**

God sovereignly pronounced judgment against Edom. He has directed that the nations will go against the Edomites in battle.

Remember that although the nations do not worship God or desire to glorify Him, He has total control over them.

**Prov. 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the**

**hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.**

Once again, we see a demonstration that even the most wicked entities in the world are used by God for His own purposes.

**Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.**

### **1:3-4 Edom's Arrogance**

God was going to judge the Edomites. But why? He will spend several verses telling us. First of all, he deals with their inward heart: they are arrogant and proud.

Pride is disgusting to the Lord (Prov. 6:17). People who are prideful forget the Lord (Deut. 8:14) because they believe that they are strong apart from God (Judg. 7:2). Pride makes people act corruptly (2Chron. 26:16) and refuse to listen to God's commands (Neh. 9:16). And so God will always judge the proud heart (2Chron 32:25; Psalm 5:5; 94:2; Isa. 2:12; etc.).

What exactly was it that had made the Edomites so proud and arrogant? One thing was the security of their defenses. Their territory included some amazing red sandstone cliffs which offered amazing protection from anyone who would be their enemy. The famous rock city of Petra was in their land. If you have seen photographs of this place, you know that it would be very easy to think that you were very safe.

But God tells them, "I'm gonna take you down. You've built high like the eagle, but you will be brought down low."

### **1:5-6 Worse Than Other Fates**

God tells them of their fate: "If you were robbed, the robbers couldn't take everything. If you were harvested, the harvesters couldn't possibly gather every piece of fruit. Something would be left. But the way I'm going to judge you, nothing will be left. Every last item will be taken away."

## **1:7 Betrayed Of Allies**

Edom had made lots of alliances. The security of their defenses, as well as their possession of the trade routes made it beneficial to everyone to be their friend and not their enemy. But the Lord was going to make sure that these diplomatic relationships would become deceitful, leading to betrayal.

## **1:8-9 Wise, Understanding, And Mighty**

Another reason that the Edomites were so arrogant was because of their great wisdom. In fact, they were known throughout the ancient world for their great intelligence. When we read of King Solomon's wisdom, it is compared to the wisest of the world at that time:

**1Kings 4:30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.**

The Edomites were the sons of the east, known for intelligence rivaling that of the Egyptians. But God is pointing out that wisdom doesn't do you any good when you're being slaughtered. Jeremiah wrote,

**Jer. 49:7 Concerning Edom. Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Is there no longer any wisdom in Tay-MAWN? Has good counsel been lost to the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed?"**

Yes, they were wise, but they were also about to be judged.

Tay-MAWN was the biggest city of the Edomites. (Remember that Job's friend Eliphaz was a TAY-mawn-ite.) Their wisdom wasn't going to help them on the day that they were slaughtered.

## **Why?**

Now, by this time, we have to wonder why they are going to be judged so harshly. Sure, they were proud and arrogant, but we know lots of people that have this sin in their hearts.

But it was their inward arrogance that led to outward sin. And the sin which they committed is a guaranteed way to bring down the wrath of God on any people...

## **1:10-14 Because Of Behavior Towards Jacob**

It is no secret that the nations of the world have hated and continue to hate Israel, to this very day. But if any people in history ever had a reason not to oppress the Israelites, it was the Edomites. After all, they were brothers. Israel and Edom were traced back to Jacob and Esau, the twin brothers of Isaac and Rebekah. They of all people should have treated the Israelites well.

But they had done violence against Israel, and it was this sin which would be their undoing.

God had expected brotherly behavior between these two nations. In fact, He had commanded the Jews to respect the common ancestry of their peoples, saying,

**Deut. 23:7 “You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother...**

### **Refused Passage**

But the Edomites had made themselves enemies of Israel. When Moses was leading the people towards the Promised Land, he sent word to the king of the Edomites.

**Num. 20:17-21 ‘Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king’s highway, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory.’” Edom, however, said to him, “You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you.” Again, the sons of Israel said to him, “We will go up by the highway, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing else.” But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.**

Later, the Moabites hired Balaam to curse Israel. Instead, he spoke a prophecy of the Messiah appearing, saying,

**Num. 24:17-18** "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, while Israel performs valiantly.

Seir was the mountain, and the name of the hill country in which the Edomites had settled (Gen. 36:8; Deut. 2:5). God was announcing that the Edomites would be judged for their behavior towards Israel.

### **Later Enmities**

After Israel moved into the Promised Land, the Edomites continued to act as enemies. King Saul had to fight against them (1Sam. 14:47), King David had to occupy them (2Sam. 8:14), and King Solomon was in enmity with them (1Kings 11:14), and many of Judah's kings also had difficulty with them (2Kings 8:20; 2Chron 21:10; 28:17; etc.).

### **The Ultimate Sin**

But then, the Edomites had done the unimaginable. When Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem (2Kings 25:1-7), the Edomites had celebrated. On that day, the Edomites had said of Jerusalem,

**Psa. 137:7** ..."Raze it, raze it to its very foundation."

I am reminded of the behavior of the Palestinians in Israel came of the September 11th attacks in the United States. They cheered in the streets. They rejoiced over our suffering, and celebrated over our sorrow.

This was the behavior of the Edomites. Even worse, when the Jews were running away, the Edomites caught them, killing some and turning others over to the Babylonians. The Lord saw that the Edomites,

**Ezek. 35:5** "...have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity..."

### **1:15-16 As You Have Done, It Will Be Done To You**

God tells them that they are going to be repaid for what they have

done, in the same way that they did it.

They had rejoiced over Israel's downfall, others would rejoice over theirs. They had dealt treacherously with Jacob, so others would deal treacherously with them. Jesus taught,

**Luke 6:31 "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you."**

This is more than "the golden rule." It can also be interpreted as a warning. For in fact, we can expect to be dealt with in the same way that we treat others. Paul warned,

**Rom. 2:5-6 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS**

When Jerusalem had been conquered, there were Edomites who had gone to the mountain overlooking Jerusalem and gotten drunk. They will be repaid according to their deeds. God says to them, "Since you want to drink so badly, you will drink of the wine of My wrath."

### **1:17-21 The Kingdom Will Be The Lord's**

The Lord points them forward to the Millennial kingdom, when Israel will not be mistreated or oppressed by any of the nations. Their borders will be expanded to the promised limits.

In the past, the descendants of Esau had gone to Mount Zion to rejoice over Israel's fall. But in the future, the descendants of Esau will be judged.

As the prophet Ezekiel wrote,

**Ezek. 35:15 "As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD."**