

## Obadiah: God Who humbles

**Memory Verse:** Obadiah 1:15 "The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."

### Background

Obadiah is the 31st book of the Bible and the 4th book of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. The name *Obadiah* means "Worshiper of Yahweh" or "Servant of Yahweh." There are several Obadias in the Old Testament and it is uncertain whether the prophet Obadiah was one of these men or somebody else entirely as nothing of his background is given. Obadiah is one of the few writing prophets that prophesied to a foreign nation (Edom) instead of to Israel or Judah. Based on his emphasis of Jerusalem throughout his book, it is likely that Obadiah was from the southern kingdom of Judah.

Obadiah, the shortest book of the Old Testament with only twenty-one verses, doesn't mince words as he pronounces God's judgment on the nation of Edom. Obadiah prophesied to Edom sometime after the Edomites participated in a plundering of Jerusalem (1:10-14). There were several invasions of Jerusalem and without further details given in Obadiah, it is possible he prophesied anytime from 850-586 BC. Most scholars tend to place Obadiah around 848-841 BC, making him one of the earliest writing prophets just a few years before Joel's ministry. While the Edomites were never a strong enough nation to invade Jerusalem on their own, they certainly weren't opposed to standing by and watching foreign nations defeat and loot Jerusalem. Instead, the Edomites rejoiced and gloated in Jerusalem's destruction. Obadiah predicts God's certain judgment on Edom in verses 1-18, and ends his book with the hope of restoration for Israel. This restoration of Israel included their ownership of their land once again as well as possessing the land of their enemies, the Edomites and Philistines.

### The Short Story

Obadiah prophesies God's coming judgment on Edom.

### What's the Big Idea?

The Edomites lived in the mountainous land southeast of Judah. They were descendants of Esau who was given the name Edom ("red") when he sold his birthright to his twin Jacob for a bowl of red stew (Genesis 25:29-34). The struggle between Jacob and Esau began in the womb (Genesis 25:22-26) and the hostility continued among their descendants in the nations of Edom and Israel for over a thousand years. Instead of acting as brothers and allies, Edom became bitter enemies of the Jews. Edom refused passage to Moses and the Israelites on their way to Canaan (Numbers 20:14-21); they opposed King Saul although eventually subdued under David and Solomon; they also rebelled successfully against King Jehoram of Judah. The enmity between the nations continued to the point of Edom gloating over Jerusalem's destruction. The Edomites were a prideful, arrogant people and the Lord, through Obadiah, warned them that, "Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever." (1:10). Unlike the other prophetic books in the Bible, there was no call for repentance or turning back to the Lord. The Lord's coming judgment on Edom was certain. In the fifth century BC, the Nabataeans forced the Edomites to leave their home. They continued to exist as active enemies of the Jews and become known as the Idumaeans. When Rome conquered Judea, the Herods, an Idumaeon family, ruled Judah. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD and Obadiah's prophecy for the Edomites was fulfilled as they disappeared from history.

### So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

The Edomites are a shining example to us of the Proverb "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18). God humbled the Edomites, cutting them off forever. God has a better way for us and a better example of how to live: His Son, *Jesus*, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:6-8).

*\*Material taken from various sources.*

## Teaching Text

**Obadiah 1:3-4** “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.”

## Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- Why is it so important to understand the historical context of a passage?
- Why is pride such a damaging action of the soul? How does it deceive us in our faith?
- What was Satan’s greatest sin against God according to Isaiah 14:13-14? What has been yours?
- Where did Edom have a false sense of security? What was their downfall?
- Who in the end will bring down all who stand against God’s people?

## Practical Application

- In what area of your life do you struggle with pride?
- What generational curse needs to be eradicated from your life?
- What generational blessing needs to be fostered and strengthened in your life?
- Who do you need to remind that they are not destined to live past mistakes?
- Where is God asking you to humble yourself before Him?

## Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:1-2, “See, I will make you small among the nations. you will be utterly despised.”
- 1:7, “All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you...”
- 1:12 “You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor boast so much...”
- 1:15, “The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you...”
- 1:21, “Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord’s.”

## Bonus Features: Where is Jesus?

Jesus often spoke of the need to have the right heart and actions toward God and to the children of God. He stood against the Pharisees for being “open graves” that drug down the people of God under their burdens of “righteousness”, thinking themselves higher than they should. Like the Edomites, their pride even in the law of God, brought them to stand against the things of God and Jesus and to bring harm to the children of God. Jesus made it clear that against such things there is strong judgment.

## Personal Takeaways and Notes

