

**OBADIAH, THE PREACHER**

Obadiah 1-21

**Intro:** This is my final message on the one chapter books of the Bible, The first four were in the NT - 2 John, 3 John, Philemon, and Jude. Obadiah is in the OT.

Obadiah is one of the Minor Prophets, called Minor not because they were less important, but because they were shorter. Every book of the Bible is important and has its place in the Word of God or it would not be there. So we need to treat every book of the Bible as “inspired by God” (2 Tim. 3:16) and included in what Paul wrote especially about the OT, but which applied equally as time went on to the books of the NT as well.

One point that is often overlooked by the OT prophets is that they were preachers. I know of one writer who called them, “God’s Emergency Men.” Only in a secondary sense were they predictors of the future, except for the prophet Daniel. Most of the prophets did speak of future judgments, but their message was primarily one of warning to their own generation.

At the same time, the prophets spoke to future generations. What has displeased God in the past, continues to displease Him. So in that sense the Bible is timeless. While the NT has special application to the people of God following the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet the OT is not to be overlooked but, as the Apostle Paul said also in the passage I referred to a moment ago, “is profitable for doctrine, for rebuke, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The name Obadiah appears some twenty times in the OT, but it is doubtful that any of the other references refer to the Obadiah who wrote this prophecy. So, in a very real way, the emphasis is not upon the man, but upon the message. He called it a *vision*, meaning that it was given to him by what he saw, which was typical of the way many of the prophets spoke of the message that God had sovereignly given to them. So this Obadiah was a true prophet, but the Spirit of God did not want us to focus our attention upon the man, but upon his message.

His message was delivered originally to Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau who was the twin brother of Jacob. The reference to

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these two brothers, and especially to Jacob, takes us back to Genesis 25 where we have the record of the births of Esau and Jacob, to the end of Genesis 49 where the death of Jacob is recorded.

Special honor is given to Jacob several times in the OT, and once each in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where God is called “the God of Jacob.” We know from the way that Jacob cheated his older twin out of the blessing of the Lord that Jacob by nature was not worthy of such an honor, and so “the God of Jacob” is a title which forever commemorates that God is a God of grace, and should be an encouragement to all of us who know that we, too, are the recipients of the grace of God. Jacob did not deserve the blessing of the Lord any more than Esau did, but it was God who chose Jacob, but not Esau. And we see how God’s plan worked out in Jacob’s life. In reading the book of Obadiah it would be good to go back to familiarize ourselves with the story of Jacob and Esau if it is not clear in our minds.

As the record of Jacob and Esau in the book of Genesis is concluded, it seems that Esau had forgotten and forgiven Jacob for what Jacob had done to him, but the book of Obadiah indicates that the seed of hatred for Jacob remained in the heart of Esau and his descendants until it reached the pitch that is described for us in Obadiah. Jacob and Esau actually lived about 1900 years before Christ. It is generally thought that the prophecy of Obadiah was written shortly after the downfall of Judah in 586 B.C. when Babylon captured Jerusalem *and the Edomites, Esau’s descendants joined with the Babylonians against Judah*. It is alarming to think that such hatred for the Jews was growing in the hearts of Esau’s descendants for more than a thousand years. But such may well have been the case.

How careful we need to be with our children and grandchildren in sowing the seeds of any sin that might be growing through the years, and that ultimately would lead others into actions that would result in bringing the judgment of God upon them.

For the Edomites to join with the Babylonians was in direct violation of the eternal plan of God for Israel, and could not possibly result in anything but the judgment of God. It is even alarming to learn that the Herods in our Lord’s day who were so wicked were from Idumea in whose name you recognize that they were Edomites.

## The Message

You will notice that in verses 1 and 2 the Lord reminds Edom of Who is in charge. We are all inclined to forget, especially in our own generation, that God is the God of all of the nations of the earth, and in every generation. Any view of world history which overlooks this fact, cannot be a true view. Even in our day, because of their numbers, the Arabic nations are inclined to think that they are in charge, and can, without doubt, accomplish the goals that they have set for themselves, that is, the destruction of Israel and of the United States. Often it looks like they are in charge, but that is where the reading of the OT prophets is strengthening to our faith.

What, primarily, was Edom's sin? It was pride – which was the original sin of the Devil. In 1 Timothy 3 where the Apostle Paul was giving the qualifications for a bishop, or elder (the same office in the church), he said that they were not to consider a novice “lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.” (See verse 6). Pride is the root sin. Pride causes us to be deceived about ourselves, about others, and even about God. We are all proud by nature. That is a fruit of sin. We are told in of the good king Uzziah that he was marvelously helped by God until he was strong, but then, when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his own destruction. It was then that he intruded into the priest's office. God struck him with leprosy, and he died a leper. See 2 Chronicles 26.

So we always need to be on our guard against thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. See Romans 12 1-3 where the Apostle Paul followed those two great verses having to do with our consecration, that he followed it with a warning about pride.

Solomon said that “pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).

The greatest example that we have in Scripture of humility, is the example of our Lord Jesus Christ as Paul explained and exhorted us to follow His example in Philippians 2:5 ff.

In 1 Peter 3 that Apostle Peter reminded the women who were believers to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet spirit, “which in the sight of God is of great price” (see verse 4).

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There is hardly a subject concerning our lives as believers in the NT than those which deal with humility and meekness and other related words.

And so read Obadiah 3 and 4. Verse 3 indicates that one reason for their feeling of security was their geographical location, among the rocks of Petra where they felt absolutely secure. But in verse 4 God reminded them that although they would exalt themselves among the stars, the Lord would still bring them down.

God is very patient with all of us, and He had been patient with Edom, but when we persist in the sin of pride, eventually everything goes wrong. And the Edomites could not do anything about it, *and neither can we!*

What did God do to humble the Edomites? Read on in verses 5 through 9.

Now beginning with verse 10 and going down through verse 14 we have the specific charges which the Lord brought against the Edomites. The Lord brought seven specific charges against Edom in their relationship with Judah. Bible teachers differ as to when this actually took place, but most it seems hold that it had to do, as I have said, with the destruction in 586 B.C. If it had been important for us to know when it happened, the Lord would have made it clear. The truth is that it did happen. The Lord saw it (because nothing can be hidden from Him, nor does He forget the things that are done against His people even when His people may have been disobedient and deserving of what the Edomites did).

The Edomites were being judged because of the part that they had (1) in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (v. 11) and (2) and against the people of Judah in particular (vv. 12-14).

This morning my reading in the Psalms was **Psalm 37**. I want to read it to you now because it expresses how the Lord felt, and must still feel about Jerusalem. And again it is good to apply this to what is going on today. We know that the judgment of God is going to fall on the Jews during the Great Tribulation, and possibly before, but it is still God's city which He gave to His people Israel, and the land surrounding it.

Beginning with verse 12 and going down through verse 14 God mentioned *seven charges* that He was making toward Edom, the descendants of Esau. According to 2 Tim. 3:16 the Word of God is profitable

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for reproof. These seven charges are reproofs, things that the Edomites did which they should not have done, and the implication is that they knew that they should not have done them. God made note of all of them, and Edom stood before God as **guilty!**

When we come to a passage like this in Scripture, and we know that it does not apply primarily to us, yet it does sound a message for us. All of us who read the Bible know that it not only tells us what the Lord wants us to do, *but it tells us what the Lord does not want us to do. In fact, we have commands telling us what we are not to do.* As we read God's case against Edom, does it cause us to search our own hearts concerning our relationship with the Lord. Israel needed to do the same. We can be experts in seeing what other people are doing that are displeasing to the Lord, but do we turn the Word on our own hearts. When we were studying 1 John we learned that "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

We can never lose our salvation because of disobedience, but disobedience does affect our fellowship, and can adversely affect the petitions that we bring to the Lord. Such reflection upon ourselves as we read even the OT can be of great help to us in our walk with the Lord today.

Verses 15 to the end in verse 21 are prophetic of "the day of the Lord." Notice the prominence of the word "shall" in every verse. "The day of the Lord" is period of the Great Tribulation which is yet to come upon the earth – leading to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign upon the earth for a thousand years.

One of the greatest incentives that we have for holy living today, is that we remember that our God is a holy God, amazingly patient, but being holy, He is also a Judge, a righteous Judge. How careful we need to be that our lives day by day, are lived in obedience to God's Word, and to the glory of God.