

## Obadiah

**Introduction:** Today we continue our series on the “Not so minor prophets” we come to Obadiah and to truly understand what’s going on in Obadiah we need to go all the way back to Genesis. In Genesis God called Abraham to go to a land that he would show him and to father a nation. He said that he would be the God of that nation and that through Abraham’s offspring all peoples on the earth would be blessed. Well Abraham and his wife Sarah gave birth to Isaac. When Isaac grew up he married Rebekah and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. It says in Genesis 25 that the twins struggled for position in Rebekah’s womb until she gave birth to two sons Esau and Jacob. Now the struggle that began in the womb continued on as the boys grew. Esau was strong and a hunter and Jacob preferred to do things around the home. One day when Esau came in from hunting he was starving and Jacob tricked him into giving up his birth right for a bowl of soup. This further divided the brothers. The final blow was when Isaac their father was on his deathbed and Jacob disguised himself as Esau and tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing that should have gone to Esau. While Isaac and Esau did reconcile a lot of their issues later in life this feud between two brothers turned into a boiling hatred between two nations. Esau became the father of the Edomites and Jacob became the father of the Israelites. The Edomites and Israelites although linked by blood constantly warred against each other.

Just to give you idea of the depth of this conflict I am going to read a passage from Numbers. Now this takes place after Israel has been freed from slavery in Egypt for 400 years and they are wandering the desert until God brings them into the land He promised Abraham generations ago.

### Numbers 20:14-20

<sup>14</sup> Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, “This is what your brother Israel says, ‘You know all the hardships that have overtaken us. <sup>15</sup> Our ancestors went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt many years, but the Egyptians treated us and our ancestors badly. <sup>16</sup> When we cried out to the LORD, he heard our plea,<sup>[c]</sup> and sent an angel,<sup>[d]</sup> and brought us out of Egypt. Now look, we are in Kadesh, a city on the border of your territory. <sup>17</sup> Please let us travel through your land. We won’t travel through any field or vineyard, or drink any well water. We will travel the King’s Highway; we won’t turn to the right or the left until we have traveled through your territory.”

<sup>18</sup> But Edom answered him, “You will not travel through our land, or we will come out and confront you with the sword.”

<sup>19</sup> “We will go on the main road,” the Israelites replied to them, “and if we or our herds drink your water, we will pay its price. There will be no problem; only let us travel through on foot.”

<sup>20</sup> Yet Edom insisted, "You may not travel through." And they came out to confront them with a large force of heavily-armed people.<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>21</sup> Edom refused to allow Israel to travel through their territory, and Israel turned away from them.

The Edomites hated the Israelites so much that they threatened to kill them if they even tried to travel through their land. No this conflict continued all through the Old Testament and reached a boiling point when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Assyrians in 586 BC. And that's where we come to Obadiah. Now Obadiah is the shortest of the prophets but his warning against the danger of pride and his promise of God's justice is vitally important to us today. So let's pray and then dive into the text.

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

<sup>1</sup> The vision of Obadiah.

This is what the Lord GOD has said about Edom:

We have heard a message from the LORD;  
an envoy has been sent among the nations:  
"Rise up, and let's go to war against her."<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Look, I will make you insignificant  
among the nations;  
you will be deeply despised.

- Setting
  - Prophet: Obadiah (servant of Yahweh)
  - Subject: prophecy of judgment against Edom
    - Good company Ezekiel 35:5-15
  - When: sometime after 586BC
    - 2 Kings 25:1-7
  - Audience: The Exiles of Jerusalem
    - Important: Not what is God saying to Edom but why are God's words of judgment against Edom important for the Exiles of Jerusalem and why is that important to us today.

#### Transition:

So now that we have the setting straightened out let's look at the sin Edom is guilty of...

### **Obadiah 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> Your arrogant heart has deceived you,  
you who live in clefts of the rock<sup>[b][c]</sup>  
in your home on the heights,

who say to yourself,  
“Who can bring me down to the ground?”  
4 Though you seem to soar<sup>[d]</sup> like an eagle  
and make your nest among the stars,  
even from there I will bring you down.  
This is the LORD’s declaration.

- The Core sin of Edom is Pride
  - 500 ad 7 deadly sins “Gregory the Great in his commentary on Job (Moralia in Job) calls pride the queen of sins and the root of all sin”
  - Their other sins are an out pouring of that one root sin pride
- How the geography of Edom lent itself to pride
  - (picture of petra)

**Transition:** Edoms Pride led them to do horrible things and God has some harsh words for them...

5 If thieves came to you,  
if marauders by night—  
how ravaged you would be!—  
wouldn’t they steal only what they wanted?  
If grape harvesters came to you,  
wouldn’t they leave a few grapes?  
6 How Esau will be pillaged,  
his hidden treasures searched out!  
7 Everyone who has a treaty with you  
will drive you to the border;  
everyone at peace with you  
will deceive and conquer you.  
Those who eat your bread  
will set<sup>[e]</sup> a trap for you.  
He will be unaware of it.  
8 In that day—  
this is the LORD’s declaration—  
will I not eliminate the wise ones of Edom  
and those who understand  
from the hill country of Esau?  
9 Teman,<sup>[f]</sup> your warriors will be terrified  
so that everyone from the hill country of Esau  
will be destroyed by slaughter.

**Transition:** God says think about some of the worst people and what they do. Thieves rob your possessions take what doesn’t belong to them, but they have a limit of what they can or a willing to take. Marauders, raiders, they come in and ravage the people. They kill and steal, but even they have a limit on how much chaos

they can cause. But God's judgment of Edom will be total. Nothing will be left of the tribe of Esau and all their lofty claims all their sources of pride will be eradicated.

One thing to note about Obadiah is there is no call to repentance, no offer of reprieve. Judgment is coming and there is no stopping it. So what did the pride of Edom lead them to do that was so horrible that it demands such a harsh judgment? Lets see...

### **Obadiah 1:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> You will be covered with shame  
and destroyed forever  
because of violence done to your brother Jacob.

<sup>11</sup> On the day you stood aloof,  
on the day strangers captured his wealth,  
while foreigners entered his city gate  
and cast lots for Jerusalem,  
you were just like one of them.

<sup>12</sup> Do not gloat over your brother  
in the day of his calamity;  
do not rejoice over the people of Judah  
in the day of their destruction;  
do not boastfully mock  
in the day of distress.

<sup>13</sup> Do not enter my people's city gate  
in the day of their disaster.  
Yes, you—do not gloat over their misery  
in the day of their disaster,  
and do not appropriate their possessions  
in the day of their disaster.

<sup>14</sup> Do not stand at the crossroads  
to cut off their fugitives,  
and do not hand over their survivors  
in the day of distress.

- When Jerusalem was destroyed 586bc
  - Edom celebrated their destruction
  - The mocked the Israelites
    - Not only that
  - They participated in the destruction
  - Assyria burning the city
  - Edom looting
  - Helping them capture those who fled
- Psalm 137

<sup>1</sup> By the rivers of Babylon—  
there we sat down and wept

when we remembered Zion.  
<sup>2</sup> There we hung up our lyres  
 on the poplar trees,  
<sup>3</sup> for our captors there asked us for songs,  
 and our tormentors, for rejoicing:  
 "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."  
<sup>4</sup> How can we sing the LORD's song  
 on foreign soil?  
<sup>5</sup> If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
 may my right hand forget its skill.  
<sup>6</sup> May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth  
 if I do not remember you,  
 if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy!  
<sup>7</sup> Remember, LORD, what the Edomites said  
 that day<sup>[a]</sup> at Jerusalem:  
 "Destroy it! Destroy it  
 down to its foundations!"  
<sup>8</sup> Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,  
 happy is the one who pays you back  
 what you have done to us.  
<sup>9</sup> Happy is he who takes your little ones  
 and dashes them against the rocks.

- Remember Jerusalem was not innocent
  - 2 Chornicals 36:15-16 15 But the Lord, the God of their ancestors sent word against them by the hand of his messengers, sending them time and time again, for he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they kept ridiculing God's messengers, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the Lord's wrath was so stirred up against his people that there was no remedy.
- Even though the judgment of Jerusalem was justified
  - Even though it was necessary to bring them to repentance
  - And they had brought it upon themselves
- It was wicked of Edom to celebrate.
  - Pride had so poisoned the minds of the Edomites that they rejoice in the destruction of Jerusalem and magnified their suffering
- Such a vitally important lesson
  - You see it from pastors
    - Keyboard warriors
    - In causal conversation
  - Out of a sick sense of pride disguised as righteousness
    - We laugh at the moral failures of our political opponents
    - We celebrate the death of Americas enemies
    - We look at a criminal sentenced to death and celebrate that they got what they deserved.
  - Osama Bin Laden

- Jesus says I desire mercy not sacrifice
  - Not the righteous but sinners
- Ezekial 33 “As I live—this is the declaration of the Lord GOD—I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways!”
  - We often apply this verse to our own lives and wish the exact opposite for our enemies

**Transition:** We should take this warning seriously because God says that this judgment is not just for Edom...

### **Obadiah 1:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> For the day of the LORD is near,  
 against all the nations.  
 As you have done, it will be done to you;  
 what you deserve will return on your own head.

<sup>16</sup> As you have drunk on my holy mountain,  
 so all the nations will drink continually.  
 They will drink and gulp down  
 and be as though they had never been.

- When Jerusalem fell Edom gorged itself on the destruction and chaos
  - Fueled by pride they got drunk on the blood shed
  - God says on the Day of the Lord the people of all nations that get drunk on destruction and rejoice at the downfall of others will receive that chaos and destruction in return

**Transition:** He goes on to describe more what will happen specifically to Edom and its amazing looking back years later that we can see the words of God were fulfilled.

### **Obadiah 1:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> But there will be a deliverance on Mount Zion,  
 and it will be holy;  
 the house of Jacob will dispossess  
 those who dispossessed them.

<sup>18</sup> Then the house of Jacob will be a blazing fire,  
 and the house of Joseph, a burning flame,  
 but the house of Esau will be stubble;  
 Jacob will set them on fire and consume Edom.  
 Therefore no survivor will remain  
 of the house of Esau,  
 for the LORD has spoken.

- Verse 18 describes Edom as being consumed by the houses of Jacob and Joseph

- After Jerusalem fell Edom was destroyed by Persia, Assyria, and Babylon at different times.
- The scattered people became known as the Idumeans and they actually show up in the new testament
- Lived among the Jewish people and intermarried with them
  - Swallowed up and Little genetic distinction
- Jewish revolt in 135AD they fought along side the Jewish people
  - Rome defeated the revolt they virtually eradicated any genetic trace of the Edomite people
  - Genetic testing

**Transition:** Obadiah ends his prophecy with a promise of blessing and restoration not for Edom but for Israel...

<sup>19</sup> People from the Negev will possess  
the hill country of Esau;  
those from the Judean foothills will possess  
the land of the Philistines.

They<sup>[a]</sup> will possess  
the territories of Ephraim and Samaria,  
while Benjamin will possess Gilead.

<sup>20</sup> The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah<sup>[a]</sup>  
and who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath  
as well as the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad  
will possess the cities of the Negev.

<sup>21</sup> Saviors<sup>[a]</sup> will ascend Mount Zion  
to rule over the hill country of Esau,  
and the kingdom will be the LORD's.

- God promises that while Edom will be wiped off the face of the earth Israel will return and live again live in the land God promised to them. And the kingdom will be the Lord's

**Conclusion:**

I know that Obadiah has some pretty heavy stuff. Unlike the other prophets there is not the call to repentance or the promise of deliverance for the nation facing judgment but we need to remember that Obadiah is not written to Edom. Its written the Jews in Exile who have just faced their own judgment and in Obadiah we see both a warning and a promise.

God warns that Pride leads to destruction. Pride leads to the justification of horrible acts against people who are considered less. It leads to rejoicing at the suffering of others because it encourages us to declare that they got what they deserved. We live in a society that glorifies pride and celebrates the demise of those we see as enemies.

So how do we respond to this warning in Obadiah. I think Ambrose of Milan in 397 AD has some important words for us...

Ambrose of Milan 397

And first grant that I may know how with inmost affection to mourn with those who sin; for this is a very great virtue, since it is written, "And you shall not rejoice over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, and speak not proudly in the day of their trouble." Grant that so often as the sin of anyone who has fallen is made known to me I may suffer with him and not chide him proudly but mourn and weep, so that weeping over another I may mourn for myself, saying, "Tamar has been more righteous than I."

Our first response when we hear of the sin or the downfall of another especially our enemies should be to pray and mourn. Pray that God would win their souls that they would turn from their wickedness and live, and mourn that sin has such a hold on people that God loves deeply.

God challenges us to pray for our enemies to recognize sin for the devouring beast that it is and to pray not for destruction but deliverance. And as we pray in this way, even when it is hard God will transform our own hearts so that we will see how precious even our enemies are in the eyes of God.

So next time you see a story on social media or read an article pause pray and mourn and ask for God to bring about transformation.

Obadiah also contains a promise that one-day justice will be served. I like many people have a difficult time with passages about the wrath of God. Why doesn't he just win them all, transform their hearts show them His true glory. But Revelation 19 tells us that even when Jesus returns and his glory is on full display for all to see some will still rise up and try to kill Him.

The perfect love of God's justice hit me when I was in a prayer group in college and someone was wrestling with the wrath of God and a girl who had been pretty quite spoke up and said.

"When I was little someone hurt me really bad and he lived his whole life without ever facing justice. No one believed me when I told them what he did, he never went to jail. But I know that God believes me and that he right now is facing justice."

There is no such thing as a righteous loving God without perfectly just God. The promise of God's perfect justice means it is not our responsibility to settle the score but that we can lay the burden of past wrongs and unsettled scores and the feet of Jesus.

So I invite you if you're carrying that burden to pray and ask God to help you surrender that pain at His feet. Not to sit back and do nothing but to proclaim to yourself that vengeance is the Lord's and to rest in the promise of His justice.

And if your carrying that burden but you don't know Jesus as your personal lord and savior I invite you to simply pray and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins, free you from the burdens that weigh you down, and be the lord of your life. And he will give you a peace and love that surpasses all understanding.

Lets pray