

Obadiah

“Jesus Christ, our Avenger and Deliverer”

Author: Obadiah “Servant of YHWH”

About him we know nothing outside his vision. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Nahum. Obadiah was presumably from Judah, but the Talmud (Jewish tradition) says he was an Edomite convert to Judaism. It is possible that he belonged to a prophetic network centered at the Temple.

Location & Date:

There is great difference in opinion on the date for this prophet. Some (e.g., Swindoll, Reece) give 887 BC during the reign of bloody Athaliah and Israel's Jehoram (2 Kings 8:18; 17:7). Others (Richards, Farrar, Moorehead, McGee, Mears, Lockyer) put his work around 587 BC, just before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. It all seems to hinge on verse 11. Note also the similarities of Jeremiah 49:9, 14-16 and Obadiah 1-5.) The Edomites definitely participated in the destruction of Jerusalem (Psalm 137:7; Lamentations 4:21; Ezekiel 25:12; 35:10.) All in all it makes sense to me that his prophecy came just before the Exile.

Key Message:

Shortest book in the Old Testament, only 21 verses, but it has two important messages:

- 1- Doom of the Proud and Rebellious
- 2- Deliverance of the Meek and Humble

It speaks to our two natures mentioned in Romans 7 & 8, of living in the flesh or by the Spirit.

Key Verses & Words:

Edom/ Pride, Obadiah 1:6; Proverbs 16:18
The Mountain imagery of invulnerability/pride between Seir and Zion is key for seeing the triumph of the Mountain of God over the Mountain of Flesh.

SWINDOLL'S THREE LESSONS FROM OBADIAH

- 1- If we hold grudges or attempt to take revenge, our own failure is certain. (Romans 12:19)
- 2- If we are proud and take pleasure in another's calamity, our own success will be diminished. (Romans 12:15)
- 3- If we think we are secure in what we have earned and erected, our situation is sure to change. (Obadiah 15)



The Prophet Obadiah from a Medieval woodcut? by an unknown artist entitled "Prophets" depicting Isaiah, Jonah, and Obadiah. Getty Images at viewimages.com

THE EDMITES – THE WHO?

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the fraternal twin brother of Jacob (Israel) (Genesis 25:24-34.) He despised his birthright (relationship with God) for a bowl of soup (worldly flesh.) The first and last books of the Old Testament mention Esau. See the strange statement God makes about him in Malachi 1:2-3. Why does He say that? The answer is in Obadiah. Also see Romans 9:10-16.

Esau drove the Horites (Genesis 14:5-6) out of the impregnable Petra (Sela) after selling his birthright, and took all the red sandstone cliffs of Mount Seir. They would venture out of their "eagles nest" (Obadiah 4) with 700 foot high, mile long approaches, and raid their neighbors. They kept alive for generations their bitter enmity to the Jews, and helped anyone who wanted to hurt them. Herod at the time of Christ was an Edomite.

Edom had refused the Hebrews permission to pass through their land on their way to the Land of Promise (Numbers 20:14-21.) When Jerusalem was being overthrown by the Babylonians, they shouted, "Raze it, Raze it!" (Psalm 137:7). But God had commanded the Jews not to hate Edom (Deuteronomy 23:7.) After Judah fell (2 Chronicles 36:15-22), the last Babylonian ruler Nabonidus marched into the Arabah and took Edom, Teman, Mount Seir, and Petra. He totally destroyed them. Edom's name is no longer mentioned as a people after the fall of Jerusalem to Roman General Titus in 70AD, but their people still live and still hate Israel.



Outline:

1- EDMON'S DESTRUCTION (verses :1-16)

- Charge against Edom (:1-9)
- Crimes of Edom (:10-14) Quasi court scene
- Catastrophe on Edom (:15-16)

2- ISRAEL'S RESTORATION (verses :17-21)

- Condition of Israel (:17) "Reclaim what the devil stole"
- Calling of Israel (:18)
- Consummation of All Things (:19-21)

Sources: FF Bruce, *International Bible Commentary*; Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; J. Vernon McGee, *Briefing the Bible*; Life & Times Historical Reference Bible; Herbert Lockyer, *All the Men of the Bible*; Henrietta Mears, *What the Bible is All About*; The Reese Chronological Bible; Larry Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*; Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*; Charles Swindoll, *Living Insights Study Bible*. Pictures come from <http://cedar.evansville.edu/~ecoleweb/>; www.christusrex.org; www.artchive.com; www.christcenteredmall.com; Getty Images, viewimages.com; www.geocities.com/gileadintl. Modified map is from <http://www.emulateme.com/israel.htm>



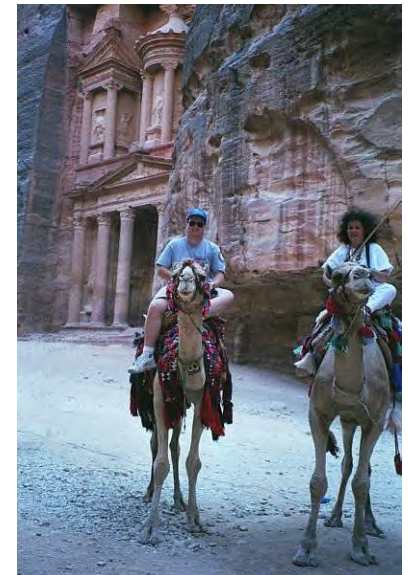
This is the end of the Siq, the mile-long, 700 foot high rock fissure entrance to Petra, the city of Esau. It was capital of Edom in the Arabah south of the Dead Sea. Notice how small the people are in this picture. This was an impenetrable place. Many believe the Jews will hide here during the second half of the Tribulation. How ironic. The home of the Jews' worst enemies could become their hiding place during their Time of Troubles.



This is the Treasury at Petra, the first magnificent thing you see. It is literally carved out of the rock. No, it isn't Esau's former home! This temple was carved by the Nabateans just before the Roman period. Just so you get an idea of how big it is, if I stood next to one of the center columns, I wouldn't be much taller than their bottom pediments.

FOR YOUR VIEWING ENJOYMENT

You can see all my Petra pictures and other Holy Land shots by logging on to www.geocities.com/genebrooks & click "Holy Land Pictures."



Yes, that's me staring at the camera. No, I'm not the one with the big knees. Hey, every spiritual warrior has to have a time in the desert. How do you like my brand of desert spirituality? See the Treasury cut out of the rock behind me? That same Treasury is visible in the Siq picture and in another picture in full detail.



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