

Obadiah (“Servant of Yahweh”)

Introduction: Today I want to introduce you to the prophet Obadiah. His name means “servant of Yahweh.” It was written to one of Israel’s enemies to the southeast, the county of Edom. You’ll remember that Edom was another name for Esau, Jacob’s twin brother, son of Isaac. This nation was apparently rejoicing over the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. God addresses their sinful attitude and actions toward God’s chosen people. This nation was mistreating God’s people. Will there be any justice in all of this? If so, who will set things right?

Later on, the Edomites would become known as Idumeans. Herod the Great was an Idumean and ruled over Israel in the time of Jesus.

This is the shortest book in the OT, only 21 verses, so I think it is something we can handle all at once. Thanks to David Dorsey.

- 1) **Edom will be defeated by Yahweh by means of the nations—1:1-4**
 - a) Spoken by Adonai Yahweh, emphasizing His sovereign ownership of the world and history.
- 2) **Edom will be utterly plundered by its former allies—1:5-7**
 - a) Edom may be inaccessible to man, but not to God. (C. Feinberg)
- 3) **Edom will be depopulated in the future—1:8-11**
 - a) Their leadership will be destroyed—1:8-9
 - b) Their crimes against Israel explained—1:10-11
- 4) **FOCUS: Reasons for Judgment—1:12-14** (7 sins of Edom against Israel)
 - a) **They refused to be compassionate AS A SPECTATOR—1:12**
 - i) **They showed indifference toward the hurting:** ¹² *“But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity;*
 - (1) The Jews and Edomites were distant cousins.
 - ii) **They maliciously celebrated their suffering:** *Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;*
 - iii) **They insulted their suffering:** *Nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress.*
 - (1) Remember Ps. 137:7, *“Remember, O Yahweh, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, “Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!”*
 - (2) This attitude offends God; remember Prov. 24:17-18.
 - b) **They refused to be compassionate AS A PARTICIPANT—1:13**
 - i) **Took advantage of the vulnerable:** ¹³ *You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity.*
 - ii) **Scorned those who were suffering:** *Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction in the day of their calamity,*
 - iii) **Looted/took what does not belong to you:** *Nor laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity.*
 - (1) Coveting and stealing what belongs to another.

- c) **Betrayed the fugitives fleeing for safety:** ¹⁴ *You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress.*

5) Edom and the nations will be depopulated in the future—1:15-16

6) Israel will plunder Edom in the future and regain what it has lost—1:17-18

7) Israel will be victorious over the nations in the future—1:19-21

8) Things we need to remember:

- a) Obadiah's message is this: it may appear for the moment that evil has triumphed; but be assured, in the end Yahweh will right all wrongs. Yahweh is still in control; and he is worthy of Israel's trust. (Dorsey)
- b) Indeed, the entire prophecy of Obadiah speaks of Yahweh's great love for His covenant people and His omnipotent intervention into the affairs of human history on behalf of His people so that He might reign over the nations. (Busenitz)
- c) Genesis 12:1-3 cannot be ignored or denied.