

**Obadiah**  
**God is Going to Right All Wrongs**

**I. Structure**

- A. *1-14 — The charge against Edom*
  - 1. *1-4 — The pride of Edom*
  - 2. **5-9 — The promised destruction of Edom**
  - 3. **10-14 — The problem with Edom**
- B. **15-21 — The Day of the LORD**
  - 1. **15-18 — Judgment on the nations**
  - 2. **19-21 — Blessing on Judah**

**II. Message of the book** — God is going to right all wrongs. Judah has been watching the people of Edom take advantage of them in their weak state and they are wondering if God is going to make things right. In Edom’s pride they assumed they were invincible, and they abused their brothers by kicking them while they were down. Consequently, God is going to judge Edom and the nations. But Obadiah is about more than this. Obadiah is about the restoration of Judah as well. Those who heard Obadiah’s message would have been encouraged to know that God is going to right all the wrongs. This is the Day of the Lord.

**III. 5-9 The Promised Destruction of Edom**

**A. 5-7 — The nations will ransack Edom**

**5-6 — Consider for a moment what happens when a thief comes to steal in the night. How much would they steal?** While thieves come in and steal what’s most valuable to them, they don’t always take everything. They leave some things as they can only take so much, and only so much has value to them. In this case the one being robbed only loses some.

**What do you make of this statement inserted in the middle of the discussion about robbers, “how you have been destroyed?”** It’s as if Obadiah couldn’t keep his excitement about their judgment hidden.<sup>1</sup>

**Picture grape gatherers going through the vineyard, would they take every grape?** Consider especially the day in which Obadiah writes, when leaving behind some grapes is a way to provide for the poor. The rhetorical question is answered for us. They would leave something behind.

Then we come to verse 6. **With the thief and the grape gleaner in the back of our minds, what is Obadiah saying will happen to Edom?** They would search through Edom’s cliffs and be so thorough that they would find all their treasure.<sup>2</sup> There would be nothing unturned, nothing that is left behind. They would be completely pillaged.

7 — In verse 2 we saw that God had sent a messenger throughout the nations to call them to rise up and attack Edom. Now we see those nations rising up and attacking them.

**What statements describe the relationship that Edom has with these nations?** They were literally “men of your covenant,” and “men of your peace,” and “those who eat bread with you.” In their grand wisdom, Edom thought they were secure in those relationships.

Their false confidence destroyed them. Their allies pushed them away from their homeland, deceived them, prevailed over them, and set a trap for them. They failed to take into account that they were not as wise nor as secure as they thought. But most of all, they failed to realize that the Sovereign God was not intimidated by their “wisdom” and “understanding.”

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<sup>1</sup> Billy Smith, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Chisholm, 114.

## B. 8-9 — God destroys those they place their confidence in

**8** — Verse 8 comes unexpectedly. It would have felt more natural if Obadiah would have talked about the destruction that God would bring on Edom, but instead of that he promises that he will destroy the wise men and their understanding.

In some sense the wise men have destroyed themselves. Chisholm writes this, “Despite their reputation for discernment, these wise men were self-deceived (v. 3) and incapable of detecting the deception of others (v. 7).”<sup>3</sup> They may have claimed to be wise and even have been the pride of Edom, but they were no match for the Sovereign One who is able to work where they cannot see, able to bypass what they consider invincible, and able to unravel their perfect situation.

Stop and consider again the statement, “declares the LORD.” This is not something we want to just skim over, but instead to feel the weight of the authority and power that is behind those words. This is something God has decreed and there is no stopping it.

**9** — **Who has Edom placed their confidence in?** Now the decree stretches to the mighty men. All those that Edom is hoping in, their allies, their wise men, their mighty men, all of them have failed. The result is that every man in Edom will be cut off.

**Who or what is Teman?** This is a grandson of Esau (Gen 36:11). It is used in this passage as a means of representing the whole of Edom.<sup>4</sup>

Notice the words “every man...will be cut off by slaughter.” There is no exception made. All of them will be destroyed leaving no one left.

## IV. 10-14 — The Problem With Edom

A. **10** — Because of their violent actions toward their brother Jacob, Edom will suffer the consequences.

The nation that was deceived by their own pridefulness will now be covered in shame (see also v.2). This will come about from their allies turning on them, being removed from their “secure” dwelling. But second, they will be cut off forever. They have abused God’s people, and God is preparing to bring judgment upon them by making them a nation no longer.<sup>5</sup>

B. **11** — **Why would Obadiah say, “You were like one of them?”** Obadiah provides a description of the scene in Judah. It was a time of weakness and vulnerability. God was punishing Judah for their own wrongs and was dealing with them through his chosen army. However, Edom took advantage of their weakness and become like the nations. They were just as guilty as those that were attacking Judah. They were just as wrong and became like them because they did nothing to stop them, but silently endorsed them as they stood back to let Babylon do the dirty work.

Inaction when others are being abused and we are aware of it makes us culpable. In this case it was much worse. It was inaction because they were hoping their brother would be destroyed so they could profit off of them.

C. **12-14** — The list of their wrongs: There are eight prohibitions in these verses. That there is a list of prohibitions seems confusing, especially because we would be expecting a list of their wrongs. The context communicates that they did wrong in verse 10, “Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob...” and also in verse 15, “...As you have done, it shall be done to you...” Additionally, we should remember that the purpose of the book is not to keep Edom from doing something wrong so much as it is to pronounce judgment on them. In light of that we can

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<sup>3</sup> Chisholm, 114.

<sup>4</sup> NET Notes, “*Teman*, like Sela, was a prominent city of Edom. The name Teman is derived from the name of a grandson of Esau (cf. Gen 36:11). Here it is a synecdoche of part for whole, standing for all of Edom.”

<sup>5</sup> According to Jeffrey Niehaus, Edom would no longer be a nation by 312 B.C., thus a fulfillment of God’s promise to bring them low (516).

conclude that these “declarations of guilt [are] stated in the form of a prohibition.”<sup>6</sup>

**How does this list describe what took place?**

**How might this section have been an encouragement to the Judean audience?**

1. But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune;
2. Do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin;
3. Do not boast in the day of distress.
4. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity;
5. Do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity;
6. Do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity.
7. Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives;
8. Do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.

**V. 15-18 — Judgment on the nations**

- A. **15** — While Obadiah has demonstrated that the judgment is against Edom, here he broadens it to include all the nations. This includes those nations that contributed to the demise of Judah.<sup>7</sup> The Day of the LORD is again brought up and we are reminded of its two-fold focus in this section; judgment and blessing.

Edom’s deeds have been accounted for. God has seen it all and will bring judgment upon them for it. All that they had done shall be returned on their heads.

Consider this statement from Smith, “*Edom represents all nations in every generation that are opposed to God and to God’s people. Ultimately all attacks of the nations against God and his people will meet with defeat. God will judge all such nations with the same atrocities those nations have inflicted upon God’s people.*”<sup>8</sup>

**How might this truth apply to us who are living under a different covenant?**

- B. **16** — **What does this drink represent?** This is a bit of a trick question. There are three references to drink in this verse. The first reference is directed toward Edom. It appears that it refers to Edom celebrating their victory over their brother on Mount Zion. So they drank, but it was for celebration.<sup>9</sup> This is helped by the past tense, “you have drunk.”

The second instances probably has the wrath of God in view. Verse 15 in large part points to future outpouring of wrath on the people, “... they shall drink.

Notice the words, “continually,” and “they shall drink and swallow.” These terms convey the idea that they will be forced to drink the wrath of God, and will have to endure it continually.<sup>10</sup>

The result of their drinking is that it will be as if they never existed. They had set up their kingdom like a

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<sup>6</sup> Bob Spender, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Chisholm, 115.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, 197.

<sup>9</sup> Niehaus, 536.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, 198.

sandcastle built on the shore. They were sure it would stand, and had confidence in their wisdom and might. Yet, God's wrath was going to wash over them like a wave and destroy all that they had. All their work, all their pride, everything was going to be erased. They would pay for the wrongs they had done to God's people.

- C. **17-18** — Because of Yahweh's intervention, there is a reversal in the situation. Before it was Judah that was cut off (v. 14), now they will escape. Before on Mount Zion, Edom was celebrating over their brother (v. 15), now it would be holy. Before Judah was taken away by Babylon and betrayed by Edom (v. 14), now they would possess their land again. Before Edom was the one who was in the place of power and control over Judah (v. 3-4), now it will be Judah that will be used to bring Edom to their end.

Once again, we see Yahweh putting his stamp of approval on it with a statement like, "for the LORD has spoken." It is as good as done.

## VI. 19-21 — Blessing on Judah

- A. **19-20** — These two verses are rather difficult for us to navigate. First we need to know a bit about the geography, then its significance.

### 1. Geography

- The Negeb (or Negev) refers to the southern portion of Judah.
- NET notes provides this helpful understanding, "*The Shephelah as a region refers to the Palestinian foothills that rise from the coastal plain. In much of Old Testament times they served as a divide between the people of Judah and the Philistines.*"<sup>11</sup> Judah will take back territory that they once had.
- Then there seems to be a general group that will overtake the central area of Ephraim, Samaria, and Benjamin will take Gilead.
- In verse 20 we find that those who come back from exile will take possession of Canaan as far as Zarephath. **Where is Zarephath you ask?** It's located just south of Sidon. It appears that some Israelites were living there at one time (1 Kings 7:8-24, the widow of Zarephath).
- What about Sepharad? On the far side of Babylon. Here is what Stuart says, "*In other words, exiled Judeans will come from even beyond the far reaches of the Babylonian empire, miraculously brought back by Yahweh, driving the Edomites out of their encroachments!*"<sup>12</sup>

2. **Why does any of this matter?** What we see from these two verses is that Yahweh was promising Judah that they would again take back their old land to its furthest extremes. They would come from far away, but by His strength they would take ownership again of the land that was promised to them.<sup>13</sup>

- B. **21** — **Who are these "deliverers/saviors?"** It would seem that they are the very survivors of verse 20. This is the same term used for the judges of old. They will go back to Jerusalem, "Mount Zion," and they will rule over Edom. One final time Yahweh makes it clear that Edom will no longer be invincible on its lofty perch, but will be subject to Judah.

The ultimate hope in this passage is that Yahweh will reign over his kingdom. He will be established as King over all nations (Hebrews, 2:5-9; Rev 11:15).

## VII. Jeremiah 49:7-22

### VIII. Application

- What is the message of Obadiah?
- What the significant points in the book?
- How does Obadiah encourage and challenge us today?

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<sup>11</sup> NET Notes are available at [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org)

<sup>12</sup> Stuart, 421.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 421.