

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

OBADIAH

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Obad. 1:1 The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.

Obadiah's name means "one who serves YHWH." The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. The land area referenced is included in present day Jordan. Obadiah has been given a vision from God concerning Edom.

I think the "we" is referencing Obadiah as a representative of the Jewish people. A *rumour* from the Lord is not just idle gossip, nor is it questionable as truth, it just means it is an announcement, a declaration from God. God has sent an ambassador of some sort (angel or human) to the *heathen*, the gentile nations, to stir them up for battle against Edom.

I am reminded of the spiritual warfare taking place in connection with happenings on planet earth as referenced in the book of Daniel. Just as Satan is utilizing his legions to deceive the world and accomplish his purposes, so are God's hosts engaged in ensuring that he does not succeed and that God's purposes are fulfilled.

Obad. 1:2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

Evidently the nation of Edom was small in comparison to other gentile nations and they weren't at all liked. Why?

Obad. 1:3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

Obad. 1:4 Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.

Because of their pride. At the time of this message, they were dwelling securely in their mountain homes, like Petra. They felt safe and invincible like the eagle in her very high nest, away from the reach of any of her enemies. They didn't even consider that God is sovereign and capable of bringing kingdoms down just as surely as He allows them to prosper. This description of Edom is echoed by the prophet Jeremiah:

Jer. 49:16 Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, *and* the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

I think that is truly the outlook of many today. They are so focused on their personal "kingdoms" and so proud of what *they* have accomplished, that they don't even recognize that they have only been allowed to prosper because of their God-given talents and abilities. They don't consider that God can take away just as surely as He gives.

Obad. 1:5 If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave *some* grapes?

Obad. 1:6 How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up!

This part of the message is a word picture. Even robbers don't take everything you own; they take what they want and leave. Even those who gather the grapes don't take every grape; they leave a few. This verse is echoed almost verbatim in Jeremiah:

Jer. 49:9 If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave *some* gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.

"how art thou cut off!" – This seems to be an exclamation of contrast as Obadiah's vision unfolds. Edom is going to be completely destroyed! Verse 6 seems to be an exclamation point to this thought. Even the hidden things are going to be exposed and taken.

Obad. 1:7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat thy bread* have laid a wound under thee: *there is none understanding in him.*

Edom's supposed allies are deceiving them; they are going to join forces with their enemies.

Obad. 1:8 Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?

Obad. 1:9 And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

God makes it clear that He is the One bringing about Edom's destruction. The best efforts of their wisest men will all fail. Their brave fighting men will be brought to fear from the violence of the attack. The results will be the complete destruction of the men of the mountains of Edom.

Obad. 1:10 For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

Obad. 1:11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them.

Maybe the other nations despised Edom because of its pride and arrogance, but the reason God is bringing this destruction on Edom is because of the way they have treated the people of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, Esau's brother. That thought is supported in the book of Ezekiel:

Ezek. 25:12 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

Ezek. 25:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

Even though scripture tells us that Jacob and Esau were reconciled when Jacob finally came home, Esau's descendants must have developed a great jealousy of Jacob's descendants as their blessings multiplied as God's chosen people. Edom refused them passage through their land during their time in the wilderness after being delivered from Egypt. They had even been subject to Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon. At every opportunity they chose to join in with Israel's enemies.

Obad. 1:12 But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.

Obad. 1:13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity;

Obad. 1:14 Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

This section seems to indicate that this message to Edom came after the Jews had been taken captive by Babylon (became strangers in a foreign land). The people of Edom had rejoiced in the misfortune of Judah. Evidently, they became scavengers to take from the Jews whatever the Babylonians had left behind of value. They also seemed to have captured Jews who tried to escape and handed them over to the Babylonians.

(4/06) In reading through this journal again recently, I thought about the fact that Jordan is the "Palestinian" homeland today. These verses make me think about how the Palestinians rejoice at the destruction caused by their suicide bombers. It also makes me think about how greedy they are to declare the land as theirs even though they have no historical claim to it, and there is plenty of land available in Jordan for them to possess.

Obad. 1:15 For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

Obad. 1:16 For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *so* shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

The day of the Lord always speaks of judgment and God's wrath. As in my study of Habakkuk, the principle of sowing and reaping is again referenced.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

(4/06) The fact that Obadiah relates the fulfillment of this destruction of Edom with the day of the LORD against "all" the heathen places it during the end times—the time of God's wrath against His enemies.

"they shall be as though they had not been" = complete destruction

Obad. 1:17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

Edom's destruction is sure and final. On mount Zion in Jerusalem, the people of God will again be delivered; their judgment is not final. The Jews will again return to fellowship with God and will enjoy the blessings of God's covenant promises. This verse seems to project this fulfillment of this vision to the time of Israel's place of blessing when the Lord comes back to establish His kingdom.

Obad. 1:18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Evidently, the people of Israel (both northern and southern kingdoms again united as one) were to have a part in the final judgment on Edom. Again, this thought is supported in Ezekiel:

Ezek. 25:14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

Obad. 1:19 And *they* of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they* of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.

Obad. 1:20 And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, *even* unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which *is* in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.

Eventually, the land that was once Edom will become part of the southern portion of the nation of Israel; that will also be true of the land that was once the Philistines (today's Gaza strip). Again, I think this will come to fruition when the Lord establishes His earthly kingdom.

Obad. 1:21 And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

This verse seems to have reference to the saints that will have positions of rulership when the Lord returns to establish His earthly kingdom. The kingdom will be YHWH's—a statement of fact.