

Note

Obadiah – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC Era of prophets	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC Era of princes	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC Era of priests	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah
	Jeremiah	Lamentation
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel
	Daniel Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar	Daniel
	Hosea	Hosea
	Joel	Joel
	Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obadiah 	

Summary

Obadiah - Part 1 of 1.....3

Edom's greatest sin was the oppression of the Israelites. God is a jealous God, who loves and protects His children, whether Israelites or Christians. If you take care of God's people, He will bless you. If you persecute them, you will face His wrath. This is the lesson for all nations and leaders: They will be judged by their behaviour towards Christians and Israel.

Transcript

Obadiah – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the book of Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament. The text consists of a single chapter. It has several judgment poems about one nation, not Israel, but Edom.

Who is Obadiah? He was the first of the pre-exilic prophets, prophets before the exile. He was sent to warn the Jews, God's people, that one day if they disobey God, they would go into exile. The warning was given 300 years before the Babylonian Exile. After him more prophets came to warn. Can you imagine warning somebody for 300 years before the punishment? That's our God. People think God would just burst out in anger and rage at His people like a dictator. No, God's judgment came after 300 years of warning to the children of Israel through many different prophets. Each one used a different method to forewarn the children of Israel.

The word name Obadiah means "servant of Yahweh" or "worshipper of Yahweh." Who were the Edomites? They were the descendants of Esau. We know that Esau and Jacob were twin brothers born to Isaac and Rebekah. There was a huge rivalry between these two brothers, which we have talked about before. The sibling rivalry started because of favoritism from the dad and the mom which lasted for 2000 years. Again, a warning to all parents: Please do not pit one child against another by favoritism. Sometimes, you don't realize you are pitting one child against another. "I just like this guy better than the other." Never bring it up. You may like one more, and it's natural, but never highlight it, never mention it. Both are your kids; they are given by God. Love them. Be careful of starting sibling rivalry.

Esau was reddish in complexion and hairy, therefore, he was nickname Edom. Edom means red hair. His descendants were called Edomites. When Jacob had a breakthrough from God, he was no more called Jacob, because his name means "deceiver." God gave him a new name "Israel", "Prince of God." The descendants of Jacob are called Israelites. The rivalry remains between the two, the Edomites and the Israelites which lasted for a long time. Remember the children of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael? Rivalry continues until today, almost 4000 years. But Thankfully, that rivalry between the Israelites and the Edomites ended 2000 years ago because of the prophecy found in the book of Obadiah. Edomites do not exist anymore. There are no such people called Edomites.

Edom was on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. The Israelites live on the western side. Edom became a very powerful place for two reasons. Firstly,

they dwell in a place (which is at present a tourist attraction) called Petra, the Greek word for “rock” and the feminine form of “Peter”. Petra is an amazing place. There are huge rooms, caverns like cathedrals, built into the rock face, high up on the hills. The Edomites were so proud of their impregnable position because they lived up on a hill. During the olden days, if you are engaged in a warfare and you are positioned in an elevated place, just like Jerusalem or in Mount Zion, you have more advantages. You always control the battle because, basically, you shot down the arrows. People fight against gravity when going up. They felt they were impregnable, that made them very proud. They look down on others, literally looking down on others because they live in a higher place. Secondly, the geographical position of Petra was on a very important trade route between the rest of the world and Arabia. They were rich; they were militarily powerful.

Let us look on this very short book. We can do this almost like a mini Bible study. Edom is described in verse three.

Obadiah v3 ESV The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, “who will bring me down to the ground?” Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord.

When this declaration was made to Edom, it sounded almost ridiculous. They were militarily powerful and economically prosperous. “And who is this Obadiah to make this prophecy that we will be brought down?”

Why did God want to bring them down? Edom was high and lifted up. He thinks nothing can bring him down. Of course, we know God hates pride. When we are proud God will bring us down. The tendency is when you are proud you look down on everybody. Eventually, you look down on God. “I don't need God! Who needs God? I have everything. You need God because you are weak!” That's what rich people basically feel. The moment God senses pride, He works. He knows it is going to lead to horrible sin; the creature dares to look down on the Creator. Be careful about pride. Be on guard the moment you have more wealth, in a high position and become famous. Whether you are a businessman or a pastor, keep low. Pride leads you to death and destruction. We see here that God is going to destroy them.

v 5 & 6 ESV

If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night-how you have been destroyed! - would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings? How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out!

God says, “You know if thieves come to you, just give what they want. But for you, it will not just be a robbery, it will be destruction. You'll be pillaged, totally destroyed.”

Why God? If you want to humble them just bring them back to Ground Zero. Give them a chance again. Bring them down so they won't become proud. Why do you want to destroy them utterly?

In verses 10 to 14 we see the reason why God wants total destruction for the Edomites. Notice the ‘do not.’

Because of the violence done to your brother, Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth [Jacob's wealth, Israel's wealth], and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity; do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity. Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.

What have they done besides pride? The Edomites were guilty of taking advantage of the Israelites whenever they were in distress. When Israel was attacked by any group of people, be it Philistines, Arabians, Babylonians or whoever, the Edomites always came in and took advantage of them. They saw they were helpless. When the Israelites were attacked, they came in and grabbed the rest of what they could. The survivors were sold to slavery. In other words, they took advantage of God's people in times of weakness.

This is the whole lesson in this little book Obadiah, a very significant one. Every national leader in the world has to read this one-chapter Bible book because it is the theology for all nations on how they deal with God's people, whether they be Israelites or whether they be Christians. God forbid anyone who bullies His people. Every national leader must read this or he will face the wrath of God as He did to Edom.

This book clearly shows that pride was not the number one sin of the Edomites; instead, it was their oppression of Israelites. They are charged for their violent actions against their brother nation, the house of Jacob. They were not strong enough to attack Israel but they let big powers attack Israel like Syria, Babylon, Egypt, and many other nations. But when Israel became weak, they took advantage. Do you think this lesson is just for Edom?

Look at verse 15 and underline it.

For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.

The principle here is for all nations. The example is Edom. Edom took advantage of God's people. Without a doubt, God is going to wack anyone who does what Edom had done. This very important lesson is unfolding throughout history. Nations that were good to Israel, like Britain long ago, was blessed by God. The day Britain stopped protecting Israel, the British Empire literally collapsed. It's no longer a British Empire; America has experienced the same. The nation did not become powerful because Americans are more brilliant than anybody else; it is because they protected Israel. The American power will also disappear the moment they stop protecting Israel. Countries that persecute and punish Christians, no matter how mighty and economically powerful they are, will eventually face the wrath of God. Do you think God is just sleeping?

You think this book is about Edomites? No, it includes all nations. "Whatever you have done unto them I will do to you. God said. He will obliterate Edom. How will he do it?"

The answer is found in verse 19:

Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

History tells us that people from Negeb, southern part of the dessert, came and attacked Edom's impregnable fortress and they never recovered after that. Furthermore, it is possible that the last Edomites were the dynasty of Herod. King Herod had an evil mind. He ruled during the time of Jesus. The sceptre had left Israel. Herod was not actually a Jew; he was an Edomite. Herod I, Herod II, Herod III until his great grandson, Agrippa, which can be found in the book of Acts, reigned for several decades. It was about AD 100 when nothing more was heard about Edomites. Obadiah's prophecy sounds quite ridiculous. He was saying, "Esau will disappear."

The last part of Obadiah tells how Israel would grow bigger and take over other lands that will become part of the eternal kingdom. At the time Obadiah made this prophecy, circumstance looked exactly the opposite. Israel was disappearing and became weaker and weaker as powers were coming in, while Edom was mightier. But when Obadiah was making this prophecy, people were saying, Are you sure you got it right? Edom would disappear, I thought Israel will disappear. That's how prophecy looks like. There are no more Edomites today; they do not exist anymore. Obadiah's prophecy took a long time to happen.

God's judgments are sure. God's timing is not our timing. 1000 years is just one day to God. In eternity, 1000 years is less than one day. God's judgment is sure and it will come to pass. Our time frame is very short. At the end of it all, what was God actually doing? He was just fulfilling a promise He made to

Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 verse three. He said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

I'm glad my country Singapore and Israel are best friends. They have good relationship. I can see the prosperity of my land, Singapore, not because we are smarter than anybody else. Some say our geographic location is on the right spot. Yes, it does help when in the right place. However, you can be in the right place and yet miserable. Singapore is blessed because it values its relationship with a tiny country called Israel.

What do we learn from this tiny little book? We learned that God is jealous for His children. I want you to understand the word "jealous" because even dictionaries do not elaborate or differentiate the word anymore. They mixed the word "jealousy" with "envy". Envy is the feeling or desire to have what someone else has. Jealousy is simply being very protective of one's possessions. I'm jealous for my wife because she is my wife. I'm jealous for my reputation, it's my right. If you are not jealous of your possessions, like your wife and children, I feel sorry for them. I'm jealous or protective for my kids. If anybody hurts them, I will do something about it.

One character of God is this: He is a jealous God. He is jealous for His honour because He is honourable. He is jealous for his reputation, He is jealous for His glory because He is glorious. He is protecting his rightful position. People are trying to say, "God is egoistical. He wants to take other people's glory." No. The glory belongs to Him alone. Anyone who robs God's glory is crazy. All glory and power belong to Him. The glory and power you have come from Him. If God takes away His power, we will all be dead immediately.

Understand that the Bible tells us God is jealous for His people. I am thankful that God is jealous for me. I'm His child; He is going to protect me. If anybody bullies me, God will deal with him and I am thankful for that. I'm also thankful I had a good a biological father who loved and protected me. This principle is very important. God's children, whether they are Israelites or Christians, are loved and protected forever.

When Saul was on his way to the road of Damascus, he was struck down by God and heard His voice, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" "I didn't persecute You, God!" Paul was thinking. As far as God is concerned, Paul was persecuting God. That's sounds like my God. I love this God because He is a real father. He stands by me and I am a part of Him.

If you read the New Testament, in Matthew, chapter 25 verses 33 to 40, God divides the nations into the sheep nations and the goat nations. The sheep nations are those "who fed [Him] when He hungry and gave water when [He] had none." "

Understand this-that if you take care of God's people, He will bless you.

I hope national leaders understand that they will be judged by their behaviour towards Christians and to Israel. The book of Obadiah is short but powerful. There is an important principle for any national leader to apply that will lead his country to success. It is not how great a nation's economy is or how great his political savvy or strategy, but how much God blesses him. If he blesses God's people, he will be blessed. Because my children are precious to me do not ever dare to hurt them. You touch my children, you touch the apple of my eye. The apple of the eye refers to the iris. It is the most sensitive part of the eye that when you touch it, straightaway there is a response.

There are great lessons about this jealous God. In a real sense, it is very hard to touch God because He is lifted high, and very tempting to bully the people of God. Warning to you-Give a glass of cold water to the least of God's people and you will be blessed.

God bless you.