

## Minor Prophets: Obadiah

### Background

- Obadiah has given us very little information about himself other than His name. His name means “worshipper of Yahweh.” There are 12 Obadiah’s mentioned in the Old Testament. There is no way of knowing if one of them was the Obadiah who wrote this book.
- It is the shortest book of the OT.
- It is addressed to Edom

### History of Edom and Israel

- Isaac and Rebecca had two sons (twins). The first the Esau (means hairy) the second Jacob (means heel grabber /trickster). Esau was very red and the lentil soup he purchased with his birthright was also red, so he was nicknamed Edom (red) .
- Esau sold his birthright as firstborn to Jacob for a bowl of soup and later Jacob solidifies it by tricking his father into giving him the firstborn’s blessing.
- Genesis 27:39-40: ...39Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, "Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above. 40"By your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck."
- These brothers became two nations: the Edomites and the Israelites.
- God gave Esau Mt. Seir to possess (Joshua 24:4)
- Esau’s grandson was Amalek.
  - Exodus 17:8 The Amalekites attacked Israel as they came in to the promised land.
  - Saul was instructed to wipe out the Amalekites, but failed to do so (1 Samuel 5:18).
  - Haman the “Aggagite” in the story of Esther was an Amalekite from the line of King Agag. This is the last mention of Amalekites in the Bible.
- During the reign of David, Joab wiped out every male in Edom. David established Edom as a vassal nation under Israel. However, Hadad the king’s son escaped with others to Egypt. There they waited until Solomon became king and returned causing trouble for Solomon (1Kings 15:16). He was defeated and Edom’s vassal relationship continued with Israel.
- At the time of Obadiah’s writing Edom had become strong and was known for its well fortified mountain cities. Seir, Bozrah, and Selah (Petra) were all part of their strongholds.
- During the time of the Babylonian invasion and exile in 586 B.C. Edom added to Judah’s problems by looting and pillaging.
- In 163 B.C. during the Maccabeus revolt against the Greeks, Edom was subjugated under Jews.
- In 125 B.C. they were forcibly converted to Judaism under the Jewish leader John Hyrcanus (nephew of Judas Maccabeus). Hasmonean Kingdom
- The land of Edom became known as Idumea. The Idumeans became part of the Jewish nation despite the protests of the Pharisees.
- The leader of the Idumeans in 47 BC, Antipater the Idumean, conducted a military rescue of Julius Caesar, which established him as a favorite with the Romans. Antipater became the Roman Procurator of Judea.
- His son Phaseal became the governor of Jerusalem and Herod the Great. This the Herod who rebuilt the temple, and massacred baby boys during the time of Jesus birth. After his death the Romans split the land between his children.

- In the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD Idomeans are mention fight alongside zealots. After this they seem to disappear from history.

### **What Does Obadiah Say?**

Introduction: vs. 1

- We: Obadiah and the Judeans
- Rumor: not like we use it. In Hebrew this would be report.
- Ambassador: being sent to stir up other nations against Edom

The Indictment: vs. 3-9

- Edom is self deceived because of its strategic geographical position.
- Even thieves and grape gatherers leave remnants, but Esau's possessions will be ransacked and nothing will be left.
- Edom's allies will be the ones to attack them. Neither wisdom nor might will save Edom.

God's Reasons: vs. 10-14

- Violence against your brother Jacob throughout the years
- Watching as Jerusalem was carried away into exile (See Psalm 137)
- Looting Jerusalem in the chaos of invaders
- Preventing escape and even capturing those left behind

Justice: vs. 15-18

- The day of the LORD is near upon all the nations
- In the day of the LORD Edom will drink God's wrath in the same way that they made Judah drink their wrath upon the mountain of Jerusalem.
- A united Israel will be get Esau's possessions, like a flame that devours stubble
- This is certain because the LORD has spoken it

Establishment of Righteousness: vs. 19-21

- Negeb is southern Judah. They will possess modern day Jordan, which is the land of Esau
- Those of the Shephelah, the mountain range where Jerusalem is, will possess the land of the Philistines (present day Gaza Strip)
- They shall possess the land of Ephraim and Samaria (present day West Bank)
- They shall possess Gilead (present day Jordan)
- Exiles will possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath (includes Golan Heights and southern Lebanon)
- Exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will be in Southern Judea (the Negeb)
  - Sepharad/Saparda is mentioned in Old Persian inscriptions and refers to two places: one in Media and the other in Asia Minor (present day Turkey). Some think it is Sparta, Sardis (originally Sfarid in Lydian and Sparda in Old Persian) or even a reference to the Iberian peninsula (Spain) where Sephardi Jews are from.
- Saviors/deliverers will rule from Zion/Jerusalem. They will rule over the land of Edom.

### **What does it mean?**

- Judgment has and will come against Edom and the nations in their prideful rebellion against the LORD. Vs. 15 takes the basic summary of Edom's actions and expands them to the nations and promises a day when God will bring ultimate justice.
- We see a legitimate series of judgments against Edom that have fulfilled this prophesy in many ways, but there seems to have more to come.
- There will be a day when the Kingdom of the LORD will rule from Mount Zion.