
Obadiah

Book Background

The people of Edom were descendants of Esau who lived southeast of Israel in a mountainous region called Seir. The area has an assortment of serrated ridges and ragged crags with numerous places to hide. The capital was Petra, the rock city featured difficult access and natural defenses. The Edomites felt highly secure from enemies there. ([Oba 3-4](#)).

The hatred between Edom and Israel was ancient beginning with Jacob and Esau ([Gen 27:35-41](#)) and continuing through the years ([Num 20:14-20](#), [1Sam 22:6-23](#)).

According to [Psalm 137:7](#) and [Ezekiel 35:11-15](#), Edom joined with Babylon to cause Judah's downfall.

Author

Obadiah does not leave us many clues about his identity. He was likely a contemporary of Jeremiah since the context is the Babylonian invasions. Obadiah means worshipper or servant of Jehovah.

We might call Obadiah the **prophet of poetic justice** because of verse 15 "...As you have done, it shall be done to you."

Key Verse

Obadiah 15 "For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; (NKJV).

Outline

Some call Obadiah a "doom oracle." If we break it apart by the components of a doom oracle, we get:

Obadiah 1-9	Announcement of doom: prediction of Edom's defeat
Obadiah 10-16	Reasons for doom: review of Edom's crimes against Judah while they were helpless
Obadiah 17-21	Promise of future victory: for Jacob, not Esau (On the day of the Lord, God will restore Israel.)

Book Highlights

The primary audience for most prophetic books is God's people. The three exceptions are: Obadiah (Edom), Jonah (Nineveh), and Nahum (Nineveh).

Edom's counselors and warriors would not be effective against God's judgements ([Oba 15](#)). People living at the time would have predicted that Edom would survive rather than Judah. By the world's standards, Edom was a clear winner.

Personal Reflection and Application

God is sovereign in the rise and fall of nations ([Oba 2](#)). Do you pray for our nation?

The proud and rebellious are doomed while God delivers the meek and humble. Are you meek and humble?

Small Group Conversation Guide

Esau warring against Jacob pictures our flesh that wars against our spirit. Look at aspects of flesh in this table. Discuss ways to recognize these in ourselves and seek God's help in allowing the Spirit to prevail.

pride, defiance Oba 3	say in your heart "Who shall bring me down...?"
hatred Oba 10	violence against your brother
cruelty Oba 12	rejoiced...in the day of their destruction
greed Oba 13	laid hands on their substance

Leadership Principles from Obadiah

Do You Help?

The Edomites stood by and watched as the Babylonians carried off Judah ([Oba 8-14](#)). They had the power to help their brother and did not.

When leaders have the power to do good and don't use that power, God says they are guilty ([Jas 4:17](#)). Leader, when you have the power to help, do you do it?

Something to Find in Obadiah

Look for why God planned to judge the people of Edom.