

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 9/18/08 Wednesday evening

Old Testament Survey—Obadiah

How should we view the nation of Israel? Does God have anything to say about that question in His Word? Indeed, He does, and this evening we'll be taking a look at a tiny book, an often-overlooked book, that has much to say to us.

Discuss: What do you know about the book of Obadiah?

### General Observations:

--the first book I ever read through entirely in the Bible (as an 11 year old)

--preached two messages from it at WBC in Feb 1991; Do you remember what was happening in the world at that time? We watched in living color as CNN showed us Iraq launching scud missiles on Israel. Our minds raced with a question: What should be our attitude when Israel is under siege?

That's the very issue Obadiah addresses. It's a book written addressing a nation that responded wrongly when Israel was under siege.

### **Who wrote the book?**

--Obadiah

### Observations about the man Obadiah:

--we know very little of him

--his name means "worshipper of Yahweh"

--he was a prophet of God to the people of Judah

--he had a strong personality, and was very offended by cruelty to people

--his book is very similar to Jeremiah 49:7-22

--his message concerns Edom

Note: Many of Israel's prophets spoke out against the wickedness of surrounding nations. The Edomites probably never heard Obadiah's message. Obadiah wrote it about them, but it was for the Israelites. It was a backdoor message. How so? God gave it to encourage His people as they endured a time of destruction.

--Obadiah announced that the destruction of Edom was coming (see verses 1-2)

See: Map of Edom

## When was the book written?

--We're not sure of the date. The date is difficult to determine. The details presented in the book could fit several historical settings.

--See possibilities below...

Q: Who were the Edomites? The descendants of Esau

Q: Who was Esau? A son of Isaac, and a twin-brother of Jacob; Antagonism between the Jews and Edomites went right back to Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:21-23)

Q: Where did the Edomites live? SE of the Dead Sea, in present day Jordan

Q: What kind of people were the Edomites, acc. to v 3? Proud (the term comes from a verb meaning "to boil up, seethe"; the essence of pride is insubordination; a proud man rejects authority, whether from God or man, and usurps it for himself). The Edomites felt they were invincible. Why? They proudly relied on five things.

1. They relied on their location (3-4). Geographically, located on a narrow mountainous ridge; its main cities (Sela, which means "rock," Teman, Bozrah, and later Petra) were all located on this impenetrable high rock formation. They thought they were invincible.

2. They relied on their wealth (5-6).

3. They relied on their wisdom (8). Edom was noted for its wise men. Eliphaz, the wisest of Job's friends, was from Teman.

4. They relied on their might (9).

5. They relied on their friends (9).

The Edomites thought they were invincible, and because of this they were a wild people. They could raid people, and then retreat to safety in the mountains. They were very confident in themselves. Arrogant, self-sufficient, secure.

Q: What did Edom do that displeased God, in verse 10? Violence against Jacob

Q: What specifically did Edom do, acc. to verse 11? Stood by when another nation attacked Israel, and instead of defending, acted as an accomplice. When? Scholars aren't sure. Four possibilities:

1. 926 B.C. -- when Egypt attacked Israel and took 151 cities; Edom became an accomplice of the Egyptians by closing the escape routes, though it did not attack Israel directly.

2. 848-841 B.C. -- When Jehoram was king, the Philistines invaded Judah (2 Kgs 8).

3. 743-715 B.C. -- When Ahaz was king of Israel, Edom joined the Philistines and attacked Israel (2 Chron 28:17-18)

4. 586 B.C. -- When Babylon invaded and destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites were passively involved (see Psalm 137:7\*\*).

We don't know for sure which time is the one Obadiah has in mind.

### **Why was the book written?**

Obadiah reveals that destruction is coming for Edom.

How severe would it be? See: Analogy in verse 5. What do thieves and grape-pickers have in common? They're both in a hurry, and may overlook something and leave it behind. But Edom would not be so fortunate. She would be destroyed thoroughly.

### **What is the outline of the book?**

- I. The Coming Destruction of Edom (1-9)
- II. The Cause of Edom's Judgment (10-14)
- III. The Coming Day of the Lord (15-21)
  - A. God will judge the nations and deliver Zion (15-18).
  - B. God will establish His Kingdom (19-21).

### **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

The message of Obadiah is that God takes care of His people, and will judge those who oppose them, maybe now, maybe later.

### **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *God holds people responsible for their treatment of others.*

God held Edom accountable for four crimes.

- a. She refused to help when Israel needed help (11).
- b. She rejoiced when Israel fell (12).
- c. She took advantage of Israel when she was down (13).
- d. She acted as an accomplice in the crime (14).

If God hates evil behavior and attitudes among unbelievers, what about with us? If He didn't tolerate the pride and arrogance and cruelty of the Edomites, a people that weren't even His people, what do you think He expects from us?

Discuss: What are some implications of this truth for us?

2. *Obadiah reminds us of the faithfulness of God's Word.*

Did Obadiah's prediction come true? Is there a nation of Edom today? God will have the last word. In 450 B.C. the Edomites were driven out, and later became the Idumeans (Herod the Great was one), who were exterminated by the Romans.

Discuss: How does Obadiah's message encourage you?

3. *God hates arrogance.*

God judged Israel by raising up a pagan nation to punish His people. But, He didn't tolerate Edom's delight over Edom's judgment. God despises the attitude of people delighting when other people are hurt.

Discuss: How are we prone to do this? (e.g. A person dying of a STD, "He's getting what he deserved...")