

The book of Obadiah is a minor prophet book in the Old Testament. It is the shortest book in the Old Testament that only contains one chapter. The prophet Obadiah wrote it. The name Obadiah means worshipper of Yahweh. It is difficult to tell the date that was written but possibly about 853-841 B. C. or 605-586 B.C. Obadiah is likely from an area near the holy city in the Southern Kingdom of Judah because Obadiah had placed emphasis on Jerusalem in the prophecy.

This book is about God's disapproval and punishment on the nation Edom and surrounding nations. Israel had a longstanding rivalry with the nation of Edom. It started as early as was stated in Genesis. God made a promise to Abraham to bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him. That blessing was passed on to Isaac (Gen. 21:12, 26:24). Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twins: Esau (older) and Jacob (younger) (Gen. 25:24-26). Esau sold Jacob his birthright for a bowl of soup, and then Jacob tricked their father into giving him the blessing of the firstborn. Esau was very unhappy. Esau's descendants became the nation of Edom while Jacob fathered the twelve tribes of Israel. As a note, Israel's capital was Mount Zion (Jerusalem) whereas Edom's was Mount Seir or called Mt. Esau here. (Deut. 2:5).

1) Prophesied Punishment to Edom due to Pride (Vs. 1-9)

a. Pride deceives you

The nation of Edom was built on a rocky mountain. The entrance was a narrow way. It was very difficult for other nations to attack Edom. They were so proud of their situation and believed no way that the nation would be invaded. A person is often blinded to the real situation when pride has filled his heart.

b. Pride destroys you

God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble (James 4:6). Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18). Pride a very serious sin. The fall of Satan is due to pride. Obadiah 1:8-9 shows how God will destroy Edom.

2) Punishment to Edom due to Indifference and Attacks their brothers (Vs.10-14)

a. Indifference or no sympathy to care

Verses 10 to 13 as well as Psalms 137:7 described the Edomites had no sympathy to God's people from the same forefather. I. Cor. 12:26 in the New Testament stated "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together". The Edomites done the opposite. They cheered when the other nations attacked Judah. We Christians should not stand aside and do nothing when injustice is done on other people such as witnessing a criminal attack on a person. It is a sin to cheer in that situation.

b. Attack your own brothers

Verses 13 and 14 are more specific on Edomites' sin about attacks and robbery on the people in Judah while another nation had finished its attack on Judah. Their sins include hurting innocent, involving in racial injustice and terrorism. The cause of these sins is hatred.

3) Israel's Restoration and Edom's Destruction (Vs. 15-21)

Verses 15 to 21 are about God's judgement on Edom and other countries that attacked God's people. God will punish them the same way they had treated God's people. Edom and those nations will be destroyed. God will restore His people and make the Israelites get the land back again. All prophecies are fulfilled according to God's time. The prophecy on Edom was fulfilled around the first century where it no long exists as a nation. Israel's full restoration prophecy will happen later.

This book is about a situation over 2500 years ago on two nations. How does this book apply to your life today? The sins of the Edom nation are the same sins that you and me need to avoid today. Pride is a very common human problem, but we must resist it because it is very destructive. Hatred is something we must not have (Matt. 6:14-15, Eph. 4:31-32). The indifference attitude and no mercy on victim have no place in a Christian life. God wants us to be humble and to love others. We should live a holy life that can bring glory to God.