

OBADIAH

STUDY GUIDE

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Obadiah

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The study of end time events is called eschatology. People who study it have a variety of different opinions, views, and perspectives and this often leads to disagreement. We need to, however, make sure that our view is based upon what the Word of G-d says. No one understands everything perfectly about the last days. We can all learn from others. When we hear something that we do not agree with it should cause us to go back to the Bible to study it thoroughly to see what G-d is indeed revealing. It is so important that, as we learn about what G-d reveals, we do not champion a particular group, a specific theology, etc but we need to diligently study the Scripture so that, led by the Spirit, we are faithful to the truth that G-d reveals to us in it.

The main purpose of this prophecy of Obadiah is to reveal to us the events that must take place for this world, G-d's creation, to become established as the L-rd's Kingdom.

Note: For the most part, throughout this study guide, “Esau” and “Edom” refer to the descendants of Esau. Likewise, ‘Jacob’ refers to the descendants of Jacob (i.e Israel).

Obadiah means “Servant of the L-rd”. As a servant of G-d our desire is to work for Him and also to be pleasing to Him. This is really where it begins for each of us. G-d is not going to teach us, illuminate Biblical texts for us, or give us insight if we are not interested in serving Him or doing His work.

Verse 1: *“The vision of Obadiah. Thus said the L-rd G-d to Edom: ‘We have heard a report from the L-rd that an ambassador is sent among the nations: “Rise up, let us rise up unto her for war.””*

Said: If your Bible says: ‘Thus says the L-rd...’ it has been translated incorrectly. The word that appears here is written in the past tense – “said”. Although this prophecy is about something that is yet future, the past tense use of this verb confirms G-d’s promise – in G-d’s eyes (and therefore it would be right to view it in this way through our eyes too) this prophecy is confirmed (it will happen) and, because G-d has said it, it is as good as already done.

Edom: This is a unique prophecy. The audience is not Israel, but it is a prophecy spoken to the nations. The Edomites are descended from Esau. A good study of the Edomites throughout the Bible will reveal that G-d hates, and will eternally condemn, these people (those who do not repent) because they walk in the spirit of their father Esau - who had contempt for the purpose and will of G-d (Malachi 1:2-5, Romans 9:13).

Ambassador: This prophet, like an apostle, was sent forth among the nations (the Gentiles) to proclaim a message to them – he was not sent solely to Israel, as was so often the case with these prophets.

Rise up unto her for war: We are called by G-d to rise up and be against Edom (modern day Jordan). Even today, Edom (more specifically, the Palestinians) are a group of people who are in conflict with the Jewish people (the sons of Jacob). It is important to note that Edom, under the leadership of the antichrist, is going to represent a nation that gets the support of the world. Edom is one of the countries spared the wrath of the antichrist (Daniel 11:41)

Note: The first thing Obadiah does is to give us a perspective about a battle ("*rise up unto her for war*"). A conflict between Jacob (the father of the Jewish people) and Esau (the father of the Edomites) is at the heart of this prophecy. Realize that the Kingdom will not be established until there is a war against Edom.

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. Even in the womb they were at conflict with each other (Genesis 25:22-28). Jacob was a man who followed hard after the purposes of G-d. He was committed to and desired the things of G-d. He was a man that G-d loved. Esau, on the other hand, was a man that G-d hated (Malachi 1:2-5, Romans 9:13) Why? Esau had contempt for the things of G-d. If something did not benefit him then he wanted no part of it. Esau despised his birth right (Genesis 25:29-34). It is in Genesis 25:30 that we see his name was also "Edom".

Verse 2: "*Behold, I have set you small among the nations. Exceedingly despised are you.*"

Behold: This means we need to pay attention to what follows, as it is very important.

You: G-d is now speaking to Edom.

Small: This is a word for little - in this context it means insignificant. Among all the nations of the world the Palestinians are a small people - smaller even than the Israelis (the Jewish people).

Despised: Contemptible. This is the same word used to describe how Esau thought of his birth right. He had contempt for it. He thought little of it. The principle we can learn here is this: how we think concerning the things of G-d is how G-d will think concerning us (Luke 6:38) G-d, speaking here to Edom, says, firstly, that they are insignificant as a people and secondly that they are a disgrace among the nations. G-d is not pleased with them.

Verse 3: "*The unrighteous intent of your heart you have been lifted up. Your dwelling place is in the clefts of the rock. An exalted place is where you dwell. You have said in your heart: 'Who will bring me down to the land?'*"

Unrighteous intent: This is NOT the word for 'pride'. The Bible refers to two types of sin: Intentional sin and unintentional sin. Unintentional sin is sin that is done without intent (You did wrong, but you didn't have the intent to do wrong). It is done out of negligence or carelessness. It is still a sin, however, and it still needs to be dealt with – all sin has consequences.

Intentional sin, on the other hand, has a degree of rebellion, forethought and intent attached to it. This is a more serious form of sin. This intentional sin is what G-d is referring to here in regard to the people in the last days – Edom (Proverbs 18:12)

Dwelling...in the clefts of the rock: They have lifted themselves up and have placed themselves in what they think is a secure position. Their thoughts are on themselves and on their own

rebellious desires (high and mighty -their attitude is one of pride and self-exaltation). This is in direct contrast to what G-d has commanded us to do in James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6.

Exalted: Elevated. Lifted high, out of reach.

Who will bring me down?: This is Edom's question. We know the answer to this...G-d! G-d humbles the proud (Proverbs 29:23)

Verse 4: *"If you raise yourself up high like an eagle, if you put your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,' declares the L-rd."*

I will bring you down: G-d is answering Edom's question.

Declares the L-rd: This is a term of promise. G-d's Word is His promise (Hebrews 6:13-18).

Verse 5: *"If thieves had come to you, if robbers by night –how you will be made silent - surely they will steal according to what is sufficient for them? If those who harvest the grapes should come unto you, surely they would leave the little grapes?"*

Note: This verse reveals a character trait (inner condition) that Edom possesses.

Thieves...robbers: People who steal. When thieves come they do not take everything. They only take what they need or desire.

Those who harvest... would leave the little grapes: In the same way as the thieves, grape gatherers leave some grapes behind. Esau/Edom is different. He will want to (and has always wanted to) annihilate or totally destroy the Jewish people - not leave any remnant whatsoever (Ezekiel 35:11-15).

Verse 6: *"How Esau will be besought! All your hidden things are going to be sought out and revealed."*

How Esau will be besought!: Searched out: Exposed. There is going to be a disclosure.

Esau/Edom is going to be revealed for the wicked one that he is.

Verse 7: *"Unto the border they will send you, all the men of your covenant. They are going to deceive you, and are going to lift themselves up. You are going to be defeated by the men of your peace. Your bread is going to be taken, and they will set a trap in exchange for you. You will not perceive what they are going to do to you."*

The men of your covenant: The people from Esau are going to be part of a group, an alliance, a confederacy. Although this group would be considered "friends" to Esau ("*men of your peace*") they are going to turn against him. Esau was not satisfied with what G-d gave him. He wanted, and made plans to take, what belonged to his brother as well. At the end, this is going to backfire on him.

They are going to deceive you: When we are full of pride it is easy for us to be deceived. This is what happened to Esau. He was (and is going to be) easily deceived.

Your bread is going to be taken: Their provision, what they survived on. It is a divided house (Mark 3:25)

They will set a trap: A blow, a punishment. They are going to turn against Esau.

Verse 8: *“Surely on that day,’ declares the L-rd, ‘I will destroy the wise men of Edom, and the ones of understanding on the mount of Esau.”*

That day: This is the day of judgment (This puts this prophecy into an end time perspective).
Destroy the wise men...the ones of understanding: G-d is going to destroy their wise ones and leave them to consult with fools (1 Corinthians 1:19-29).

Verse 9: *“And your mighty ones are going to be confused, the mighty ones of Teman. On account of this, every man will be cut off from the mountains of Esau because of the slaughter.”*

Mighty ones: The wise ones.

Teman: The Hebrew name for Yemen of today -south of what is traditionally a part of Edom. This is one of the coalition partners of Edom.

Slaughter: A massacre. In the last days, according to Isaiah 63:1-6, Edom is one of the three places mentioned that Messiah is going to go to (He is going to judge Edom) as He makes His way to Jerusalem. Why is G-d going to judge them?

Verse 10: *“Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you shall be covered up with shame. And you will be cut off forever.”*

Violence: (חַמָּס) It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for violence is “hamas” [although the organisation called ‘Hamas’ (a Palestinian Islamic group that rules the Gaza Strip) say the meaning in Arabic is ‘zeal, bravery’ etc] Incidentally this word is the same word used in the account of the flood (Genesis 6:13). The violence referred to here is the violence of those who love to cause suffering to others. They derive pleasure from inflicting pain on others.

G-d is not happy about this violence being committed *against Jacob* (the Jewish people).

You will be cut off forever: A great slaughter is coming to Esau (Edom) because of their love of violence and desire to inflict pain on others. There will be no survivors. Yeshua Himself is going to take care of this judgement (as seen in Isaiah 63:1-6).

Verse 11: *“On the day that you stood in opposition, on the day that foreigners took captive his army. When foreigners came to the gates and cast lots for Jerusalem – even you were as one of them.”*

Foreigners took captive: This verse is talking about the Babylonian captivity. G-d raised up Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to execute punishment upon Judah (the Jewish people left in Israel at that time – the other tribes were already in exile). The descendants of Esau did not receive a call from G-d to participate in this battle. Instead of defending the Jews, Edom joined the Babylonians to fight against them. Historical accounts, and some of the writings of the prophets, record that those from Esau wanted to annihilate every Jewish survivor. This is what this verse is alluding to.

Army: This could be referring to the populace of Israel (as well as to their wealth and possessions).

Verse 12: *“You should not have looked upon the day of your brother, the day that he was taken captive. You should not have rejoiced concerning the children of Judah on the day of their destruction. You should not have exalted your mouth on the day of tribulation.”*

Looked upon the day of your brother: It is not good to look upon and gloat over the punishment of others. Instead of being grieved over what had happened to Jacob’s descendants Esau took pleasure in it and rejoiced over the captivity, destruction, and distress of his kin.

Exalted your mouth: Lifted up, made great, spoke proudly - they praised this judgment that had fallen on the Jews.

Verse 13: *“You should not have entered into the gates of my people on the day of their calamity, nor looked upon their evilness on the day of their calamity, you should not have taken his wealth on the day of his calamity.”*

Their evilness: Meaning the Jewish people’s evilness (evilness refers to that which is against G-d’s will). Although G-d allowed the Jewish people to suffer that was not His will from the very beginning. G-d does not will judgement upon anyone. He does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to repent and find grace. However, when people rebel and do not repent they experience that which was not G-d’s will from the beginning.

Wealth: Jacob’s possessions

Calamity: Disaster a catastrophe. Although G-d had raised up Nebuchadnezzar to punish the Jewish people He nevertheless saw it as a calamity, a catastrophe, taking place. Because G-d is righteous He has to punish sin, rebellion, and idolatry.

Verse 14: *“You should not have stood upon the crossroad to cut down his survivors who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained on the day of trouble.”*

Cut down his (Jacob’s) survivors: G-d did not want Nebuchadnezzar to annihilate the Jewish people – G-d limited His judgement upon Jacob (Israel) as he wanted a remnant to survive. Esau, however, attempted to stamp out this remnant. His desire was to annihilate, exterminate, them. He stood at the intersection and, in opposition to G-d’s plan, cut down the survivors as they were going into exile – the place where G-d wanted them to be. Numerous individuals, that G-d wanted to survive, Edom cut down. They are going to be held accountable for this. This is why G-d is so displeased with Esau and why G-d is going to judge him.

Delivered up those: Some of the descendants of Esau cut down the Jewish captives. Others of the descendants of Esau took those who remained in Judah captive. They then delivered them to Babylon, so that Babylon could finish the job of annihilating them.

The day of trouble: The day of tribulation. This same phrase is used to describe Jacob’s trouble in Jeremiah 30:7.

Verse 15: *“For near is the day of the L-rd upon all the nations; just as you have done it will be done to you. Your recompense shall return upon your head.”*

Near: Close

The day of the L-rd: This phrase gives us the timing of when this prophecy against Edom will be fulfilled. ..right at the very end of days.

All the nations: All the nations are going to join with the descendants of Esau against Israel (Revelation 16:14-16).

As you have done it will be done to you: The measure that you measure with will be measured back to you (Matthew 7:2).

Your recompense shall return: The payment that they have paid out to others is going to be revisited upon their heads. G-d is promising to judge Esau for standing in opposition to His plan.

Verse 16: *“For just as you drank upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continuously; they shall drink and swallow, and that which was is not going to be.”*

Drank upon My holy mountain: The image here is one of Edom toasting in victory when the temple (situated on the Temple Mount) was destroyed.

All the nations drink continuously: The nations do not want a temple in Jerusalem. They do not desire a house for G-d, in which He can be worshipped (Currently the situation on the Temple Mount is that a very limited number of people –Jews or Christians– are allowed on the Temple Mount to read their Bible or pray. It is done under very strict military protection).

That which was is not going to be: G-d is going to bring about a change. He wants to build a new temple.

Verse 17: *“On Mount Zion there is going to be deliverance, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob will possess their inheritance.”*

Mount Zion: When the Bible speaks of ‘Jerusalem’ it is often referring to her in her natural or fallen state – the way she is now. When she is called ‘Zion’ it is referring to her in her Kingdom state, the way that she is going to be (holy) when Yeshua returns and sets up His millennial Kingdom.

There is going to be deliverance: The world has always wanted to destroy the Jewish people. Because of G-d’s promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He has always kept a remnant alive.

Holy: According to the purposes of G-d.

The house of Jacob (the Jewish people): When people tell you that G-d is finished with the Jewish people, or that the church has replaced them, do not believe them. That is a false teaching. G-d has a plan to bring His Old Covenant people into a New Covenant relationship with Himself. ALL the Jewish people (that entire 1/3rd remnant – Zechariah 13:8-9, Romans 11:26), who do not go in the rapture, are going to turn to Yeshua as their Messiah - after the rapture of the church has taken place (Many Jewish believers will be a part of the rapture). After the rapture, G-d again turns His attention (so to speak) toward the salvation and redemption of Israel.

Possess their inheritance: This is a promise. G-d is not going to establish His Kingdom before the house of Jacob takes possession of their inheritance (this has to do with the land, the real estate, of Israel - as some of the following verses will confirm).

Verse 18: *“And it shall come about that the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph shall be a flame; but the house of Esau is going to be like hay. They are going to ignite among them and devour them. And there will be no survivor from the house of Esau.” For the L-rd has spoken.”*

Note: Obadiah has been speaking about Edom. Now there is a change, and his attention shifts to Israel (the house of Jacob and Joseph).

Joseph is a reference to the Northern kingdom [Israel split into a Southern kingdom (called Judah, and comprised predominantly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) and a Northern kingdom. The remaining ten tribes made up the Northern kingdom of Israel and were referred to as ‘Israel’]

Hay: Straw. Everyone knows what happens when you put fire and straw together...

They: The Bible reveals to us that in the last days Israel (the entire house of Israel that has come together again!) is going to devour the descendants of Esau.

There will be no survivor: The measure that Edom used will be measured back to him (Matthew 7:2). His desire was to destroy the remnant of Israel, so he will be left with no remnant (no survivors).

The L-rd has spoken: His Word is His promise (Hebrews 6:13-18).

Verse 19: *“And the ones of the Negev will inherit the mountain of Esau, and those of the Philistine lowland they shall possess the field of Ephraim and the field of Samaria. Benjamin is going to take possession of Gilead.”*

Note: Verse 19 & 20 reveal to us that G-d is still interested in the land (It is another false teaching that says that He is not interested in real estate). In so many prophecies, G-d has promised to bring back the people so that they can settle and take possession of the land. There is a spiritual battle for the actual ground of Israel. So many of the world organisations (UN, EU etc) are against what is happening in Israel, and instead of maximising the land for the Jewish people to inhabit it (as G-d desires) they are trying to take away territory from Israel – they are against the plans G-d has for this country.

The ones of the Negev: The inhabitants of the Negev (The Negev is an arid, desert area that spans the southern part of Israel).

Inherit the mountains of Esau: This means that Israel is going to expand its current border and move into Southern Jordan.

Philistine lowland: An area along the Mediterranean coast (Ashdod, Ashkelon, etc)

The field of Ephraim: This is an area that is currently occupied by the modern-day Palestinians. It is near where Ramallah is today.

The field of Samaria: Also occupied by the Palestinians today, and is what the world calls “The West Bank”.

Gilead: This is in Northern Jordan (both Southern Jordan and Northern Jordan are going to become part of Israel's territory before the Kingdom of G-d is established. From a worldly perspective it does not seem possible right now that these lands will be given over to Israel. Watch this space! G-d has said they are going to be –we would be wise to stick to His narrative).

Verse 20: *“And those who have been exiled of the hosts of the children of Israel are going to take possession of the Canaanite land unto Zarephath. The exiles of Jerusalem which are in Sepharad are going to possess the cities of the Negev.”*

The hosts: The armies

Zarephath: (1 Kings 17v8-9) An area in Northern Lebanon. It was a city on the Mediterranean coast between Sidon and Tyre. This speaks about the borders of Israel greatly expanding.

Sepharad: The Hebrew name for Spain. Some exiles will go back to Israel from Spain. They will inherit the cities in the Negev area.

Verse 21: *“Then saviours are going to go up to Mount Zion and they are going to judge the mountain of Esau. And the Kingdom shall be the L-rds.”*

Saviours: Related to making salvation or bringing deliverance.

Mount Zion: See verse 17. Mount Zion is also a reference to worship. Those who have been saved are going to go up to worship G-d. They are going to have a Kingdom experience.

Judge the mountain of Esau: They (these saviours) are also going to judge all those nations who have joined together with Esau – all those who have had a desire to thwart the things of G-d, all those who believe that G-d is finished with Israel and that the land is no longer important.

The Kingdom shall be the L-rds: If our eschatology, our view of the last days, does not take into consideration the Jewish people going back and taking possession of the land of Israel (and beyond the borders of Israel), and rendering judgment upon Edom and the coalition of nations (who join with Esau), then it might be a good time to rethink our view. After the judgment of the enemies of Israel, G-d is going to set up His Kingdom!