

Session 14 The Forerunner Message in Obadiah and Nahum 1

I. INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH

A. The book of Obadiah is a prophecy against Edom, which was a nation east of Judah, near the south end of the Dead Sea. The Edomites, descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Gen. 36:1), were bitter enemies of Judah.

B. Outline of Obadiah

1:1-9	The Lord's judgment on Edom
1:10-14	Edom's sins against Judah
1:15-18	The coming day of the Lord
1:19-21	Israel shall recover all their land

II. THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON EDOM (OBAD. 1:1-9)

A. The Lord's people received a report from a messenger about His judgment on Edom (1:1-4).

¹The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom (we have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"): ²***"Behold, I will make you small among the nations..."*** ³***The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock...you who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'*** ⁴***Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,*** says the LORD. (Obad. 1-4)

1. ***We have heard a report:*** By saying, "We," Obadiah identified himself with what his people in Judah suffered after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. This prophecy encouraged them.
2. ***A messenger has been sent:*** The Lord would send a messenger among the nations to stir them to go to battle against Edom as the Lord's instrument to judge Edom.
3. ***Let us rise up against her:*** The Lord summoned a coalition of nations to rise against Edom.
4. ***I will make you small:*** The message was directly to Edom, a relatively strong nation, that the Lord would make them small in numbers, territory, wealth, and prestige.
5. ***You dwell in the clefts of the rock:*** The Edomites lived in very mountainous land.
6. ***The pride of your heart*** (1:3): In their pride, they felt secure and even invincible because of the protection of the natural defenses provided by mountainous area of Mt. Seir.
7. ***Who will bring me down?:*** They proudly boasted, "Who will bring me down to the earth?" They neglected to see that they were not protected from God's judgment.
8. ***I will bring you down:*** The Lord promised to bring them down (1:4). A partial fulfillment of this occurred in 312 BC, when Petra, the capital of Edom, was seized by the Nabatean, and Edom ceased to exist as a nation with a government. The complete fulfillment of this will occur in the end times when no survivor shall remain (1:18).

B. Obadiah's prophetic message in 1:1-4 is very similar to Jeremiah 49:14-16.

C. Edom would be betrayed and totally cut off or destroyed (1:5-7).

⁵***"If thieves had come to you...how you will be cut off!"—would they not have stolen till they had enough? If grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings? ⁶Oh, how Esau shall be searched out! How his hidden treasures shall be sought after! ⁷All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border; the men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you. Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it."*** (Obad. 5-7)

1. ***You will be cut off:*** By 312 BC, Edom's land was occupied by the Nabateans (Mal. 1:3-5).
2. ***Hidden treasures:*** Edom's treasures would be completely plundered. Edom was in a strategic location to be an international trade center, especially between Arabia and Syria. Edom stored great amounts of treasure and valuable goods in their numerous caves.
3. ***Men in your confederacy:*** The men of their confederacy were probably Moab, Ammon, Tyre, etc., who together resisted Nebuchadnezzar and were attacked by him (Jer. 27:3).

D. Edom would suffer the loss of their national leadership, their wise men, and soldiers (1:8-9).

⁸***"Will I not in that day...even destroy the wise men from Edom...⁹Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that everyone...may be cut off by slaughter.*** (Obad. 8-9)

1. ***That day:*** This points to the time when the Lord would destroy Edom. That day in ancient history also points to an eschatological day when the Lord will judge all nations (1:15).
2. ***Destroy the wise men:*** Edom gained a reputation for being an economic center of trade. The shrewdness of their economic, military, and political advisors was not sufficient to deliver them.
3. ***Mighty men shall be dismayed:*** Their best and mightiest soldiers would be "terrified."
4. ***Everyone cut off by slaughter*** (1:9): "Everyone" emphasizes the thoroughness of the slaughter. After their army is destroyed, Edom's general population would be slaughtered.

III. EDMON'S SINS AGAINST JUDAH (OBAD. 1:10-14)

A. Edom will be cut off forever because of their violence and passive indifference toward Israel in their calamity (1:10-14). The Lord will judge Edom for sinning against Judah in these ways.

¹⁰***"For violence against your brother Jacob, same shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. ¹¹In the day that you stood on the other side—in the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners...cast lots for Jerusalem—even you were as one of them. ¹²But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; nor...rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; nor...spoken proudly in the day of distress. ¹³You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction...nor laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. ¹⁴You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those...who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress."*** (Obad. 10-14)

- B. **The day:** Obadiah emphasized “the day,” mentioning it ten times in 1:11-14. This term designates a time in history when Jerusalem was destroyed. Edom sinned this way against Judah in context to Babylon’s destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC and also at an earlier time, around 850 BC, when Judah was invaded by Edom and the Philistines—they took King Jehoram’s family and property (2 Kgs. 8:20-22; 2 Chr. 20:1-2; 21:8-17; 22:1)
1. The climax of “the day” comes with the announcement of the “day of the Lord” (1:15). On that day God’s enemies will be judged and His people restored (Amos 5:18-20).
 2. Keil proposed that Obadiah referred to an event in the past and to another that would happen again in the future, the past event being a type of future reoccurrences.
- C. Obadiah outlined eight charges against the Edomites in 1:12-14—they should not have gazed or gloated over the captivity of their Jewish brothers (1:12), should not have rejoiced over the destruction of Judah (1:12), should not have spoken proudly against Israel (1:12), should not have entered the gates of Jerusalem to do harm (1:13), should not have gazed or looked down on the Jews in their affliction (1:13), should not have taken their substance or wealth (1:13), should not have waited at the crossroads to cut down the Jews who escaped the distress (1:14), and should not have delivered or captured the Jews and then handed them over to their oppressors (1:14).
- D. **For violence against your brother Jacob:** The blood relationship between Jacob and Esau made Edom even more guilty before God for their violence against their brother Judah.
- E. **You shall be cut off forever:** The Lord’s penalty is so severe because their betrayal was so severe.
- F. **You stood on the other side** (1:11): They watched at a distance as Jerusalem was plundered. Here the Lord is warning present-day Edom in southern Jordan of the malignant neutrality of the ancient Edomites. He warns all against repeating this same passive evil.
- G. **The same shall cover you:** They would receive the treatment from God that they gave Israel.
- H. **You were as one of them:** Edom acted in the same way as Babylon, instead helping like a brother.
- I. An end-time application of the principles laid out in 1:10-14 was given by Jesus in Mt. 25:31-46. The multitudes who passively refused to help Israel during the holocaust will answer to the Lord.
- ³¹“When the Son of Man comes...He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them...³⁴The King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come...inherit the kingdom...³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink...³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me...’ ⁴⁰The King will...say to them, ‘...as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ ⁴¹Then He will say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me...into the everlasting fire...⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was... naked and you did not clothe Me...’ ⁴⁴They will answer..., ‘When did we see You hungry or thirsty...and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵He will answer, ‘...as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Mt. 25:31-46)

IV. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD (OBAD. 1:15-18)

- A. The day of the Lord will result in God's judgment being released on all of His enemies (1:15-18). The Lord's judgment of Edom here is in context to judgment on all nations.

*¹⁵"The day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; as you have done, it shall be done to you...
¹⁶For as you drank on My holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink...they shall drink...and shall be as though they had never been. ¹⁷But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance...¹⁸The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall...devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau..."*
(Obad. 15-18)

- B. *Day of the Lord*: This speaks of the time when Jesus returns to reign on the earth.
- C. *All the nations*: The global scope of judgment is emphasized twice in 1:15-16.
- D. *As you have done, it shall be done to you*: As Edom and the other nations and individuals have done to Israel, so the Lord will do to them on the last day. The judgment on Edom culminates in the end times. Thus, Edom still exists in the end times for this to happen.
- E. *As you drank on My holy mountain*: Edom celebrated Babylon's victory over Jerusalem by getting drunk on Mt. Zion. As they staggered with drunkenness when rejoicing over the fall of Jerusalem, so they will stagger from drinking the cup of the wine of God's judgment.
- F. *As though they had never been*: Some nations will no longer exist in the Millennium.
- G. *There shall be deliverance*: The remnant of Israel shall find deliverance in Jerusalem (Joel 2:32).
³²And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance...among the remnant... (Joel 2:32)
- H. *Jacob and Joseph shall be a fire* (1:18): The house of Jacob and Joseph shall be a flame that burns Edom as stubble. The Lord will anoint some Israelites to consume their enemies (Zech. 12:6-8).
⁶"On that day I will make the clans of Judah...like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples [nations] right and left... (Zech. 12:6)
- I. *No survivor shall remain of the house of Esau* (1:18): Amos, however, prophesied that a remnant of Edom will be left in the end time (Amos 9:12). Possibly the old national government will not exist even as the Nazi government does not exist today yet the German people do.
- J. The Lord promised that all the lands of Israel would be restored to them and that He would anoint leaders in that day when He defeats the enemy nations (1:19-21; Zech. 12:6-8).
¹⁹The South shall possess the mountains of Esau [Jordan], and the Lowland shall possess Philistia. They shall possess the fields of Ephraim...Benjamin shall possess Gilead. ²⁰And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land...²¹Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's. (Obad. 19-21)

V. THE FORERUNNER MESSAGE IN NAHUM 1

- A. The end-time message in Nahum 1 highlights the fullness of God’s anger when He makes an end of the Antichrist (the wicked counselor; 1:15) and his coalition of nations (Rev. 14:10; 15:1). This prophecy was partially fulfilled when Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was defeated by the Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC. It will be completely fulfilled at the end of the age when *wicked ones no longer pass through Israel* (1:15). Israel has been invaded many times since 612 BC. Only after Jesus defeats the Antichrist will Israel have permanent security.
- B. Outline of Nahum 1
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| 1:1-8 | A description of the Lord’s character and actions |
| 1:9-14 | The Lord’s word against Nineveh |
| 1:15 | The glorious deliverance of Israel |
- C. Isaiah spoke of the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” who would strike Zion (Isa. 10:5, 24; 52:4). Micah also referred to the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” (Mic. 5:5). The king of Assyria was the mightiest world leader up to that time in history and had afflicted many nations. In Isaiah’s day, the only Assyrian king who attacked “those who dwelt in Zion” or Jerusalem was Sennacherib in 701 BC. Yet he did not strike Jerusalem “with a rod in the manner of Egypt” to enslave them. In fact, he did not even enter Jerusalem. Instead, Jerusalem was delivered from Sennacherib when the angel of Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36). Sennacherib was a type of Antichrist.
- ²⁴...“**My people, who dwell in Zion [in Jerusalem], do not be afraid of the Assyrian [Antichrist] He shall strike you with a rod ...in the manner of Egypt. (Isa. 10:24)**

VI. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LORD’S CHARACTER AND ACTIONS (NAH. 1:1-8)

- A. Nahum describes the Lord’s personality and power over creation and the nations. Nahum’s optimism was based on the character of the omnipotent God who is jealous yet slow to anger.
- ¹**The burden against Nineveh...**²**God is jealous, and...the LORD avenges and is furious...**³**The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm...**⁴**He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers...**⁵**The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it.**⁶**Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure...His anger? ...**⁷**The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble...** (Nah. 1:1-7)
- B. **God is jealous:** The Lord’s jealousy is an essential element in His personality. His jealousy and zeal are expressed in ways that greatly benefit His people and remove their oppressors. Thus, He is jealous in the sense that He demands a relationship characterized by loyal love.
- C. **The Lord’s vengeance:** God’s vengeance is the action that naturally flows from His jealousy. He is an avenging God whose judgments remove all that hinders love.
- D. **He will not acquit the wicked:** He is reliable to remove and punish sin. This reassured Israel that the evil nations that oppressed them would give an account to God and be removed.

- E. **Slow to anger:** The Lord is slow to anger from a human point of view. His anger is never from frustration and is always under His perfect control. His anger is slow, yet not from weakness, but because He is great in power. Many mistake His patience for passive disengagement (Eccl. 8:11).
- F. **Great in power:** The Lord is great in power as seen in creation and history. In 1:3-6, Nahum mixed the miracles of the past with the events of the future when elaborating on God's power over nature.
- G. **Whirlwind and storm:** The Lord "has His way" in the whirlwind and in the storm.
- H. **Makes the sea and rivers dry:** He rebukes the sea, making it dry, and dries up all the rivers (1:4).
- I. **Earthquakes:** The Lord will release earthquakes in His end-time plan (Rev. 16:18-20; cf. Isa. 2:10, 19, 21; 13:13; 29:6; Ezek. 38:19; Hag. 2:6, 21; Zech. 14:4-5; Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11; Heb. 12:26-27; Rev. 6:12-14; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18-20).
- J. **The whole world:** The world and all who dwell in it will witness the fullness of this prophecy.
- K. **Who can stand and endure?:** This question of who can stand and endure the Lord's anger is used in various end-time passages (1:6; cf. Joel 2:11; Mal. 3:2; Rev. 6:17).

VII. THE LORD'S WORD AGAINST NINEVEH (NAH. 1:9-14)

- A. The Lord will frustrate and destroy all attempts of the nations to resist His plans (1:9). Assyria besieged Jerusalem once but did not do so a second time once Nineveh fell in 612 BC.
**⁹What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time...they [Assyria and the Antichrist] shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.
¹¹From you comes forth one who plots evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor. (Nah. 1:9-11)**
- B. **Conspire against the Lord:** Their sin is premeditated by those who actively "plot" against Him.
- C. **Affliction will not rise up a second time:** He will make an utter end of it.
- D. **Wicked counselor:** This was initially fulfilled by the Assyrian King Sennacherib, a type of the Antichrist, who prepared the military plans for the Assyrian army to destroy Jerusalem.
- E. The Assyrians were powerful and numerous. They appeared to be safe, but the Lord would cut them off and they would pass from the stage of history (1:12-14).
¹²Thus says the LORD: "Though they are safe, and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more; ¹³for now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart." (Nah. 1:12-13)
- F. The Lord promised to deliver Judah (1:15). How should she respond to this? She is exhorted to be faithful to keep the appointed feasts and to perform the vows she made to God in the time of peril.
¹⁵Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings...Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. for the wicked one shall no more pass through you... (Nah. 1:15)