

TIMELESS TRUTHS FOR A CRUCIAL TIME

The Messages of Twelve Old Testament Prophets

Discussion Guide
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Sermon Title

In Wrath Remember Mercy

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Obadiah

Introduction: Obadiah is one of the shortest books in the Bible, and at first glance seems to lack historical context. For many, without benefit of background, reading it will seem strange, disjointed, and mystifying. Yet this tiny book has a powerful message and a lesson for all of us because it addresses a tendency we are all so prone to have and which God obviously hates very much.

Sermon Outline

I. Obadiah: The Prophet and the Prophecy

- A. Nothing is known about the man, Obadiah. His name means servant.
- B. Date of the book by scholars ranges from 899 BC to 312BC, nearly 600 years!
 1. Should be dated by internal evidence
 2. In a time of great trouble for Jerusalem
 3. When Edom took advantage of her brother's distress
 4. My vote is for 580's after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon
- C. It is a prophecy against Edom, the small nation of Esau's lineage.
- D. It is an encouragement for Judah that God has noted her mistreatment.

II. The Message of Obadiah

- A. A prophecy against Edom (Esau) for taking advantage of Judah in her day of trouble. There are parallel passages in other prophetic writings:
 1. Jeremiah 49:14-16 compare to Obadiah 2-3
 2. Psalm 137:7 "Level it, level it down to its foundations!"
- B. Other prophecies deal with judgment to Edom:
Amos 1:11-12, Isaiah 21:11-12, Jeremiah 49:7-22, Ezekiel 25:12-14
- C. What was the problem with Edom?
 1. Located to the south of Judah and Jerusalem this nation controlled a 71 mile stretch of strategic road and used tolls to raise revenue.
 2. Citizens dwelt mainly in the hills and rocky heights and were noted for their wisdom and strategic planning
 3. With few exceptions they had lived mainly in peace with Judah, but
 4. In the day of Judah's calamity they took up the fight, blocked the ways of escape and joined in the looting and plunder of the city of Jerusalem
- D. Eventually Edom disappeared as a nation. In the time of Christ she was known as Idumea and after the fall of Jerusalem in the first century AD eventually disappeared from the pages of history.

III. Lessons From Obadiah

- A. Obadiah is never quoted in the New Testament and there is no precise reference to Jesus Christ, yet this book has much to teach in harmony with Christian principles and demonstrating the grace and mercy of the Lord:
 1. Ephesians 4:30-32
 2. Romans 14:4, 10-13
- B. Even when God may be bringing judgment, we are to show mercy
 1. We can never know beyond doubt what is God's judgment precisely
 2. We all deserve judgment, God always desires to bring repentance
 3. We may be the instrument God uses to bring His grace and mercy in a time of natural consequences of sin or even Divine wrath
 4. It is ungodly ever to gloat over someone else's judgment or to take advantage of them when they are down.

The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom-- We have heard a report from the LORD, And an envoy has been sent among the nations saying,

"Arise and let us go against her for battle

² "Behold, I will make you small among the nations;

You are greatly despised.

³ "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'

⁴ "Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.

⁵ "If thieves came to you, If robbers by night-- O how you will be ruined!-- Would they not steal only until they had enough?

If grape gatherers came to you, Would they not leave some gleanings?

⁶ "O how Esau will be ransacked, And his hidden treasures searched out!

⁷ "All the men allied with you Will send you forth to the border, And the men at peace with you Will deceive you and overpower you. They who eat your bread

Will set an ambush for you.

(There is no understanding in him.)

Obadiah 1-7 (NASB)

Discussion Questions

1.) Why was God so angry with the Edomites?

2.) What was happening in Jerusalem and Judah based on other Scriptures?

3.) How does Psalm 137 fit into the message of this book?

⁸ "Will I not on that day," declares the LORD, "Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau?"

⁹ "Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman, So that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.

¹⁰ "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever.

¹¹ "On the day that you stood aloof, On the day that strangers carried off his wealth, And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem- You too were as one of them.

¹² "Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress.

¹³ "Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster.

Obadiah 8-13 (NASB)

4.) How has the lesson of Edom affected you personally? What have you learned?

5.) Can you think of contemporary examples of judgment or consequences for sin by people, cities, or nations? Are you sure the calamity is God's judgment?

6.) What should be your personal response, and what should be the Church's response when ungodly people suffer natural disasters and the ravages of war?

Some the questions on this Study Guide are borrowed from the *Serendipity Bible for Groups*; Fourth Edition, New International Version; published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI

15 "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations.

As you have done, it will be done to you.

Your dealings will return on your own head.

16 "Because just as you drank on My holy mountain,

All the nations will drink continually.

They will drink and swallow

And become as if they had never existed.

17 "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy.

And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.

18 "Then the house of Jacob will be a fire

And the house of Joseph a flame;

But the house of Esau will be as stubble.

And they will set them on fire and consume them,

So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,

" For the LORD has spoken.

19 Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau,

And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain;

Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria,

And Benjamin will possess Gilead.

20 And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel,

Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,

And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad

Will possess the cities of the Negev.

21 The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion

To judge the mountain of Esau,

And the kingdom will be the LORD'S.

Obadiah 15-21 (NASB)

