

Obadiah: Jesus the Deliverer

I. Chapter 1: 1-18 The End of Edom

II. Chapter 1:19-21 Future blessing of Israel

The next two books on our tour through the Bible are two small prophecies to gentile nations, Obadiah writes to the Edomites (descendants of Esau) and Johan writes of his reluctant missionary journey to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. These two prophets had very different results as well:

- Obadiah's 21 verse book pronounces certain judgment without any hope of forgiveness (albeit it took 1,000 years before it was fulfilled).
- Jonah's four chapter book speaks certain judgment to a city that repents much to Jonah's dismay.

Not much is know of Obadiah or the time frame in which he wrote. There are 13 Obadiah's in the Bible but only four of those have any possibility of being the author of the book and it is quite possible that he is none of the four. The name means "*Servant of God*" and he writes the shortest book in the O.T. and very likely chronologically the earliest of the prophetic writings. He makes no mention of his ancestry or his home town so he most likely was not of a priestly or royal lineage. Most scholars believe that he was a contemporary of Elisha and wrote a few years before Joel did.

Since Obadiah does not write to Israel and his prophetic words of Edom's destruction have been fulfilled which he out lines in verse 10 saying "*For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever*" why should we bother with these 21 verses at all? I suppose many will think me liberal for saying what perhaps only a few are thinking but I'm afraid many today wonder about the

relevance of the Bible in general and the inspiration of certain passages or books specifically. What application can be made towards our lives today from only around 600 words to a nation that doesn't even exist? Someone has well said that "*A sermon's strength is not necessarily proportionate to its length!*" Such is the case with this the smallest of the so called minor prophets! Far too often we tend to evaluate the impact of something based upon its size but consider the diamond next to the granite boulder, one is a gem the other a mere big rock! So let's mine the treasure of Obadiah's 21 verses!

II. Chapter 1: 1-18 The End of Edom

It takes Obadiah very little time before he tells Edom the reason for their coming destruction in verse 3 when he says, "*The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you who say in your heart, who will bring me down to the ground?*" Edom main city was the rock city of Petra in modern day Jordan. The city was inside a volcano with only entrance coming from a very narrow passage (about 9-13 feet across) which winds around through steep cliffs for over a mile until it opens up into a large natural amphitheater which walls have been carved into living quarters for over 100,000 thousand. The Edomites thought Petra impregnable as it was easily defended by 12 men. Edom's pride in their security was the cause of their downfall. Such a self-sufficiency according to verse 10 had brought about "*violence against your brother Jacob*" as well as according to verse 12 indifference when Israel was taken captive as well rejoicing "*over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction*" and speaking "*proudly in the day of distress*". According to Proverbs 6:16-17 the number one thing Lord hates is "*A proud look*", as it is what keeps men from God and one another. Edom had everything going for it as they had a great fortress in which to

protect its self, tremendous ingenuity as they had built a complete city out of rock and had managed to have vegetable gardens with no known direct water source through aqueducts. They had commerce as they were in direct path of the trade routes. Yet with all of this going for them they became arrogant which led to indifference which led to out and out violence to against others.

Oh dear ones how often has this scene of Edom played out in nations as well as individual lives? God's blessings are meant to be blessings to others and never to be seen as some sort of entitlement especially as it would lead to miss treating others! Paul wrote to the Corinthians' in 1 Cor. 6:7 *"The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?"* This attitude between Edom and Israel went way back to Esau and Jacob and the battle over that which Esau never wanted to be spiritual leader. Why these two were true sibling rivals as we are told that they were fighting in the womb. Far too common is such fighting amongst what should be spiritual brethren. In Mark 9:38-41 Jesus disciples said, *"Teacher, said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us. Do not stop him, Jesus said. No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward."*

By way of application every believer has two natures one of pride the other of humility. Paul spoke of this in Galatians 5:16-17 saying *"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you*

wish.” He said in Col. 3:9 that we are to “*put off the old man with his deeds*” and in Ephes. 4:22 tells the reason for this the “*the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*” therefore in Romans 6:6 Paul reminds us “*that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*” When Obadiah speaks of Edom being cut off forever to too must we to need to “*reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Romans 6:11) Now such action on our part brings us to the final section of Obadiah’s prophecy the blessings of Israel.

II. Chapter 1:19-21 Future blessing of Israel

Dear ones there is a direct correlation to personal fulfillment in God’s blessing upon our lives and the continual dying to the “old man” of pride. Could our lack be do to what James spoke of this saying in James 4:3 “*You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures*”? Until the destruction of our prideful Edom we shall never possess the mountains of Esau, nor the fields. God longs to expand the borders of His children if only they would cut off the Edom and his arrogance. It is at that time that captives shall possess all the cities.

Pride causes us independence from God. **Edom became arrogant because they dwelt in the rock but she could have Known the security of dwelling upon the Rock!** And such a heart kept Edom from the blessings God would have lavished upon her. But pride also caused Edom to be insensitive to those around them even their own family. Instead of seeing that God had blessed them to be a blessing Edom thought of their blessings as coming from their own resources and as such saw themselves superior to those around them as they became indifferent, mocking and even participating in the

suffering of others. Oh let us learn the lessons spoken by Obadiah lest we become like Edom instead of Israel.