



Bible Book Club

Book of Obadiah

Author: Obadiah, a minor prophet. The name means “servant of the Lord.” The author gives no information about himself. Obadiah was a common name during Old Testament times. The Old Testament mentions the name Obadiah about a dozen times. All attempts, by historians and theologians to identify either of the twelve as the author have failed.

Time: The time of the writing of Obadiah is uncertain. The author does not indicate the time, however verses 10-14 refers to an attack on the city of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 8:20-22, and 2 Chronicles 21:16-17 describes an attack against Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoram (848-841 B.C.) by the Philistines and the Arabians. The Book of 2 Kings 24 and 25 describe the attack of the Babylonians against Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Genre: Prophecy

Audience: The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob.

Theme: Obadiah is a warning concerning family feuds, grudges, pride and gloating. It is a warning that God is on the throne and cares for his own

Key Verses: 10-14

Structure

1. God knows and will judge the sins of His people’s enemies (1-14)
 - a. Pride deceives people into thinking they can escape God’s judgement (1-4)
 - b. Deceitful people will be deceived by their “friends” (5-7)
 - c. Human wisdom cannot avoid divine judgement (8-9)
 - d. Conspiracy against “brothers” will not go unpunished (10-14)
2. The Day of the Lord offers judgement for the Nations, but deliverance for God’s people (15-21)
 - a. Sinful peoples will receive just recompense (15-16)
 - b. God will deliver His people in holiness (17-18)
 - c. God’s remnant will be restored (19-20)
 - d. The Kingdom belongs to God Alone (21)

History of Edom

The Edomites are descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob (Genesis 25:19-34). Esau was nicknamed "Edom" (which means, "red"). The Israelites are the descendants of Jacob. Therefore, Edom is referred to as "a brother" of Israel.

Enmity between Israel and Edom began with Jacob and Esau and became worse at the time of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt. When the Israelites requested to pass through the land of Edom, they were refused passage (Numbers 20:14-21). Edom was a constant threat to Judah.

When the Kingdom of Israel was divided, the southern part of the kingdom took the name Judah. Jerusalem was the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Israel.

The men of Edom - especially of the city Teman - were noted for their wisdom (Jeremiah 49:7).

The ancient city of Petra, once the capital city of Edom, known as Sela, had amazing defenses. It is a city carved into the rock, accessible by a narrow canyon almost a mile long. At the end of the canyon, there is a spectacular city carved in stone, and seemingly incapable of being conquered by any army.

Esau eventually settled in the area of Mount Seir and absorbed a people known as the Horites (Genesis 36:8-43).

When Israel came out of Egypt and wanted to pass through the land of the Edomites to enter into the Promised Land, the Edomites would not let them (Numbers 20:14-21).

The Edomites opposed Saul and were conquered under David and Solomon (1 Samuel 14:47, 2 Samuel 8:14, 1 Kings 9:26).

In the days of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Edom joined with Moab and Ammon to attack Judah, but the Lord fought for Judah and defeated them (2 Chronicles 20:1-27, the famous battle that was led with praise).

The Edomites successfully rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8:16-22).

King Amaziah of Judah brought them back under subjugation (2 Kings 14:9-11)

The Edomites again attacked Judah in the days of King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:17).

Centuries later, King Herod the Great (Luke 1:5) was an Edomite.

They fought side by side with the Jews in the rebellion against Rome in 66-70 A.D., and were crushed by Rome, never to be heard of as a people again. The predictions of Obadiah 1:10 and 1:18, were proven true.