

## Bible Study Notes and Questions on Obadiah

**Overview:** Nothing is known of Obadiah. His name means “servant or worshipper of the Lord.” The name was common in scripture (**1 Kings 18:3-16; 1 Chronicles 3:21; 7:3; 8:38; 9:16; 12:9; 27:19; 2 Chronicles 17:7; 34:12; Ezra 8:9; Nehemiah 10:5; 12:25**). The prophet had a revelation from God regarding the nation of Edom which is the main theme of the book.

The possible dating of the book could be shortly after the time of Babylon bringing Jerusalem to complete ruin in about 586 BC. The event seems to be referred to in **verses 11 to 14** of this prophecy. There are different views regarding dating from even later than the exile of the Jews to being earlier from about 845 BC.

Judgement had been declared upon Edom. The nation had become proud, boasting of its power and prosperity. There was a city called Sela, meaning rock or crag, which was built high on a plateau that was virtually impregnable and inaccessible. The Edomites, descendants of Esau, had dwelt in Mount Seir (**Genesis 36:8-9**) which was a mountainous region extending from south of the Dead Sea to the gulf of Akabah. Destruction was to come from a confederacy of nations (**verses 1-9**) to leave Edom utterly ruined.

The prophecy of Obadiah exposed Edom’s treatment of Israel when brought to ruin. Ultimately Edom would cease to be a nation cut off for ever. Historical evidence has shown that Edom fell under the yoke of Babylon (**Jeremiah 25:21**) about five years after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC when the Edomites helped to raze Jerusalem (**Psalms 137:7**). Later in 312 BC, Edom’s capital Sela (now Petra) was destroyed by Antigonos, one of the generals of Alexander the Great. Later still the Edomites, whilst settling in the Negev in southern Israel, were routed by Judas Maccabaeus in 185 BC. According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, their ruin was completed by Alexander Jannaeus, the small Edomite remnant being almost entirely wiped out in the massacre at the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The survivors were absorbed by desert tribes. They ceased as a nation by name and their language perished. The sentence on Edom had been executed in fulfilment of Obadiah’s prophecy (**verse 18**).

The judgment of all the nations was foretold briefly in **verses 15 and 16**, the key words being “as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee”. Other nations would also receive judgment in their treatment of Israel which seems clear from **verse 16**.

Israel’s future deliverance has been foretold clearly in this final section of this prophecy (**verses 17-21**). Israel (the house of Jacob) will be ablaze (**verse 18**) whilst nothing will remain of Edom (the house of Esau). Israel will have possession of the land of the Edomites, the Philistines and the Canaanites. Finally, the Lord will rule the kingdom seen to be visible in the millennial reign of 1000 years when Jesus Christ will have returned to rule over the whole earth.

It is the view of the author of these notes that God has not forsaken Israel as a nation. A literal interpretation of bible prophecy has led the author to believe without any doubt that God made eternal promises to Abraham and to David, king of Israel, regarding the Jewish people, descendants of Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 17:1-8; 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:1-17; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15**). Jesus Christ will return in glory to the earth to be seen as the king of Israel, king of the Jews (**Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33**), in a visible Messianic kingdom for 1000 years known as the millennium (**Revelation 20:1-6**). God’s presence will be known in Jerusalem (**Isaiah 4:4-6**), and Israel will be acknowledged by all nations to be the place where other nations need to come to receive God’s word (**Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4**).

## Questions

### Section A:

- 1) What do we know from the text where the nation of Edom can be found?
- 2) What does the word “we” refer to in **verse 1**?
- 3) What is the **key verse** or **word** in this prophecy?
- 4) What judgments were foretold by Obadiah upon Edom in **verses 1-10**?  
See also **Isaiah 11:14; 34:5-17; 63:1-4; Jeremiah 9:25-26; 25:17-26; 49:7-22; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; Malachi 1:4.**
- 5) Look carefully at **verses 15 and 16**. Show how the nations will be judged by God.
- 6) Why was God’s judgment on Edom so severe in **verses 10-14**?  
See also **Numbers 20:14-21**.
- 7) What is foretold of Israel’s future as a nation in **verses 17-21**?
- 8) Who are the “saviours/deliverers” in **verse 21**?
- 9) Show how Edom (Esau) is a type of “**the flesh**” or “**the old man**” or “**self life**” in us?  
See also **Galatians 5:13-26; Colossians 3:5-17**.
- 10) Show how Israel (Jacob) is a type of “**the Spirit**” or “**the new man**” in us.  
See again **Galatians 5:15-26; Colossians 3:5-17**.

### Section B:

The following questions may require much more extensive study and may be better attempted individually.

- 1) Study the relationship between Edom and Israel in **verses 10-21** and see also **Genesis 25:23; 27:41-45; 32:1-21; 33:1-20; 36:1-43; Exodus 15:15; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:1-8; 23:7-8; 1 Samuel 21:7; 22:6-23 with Psalm 52; 2 Samuel 8:13-14; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 14:7; 1 Chronicles 18:11-13; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10; 28:17; Psalm 83:1-18; 137:7; Isaiah 63:1-6; Ezekiel 35:1-15; Joel 3:18-19; Amos 1:11-12; 9:12; Malachi 1:3-5; Romans 9:13.**
- 2) What is understood by “**The day of the Lord**” in **verse 15**?  
See also **Isaiah 2:10-22; 13:6-11; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Zechariah 14:1-3; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:15; Revelation 6:12-17.**

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