



Obadiah

As we are coming down to the end of the Old Testament, we'll soon be complete with the Old Testament study, and moving on into the New Testament once again.

The book of Obadiah opens with a statement...

The vision of Obadiah (1:1).

Now with that, you have about all we know for sure about Obadiah. There are others in the old testament by the name of "Obadiah", and at various times different commentators, have tried to identify this Obadiah, with some of the other Obadiah's of the old testament. But none of them seemed to really fit. So, not only do we not know anything for certain about this man, as far as his tribe that he came from, or area that he came from, or territory, or even when he prophesied. Just guesses concerning his prophecy, by the scholars are anywhere from 330 BC to 927, so gives you a good span of 600 years to choose from. Somewhere in that 600 year period, he came along and prophesied. So we don't really know much of the background of Obadiah.

It would appear that his prophecy was before Jeremiah. Now Jeremiah did have the scrolls of the other prophets, or many of the prophets. Jeremiah would often incorporate some of the prophecies of Isaiah, into his prophecy. It would appear that the prophecy of Jeremiah in chapter 49, against Edom, was taken, or he had the prophecy of Obadiah before him, and he uses much of Obadiah's prophecy against Edom, in his prophecy, in Isaiah 49.

So, in looking at the 49th chapter of Jeremiah, I think I said Isaiah, but looking at the 49th chapter of Jeremiah, you will find great similarities, as it would appear that perhaps Jeremiah was incorporating into his prophecy against Edom, the prophecies that the Lord had already given, through Obadiah. So, "This is the vision of Obadiah. God in sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake to the fathers by the prophets". Sometimes God spoke to them through vision. Sometimes through analogies, sometimes through the voice of the Spirit to their heart, as Elijah testified, concerning the wind. "God is not in the wind, the fire, the earthquake, and then the still small voice, and God was in the still small voice". So Obadiah describes his as, "A vision of Obadiah". God spoke to him through a vision.

Now, it would seem that a vision is a God given capacity to view the spirit realm. We live in the physical realm. But there is also a very real spiritual realm. The capacity to see into the spiritual realm, would, and is often classified as, a vision. Now in the realm of the spirit, you have left the time continuum. That is why so much of that which comes by vision, can be prophetic, because you see it as happening, but you're in the spirit dimension. It really hasn't happened yet, but you are seeing it, as though you are watching it.

In the book of Revelation, John describes himself as being on the island of Pathos, and the statement that John makes is to, "The day of the Lord", or, "On the day of the Lord". Some have interpreted that as, "Well it was Sunday, the Lord's day, that he had this vision on the island of Pathos". But there are other translations that, "I was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord". That is, he was taken again in the spirit realm, and by vision, to see the things that would take place in the day of the Lord.

So Obadiah, a vision. He describes the vision, which has to do with the judgement of God against the nation of Edom.

Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom (1:1);

Now, the Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. As we have mentioned, when Rebecca was expecting, she was having a very difficult pregnancy. She finally cried unto the Lord, and the Lord told her that the problem was, that there were two nations in her womb, that were diverse from each other. So, from Esau, came the Edomites, and from the twin brother Jacob came, the Israelites. But not only were they diverse in the womb from each other, but throughout history, they remained enemies, and diverse. At one time Esau threatened the life of Jacob, and Jacob fled from his brother Esau. Spent some seventeen years in the area of Haran, as he was really afraid of his brother Esau's anger and wrath.

So, the Edomites, descendants of Esau, they moved south and east of the area of the Dead sea. They

occupy that area on the eastern side of the great Syro-African rift, that valley, in which the Dead sea is a part in that great valley. South from there, and to the east, was the area inhabited by the Edomites.

Now early in Genesis, the Edomites became a strong race of people. In Genesis you have several listings of the dukes of Edom. These dukes were sort of the fathers, the patriarchs, and they ruled over their families. But as their families through generations would grow, they had ruled over the territories. The first born son of Esau, was Teman. So you find that the scripture mentions many times, this son of Esau, Teman. He was one of the dukes. The area of the city of Teman, became known for the wisdom of the men that were there. You remember in the book of Job, that Eliphaz, one of the men who came to speak to Job in the hour of his distress, Eliphaz was from Teman. So you find the, the reference in Obadiah here, to the wisdom of Teman. So, "Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom;"

We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, [Heathen is literally, "nations".] Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle (1:1).

The stirring among the nations by the Lord, against Edom.

Behold, [The Lord said] I have made thee small among the nations: and you are greatly despised. The pride of your heart hath deceived you, you that dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground (1:2-3)?

Now today, in southern Jordan, one of the tourist attractions is the rock city of Petra. This rock city of Petra, is what the prophet here is referring to. "You dwell in the clefts of the rocks." The Edomites made fabulous cave dwellings in the limestone, or sandstone mountains, and they would decorate them. As far as the facade on the front, absolutely beautifully! So, the rock city of Petra remains today as a monument to their skills. As they would just carve out the sides of the mountains, the cliff, these beautiful public buildings, as well as private residences.

There is a group in Australia today, who are sort of cave dwellers. They have these lovely four bedroom homes carved out of the rock in this rather arid area, which would be rather difficult to survive in, but by digging them out of the rocks, they're naturally air conditioned. They remain cool, and uh, it's quite a, I've seen pictures of these rock homes, or cave homes in Australia. But the rock city of Petra, where they're in the cliff.

Now the valley going back into Petra is very narrow. You can only, the width of one horse is about all. You have to go single file on horseback through the canyon, to get back to Petra. Thus it had really natural defenses. It was very difficult for an invading army to actually have any success against the Edomites, dwelling back in these valleys, up in these caves, carved out of the rock on the mountainside there. So they felt very secure. The prophet speaks of the pride of their heart. Because they said, "Who can bring us down?", as they dwelt there in the clefts of the rock, habitation is high.

But though you exalt yourself as the eagle, [Who made his nest up there in the craggy heights of the mountains.] and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, saith the Lord (1:4).

The pride of Edom is to be brought down. Now the Lord speaks of the utter destruction that is gonna come against Edom.

In contrast, if a thief breaks into your house, and begins to steal stuff, he'll leave some of the stuff there. He's not gonna take everything. He might take your computer, and your stereo, and your TV, but he's not gonna try and walk off with your dresser, or armoire, or something like, he might take stuff out of your dresser, but he's not gonna try and lug your dresser out of your house. Because he can only take that which he can get away with quickly, and easily, that which he can carry very handily. So the prophet said...

If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? [In other words, they had picked up what they could carry, but then they're gonna leave something, they're not gonna take everything.] if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes (1:5)?

When the people would go through and harvest the grape crops, they would always leave some of the grapes on the vine for the poor people to come in after them, and to help themselves. They would not strip the vineyard clean. So, the Lord is however saying...

How are the things of Esau searched out! how are the hidden things sought up (1:6)!

God is going to strip them clean. He's not gonna leave anything of them.

All of the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him. Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and the understanding out of the mount of Esau? And the mighty men, O Teman, [Thy mighty men] shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter (1:7-9).

God's gonna completely wipe them out. For, and the reason for this, the judgement. That's what God is gonna do, the reason for it is...

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shall be cut off for ever (1:10).

The violence against Jacob. As I said, it started with the twin brothers, they were at odds with each other. But later, when Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, they were not successful in a direct assault against the land, because of their unbelief. So they took the route, they went to the other side of the great Jordan valley, and they started coming up on the opposite side of the Afro-Syrian rift. As they were coming to Edom, they sent a message to the king of Edom, requesting passage through the land. They said that they would not eat of the food of the land, unless they bought it. They would provide their own water. "All we want to do is pass through the land. We'll, we'll not harm anything, we'll not take anything, we just want passage through."

However, the king of Edom came down with his army, and would not allow them passage through the land. So they had to take a circuitous route, around Edom. That violence was there, that antagonism was still there.

Now later on, we find historically, and this is why we don't know exactly when this book was written, because several times Edom manifested violence against the descendants of Jacob. In II Chronicles, chapter 22, let's try 21, verse 8. Talking about the days of king Jehoram. "In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all of the chariots with him. And he rose up by night and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots." So, the time of the rebellion of the Edomites, against the children of Israel.

There is a, there is a, and I should've marked it. In my mind, I said, "Mark this, so when you get there, you'll be able to see it quickly", and I didn't. You know, should've listened. But there is a reference to Edom's rejoicing at the problems of Judah. There is in Psalm 137, the cry of the psalmist against Edom. In verse 7, he said, "Remember O Lord the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Raise it! Raise it! even to the foundation thereof." They were always there to cheer the enemies of Israel.

Whenever there was a nation that would come against Judah, they were there to support the enemies, and encourage the enemies, and to join in the plunder. This happened different times in the history. Of course it happened at the time of Jeremiah, under the destruction by Babylon. Again, Edom was there to take advantage of the condition of Judah, their defeat, and the psalmist is asking God to don't forget what Edom did, as they were there cheering on the enemies, and plundering the city. So, "The violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever". The reason for the judgement of God, the violence against God's people.

Now the Lord had promised Abraham, "I will bless those that bless thee, and curse those that curse thee. I don't know what your particular opinion may be concerning the Jew, but let me just give you a word of warning, don't curse them. You may not agree with them, you may not agree with their policies, you may not even like them, but don't curse them. As a Christian, I believe that we should be supportive of Israel, and supportive of the Jews, whether or not we agree with them. I think that it's just wise, as a Christian, to be supportive of them. If you want to be blessed, bless them. If you want to be cursed, curse them, because that is the promise God made to Abraham, and God keeps His promises! So, don't touch them!

Now Edom is suffering as the result of it. In the 25th chapter, in the book of Matthew, when the Lord returns to the earth, and He gathers the nations together for judgement, and He separates them as a shepherd would separate his sheep from his goats. He says to those on His right hand, "Come ye blessed of

the Father, inherit the kingdom. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink, I was naked and you clothed me". And goes on. "And Lord when did we see you like this?" And, He said, "Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these my brethren", and most commentators believe that Jesus was referring to your attitude towards the Jews. His brethren, the Jews and, "inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, my brethren", the Jewish people, "you have done it unto me". The Lord's identity with the Jewish people. So it is important that as Christians, we maintain a posture of love, and friendship toward the Jew. Edom is in trouble because they were against Judah, perpetually. When, and of course he'll be talking about this, we'll, we'll just wait till we get there.

In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away the captives his forces, and the foreigners entered into his gates, [That is of Jerusalem.] and they cast lots upon Jerusalem, even you were as one of them (1:11).

"You joined against Jerusalem, the forces against Jerusalem." When the Jews were trying to flee, the Edomites stood there at the fords, and they hindered them, they turned them over to their enemies.

You should not have looked on the day of your brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither should thou hast rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither should you have spoken proudly in the day of their distress (1:12).

Another thing that you want to be careful about, is gloating when God judges your enemies. It's not right, it's not scriptural. We are warned against gloating over God's judgement upon our enemies. This is what Edom was doing. They were gloating. God was judging His people, God was judging the nation of Israel because of their sin. But Edom was gloating in the judgement of God. "You should not have done that", the Lord is saying.

You should not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; [The Edomites moved in to take the spoil.] yea, you should not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; And neither should you have stood in the crossway, to cut off those that did escape; neither should you have delivered up those that did remain in the day of distress (1:13-14).

So the Edomites were vicious enemies, cutting off those that were trying to escape, turning them over to their enemies. The prophet goes out to the day of the Lord, when God is going to bring full judgement against Edom. Historically, about the last of the Edomites that we know, historically, were the Herods, that ruled in Israel at the time of Christ. Herod was known as an Idumean, or an Edomite. That, historically is about the last that we know of them. Who they are today, from an ethnic standpoint, we don't know. There are some who suggest that they are the Turks, that those of Edom actually finally settled in the area of Turkey, and there has been that suggestion. But the judgment that God has pronounced will not be complete until the day of the Lord, which of course is yet future.

For the day of the Lord is near upon all of the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee (1:15):

And what a principle this is, and we get it all through the scripture. "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto you." We read, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. As you have done, it shall be done unto you." We are told that we are not to judge. For what in, whatever measure we use to judge another, will be the standard of measurement that God will use when He judges us. As you have done, it's going to be done unto you. That's why I like to be so merciful and gracious, because when I stand before Him, I'm gonna need all the mercy I can get. So, as you have done, it shall be done unto you.

Thus God's declaration of a principal, and this is one of those principals that we find God repeating throughout the Bible. An important principal for us to grasp. Jesus said, "And whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye likewise also unto them. As you do, it shall be done". So Edom is really setting the standard for the judgment that God brings against her, which is often times the case. We are the ones who set the standards for the judgment of God. "As you have done, it shall be done unto you:"

thy reward shall return upon your own head (1:15).

You're going to get back what you have done. What you have sown, you're going to reap.

For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all of the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been (1:16).

That is, the Edomites. Now, as we have often mentioned, dark, dark, dark, is the future for Edom. But God never leaves us in the darkness. As the prophets were telling of the judgments of God that were going to come upon Judah, upon Israel, they never stopped with just you know, the, the great judgments that were gonna fall, but they always went out to the fulfillment of the purposes of judgment. When God brings judgment into your life, the purposes of God are always for your benefit, they are always for your good. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord. For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourges every son that He receiveth. But the chastening will bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

That’s God’s purpose. It’s not to just punish you, and send you out and, and just say, “Oh don’t bother me anymore! I’m through with you!”, but it’s to correct you, it’s to bring you back into that place where then God can do for you, what He wants to do, because of His love for you. So the story never ends in the darkness, it never ends in the judgment. But it always goes on to that glorious day, when the purposes of God have been accomplished, and when we will have been perfected by the work of God’s Spirit within our life, when then, we see the glory of God, and the blessings of God covering the entire earth.

Dark days lie ahead for this world. The world is entering into one of the darkest eras of man’s history. We are soon going to see a great tribulation, such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again. It will be cataclysmic, it will be catastrophic, as God is going to judge the world. But it won’t end in judgment. It will only be a purifying in order that the glorious day of God’s reign might come, and that we will see then, beyond the great tribulation, And immediately after the tribulation of those days, Jesus said, “Shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great glory, to establish the kingdom of God”. So it doesn’t end in darkness, but it ends in the glorious day of the Lord. So...

Upon mount Zion [in that day] shall be deliverance (1:17).

Paul the apostle, in Romans, speaks of the blindness that is happened in part to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. But then he said, “All Israel shall be saved, for there shall come a deliverer out of Zion”. So here is the prophecy of that deliverer. “In that day upon mount Zion shall be deliverance.” For the deliverer shall come and establish the kingdom of God.

and there shall be holiness (1:17);

Oh how I long for that today! Do you realize how out of control things are today. Do you really? I mean, do you read the papers? You know, right here in our community, people are being shot every week! So much so, that we don’t even get alarmed anymore. “Oh two more shot, my.” “Right over here on Bristol street!” “Oh my, that’s close isn’t it?” But, you know we, we it’s, it’s so common now, that we don’t all shook! It’s, it’s become so common place that it’s hardly even news. It doesn’t even hit front page anymore. You have to find it back on page six in a little article. You know, “Two more shot in Santa Ana.” You realize how far down we’ve gone. We’re getting ripe for the judgment of God. But, it’s not going to end there.

The purpose of the judgment is to purge things out, so that God can establish His righteous kingdom, and there will be holiness. People will live holy lives. I don’t know if we’ll have cars in those days, we probably won’t need them. God will have some better mode of transportation that doesn’t need tuning up, and doesn’t leave the air all fowled. But whatever we have, you won’t have to lock it for security. Ha, ha! You won’t have to worry about people stealing it. There will be holiness. People will live as God intended man to live, in a loving, giving society. Where our concern are for each other, and each other’s needs, and there won’t be the taking advantage of, or the ripping off of. But a glorious day of the Lord. The deliverer on mount Zion, and the effect of His reign will be holiness.

and the house of Jacob shall possess [his possessions, or] their possessions (1:17).

When God made the covenant with Abraham concerning the land, God said that He had given him all of the land from the river Euphrates to the Nile river. “Abraham, it’s all yours! From the river Euphrates, the great river Euphrates to the Nile! The great river of Euphrates!” They never have taken all of the land that God gave them. They never possessed their possessions. They did not even possess all of that land that was immediately there, that we usually define today as the land of Israel. They did not drive out all of the

enemies as they were commanded. Put some of them to tribute. They did not drive out the Philistines, the tribe of Dan left them there in the plains. Finally, the tribe of Dan even just moved out, and moved on up into the northern part to Lachish. They didn't possess their possessions.

God had promised them much more than what they claimed. But God had said, "Every place you put your foot, I have given to you for a possession". "It's there, I've given it to you. You've got to go in and just lay claim to it." But they didn't do it. They stopped short. They became satisfied, they became content, and they didn't press on to complete victory to possess all that God had promised to them.

Now God has promised to you, as His child, a glorious life of victory, of power, of peace, of glory, of rest! But so many Christians have never fully taken of all that God has provided for us. It's there! God has made provision. He has given it to you. But you've never fully possessed your possessions. We are like the children of Israel. We've come into the land, we've said, "Oh isn't this glorious dwelling in Canaan!" But there is so much more that God has for us, if we would just go in and claim it. "Every place you place your foot I have given to you for a possession. In that day, Jacob will possess her possessions." It goes on to share the last part of the book here, how that they will possess that territory that God had promised to them, or to their father Abraham.

The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau [That is the Edomites] will be the stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of the Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it (1:18).

So in that day of judgment, Esau, the house of Esau, is to be cut off. Joseph, or Jacob the fire, and Joseph the flame, and Esau the stubble.

And they of the south [That is the descendants of Jacob] shall possess the mount of Esau (1:19);

The Israelites, the Jews will move on over into the area of which of course today, is Saudi Arabia. A portion of it at least is Saudi Arabia, part of it is in Jordan, and they'll move across and possess the mount of Esau.

and they of the plain the Philistines: [They'll take the area of the Gaza strip, which is today of course, or Gaza strip, it's today disputed, but it will come into their possession.] and they will possess the fields of Ephraim, [Which today are called West Bank, the area around Jeanine, and Shechem, and Samaria, there in the West Bank area, the area of Ephraim.] and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead (1:19).

Which of course, was up in the area of the Golan Heights. Interesting that these areas are being disputed today. In fact they're, you know sort of negotiating over these very areas today, that the bible speaks about. Ultimately, no matter what comes out of these uh, land for peace kind of negotiations, Israel's going to get them ultimately, because God promised them to Abraham.

And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even to Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. And saviours [or deliverers] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom [Ah, I love it!] shall be the Lord's (1:20-21).

He shall reign for ever and ever! The glorious kingdom of God! That's where it leaves you. It doesn't leave you in the darkness of judgment. But it brings you out to the glorious reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

Now that's exactly what Jesus told you to pray. "When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come...". Yes! And the kingdom shall be the Lord's! We look at the sad condition of the world today, and our hearts yearn for righteousness! We think things are bad, and then we listen to Rush Limbaugh, and we didn't know how bad they were! I mean things are more corrupt than I thought! But oh how I long for that day, that day when He shall reign, in righteousness, in truth, in equity. That day, when the kingdoms shall be the Lord's.

You see, that's exactly what Jesus came to do. To redeem the world back to God. Satan took Him up to a high mountain, and said, "Hey bow down and worship me, and you can have them". He showed Him the kingdoms of the world. "Just bow down and worship me, I'll give them all to you. They're mine. I can give them to whomever I will. If you just bow down and worship me, I'll give you the kingdoms and the glory of

them". He came to the end that He might reign over the kingdoms of this world. But not by following Satan's compromise, but by following God's plan of redemption through the cross. Jesus paid the price, and has redeemed the world. But as the book of Hebrews declares, "God hath put all things under Him".

But we do not yet see all things under Him, but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory. But the day is gonna come, and we're praying for it. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Here on this earth, even as it is in heaven." His, He is, He does reign, He does rule, and His will is being done in heaven, and that's a glorious place.

We always think of heaven as idyllic, and it is. Why? Because, His will is being done there. What makes earth hell? The rebellion against His will. What brings the suffering? What brings the pain? What brings all of the tragedies, and calamities? The rebellion against His will. When His will is done here on the earth, even as it is in heaven, these things will all go, and we will dwell with Him, in His kingdom, world without end. King of kings, and Lord of Lords, for ever, and ever, and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Handel caught it! He caught the excitement of it. I pray that God will help us to catch the excitement of it. Our day is coming. The day of the Lord. Our kingdom. Our King is coming, and we shall live and reign with Him for ever.

Father, we thank You for the glorious hope that we have in Christ Jesus. Lord even as Obadiah prophesied against Edom, and we see historically, the prophecies fulfilled. Lord, we look forward to that portion of the prophecy of Obadiah, that yet remains unfulfilled. But, we are convinced is not far distant. That we will see the glorious culmination of the prophecies of scripture, and our Lord Jesus Christ shall reign, and shall rule over the earth. King of kings, Lord of Lords. So, Lord we pray that tonight we might submit ourselves as citizens of that heavenly kingdom, and surrender our lives in allegiance to Jesus Christ. In His name we pray, Amen.