

**Obadiah:**  
**Edomites' Destruction Foretold**  
**Lesson 12**

**Key Verse**

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

—Romans 9:13

**Key Verse Thought:** Before beginning today's lesson, consider today's key verse. It is important to remember that this is God speaking. We must remember that God hates sin and wickedness. See what we read about Jesus, God's Son: "**Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ...**" (Hebrews 1:9). See that in this verse *righteousness* means "disposition or conduct in common life — i.e.: just, uprightness, good character, virtue" and *iniquity* means "sin, unrighteousness, lawlessness." If you are teaching a class, ask your students if they remember the twins Jacob and Esau from the Bible. Remember that Esau rejected what was right. As we look at this Bible Lesson, we will better understand why God hated Esau. We will see how Esau, and his descendants, had rejected God and the things of God. For that (and because of his hatred toward Jacob and his descendants) God promised destruction to that people.

**Emphasis:** First, we are to make sure we have chosen a life pleasing to God (have Jesus in our heart). Afterward, we should learn to live as an ambassador in this world, knowing we represent Jesus to the lost.

**Lesson Summary:** Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It is considered one of the older books of prophecy. No one is quite sure when it was written. There are no clues within the book to help us place it in history as many other books of prophecy have. However, we do know that it is a book of warning. It warns us of what will happen to those who are against God's people. It was written as a warning to those who persecuted the Israelites.

God called Obadiah as an ambassador (a messenger representing God) to warn Edom of their pending doom. First, though, we will remember who the people of Edom were. They were descendants of Esau. Remember that he was the twin brother of Jacob. We will recall the events that transpired, causing them to become enemies, and will consider a few times that Israel had conflict with the Edomites. They were also a vocal adversary when Israel was threatened. They

took pleasure in the troubles of Israel. Because of that, God would deal with them. We will read that another reason they would be destroyed was because of their pride; God would bring them down.

Finally, we will read of the judgments that would fall upon Edom; and the recompense God would pay His people, the Israelites.

### **Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson**

- Monday: Obadiah 1
- Tuesday: Genesis 25
- Wednesday: Genesis 27
- Thursday: Genesis 28
- Friday: Numbers 20:14-21
- Saturday: Obadiah 1

### **Obadiah:**

#### **Edomites' Destruction Foretold**

1. Who Were the Edomites?
  - Descendants of Esau
  - Esau named Edom when he sold his birthright
  - Adversary of Israel
2. Edomites' Failure: Obadiah 1-9
  - Obadiah, God's ambassador
  - Their pride and subsequent diminution
3. God's Judgments: Obadiah 10-16
  - The Edomites' wrongdoings
  - God's coming judgment upon Edom
4. Jacob's Descendants Recompense: Obadiah 17-21
  - God would preserve His people
  - The great possessions the Israelites would have

**Note:** In our last lesson, we learned of the vengeance of the Lord that was to fall upon Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, because they had afflicted God's people. In this lesson, we will study the book of Obadiah, which is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It is considered one of the older books of prophecy, because no one is quite sure when it was written. It is a book that warns of what will happen to those who are against God's people.

## 1. Who were the Edomites?

The first thing we need to know to understand better the book of Obadiah: who were the Edomites? Remember back into the history we have already studied. God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants that He would be their God, and they would be His people. God gave Abraham a son in his old age, Isaac. Isaac and his wife Rebecca had twin boys — Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:19–26). As the twin boys struggled within Rebecca, she inquired of the Lord as to why. See what God told Rebecca in answer to her question. “**And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23). There would be two nations, and two “**manner of people.**” *Manner of people* means “an ethnic group that has an internal cultural bond.” The older would serve the younger — opposite of what one would think. Read the description of the two boys. “**25. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 26a. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob ...**” (Genesis 25:25–26a). Read a further description of the twin boys and notice how different they were. “**And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents” (Genesis 25:27). Everyone should remember the accounting of Esau coming in from the field, hungry. “**And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom” (Genesis 25:30). Notice it is here we see his name is Edom. Do you remember what happened? Jacob made him promise to sell him the birthright for that bowl of red pottage. The birthright was the advantages given to the oldest (for example: he received great respect from the household; he became a sustained authority as the family grew). This should have meant much more to Esau than a bowl of pottage. We catch an insight from the New Testament on this subject. “**16. Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17. For ye********

know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Hebrews 12:16–17). He was considered a wicked or profane person because he sold his birthright. We then find he did not inherit the blessing for “**he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance ....**” Remembering back to Genesis 27, Jacob received the blessing from his father — not Esau.

Esau married with the wrong people, the Canaanites. “**Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan ...**” (Genesis 36:2). Remember that was against his father’s wishes (see Genesis 28:6–9). We can read the genealogy of Esau in Genesis 36. Also see Genesis 36:8: “**Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.**” The land of Esau is called Seir, the country of Edom. This will help us, as we understand the book of Obadiah. It will also help us understand some of the conflicts God’s people, Israel, had with the Edomites through the years.

As the children of Israel were on their way to the Promised Land after leaving Egypt, they had to pass through the land of Edom. However, the king of Edom would not let them pass. Instead, the Edomites came out against them (see Numbers 20:14–21). But later, in Deuteronomy chapter 2, God told the Israelites that they would pass through the land of Edom — but they could not live upon Mount Seir because it was given to Esau’s descendants. There are other instances in history when the children of Edom would not cooperate with Israel. We can read of instances where they were as an enemy. A few examples are when King Saul warred against them in 1 Samuel 14:47, when David conquered them and they became his servants in 2 Samuel 8:14, and when they were a vocal adversary when Jerusalem was threatened. (See Psalm 137:7: “**Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.**”). These are just a few.

**A Deeper Path:** Remember our Key verse for today. “**As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**” (Romans 9:13). Can you understand God’s hatred when Esau rejected God’s ways, choosing to be a wicked, or profane, person? Moreover, his descendants followed in his path. Should we choose God’s ways? “**6. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon**” (Isaiah 55:6-7). God is a forgiving God — if one will only forsake his way and turn to God.

## 2. Edomites' Failure: Obadiah 1-9

Now that we know that the descendants of Esau (the Edomites) were the enemy of God's people, read the call of Obadiah. "The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle" (Obadiah 1). As we read this, we know the message was specifically directed to Edom. God was sending Obadiah with a message to the heathen. Remember that *heathen* means "non-Israeli, or Gentile; the nations." Keep in mind that the Edomites had chosen to **not** be God's people.

How did all of the nations view them? "Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised" (Obadiah 2). They were by no means a great nation. We can also read that most nations hated the Edomites. As we continue to read, God pointed out that they were a proud nation for they thought more of themselves than they should have. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" (Obadiah 3). To help us understand their sense of security, we need to remember that they were given Mount Seir. They dwelt in the mountains, so their habitation was high; probably well fortified. Nevertheless, as we continue, we find that obviously gave them a false sense of security. But does it really matter what they thought of themselves? It only matters what God thought. "Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD" (Obadiah 4). Read the following question to consider. Which is more important: where one elevates or places oneself, or where God places one? As we will learn in our lesson today, it does not really matter where we place ourselves if we are opposed to God and His people.

Read Obadiah 5. "If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave *some grapes*?" (Obadiah 1:5). (This is almost the same proclamation made in Jeremiah 49:8–10.) Notice God wanted them to think about the thievery one could endure. When somebody robs a place, or someone, they rarely take everything. They usually take the most important or most valuable, leaving some things behind. God wanted them to fully understand what He was about to reveal. "How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up!" (Obadiah 6). God knew every thing about Esau; and his descendants. Every evil

thought and every evil deed done against God's people — even all of the hidden things are made known to God. “The *secret things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we may do all the words of this law*” (Deuteronomy 29:29). Some things God makes known to His people. God was making known to Obadiah the exceeding wickedness of the descendants of Esau. We should remember that God sees and knows everything, for there is nothing hidden from God. (See an example in 1 Corinthians 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ....”)

Read Obadiah 7–9. “7. All 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. 8. Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? 9. And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.” Edom had seen people deceive them and defeat them before, but God would destroy. All would be killed. At this point, this was a prophecy of what God was going to do, but we now know that this was fulfilled in 70 A.D. All of Esau's descendants were utterly wiped out; destroyed.

**A Deeper Path:** Obadiah was called by God to be an ambassador. An **ambassador** is *one who acts as a representative; often a messenger*. Paul was a messenger of God's Word to the lost world. “19. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19–20). As a Christian, we too are to be ambassadors. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ ...” (2 Corinthians 5:20a). Read what we are warned of in Proverbs 13:17: “A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador *is* health.” We are to be a faithful ambassador of Christ, representing Jesus to the world; not as a wicked messenger.

Also, remember what God thinks of pride (of which Edom was guilty). “Pride *goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall*” (Proverbs 16:18).

### 3. God's Judgments: Obadiah 10-16

Read the following verses to see what the descendants of Esau, the Edomites, did wrong. Also, notice the judgment they will receive:

#### Obadiah 10–14:

“10. For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

- 11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side,
- in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and
- foreigners entered into his gates,
- and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them.
- 12. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger;
- neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;
- neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.
- 13. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity;
- yea, thou shouldest 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;
- 14. Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape;
- neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

Read the following verses to understand the judgment of God that would fall upon Edom:

#### Obadiah 15–16:

- “15. For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen:
- as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee:
- thy reward shall return upon thine own head.
- 16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *so* shall all the heathen drink continually,

- yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.”

There are many other verses recorded that would tell of the pending judgment upon Edom (also called Idumean):

- **Ezekiel 25:13:** “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.”
- **Ezekiel 25:14:** “And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.”
- **Ezekiel 35:15:** “As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, *even* all of it: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.”
- **Ezekiel 36:5:** “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all *their* heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.”
- **Isaiah 34:5–6:** “5. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. 6. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.”

**A Deeper Path:** It is very important to recognize why God was sending judgment upon Edom. They not only refused help to the Israelites, they were a constant source of trouble to them. What should we learn from Proverbs 24:17? “*Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth*” (Proverbs 24:17).

Jesus showed compassion upon those in need (see Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 5:19; etc.). We, as Christians, are to show compassion to those in need — just like Jesus did. “*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*” (1 John 3:17).



Remember what we have learned. Esau's descendants rendered evil to Israel. They were not an ally. They were even related! See the admonishment we read.

8. Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: 9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil (1 Peter 3:8-12)

Because we are Christians, we are to have compassion upon one another. We are to refrain from evil and evil deeds — turning away from evil. We are to strive to be at peace with one another; for God is watching, and He is against those that do evil. If you forget this, remember Esau's descendants who were told they would be utterly destroyed because of how they had treated their extended family, the Israelites.

#### **4. How Would Jacob's Descendants Benefit?**

As we read the following, we can understand how God would preserve His people – Judah and Israel. Also, see the devouring of Esau:

##### **Obadiah 17–21:**

- “17. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, [remember that Zion is Jerusalem]
- and there shall be holiness;
- and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
- 18. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame,
- and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken *it*.”

Read the great possessions God would give His people afterward:

- “19. And *they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.* 20. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.*”

The Israelites would see a redistribution of land, and then God would send deliverers to judge them — rightly.

- “21. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.”

Then the kingdom would be the Lord's. “2. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,* 3. And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness” (Malachi 1:2–3).

For, you see, God is still in complete control.

**Reinforcement:** As we studied this lesson, we saw that God hated unrighteousness; so much so, that he told Obadiah to warn Edom of their imminent destruction and annihilation — but not before telling them exactly why this would happen to them. The Edomites had chosen to be the enemy of God and His people. They had the choice, as do all people; to believe in God, or not. Remember what we have already learned that is presented so simply and easy to understand. “6. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* 7. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.* 9. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Galatians 3:6–9). Those who have the faith of Abraham — believing Jesus would one day come and bless the world with his death, burial, and resurrection — are justified before God. Those who reject these truths will miss God's blessing — just as the nation of Edom, who rejected God and God's people.

Another important thing to recognize in this lesson: God's hand is against those who are against God's people. We should also remember how this displeases God. It should make us stop and think so that we do not speak against God's people in haste or jest.

**Closing:** It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today's lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today that we will make sure we have chosen a life pleasing to God (have Jesus in our heart). Pray we will learn to live as an ambassador in this world, knowing we represent Jesus to the lost.*