

Obadiah

Purpose: Judahites should look soberly at the impending doom of Edom, but take heart in restoration promises.

Outline: 1a – Title

1b-14 – Judgment against Edom

15-21 – Day of the Lord

Author: Obadiah

Date: Obadiah's ministry took place either during the reign of Jehoram (cf. 2 Kings 8:20-22 & 2 Chronicles 21:8-20) or more likely during the time period 605-586 (contemporary of Jeremiah)

Highlights:

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament (just 21 verses). The name, Obadiah, means “servant (or worshiper) of Yahweh.”

Unlike the other prophetic books, the title of the book (1:1a) gives no information about the time, place, or prophet. This has caused vast disagreement about the date and location of the prophecy. The dating is mainly a matter of relating vv.11-14 to one of two specific events in Israel history. Either it refers to the invasion of Jerusalem by Philistines and Arabs during the reign of Jehoram (853-841 B.C.) – making Obadiah a contemporary of Elisha); or it refers to the Babylonian attacks on Jerusalem (605-586). Obadiah would then be a contemporary of Jeremiah. The latter has received wider acceptance as it seems more likely.

Obadiah was probably a Judahite. His prophecy was a response to the role Edom played in the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian hordes of King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24-25). Edom is also called Hor (Numbers 20:23); Seir (Genesis 36:8-9), and Esau (Deuteronomy 2:4-5). Edom is the nation of descendants from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (who later became Israel). Edom and Israel coexisted peacefully until the reigns of Saul and David.

As early as 597 B.C., control of the Negev was wrested from Judah by the Babylonians (cr. 2 Kings 24:8-17), and the Edomites moved into the area to fill the vacuum. Edom not only assisted Babylon in the sacking of Jerusalem in 587, but also occupied Judean villages well into the Persian period.

There is a significant parallel between Obadiah 1-9 and Jeremiah 49:7-22. Either Obadiah said it first, Jeremiah said it first, or some unknown source said it first.

Judgment against Edom (1b-14)

God's resolve to judge Edom (1b-7)

Summons (1b)

Sentence (2)

Accusation (3)

Sentence (4-7)

God's reason to judge Edom (8-14)

Sentence (8-9)

Accusation (10a)

Sentence (10b)

Accusation (11-14)

Day of the Lord (15-21)

Vengeance against the nations and Edom (15-16)

Accusation (15a)

Sentence (15b)

Accusation (16a)

Sentence (16b)

Deliverance for Jerusalem and all Israel (17-21)

Oracle of Salvation (17-18)

Oracle of Salvation (19-21)