THE BOOMERANG EFFECT – JUDGMENT ON EDOM

Commentary on the Book of Obadiah

by Paul G. Apple, July 2025

SELF RIGHTEOUS PILING ON BY ARROGANT BOASTERS IS DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION BY THE GOD WHO FULFILLS HIS PROMISE OF A RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM

Obadiah 15 -- "*For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nation.*
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head."

For each section:

- Thesis statement … to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline … to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions … to encourage life application
- Representative quotations … to stimulate deeper insight

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BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

GENERAL

Anthony Gelston: Jerome's statement that this book is as difficult as it is short is often quoted. The first verse identifies the prophet as Obadiah and the topic as Edom. Obadiah is a common Hebrew name, meaning "Worshiper" or "Servant of Yahweh," but there are no grounds for identifying this prophet with any of the dozen or so individuals of this name in other parts of the OT. Much of the prophecy is undoubtedly concerned with Edom, but questions arise over the unity of the material and over the possibility of dating the prophecy. . .

The view taken here is that **Obad 10–14** most probably does refer to the actual treachery of Edom against Judah at the time of the fall of Jerusalem, with the corollary that this enables us to date at least this part of the prophecy shortly after that time.

Daniel Timmer: The book of Obadiah presents God's justice against sin, and his mercy in salvation, in two overlapping perspectives.

- The first is tied to the state of Edom at the time of Judah's destruction by Babylon in 586 bc, when Edom's often adversarial relationship with its kinfolk reached its lowest point in Edom's violence against residents of Jerusalem fleeing death and destruction. The retribution that Edom will receive for these sins overlaps with God's definitive punishment of all sin in the Day of yhwh (in most modern versions, the Day of the Lord).
- This second perspective also involves his restoration of his people, which includes both Israelites and those on 'Mount Esau', in fulfilment of **Genesis 12:1–3**. Obadiah's message thus encourages the faithful, whether in Judah or in exile then or in any setting now, while warning the wicked (whether Israelite or not) to repent before the Day of yhwh falls upon them (Wendland 2014: 133).

AUTHORSHIP, BACKGROUND, SETTING, DATE

The Edomites as descendents from Esau were distant relatives of the Israelites and lived in the mountainous region to the south. They had a history of opposing God's program for exalting the nation of Israel and making her a light to the world. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded and drove some refugees down their way, they took delight in the plight of their neighbors. Obadiah delivers God's message of doom and destruction for their arrogance and opposition. The Edomites occupied the territory east of the Arabah between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah south of the Zered River and north of Eziongeber (Elath). Its eastern boundary was the Arabian Desert. Edom was also known as Seir after Mount Seir, the prominent tableland that occupied the northeastern part of Edom's territory.

Thomas Constable: As is true of all the other prophetical books in the Old Testament, the title of this one evidently comes from the name of its writer. "*Obadiah*" means "servant of Yahweh" or "worshipper of Yahweh," depending on the form (vocalization) of his name in Hebrew, which is debated. There are 13 men who bear this name in the Old Testament, from Davidic to postexilic

times, assuming the writer was not one of the other 12. It appears that he was not since attempts to identify him with one of the others have proved unsatisfying.

Shortest OT book and one of the most difficult to date. The two dates suggested are 845 B.C. and 586 B.C.

John MacArthur: The date of writing is equally difficult to determine, though we know it is tied to the Edomite assault on Jerusalem described in **vv. 10–14**. Obadiah apparently wrote shortly after the attack. There were 4 significant invasions of Jerusalem in OT history:

1) by Shishak, king of Egypt, ca. 925 B.C. during the reign of Rehoboam (**1 Kin. 14:25, 26; 2 Chr. 12**);
2) by the Philistines and Arabians between 848–841 B.C. during the reign of Jehoram of Judah (**2 Chr. 21:8–20**);
3) by Jehoash, king of Israel, ca. 790 B.C. (**2 Kin. 14; 2 Chr. 25**); and
4) by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Of these 4, only the second and the fourth are possible fits with historical data. Number two is preferable, since Obadiah's description does not indicate the total destruction of the city, which took place under Nebuchadnezzar's attack. Also, although the Edomites were involved inNebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem (**Ps. 137; Lam. 4:21**), it is significant that Obadiah does not mention the Babylonians by name (as with all the other prophets who wrote about Jerusalem's fall), nor is there any reference to the destruction of the temple or the deportation of the people; in fact, the captives appear to have been taken to the SW, not E to Babylon (cf**. v. 20**).

Chuck Swindoll: the best argument places Obadiah in the 840s BC, making him the earliest writing prophet, a few years prior to Joel, and a contemporary of Elisha. The biggest piece of evidence for this early date comes from **Obadiah 1:10–14**, which indicates an Edomite invasion of Jerusalem. While Edom was too weak a nation to ever invade Judah on its own, Edom no doubt participated with other nations when the winds of change blew in its favor.

In the 840s, when Edom rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah, the Philistines and the Arabians also invaded Jerusalem (**2 Kings 8:20–22; 2 Chronicles 21:16–17**). While 2 Chronicles does not indicate the Edomites' participation in the invasion, **Obadiah 1:10–14** pictures the violent behavior that the Edomites carried out on their neighbors, waiting on nearby roads to cut down those fleeing from the invaders within Jerusalem. The Edomites could have easily heard of Jerusalem's invasion by foreign powers and entered themselves into the fray so that they too might benefit from plundering their neighbors in Jerusalem.

Hampton Keathley: It is very difficult to be certain about the date for this book, but primary arguments for a late date seem to center around the idea that the evil perpetrated against Israel by Edom was so bad that only the destruction by Babylon in 586 could fit the description adequately. However, just because a later destruction was worse, doesn't mean that earlier conflicts, destruction, etc. weren't bad too. [especially since the events are meant to be typical of eschatological devastation in the coming Day of the Lord]

If Obadiah is writing after a bad incident in Israel's history, and describes it as being really bad,

that doesn't mean a later (and even worse) event is in view because it hadn't happened yet.

Homer Heater Jr.: There is insufficient historical data in the book to identify its historical setting. A major catastrophe has taken place in Judah that has led to exultation on the part of Edom. The most likely time for that catastrophe was the destruction of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar. It most certainly could have been earlier, but I believe it belongs to this horrible period of Judah's greatest devastation.

David Guzik: **Who were the Edomites?**

- The Edomites were the people descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob (**Genesis 25:19-34**). Esau was nicknamed "Edom" (which means, "red") probably because he had red hair.
- Esau eventually settled in the area of Mount Seir and absorbed a people known as the Horites (see **Genesis 36:8-43**, which refers to Edomite rulers as dukes in the King James Version).
- When Israel came out of Egypt and wanted to pass through the land of the Edomites to enter into the Promised Land, the Edomites wouldn't 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 (see **2 Chronicles 20:1-27**, which describes 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**).
- The Edomites fought side by side with the Jews in the rebellion against Rome in A.D. 66-70 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.

J. Sidlow Baxter: The Edomite people were like both their father and their country. Their nature was marked by a hard earthiness. They were profane, proud, fierce, cruel; and these tempers found concentrated vent in a strangely persistent, implacable, bitter, gloating spite against Israel, the nation which had descended from the twin-brother of their own national father, Esau. This violent nastiness had expressed itself again and again in the history of the two peoples. A never-forgotten instance of it was way back in the days of Israel's wilderness wanderings, when, with vicious threat, Edom had flung refusal to the courteous appeal of Moses that Israel might be allowed to pass through the Edomite country (**Num. xx. 14-22**).

Daniel Timmer: Edom's territory lay south of the Dead Sea and the territory of Moab. It was bounded by the Arabah on the west and the Arabian Desert on the east (Edelman 1995: 3). As early as the late second millennium it developed a large-scale metal production industry alongside its even older and largely nomadic agricultural and shepherding economy (Burnett 2016: 331). This significant industry, which thrived first in the twelfth to eleventh centuries and again in the tenth to ninth centuries, 'could only have been organized by a complex polity', to which passing reference is perhaps made in **Genesis 36:21** (Levy et al. 2005: 158). By about 800 bc, Edom had become a vassal of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, but the effective absence of Assyria

from the region for the next seventy or so years allowed Judah to occasionally reassert control over parts of Edom's territory (**2 Kgs 8:22; 14:7, 22; 16:6; 2 Chr. 28:16–17**) until Assyria returned in the late 730s. From that point onwards, Edom remained a vassal until the end of Assyrian control of the Levant a century later (Edelman 1995: 1).

Edom's participation in the Assyrian Empire enhanced its integration in international trade, which travelled along 'the King's Highway' that passed through Edom's territory as well as other southern routes.3 Its increased economic success from the mid eighth century onwards reflects increased political organization centred on the Edomite Plateau (Burnett 2016: 336). The Edomite state was relatively decentralized and consisted primarily of 'small agricultural villages', which accounts for the minimal quantity of epigraphic (written) remains that have been discovered at its more developed sites (Crowell 2008: 413).

Alongside occasional conflict between Judah and Edom, including Edom's attack on Arad around 700 bc and significant incursions into Judean territory around the end of the seventh century (van der Veen 2014: 397), Edom's proximity to Judah also made possible more peaceful interaction, including mutually beneficial trade. This general proximity echoes more formal alliances of 'brotherhood' that first appeared between second-millennium kings and later continued between smaller states (Podany 2010: 307), and it is possible that such a formal agreement existed between Judah and Edom (Dykehouse 2013). Be that as it may, the brotherhood of their respective ancestors entailed even greater obligations. This explains Obadiah's exclusive focus on Edom, while Babylon is referred to only obliquely despite being almost entirely responsible for Jerusalem's destruction.5

LITERARY STYLE:

Thomas Constable: Whoever Obadiah was, he possessed significant literary talent. He employed the skills of imagery, rhetorical questions, irony, repetition, and various forms of parallelism in his brief prophecy.

Daniel Timmer: Obadiah contains only two types of literature: oracles of judgment (**vv. 2–4, 5–9, 10–14**) and an oracle that promises deliverance for (restored) Judah and judgment for all the nations (**vv. 15–21**). Except for the first verse, the entire book is presented as yhwh's direct speech.

INTERPRETIVE CHALLENGES:

John Barton: "Our Joel is the problem-child of Old Testament exegesis," wrote Adalbert Merx in

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Chuck Swindoll: Edom had been found guilty of pride before the Lord (**Obadiah 1:3**). They had thought themselves greater than they actually were; great enough to mock, steal from, and even

harm God's chosen people. But the "*Lord GOD*," a name Obadiah used to stress God's sovereign power over the nations, will not stand idly by and let His people suffer forever (**1:1**). Through Obadiah, God reminded Edom of their poor treatment of His people (**1:12–14**) and promised redemption, not to the Edomites but to the people of Judah (**1:17–18**). The nation of Edom, which eventually disappeared into history, remains one of the prime examples of the truth found in **Proverbs 16:18**: "*Pride goes before destruction, / And a haughty spirit before stumbling*."

Application: Obadiah's prophecy focuses on the destructive power of pride. It reminds us of the consequences of living in a self-serving manner, of following through on our own feelings and desires without considering their impact on those around us. Do you struggle to set aside your own wants and desires for those of God and others? Though such pride has been part of the lives of fallen human beings since the tragedy of the fall in Eden, Obadiah offers us a stark reminder to place ourselves under God's authority, to subject our appetites to His purposes, and to find our hope in being His people when the restoration of all things comes.

David Malick: **Purposes of Writing**
A. To proclaim judgment upon Edom for rejoicing over the fall of Jerusalem.
B. To proclaim through the judgment of Edom that all of the nations will be judged for their hostility to God's people.
C. To proclaim a message of hope for Judah.

John Piper: The main point of the prophecy seems to be that God's oppressed people should take courage because God is still the righteous Master of the universe: wrongs will be righted through judgment, and the Judge of all the earth shall rule openly someday with all his people in safety forever.

Douglas Stuart: **Edom deserved punishment**, not because it didn't know any better (cf. **Jonah 4:11**) but precisely because it did know better. What the nations mentioned in oracles such as Obadiah are to be judged for is that which they knew to be wrong but did anyway. Taking the territory of others is understood worldwide to be wrong—yet that is what Edom did to Israel. While the Babylonians had the Judeans either in captivity or under siege in Jerusalem (i.e., from 588 onwards), the Edomites simply moved in and took over large tracts of land in southern Judah, abandoned by their Judean owners as they fled for safety from the Babylonians (**Obad 11–13**). (Edom had capitulated to Babylon earlier and thus was not in the same danger that the Judeans were.) The Edomites also captured and turned over to the Babylonians fleeing Judeans (**Obad 14**) instead of showing compassion toward their brother nation. As a result, the judgment of God described in **Obad 1–9** was announced by Obadiah against Edom, including defeat in war, plundering by the enemy, widespread slaughter of the population, and the permanent end of Edom as a threat to Israel.

John Goldingay: This material still concerns Israel, because in different connections Yahweh's attitude to other peoples in Israel's world is important to Israel itself. Several rationales thus lie behind these prophecies. There is the danger of Israel being too impressed by other peoples and thus relying on them as potential allies rather than on Yahweh. There is the danger of being too impressed by them and thus being afraid of them, rather than trusting Yahweh. There is the

danger of thinking that Yahweh will simply write them off and that they will never have the chance to turn to Yahweh.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Obadiah was composed after the Babylonian defeat of Judah, which brought massive physical devastation, death, forced deportation, and loss of temple, monarchy, and capital city. As survival literature, prophetic books like Obadiah were written to help the faith community cope with the crushing physical, psychological, and spiritual trauma created by foreign domination and conquest (Stulman and Kim: 9–23). Obadiah does so by providing a straightforward, comforting message of hope to a demoralized people, promising that God will destroy their enemies. Herein lies the central theological challenge for a Christian commentary on Obadiah.

MAJOR THEMES AND THEOLOGY

John MacArthur: The book is a case study of **Gen. 12:1–3**, with two interrelated themes:

1) the judgment of Edom by God for cursing Israel. This was apparently told to Judah, thereby providing reassurance to Judah that the Day of the Lord (**v. 15**) would bring judgment upon Edom for her pride and for her participation in Judah's downfall;
2) Judah's restoration. This would even include the territory of the Edomites (**vv. 19–21; Is. 11:14**).

Obadiah's blessing includes the near fulfillment of Edom's demise (**vv. 1–15**) under the assault of the Philistines and Arabians (**2 Chr. 21:8–20**) and the far fulfillment of the nation's judgment in the first century A.D. and Israel's final possession of Edom (**vv. 15–21**).

Lloyd Ogilvie: **3 Major Themes**

1) Important to know your enemies. There was no question in Obadiah's mind about who was his enemy. The twenty-one verses of his prophecy are focused on the judgment of the Edomites.

2) Prediction of a deliverance on Mount Zion (**v. 17**).

3) Judgment and punishment is God's prerogative (**vs. 21**).

Paul R. Van Gorder: **STEPS IN EDOM'S DOWNFALL--**
Tracing the stages of Edom's decline is a valuable study.

First, the prophet accused them of standing aloof (**Obadiah 1:11**). In every conflict between right and wrong, the person who remains neutral does much of the damage.

Second, they actually saw the destruction and distress of Jerusalem with their own eyes (**Obadiah 12**). What a terrible thing to refuse to help the Lord's people! In the present Jewish situation, we would do well to consider the fact that God's attitude has not changed toward His chosen people. Oh, I know that one may argue the craftiness of the Jews, pointing out that they are still supplanters. Even so, we must not join those who would condemn them. I fear for any nation that causes grief to Israel. [cp. **Ge 12:1-3**]

Third, the Edomites gloated when Israel fell (**Obadiah 1:12**).

Fourth, they spoke proudly; they had what we call the "pharisaical attitude." Edom stood by and said, "That's all right; they probably deserved it."

Fifth, not only were the Edomites guilty of wicked indifference, they eventually became actively involved in Israel's distress (**Obadiah 1:13**).

Sixth, Edom took advantage of Judah's trouble by plundering some of their wealth (**Obadiah 1:3**).Sin is never the sudden outburst of a moment. (Note carefully the steps these relatives of Israel had taken in their downfall.)

Seventh, they gave open assistance to the enemy (**Obadiah 1:14**). When the Israelites escaped and tried to flee, the Edomites cut them off from their defenses and handed them over to their pursuers.

Yes, it's the old story of the progression of sin. The Old Testament prophet was thundering out the New Testament principle of *"whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (**Galatians 6:7**).

Philip Peter Jenson: The promises of salvation in Obadiah reflect the fundamental belief in Israel's election as the people of God and the choice of Zion as Yhwh's dwelling place on earth. Although he may have departed for a while, Obadiah looks forward to a time of renewed presence and protection for his people (**Obad 15–21**). The behaviour of Edom is condemned with such force not just because it contradicts general ethics, nor even because Edom and Israel are brother nations.

Even more significant is that Israel was the focus of Yhwh's purposes (Robinson 1988, 95). There is a canonical tension between the texts that regard the nations as subject to divine judgment and punishment (e.g. Obadiah), and those that look to some sort of sharing in Israel's blessing (e.g. **Mic 4:1–5; 6:8**). Jonah is one example of a sophisticated exploration of this tension. The New Testament resolves this tension primarily in terms of the mission of the church (e.g. **Acts 1; Romans 1**).

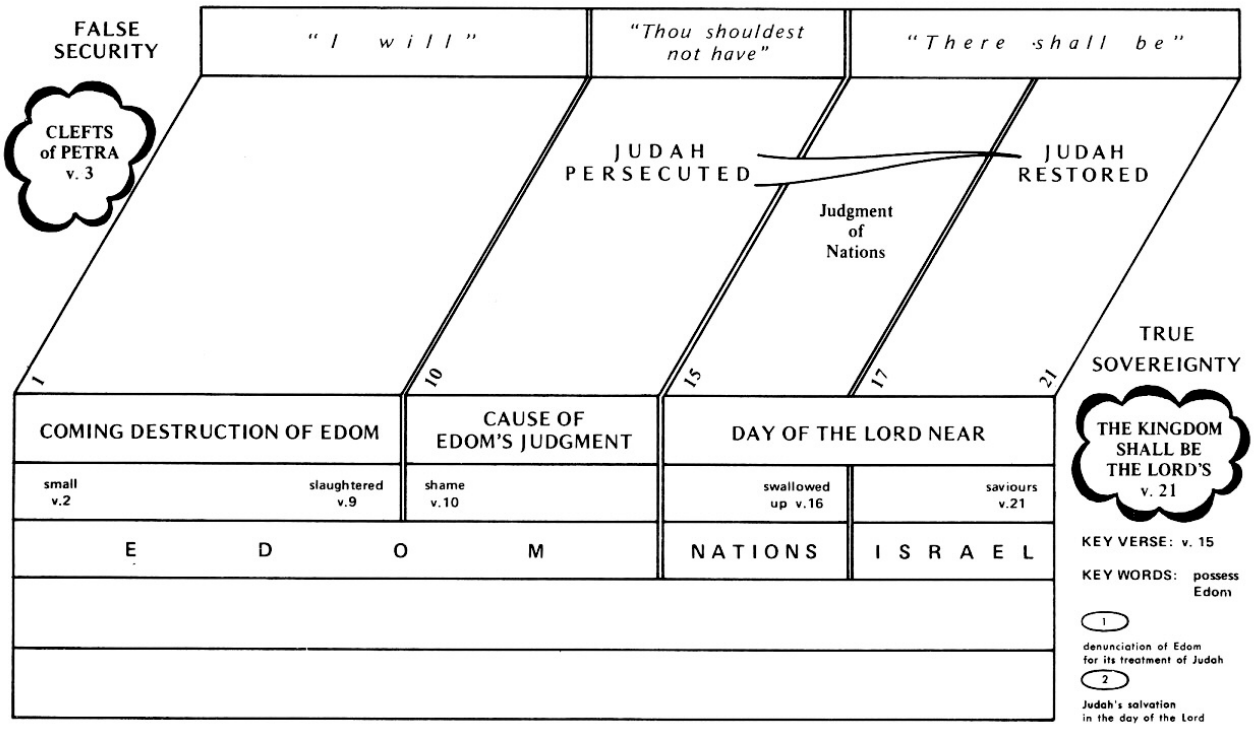
STRUCTURE

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Obadiah is difficult to divide into sections: there are almost as many different outlines as there are commentators. Given this lack of consensus, any convictions about structure should be held lightly. However, it does seem clear that the book falls into two parts. **Verses 1-14** denounce Edom for various offenses against Judah, and **15-21** announce the destruction of enemy peoples accompanied by the restoration of Judah. The proclamation in **verse 15** that the day of the Lord against the nations is near marks a **turning point** in the book. It broadens the scope of judgment to include the nations and signals the shift from Judah's desolation to its deliverance.

Nelson's Bible Dictionary:

I. The Predictions of Judgment on Edom **1:1-9**
II. The Reasons for Judgment on Edom **1:10-14**
III. The Results of Judgment on Edom **1:15-16**
IV. The Possession of Edom by Israel **1:17-21**

Jensen's Survey of the OT:



OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

"*Pride goes before a fall*." – the universal principle of cause and effect
"*What goes around comes around*." – the boomerang effect of poetic justice

These two familiar sayings summarize the prophetic burden of the prophet Obadiah. His brief message of 21 verses, the shortest book in the OT, pronounces God's judgment on Israel's brother nation of Edom – capping a bitter rivalry between the descendants of Jacob and of Esau. Little is known about Obadiah. He seems to be a resident of the southern kingdom of Judah but probably not from either the kingly or priestly heritage. His name means either "*Servant of Jehovah*" or "*Worshiper of Jehovah*".

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Let's begin with the history of the nation of Edom which is about to reap the consequences of her betrayal and malicious conduct toward her blood relatives. Interestingly, this is the only biblical book written strictly to an audience of Gentile unbelievers.
Yet its denunciation of pride and arrogance and false security certainly resonates with us today.

John Stott: At every stage in our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, **Pride is our greatest enemy and Humility our greatest friend**.

Illustration: The Lord impressed this upon me when I was only in elementary school . . .

1. Origins of Edom

- **Ancestry:**
  The nation of **Edom** traces its ancestry to **Esau**, the twin brother of **Jacob (Israel)** (**Genesis 25:19–34; 36:1**).

  "*And the LORD said to [Rebekah], 'Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples shall be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger*.'" (**Gen. 25:23**) So this conflict began in the womb

  - Esau's descendants settled in the rugged hill country of **Seir**, south of the Dead Sea.
  - The name "Edom" means **"red"**, recalling both Esau's reddish appearance at birth and the red stew for which he sold his birthright.
    "*Esau despised his birthright*" (**Gen. 25:34**)

- **Territory:**
  Edom occupied a mountainous region stretching from the **Wadi Zered** to the **Gulf of Aqaba** (modern-day southern Jordan).
  - Its chief city was **Bozrah**, later **Petra**, famous for its rock-hewn dwellings and defensive terrain.

- The **King's Highway**, a major trade route, passed through Edom, giving the nation economic and strategic importance.

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2. Early Relations Between Edom and Israel

Though related by blood, Edom and Israel experienced **persistent hostility** throughout biblical history.

a. The Patriarchal Period

- The enmity began with **Jacob and Esau's conflict** over the birthright and blessing -- Remember how the crafty Jacob with the help of his mother was able to gain the blessing from his dying father Isaac:
  "*May peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you; Be master of your brothers, And may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, And blessed be those who bless you.*"(**Genesis 27:29**).

  When Esau came into his father afterwards, he was bitterly disappointed that his father had little left to give him:
  "*Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, 'Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above.* [40] *And by*

your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck.'[41] *So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.*'" (**Gen. 27:39-41**)

- Although the brothers later reconciled (**Genesis 33**), tension continued between their descendants.

b. The Exodus Period

- When Israel journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, they requested passage through Edom via the King's Highway (**Numbers 20:14–21**).
- Edom refused and came out with an army, forcing Israel to detour around their territory.
    - This act became symbolic of Edom's **brotherly betrayal** and was long remembered in Israel's collective memory.

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3. The Monarchical Period

a. Under Saul and David

- King **Saul** fought against Edom (**1 Samuel 14:47**).
- **David** subdued Edom and placed garrisons there (**2 Samuel 8:13–14; 1 Kings 11:15–16**).
    - This marked a period of Israelite control over Edom.

b. Under Solomon and the Divided Kingdom

- Under **Solomon**, Edom remained subject but **revolted** later in his reign (**1 Kings 11:14–22**).
- In the days of **Jehoram of Judah** (ca. 850 BC), Edom successfully revolted and regained independence (**2 Kings 8:20–22**).
  "*In [Jehoram's - son of Jehoshaphat] days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.* [21] *Then Joram crossed over to Zair, and all his chariots with him. And it came about that he arose by night and struck the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; but [Jehoram's] army fled to their tents.* [22] *So Edom revolted against Judah to this day*."

In terms of dating the book of Obadiah, this conflict is key. **Vs 10-14** of Obadiah describe a significant invasion of Judah by foreign forces. Some commentators take that event to be much later – 586 BC – when Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jerusalem. But for a number of reasons I prefer this earlier incident back in **850 BC**. **2 Chron. 21:16** – 3 nation alliance of Edomites, Philistines and Arabians

c. Subsequent Hostility

- Edom often joined other nations against Judah.
- Prophets like **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Ezekiel**, **Amos**, and **Obadiah** denounced Edom for violence and arrogance toward their brother nation.

Application: Have you ever been betrayed by someone close to you? The pain of betrayal runs deeper when it comes from family. Obadiah tells the story of a **family feud** that never healed — and a God who will not forget when wrong is done to His covenant people.

OVERVIEW:

The origin and history of the nation of Edom and its opposition to Israel must be understood as background to God's declaration of judgment. Obadiah's vision combines what will take place in the near term with reference to Edom for her pride and arrogance with the eschatological judgment and destruction of all the godless nations in preparation for the glorious restoration of Israel. The establishment of God's eternal kingdom will **turn the tables** once and for all on the arrogance and false security of Edom.

STRUCTURE:

2 Major Sections in the Book:

I. (:1-14) THE EXTINCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF EDOM
- A. (:**1-9**) Pride Goes Before a Fall – The Delusion of Pride
  - **(:1)** Introduction
  1. (:**2-3**) Folly of Arrogance and False Security
  2. (:**4-9**) Finality of Certain and Complete Destruction
- B. (:**10-14**) What Goes Around Comes Around – The Deceit of Betrayal
  1. (:**10**) Their Brotherly Treachery
  2. (:**11-12**) Their Boastful Triumph
  3. (:**13-14**) Their Brutal Treatment

II. (:15-21) THE EXALTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
- A. (:**15-16**) Certainty of the Day of the Lord
  1. (:**15a**) Universal Accountability
  2. (:**15b-16**) Unavoidable Justice
- B. (:**17-18**) Contrasting Destinies between Edom and Israel (Flesh and Spirit)
- C. (:**19-21**) Climax of God's Plan for His People and His Kingdom
  1. (:**19-20**) Ultimate Restoration of God's People and Land
  2. (:**21**) Universal Reign of the Lord

Condemnation vs. Consolation
Ruin of Edom vs. Restoration of Israel

Big Idea: Self Righteous Piling On by Arrogant Boasters is Doomed to Destruction by the God Who Fulfills His Promise of a Righteous Kingdom

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I.(:1-14) THE EXTINCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF EDOM

A.(:**1-9**) Pride Goes Before a Fall – The Delusion of Pride

(:1) Introduction

The Prophet = Obadiah
The Target = Edom
The Judgment = Coalition of nations conspiring to attack Edom

Richard Coggins: Those nations will wage war against Edom, supposing that they are doing so at their own whim and for their own advantage. In fact, their decision is not their own but the LORD'S. Just as in **Isa. 10:5–15** Assyria was no more than the rod in Yahweh's hand, though supposing that its own power had brought it victory, so here the nations are pictured as being under the control of Israel's God.

1.(:**2-3**) Folly of Arrogance and False Security

a. Destiny Described

1) Reduced to Smallness

"*Behold I will make you small among the nations.*"

Leslie Allen: The first word *hinnēh*, traditionally rendered "*behold*," is designed to arrest the hearers and focus their attention on God's coming involvement in the affairs of men. The verb is a **prophetic perfect**: God's deed is as good as done, and the fate of Edom is sealed. Their destiny is to be one of utter **insignificance**. It will be all the more shocking to the Edomites because they have been the victims of **self-deception**. They shrug off any suggestion of invasion and defeat with a confident denial, thinking themselves safe in their rocky bastion.

2) Relegated to Shame

"*You are greatly despised.*"

b. Arrogance Denounced – Their Lofty Position due to Geography

"*The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,*
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,"

Pride always whispers, "**I'm untouchable**." Whether it's an ancient nation or a modern man, pride blinds us to our dependence on God.

Definition of Arrogance:

- Attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assertions.
- **Offensive attitude of superiority** shown especially by excessively confident or rudely dismissive behavior.

- Someone once boasted: "If I only had a little humility I would be perfect"
- "A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle"
- "None are so empty as those who are full of themselves"
- "Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you." – Andrew Murray

David Guzik: The Edomites boasted in **their natural defenses**. 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.

Thomas Constable: The outstanding mark of Edom's national character was **pride**. The Hebrew word for pride (*zadon*) comes from a verb meaning to boil up (*zid*). It pictures pride as water that boils up under pressure in a cooking pot. Similarly the proud person is like a bubble that thrusts itself up but is **hollow**. Interestingly, the same Hebrew word occurs three times in the account of Esau, the father of the Edomites, squandering his birthright (**Gen. 25:27-34**).

c. False Security and Pride Exposed

"*Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'*"

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Obadiah places words into Edom's mouth to characterize it as smug and naive. Readers familiar with prophetic literature know that God does not listen passively to such arrogance. . . Because God alone is exalted, human self-exaltation encroaches on divine turf and merits judgment. Human haughtiness is also problematic because of its practical consequences. An exalted sense of national pride and self-sufficiency can inspire nations to commit atrocities against others. They care only about their own interests and never imagine that they are accountable to a higher power who stands behind the moral order of the universe.

2.(:**4-9**) Finality of Certain and Complete Destruction

a. **(:4)** Promise of Certain Destruction Despite False Security

"'*Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,' declares the LORD.*"

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: God mocks Edom's arrogant sense of invincibility by evoking the exaggerated image of an eagle soaring so high that it can build its nest among the stars **(v. 4)**. God declares that no location is so distant or secure as to prevent him from dragging Edom to the ground, exactly what Edom has just boasted no one can do. Edom's punishment will fit its crime.

Mark Dever: Pride flatters us; tells us things we want to believe about ourselves. We are so easily deceived.

Those things that we trust in to give meaning and significance to our life will prove to be totally inadequate to defend us against the judgment of God. When God decides to judge a rebellious nation, no Department of Homeland Security can protect it.

For every rise of a great empire throughout world history there is an accompanying decline. Only certainty is that having power will not last.

b. **(:5-6)** Promise of Complete Destruction

1) **(:5)** Two Contrasts Illuminating Only Limited Destruction

a) Thieves at Night

"*If thieves came to you, If robbers by night-- O how you will be ruined!—*
Would they not steal only until they had enough?"

b) Grape Gatherers

"*If grape gatherers came to you, Would they not leave some gleanings?"*

2) **(:6)** Imagery of Complete Destruction

"*O how Esau will be ransacked, And his hidden treasures searched out!*"

Anthony Gelston: The whole of **vv. 6–9** stresses the **finality** and **inescapability** of the judgment awaiting Edom. . . This ransack of Edom won't work by half measures (**v. 6**). Its invaders will look in every corner of the land and take everything worth taking.

c. **(:7)** Treachery of Edom's Allies

"*All the men allied with you Will send you forth to the border,*
And the men at peace with you Will deceive you and overpower you.
They who eat your bread Will set an ambush for you.
(There is no understanding in him.)"

Edom boasts in her **wisdom**; but this deception by her allies catches her by surprise. This highlights the theme of **treachery** in Edom's dealings with her blood relatives = the descendants of Jacob.

Their allies would betray them; their wise men would fail them; their mighty men would fall. God's judgment would be complete and inescapable.

d. (:**8-9**) Destruction of the Wise and the Mighty

1) **(:8)** Destruction of the Wise

"'*Will I not on that day,' declares the LORD, 'Destroy wise men from Edom*
And understanding from the mountain of Esau?'"

2) **(:9)** Destruction of the Mighty

"Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman,
In order that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter."

B.(:**10-14**) What Goes Around Comes Around – The Deceit of Betrayal

J. Sidlow Baxter: Here, in this particular prophecy about Edom, we are meant to learn emphatically that there is a principle of "**poetic justice**" operative in the Divine government of

the earth's peoples. This is the distinctive contribution of this Edom prophecy. Obadiah, let us remember it well, is the prophet of poetic justice.

See how this truth is amplified by the context.

- Edom had indulged in treachery against Judah (**verse 11, 12**); therefore Edom should perish through the treachery of confederates (**verse 7**).
- Edom had seized the chance to rob Judah (**verse 13**); therefore Edom should be robbed even till his hidden things, or treasure, were searched out (**verses 5, 6**).
- Edom had lifted the sword and shown violence against Judah (**verse 10**); therefore Edom should perish by slaughter (**verse 9**).
- Edom had sought the utter destruction of Judah (**verses 12-14**); therefore Edom should be utterly destroyed (**verses 10, 18**).
- Edom had even sought to hand over and dispossess the remnant of the invaded Jerusalem (**verse 14**); therefore, in the end, the remnant of Jacob should possess the land of Edom (**verse 19**).

Yes, poetic justice! – **the penalty corresponding to the iniquity** as one line of poetry corresponds to another!

James Nogalski: **Verses 10–14** continue the thought of **Obad 1–9** but shift from pronouncements of judgment to explicit accusations of the crimes of Edom against Judah (Jacob). The crimes include:

- violence against Jacob (**v. 10**);
- taking captives from Jerusalem when others attacked it (**v. 11**);
- rejoicing over Judah's misfortune (**v. 12**);
- entering Jerusalem (**v. 13**); and capturing Jerusalem's fugitives (**v. 14**).

1.(:**10**) Their Brotherly Treachery -- Malice

a. The Offense

"*Because of violence to your brother Jacob,*"

Some offenses are deemed more egregious because we are acting with malice towards someone with whom we should have a loyal relationship – like a sibling or a spouse.

b. The Punishment: Shame and Elimination

"*You will be covered with shame,*
And you will be cut off forever."

David Baker: Violent Edom, instead of being cloaked by its pride (**v. 3**), is now "*covered with shame*," just as the flood covered Noah's violent neighbors (**Gen. 7:19–20**) or as one might be wrapped in a garment (e.g., **Ex. 28:42; Deut. 22:12**). The ironic twist is that garments are used most commonly to cover one's shame (e.g., **Gen. 9:23; Hos. 2:9**; cf. **Gen. 3:7, 21**), but here it is shame that covers the nation. Shame is in contrast with **honor**, an external consideration of worth—an important concept in the Near East, including contemporary Arabic culture.

Biblehub.com: The phrase "*cut off forever*" indicates a complete and permanent destruction. This prophecy was fulfilled historically when Edom ceased to exist as a nation. The Edomites were eventually absorbed by surrounding peoples, and their identity was lost. This judgment reflects the biblical principle that those who oppose God's chosen people will face divine retribution (**Jeremiah 49:17-18**). The finality of being "*cut off*" underscores the seriousness of Edom's sin and serves as a warning to other nations. This also foreshadows the ultimate judgment against all who oppose God's kingdom, as seen in eschatological passages like **Revelation 19:11-21**.

2.(:**11-12**) Their Boastful Triumph – Aloofness and Gloating

(:**11**) Aloofness

"*On the day that you stood aloof,*
On the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem—
You too were as one of them."

"*The one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it is sinning*" (**James 4:17**).

As a church we don't just care for our own congregation, but we export our love and care and concern for Christians around the world; that is why we encourage Pastor Harmon in his trip to the Philippines – not so much for any benefit to our church … that's the opposite of what the Edomites did to God's people

Application: **Indifference** to suffering and injustice is complicity. When believers today see Israel or God's church attacked, we must not be neutral.

(:**12**) Gloating

"Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune.
And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction;
Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress."

Ken Boa: to look at with smug or malicious satisfaction; happens in sports all the time **[Vs. 12-13; Prov. 17:5; 24:17; Job 31:29; Ps. 35:15]** A malicious form of rejoicing; it broadcasts one's superiority over an opponent; root = sin of Pride; tends to devalue or despise the intrinsic God-given value of others; fails to acknowledge our own fragility and vulnerability – we could easily be the defeated one; rejoicing over victory is good and normal but guard your heart against gloating; only by grace of God that we take our next breath

Biblehub.com: The admonition against gloating highlights the moral and ethical expectations God has for nations and individuals. Gloating over another's misfortune is condemned throughout Scripture, as seen in **Proverbs 24:17-18**, which warns against rejoicing when an enemy falls. This phrase underscores the principle of empathy and compassion, even towards adversaries. Boasting in another's distress is portrayed as arrogance and pride . . . This attitude reflects a lack of understanding of God's justice and mercy.

Cf. taunting penalties in the NFL

3.(:**13-14**) Their Brutal Treatment – Exploitation / Looting / Ambushing

"*Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster.*
Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster.
And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster.
14 And do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives;
And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress."

Looting is a despicable crime. It often takes place in the midst of some natural disaster or as here, during wartime. You are taking advantage of the calamity others are experiencing. That is human nature at its lowest.

Lloyd Ogilvie: But the catalogue of the sins of the Edomites reaches a climax with the description of how they stood at the crossroads outside Jerusalem and captured the fleeing citizens of the city and turned them over to the invaders.

II.(:15-21) THE EXALTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A.(:**15-16**) Certainty of the Day of the Lord

1.(:**15a**) Universal Accountability – God's Universal Judgment Will Include All Nations

"*For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations.*"

Richard Coggins: The **major break** within the book of Obadiah occurs at this point. Though there are obvious thematic links between the two parts, there is also a marked new development away from the direct concern with contemporary Edom toward an **eschatological** picture of the destruction of "*all the nations*."

Biblehub.com: The "*Day of the LORD*" is a recurring theme in the prophetic books, signifying a time of divine intervention, judgment, and salvation. In Obadiah, this day is imminent, not just for Edom, but for all nations. . . The phrase indicates a universal scope of God's judgment, extending beyond Israel's immediate neighbors to encompass all nations. This concept is echoed in other prophetic books such as **Joel 2:1** and **Zephaniah 1:14**, where the Day of the LORD is portrayed as a time of reckoning. The nearness of this day suggests urgency and the certainty of God's plans. In a broader theological context, it foreshadows the **final judgment** described in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation.

2.(:**15b-16**) Unavoidable Justice – God's Retributive Judgment Will Be Just

"*As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. 16 Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow, And become as if they had never existed.*"

Biblehub.com: **They will drink and gulp it down--** This phrase intensifies the imagery of judgment. The act of "*gulping down*" suggests an overwhelming and forceful experience of God's wrath, leaving no room for escape or reprieve. It conveys the idea that the nations will fully experience the consequences of their actions against God and His people. This imagery is consistent with prophetic literature, where the cup of wrath is often depicted as being consumed fully, leaving nothing behind.

Application: God's justice may seem **delayed**, but it is never **denied**. The same God who judged Edom will one day set all wrongs right.

B.(:**17-18**) Contrasting Destinies between Edom and Israel (Flesh and Spirit)
1. (:17) Deliverance and Holiness of Zion

"*But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy.*
And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions."

This looks forward to the national salvation of ethnic Israel leading into the Millennial Kingdom (Rom. 11:26-27).

2. (:18) Destruction of House of Esau

"*Then the house of Jacob will be a fire And the house of Joseph a flame;*
But the house of Esau will be as stubble.
And they will set them on fire and consume them,
So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,
For the LORD has spoken."

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Another new element here is that Obadiah envisions a **reunion of the nation** that had split into Israel and Judah in 922 after the death of King Solomon. Because Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh (**Gen 48:1**), the names of the two largest tribes of northern Israel, house of Joseph designates the Northern Kingdom, whereas house of Jacob means Judah (cf. **Ps 77:15; Amos 5:6, 15; 6:6; Zech 10:6**). Obadiah envisions some type of revival of the Northern Kingdom, which had been destroyed by Assyria in 722, and a reunification with Judah, similar to what other prophetic texts portray **(Isa 11:12-14; Jer 3:18; 23:6; 30:3; 31:27, 31; Ezek 37:15-23; Hos 1:11; Zech 10:6**). The prophets value the unity of God's people. Neither political divisions nor the demise of the Northern Kingdom will stand in the way of God's restoring and reuniting the whole people of God.

C.(:**19-21**) Climax of God's Plan for His People and His Kingdom
1.(:**19-20**) Ultimate Restoration of God's People and Land

"*Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau,*
And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain;
Also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And
Benjamin will possess Gilead."
And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel,
Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
Will possess the cities of the Negev."

Biblehub.com: **Those from the Negev will possess the mountains of Esau;**
The Negev is a desert region in the southern part of Israel, historically inhabited by the tribe of Judah. The "*mountains of Esau*" refer to the territory of Edom, located southeast of the Dead Sea. This prophecy indicates a reversal of fortunes, where the Israelites,

specifically those from the Negev, will take possession of Edom's land. This reflects the broader biblical theme of God's justice and the eventual triumph of His people over their enemies. Historically, Edom and Israel had a contentious relationship, with Edom often opposing Israel. This prophecy underscores the ultimate sovereignty of God over the nations.

those from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines.
The "*foothills*" or "*Shephelah"* is a region of low hills between the coastal plain and the central highlands of Israel. The Philistines were a significant adversary of Israel, residing in the coastal cities such as Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod. This part of the prophecy suggests that the Israelites will expand their territory westward into the land of the Philistines. The Philistines are often depicted in the Bible as a symbol of opposition to God's people, and their defeat represents the triumph of God's kingdom. This also connects to the broader biblical narrative of Israel's conquest and settlement in the Promised Land.

They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
Ephraim and Samaria were central regions in the northern kingdom of Israel. This prophecy indicates a reunification and restoration of the land that was once divided and lost due to the Assyrian conquest. The mention of Ephraim and Samaria symbolizes the restoration of the northern tribes and the re-establishment of Israel's full territorial inheritance. This reflects the prophetic hope for the reunification of all Israel under God's rule, as seen in other prophetic books like Ezekiel and Isaiah.

and Benjamin will possess Gilead.
Benjamin was one of the tribes of Israel, located just north of Judah. Gilead, on the other hand, was a region east of the Jordan River, known for its balm and rugged terrain. This prophecy suggests an expansion of Benjamin's territory into Gilead, which was historically part of the territory of the tribes of Gad and Manasseh. This reflects the theme of restoration and expansion of Israel's borders, as well as the fulfillment of God's promises to the patriarchs regarding the land. The mention of Benjamin, a tribe known for its warriors, also highlights the strength and resilience of God's people in reclaiming their inheritance.

as far as Zarephath
Zarephath was a Phoenician city located between Tyre and Sidon, in present-day Lebanon. Mentioned in **1 Kings 17:9**, it is where Elijah was sent during a drought. The inclusion of Zarephath highlights the extent of the territory to be reclaimed, extending beyond traditional Israelite borders, symbolizing a broader restoration and influence.

2. (:**21**) Universal Reign of the Lord
    a. Appointed Saviors to Deliver and Judge
        "*The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion*
        To judge the mountain of Esau,"

Probably divinely appointed human leaders who play a role in God's plan to restore Israel, judge its enemies (here Edom in particular) and establish the Millennial Kingdom.

b. Absolute Sovereignty of the Lord
"*And the kingdom will be the LORD's.*"

David Guzik: This note of encouragement may be the central purpose for this prophecy of Obadiah. We wonder if it ever had much of a reading in the streets or palaces of Edom; but it certainly was received as welcome encouragement among the suffering people of God. Obadiah tells all God's people: "Don't worry about those who ignore your need, those who rejoice at your problems, those who take advantage of your crises, those join their hands with others in attacking you. I will take care of them."

Biblehub.com: This statement emphasizes the ultimate sovereignty of God over all nations and kingdoms. It reflects the biblical theme of God's eternal dominion and the establishment of His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. This echoes the prophetic visions found in **Daniel 2:44** and **Revelation 11:15**, where God's kingdom is depicted as everlasting and supreme over all earthly powers. The phrase underscores the fulfillment of God's promises to His people and the culmination of His redemptive plan. It points to the eschatological hope of a future where God's rule is fully realized, and His justice and peace reign supreme.

Summary – Bruce Hurt
Tracing the stages of Edom's decline is a valuable study.

- First, the prophet accused them of standing aloof (**Obadiah 1:11**). In every conflict between right and wrong, the person who remains neutral does much of the damage.
- Second, they actually saw the destruction and distress of Jerusalem with their own eyes (**Obadiah 12**). What a terrible thing to refuse to help the Lord's people! In the present Jewish situation, we would do well to consider the fact that God's attitude has not changed toward His chosen people. Oh, I know that one may argue the craftiness of the Jews, pointing out that they are still supplanters. Even so, we must not join those who would condemn them. I fear for any nation that causes grief to Israel. [cp. **Ge 12:1-3**]
- Third, the Edomites gloated when Israel fell (**Obadiah 1:12**).
- Fourth, they spoke proudly; they had what we call the "pharisaical attitude." Edom stood by and said, "That's all right; they probably deserved it."
- Fifth, not only were the Edomites guilty of wicked indifference, they eventually became actively involved in Israel's distress (**Obadiah 1:13**).
- Sixth, Edom took advantage of Judah's trouble by plundering some of their wealth (**Obadiah 1:3**).Sin is never the sudden outburst of a moment. (Note carefully the steps these relatives of Israel had taken in their downfall.)
- Seventh, they gave open assistance to the enemy (**Obadiah 1:14**). When the Israelites escaped and tried to flee, the Edomites cut them off from their defenses and handed them over to their pursuers.

Walter Baker: The short Book of Obadiah presents a powerful message. It shows what happens to those who reject God's Word and His grace, rebelling in foolish pride. During Edom's prosperity many in Israel could have asked, "*Why do the wicked prosper?*" (cf. **Ps. 73:3**) But the voice of Obadiah comes thundering through the pages of the Old Testament, and echoed in the New: "*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows*" (**Gal. 6:7**). Obadiah's words underscore the fact of God's justice. "*For we know Him who said, 'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (**Heb. 10:30-31**).

One who responds in obedience to the grace of God has everything to gain, but a person who spurns His grace in pride has everything to lose.

Application for Today:

- Beware of pride -- it blinds, deceives, and destroys.
- Bless Israel -- for God's covenant still stands.
- Believe in God's plan -- Christ will return and reign in righteousness.

OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

THE BOOMERANG EFFECT – JUDGMENT ON EDOM

SELF RIGHTEOUS PILING ON BY ARROGANT BOASTERS IS DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION BY THE GOD WHO FULFILLS HIS PROMISE OF A RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM

Obadiah 15 -- "*For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nation.*
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head."

I. (:1-14) THE EXTINCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF EDOM

A. (:1-9) THE DELUSION OF PRIDE – "PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL" GOD OVERTURNS ARROGANCE AND FALSE SECURITY BY COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

(:**1**) Introduction

a. The Prophet = Obadiah
b. The Target = Edom
c. The Judgment = Coalition of nations conspiring to attack Edom

1. (:**2-3**) Folly of Arrogance and False Security

a. **(:2)** Destiny Described
   1) Reduced to Smallness
   2) Relegated to Shame
b. **(:3**a) Arrogance Denounced
c. (:**3b**) False Security and Pride Exposed

2. (:**4-9**) Finality of Certain and Complete Destruction

a. **(:4)** Promise of Certain Destruction Despite False Security
b. (:5-6) Promise of Complete Destruction
   1) **(:5)** Two Contrasts Illuminating Only Limited Destruction
      a) Thieves at Night
      b) Grape Gatherers
   2) **(:6)** Imagery of Complete Destruction
c. (:7) Treachery of Edom's Allies
d. (:**8-9**) Destruction of the Wise and the Mighty
   1) **(:8)** Destruction of the Wise
   2) **(:9)** Destruction of the Mighty

B. (:10-14) THE DECEIT OF BETRAYAL – "WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND" -- THE TABLES WILL BE TURNED ON THEIR MALICE AND ALOOFNESS AND GLOATING AND EXPLOITATION

1. (**:10**) Their Brotherly Treachery -- Malice
   a. The Offense
   b. The Punishment
      1) Shame
      2) Elimination

2. (:**11-12**) Their Boastful Triumph – Aloofness and Gloating

3. (:**13-14**) Their Brutal Treatment -- Exploitation

III (:15-21) THE EXALTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD -- THE RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM OF GOD WILL REPLACE THE TEMPORARY DOMINION OF THE PROUD EDOMITES

A. (:15-16) CERTAINTY OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

1. (**:15a**) Universal Accountability

2. (:**15b-16**) Unavoidable Justice

B. (:17-18) CONTRASTING DESTINIES BETWEEN EDOM AND ISRAEL (FLESH VS SPIRIT)

1. (**:17**) Deliverance and Holiness of Zion

2. (:**18**) Destruction of House of Esau

C. (:19-21) CLIMAX OF GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE AND HIS KINGDOM

1. (:**19-20**) Ultimate Restoration of God's People and Land

2. (:**21**) Universal Reign of the Lord

TEXT: Obadiah 1-9

TITLE: PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL

BIG IDEA:
GOD OVERTURNS ARROGANCE AND FALSE SECURITY BY COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION:

Leslie Allen: This first section of the composition in **vv. 2–9** has analyzed from various angles the theme of the destruction of Edom. Beginning and end have stressed that neither natural impregnability nor native wisdom nor national manpower can provide adequate defense against the set purpose of Yahweh to overthrow the Edomites. Edom will come tumbling down from its proud position, deprived of wit and warrior. Its rich warehouses are to be looted and left bereft of spices and gold. Its allies will turn traitor against it. Such is to be the punishment for Edom. Dire indeed must be the sins that earn such wages, and it is to an accusation of Edom's crimes that the prophet turns in the second part of his composition.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Commentators often note that **Obadiah 1b-4** closely parallels **Jeremiah 49:14-16**. It is not clear whether Obadiah borrows from Jeremiah or whether both draw on an earlier oracle against Edom. For our purposes, two points are worth noting. One is that when the two books are read in their current order in the Bible, readers will hear Obadiah affirming that Jeremiah's words of judgment against Edom are still in effect. Second, even though Obadiah and Jeremiah share material, they shape it to serve their own rhetorical purposes. For example, Jeremiah describes Edom as striking terror in the hearts of other nations (**49:16**). Obadiah omits this detail because the emphasis is on God's impending intervention to eliminate Edom as a threat. Obadiah heightens the portrayal of Edom's smugness by placing into its mouth arrogant words claiming invincibility and by adding the image of Edom building its nest among the stars (**vv. 3-4**).

(:1) INTRODUCTION – PROPHETIC WORD OF JUDGMENT AGAINST EDOM

A. The Prophet = Obadiah

"*The vision of Obadiah.*"

Trent Butler: Obadiah means "*the servant of Yah*" (or Yahweh), and the prophet's name represents his task. He was God's servant, God's messenger to deliver an oracle against a foreign nation for Judah to overhear.

Leslie Allen: The overall brevity of the book, the shortest in the collection of the twelve Minor Prophets and indeed in the whole OT, is matched in the brevity of its title. In the

other prophetic books the editors have supplied some information concerning the period or place of origin of the author of the oracles, but in this case not even the name of the prophet's father, frequently used as the equivalent of a surname, has been preserved.

David Baker: Though the verb can be used of physical sight (e.g., **Ps. 58:8**), the noun only refers to **prophetic perception**, indicating the **content** of what is seen rather than the act of perceiving (cf. **Ps. 89:19**).

John Goldingay: The term "*vision*" is used in a loose sense, like "revelation" in English (see **Amos 1:1; 7:1–3** and the comments). It appears also in the prefaces to Isaiah and Nahum (cf. also **1 Sam. 3:1**).

B. The Target = Edom

"*Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom*"

Leslie Allen: Obadiah uses the typical messenger formula of the prophets, which serves at once to affirm the divine authority and to specify the target of his prophetic pronouncements.

David Baker: The divine title indicates the subservient position of the speaker in relation to the addressee, acknowledging the authority of the latter.

C. The Judgment = Coalition of nations conspiring to attack Edom

"*We have heard a report from the LORD,*
And an envoy has been sent among the nations saying,
'Arise and let us go against her for battle'"

Richard Coggins: Those nations will wage war against Edom, supposing that they are doing so at their own whim and for their own advantage. In fact, their decision is not their own but the LORD'S. Just as in **Isa. 10:5–15** Assyria was no more than the rod in Yahweh's hand, though supposing that its own power had brought it victory, so here the nations are pictured as being under the control of Israel's God.

Biblehub.com: **an envoy has been sent among the nations to say,**
The imagery of an envoy or messenger suggests a call to action among the nations. In ancient times, envoys were sent to deliver important messages or to rally support for military campaigns. This reflects the seriousness of the impending judgment and the divine orchestration behind the events. It also highlights the theme of God using nations to accomplish His purposes, as seen in other prophetic books like Habakkuk.

I. (2-3) FOLLY OF ARROGANCE AND FALSE SECURITY

A. (:2) Destiny Described

1. Reduced to Smallness

"*Behold I will make you small among the nations.*"

Leslie Allen: The first word *hinnēh*, traditionally rendered “behold,” is designed to arrest the hearers and focus their attention on God’s coming involvement in the affairs of men. The verb is a prophetic perfect: God’s deed is as good as done, and the fate of Edom is sealed. Their destiny is to be one of utter insignificance. It will be all the more shocking to the Edomites because they have been the victims of **self-deception**. They shrug off any suggestion of invasion and defeat with a confident denial, thinking themselves safe in their rocky bastion.

David Baker: To be **small in significance** was to be “despised,” as the second half of verse 2 indicates. In an area vying for national prominence, diminution of esteem was degrading as well as dangerous, because it was viewed as a sign of weakness and an opportunity to attack.

Trent Butler: Edom was big only in that it had tall, rough mountains. Otherwise, it was a nation that controlled a small territory and exercised minimal influence in international affairs. Its only hope for fame lay in its location on the trade route between Mesopotamia and the Red Sea or between Egypt to the west and Assyria and Babylon to the east. The exotic goods from Arabia and Africa traveled through Edom to get to customers in the north, east, and west. With no hopes for economic importance, Edom would be small. Not only that, Edom would be utterly despised.

Biblehub.com: **Behold, I will make you small among the nations;**
This phrase indicates a divine decree of judgment. The word "*Behold*" serves as a call to attention, emphasizing the certainty and importance of the message. The context is God's pronouncement against Edom, a nation descended from Esau, Jacob's brother. Historically, Edom was a significant power due to its strategic location and control of trade routes. However, this prophecy foretells a reduction in their status and influence. The phrase "small among the nations" suggests a loss of power and prestige, aligning with other biblical prophecies where God humbles the proud (**Isaiah 2:12, Jeremiah 49:15**). This humbling of Edom serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty over nations and His ability to exalt or abase according to His will.

2. Relegated to Shame
"*You are greatly despised.*"

Biblehub.com: **you will be deeply despised.**
The phrase "deeply despised" indicates not only a loss of power but also a loss of respect and honor among other nations. Historically, Edom was often in conflict with Israel and other neighboring nations, leading to animosity and disdain. This prophecy reflects the consequences of Edom's pride and hostility, particularly against Israel **(Psalm 137:7, Ezekiel 25:12-14**). The deep disdain could also be seen as a result of their betrayal and violence against their kin, the Israelites, during times of distress. This serves as a broader biblical theme where pride and enmity lead to downfall and disgrace **(Proverbs 16:18**). Theologically, it underscores the principle that those who oppose God's people and purposes will ultimately face divine retribution.

B. (:3a) Arrogance Denounced

"*The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,*
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,"

Leslie Allen: Perched on the top of this natural fortress, the Edomites assimilated from their habitat a superior attitude of impregnability, which represented a defiant challenge: "*Who can bring me down to earth*?" This description of arrogant supermen serves as a stark prelude to the shock of their imminent downfall. In their presumptuous pride they have reckoned without God. Over these puny creatures, sadly mistaken in their illusions of superhuman invincibility, looms the majestic figure of Yahweh. Like the eagle they are denizens of rocky heights, but were they likewise to soar into the sky above, they could not get beyond the reach of the long arm of divine justice. The reference to flying high in the sky and to roosting among the stars paints a vividly imaginative picture, which serves to stress the power of God and the powerlessness of the Edomites. Earthbound mortals as they are, they present an easy prey for Yahweh despite their boasts.

Thomas Constable: The outstanding mark of Edom's national character was **pride**. The Hebrew word for pride (*zadon*) comes from a verb meaning to boil up (*zid*). It pictures pride as water that boils up under pressure in a cooking pot. Similarly the proud person is like a bubble that thrusts itself up but is hollow. Interestingly, the same Hebrew word occurs three times in the account of Esau, the father of the Edomites, squandering his birthright (**Gen. 25:27-34**).

David Guzik: The Edomites boasted in **their natural defenses**. 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.

The Edomites boasted in **their wisdom**. The men of Edom - especially of the city Teman - were noted for their wisdom. The phrase men of the East in the Old Testament often refers to men from Edom, and passages like **1 Kings 4:30** declare the great wisdom of the men of the East. As well, **Jeremiah 49:7** says of Edom: "*Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished*?" This was another source of pride for the Edomites.

The Edomites boasted in **their alliances** and trusted in their allies - their confederacy, the men at peace with you (**Obadiah 1:7**). They thought that their alliances made them strong, and they were proud because of that strength.

David Baker: Edom's military advantage puffs up her national pride to a point of arrogance. She is convinced of her inviolability enough to brag of it. This is not a justified self-esteem deriving from some actual preeminence, but rather a deceptive self-vaunting. As the first woman was deceived by the serpent in the Garden into rising

above her level of adequacy (**Gen. 3:13**), so Edom leads herself astray. Her pride raises her even above her earthbound heights. She likens herself to an eagle who can soar and nest above the high terrain (**Obad. 4**; cf. **Job 39:27; Prov. 23:5**), or even above the earth itself, to the very stars, the outer reaches of their existence (**Job 22:12**).

Unfortunately for Edom, her survey to every horizon of the military might to which she considers herself superior does not include a glance heavenward, where the greatest threat to arrogance lies. It is not a human army who brings Edom down, but the warrior God (**Amos 9:2**). He leaves the nation a diminished and "*despised*" people. She does not consider Israel's God, who created those same stars (**Gen. 1:16**) and who is also referred to as an eagle (**Deut. 32:11; Jer. 49:22**). It is this God, Yahweh, who speaks these words of judgment, as indicated by the phrase "*declares the LORD*," which occurs numerous times in the prophets.

Anthony Gelston: Edom has a natural confidence (**v. 3**) deriving from its physically strong position. Its capital, Sela (Cliff), sits on a massif. Like Jerusalem, on three sides it is flanked by steep slopes; it can be easily approached only from the southeast. It's easy to defend and hard to attack. Such a position encourages the assumption that one is **unassailable**. It's like a bird sitting in a crevice. But such confidence is **self-deceptive** because it leaves God out of account. Arrogance is a vice. Obadiah has in mind not the kind of pride that denotes self-respect, a proper self-confidence, and a pleasure in one's achievements but the kind of pride that does not recognize God as God and has the self-confidence that makes a person ruthlessly ambitious and willing to tread on other people.

C. (:3b) False Security and Pride Exposed

"*Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'*"

Carl E. Armerding: Edom's natural defenses were imposing. Its main centers of civilization were situated in a narrow ridge of mountainous land southeast of the Dead Sea . . . This ridge exceeded a height of 4,000 feet throughout its northern sector, and it rose in places to 5,700 feet in the south. Its height was rendered more inaccessible by the gorges radiating from it toward the Arabah on the west and the desert eastwards. In addition to these **natural fortifications**, Edom was strongly defended by a series of Iron Age **fortresses**, particularly on the eastern frontier where the land descended more gradually to the desert.

John Barton: These verses [:**3-4**] develop a theme dear to the hearts of many of the prophets, that of **human hubris**—the pride in one's own status that presents a challenge to the sole supremacy of God. It is a regular feature in oracles against the nations in the Old Testament: classic examples are Isaiah's attack on the Assyrians (**Isa. 10:5–19**) and Ezekiel's diatribe against the prince of Tyre (**Ezek. 28:1–10, 17–19**). Whether the Edomites were notably more full of arrogance than other nations or even more prone to congratulate themselves on their exalted status than the Judaeans whom Obadiah was addressing we are in no position to say; the prophets assume that foreigners are all arrogant and proud.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Obadiah places words into Edom's mouth to characterize it as smug and naive. "*Who will bring me down to the ground*?" (**v. 3c**). Readers familiar with prophetic literature know that God does not listen passively to such arrogance. God's judgment of human pride and smugness, sometimes associated with heights, is a common prophetic theme (**Isa 2:11-17; 10:5-16; 14:3-20; 23:8-12; Jer 50:31-32; Ezek 28:1-10, 17-19**). Because God alone is exalted, human self-exaltation encroaches on divine turf and merits judgment (Barton: 138). Human haughtiness is also problematic because of its practical consequences. An exalted sense of national pride and self-sufficiency can inspire nations to commit atrocities against others. They care only about their own interests and never imagine that they are accountable to a higher power who stands behind the moral order of the universe.

God mocks Edom's arrogant sense of invincibility by evoking the exaggerated image of an eagle soaring so high that it can build its nest among the stars **(v. 4**). God declares that no location is so distant or secure as to prevent him from dragging Edom to the ground, exactly what Edom has just boasted no one can do. Edom's punishment will fit its crime.

II. (4-9) FINALITY OF CERTAIN AND COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

A. (:4) Promise of Certain Destruction Despite False Security

"'*Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,' declares the LORD.*"

This verse is normally taken with **vv. 1-3**; but the theme blends nicely with **vv. 5-9**.

John Barton: Divine opposition to all that is "haughty" or "lofty" is a recurring theme in the book of Isaiah (cf. also **Isa. 2:12–18**, where high trees and mountains are at risk from God's judgment, as symbols of overweening human pride). In Obadiah it is easy to dismiss this theme as merely a convenient stick with which to beat the hated Edomites: they are so proud, they even prefer "*high*" places to live in! But the theme has wider resonance than this, as its treatment in Isaiah shows. It belongs to the Old Testament's perception of the relative status of God and humanity, and its absolute conviction that **no one must for a moment challenge the supremacy of YHWH**. That the Edomites have set their dwelling "*among the stars*" should ring warning bells, if one has read (as perhaps the author of this oracle had) **Isa. 14:12–14**.

Thomas Constable: Here the figure of an eagle that was also in view in the previous verse becomes explicit. Even if the Edomites would build their nest as high as the stars (hyperbole), God would bring them down. They might have been humanly unassailable, but they were not divinely unassailable. They had proudly boasted, "*Who will bring me down to the earth?*" (**v. 3**), but Yahweh replied, "*I will bring you down*" (**v. 4**). He would burst their bubble. He Himself declared that He would.

Malachi, who wrote some 400 years later, mentioned that the Edomites were still in existence then (**Mal. 1:3-4**). By 312 B.C. the capital of Edom was in Nabatean hands, and Edom had ceased to exist as a nation, though Edomites continued to live. They became known as Idumeans.

B. (:5-6) Promise of Complete Destruction

1. (:5) Two Contrasts Illustrating Only Limited Destruction
   a. Thieves at Night – Would not steal everything
   "*If thieves came to you, If robbers by night-- O how you will be ruined!—Would they not steal only until they had enough?*"

Leslie Allen: If the first stanza stressed the **inevitability of destruction**, this next one emphasizes its **thoroughness**.

   b. Grape Gatherers – Would leave some gleanings
   "*If grape gatherers came to you, Would they not leave some gleanings?"*

Thomas Constable: Thieves robbed houses and grape pickers stripped vineyards, yet both left a little behind that they did not carry off. However, Yahweh's destruction of Edom would be so complete that nothing at all would remain of her (cf. **Jer. 49:9-10**). There would be no remnant of Edom left (in contrast to the remnant that Yahweh promised elsewhere to leave in Israel).

[**vs. 8**] God would destroy Edom's famous wise men (cf. **1 Kings 4:30; Job 1:1; 2:11; 4:1; Jer. 49:7; Lam. 4:21; Baruch 3:23**) and their understanding by allowing them to fail to detect the unfaithfulness of their allies (**v. 7**). They would also overestimate their own security (**v. 3**).

Frank Shalieu: Thieves usually take only the most valuable items, but there would be utter destruction with Edom. A thief steals the items he can carry and then leaves, wanting to get out safely. In a vineyard, the grape pickers gather the easy-to-get clusters and leave a portion behind. Under the Law, Israel was required to leave some grapes for the poor to glean (compare **Jer. 49:9**). But even if the grape pickers were not considering the poor, they could not wait for every grape to ripen, so they picked only the clusters that were convenient. The analogy was that Edom would be stripped bare of its treasures. When judgment was visited, nothing would be left behind; the spoilage would be complete.

2. (:6) Imagery of Complete Destruction
   "*O how Esau will be ransacked, And his hidden treasures searched out!*"

David Baker: By contrast, Edom in its punishment is completely denuded (**v. 6**). Even the stores hidden away in her rocky nooks and crannies (**v. 3**) will be ferreted out, purposefully sought for (cf. **Gen. 31:34–35**), and, by implication, plundered.

Anthony Gelston: The whole of **vv. 6–9** stresses the **finality** and **inescapability** of the judgment awaiting Edom. . . This ransack of Edom won't work by half measures (**v. 6**). Its invaders will look in every corner of the land and take everything worth taking.

C. (:7) Treachery of Edom's Allies

"*All the men allied with you Will send you forth to the border,*
And the men at peace with you Will deceive you and overpower you.
They who eat your bread Will set an ambush for you.
(There is no understanding in him.)"

Biblehub.com: **All the men allied with you will drive you to the border;**
This phrase highlights the betrayal of Edom by its allies. Historically, Edom was situated south of the Kingdom of Judah and had alliances with neighboring nations. The prophecy indicates that these allies, once trusted, would turn against Edom, forcing them to the borders of their own land. This reflects the broader biblical theme of the unreliability of human alliances compared to the faithfulness of God (**Psalm 118:8-9**). The driving to the border symbolizes a complete rejection and expulsion, reminiscent of how Israel's enemies often sought to push them out of their land.

without your awareness of it.
The final phrase emphasizes the complete surprise and unawareness of Edom regarding the impending betrayal. This lack of awareness can be seen as a result of pride and overconfidence, a recurring theme in Obadiah's prophecy against Edom. It serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of complacency and the importance of vigilance, echoing the New Testament's call to be watchful (**1 Peter 5:8**). The unexpected nature of the betrayal highlights the futility of relying on human wisdom and alliances over divine guidance.

Hampton Keathley: [**vs. 7**] Edom's enemies will be her allies -- The Nabateans were caravan drivers whom the Edomites trusted and traded with. They were their business partners. They were allowed into the city, but they turned against the Edomites and conquered them.

Leslie Allen: Edom's security, based both on impregnable position and on international alliance, will prove equally ill-founded. The emphasis upon deception appears to be a taunting allusion to the famed wisdom of the Edomites, to which **v. 8** explicitly refers. The ironic truth is that those who know so much are to come to their downfall by their lack of knowledge.

David Baker: Rather than receiving the support expected from friends, Edom finds them to be enemies. The Edomites are forcefully expelled (cf. **Gen. 3:23; Jer. 15:1**) from their dwellings and driven to the periphery of their land. Like their own deceitful heart (**Obad. 3**), former friends deceitfully overpower Edom—an example of a hendiadys in which two nouns, "*deceive*" and "*overpower*," make up one concept (e.g., "kith and kin") rather than two separate actions. Often used in terms of conflict (e.g.,

Judg. 16:5; 1 Sam 17:9), the erstwhile friends overpower Edom, driving her out of her holdings.

Trent Butler: *Those who eat your bread* are those in friendly treaty relations who have been invited to political banquets and celebrations and who have eaten ceremonial meals sealing the covenant or treaty. They would set a trap for Edom. But you will not detect it reads literally "*no understanding in it*." Edom had a marvelous reputation for wisdom and understanding. But the reputation would not serve her in this situation. No one could explain what was happening to Edom. This was a vision that came from God—a prophetic oracle revealing what lies beyond human explanation.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: The imagery of **verse 7** focuses on **treachery** and **abandonment** by Edom's former allies, who will overpower Edom and force its people to the boundary. It is not clear whether being driven to the boundary means that Edomites fleeing invaders will be refused asylum by former allies and pushed back across their own border, or whether it means that atrocities by invaders will cause Edomites to seek refuge in remote border regions. Also unclear is the identity of the former allies now turned enemies. Are they the nations summoned to battle in **verse 1**, or the Babylonians with whom Edom must have been allied if Edom participated in the sacking of Jerusalem, or are they some other entities?

D. (:8-9) Destruction of the Wise and the Mighty

Leslie Allen: Two parallel statements are made concerning Edom's twin assets of **wisdom** and **military strength**. Their parallelism is indicated by the repetition of *out of Mount Esau* at the end of the second line and toward the end of the third. The oracle is closely integrated with the preceding stanza by the way it picks up the thought of lack of knowledge and develops it.

1. (:8) Destruction of the Wise
   "'*Will I not on that day,' declares the LORD, 'Destroy wise men from Edom*
   And understanding from the mountain of Esau? '"

David Baker: Yahweh promises that he will not only deprive Edom of tactical geographical advantage (**vv. 2–4**) and strength derived from either wealth or allies (**vv. 5–7**), but he will also deny them two other means of national support, the wise and the strong. The "*wise men*" are important figures in the court and society (**Jer. 18:18**; cf. **Deut. 1:13–15; Prov. 24:3–7; Isa. 29:14**), providing sage intellectual insight or good sense (e.g., **2 Sam. 13:3; 1 Kings 5:7**) as well as practical skill (e.g., **Isa. 3:3; 40:20**).

2. (:9) Destruction of the Mighty
   "*Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman,*
   In order that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter."

Trent Butler: Teman, meaning "*south*," is another name for Edom derived from an early ancestor (**Gen. 36:11**). Teman may originally have been a tribal name given to the

territory around the capital of Bozrah and gradually expanded to refer to all of Edom. Edom's soldiers forced to leave their mountain refuges would be terrified. The country's inhabitants would be led to slaughter.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Am I characterized by pride so that I am trusting too much in my own status or strength?

2) Where in my life have I seen the truth of the proverb that "*Pride goes before a fall*"?

3) In what ways do powerful nations thing that they are invincible and beyond the judgment hand of God?

4) How can a nation trust in allies which might end up betraying them in the end?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Betrayal by a sibling can be especially painful because the ties of blood and family intensify the disappointment and anger unleashed by such betrayal. Obadiah taps into such life experience to create sympathy for Israel and outrage at Edom, asserting that Edom (descended from Esau; **Gen 36:1, 8**) has betrayed his brother, Israel (descended from Esau's twin brother, Jacob; **Gen 32:28; 35:10**). The book begins with four short units that describe God's judgment of Edom from different angles. **Verses 1b-4** depict how God will put an end to Edom's arrogance and claims to invincibility, followed by a description of how enemies have pillaged Edom (vv. 5-7). Then God decrees punishment on Edom for betraying brother Jacob/Israel and participating in the looting of Jerusalem (**vv. 8-11**). God then issues eight commands detailing the atrocities Edom should not have committed against his brother (*vv. 12-14*). **Verse 15** marks a turning point in the book as Obadiah announces that, on the day of the Lord, Edom's judgment will broaden into judgment upon all nations, thereby making possible Israel's restoration. Mount Zion will become a holy refuge; Israel will incinerate Edom and possess an expanded territory that will become God's kingdom.

Trent Butler: God condemns Edom, Judah's southeastern neighbor, for pride, overconfidence, and their refusal to help in time of need, for pillaging Jerusalem while Judah was attacked by Babylon, and for capturing Judah's fleeing refugees. God thus announced the coming Day of the Lord when Edom would fall, Judah would be delivered, and the Lord's kingdom would be established.

David Baker: **Nationalistic pride** is not the domain of Edom alone but characterizes the human race, both in terms of ethnic as well as ecclesiological associations. Humanity is pictured as reaching toward heaven from their habitation in Babylon early in human history (**Gen. 11:1–11**, esp. **v. 4**; cf. **Job 20:6; Prov. 21:24**) just as Babylon did much later (**Isa. 14:12–14; Jer. 51:55**; cf**. Isa. 13:19; Hab. 2:2–5**). While one might expect such self-confidence on the part of the world powers (cf. Assyria, **2 Kings 19:22; Isa. 10:12; Zech. 10:11**; Egypt**, Ezek. 32:12**), it is also evident among smaller states (Moab, **Isa. 16:6; 25:10–11; Jer. 48:29**; Tyre, **Isa. 23:9; Ezek. 28:2**; Philistines, **Zech. 9:6**). Even Israel and Judah are not immune (Israel, **Isa. 9:9; 28:1–3; Hos. 5:5; Amos 9:2**; Judah**, Jer. 13:9, 17; Zeph. 3:11**). Pride in might, whether through armed forces, chariotry, or horses, is misplaced, however, since it is Yahweh who brings these into being **(Isa. 43:16–17**), and he brings them down (**Jer. 51:20–21; Zech. 9:10**). The battle is ultimately in God's hands (**Prov. 21:31**), not in that of any nation.

TEXT: Obadiah 10-14

TITLE: CONDEMNING THE OFFENSES OF EDOM

BIG IDEA:
THE TABLES WILL BE TURNED ON THEIR MALICE AND ALOOFNESS AND GLOATING AND EXPLOITATION

INTRODUCTION:

David Baker: The **external reasons** for the fall of Edom are now identified. The surprising reversal of **verse 7** (friends turning to enemies) is not that surprising after all! Instead, Edom will receive back on her own head what she had done to her own "family." **What goes around comes around!**

The first two verses of this section break the normal Hebrew word order by beginning with prepositional phrases. They emphasize causes of **judgment: violence and noninvolvement. Verses 12–14** continue with a litany of eight sentences, each beginning with the adverb *"(and) not*." By emphatic ordering and the emphasis of repetition, the prophet is hammering away at the heinous nature of that in which Edom is involved. The inseparable preposition *"(deriving) from violence*," which opens this section in **verse 10**, is the same preposition that closed the previous section *("[deriving] from slaughter*" in **v. 9**). This provides a noticeable syntactic tie between cause and effect.

Trent Butler: The **main charge** against Edom revolved around the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 B.C. Edom stood on the other side from Judah at that time, aloof while strangers carried off his wealth. As Babylon burned the city and carried away temple treasures (**2 Kgs. 25**), Edom made no effort to respond as a treaty partner or ally of Jerusalem. Instead they were like one of them. They acted like foreigners who had no relationship to Israel. They helped destroy their kinsmen in hopes of financial gain.

Richard Coggins: With **v. 10** we reach a new section of the book in two senses. First, at the literary level, the detailed links with **Jer. 49** are now at an end (the thematic link between **v. 16** and **Jer. 49:12** is only a very partial exception to this claim). Second, there is a change of theme. From the announcement of doom upon Edom the emphasis now turns to a spelling out of the wrongs which have made such a doom inevitable.

Philip Peter Jenson: The distinctive emphasis of the section is that Yhwh's judgment is coming because of Edom's behaviour to his "*brother*," Israel. The accusations echo the punishments of earlier verses and, together with the specific statement of principle in **v. 15b**, assert that Edom's terrible fate is not arbitrary but reflects its actions against Judah. Following an introductory summary (**v. 10**; cf**. v. 2**), Edom is accused of inaction (**v. 11a;** cf. **v. 7**), plundering Jerusalem (**v. 11b**; cf. **vv. 5–6**), gloating over Judah's

misfortune (**v. 12**; cf. **v. 2**) and helping to mop up survivors (**v. 14**; cf. **v. 7**). The crime is so serious because the identities of the two nations are bound up with their ancestors, the two brothers Jacob and Esau (**vv. 10, 12**).

James Nogalski: **Verses 10–14** continue the thought of **Obad 1–9** but shift from pronouncements of judgment to explicit accusations of the crimes of Edom against Judah (Jacob). The crimes include: violence against Jacob (**v. 10**); taking captives from Jerusalem when others attacked it (**v. 11**); rejoicing over Judah's misfortune (**v. 12**); entering Jerusalem (**v. 13**); and capturing Jerusalem's fugitives (**v. 14**). Literarily, this unit contains two parts: reference to Edom's past mistreatment of Judah and its future consequences in **verses 10–11** and the negative commands (vetitives) in **verses 12–14** that function both as admonitions and accusations.

I. (:10) THEIR MALICE

A. The Offense

"*Because of violence to your brother Jacob,*"

David Guzik: Some sins become worse depending on whom we sin against. It is sin to treat someone else badly; it is worse to treat a brother or sister in Jesus badly. It is sin to speak harshly to anyone; it is worse to speak harshly to your husband or wife.

David Baker: "*violence*" -- This word can indicate both personal physical abuse (e.g., **Gen. 49:5–6; Jer. 13:22**) and practices destructive of institutions and society (e.g., **Ex. 23:1; Zeph. 3:4**). In this case, both physical and psychological destruction are introduced by this term. Specific instances are explored in the following verses.

Daniel Timmer: Violence refers to 'cold-blooded and unscrupulous violation of the personal rights of others, motivated by hatred and greed and often accompanied by brutal, physical violence', and puts the 'Edom' in view here in a very unfavourable light.

B. The Punishment

1. Shame

"*You will be covered with shame,*"

David Baker: Violent Edom, instead of being cloaked by its pride (**v. 3**), is now "*covered with shame*," just as the flood covered Noah's violent neighbors (**Gen. 7:19–20**) or as one might be wrapped in a garment (e.g., **Ex. 28:42; Deut. 22:12**). The ironic twist is that garments are used most commonly to cover one's shame (e.g., **Gen. 9:23; Hos. 2:9**; cf. **Gen. 3:7, 21**), but here it is shame that covers the nation. Shame is in contrast with honor, an external consideration of worth—an important concept in the Near East, including contemporary Arabic culture. Honor is unlike pride, which is an internal, subjective consideration of worth. Edom is deprived of the former as she already had been deprived of the latter (**Obad. 2–3**).

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: One consequence of Edom's violence against his brother is that he will be covered with shame, meaning that Edom will be overwhelmed by humiliation and disgrace before a watching world (**v. 10**). This is another example of Edom's punishment fitting its crime. Because it has participated in the humiliation of Judah (**vv. 12-13**), it will be similarly humiliated. A second consequence is that Edom will be cut off forever (**vv. 9-10**), which means the end of Edom as a national entity. This punishment also fits the crime: Edom will later be accused of cutting off Judah's refugees (**v. 14**).

2. Elimination
"*And you will be cut off forever.*"

Leslie Allen: Edom's **violence**, a basic disregard for human rights, will prove the prelude to its inevitable humiliation, and indeed to its permanent dissolution. So certain is the prophet of God's justice and its outworking in the world of men. In fact the mills of God's judgment ground slowly but inexorably to this very destiny. Taking advantage of Judah's downfall and pressing into the west, the Edomites eventually proved natural victims to a resurgent Judah in the second century B.C., when John Hyrcanus conquered them, and, compelling them to be circumcised, deprived them of their nationhood.

David Baker: Shame is not the only result, however, since shame, while psychologically damaging, is not of itself fatal. Edom will be "*destroyed*" (the same verb as "*cut down*" in **v. 9,** providing yet another verbal tie between this section and the last). The nature of this total destruction (cf. **Gen. 9:11**; **Jer. 11:19**) is accentuated here, since it is eternal ("f*orever*"). There is no hope for future restoration since there will be nothing to restore.

Biblehub.com: **and cut off forever**
The phrase "*cut off forever*" indicates a complete and permanent destruction. This prophecy was fulfilled historically when Edom ceased to exist as a nation. The Edomites were eventually absorbed by surrounding peoples, and their identity was lost. This judgment reflects the biblical principle that those who oppose God's chosen people will face divine retribution (**Jeremiah 49:17-18**). The finality of being "*cut off*" underscores the seriousness of Edom's sin and serves as a warning to other nations. This also foreshadows the ultimate judgment against all who oppose God's kingdom, as seen in eschatological passages like **Revelation 19:11-21**.

II. (:11) THEIR ALOOFNESS

"*On the day that you stood aloof,*
On the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem—
You too were as one of them."

Richard Coggins: The governing theme of the next few verses is that of the "*day*." Hebrew *yom* ("*day*") occurs at least once in each verse and eleven times in all in **vv. 11–15**, and in the present form of the text (there is dispute, as we shall see, whether **v. 15a** has been displaced) the climax is reached with the announcement in **v. 15** that this day is "*the day of the LORD*."

Here, as elsewhere in Obadiah and more generally in the OT, there is a complex relationship between historical and theological assertions. The theme of the **day of the LORD** is characteristically that of **judgment**; it is a day when God brings judgment upon all who have fallen short of the demands made upon them. Characteristically, those victims of judgment will be the enemies of Israel; but on a number of occasions the prophets warn that Israel itself will not be immune from the threat of judgment. The frequency with which similar phrases and motifs are found suggests that the background of this language was cultic. But such a background should not lead us to suppose that historical events had no part to play in the building up of this picture of the day. Judgment was given, to some extent at least, on the basis of specific wrong acts, and it is most likely that one occasion for the gathering together of the book of Obadiah was the conviction that Edom had, by such specific wrong acts, transgressed the will of Yahweh and would be the victim of judgment at his day. Some such understanding seems essential to make good sense of the verses which here follow, gradually building up to their climax in **v. 15**.

David Baker: The verb "*carried off*" indicates that military action is involved, with the conqueror removing either people (whether soldiers or citizenry; e.g., **1 Kings 8:46–48**) or property ("*wealth*"; cf. **2 Chron. 21:17**). In a society where gates and walls protect cities, open access for nonnative "*foreigners*" (**Deut. 17:15**) is not only a disgrace, but it is also dangerous. Jacob's/Judah's gates are open, those of Jerusalem as well as those of her other towns.

These strangers, rather than respecting the authority of Judah's capital or the sanctity of the site of the temple, treat it as a commodity won by the lucky gambler. The instrument determining the winner is the "*lot*," most likely a pebble with inscriptions on its surfaces. These indicate various possible outcomes that are determined randomly by throwing, much like dice. While used to determine who might receive clothing or property (e.g., **Num. 26:55; Ps. 22:18**), it is also used in a grammatical form similar to that found here to indicate the division of prisoners of war for exploitation as slaves (**Joel 4:3; Nah. 3:10**). While no such practice is associated with any specific date in Judean history, the reference of this whole section is probably to the Babylonian exile of Jerusalem and Judah in either 597 or 586 B.C.

Thomas Constable: God cited one specific instance of Edom's violence against her brother, but as I explained in the introduction, which instance is unclear. Edom's treachery against Judah had taken place on a particular "day" in the past. Likewise God's judgment would come on a particular "day" yet future (v. 8). The Edomites' sin was that they failed to help the Israelites in their hour of need (cf. Luke 10:31-32). Instead they stood aloof and watched joyfully as Israel's invader plundered Jerusalem.

Enemies passing though a city's gate signified the loss of its self-rule.[32] God considered the Edomites as guilty as Jerusalem's invaders because the Edomites failed to help their brethren.

David Guzik: Sometimes doing nothing is a great sin. **Numbers 32:23** speaks of the sin that will find you out, and the sin it speaks of is the sin of doing nothing.
Progression of sin of Edom:

- First they did nothing
- Then they rejoiced in Judah's distress and calamity
- Then they took advantage of their vulnerable state
- Then they joined in the violence against God's people

"*The one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it is sinning*" (**James 4:17**).

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Obadiah uses three different images to portray Jerusalem's devastation (**v. 11**).

- First, foreigners have entered the city's gates, meaning that invaders have overcome Jerusalem's defenses.
- Second, strangers have looted the city and carried off its wealth.
- Third, the invaders have cast lots for the city, which could mean that troops used a game of chance to determine who got to loot which part of the city, or perhaps who got which part of the plunder already collected (cf. **Joel 3:3; Nah 3:10; Ps 22:18**).

Daniel Timmer: Edom's lack of fraternal love and concern for Judah is inseparable from its disregard for yhwh as the deity in covenant with Judah (note my people in **v. 13**). It is perhaps for this reason that this is the second and last time that Obadiah refers to Judah as Edom's brother.

Biblehub.com: **you were just like one of them**
Edom's behavior is equated with that of the invaders, despite their kinship with Israel. This condemnation highlights the betrayal and moral failure of Edom, aligning them with the enemies of God's people. The Bible frequently warns against aligning with the wicked (**Psalm 1:1**), and Edom's actions serve as a cautionary tale of the consequences of such alliances.

III. (:12) THEIR GLOATING

"Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune.
And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction;
Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress."

Richard Coggins: One of the most clearly defined subunits of the whole book embraces **vv. 12–14**. It is a series of **prohibitions**, each beginning in the same Hebrew form (*we'al* + verb) and ending with the phrase "*in the day of*…."

John Barton: The main exegetical question in this section is how to understand the verbs in **vv. 12–14**. The obvious way to take them is as imperative imperfects: "*do not gloat, rejoice, boast*," and so forth. But this produces an odd effect, since until now the prophecy has clearly referred to what the Edomites have already done. It is possible that the present oracle is to be seen as older than the first three and that it represents what Obadiah had said to Edom (i.e., to a Judaean audience but intending to be "overheard" by the Edomites) before the fall of Jerusalem. Apart from the general implausibility of the prophet's uttering such instructions to an absent audience, they are curiously detailed for such a scenario—forbidding, for example, standing at a crossing point to cut off fugitives' escape. The prophet would hardly have had in mind such a detailed blueprint for the Edomites' actions.

The usual solution has been to read these imperfects as referring to **what Edom should not have done**. There are few examples of such a use of the imperfect in the Old Testament, but it was recognized by GK §107. . . *But you should not have gloated over your brother*… etc.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: **Verses 12-14** continue to describe Edom's offenses through eight parallel statements naming the abuses that Edom should not have committed against Judah. The NRSV renders the verbs in past tense so that they condemn Edom for its past misdeeds, whereas the NIV renders them in the imperative so that they warn Edom to refrain from the offenses. Technically, the Hebrew verbs are a form of imperative, but they function somewhat like a parent's admonition to a misbehaving child, "You should not hit your brother" (Bridger: 60). This sentence issues a command by responding to a misdeed that has already happened. Given that Edom's crimes have already been committed (**vv. 10-11**), it seems best to think of the imperative verbs of **verses 12-14** functioning as both admonitions and denunciations, with significantly more weight on the latter.

Leslie Allen: The narration of bare facts given in the heart of **v. 11** now yields to an excited elaboration of the heartless behavior of the Edomites. The prophet shouts as if in the grip of a nightmare. He feels afresh the emotions of resentment and loathing as in his mind's eye he sees again the leering, loutish folk of Edom. In his anguish he screams out "No, no, no!" protesting with all his being against their revelling in the situation that spelled the end of Judah. Again the keynote your brother sounds out in condemnation of their lack of concern. . .

The treachery of Edom in its treatment of Judah is to be echoed in the betrayal of Edom by its own allies and confederates. The traitor will be betrayed in turn, and the unfaithful will discover how bitter is the taste of infidelity.

Daniel Timmer: The list of eight actions or attitudes exceeds by one the Old Testament's classically complete list of seven (gloat, rejoice, boast, enter, gloat, loot, stand, hand over). These activities touch nearly every dimension of human existence: 'eyes (seeing), mouth, foot (entering), hand (reaching out), heart (to rejoice)' (Dick 2005: 16). The prohibitions are definitive of these Edomites, as much in grammar as in their number and variety, and simultaneously condemn them on those grounds (Renkema 2003: 171).

Biblehub.com: **But you should not gloat in that day**
The admonition against gloating highlights the moral and ethical expectations God has for nations and individuals. Gloating over another's misfortune is condemned throughout Scripture, as seen in **Proverbs 24:17-18**, which warns against rejoicing when an enemy falls. This phrase underscores the principle of empathy and compassion, even towards adversaries. The "day" refers to a specific time of judgment or calamity, often seen as a divine act of justice.

nor boast proudly in the day of their distress
Boasting in another's distress is portrayed as arrogance and pride, which are consistently condemned in Scripture. This attitude reflects a lack of understanding of God's justice and mercy. The "day of their distress" refers to the severe trials faced by Judah, including the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. This phrase serves as a warning against pride and self-exaltation, reminding readers of the need for humility before God. The prophetic literature often contrasts human pride with divine sovereignty, as seen in **Isaiah 2:11-12**.

IV. (:13-14) THEIR EXPLOITATION

"*Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster.*
Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster.
And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster.
[14] *And do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives;*
And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress."

David Baker: Obadiah uses a synonym for "*misfortune*" three times in **verse 13**. "*Their disaster*" (*ʾêdām*) refers to that of Judah, but the term also supplies a clear wordplay on the name Edom. Edom looks around from close quarters (cf. **v. 12**) at Judah's calamity after they enter her gate. But Edom does not stop with observing. She joins in the looting and pillage of their wealth. The verb "*stretch out [the hand]*" (NIV "*seize*") has a peculiar grammatical form, but is often used of taking things (with the implied direct object "*your hand*"; see also **2 Sam. 6:6**; cf. **Gen. 3:22; Ex. 22:7, 10**). The identification of Edom with the enemy of previous verses again accentuates the surprising statement closing **Obadiah 11**.

Hampton Keathley: This is like people who loot a city after a hurricane or something. If you can have degrees of evil, this is one of the lowest forms of theft. It is taking advantage of another's calamity.

Trent Butler: Edom took three steps against Judah: (1) They entered the gate; (2) they examined the evil done to Jerusalem; and (3) they found and sent away anything of value for their personal use. They forgot one thing. God declared that these were his people. Babylon defeated Jerusalem. Babylon did not defeat Yahweh, the God of Jerusalem. He remained to fight another day. Edom, beware!

God had one last set of No! No! for Edom. “Do not stand over the crossroads to cut off his refugees. Do not deliver over his survivors in the day of trouble.” Edom went one step further down the road to God's wrath. Edom was not content with getting valuables and running home. Edom stood at the highway intersections and captured the few surviving escapees from Judah. Edom participated as a full ally of Babylon, not as a friend, relative, and ally of Jerusalem.

Biblehub.com: **Nor should you stand at the crossroads**
This phrase highlights the strategic position of Edom, located at a crossroads of major trade routes. Historically, Edomites were known for their strategic control over these routes, which they used to their advantage. The crossroads symbolize a place of decision and opportunity, where Edom chose to act against their kin, the Israelites. This action is condemned as it reflects betrayal and opportunism. The crossroads also serve as a metaphor for moral and spiritual decisions, emphasizing the importance of choosing righteousness over exploitation.

to cut off their fugitives
The act of cutting off fugitives indicates a deliberate attempt to prevent escape and ensure capture or death. In the context of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem, Edom's actions are seen as a betrayal of their kinship with Israel. This phrase underscores the severity of Edom's sin, as they not only refrained from offering refuge but actively participated in the oppression. Biblically, this act is reminiscent of other instances where God condemns those who harm the vulnerable, such as in **Proverbs 24:11-12**, which calls for the rescue of those being led away to death.

nor deliver up their survivors
Delivering up survivors implies handing over those who managed to escape the initial destruction. This action is particularly egregious as it involves betrayal and a lack of compassion. Historically, this reflects Edom's alliance with Babylon, prioritizing political gain over familial loyalty. Theologically, it contrasts with the biblical call to protect and aid the oppressed, as seen in passages like **Isaiah 1:17**, which urges the defense of the fatherless and the widow.

Lloyd Ogilvie: But the catalogue of the sins of the Edomites reaches a climax with the description of how they stood at the crossroads outside Jerusalem and captured the fleeing citizens of the city and turned them over to the invaders. Added to this, the Edomites apparently acted as quislings to the Chaldeans in rounding up the Israelites who were still hiding in the city. No mercy was shown by the Edomites.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) When is inaction inexcusable?

2) When are we tempted to gloat over the misfortunes of others?

3) How does the brotherly relationship between the nations of Edom and Israel increase the accountability of Edom here?

4) Have we fully embraced the Lord's gracious forgiveness so that we no longer are burdened with the shame of our sins?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Leslie Allen: The prophet, who apparently speaks throughout **vv. 10–14, 15b** as the interpreter of God's will, places side by side in sharp relief two words opposed in meaning: violence and brother. The kinship of the two national groups of Edom and Israel, and its corresponding obligation, are stressed in **Deut. 23:7**: "*You must not regard an Edomite with abhorrence, because he is your brother.*" This kinship is grounded in the patriarchal traditions of **Gen. 25–29; 32f.**, which present in prototype the history of rivalry and suspicion subsequently experienced by the two nations. Judah is expressly called Jacob in order to bring out this relationship. Whatever the rights and wrongs of this habitual hostility, the prophet can see no sufficient warrant for this unforgettable instance of Edom's treatment of a brother nation already overwhelmed by crisis. Kinship creates obligation, which cannot be neglected with impunity.

Daniel Timmer: Edom's violence against its Israelite kinfolk epitomizes its self-centred commitment to its own interests before all else, even when that involves a flagrant lack of pity and heartless opportunism. YHWH's justice, complemented by his covenantal commitment to his people, expresses his strong condemnation of such violence and ensures that such wrongs will not go unpunished.

John Schultz: Edom made no effort to help his brother Jacob escape from the claws of Nebuchadnezzar. As a matter of fact, the Edomites joined the looters. Think of a suitable punishment for people who come in and loot after a tornado or an earthquake strikes, or after a city is bombed! That is human nature at its lowest!

Edom's crime did not stop at this point. They became actively engaged in Israel's destruction. Their lack of compassion turned into positive enjoyment of the other's disaster. Sadistic pleasure is evidence of a complete loss of human feelings. It erases the image of God in a human being as it fails to recognize that image in the other person. The Book of Proverbs states: "*He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker;*

whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished." The final touch of Edom's crime against humanity was their active cooperation with the powers that were involved in Israel's ruin. Edomites guarded the crossroads where the refugees tried to escape and finished off those that fell in their hands. Those they did not kill were handed over to the enemy for destruction or captivity. As The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary comments: "Thus Edom, from malicious looks, proceeded on to malicious words, and from words to deeds-deeds of covetousness, spoliation, and murder."

TEXT: Obadiah 15-21

TITLE: AFTER THE DAY OF THE LORD THE KINGDOM WILL BE THE LORD'S

BIG IDEA:
THE RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM OF GOD WILL REPLACE THE TEMPORARY DOMINION OF THE PROUD EDOMITES

INTRODUCTION:

Daniel Timmer: The limited, non-eschatological punishment of Edom described in terms of military defeat, political disintegration and shame and scorn is distinct but not entirely separate from the Day of yhwh that will come upon all nations. Edom is addressed in the second person for the last time in **verses 15–16**, and that section serves as a transition between these two stages of judgment, the first of which typifies or presages the second.

James Nogalski: The structure of **verses 15–21** derives from the rhetorical logic of its four interrelated sections: the literary hinge of **verse 15** connects the preceding verses to what follows; **verses 16–17** pronounce deliverance and justice for Zion; **verses 18–20** focus upon the reconstitution of Yahweh's kingdom; and **verse 21** concludes Obadiah with a summary of the book's two main themes. As a whole, these verses portray an eschatological promise for a coming day of Yahweh that will provide future security for Jerusalem and punishment for Edom and the nations.

ChatGPT.com: Theme: God's justice will be fully executed, His people will be vindicated, and His kingdom will triumph.

Homiletical Big Idea: Though the proud nations will fall under God's judgment, those who belong to Him will be restored and reign with Him in His everlasting kingdom.

Conclusion: God's justice is certain. The proud will fall, the faithful will be delivered, and God's kingdom will prevail. Obadiah, though brief, reminds us that **the Lord reigns**, and His people will share in His triumph.

I. (:15-16) BOOMERANG EFFECT – WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND IN THE DAY OF THE LORD – UNIVERSAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A. (:15a) God's Universal Judgment Will Include All the Nations

"*For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations.*"

Richard Coggins: The **major break** within the book of Obadiah occurs at this point. Though there are obvious thematic links between the two parts, there is also a marked new development away from the direct concern with contemporary Edom toward an

eschatological picture of the destruction of "*all the nations*." Many scholars have regarded the remaining verses as additions from another hand (Allen offers a survey of scholarship; Joel, etc., 133–36). Such a view should certainly not be dismissed, but it is doubtful whether so short a collection of oracles offers enough criteria for confident decision on this point. While there is clearly a change of emphasis, there is no obvious difference in literary style, and it has been argued that the structure of the book can be best understood by seeing it as a unity.

John Schultz: The mention of the Day of the Lord in connection with all nations widens the scope of this prophecy to a universal degree. This is no longer a warning to one particular people; it is a warning to mankind at large. Judgment upon Edom becomes symbolic for God's judgment upon all the nations of the world.

Biblehub.com: The "*Day of the LORD*" is a recurring theme in the prophetic books, signifying a time of divine intervention, judgment, and salvation. In Obadiah, this day is imminent, not just for Edom, but for all nations. Historically, the Edomites were descendants of Esau and had a longstanding enmity with Israel, the descendants of Jacob. The phrase indicates a universal scope of God's judgment, extending beyond Israel's immediate neighbors to encompass all nations. This concept is echoed in other prophetic books such as **Joel 2:1** and **Zephaniah 1:14**, where the Day of the LORD is portrayed as a time of reckoning. The nearness of this day suggests urgency and the certainty of God's plans. In a broader theological context, it foreshadows the final judgment described in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation.

B. (:15b-16) God's Retributive Judgment Will Be Just

"*As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.* [16] *Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow, And become as if they had never existed.*"

Biblehub.com: **As you have done, it will be done to you;**
This phrase underscores the principle of divine justice and retribution, often summarized as "*you reap what you sow*." In the context of Obadiah, Edom's actions against Israel—such as violence, betrayal, and gloating over their misfortunes—are highlighted. This principle is consistent with other biblical teachings, such as in **Galatians 6:7**, where Paul writes about sowing and reaping. The idea of reciprocal justice is also seen in the teachings of Jesus, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 7:2**), where the measure one uses will be measured back to them. This reflects the moral order established by God, where actions have consequences.

so all the nations will drink continually
This part of the verse shifts from Edom to a broader judgment against all nations that oppose God and His people. The "drinking" here symbolizes experiencing God's wrath and judgment. The idea of drinking from the cup of God's wrath is a recurring biblical theme, seen in passages like **Jeremiah 25:15-29** and **Revelation 14:10**. The term "continually" emphasizes the completeness and inevitability of this judgment, suggesting that it will be relentless and inescapable for those who oppose God.

They will drink and gulp it down
This phrase intensifies the imagery of judgment. The act of "gulping down" suggests an overwhelming and forceful experience of God's wrath, leaving no room for escape or reprieve. It conveys the idea that the nations will fully experience the consequences of their actions against God and His people. This imagery is consistent with prophetic literature, where the cup of wrath is often depicted as being consumed fully, leaving nothing behind.

Hampton Keathley: The references to Edom's destruction would be the near fulfillment and the references to all the nations would be the far fulfillment.

Thomas Constable: Edom had her "day" on the Lord's holy mountain, Jerusalem, when she failed to help her brother, Israel. Likewise, all the nations would have their "day" dominating Jerusalem and the Jews, during "*the times of the Gentiles*" (**Luke 21:24**). We live in "*the times of the Gentiles*." Obadiah described these enemies as drinking there in celebration of their dominion over Israel (cf**. Exod. 32:6; 1 Sam. 30:16**). Though they would celebrate to the point of delirium, God would destroy them, and they would become as though they had never existed. They would drink the cup of His wrath (cf. **Ps. 60:3; 75:8; Isa. 51:17-23; Jer. 25:18-18, 28-29; 49:12-13; Hab. 2:15-16**).

G. Herbert Livingston: The judgments of the Lord will be based upon justice, not upon caprice or vindictiveness. The punishment will not be less than nor more than the crimes committed.

David Guzik: There is a sense in which God's judgment against Edom was just the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**: *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.* The Edomites cursed Israel, so they were cursed. If we want to be blessed, we should bless the Jewish people.

John Schultz: Some scholars take "*you drank on my holy hill*" to refer to Judah, others think that it refers to Edom who desecrated the temple mount. In the first case, drinking would be meant metaphorically, in the second, it could be taken literally. The Pulpit Commentary leans toward the second meaning, since the prophecy is generally addressed to Edom. Others argue with the same force that it does not refer to Judah, but to Edom's victory celebrations in Jerusalem. Jeremiah gave a prophecy, similar to Obadiah, which would make one believe that the reference is to God's judgment over Judah as an example of judgment to come upon Edom. We read:

> "*This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them.' So I took the cup from the LORD's hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn and cursing, as they are today; Pharaoh king of Egypt, his attendants, his*

officials and all his people, and all the foreign people there; all the kings of Uz; all the kings of the Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod); Edom, 34 Moab and Ammon; all the kings of Tyre and Sidon; the kings of the coastlands across the sea; Dedan, Tema, Buz and all who are in distant places; all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign people who live in the desert; all the kings of Zimri, Elam and Media; and all the kings of the north, near and far, one after the other--all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. And after all of them, the king of Sheshach will drink it too. 'Then tell them, ' 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you.' ' But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: ' 'You must drink it!' ' 'See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword upon all who live on the earth, declares the LORD Almighty.' ' "

John MacArthur: Judah drank temporarily of judgment, Edom will drink "*continually*."

II. (:17-18) CONTRAST BETWEEN HOUSE OF ESAU AND HOUSE OF JACOB (FLESH VS SPIRIT)

A. (:17) Deliverance and Holiness of Zion

"*But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy.*
And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions."

Richard Coggins: As to the idea of the "*holy*" city, it is vital to recognize that here, as elsewhere in the OT, the idea of holiness is not simply—or even primarily—a moral and ethical idea. Allen rightly refers (*Joel*, etc., 164–65) to a passage in Isaiah which may be approximately contemporary with our prophet. To call Jerusalem "*the holy city*" implies that

> *there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.*
> (**Isa. 52:1**)

Holiness, that is to say, implies a state of being set apart, and the exclusion of all that is regarded as being incompatible with that state. Both the positive and the potentially negative and damaging aspects of the idea are plain to see.

B. (:18) Destruction of House of Esau

"*Then the house of Jacob will be a fire And the house of Joseph a flame;*
But the house of Esau will be as stubble.
And they will set them on fire and consume them,
So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,
For the LORD has spoken."

Biblehub.com: **Then the house of Jacob will be a blazing fire**
The "*house of Jacob*" refers to the descendants of Jacob, also known as Israel. In biblical symbolism, fire often represents judgment, purification, and the presence of

God. Here, it signifies the power and strength of Israel in executing divine judgment. Historically, the Israelites were often in conflict with the Edomites, descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. This phrase suggests a reversal of fortunes, where Israel will be empowered to overcome its adversaries.

and the house of Joseph a burning flame
The "*house of Joseph*" refers to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons, who were significant tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel. The imagery of a "burning flame" complements the "*blazing fire*," indicating a united and potent force. This reflects the biblical theme of God restoring and uniting His people to fulfill His purposes. The mention of Joseph highlights the broader inclusion of all Israel in this prophetic victory.

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Another new element here is that Obadiah envisions a **reunion of the nation** that had split into Israel and Judah in 922 after the death of King Solomon. Because Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh (**Gen 48:1**), the names of the two largest tribes of northern Israel, house of Joseph designates the Northern Kingdom, whereas house of Jacob means Judah (cf. **Ps 77:15; Amos 5:6, 15; 6:6; Zech 10:6**). Obadiah envisions some type of revival of the Northern Kingdom, which had been destroyed by Assyria in 722, and a reunification with Judah, similar to what other prophetic texts portray **(Isa 11:12-14; Jer 3:18; 23:6; 30:3; 31:27, 31; Ezek 37:15-23; Hos 1:11; Zech 10:6**). The prophets value the unity of God's people. Neither political divisions nor the demise of the Northern Kingdom will stand in the way of God's restoring and reuniting the whole people of God.

III. (:19-20) RESTORATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND LAND

"*Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau,*
And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain;
Also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And Benjamin will possess Gilead."
And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel,
Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
Will possess the cities of the Negev."

Philip Peter Jenson: The order of treatment is **clockwise**: South (Negeb), west (Philistines), north (Ephraim, Samaria) and east (Gilead). After the fall of Jerusalem the Edomites took over the Southern wilderness of the Negeb, and the Philistines expanded into the Western lowland (the Shephelah, from a root meaning *low*).

Biblehub.com: **Those from the Negev will possess the mountains of Esau;**
The Negev is a desert region in the southern part of Israel, historically inhabited by the tribe of Judah. The "*mountains of Esau*" refer to the territory of Edom, located southeast of the Dead Sea. This prophecy indicates a reversal of fortunes, where the Israelites, specifically those from the Negev, will take possession of Edom's land. This reflects the

broader biblical theme of God's justice and the eventual triumph of His people over their enemies. Historically, Edom and Israel had a contentious relationship, with Edom often opposing Israel. This prophecy underscores the ultimate sovereignty of God over the nations.

those from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines.
The "*foothills*" or "*Shephelah"* is a region of low hills between the coastal plain and the central highlands of Israel. The Philistines were a significant adversary of Israel, residing in the coastal cities such as Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod. This part of the prophecy suggests that the Israelites will expand their territory westward into the land of the Philistines. The Philistines are often depicted in the Bible as a symbol of opposition to God's people, and their defeat represents the triumph of God's kingdom. This also connects to the broader biblical narrative of Israel's conquest and settlement in the Promised Land.

They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
Ephraim and Samaria were central regions in the northern kingdom of Israel. This prophecy indicates a reunification and restoration of the land that was once divided and lost due to the Assyrian conquest. The mention of Ephraim and Samaria symbolizes the restoration of the northern tribes and the re-establishment of Israel's full territorial inheritance. This reflects the prophetic hope for the reunification of all Israel under God's rule, as seen in other prophetic books like Ezekiel and Isaiah.

and Benjamin will possess Gilead.
Benjamin was one of the tribes of Israel, located just north of Judah. Gilead, on the other hand, was a region east of the Jordan River, known for its balm and rugged terrain. This prophecy suggests an expansion of Benjamin's territory into Gilead, which was historically part of the territory of the tribes of Gad and Manasseh. This reflects the theme of restoration and expansion of Israel's borders, as well as the fulfillment of God's promises to the patriarchs regarding the land. The mention of Benjamin, a tribe known for its warriors, also highlights the strength and resilience of God's people in reclaiming their inheritance.

as far as Zarephath
Zarephath was a Phoenician city located between Tyre and Sidon, in present-day Lebanon. Mentioned in **1 Kings 17:9**, it is where Elijah was sent during a drought. The inclusion of Zarephath highlights the extent of the territory to be reclaimed, extending beyond traditional Israelite borders, symbolizing a broader restoration and influence.

Anthony Petterson: Israel will possess the full extent of the promised land, including Edom (Esau) to the east and Philistia to the west. The Negev is to the south of Jerusalem, and the foothills lie between the high central ranges of Judah and the coastal plains. Ephraim refers to the territory of the northern kingdom of Israel, with its capital Samaria. Gilead is an Israelite town east of the Jordan River. Zaraphath is a town to the far north, near Tyre and Sidon. The location of Sepharad is uncertain. It possibly refers to western Turkey. The climax of Obadiah is the promise of God’s universal

kinship. Obadiah's prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus, the Savior who establishes God's kingdom and rules the nations (**Mk 1:15**).

John MacArthur: Sepharad – Not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, the location is uncertain. Most rabbis identify it with Spain; others has suggested Sparta or Sardis.

ChatGPT.com:
Exegesis:

- **Geographical references** (Negeb, Shephelah, Zarephath, etc.): Symbolic of **total restoration** of Israel's land.
- **Edom's territory is inherited** by God's people—a sign of victory and reversal.
- **"Exiles…shall possess…"** (**v.20**): Points to the return of the **dispersed**—God does not forget His exiled people.

Application:

- God restores **what was lost**, including dignity, land, and identity.
- Even the **marginalized and scattered** have a place in God's redemptive plan.
- God's promises extend to those **far off** (cf. **Acts 2:39**).

A. (:21) UNIVERSAL REIGN OF THE LORD

A. Appointed Saviors to Deliver and Judge

"*The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion*
To judge the mountain of Esau,"

Biblehub.com: **The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion**
This phrase refers to the leaders or saviors who will rise to bring about God's justice and restoration. Mount Zion, a significant location in Jerusalem, symbolizes God's holy presence and the center of His kingdom. Historically, Zion was the site of the Jebusite fortress captured by David, becoming the City of David. In a broader biblical context, Zion represents the spiritual kingdom of God. The ascent of deliverers to Zion signifies a divine appointment and empowerment to execute God's will. This imagery connects to the idea of God's chosen people being restored and elevated to a place of prominence and authority.

ChatGPT.com: **Who are the "deliverers"?**
The term translated as **"deliverers"** (Hebrew: *mōshiʿīm*, מוֹשִׁעִים) can also be translated as **"saviors"** or **"rescuers."** These are individuals who act on God's behalf to bring justice, restoration, and leadership.

Interpretations vary:

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1. Human Leaders Appointed by God
Some biblical scholars view these "*deliverers*" as **human agents** raised up by God to execute His judgment and establish justice. This is similar to how God raised up judges or deliverers in the Book of Judges to save Israel from oppression (e.g., Gideon,

Deborah, Samson).

- They could be **leaders of restored Israel**, possibly even from the returning exiles.
- They ascend **Mount Zion**—symbolic of God's holy rule—to **govern or judge** Esau's territory (representing Edom, historically hostile to Israel).

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2. Messianic or Eschatological Figures
Others see this as **prophetic language** pointing toward the **Messianic age** or **end-times**:

- The "deliverers" could represent **saints**, **faithful believers**, or **righteous rulers** who share in the Messiah's reign.
- Some Christian interpretations see it as a foreshadowing of **Christ and His co-rulers** (see **Revelation 20:4–6**).

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3. Heavenly Beings or Angelic Agents
A less common view is that the deliverers could be **angelic agents**, carrying out divine judgment and administration during God's final establishment of His kingdom.

Conclusion:
The "*deliverers*" in **Obadiah 21** are most likely **divinely appointed human leaders** who play a role in God's plan to restore Israel, judge its enemies (particularly Edom), and establish God's kingdom.

F. B. Meyer: [**vs. 17**] There are many instances of people not **possessing their possessions**. Such are those who put their plate and valuables into furniture depositories, and for years leave them to neglect; who have shelves of unread, uncut books; who do not realize that coal and iron mines lie under their estates; who never enjoy the wealth of love and tenderness in their friends' hearts; who refuse to avail themselves of resources which are well within their reach.

But too many of God's people are like this. The Father has caused all his fullness to reside in the nature of Jesus; He hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness in Him; He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; in our Savior are treasures of wisdom, of purity, of prevailing power, of love and patience. The Divine Merchantman has come to us to give us gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eye salve. But we go blundering on in our own selfish, sinful, faltering way. We do not possess our possessions. We do not call into practical use the boundless reinforcements awaiting us, at every hour, within the tiniest beckoning of our faith. We are like the manufacturer who refuses to use the steam-power, though it is laid on into the mill; or the householder who refuses to touch the button of the electric light.

John Goldingay: In **v. 21**, "the three brief cola are related to the three chief figures in the book—Jerusalem, Edom, and Yahweh." In the book of Judges, "*deliverer*" describes one of the individuals who exercised authority in parts of Israel from time to time before there were kings, when the Israelites were still entering into possession of the country. The more frequent term there is the word commonly translated "*judge*,"

which more accurately suggests a leader or someone who exercises authority, and the verb from which the title "*Judges*" comes appears in the parallel colon here. From Mount Zion these leaders will rule the former Edomite territory as well as the area of which Jerusalem is the titular capital.

Thus the reign will be Yahweh's (**v. 21b**). Deliverers who exercise authority are compatible with Yahweh ruling or reigning, as human kings are not, according to Gideon and according to Yahweh in what he had to say to Samuel (**Judg. 8:22–23; 1 Sam. 8:5–7**).

Richard Coggins: To the end there is maintained the tension between the general assertion of Yahweh's power, with the conviction that he would overthrow all his enemies, and the specific application of that power to the struggle against the Edomites, who for the author of this short collection epitomized the work of those enemies.

B. Absolute Sovereignty of the Lord

"*And the kingdom will be the LORD's.*"

David Guzik: This note of encouragement may be the central purpose for this prophecy of Obadiah. We wonder if it ever had much of a reading in the streets or palaces of Edom; but it certainly was received as welcome encouragement among the suffering people of God. Obadiah tells all God's people: "Don't worry about those who ignore your need, those who rejoice at your problems, those who take advantage of your crises, those join their hands with others in attacking you. I will take care of them."

Thomas Constable: Amillennial interpreters understand New Testament references to Israel as references to the church. They see the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy not in the restoration of Old Testament Israel to future sovereignty in the Promised Land but in the final victory of the church over all her enemies. Premillennialists reject this "replacement theology" (the church replaces Israel in God's program) because we believe when God said "*Israel*" He meant Israel. It is incorrect, we believe, to conclude that because Christians are the spiritual seed of Abraham the church is the spiritual seed of Israel.

As the nation of Edom opposed the Israelites, so the Edomites of Jesus' day (Herod the Great and his successors) opposed Jesus Christ and His followers. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who proved to be the fulfillment of all that the nation of Israel was to be, became the personal focus of Herod's hostility, who tried to kill Jesus in His infancy. Yet Herod was unsuccessful. Likewise all the enemies of Israel, and of Israel's Messiah, will be unsuccessful in doing away with the Savior and will experience destruction themselves for trying to do so.

Biblehub.com: **And the kingdom will belong to the LORD**
This statement emphasizes the ultimate sovereignty of God over all nations and kingdoms. It reflects the biblical theme of God's eternal dominion and the establishment of His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. This echoes the prophetic visions found

in **Daniel 2:44** and **Revelation 11:15**, where God's kingdom is depicted as everlasting and supreme over all earthly powers. The phrase underscores the fulfillment of God's promises to His people and the culmination of His redemptive plan. It points to the eschatological hope of a future where God's rule is fully realized, and His justice and peace reign supreme.

Trent Butler: But Obadiah had one final shocking lesson for Israel—the kingdom will be the LORD's. Israel's new day of rulership would be vastly different from their previous efforts because now the Lord would be king over Israel and over all that Israel possessed. Only then could Obadiah promise, "*On Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance*" (**Obad. 17**).

John Barton: Commentators generally agree that the last verse is a kind of key to the theological stance of the book of Obadiah,8 which is thus not as bad as it seems. The prophet and those who added to his message were concerned above all that YHWH's rule over the world should be reestablished, after it had appeared to totter because of the events of the exilic period. As Raabe argues, Obadiah is a kind of response to the message of Lamentations, with its fear that YHWH has abandoned his people. It reaffirms that it is truly YHWH who is in charge of what occurs on earth, and who will, in the long run, take steps to reestablish his sovereignty. God is not to be evaded, but his intention is ultimately to establish a new world order characterized by peace, though also by the predominance of his chosen people, Israel.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How can the "*day of the Lord*" be said to "*draw near*" if it still lies in the eschatological future?

2) How do unbelievers fail to grasp the reality and severity of God's coming judgment?

3) Are you comforted or distressed by the principle that we will sow what we reap?

4) Who are the "*deliverers*" who **vs. 21** says will ascend Mt. Zion?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: The major turning point in the book comes with the announcement that the day of the Lord against all nations is near (**v. 15**) [*Day of the Lord*, p. 293]. Although **11-14** repeatedly speak of the day of Judah's calamity, now a new day is dawning when God will punish the nations in the process of delivering Israel [*Salvation and the Destruction of Enemies*, p. 304]. Although Edom remains the primary target of judgment, its sins and punishment now come to symbolize the sins and judgment of all

nations who stand opposed to God's purposes.

On the day of the Lord, Edom's offenses will recoil on its head, and it will receive the same treatment that it dished out to Judah (**v. 15b**).

David Baker: **Verse 19** lists various people who possess, or dispossess (see **v. 17** for a discussion of the verb), peoples or places. The first verb has two subjects, (lit.) "*the Negev*" and "*the foothills*," each acquiring a direct object, "*Mount Esau*" and "*the Philistines*" respectively, both marked by the regular Hebrew accusative indicator. The verb is implied rather than duplicated for the second pair (though the NIV makes it explicit).

The form of the first clause exactly parallels that of the second half of **verse 17**. The "*Negev*" is a synecdoche representing its inhabitants (cf. NIV "the people of"), as did all of the geographical names functioning as verbal subjects, since people rather than locations possess land. The Negev is a dry region geographically adjacent to Edom to its west (cf. **Num. 21:1; Judg. 1:9**), in the vicinity of Arad and Beersheba. It is the part of Judah most easily able to convey inhabitants to its neighboring territory. Mount Esau/Edom is the only territory among those listed that is not included within Israel's traditional territorial boundaries (**Deut. 2:4–5**). Rather than retaking what was originally hers, Judah is applying talion, repaying Edom for her inappropriate actions (**vv. 10–14**; cf. the tie with **Amos 9:12**).

The "*foothills*" ("*Shephelah*") lay to the east of the Mediterranean coastal plain and are the western approach to the central highlands of Judah. At times they are designated as having two parts, that of Israel in the north (**Josh. 11:1–3, 16**) and that of Judah in the south, occupying a strip of about ten by fifty miles running southwest from Gezer (**Deut. 1:7–8; Josh. 10:40; 11:16; 12:8; Judg. 1:9**). It was the natural location to move against the Philistine pentapolis, which lay on the coastal plain immediately to its west, dispossessing its people and retaking land that was part of Judah's traditional territory (e.g., **Ex. 23:31; Num. 34:6; Josh. 15:45–47**, where they were listed as belonging to the foothills; implied in **Gen. 15:18–21**). This same promise is made in **Zephaniah 2:4–7**. While some of its cities were previously conquered by the Babylonians, they are still inhabitable and inhabited during Obadiah's period. The Philistines, while facing frequent wars with Israel (e.g., **2 Kings 18:8**), Assyria, Egypt (**Jer. 47:1**), and Babylon, did not disappear as a result of any of these conflicts. By the time of the Persian acquisition of the territory in 539 B.C., the Philistine population was assimilated with its occupiers and neighbors, and by the conquest by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C., all that remained was the name "*Palestine*."

The second Hebrew verb in **verse 19** does not supply an expressed subject in relation to the first two direct objects, "*the fields of Ephraim and Samaria*." These territories are farther north, in what was previously Israelite territory. Ephraim's tribal territory stretched from the Mediterranean just north of the Philistine territory into the central highlands. As the major tribe in the north, its name is synonymous at times with the entire northern kingdom (e.g., **Isa. 7; Jer. 31:9, 18, 20**). Though the text does not

indicate those who take this territory, the logical repossessor of this territory is the "*house of Joseph*" or the broader "*house of Jacob*" (**Obad. 18**). The former is appropriate since Ephraim is one of Joseph's two sons (**Gen. 41:52; 46:20**).

"*Samaria*" was the former capital of Israel and was conquered, along with the whole northern kingdom, by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., showing that Obadiah was written after that date (see introduction). This northern territory did regain some measure of autonomy under the Persians after 539 B.C., but it maintained a distinction from Judah in the south (cf. **2 Kings 17:29**, where the Samaritans were condemned for syncretistic worship practices; see numerous New Testament passages, including **Matt. 10:5**).

The third direct object ("*Gilead*") will be dispossessed by Benjamin. Gilead lies northeast of the Dead Sea and of the territory inhabited by Benjamin, whose tribal territory lies just north of Jerusalem and south of that of Ephraim (Josh. 18:11–28). Benjamin has several historical ties with the area (e.g., **Judg. 21:8–14**, where Israel battles Jabesh Gilead and Benjamin stole their women for wives; **1 Sam 11:1–11**, where Saul, a Benjamite, defeats the Ammonites on behalf of Jabesh Gilead; **2 Sam. 2:8–11**, where one of Saul's sons becomes king over the area) and is the closest to reclaim this area that was originally part of the territory of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh (**Josh. 13:8–13**). Other prophets also mention its restoration to Israel (**Jer. 50:19; Mic. 7:14; Zech. 10:10**).

Carl Armerding: The "*day of the Lord*" is a theme of great significance in Israel's eschatology and it gives final definition to the preceding references to a "*day*" in Obadiah: Edom's and Judah's downfall both constitute elements in the pattern of this "*great and dreadful day of the Lord* " (**Joel 2:31**). It signals the climactic establishment of God's rule in human history and, as such, brings judgment on all those enemies who oppose his dominion. Such a judgment engulfed apostate and rebellious Israel, most notably in the fall of Samaria and of Jerusalem – so confounding the popular theology of the eighth and seventh centuries – and descended subsequently on "*the Gentile*," those foreign nations not bowing to God's sovereignty. This "*day*," then, with its eschatological overtones, defines the destiny of Edom and the nations in both **vv. 1-9** and **vv. 15-21**. After the nations have had their "*day*" on the Lord's holy mountain, his "*day*" will come in power and great glory, with none to oppose its thrust. This "*day*" is, in the first instance, promised in terms that admit a preliminary fulfillment within history for the faithful remnant of Israel; and it is his promise of "deliverance" and conquest for the "*house of Jacob*" (**vv. 17-21**). Above all it is purged and restored Israel, whether in historical or eschatological terms, that serves as the instrument by which the Lord introduces and establishes his reign.

Walter Baker: The short Book of Obadiah presents a powerful message. It shows what happens to those who reject God's Word and His grace, rebelling in foolish pride. During Edom's prosperity many in Israel could have asked, "*Why do the wicked prosper?*" (cf. **Ps. 73:3**) But the voice of Obadiah comes thundering through the pages of the Old Testament, and echoed in the New: "*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows*" (**Gal. 6:7**). Obadiah's words underscore the fact

of God's justice. "*For we know Him who said, 'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (**Heb. 10:30-31**).

One who responds in obedience to the grace of God has everything to gain, but a person who spurns His grace in pride has everything to lose.

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