

Bible Synthesis IV
(Bible Survey)
INTRODUCTION TO
OBADIAH

1. INTRODUCTION

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. In literary form, the book is a “doom song.” It has a singular theme which is judgment upon Edom.

2. AUTHOR

Obadiah = “servant of the LORD”

- (1) He was undoubtedly from Judah —Oba. 10, 11–12, 17, 21
- (2) Various persons named Obadiah are seen in the Scriptures:
 - 1. An officer over the house of Ahab —I Kings 18:3
 - 2. One of the princes whom Jehoshaphat commissioned to teach the law in Judah —II Chron. 17:7
 - 3. One of the men who supervised the repairing of the Temple under Josiah —II Chron. 34:12
 - 4. A priest in the time of Nehemiah —Neh. 10:5
- (3) Nothing is known of this man apart from the very little (his name and his message) seen here in this little book.

3. RECIPIENTS

- (1) Edom, the descendants of Esau, located as a nation south of the Dead Sea — 1:1
See Genesis 24:30; 36:1 — The Edomites descended from Esau, brother of Jacob.
- (2) A brief account of the relationship between Israel and Edom:
 - 1. Enmity began at birth —Gen. 25:22–23
 - 2. Enmity continued with the matter of the birthright and the blessing —Gen. 25:27–32; 27:1–46
 - 3. Esau and Jacob were reconciled and seemingly died in peace —Gen. 33
 - 4. Edom refused passage to Moses and the people during the march to Canaan —Num. 20:18
 - 5. King Saul fought against Edom —I Sam. 14:47
 - 6. David brought Edom into subjection —II Sam. 8:13–14
 - 7. They attempted rebellion under Solomon, but were unsuccessful —I Kings 11:14–22
 - 8. They found freedom during the reign of Jehoram of Judah (about 845 B.C.) —II Kings 8:20–22
 - 9. During the destruction of Jerusalem, the Edomites cheered its downfall —Psalm 137:7
- (3) Prophecies relating to the destruction and judgment of Edom:
Ezek. 25:12–14; Amos 1:11–12; Isa. 34:5–14; Jer. 49:7; Lam. 4:21–22
- (4) The Edomites were dwellers in the city of Petra. In 312 B.C. the Nabatæans (Arabs) displaced them from Mount Seir.

4. DATE OF WRITING

- (1) About 845 B.C. (although other good scholars place it much later). The earlier date (845 B.C.) is according to the following arguments:

According to vv. 11–14 there was an invasion and plunder of Jerusalem which had occurred sometime previously.

- 1. Edom had revolted during the reign of Jehoram and was a bitter antagonist of Judah at that time —II Kings 8:20–22; II Chron. 21:8–20
- 2. There is no mention in Obadiah of the deportation of the whole population as occurred in 586 B.C.
- 3. The captives were not taken to Babylon, as in 586 B.C., but to Phoenicia and the West —Oba. 20
- 4. Obadiah leaves the enemy unidentified, while all of the other prophets include the names of the nation and even of Nebuchadnezzar himself.
- 5. No reference is made to the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple which took place in 586 B.C.
- 6. Amos (±760 B.C.) and Jeremiah (627 to 586 B.C. and beyond) show an acquaintance with Obadiah [Compare Oba. 14 with Amos 1:6; Oba. 4 with Amos 9:2; Oba. 19 with Amos 9:12]. Jeremiah may have quoted from Obadiah 1–6 in Jeremiah 49:7–ff. And Joel 3:3–6 seems to refer to the same occasion described by Obadiah.

5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

To warn Edom of the judgment soon to come upon them because of their pride and malicious treatment of Judah:

- (1) Violence done to Judah —Oba. 10
- (2) Indifference to Jacob’s trouble —Oba. 11
- (3) Rejoicing over Judah’s destruction —Oba. 12–13
- (4) Pride and sinful self-security —Oba. 3–4

6. THEME

Retribution for Edom

7. KEY PASSAGES

Obadiah 15

8. KEY TERM

“Edom” (with Esau) — 9 times

“cut off” — 3 times

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OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

1. Complete Destruction of Edom Predicted —Oba. 1–9
2. The Principal Reason for This Destruction —Oba. 10–14
3. The Day of the LORD: Judgment and Restoration —Oba. 15–21