

God's message to the Jewish people (Obad. 17-21)

Having announced what God was going to do to Edom, Obadiah proceeded to defend God's judgement of the nation (Obad. 10-16) by explaining why God was judging Edom and named five ways in which the Edomites had sinned against the Jews and the Lord.

Edom betrayed, humiliated, defeated, crushed, and mocked exiled Israel. But Obadiah tells us that God's own are eventually delivered, restored, vindicated, set apart, given possession, triumph and rule, under the kingship of God.

God rules this world and turns the course of nations and history as he pleases. If this were not so he could not promise Judah that he would cut off Edom and establish Jacob/Israel. No Christian should have the jitters that the world is careening out of control toward a meaningless catastrophe. God is in control.

The second part of Obadiah holds out the hope of salvation to the remnant of Israel and promises that in the end the Kingdom will not belong to the Babylonians nor to the Edomites but to the Lord.

After the prophecy about Edom had been delivered, Obadiah turned to His own people and announces three divine promises.

God will deliver you (Obad. 17-18).

God will defeat your enemies (Obad. 19-20).

God will establish the kingdom (Obad. 21).

God will deliver you (Obad. 17-18).

The northern kingdom (which ended with the destruction of Samaria in 722BC and the exile to Assyria from which none returned) was sometimes referred to as the house of Joseph. (as in I K 11.28 Ps 77.15 Am 5.6) and Jacob stands for the southern kingdom.

Obadiah said exiled Judeans will come from even beyond the far reaches of the Babylonian empire, miraculously brought back by Yahweh, driving the Edomites out of their encroachments!

David Baker writes: ["All of the tribes, those previously exiled by Assyria and those now taken by Babylonia, will be involved in Edom's judgment."](#)

History tells us that God did deliver His people from Babylonian Captivity and the Edomites were subdued by the Jews led by Judas Maccabeus who, "fought against the children of Esau in Idumea and gave them a great overthrow" (1 Mace. 5:65) in 165 B.C., and in 126 B.C. another Jewish leader, John Hyrcanus, son of Simon, "subdued all the Edomites and permitted them to remain in the country on condition that they would receive circumcision and adopt the laws of the Jews" (Josephus). With God's help the Edomites were finally subdued by the Jews, and from that day have never been a separate people or kingdom.

By New Testament times, Edom as a nation no longer figured in world affairs. Edomites were in Israel when the JEWS were in Israel. For example King Herod the Great was an Edomite not a JEW. They dwelled amongst the JEWS, ate with the JEWS adopted their practices, culture etc.

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (A.D. 70), Edom dropped forever out of world history.

All that remains of Petra today for example, is a lonely and desolate ruin. Petra's future is behind her! The future of Jerusalem, however, will be a glorious one.

Warren W. Wiersbe writes; [In the end times God will again deliver his people Israel and establish His kingdom. Mount Zion will be consecrated to the Lord and all defilement removed.](#) "Jacob" refers to the Southern Kingdom and "Joseph" the Northern Kingdom. They will be united into one nation and enter the Messianic Kingdom together, possessing the inheritance promised to them. (Warren W. Wiersbe The Bible Exposition Commentary p375)

The defeated and crushed people of God find that through God's kind, just, and powerful intervention they are rescued. There is escape and survival in the place where He dwells and makes himself known, Mount Zion. There is a future where it seemed that all hope had gone. Verse 17.

God has made a way of escape and salvation from his wrath. "On Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy." Verse 17. God requires holiness of life from those whom he delivers from evil. Those who have fled from the wickedness of pride to the holiness of humility will find refuge on the day of the Lord.

Zion, the city of God, shall be holy because it will be filled, not with people who never sinned, but with people who have been broken and humbled by their sin and have received mercy and forgiveness.

- 17.a. But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape.
- 17.b. and it shall be holy.
- 17.c. and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.

Three aspects of God-given hope are described here: deliverance, re-sanctification of what has been desecrated, and re-possession of what has been taken away. The ultimate outcome is the same with all three of these possibilities – the people of God will take back from the Edomites (and others) what had been taken from them and so will come into full possession of the promised inheritance.

God's people of every age need to learn how to **possess its inheritance** v17 or as the AV puts it "possess their possessions." Israel failed to do this when she entered the Promised Land.

Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance— now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Hebrews 9:15

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

Our inheritance is to live lives set free from the power of sin and to know the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus puts it when he promised the Holy Spirit in John 14 **he lives with you and will be in you.** John 14:17

VERSE 18

- 18.a. The house of Jacob will be a fire
- 18.b. and the house of Joseph a flame,
- 18.c. and the house of Esau will be stubble
- 18.d. they will set it on fire and consume it
- 18.e. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau.
- 18.f. the LORD has spoken.

The image is plain. God's holy presence is like fire and this comes to the wicked as consuming punishment

God will defeat your enemies (Obad. 19-20).

Israel will reclaim the land formerly inhabited by the Edomites, the Philistines, and the Samaritans. The Jews have been struggling to possess their inheritance for centuries, but other powers have always stood in the way.

The Jews will "**possess the land**" without the help of any nation, but only through the help of the Lord their God. Israel has returned to their land in unbelief, and the nation was established in 1948. However, one day they shall see their Messiah and believe on Him, and the nation will be "born in a day" (Isa. 66:8; Zech. 12:10-13:1; 14:1-9).

Amongst the specific lands listed in verses 19 and 20 is the territory through which the descendants of Esau had refused to allow Israel to pass.

Even during the reign of Kings David and Solomon, when the Israelite kingdom was at its largest, God's people never occupied all the territory He had promised them.

Obadiah looks forward to a day when the house of Jacob will truly "**possess its inheritance.**"

God will establish the kingdom (Obad. 21).

Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the LORD's.

King Messiah will have "deliverers" ("saviours" AV) assist Him in His rule over Edom and the nations.

Saviours - is the word from which we get the names Joshua and Jesus. Saviours are those who save, make salvation happen, bring about deliverance.

Remember Jesus said to his disciples, **I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** (Matt. 19:28)

And it's a promise for those who are faithful to Him today. Scripture teaches that faithfulness to Him today will mean reigning with Him in the kingdom.

Rev 5 8 the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. they sang your blood purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.

Rev 22 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. 6 The angel said to me, These words are trustworthy and true.

All of God's children look forward to the day when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord, and He shall reign forever and ever.

The Lord will reign from Mount Zion, where His temple will stand, "and all nations will stream to it" (Isa. 2:2).

Then every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord of all.

It is clear that God will punish many Gentiles for the way they have treated the Jews, but there is also the promise

Genesis 12:2-3 2I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

When the great and terrible Day of the Lord dawns, the nations of the world will be judged for the way they have treated one another and the nation of Israel. Until that day dawns, God's church must keep praying "Thy kingdom come" and seek to obey His commands because "the kingdom will be the Lord's."

And the kingdom will be the LORD's. The LORD's is the last word in the book, it is unsurprising that the book ends with this phrase. This is the summary of the state of affairs that will be brought about by the intervention of God which brings punishment to Edom, judgement to the nations, and restoration to God's people.

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." Rev 11.15

Conclusion

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 judgement, and the Judge of all the earth shall rule openly someday with all his people in safety forever.

The difference between God's treatment of the Jews and His treatment of Edom must be kept clearly in mind. God was chastising, or disciplining, the Jews. The afflictions He sent them resulted in their deliverance and restoration.

As far as Edom was concerned, however, God was acting in punishment, and His dealings with this proud and defiant people resulted after many generations in their final destruction.

Edom's future is behind her! The future of Jerusalem, however, will be a glorious one.

It's the same difference between the way God treats believers and the way He treats those who reject His Son. God allows affliction to come to Christians so that they may be chastened and brought back into His blessing. But in dealing with those who have deliberately chosen to reject the offer of grace and forgiveness, God will eventually act in judgement. Unless they turn to Christ, He will destroy them.

The message of Obadiah is relevant to our day for another reason. Esau was a typical "profane" (or secular) person (cf. Heb. 12:16), insensitive to true values. The world is full of people who have sold their spiritual birthright for the pottage of materialism—for pleasure, wealth, or "success." All such individuals should find a stern warning in this ancient prophecy.

We can be just as encouraged as the Jews who heard Obadiah's message because

God will deliver us (Obad. 17-18).

God will defeat our enemies (Obad. 19-20).

God will establish the kingdom (Obad. 21).

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