

Order of Worship

Announcements

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Scripture

Lord's Supper

Contribution

Sermon

Closing Prayer



Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9 a.m.

Worship 10 a.m.

Sunday Evening

Worship 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday Evening

Bible Classes 7 p.m.



New York Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

August 2, 2026

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18 (ESV))

When was the last time you read Obadiah? It is the shortest Minor Prophet, being only one chapter long and 21 verses total. Most likely, it hasn't been a high priority on your reading list. Obadiah is another of those short books which is easy to overlook.

Obadiah directs his comments against Edom. And there's another reason to bypass Obadiah. I mean seriously, what do you know about the Edom? What role did it play in the Old Testament? And why does God spend His time speaking about Edom through the prophets? If we're being honest, Edom seems a little obscure and off the beaten path – even the Old Testament path. But there is a wonderful message here regarding fidelity to family, a lesson which Edom forgot.

Edom was a nation composed of the descendants of Esau, Jacob's fraternal twin brother. In between the time Jacob fled Esau's presence to live with his Uncle Laban in Haran, and Jacob's return to Canaan, Esau had conquered the territory (formerly known as the Land of Seir – Genesis 22:3 and 36:20, 21, 30) (see Genesis 32:3 and 36:6-8) that later took on his name. (In Hebrew, 'Edom' is derived from 'Esau'.) It was located east of the Jordan, south of the Dead Sea, and south of Moab. It's mostly mountainous country with little farmland available. But the King's Highway did pass through it. This road was a trade and military route which connected Egypt, the northern Arabia peninsula and Mesopotamia.

Even though the descendants of Jacob and the descendants of Esau were related, the relationship between them was always tenuous, never warm and sometimes contentious. For example, during the Exodus, Edom refused to give the Israelites passage through their land (Numbers 20:14-21). Even so, God forbade Israel to abhor their Edomite brother (Deuteronomy 23:7,8). When Joshua divided the land among the conquering tribes, he allotted territory for Judah to the border of Edom but did not encroach on Edom (Joshua 15:1, 21).

However, roughly two centuries later King Saul fought the Edomites (1 Samuel 14:47). King David conquered the country (2 Samuel 8:13, 14 where "Aram" is emended for "Edom"). As time went on, Edom rebelled and even formed alliances with Judah's enemies (for example, 2 Chronicles 20:1).

Then we come to Obadiah. It is hard to nail down exactly when this little book was written. Some scholars date it pre-exilic (meaning prior to the Babylonian captivity); some have dated it shortly after the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem. Whatever the exact dating is, we do know from the book itself that God was going to judge against Edom because of what they had done against their brethren in Judah.

There was a point in time where Judah's enemies attacked and pillaged Jerusalem. God condemned Edom because, "On that day, you stood aloof" (Obadiah 1:11). Even more, Edom appears to have gloated, rejoiced and even boasted while it was happening (1:12). On top of that, Edomites stood at the crossroads to capture the fugitives and then hand them over to the attacking armies. (1:14) Edom thought they were safe and secure from invading armies in their mountain country (1:3, 4) (even though history had shown that wasn't the case).

God tells Edom that "... the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head." (1:15 (ESV)) Even more, God tells Edom, "The house of Jacob shall be a fire ... and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn and consume them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken." (1:18 (ESV)) In other words, at some point in the future God would use those same descendants of Jacob, the very ones Edom had mocked and turned over to their enemies, to punish Edom.

During the intertestament period, Judas Maccabees subdued the Edomites (recorded in 1 Maccabees 5:65) and John Hyrcanus compelled them to be circumcised and incorporated into the Jewish people. (The Herods were Idumeans (descendants of Edomites).)

Doesn't some of Obadiah sound very New Testament? How about pride going before a fall (both Proverbs 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 10:12) and being judged by the same standard that you judge others (Matthew 7:1, 2)? God's wisdom and justice are eternal. This little book of Obadiah reminds us of that. ~ Terry



*"Worship the Lord with
gladness. Come before Him
with joyful songs."*

~ Psalm 100:2