

Obadiah

by Ross Callaghan

<http://rosscallaghan.yolasite.com>



- Author** The prophet Obadiah.
- Written to** The nation of Edom.
- Date** Around the time when Jerusalem was ransacked by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC.
- Type** Prophecy of judgement.
- Theme** Edom will be judged because of its cruelty to Israel.
- Purpose** To pronounce God's judgement on Edom.
- Key verse**

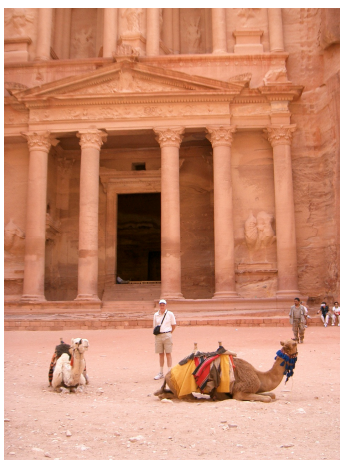
Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. v10

Introduction

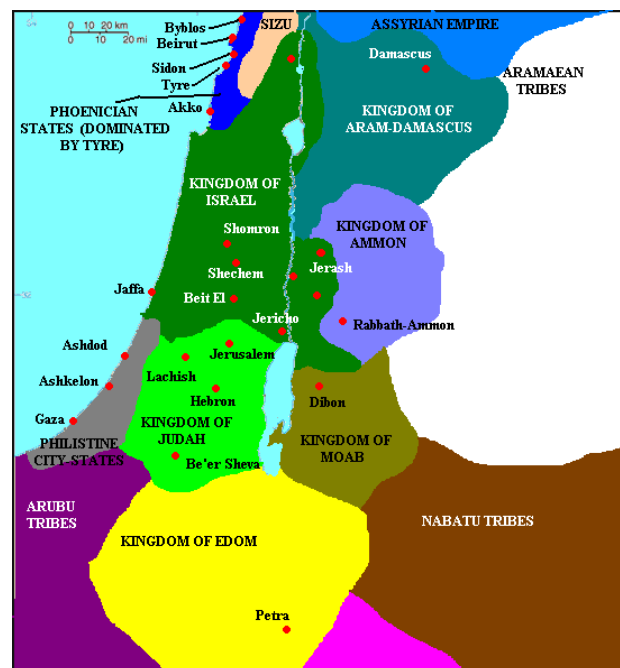
Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament: just 21 verses. It is a prophecy against Edom, one of the countries that were enemies of God's people, Israel.

Edom is in modern day Jordan. Its capital was Petra (or Sela) meaning a *rock*.

Petra is today one of the 7 wonders of the world. It is called the Rose Red City and is entered through a siq (or a cleft) in some towering rocks leading to an amazing city carved out of the red rock faces.



Petra today



Lessons

1. Israel and Edom descended from twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. If family members treat each other like Edom treated Israel they can expect the same kind of relationship breakdown that Obadiah described. God wants good relationships in families!
2. Edom trusted in its position on the Kings Highway (thus ensuring a constant supply of trade); and that its capital Petra was safe high up in the cleft of the rocks with a reliable water supply (brought in from outside by an ingenious system of channels).

The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD. v3,4

This prophecy has been accurately fulfilled. The inhabitants of Petra, the Nabateans, were conquered by the Romans in 106AD when their water supply was cut off at the entrance to the city. Later on a more reliable highway was discovered so trade dried up on the Kings Highway. There was also a big earthquake that destroyed the water channels. As a result Petra became deserted except for occasional Bedouins. It was rediscovered in 1812 and is now a major tourist attraction. Well worth a visit!

Obadiah prophesied that Petra would be desolate and it is today. During the day there are lots of tourists but after dark no-one is allowed in there. This amazing fulfillment of God's word reminds us that we can't afford to trust in our material possessions and circumstances, just in the Lord.

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

3. Obadiah's message reflects Genesis 12:2,3 where God says He will make Israel a great nation, and bless those who bless her; but curse those who curse her.
4. There can be conflict in our own lives mirroring the conflict between Israel and Edom. The 'flesh' and the Spirit are in a continual battle just like the two nations in Obadiah's prophecy and ultimately one or other of them will triumph. If we put to death the deeds of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit we can live according to the Spirit; and that's the best way to live! See Romans 8:5-17 Colossians 3:5-10.

Outline

Predictions of judgement on Edom v1-14

The pride of Edom has deceived her. She gets her security from her position in the rocks, but she will be ransacked and her treasures pillaged. God will bring her down, and will destroy her because of the way she has treated Israel.

Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. v10

Results of judgement on Edom v15-18

The day of the Lord is near when He will judge Edom. As they did to Israel, so it will be done to them. Through this Israel will once again possess the land as its inheritance. There will be no survivors from Edom.

But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance. v17

Edom will be governed by the Lord v19-21

The nation of Edom will be taken over and governed by Israel.

Ultimately: *The Kingdom will be the Lord's. v21.*

Discussion questions

Why was Edom judged by the Lord? What was the result of this judgment?

If you have visited Petra you will have been amazed at what an ancient civilization was able to achieve. Yet it all came to ruin! What does this tell you about the fragility of empires, nations, buildings, economies etc. that we put so much store on today? Is it possible that our civilization could fall and come to ruin? (Consider aspects like global warming, population growth, pandemics, nuclear power, military might, selfishness, sinfulness, power struggles, rejection of the Lord).

God judged Edom and in many parts of the Bible He says He will judge other nations in the future. What do nations need to do in response? What do Christians need to do in response?

The ancient land of Edom is currently in Jordan. Obadiah says that it will be returned to Israel. What are the implications of this?

What have you learned from your study of Obadiah? How has this affected your life?

Watch a video of our trip to Petra here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxQQhJMxGUK>

Some pretty amazing scenery, and a wonderful fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy!