

## **The Vision of Obadiah**

Obadiah 1:1-21

### **Introduction**

The story of the day of the Lord, which includes the battle of Armageddon, cannot be fully understood without considering Obadiah and his vision concerning Edom. Every word of his vision awaits the Lord's timing to bring about the end of Jacob's trouble which comes at the end of the seven years of tribulation. To understand the importance of the vision for the future, we must understand the history of two brothers, Jacob and Esau.

Jacob and Esau are the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca, grandsons of Abraham and Sarah.<sup>1</sup> In the womb, the twins struggle just as they will struggle in life and their descendants will struggle until the completion of the battle of Armageddon in the future.

In the last book of the Old Testament the Lord declares to Malachi, "Jacob, I love, Esau, I hate."<sup>2</sup> Why would the Lord say these words? The answer is found in the actions of his offspring through the centuries. Esau's children will include all the Arab nations of today and their faith will focus on an apostate god and religion called Islam.

Jacob's sons become the twelve tribes of Israel who worship the only true God. Their faith follows the Mosaic Law but fails to accept the fulfillment of that Law found in the Messiah. Ultimately, they will turn to Him during the seven years of tribulation. Obadiah's vision is not unlike those of Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the rest of the fourteen prophetic books of the Old Testament. A vision is different from a dream. In visions, the Lord or one of His angels actually appears to the prophet and delivers the message that is to be repeated. In a dream, the prophet sees the scene played out while he is sleeping.

Obadiah's vision is similar to Joel's because not one word of either book has been fulfilled. Joel's book foretells Israel's heartache during her seven years of tribulation just before Armageddon. Obadiah foretells the destruction of Esau's children at the beginning of the Armageddon battle. They will be destroyed because of their ruthless treatment of their Israelite cousins.

Who is Obadiah? We really do not know. Five stories in the Old Testament contain men with this name, but it is impossible to link the first four with the author of this vision.

When was this vision written? Once again, because there is no internal evidence in the vision or the rest of the Bible, no conclusive date can be set for its actual transcription. However, it was included with the fourteen books of the prophets as early as 350 BC, placing it solidly in the Jewish heritage with the other 38 books of the Old Testament.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah died before the marriage of Isaac to Rebecca

<sup>2</sup> Malachi 1:2; Romans 9:13

Edom, which means Esau, is the target of the Lord's wrath in this vision. His descendants' land is called Idumea or Edumea, and it is south of Jerusalem extending into the rough hills and mountains below the Dead Sea. The Edomites refuse to allow the Israelites to traverse his land on their way to conquer the Promised Land. As a result, the Lord instructs Joshua to conquer him, scattering his inhabitants all the way to the Mediterranean coast, where they will intermarry with the Phoenician people, be renamed the Philistines and ultimately misnamed the Palestinians by one of the Caesars.

### **The Report**

Obadiah 1:<sup>1</sup> The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning 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"— <sup>2</sup> "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised.

In Obadiah's vision the Lord reveals that an envoy has been sent throughout the nations of the world to enlist people to fight against Israel. The participants in this envoy are Edomites and it can be safely assumed that they are instigating the call for all nations to join them in their battle against Israel. The other prophets help us understand when this will occur. In John's Revelation it occurs after the sixth bowl is poured upon the earth and three frogs come out of the false prophet's mouth to go to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war on the great day of God, in the valley of Armageddon.<sup>3</sup> Zechariah's prophecy agrees with John's timing, placing the gathering of the nations outside Jerusalem just prior to the battle and just before the Lord returns to the Mt. of Olives.<sup>4</sup>

It must be understood that the nation of Edom has always hated Israel. Today, the worldwide population of Israel's Arab cousins seeks to eliminate her government so the Palestinians can take full control of her land. Every move is calculated to shrink the Jewish nation and her population, reducing her to the point of insignificance in earthly terms with total annihilation as the goal.<sup>5</sup> The Edomites of Palestine refuse to honor the Lord's land grant to Israel. They are the ones who constantly stir the support of the Arab nations against Israel. Their refusal to accept the Lord's desire for Israel shows their arrogance as they spit in the face of the true God while worshiping their apostate Allah.

### **Arrogance Deceived**

Obadiah 1:<sup>3</sup> "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?' <sup>4</sup> "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.

Today, Esau's descendants have surrounded Israel completely. In truth, they infiltrate her streets and occupy her towns, while at the same time pronounce the unfairness of the occupation of their region, demanding the expulsion of Israel from the land. Yet, at the same time, they control Mt. Moriah, the holy temple mount, which they have capped with their gold domed mosque.

The Edomites are brazenly arrogant and will continue to be so because of their accomplishments recorded in this passage. Their success will be so great that they will be self-deceived to the point of thinking they are too great and affluent to fail as a nation. At

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<sup>3</sup> Revelation 16: 13-16

<sup>4</sup> Zechariah 14: 1-8

<sup>5</sup> Joel 2:17

one time they had carved their cities into the sides of the mountains, but deserted them sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. To fulfill prophecy, they will return to the barren clefs of the rocks in Petra, reestablishing it and the city of Teman as well as the mountain range of Paran.

### Utter Ruin

Obadiah 1:<sup>5</sup> "If thieves came to you, If robbers by night— O how you will be ruined!— Would they not steal *only* until they had enough? If grape gatherers came to you, Would they not leave *some* gleanings?"<sup>6</sup> "O how Esau will be ransacked, *And* his hidden treasures searched out!"<sup>7</sup> "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.~~)<sup>8</sup> "Will I not on that day," declares the Lord, "Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau?"<sup>9</sup> "Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman, So that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.

The Lord uses several descriptive thoughts to describe the utter ruin that will overtake the Edomites. It will not be like thieves in the night because thieves take only what they want or need; they never take everything. Neither will it be like the grape gatherers who always leave a little behind for the poor to gather. They will be utterly destroyed and everything they have will be taken from them.

Moreover, Edom's so-called friends and allies will aid in the deception by accepting a place of duty at the border of southern Israel and the land of Edom. When they leave, their friends will sack their cities, stealing the supplies for their own use.

Then, when the Lord arrives, He will destroy all of the Edomites before He approaches Jerusalem to melt away all who stand in the valley of Armageddon.<sup>6</sup> All the Edomites will be slaughtered that day.<sup>7</sup>

### Why Edom?

Obadiah 1:<sup>10</sup> "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered *with* shame, And you will be cut off forever."<sup>11</sup> "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."<sup>12</sup> "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."<sup>13</sup> "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."<sup>14</sup> "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.

Edom will be destroyed because she has done everything possible to hurt her Israelite cousins during her time of tribulation and trouble. The Edomites will do nothing to protect Israel or her property, almost acting like border guards while others plunder Israel's assets. They will be part of the siege on Jerusalem when half of the people in the city die. They will be thrilled to see Israel's travail. When the Jews begin to run, the Edomites will block their exits from the cities, capturing them as fugitives and turning them in for rewards and prison terms. The Lord warns them not to do these things, but they will and He will destroy them.

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<sup>6</sup> Habakkuk 3:3

<sup>7</sup> Joel 3:19

## Day of the Lord

Obadiah 1:<sup>15</sup> "For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. <sup>16</sup> "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.

When the day of the Lord finally arrives, the fate of Edom is set. By that time she will have used and abused Mt. Moriah for her own purposes for hundreds of years. The dome of the rock mosque was built in 1193 AD by Islam on the holy mount and it will not be removed until the Lord destroys it on His day. Because Edom and its allies have used the mount for Islam's false religion, they all will be destroyed. It will be as if they never existed. They will rot where they stand on that day.

## Israel Exalted

Obadiah 1:<sup>17</sup> "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. <sup>18</sup> "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.

When the Lord utterly destroys Edom, its allies and dealings on Mt. Moriah just south on Mt. Zion, the Israelites will be safe. After the destruction of Armageddon, the houses of Jacob and Joseph will emerge to repossess all the Promised Land taken from them in 722 BC and 606 BC. Esau, her bitter enemy and cousin will no longer exist; there will not be one survivor.

## Edom's Land Divided

Obadiah 1:<sup>19</sup> Then *those of* the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, And *those of* the Shephelah the Philistine *plain*; Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, and Benjamin *will possess* Gilead. <sup>20</sup> 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.

The Jews who have put their faith in the Lord will survive the time of tribulation and the wrath of His coming. Those of the south country, the tribe of Judah and Simeon, will inhabit Edom's mountains and plains. The Jews of the foothills of Israel will settle in the Gaza strip and the Philistine plain area as well as Ephraim's territory that was taken away in 722 BC and will be renamed Samaria.<sup>8</sup> Benjamin's tribe will take Gilead, located east of the Jordan in the old territory of Gad and the rest of the surviving Israelites from Jerusalem will dwell in the cities once owned by the Edomites.

## The Kingdom

Obadiah 1:<sup>21</sup> The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's.

The deliverers of Israel will ascend to Mt. Zion. They are the Lord and all the host of saints from all the ages who return with Him when He breaks through the eastern skies and destroys Edom from its mountains and cities to its borders on the way to the Battle of

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<sup>8</sup> Samaria was formed by the Assyrians who took over the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. Assyria removed most of the Jews from the country, leaving only the poorest people behind. Assyrians were moved to that land to intermarry with the Jews, resulting in a half-breed culture.

Armageddon.<sup>9</sup> By 6:00 PM on the day of the Lord, it is all over. What began at noon will be completed in fewer than six hours. The Lord's foot will touch the Mt. of Olives which will split from east to west. A plain will be formed that will rise above all the other natural structures of the world. Every mountain will be laid low. Over the next 45 days, the new temple will be built in Jerusalem and the great white throne will be placed there for the King of the kingdom.<sup>10</sup> The world will belong to the Lord completely for 1,000 years at that time.

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-16; Habakkuk 3:3-13, Joel 2:1-11; Zechariah 12:2-10; Zechariah 14:1-21; Zechariah 13:2-9; Revelation 19-21

<sup>10</sup> Amos 8:9; Habakkuk 3:11; Zecharah 14:7; Daniel 12:10-12; Revelation 20:1-11