

OBADIAH - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What is the message in this short book? Does it add anything of consequence to our understanding of God? Would it say much about God, that He'd use some precious space in Scripture to give us this one page of correction for those who gloat over their enemies' misfortunes? Does that say anything to us in our day? What kind of a person gloats over the discipline of another? Do we have many key texts out of Obadiah?

AUTHOR: Obadiah

"The name 'Obadiah' means 'Servant of the Lord.' The Old Testament gives the name 'Obadiah' to at least thirteen men (1 Kin. 18:3ff.; 1 Chr. 7:3; 8:38; 9:16, 44; 12:9; 27:19; 2 Chr. 17:7; 34:12; Ezra 8:9; Neh. 10:5; 12:25), but none of these can be identified with certainty as the author of this book. No details are known of the life of this prophet." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

Obadiah's of the Bible:

1. The author of the book of Obadiah.
2. The manager of Ahab's household and a devoted follower of Yahweh during the reign of Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kgs 18:1–16).
3. A postexilic descendant of David (1 Chr 3:21).
4. A descendant of Issachar and son of Izrahiah (1 Chr 7:3). According to the Chronicler, Obadiah would have been roughly contemporary with Moses.
5. A son of Azel and a member of the family of Saul (1 Chr 8:38; 9:44).
6. One of the first exiles to return to Judah (1 Chr 9:16).
7. A member of the tribe of Gad who joined David during his stay in Ziklag (1 Chr 12:9).
8. A member of the tribe of Zebulun and father of Ishmaiah (1 Chr 27:19).
9. A prince of Judah who was among a group commissioned by Jehoshaphat to teach "the book of the law of Yahweh" to the people of Judah (2 Chr 17:7).
10. A Levite who served as an overseer in the repairing of the temple during the reform of Josiah (2 Chr 34:12). He is noted as a Levite of the lineage of Merari.
11. A priest who accompanied Ezra to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:9 = 1 Esdr 8:35).
12. A gatekeeper during the priesthood of Joiakim (Neh 10:5; 12:25). His task was to guard the storehouses of the gates. (It is possible that the two mentions of Obadiah in Nehemiah were two different people.)

"Nothing is known about Obadiah except his name, which means 'Servant of Yahweh' or 'Worshiper of Yahweh.' He evidently preferred to be remembered in his prophetic role rather than as an individual, because he chose to relate no details of his personal life or history. Twelve other men in the Old Testament are known by this name." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

DATE: 586–539 B.C.

“There are many views about the date of the book. Edom’s cooperation with ‘foreigners’ in sacking Jerusalem (vv. 10–14), which is the historical background to the prophecy, could refer to any one of several incidents. It may have occurred c. 850 B.C. in the reign of Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:8–10, 16, 17), although no attack on Jerusalem is mentioned; in the reign of Amaziah, c. 790 B.C. (2 Chr. 25:14–24), although no foreigners are mentioned; in the reign of Ahaz, c. 735 B.C. (2 Chr. 28:17), although again no attack on Jerusalem is mentioned; or at the end of the reign of Zedekiah, c. 586 B.C. (2 Chr. 36:11–21; Ps. 137:7; Lam. 4:21, 22; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:5; 12–15). Though conservative scholars formerly favored the reign of Jehoram, many of them now take the reference as being to the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. While the book may have been written as early as 845 B.C., it appears that Obadiah quotes from Jeremiah 49 (cf. vv. 1–4 with Jer. 49:14–16, v. 5, 6 with Jer. 49:9, 10, v. 8 with Jer. 49:7, and v. 16 with Jer. 49:12), which is dated c. 605 B.C. A date between the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 B.C., therefore, is likely.” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“The similarity of several verses in Obadiah to verses in Jeremiah 49 suggest that Obadiah quoted from Jeremiah or vice versa.

<i>Obadiah</i>	<i>Jeremiah</i>
v.1	49:14
v.2	49:15
vv.3-4	49:16
v.5	49:9
v.6	49:10
v.8	49:7
v.9	49:22b
v.16	49:12

“Although the striking similarities between vv. 1–9 of this prophecy and Jer. 49:7–22 must be more than an impressive coincidence, they do not resolve the problem of dating Obadiah. We know that Jeremiah prophesied from about 626 B.C. until after 586; but whether one prophet quotes the other, or whether both prophets used an earlier source, is uncertain.” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

“In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar’s army crushed Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple, ending Judah’s existence as an independent nation. Edom, as a closely related nation, should have helped Judah’s refugees. But instead of offering sympathy and help, Edom handed Judeans over to the conquering Babylonians. The Edomites even murdered some of the refugees. Such treachery to a related nation could not be overlooked. God gave Obadiah a stern message for Edom, a warning of God’s judgment on them for their callous treatment of the fleeing Judeans.

“The Edomites’ pride and presumed self-sufficiency became their downfall. Their fortress capital of Sela, which they considered impregnable, became their tomb. Their Arab neighbors turned on them, taking over their land and their livelihood. The Edomites were pushed into what had been southern Judah. In the second century B.C., the resurgent Jewish kingdom under the Maccabees conquered the Edomites and forcibly converted them to Judaism. At that time they were called Idumeans.” (*Nelson Study Bible*)

“Since the book offers no specific date, internal evidence, coupled with information given in other Old Testament references, are considerations in dating Obadiah. The prophet refers to an attack on Jerusalem (Obad. 11–14). Assaults on Jerusalem recorded in the Old Testament include those by Shishak, king of Egypt (925 B.C.; 1 Kin. 14:25,26; 2 Chr. 12:2–9); by the Philistines and Arabs during the reign of Jehoram (around 850 B.C.; 2 Chr. 21:8–10, 16, 17); by Jehoash, king of Israel (around 790 B.C.; 2 Chr. 25); and by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (586 B.C.; 2 Kin. 25:1, 2).” (*Woman’s Study Bible*)

“The fact that the message concerns Edom, a land to the south of Judah, together with specific references to Judah and Jerusalem (Ob 11, 12, 17, 20, 21), implies that the prophet bore his message to the southern kingdom of Judah. Unlike most of the other prophets, Obadiah does not date his message, and various dates have been suggested, ranging from the 8th to the 6th cent. B.C. The record of the revolt of Edom in the days of King Joram (2 Kings 8:20–22) makes no reference to an Edomite occupation of Jerusalem. However, the similarity of Obadiah’s denunciation of Edom (Ob 10–14) to the denunciations of Jeremiah (Jer 49:7–22) and Ezekiel (Eze 25:12–14; 35) seems singularly appropriate to the events of 586 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. According to Ps 137:7 the Edomites approved the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and rejoiced over the calamities that overtook Judah.” (*SDA Bible Dictionary*)

THEME: The Judgment of Edom

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. Its prophecy concerns the judgment of Edom for its treatment of Jerusalem. Edom, the nation descended from Esau, had its capital at Sela (Petra). It fell into Arab hands in the fourth century, fulfilling Obadiah’s prophecy. Obadiah highlights the inevitability of God’s just judgment upon all who fight against Him and His people, as well as the certainty of the ultimate establishment of God’s kingdom. God is a God of moral justice; and He is in control, though events sometimes appear to indicate the opposite. Though God’s people may be in trouble, they eventually will be the recipients of God’s blessings.” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“The literary style of Obadiah is classic and vigorous. His theme is the destruction of Edom because of its violence against the Jews (Ob 10–14). There had been long and bitter warfare between the 2 peoples (2 Samuel 8:13, 14; 1 Kings 11:14–22; 2 Chr 20:22; 21:8–10; 25:11, 12; 28:17). At the day of the Lord tables will be reversed, and the people of Edom—blood relatives of the Jews—will be treated as they have treated others (Ob 15). Their cruelties toward Judah during a time of national crisis will meet a just reward. Then deliverance will come to the house of Jacob, and the kingdom will be restored to its rightful state (vs 17–21).

“Obadiah’s brief message logically falls into 2 parts: (1) the prediction of doom upon Edom (Ob 1–16) and (2) the triumph and restoration of Israel (vs 17–21). Obadiah first summons the heathen nations to attack Edom (vs 1, 2) because of her pride (vs 3, 4). Edom is to be plundered and her people exterminated (vs 5–9). Her crime has been violence against her

brother Jacob, 'in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem' (vs 10, 11). Instead of showing mercy the Edomites had laid wait for the Jews as they fled, cutting some of them down and taking others captive (vs 12–14). But the day of the Lord is at hand when the people of Edom will receive their just deserts and 'be as though they had not been' (vs 15, 16). That day will bring 'deliverance' to 'mount Zion,' and 'the house of Jacob' will inherit the land of Edom (vs 17–20), and the kingdom will then be the Lord's (v 21)." (*SDA Bible Dictionary*)

"Obadiah's prophecy is written in Hebrew poetry, and the reader needs to be mindful of parallelism in interpreting it. The structure of the Hebrew parallelism portrays the intense emotion with which the prophecy was delivered." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

"While Obadiah's short prophetic oracle was addressed to Edom, it is doubtful that Edomite leaders ever heard or read it. One purpose of the oracle was to comfort and encourage the surviving Judeans with the message that God had not abandoned them. Judah would be restored to its own land after the judgment of the Exile had been accomplished, and their enemies would be punished.

"In the grand scheme of the biblical message of God's redemption of fallen humanity, the Book of Obadiah may seem to be of little importance. But its portion of that message is tremendously vital. God is sovereign over all nations, whether they acknowledge His sovereignty or not. God desires that we show mercy and favor to our neighbors in their time of distress. Treachery against a relative is never justified and will be judged by the God of justice." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

"Personal Application. Obadiah forcefully addresses the matter of relationships. How easy it is for those we know best to become the objects of our most bitter resentment. Logically, Edom should have sided with Judah against Babylonia, but years of hatred caused emotions to override good sense. Such fractured relationships almost inevitably result from personal pride, pride that prevents our seeing the error of our own ways, pride that builds barriers to block the way to reconciliation. The Book of Obadiah calls us to confront the incredible cost of pride, and to realize that the importance of preserving our pride fades into oblivion when we must stand face-to-face with an angry God and try to justify our arrogance. The book calls us to repent of our pride, to seek reconciliation in broken relationships, and to model a life-style of forgiveness and acceptance. See Matthew 5:21–26.

"The prevailing theme of Obadiah is well stated by Paul in Galatians 6:7: 'Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.' Or, in the words of Obadiah himself, 'As you have done, it shall be done to you' (v. 15). Retribution is a reality. God is just, and He will punish injustices perpetrated against other people, both individuals and nations. The Lord takes very seriously the covenant promises He makes. In Genesis 12:1-3 He had promised to bless those who bless His people and curse those who curse them. The Lord so closely identifies Himself with His people, that to curse His people is to curse Him, to reject them is to reject Him. Edom's end then foreshadows the fate of all who abuse the people of God. The Lord is determined to keep faith with His people, even when His people are faithless and disobedient.

"And He will keep faith—in spite of appearances. The desecration of Jerusalem and the people of Judah sent a message to the world of Obadiah's day: The God of Israel had been defeated by the gods of Babylon, Edom, and the other oppressing nations. But that was a

false message, because appearances can be deceiving. In His sovereignty God uses circumstances to accomplish His purposes, to purify and protect His people. As Lord of all the Earth He was already masterminding Edom's doom, announcing victory in the face of smoldering defeat, and controlling the course of the future in order to accomplish His plan. The Lord who did all that for Israel is the Lord who still works for His people today." (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)

2. Was this message primarily for the Edomites or do you think that this might have been written to encourage the Jews? Do we have any evidence that the message ever got to the Edomites? How is it that the Jews were being disciplined, and these descendants of Esau were not? The Jews at least had made a profession of being God's people. What about these Edomites?

"The prophecy is 'concerning Edom' (v. 1) and is repeatedly addressed to that nation, but it was given to the covenant community as holy Scripture. The purpose, therefore, more than to warn Edom of imminent judgment, is to reassure God's people of His triumphant justice at work for them. Edom prospered, Judah lay defeated, and the moral order of the world appeared to have been overthrown by lawless forces. But the prophet Obadiah was raised up with a message of God's sovereign justice in order to strengthen His people's weakened faith. It is the righteous purpose of God, not the evil will of men, that determines history.

"When the church suffers at the hands of God's enemies, she needs to return to the prophecy of Obadiah and renew her faith in the just God revealed there. He cares for His persecuted people, and behind their present circumstances He is always at work for them." (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

Obadiah apparently writes as someone who was among the Jewish people during the siege and final destruction of Jerusalem. But the events described in this book, unless God chose to give them as a prophecy and reveal them to Obadiah before they actually happened, took place after Jerusalem was already destroyed. This occurred about one month after the wall was breached and Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. So if Obadiah was writing from the perspective of someone who saw these things take place, was he among the exiles headed for Babylon, or was he among those very few who were allowed to remain in Judah? In either case, how would he have delivered the document to Edom? Would anyone there have paid any attention if such a document arrived from Obadiah? Or was this supposed to be primarily a reassurance to the Jewish people?

3. What do you think of this "golden rule" in reverse--"As you have done, it shall be done to you?" (Obadiah 15; compare Matthew 7:12) Isn't this the way many people act in our world? How is this different than "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"? (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21; See Matthew 5:38-42)

Obadiah 15:

¹⁵ dioti eggū; hmera kuriou epi; panta ta; eñnh, oh tropon epoihsa, ouñtw eñstai soi, to; añtapodomai sou añtapodoqhsetai eijkefal hn sou, *LXX-Septuagint*

¹⁵ For near is the day of Jehovah, on all the nations, As thou hast done, it is done to thee, Thy deed doth turn back on thine own head. *Young's Literal Translation*

¹⁵ For the day of the Lord is neere, upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done to thee: thy reward shall returne upon thine head. *Geneva*

- ¹⁵ For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. *The King James Version*
- ¹⁵ “For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head. *The New King James Version*
- ¹⁵ For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy recompence [dealing] shall return upon thine own head. *1890 Darby Bible; ASV*
- ¹⁵ For the day of the Lord is near upon [against] all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you, your deeds shall return on your own head. *The Revised Standard Version; NRSV*
- ¹⁵ The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. *The New International Version*
- ¹⁵ The day of the Lord is near for all nations. Edom, you will be treated as you have treated others. You will get back what you have given. *God’s Word*
- ¹⁵ The day is near when I, the Lord, will judge all nations. Edom, what you have done will be done to you. You will get back what you have given. *Good News Bible*
- ¹⁵ As you did, so shall it be done to you; Your conduct shall be requited. Yea, against all nations The day of the Lord is at hand. *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*
- ¹⁵ The day is coming when I, the Lord, will judge the nations. And, Edom, you will pay in full for what you have done. *The Contemporary English Version*
- ¹⁵ The Lord’s vengeance will soon fall upon all Gentile nations. As you have done to Israel, so will it be done to you. Your acts will boomerang upon your heads. *The Living Bible*
- ¹⁵ For near is the day of the LORD for all the nations! As you have done, so shall it be done to you, your deed shall come back upon your own head; *The New American Bible*
- ¹⁵ 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. *The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*
- ¹⁵ The Lord’s day of judging is coming soon to all the nations. The same evil things you did to other people will happen to you; they will come back upon your own head. *(NCV)*
- ¹⁵ For the Day of Yahweh is near for all the nations. As you have done, so will it be done to you: your deeds will recoil on your own head. *The New Jerusalem Bible*
- ¹⁵ The day is near when I, the Lord, will judge the godless nations! As you have done to Israel, so it will be done to you. All your evil deeds will fall back on your own heads. *NLT*
- ¹⁵ For soon the day of the LORD will come on all the nations: you shall be treated as you have treated others, and your deeds will recoil on your own head. *New English Bible*
- ¹⁵ The day of the LORD is at hand for all the nations. You will be treated as you have treated others: your deeds will recoil on your own head. *Revised English Bible*
- ¹⁵ For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you, your dealing will return upon your own head. *Amplified*
- ¹⁵ As you did then, so it is done to you: your deeds recoil on your own head. Yes, the day of the Eternal is at hand, with doom for all the nations. *Moffatt*
- ¹⁵ The day of the Lord is near for you. As you have done, so will it be done to you. Your cruelty and mercilessness will return on your own head. You will get back what you have given. *Clear Word*

“As you have done: The nature of God's judgment always reflects the nature of the sin being judged.” (*Nelson Study Bible*, article: Obadiah 15)

“day of the LORD upon all the nations. For the day of the Lord, see Is. 2:11, 12. Now the prophet sets the judgment of Edom against the larger backdrop of God's moral reckoning with all nations. This episode with Edom is only a small preview of God's judgment; He will not stop until He has cleansed His world of all His enemies. The connection between Edom and the rest of the nations is their shared rebellion against God.” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

“The word *day* occurs 11 times in vv. 8-14. Now it becomes **the day of the LORD**, a season of judgment and divine justice **upon all the nations** around Israel. The OT looked ever forward to this time.

“The Day of the Lord’ is used by the OT prophets to signify a time in the history of mankind when God directly intervenes to bring salvation to His people and punishment to the rebellious. By it God restores His righteous order in the Earth. As noted, the terms ‘that Day,’ or simply ‘the Day,’ are sometimes used as synonyms for the fuller expression ‘The Day of the Lord.’

“The fulfillment of the Day must be seen, however, in four different stages: 1) In the times of the prophets, it was revealed by such events as the invasion of Israel by foreign powers (Amos), the awesome plagues of locusts (Joel), and the return of Israelite exiles from captivity (Ezra-Nehemiah). 2) In that prophetic insight has the quality of merging periods of eschatology so that even the prophets themselves could not always distinguish the various times of the fulfillment of their prophecies, that Day developed into a broad biblical concept. Prophetic fulfillments closest to the prophets’ own day were mingled with those reaching as far as the culmination of all things. Hence, the first coming of Christ and the church age began another phase of the Day of the Lord. As participants in this aspect of the Day of the Lord, the church can call on the risen Christ to cast down spiritual forces that hinder God's work in this present world and to bring about innumerable blessings. This is made clear by comparing Is. 61:1, 2 with Luke 4:18, 19, and Joel 2:25-32 with Acts 2:16-21. 3) The Second Coming of Christ will inaugurate the third aspect of the Day of the Lord, during which Christ's personal, righteous, and universal rule will restore God's order to the Earth (Is. 11:6-9; Amos 9:13). 4) The ultimate fulfillment of the Day of the Lord awaits the full arrival of the world to come, with its new heaven and new earth. Compare Ezek. 47:1-12 with Rev. 22:1-5.” (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)

In general, we are comfortable with the idea of “results” or “consequences” being fair. But what is the difference between result, consequence, justice, retribution, and revenge? Which one is Obadiah talking about? If the consequence is “bad” but “natural” is that okay? What if the consequence is “bad” but “imposed” by someone? Does this disturb us? Does it then automatically become justice, retribution or revenge? Does this imply that it is not “fair?”

4. Did not the Edomites know a lot about God's purposes? Do we have any evidence that the Edomites had been long term rivals and enemies of the Jews? Psalm 137:7,8. What was the general feeling between the Jews and the Edomites throughout the Old Testament? See Obadiah 1-14; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11,12; Malachi 1:2-4

There was a rivalry going between Esau (the father of the Edomites) and Jacob even before they got out of the womb! See Genesis 25:19-26. Many OT prophets spoke about judgments coming on the Edomites even as early as Balaam (Numbers 24:18). They refused even to let Israel pass through their territory on the way to Canaan (Numbers 20:14-21)!

A sample of the prophecies against Edom includes:

Psalms 60:8,9: ⁸ “But I will use Moab as my washbasin and I will throw my sandals on Edom, as a sign that I own it. Did the Philistines think they would shout in triumph over me?” ⁹

Who, O God, will take me into the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? Compare Psalms 108:9,10

Psalms 137:7,8: ⁷ Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did the day Jerusalem was captured. Remember how they kept saying, “Tear it down to the ground!”

⁸ Babylon, you will be destroyed. Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us- ⁹ who take your babies and smash them against a rock. *Good News Bible*

Isaiah 11:14: ¹⁴ Together they will attack the Philistines on the west and plunder the people who live to the east. They will conquer the people of Edom and Moab, and the people of Ammon will obey them. *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

See also Isaiah 34:5-17; Jeremiah 9:25,26; 49:7-22; Obadiah 1-14; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11,12; Malachi 1:2-4

Jeremiah 25:19: ¹⁹ Here is the list of all the others who had to drink from the cup:

the king of Egypt, his officials and leaders;

all the Egyptians ²⁰ and all the foreigners in Egypt;

all the kings of the land of Uz;

all the kings of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of Ashdod;

²¹ all the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon;

²² all the kings of Tyre and Sidon;

all the kings of the Mediterranean lands;

²³ the cities of Dedan, Tema, and Buz;

all the people who cut their hair short;

²⁴ all the kings of Arabia;

all the kings of the desert tribes;

²⁵ all the kings of Zimri, Elam, and Media;

²⁶ all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another.

Every nation on the face of the earth had to drink from it. Last of all, the king of Babylonia will drink from it. (*GNB*) [Is Jeremiah using the same language here as in Obadiah 16? Look at the next question.]

5. What is implied about the state of the dead by Obadiah 16, “They shall be as though they had not been?” Is that our key text for everything coming completely to an end, so there is no such thing as an eternally-burning hell? Or is that a poetic way of saying they will simply be eliminated? What’s your strongest evidence for believing that in the end the wicked will be totally destroyed, and be as though they had never been? How do you fit this with “their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched?” (Isaiah 66:24, *NRSV*) See also Isaiah 43:17; Malachi 4:1; Revelation 14:9-11, 20:7-10. Do we have any demonstration of what happens to the wicked in the end anywhere in the Bible? (See Malachi 4:1-3; Exodus 15:7; Isaiah 5:24; 40:24; 41:2; 47:14; Joel 2:5; Nahum 1:8-10; 2 Peter 2:6) Was Jesus “made to be sin, though He knew no sin?” (2 Corinthians 5:21) Did He die to demonstrate that death is indeed the result of sin? Is He still burning in the fires of hell?

Obadiah 16:

- ¹⁶ dioti oh tropon epiē- epi; to; ofro to; agion mou, piontai panta ta; eqnh oihon, piontai kai; katabhsontai kai; ehsontai kaqw; oujc uparconte. *LXX-Septuagint*
- ¹⁶ For—as ye have drunk on My holy mount, Drink do all the nations continually, And they have drunk and have swallowed, And they have been as they have not been. *Young's Literal Translation*
- ¹⁶ For as yee have drunke upon mine holy Mountaine, so shall all the heathen drinke continually: yea, they shall drinke and swallow up, and they shall be as though they had not bene. *Geneva*
- ¹⁶ For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen [nations] drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. *KJV; 1890 Darby Bible; 1901 American Standard Version*
- ¹⁶ For as you drank on my holy mountain, So shall all the nations drink continually; Yes, they shall drink, and swallow, And they shall be as though they had never been. *The New King James Version*
- ¹⁶ For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, all the nations round about [around you] shall drink; they shall drink, and stagger, and shall be as though they had not been [never been]. (*RSV; NSRV*)
- ¹⁶ ...and be as if they had never been. *The New International Version*
- ¹⁶ ...And become as if they had never existed. *The New American Standard Bible; 1995 Update*
- ¹⁶ As you, Israel, drank on my holy mountain, so all nations will drink in turn. They will drink and guzzle down everything in it. They will be like those who have never existed. *God's Word*
- ¹⁶ You on my sacred hill have drunk the cup, and so shall every nation drink it at my hand, drink it and stagger and vanish. *Moffatt*
- ¹⁶ My people have drunk a bitter cup of punishment on my sacred hill. But all the surrounding nations will drink a still more bitter cup of punishment; they will drink it all and vanish away. *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*
- ¹⁶ I forced the people of Judah to drink the wine of my anger on my sacred mountain. Soon the neighboring nations must drink their fill—then vanish without a trace. (*CEV*)
- ¹⁶ That same cup that you drank on My Holy Mount Shall all nations drink evermore, Drink till their speech grows thick, And they become as though they had never been. *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*
- ¹⁶ You drank my cup of punishment upon my holy mountain, and the nations round about will drink it too; yes, they will drink and stagger back and disappear from history, no longer nations anymore. *The Living Bible*
- ¹⁶ Just as you swallowed up my people on my holy mountain, so you and the surrounding nations will swallow the punishment I pour out on you. Yes, you nations will drink and stagger and disappear from history, as though you had never even existed. *The New Living Translation*
- ¹⁶ As you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually. Yes, they shall drink and swallow, and shall become as though they had not been. (*NAB*)
- ¹⁶ Because you drank in my Temple, all the nations will drink on and on. They will drink and drink until they disappear. *The New Century Version*

- ¹⁶ Just as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so will all the nations drink continually, they will drink, will drink greedily, but they will be as though they had never been! (*NJB*)
- ¹⁶ For as you, [Edom,] have drunk upon the mountain of My holiness [desecrating it in the wild revelry of the destroyers], so shall all the nations drink continually [in turn, of My wrath]; yes, they shall drink, talk foolishly *and* swallow down [the full measure of punishment], and they shall be [destroyed] as though they had not been. [Rev. 16:14-16.] *Amplified*
- ¹⁶ The draught that you have drunk on my holy mountain all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and gulp down and shall be as though they had never been; (*NEB*)
- ¹⁶ The draught you, my people, have drunk on my holy mountain all the nations will drink in turn; they will drink and gulp it down and be as though they had never been. *Revised English*
- ¹⁶ For as ye have drunk upon my holy mount, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall reel about, and they shall be as though they had not been. *Leeser-Jewish*
- ¹⁶ The way you have treated my people on my holy mountain, that's the way you will be treated. In the end, all nations who turned against my people will drink the same bitter cup. All men and women whose sense of right is gone will be as if they had never been. *Clear Word*

It is clear that the context here suggests that the subject of this expression “as though they had not been” is the “nations” that surrounded Judah. However, some translators try to get a different message from this verse. Does this apply to their existence as a nation or their existence as individuals? Some clearly favor the “nation” idea. If this were the intention of Obadiah, then it has nothing to do with the final destruction of sinners. But nations do not commit sins as nations. They are a collection of individuals.

Notice how Ellen White uses Obadiah 16:

“Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch, (Mal. 4:1),--Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, ‘Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; . . . I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.’ Then ‘the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;’ ‘they shall be as though they had not been.’” Ezek. 28:6-19; Ps. 37:10; Obadiah 16. DA 763.4; compare GC 544,545; PP 541.2; 3SG 57; SR 59.3

Psalms 37:10:

¹⁰ Before you know it, the wicked will have had it;
you'll stare at his once famous place and—nothing! *The Message*

¹⁰ Sinners will soon disappear, never to be found, *The Contemporary English Version*

It seems from these two passages that the final end of sinners is annihilation. That, of course, is quite a contrast from the eternally burning hell that many believe awaits the wicked. Where did such an idea come from?

6. We sometimes jokingly talk about “hell” as if it were next to the New Jerusalem so people from inside the city could go out and take a look once in a while—perhaps while having a picnic lunch! Is this what is suggested by Isaiah 66:24? Do we need this kind of reminder to keep us

in line for eternity? But what about some of these verses that talk about God apparently getting back at the nations around Judah. Don't you think that God's whole attitude toward vengeance is involved here in the Book of Obadiah? At the end, assuming that we will be saved, and we watch as the glory of God is unveiled, how do you expect to feel? Does Hosea help us to understand how God feels when His children are destroyed? Hosea has God crying, "How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" (Hosea 11:7,8, *Phillips*) Are bad people His children, just as much as good people? Is God losing His own children? Will He ever see them again?

Ezekiel is perhaps the clearest in his description of how God feels about the destruction of the wicked:

Ezekiel 18:23:²³ "Do you think I enjoy seeing an evil person die?" asks the Sovereign Lord. "No, I would rather see him repent and live." *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

Ezekiel 18:32:³² "I do not want anyone to die," says the Sovereign Lord. "Turn away from your sins and live." *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

But Hosea certainly uses the most compelling language:

Hosea 11:1-9:

"The Lord tells of his love for Israel"

- 1 "When Israel was young I came to love him,
And I called him out of Egypt to be my son.
- 2 But the more I called them
The further they went from me.
They made sacrifices to the Baals
And burnt incense to idols.
- 3 Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
Picking them up in my arms.
Yet they never knew that it was I who healed their bruises.
- 4 I led them with gentle encouragement,
Their harness was a harness of love.
I treated them like the man
Who eases the yoke to free the jaws—
Yes, I bent down to them and gave them food.

But Israel will not turn to him

- 5 They must return to the land of Egypt
Or Assyria must be their king,
Because they have refused to turn to Me.
- 6 The sword shall whirl around in their cities,
Break the defense of their gates,
And destroy them within their fortresses.
- 7 My people are bent on turning away from Me;
The yoke is all they are fit for—
I can love them no more.

The Lord reveals his heart

- 8 How, oh how, can I give you up, Ephraim!

How, oh how, can I hand you over, Israel!
How can I turn you into a Sodom!
How can I treat you like a Gomorrah!
My heart recoils within me,
All my compassion is kindled.

- ⁹ I will not give vent to my fierce anger—
I will not destroy Ephraim again.
For I am God and not man,
I am the Holy One in your very midst,
And I have not come to destroy.”
Hosea 11 :1-9 (*Phillips*)

The final annihilation of sin and sinners is a very large subject. So many different beliefs have developed over the centuries and millennia that it is sometimes hard to get people to look at the Biblical evidence. For a great deal more information see: ***The Final End of Sin and Sinners***; Joel - A Teacher's Guide #4; Luke - A Teacher's Guide #12,13; Isaiah - A Teacher's Guide #13; Hosea - A Teacher's Guide # 13

7. Was Obadiah written partly to encourage Israel, in the right sense, with the promise, “Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,” says the Lord?” (Deuteronomy 32:35,41,43; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30)

All of Scripture is supposed to be of value to all of us (2 Timothy 3:16)! We have no evidence that Obadiah's writings ever got to the Edomites. There certainly is no evidence that it changed their behavior at all. In either case, God stated quite clearly how He felt about it and what He intended to do about it. History confirms that Obadiah's prophecy was correct. Once again it is seen that we reap just what we have planted.

8. What do you think of God sending a message of warning to the Edomites at all? Does God bless people outside of the main line? We have several books dealing with this, don't we? Job, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum. Have there been messages to others in the past that were not of the Jewish line? Aren't all those warnings for the purpose of winning and correcting people, even Edomites?

It is interesting to note that Jonah, Nahum, and Obadiah were written to some of Israel's and Judah's worst enemies! But all of them are God's children. It also serves a secondary purpose of showing those who read Scripture that God not only cares about those outside the “covenant people” but also that He keeps His word with regard to all groups. In Obadiah's day, the Jews were suffering, but the day was coming when the Edomites, who had done their worst to take advantage of the Jews misfortune would get their turn and their “reward.”

9. The Edomites thought their nation was impregnable because they lived among the rocky crags and mountains east and south of the Dead Sea. Their capital city was literally carved out of rock. Do we feel that we have “rock-like security” in our lives? Our 401 (k)? Our bank account? The family inheritance? The “remnant” church? Could God ever shake this “security blanket?”

This is a thought question. Could the tragedies that overtook Judah ever come to us?

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