

# Obadiah

## Looking Out For Number One

### Background

The book of Obadiah doesn't really tell us much about the prophet nor do we have clear understanding that dates the writing. The name Obadiah means servant of the Lord. The entire book (the shortest in the OT) parallels Jeremiah 49. Which prophet depended on which for their writing is uncertain. The present structure of the verses describes an historical situation in which the Edomites were allied with the enemies of Israel. We know that Edom participated in the Babylonian plunder of Jerusalem in 587/586 BC. Edomites are descendants of Esau who lived in the highland and sandstone cliffs on the edge of the Dead Sea. Petra is their most famous city. Edom and Judah reflect the national continuation of the battle between Esau and Jacob. As a nation, Edom is absorbed by a coalition of Arab tribes early in the inter-testamental period.

### Outline

- I. The source of the message (1a)
- II. Nations arrayed against Edom (1b)
- III. Public enemy number one arraigned (2-7)
- IV. The indictment from the Judge (8-9)
- V. The case against Edom (10-14)
- VI. The sentence and its judgment (15-16)
- VII. The sentence and its vindication (17-20)
- VIII. Jehovah Lord is King (21)

### Cardinal Thought

Nations that live at the expense of their neighbors will fall into their own time of troubles, for all history is under the sovereign rule of God. Looking out for number one, whether personally or as a nation, is not a clear value of the Kingdom of God. The struggle for *freedom and autonomy*, so much of our world's quest, is not only counter-productive but also a challenge to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### Main Themes

1. The religious person is not markedly good, but does come to a time of repentance and surrender.
2. The person who is controlled by material advancement will ultimately live his life by advancing himself at anyone's expense.
3. The unmerciful will obtain judgment.
4. The nation's pride can blind people from fully reflecting the character of God and being a light to the nations (II Corinthians 5:17-20).
5. All nations are the concern of the Lord of the universe.

### Bridge to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- The blindness of religion as a spiritual covering
- Holiness and ethics are not mutually exclusive
- What goes around—comes around
- What Kingdom has rule in our lives?
- What we own soon owns us