

Pride
Obadiah 1-21

Slide 1

This morning we're going to look at the shortest book of the Old Testament. In terms of all the books in the Bible, Obadiah is number four by word count.

The others are 3rd John with 219 words, 2nd John with 245 words, Philemon with 335 words, Obadiah with 440 words, and Jude with 461 words.

According to web searches and other statistics, Obadiah is the least studied or least popular book in the Bible. So, today we're going to focus on this least studied and unpopular prophet, Obadiah.

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Let's begin by looking at his pronouncement.

Obadiah 1a, *"The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Sovereign Lord says about Edom—We have heard a message from the Lord: An envoy was sent to the nations..."*

In this first part of verse 1, Obadiah makes it clear that everything he's about to share was from God. None of what he was about to say were his ideas. None of what he would share were his opinions.

Every word he shared in these 21 verses were from God. How do we know that? First, Obadiah said he had a vision.

The word Obadiah used for "*vision*," here in verse 1, is "*chazown*." Sounds like something you'd order at an Italian restaurant, but it's an important Hebrew word which means "*divine communication*."

Obadiah received divine communication from God and was relaying God's word to us.

Second, Obadiah pointed out that the One giving this message was in charge. He's the "*Sovereign Lord*," the one in charge of the Universe and everything in it. Therefore, we had better pay attention when He speaks.

Third, Obadiah said that he heard the message given to a messenger or envoy of the Lord. Now, understand that Obadiah wasn't speaking his own words.

Obadiah wasn't sharing his attitudes or what he thought would happen, but rather he's reporting what the messenger from God had spoken to the nations.

Now, I want you to notice that this prophecy wasn't directed to Israel, God's people, even though they were involved.

This message that God relayed was for the people of Edom, the descendants of Esau.

In Genesis 25, Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob was blessed to be the son through whom the nation of Israel came into being, but Esau would have many descendants, too.

Genesis 25:30 shares with us Esau's nickname, Edom, and Genesis 36:43 states directly, "*This was Esau the father of the Edomites.*" Esau's descendants established the nation of Edom.

This prophecy that Obadiah received from God was directed to the descendants of Esau who lived in the area outside of Israel to the southeast.

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Obadiah's message to the Edomites didn't focus on their cruelty, their sinfulness, or the way they treated their brothers, it was centered around pride and how it would be their downfall.

Obadiah 2-4, "See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. 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."

The Edomites were too arrogant, too prideful. When we study the Bible, we should not think of its verses just pertaining to some ancient civilization.

When we read these verses, we shouldn't focus just on the Edomites and their attitudes, but we should look inward and see if any of these attitudes are reflected in us, too.

When read the Bible, we must take the Scriptures and apply them to our ourselves. Just as Obadiah is relating God's message to the Edomites, we must examine ourselves and see if the sin seen in Edom is present in our own hearts.

Verses 3-4 tells us that they were proud of their location. The Edomites had carved their cities and villages right into the land and into the rocks. This was done on purpose as it made it difficult for them to be conquered.

Edom was located in a place that had steep mountains and dangerous valleys. It was in a desert with little water. It was in an extreme location.

Because of this, they felt confident in themselves. Because of this pride, God said He would bring them down.

Think about that. That should cause us to pause and see if we have too much pride, because pride can make us think we don't need God.

So, do we think like the Edomites? Do we act like Edomites? Do we have the same emotions as them?

Throughout the world, Americans are notoriously known as being pride-filled and arrogant. Especially in today's environment!

If you were to travel abroad, would people from other lands roll their eyes and peg you as a loud, obnoxious American, like those in William Lederer and Eugene Burdick's novel, *The Ugly American*?

Of better yet, are you prideful because of the color of your skin or where you were born? Racism doesn't have to be overt. It can be hidden within us, but pride in one's race is deadly to the soul.

We must also make sure that our good-natured ribbing about an educational institution or sport team doesn't cross the line into actual hate or actually hurting someone's feelings.

This is worth mentioning because the human spirit can get out of hand when it comes to pride. Proverbs 16:18, *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

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Next, we find that the Edomites weren't just prideful of their location, but they were prideful of their wealth.

Obadiah 5-6, *“If thieves came to you, if robbers in the night—oh, what a disaster awaits you!—would they not steal only as much as they wanted? If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? But how Esau will be ransacked, his hidden treasures pillaged!”*

Since all the trade routes for the region went through their land, the Edomites enjoyed wealth with little effort.

Wealth is something that can certainly bring pride. It makes us think we don't need God, but God's messenger said they would be conquered and lose all their wealth.

Does money, or the ability to buy whatever you want, turn into buying more than you need. Do you forget to praise God from Whom all blessings flow?

Do you look down on those who are poor or struggling? Pride in money, wealth or stuff pushes God out of the way.

1 John 2:16, *“For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”*

Then we find in verse 7 that Edom also felt secure because of their allies. This is why God told Edom that the very people they trusted would turn on them.

Obadiah 7, *“All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you; those who eat your bread will set a trap for you, but you will not detect it.”*

We tend to surround ourselves with friends and family that prop us up, but the wrong kind of friends can influence us away from God. People can make us prideful in ourselves.

Those that are closest to us should push us to God and refine our faith. They shouldn't lead us into false hope or away from God. Pride in who we know or what group we're a part of is a house built on sand.

Psalm 10:4, *"In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God."*

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Then, in verses 8-10, we find that they placed their trust in their wise teachers and in their armies.

Obadiah 8-10, *"In that day," declares the Lord, "will I not destroy the wise men of Edom, those of understanding in the mountains of Esau? Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in the slaughter. Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever."*

God told the Edomites that no wise teaching and none of their armies would be able to protect them. Even the remotest parts of Edom would have trouble. The whole nation would suffer defeat.

Like today, education, skills or belief in ourselves can lead to us not relying on God. As I thought about this, I remember reading an article a while back.

It said that many children, preteens and teenagers today don't have traditional conversations with their parents because they're googling the answer to the questions they have; skipping conversations with human beings.

It matters in whom we trust. When you have a problem, to whom do you talk? Is prayer involved? Is the Bible involved? Is a seasoned believer involved in the conversation or is it just a google search or the closest person who will listen?

Life's difficult. It matters what we let influence us. Not all knowledge, wisdom or advice is equal.

Psalm 59:12-13, "For the sins of their mouths, for the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride. For the curses and lies they utter, consume them in your wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob."

Then, in verses 11-15, we find that not only had the Edomites been infected with pride, but that pride had led them to mistreat the people of Israel.

Obadiah 11-15, "On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble. You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster. You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble. "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 Edomites loved that Israel was in distress. They even celebrated it. Gloating while other people suffer is a sin, not just here in Obadiah but in other passages of Scripture.

Not only did the Edomites celebrate when Israel was suffering, but they took an active role in rounding up survivors and handing them over to their enemies. They helped the enemies of Israel plunder, kill and enslave.

There will be people in life with whom we don't get along; people who get on our nerves, bosses who drive us up a wall, mothers-in-law, and people that you must associate with just because they're in your life.

How do we treat them? Are we glad when people, we don't like, have a hard time or suffer. The suffering of someone who makes us suffer should not bring a smile to our face.

I'd say it is human nature to do so, but it's not God's way. Gloating over others' misfortune diminishes God in us.

Proverbs 24:17-18, *"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from them."*

Pride is a sin. Pride is the source of racism, unforgiveness, workaholism, arguments, self-absorption, abortion, divorce, hurtful words, and so many other sins of which we need to rid ourselves.

This is why pride needs to be constantly checked in our lives because it leads to so many other sins which compound in our lives.

Remember, when there is pride in us, God will work to discipline it out of us. If that's the case, let Him do it!

Pride leads to us mistreating others. Pride leads to attitudes that draw us away from God. Pride leads us to accept sin in our lives as normal. Pride comes out in our words and how we act. Pride is a sin.

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But God's message from Obadiah to Edom isn't finished. Obadiah finishes his short vision with a promise that God made.

The promise was that Edom would surely go away, but God's People, His People, would remain and be victorious in all things. God promised, *"I will take care of my people!"*

Obadiah 17-21, *"But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and Jacob will possess his inheritance. Jacob will be a fire and Joseph a flame; Esau will be stubble, and they will set him on fire and destroy him. There will be no survivors from Esau."* The Lord has spoken. *People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev. Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's."*

The people of Israel, who were to be marked by safety, salvation, holiness, abundance, unity, and the presence of God would have victory over the Edomites.

Edom would not win. Pride would not win. Those who are against God would not win. God wins. God's people win. We see in history that all this came true.

In 125 BC, that time between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Jewish leader and high priest Johanan Hyrcanus led a campaign and conquered the Edomites. Everything that Obadiah saw came to pass 100% in verifiable history.

Did you notice the two ways in which God promised "deliverance" for us today in this last part of Obadiah.

First, in verse 17, God promised that, *"on Mount Zion will be deliverance."* What does that mean?

Mt. Zion is the nickname for Jerusalem. Mt. Zion is a poetic way in the Bible of talking about the people of God who're part of the Kingdom of God.

Mt. Zion is a poetic way in the Bible of talking about where God dwells and describes all of God's people, including us! Where God dwells, there's deliverance. With God's people, there's deliverance.

God provides deliverance for those who are in His Kingdom. God provides for those of us who're believers in Jesus Christ.

God provides deliverance for us in this life and in the next. We, who are believers in Jesus, have everything that God promised in this last part of Obadiah. Things like:

- Safety: Our souls are kept safe by God, and nothing can take us away from Him
- Salvation: Salvation of our souls is assured through Jesus Christ and His death on the cross
- Holiness: Believers are set aside as God's people and He claims us as His own.
- Abundance: In Him, we are given love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.
- Unity: Believers are connected to each other through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Victory: Believers are more than conquerors over sin, death, and temptation.

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Conclusion

In verse 21, God promised that *"Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's."*

The deliverance that God provides won't stay just in Jerusalem, but it will expand into the rest of the world. They will become deliverers of a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

This says to me that even though people sin with pride, it can be healed and forgiven. Deliverance can come even to all, even those who deal with sin and pride.

So, let God deal with your pride. The end result will be a soul that relies on the Lord as a solid foundation and rejects the brittle foundation of self-centered pride.