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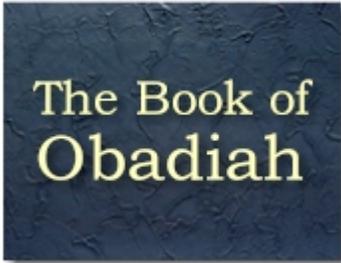
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## The Book of Obadiah

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., April 1997  
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Read the accompanying [Newsletter for April 2013](#)



### The Book of Obadiah

**The Book of Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, the 4<sup>th</sup> book of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Remember that many of the Minor Prophets are of supreme importance in understanding scripture and prophecy in particular. This Book of Obadiah is only one chapter long, with 21 verses in the King James Version. Yet at the same time it is one of the pivotal prophecies of the Old Testament. It is placed just before the Book of Jonah.**<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the short Book of Obadiah introduces the Book of Jonah. Obadiah presents a prophecy about a neighbor nation that was very important to ancient Israel, a close kin to ancient Israel, the nation of Edom. Another name would be Esau. Edom was the twin brother of Jacob. Jacob gave rise to the 12 tribes of Israel, and Esau being a twin brother, obviously, they looked very much alike. But there was a profound difference in their appearance.<sup>2</sup>

Edom had a different name called Esau which means “hairy.” He was hairy all over like a goat, whereas Jacob was not, he was of smooth skin. This hairy garment, or hairy condition, that Edom had was a peculiarity, that is true, but it was looked upon in ancient times as having great significance. People looked upon individuals who were hairy as having a kind of divinity to them. They looked like the angels, certain types of angels. In fact, before they knew what type of angels they were, many people thought that the hairy angels were perhaps even righteous. In the New Testament we find this is not the case, angels who have much hair like women are degraded and not to be believed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is important because when you look at the Book of Jonah you find it contains the New Testament gospel, so to speak, for the Old Testament. Many features of Jonah, his three days in the fish, his going to Assyria after his conversion and all of that, is very reminiscent of what we find in the New Testament with the Apostle Peter also going to Joppa at the same place, and going to the Gentiles to preach the gospel after the resurrection of Christ. We find in Jonah after his “resurrection” from the dead, that is from the fish, he went to the Gentiles as well. *ELM*

<sup>2</sup> For background on the history of Edom/Esau, see Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Most Significant Gentile Nation in the Bible.](#)” *DWS*

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Martin’s article, “[Bible Secret Number 5: The Long-Haired Jesus Is a Pagan God](#), expanded in “[Appendix 2: The Error of the Long-haired Jesus.](#)” Both are from the Book, [101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know.](#) *DWS*

## *Edom Is Esau, Jacob's Twin*

Because Edom was a twin brother to Jacob, he was in many cases confused with Jacob over the generations because they were in close geographical connection with one another. Edom lived south of Israel, south of the land of Canaan, bordering at first upon the Red Sea. That area was very important because it allowed individuals who lived in the region to go into mercantile enterprises, trading, and commerce. This name Edom means “red.” It is very close in meaning to the word Adam, the first man. It is vowel pointed slightly different but in the original Hebrew it is exactly the same word. Edom here means “red” like mankind, and it is another word for “man” or “mankind.” He was a twin brother to ancient Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Edom gave his name to the Red Sea. In Greek it means the “Eruthrian Sea” which also means “red.” The Red Sea was not only that sea which divided the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and on the east from Saudi Arabia, but the entire Indian Ocean in ancient times was known as the Eruthrian Sea, the Red Sea, named after the patriarch Edom. Edom’s descendants were very interested in mercantilism and commerce. They established commerce from Palestine and from Egypt into India and the east in ancient times.<sup>5</sup>

The descendants of Edom were so interested in commerce that they looked at the Mediterranean Sea and saw that they also needed to have ships there for commerce. There is clear evidence that the people who first established and inhabited the city of Tyre, known in Old Testament times for its mercantile and commercial enterprises, where the Phoenicians had their origin, was established by the people of Edom. The ancient Jews knew this. In fact, the early inhabitants of Tyre were people who came from the Dead Sea region, where Edom settled. They established the city of Tyre and the city of Sidon and other cities along the coast to trade in the Mediterranean Sea. They then went out through the Pillars of Hercules (what we call the Straits of Gibraltar today), even into the Atlantic Ocean, around Africa and even into the new world. They were known as the Phoenicians. (The word “Phoinos” in Greek means “red.”) They are connected with the twin brother to Israel named Edom.

This Edom was famous in ancient history. When Solomon wanted to build the temple at Jerusalem, where did he go to get the technicians, the professional people, to build his Temple? I am not talking about workman who cut the timber from Lebanon and other areas, but the architects to design the Temple. I am referring to the experts capable of cutting the stones, putting them together into the marvelous buildings that made up the Temple of God and also Solomon’s palace. He went to the Tyreans to do it.

Solomon had the money, the power, the prestige, and support of the people amongst the Israelites, but when he wanted to build the Temple in Jerusalem, he went to the King of Tyre, named Hiram, to get the professional expertise to construct it. The Tyreans (who were the Phoenicians and connected with Edom) many times became confused with Israelites. In the Bible some of the Northern Israelite tribes, especially from Dan and Naphtali, mingled in with the Tyreans. The Phoenicians were very close kin to the ancient Israelites, but they were not Israelites. Israelites had some distinctive features to classify them as different from the Phoenicians.

The differences primarily came about because the Israelites kept the Sabbath, the Holy Days of God, and they had a different calendar than the Phoenicians. But as far as looks were concerned, as far as society was concerned, as far as basic religion was concerned, they were very similar. The ancient Phoenicians had Baal (which simply means “the sun god”) as their primary god, whereas the Israelite had YHWH, another major distinction. Among the Edomites and Phoenicians, YHWH was recognized as being one of their Gods even in ancient times.<sup>6</sup> There was indeed a close connection between Phoenicians and Israelites.

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship between twins is recognized as the closest of all human relationships. Bonds between husbands and wives, and between children and parents — as a whole — are generally not as close as those between twins. *DWS*

<sup>5</sup> **“Although Erythraean Sea (Greek: *Ερυθρά Θάλασσα*) literally means ‘Red Sea’, to the Greeks it included the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.”** This quote is from the Wikipedia article, “[Periplus of the Erythraean Sea](#),” about the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD book by that name. No doubt Edom benefitted from trade through the ancient Canal connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. See my January 2012 Commentary, “[An Ancient Canal in Egypt: the Original Suez Canal](#).” *DWS*

<sup>6</sup> YHWH insists that Israel only worship Him as God, and no others. Other nations were allowed (if they were so foolish to do

Even today, historians try to identify where the northern 10 tribes of the Israelites went after the Assyrians took them captive. In many cases they have confused the movements of the Phoenicians with the Israelites. However, wherever the Phoenicians went they carried the culture of Canaan with them. Edom and the Phoenicians were in collaboration with the Israelites from the time of Solomon until the fall of Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar in the upper part of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

These people from Edom are very important in matters of history and prophecy. If you will look carefully in the Book of Revelation you find prophecies of Christ Jesus, written by John, put together into a prophetic scenario dealing with Babylon and the Babylonian system at the end of the age. Most of those prophecies are references from the Old Testament and deal with the nation of Edom, the nation which has as its very name “Adam” which meant “red” or “mankind.” The New Testament speaks about 666 denoting the number of a man, or of mankind (Revelation 13:18); the word which would best denote that would be Edom or man.<sup>7</sup>

The Jews, from the time of Christ to today, have seen the nation of Edom going primarily to Europe, establishing themselves there, and into the New World. In many cases they have been misunderstood as being Israelites where in actual fact they are Edomites.<sup>8</sup>

Edom had many characteristics which were similar to his twin brother. They had the same father, Isaac. They believed basically the same way. But remember how that Jacob deceived his father Isaac by putting skins on his body. Isaac, because his eyes were dim, thought he was talking to Esau, and he gave the blessing as well as the birthright to Jacob (Genesis chapter 27). The Edomites, going back to ancient Edom, always looked upon that as stealth, as supplanting of the truth. From that time forward they always held a grudge against the Israelites because God gave dominion over Esau to the Israelites through Jacob and the 12 tribes, and later on dominion of the whole world through the Messiah who would come from Judah.

### *Edomite Resentment of Jacob*

The Edomites in ancient times looked upon that blessing that Jacob received, that they should have had it. In fact, Edom was the firstborn of Isaac and Rebecca, not Jacob. It was true, Jacob got it by stealth. When we read the rest of the Holy Scripture, we find the birthright was designed and intended by God at the very first to go to Jacob. Even the Apostle Paul mentions that fact. At the same time imagine how Edom and his descendants would have felt about the matter. They would have felt that they were having their inheritance stolen from them by Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel, and they have been trying to get back their inheritance ever since.

I will show some other prophecies, based upon this prophecy of Obadiah. This prophecy is a single chapter, only 21 verses in length, but it is a key to show which direction the Edomite influence finally went. They controlled the whole of the Indian Ocean at one time, but they also controlled the Mediterranean. They also controlled the areas outside the Mediterranean and all of North Africa through the Phoenicians who were many of their descendants. The top people of Tyre, the kings, the royalty, and many of the people underneath, were Edomites who controlled some of the northern Israelite tribes who joined with the Edomites, such as the tribe of Dan. The Danites went into Greece very early.<sup>9</sup>

so) to worship other gods along with YHWH. And they did so. Unfortunately Israel and Judah tried to do the same. *DWS*

<sup>7</sup> A thorough examination needs to be made of all prophecies where the Hebrew consonants are translated to English as Adam or Edom. It may be they are correctly translated, are or the translation is ambiguous, or the translation needs to be changed from Adam to Edom, or from Edom to Adam. *DWS*

<sup>8</sup> See Dr. Martin’s book, *The People that History Forgot* for the post-biblical historical development of these people. *DWS*

<sup>9</sup> Josephus wrote about the Spartan Greeks having a close affinity to the Jews (*Antiquities of the Jews* 13:164–170). The Jews knew these things because the ancient Phoenicians developed the alphabet and spread throughout North Africa, into Europe, and places like that. The alphabet that you and I have today is called the Phoenician alphabet because they were the ones that spread it throughout the world. They were the great commercial people of the world. The Phoenician people in Greek were the “red people.” It does not mean red in skin, it means “red in hair.” They gave the name to the Indian Ocean and all of that because they were the great seafaring people of the ancient world concerned with commercialism and mercantilism. *ELM*

When the apostle John in the Book of Revelation refers to the prophecies of the Old Testament for the 7 year period at the end of the age, which we are approaching, most of those prophecies deal with this very nation called Edom. The word Edom also can mean mankind. It says in the prophecies that the Messiah of Israel would one day rule the entire world, and that Messiah, Jesus Christ, was to come from Judah by prophecy, not from Edom. When you get all the prophecies and put them together you find that the Edomites have felt jilted by the Israelites ever since.

There has been a tug of war between Edom on the one hand (who have gone by other names in history), and Israel on the other (who have also gone by other names). Racially it is almost impossible to distinguish Israel from Edom, even historically it is difficult. This is one of the reasons why in the last century many people felt that northwestern Europeans and Americans were none other than Israelites. I felt that myself until I was able to see from history studying at the British museum and other places in Great Britain and in Europe, that such was not the case. The confusion is so close it is no wonder people have made that identification because the people of Edom went to Europe primarily and established themselves there. This little Book of Obadiah shows the direction in which prophecy leads people from the Middle East into other areas of the world for influence.

### *The Apostles, Where Did They Preach the Gospel?*

After the resurrection the apostles went to the Gentiles. What Gentiles did the Apostle Peter go to? He went into Asia Minor. He did not go to India, not that the Indian people are not important. He did not go to China, not that the Chinese are not important. Not that the Egyptians are not important, but he did not go to Egypt either. Which way did Peter go? Which way did John go? John went to Ephesus in western Asia Minor.

Where did Paul go? Paul went to the Gentiles that were close to Israel, whom he said in the Book of Romans, **“that Abraham, our father pertaining to the flesh”** (Romans 4:1). He even said that the Roman Gentiles, uncircumcised as they were, yet they were descendants of Abraham, descendants of Isaac, and many of them were descendants of Edom. The Roman Empire, according to the Jews of the early Talmudic period (and even to this very day) has been looked on as the descendants of Edom. The Roman Empire was considered to be nothing more than the empire of man who took over instead of Israel for the Kingdom of God on earth. The great antagonism between the two was because Jacob was on one side representing Israel, and Rome on the other representing Edom.

### *Obadiah, a Key to Other Understanding*

We find in this Book of Obadiah the key which helps us see the direction which Israel and Judah would go. They would go amongst the Gentiles in a diaspora, but the chief antagonist wherever they would go would be this one individual and his descendants, those of Edom, man, mankind, red, the one who originated the Phoenicians.

Here is Obadiah prophesying somewhere in the upper part of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. This prophecy of 21 verses is repeated almost exactly in Jeremiah 49:7–22. Jeremiah gave his prophecies in the early part of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Obadiah had been around some 200 years before that time. Obadiah describes the Edomite condition relative to Israel back at his time. But the placement of Obadiah in the Bible was to show what would happen to Edom in the Day of the Lord.

This prophecy has to do with the end time. It is a key in demonstrating the influence of prophecy on the land of Canaan, the land of Israel, and going forth into the rest of the world. I will go over the prophecy quickly, comment on it in a historical sense, and then go to the prophetic sense of the prophecy to help show where Obadiah fits in the world today.

What I do at A.S.K. is teach the Gospel, history, chronology, and prophecy as clear as I can make it. I hold no secrets back from anybody. I do not understand all there is to know about prophecy yet, as we grow in grace and knowledge on those things. As we get closer to the time of the end, more will be understood

and I guarantee you one thing, this Book of Obadiah will be understood in a greater sense in the next few years in advance of us.

### *The Direction of Prophecy*

Obadiah is of prime importance in identifying the direction to which the influence of prophecy was to go, as far as the land of Israel was concerned. It shows the prime regions of the world where Israel and Judah would go, but they would keep the Sabbath, the Holy Days; they would be very different. It also shows which way many peoples, who were mistaken for ancient Israel — like the Edomites and the Phoenicians — which way they would go and the influence they would show in the world. This is exactly what history has shown. This is put in the Book of Obadiah to give that direction. And the Jews have understood this.

I will give some things that will amaze you about the teaching in Obadiah which will lead us in the right direction where prophecy will go. It also teaches us about doctrine and the Bible itself as a whole. The Bible was not to go into China at first. It was not to go into India. It was not to go into Africa. It was to go into Europe, and the direction is given here in the Book of Obadiah based upon the prophecies to Edom. The Jews understood that Edom dealt with the Phoenicians who took the commerce and mercantilism throughout the Mediterranean into North Africa, into Greece, into Italy, and also into Spain.

We even have, here in this little prophecy, a section which shows us the direction in which the primary influence would go, and the two areas it leads to, which happen to be France and Spain. They are mentioned here in this section of the Old Testament.

Obadiah means “worshipper of God,” or a servant of God. There are several men that are mentioned in the Bible by the name of Obadiah. Which one of them gave the prophecy? No one knows exactly. Scripture makes it pretty clear that he lived around 200 years before the time of Jeremiah. Jeremiah quotes him extensively and puts Obadiah’s message into a prophecy concerning Babylon of his day, as well as a future Babylon. Some of the same language we find in Obadiah is used in other sections of Scripture dealing with the Babylon at the end time, the Babylon of the Book of Revelation.

### *Obadiah’s Prophecy Was a Vision*

**“The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord YHWH concerning Edom, ...”**

• *Obadiah 1:1*

Here is the man Edom, Esau, the hairy one, the twin brother of Jacob, often confused with Jacob and Israel.

**“We have heard a rumor from YHWH, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen [all the nations of the world], Arise you, and let us rise up against her [Edom] in battle.”**

• *Obadiah 1:1*

Here is a prophecy about how the nations of the world will rise up against Edom. It will be at the end of the age just before the Day of the Lord.

Going on to verse 2: **“Behold I have made you small among the heathen: you are greatly despised.”** Or, “I will make you small in among the heathen.” Edom, the ancient Phoenicians, the people of the past to whom this prophecy was given, were some of the greatest people of commerce and mercantilism that you can imagine. They helped Solomon build the great Temple in Jerusalem; and they had the professionalism to do so, even more than Israelites had. We must understand that. These people were famous. They were close kin to the ancient Israelites. They lived in Canaan but they were not Canaanites. They were people that came from Isaac and from Abraham.

Note also that in the King James Version that sentence is in the past tense. (When you go to Jeremiah 49:15, however, Jeremiah quotes this very section and puts it in the future tense.) There is such a thing as a prophetic past, as used in Obadiah verse 2. Things which are destined to happen in the future, many times

they are expressed in the past tense in the Hebrew. What it means is, Edom, you have been great, you have been powerful, but I (YHWH) will make you small. I will make you very small.

Obadiah verse 3, **“The pride of your heart has deceived you ...”** The ancient Phoenicians had great pride in the past because they had great power, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, wealth, and authority among the ancient peoples of the world. It was due to their trading and mercantile positions, if you put all of the scriptures together.

**“... you have dwelt in the clefts of the rock.”** That means down at the Petra area. That was their home area. They came from the region southeast of Jerusalem where their home was originally, on the coast of the Red Sea, which Edom gave his name to. Later, many of them moved up to Tyre, and then they spread over the Mediterranean area. The pride of Edom is prophesied to be brought down to the ground.

But when will that pride of Edom be brought down?

**“The pride of your heart has deceived you. [they had great pride] you have dwelt in the clefts of the rock [at Petra], whose habitation is high; that say in the heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?”**

• **Obadiah 1:3**

That was also stated of Babylon. At the end of the age Babylon will say in effect, “who can bring me possibly down to the ground”? God will do so (Jeremiah 51:37–40).<sup>10</sup> Edom is compared to ancient Babylon.

## **The Eagle**

Obadiah verse 4, **“Though you exalt yourself as the eagle ...”** The eagle was their symbol. The eagle was also the symbol of the ancient Romans whom the Jews later said were descendants of these ancient Edomites. The eagle is still being used in parts of Europe and America to identify peoples who are proud, powerful, and great in commerce and mercantilism. Understand who some of these people might be who inherited the Roman culture. Take a look at the United States of America, my own country which I love very much, go to the Congress and you will find on one side of the podium and on the other the fasciae of the ancient Romans. You will find that our government is very similar to the ancient Roman government with a great deal of Biblical heritage connected with it, even to the extent that some of us have thought we might be Israelites in the past. In fact, we are not Israelites, we are basically Gentiles.

But the Apostle Paul and Peter and John directed their activities into northwestern Europe to go to the people discussed in the ancient prophecies. We are a part of the ancient Edomite people, the people who were the great Phoenicians of ancient time, the great explorers of ancient times.<sup>11</sup> We have to acknowledge that the Biblical revelation, when it left Palestine, went into Europe for a particular reason.

It does not indicate moral superiority in any way. It means that we have been given a role to play. Sometimes that role is negative and sometimes that role is positive. In regard to Esau here, Edom at the end of the age is reckoned as being the leader of all people on earth.

Look at Isaiah chapter 34. That entire chapter links right back here to Obadiah. Obadiah and Isaiah chapter 34 tell us about the end of the age about which the Book of Revelation has whole sections. They all

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah 51:37–40

**“And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps. In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, says YHWH. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.”** DWS

<sup>11</sup> I am not leaving out any people from Africa, or the Indians, or the Chinese. They have been as great as we have but the Gospel did not go into Africa or Asia at that time. It will into those areas now because God loves every person on earth. All are important. We have been given this position, not because we earned it, or deserve it, but because of an allotment, a lottery when even before the foundation of the world we were chosen to receive this understanding and position. It could have come to any other party on earth, believe it or not. *ELM* See also Dr. Martin's small book [ABCs of the Gospel](#). *DWS*

deal with this very nation of Edom. Obadiah here gives us the direction in which Edom and its influence would be going.

Obadiah verse 4: **“Though you exalt yourself as an eagle, and though you set the nest among the stars.”** People have always loved the stars as an emblem. On our United States flag today we have stars and the Star Spangled Banner. We love the eagle. That was the case in ancient Rome, and ancient Edom, as well.

### ***Geography and Edom***

Edom came from Mount Seir, near Petra. They took that name, Mount Seir, right into Spain in the Hebrew or the Phoenician language. They even named mountain ranges after Mount Seir found in the Bible. They called them the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Spain. You will find the same thing in California today. It is people being carried over into these areas of the world coming out of Palestine.

Obadiah continues in verse 5: **“If thieves came to you, if robbers by night, (how are you cut off!)”** A time is coming when Edom will be cut off for doing a particular thing. We will come to that in a moment.

**“... would they not have stolen till they had enough? If the grapegatherers come to you, would they not leave some grapes?”**

• ***Obadiah 1:5***

It means a great destruction will come. Obadiah verse 6: **“How are the things of Esau ...?”** That is the other name for Edom, the hairy one, the one who had a hairy garment on him from birth. Look at Zechariah 13:4. This verse tells how the false prophets of this world love to put on hairy garments. They like to deceive. Edom was known as the great deceiver. Their garments were always red. (Think about Church denominations today that love to have their leaders dressed primarily in red.)

The ancient Jews knew exactly who those people were. They call them the descendants of Edom who have taken over a type of religion close to that of Israel, but always persecuting Israel. The Jews from the time of the Talmudic Period on have reckoned the Christianity that they have come in contact with, as the religion of Edom. That is what they have called it, and they call it that to this day. There are historical reasons why they did. This is why the Book of Obadiah will come about as one of the major books of revelation as we come toward the time of the end. We will learn much more about this in the future.

Obadiah verse 7. It goes on to speak about a great confederacy that the Edomites have part in. **“All the men of your confederacy ...”** (Verse 7). If you want to know what that confederacy is, go to Psalm 83 and you will find a confederacy of 10 nations mentioned there. Who is the first nation mentioned? Psalm 83:5 mentions the confederacy. Verse 83:6 presents Edom as the first nation mentioned in this confederacy. This has historical relevance to it in the past, but it also will be repeated in the future near the Day of the Lord. Going on about the mighty men of Edom:

**“And your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. [Now why?] For your violence against your brother Jacob ...”**

• ***Obadiah 5:9–10***

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (and again in the time of Nebuchadnezzar in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), the Edomites join the confederacy of the Assyrians against the Israelites and later with the Babylonians against the Jews. That is what Obadiah is speaking about here historically, but at the end of the age Edom, who should be a brother to Jacob according to the prophecies, will at the last moment cut off the Israelites or the Jews who will have fled from Jerusalem. They will cut them off and not allow them to escape. That is what this entire prophecy is about. Read Obadiah and you will find that is the case. In verse 14, the condemnation is against Edom.

**“Neither should you have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape [from Jerusalem, of Jacob]; neither should you have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”**

• ***Obadiah 1:14***

Why should they not have done that? It was because they were your brothers. They were very close kin and you cut them off. Now that is what the prophecy says. Now when is this day?

**“For the day of YHWH [the day of the Lord] is near upon all the heathen: as you have done, it shall be done unto you: your reward shall return upon your own head.”**

• *Obadiah 1:15*

... For what you, Edom, will do in the future against your Jewish brothers who are of Jacob. This is a future event.

### *Uncertainty*

I do not exactly know what that event will be at this moment. The prophecies say that in the Day of the Lord, just before the second coming of Christ, those of Jacob will be in a very difficult circumstance and the people of Edom who will be powerful, in great authority and mighty, will turn against the Jews at this very moment. We need to look carefully at this because I do not know exactly where to fit it in chronologically yet. What we need to do is to keep our eyes open. This is a prophecy for the future. It goes on to say.

**“For the day of YHWH [the day of the Lord] is near upon all the heathen [all the nations]: as you have done, it shall be done unto you. ...**

**For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain [the holy mountain of Zion], so shall all the heathen drink continually. ...”**

• *Obadiah 1:15–16*

In other words, you have reaped the blessings of my holy mountain, but look what you are doing at the present time to your brother people, those of Jacob. Obadiah 1:16–18:

**“... and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance [God promises], and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, the house of Esau for stubble, ...”**

• *Obadiah 1:16–18*

This is because of what they will do to brother Jacob at this major incident to happen, just before the Day of the Lord. It goes on to say this in the end of verse 18. And those:

**“... remaining of the house of Esau; for YHWH has spoken it. And they of the south [the south country of Canaan] shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain of the Philistines [the Gaza strip]: and they [Israel] shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria [in central Palestine]: and Benjamin [and they] shall possess Gilead.”**

• *Obadiah 1:18–19*

This is the whole kingdom of Jordan. One of these days the Israelites will possess that.

Look at Obadiah verses 20 and 21. Here we come to the direction in which this prophecy is intended. It is a direction that Jews have understood for generations, and I want to point it out to you. It concerns the people of Edom. It also concerns the people of Israel and Judah how they have been close with Esau and how that Esau supported them in many cases.

### *Two Cities, Zarephath and Sepharad*

Here is what will happen. Obadiah 1:20: **“And the captivity of this host [or the great army] of the children of Israel ...”**<sup>12</sup> it speaks about the land of Canaan, the Canaanites, the cities, two cities in the land of

<sup>12</sup> In the King James Version forget those italicized words because they did not understand what they were talking about here. Italicized words are not in the Hebrew. *ELM*

Canaan will figure in prominently as far as the captivity of the children of Israel is concerned. One of them is Zarephath; that will occupy “**the captivity of Jerusalem**” and the other is Sepharad which “**shall possess the cities of the south.**” Then it says in verse 21, the last verse:

**“And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be YHWH’s.”**

• **Obadiah 1:21**

Now what does it mean here then? Two cities picked out on the coast of Palestine. They are not Tyre. They are not Sidon. The two cities that are picked are Zarephath and the other is Sepharad.

Now what is Sepharad? Sepharad was a city of the Tyreans (the ancient Phoenicians) on the coast of Palestine, so was Zarephath. These two cities were on the Mediterranean coast. In ancient times the Phoenicians established colonies in the western part of the Mediterranean. Their central mother area was back at Tyre, Sidon, Zarephath and Sepharad. Today, if you go on an airplane, let us say to anywhere in Europe from the United States, from New York you can go to anywhere in the world. Or if you are in London and you go to Heathrow Airport, you can go from there anywhere in the world. They did not do it that way in the ancient times.

If you wanted to go to a particular nation, you went to the city on the Phoenician coast that had ships that went to that nation, that had ships that would take the products of that nation so that when they would come back to the middle east, merchants from Babylon, Assyria, and other areas would come to that city to get the products from that area in the west where they were trading. The two cities of Zarephath and Sepharad were the two cities which had connections with Western Europe.

And the Jews have always recognized that the city of Zarephath, an Edomite city of the Phoenicians, was the city that traded with what we call France today, to Marseille and the territory of southern France. The Jews say that the people of Zarephath are the people of France.

Now what about this other city, Sepharad? Sepharad was the city on the Mediterranean that traded with the Iberian Peninsula, which contains Spain and Portugal. That area was known to the ancient Jews, as the area of Sepharad. Many Jews migrated to Spain, and because they migrated there, they were called the “Sepharadim” Jews, shortened to “Shephardic” Jews. There in Europe, they were amongst the people of Edom and the Phoenicians who settled in those areas.

Ancient Spain, according to prophecy, was known as Sepharad. Ancient France was known in prophecy as Zarephath. Those regions were where the Edomites established many of their early commercial cities to trade with Europe so that the European produce and commerce would come to Palestine in the Phoenician areas to be traded to Babylon, the rest of Asia Minor, Assyria, into Egypt and other places.

What you find here in Obadiah is a prophecy about Edom of the past, which has a future relevance for the Day of the Lord. This is highly interpretative, I admit, and I am not sure I understand every last bit of the prophecy yet, but as we are getting closer to the time of the end, we will understand even more.

### ***Obadiah’s Importance***

I call this prophecy to your attention because the ancient Jews looked upon it as a major prophecy to show the influence of Judaism in the world. Though they would be scattered into all nations of the world, the prime influence would be into the western part of Europe: to France, Italy, and also into Spain. Great colonies of Jews went with the Phoenicians to Spain. Even as early as the time of Solomon we find records that the Jews in Spain have maintained contact with people of Palestine. Jews continued to live in Spain until the year 1492 AD, the very year that Columbus left Spain and went to the New World.

It is most interesting, the first entry in Columbus’ log of his ship was that he found so many Jews being expelled from Spain. The day he wrote that log entry was the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of Ab which was the great fast day that the ancient Jews have always celebrated. It was the same day the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, and were destroyed again by the Romans (whom the Jews considered to be Edomites)

in 70 AD. On that day Columbus wrote that the Jews were being expelled from Sepharad, Spain. From that time forward they were not allowed in the country as a group. They could go back a little here and there, but not as a group.

The Jews have looked upon this as very significant in a prophetic sense, and I also believe that it is. Go to Isaiah chapter 34, which has to do with Edom. You pick up things that you would think come from the Book of Revelation. Indeed they are, because John, writing under inspiration of Christ Himself, referred to Isaiah chapter 34 here, connecting with Edom, this very nation. Edom means mankind; it means those who represent all mankind. Though it was a single nation, it was a nation destined to rule all mankind at the end time. In fact, many people have thought that the antichrist system itself which would rule all mankind would be the 666, the number of a man. And the word “man” in Hebrew means Edom, or Adam.

**“Come near, you nations [says Isaiah], to hear; and hearken, you people: let the earth hear [not a little bit of it but the whole earth], and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of YHWH is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he has utterly destroyed them, he has delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall he cast out, and their stink shall come out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.**

**And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll [you hear of that in Revelation chapter 6]: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, as the falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword [God says] shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, ...”**

• *Isaiah 34:1–5*

Now that is the King James translation of Isaiah 34:1–5 who wrote about these people. Six different committees translated the King James Version. One group would say Edom, another group would say Idumea. It means the same thing in Hebrew. It is Edom. The prophecy of Obadiah is just 21 verses long. Like other prophecies of the Minor Prophets it deals with the Day of the Lord and how all nations will be involved in it, and mainly those nations around the western part of Palestine. Here we find the great sword shall come upon Edom. Verses 5–8:

**“... it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of YHWH is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of kidneys of rams: for YHWH has a sacrifice in Bozrah [an ancient capital of Edom], and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea [Edom]. And the unicorns [bulls] shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of YHWH’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses of the controversy of Zion.”**

• *Isaiah 34:5–8*

Edom will do something to Zion and to Jerusalem which will be a great evil. It happened in the past and something else will happen in the future. That is what this prophecy is about.

**“And the streams thereof [of Edom] shall be turned into pitch, the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever [for the eon]: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for the ages of the ages.”**

• *Isaiah 34:9–10*

It goes on to say that evil animals will possess it, just like ancient Babylon. The verses that we find in chapter 14 of Isaiah pertaining to Babylon are very similar to the verses at the end of the age that deal here with Edom (in both Isaiah chapter 34 and Obadiah), also at the end of the age. These verses here were taken out of this very context and referred to in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Book of Revelation, where they deal with the end time. Also in Revelation it speaks about the great mercantile, commercial system which

the world will love. That has to do with the ancient Phoenicians.<sup>13</sup>

Keep your eyes on prophecy. Obadiah is important. It gives the direction you have to look to at the end time coming to Palestine. Isaiah chapter 34 gives you the teaching of the summing up of the end time of how God deals with the heathen before He establishes His kingdom on this earth.

Ernest L. Martin, 1997  
David Sielaff, April 2013

### *Addendum by David Sielaff*

In his very useful book *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, Professor David Dorsey examines various outline structures of the 21 verses of Obadiah. His conclusion is, “**The structure of the Book of Obadiah serves to reinforce its message.**” He noticed a 7-part structure that I find very appealing:

#### *Symmetry in the Book of Obadiah* (by David Dorsey)<sup>14</sup>

- a **proud Edom will be defeated** by the nations (1–4)
  - YHWH will bring Edom down (*yrd*), despite its sense of security in its lofty position
  - the nations are exhorted to rise up against Edom
  - Edom will be made small among the nations
- b **Edom will be completely plundered** by its former allies and nothing will be left (no “gleanings”) (5–7)
- c **Edom’s population will be slaughtered** (8–11)
  - topic: future day (*yôm*) of judgment
  - reason: because of the violence they did against Israel
- d **CENTER: indictment of Edom** (12–14)
- c’ **Edom and the nations will be judged (annihilated[?])**, becoming “**as if they never were**” (15–16)
  - topic: future day (*yôm*) of YHWH’s judgment
  - reason: because of what they did against Israel
- b’ **Israel will regain what it has lost and will plunder (“devour”)** Edom (17–18)
- a’ **humbled Israel will be victorious** over the surrounding nations (19–21)
  - “**saviors**” [plural] will one day go up (cf. the Septuagint) from Jerusalem to rule Edom
  - restored Israel will defeat and rule over the nations

As Dorsey points out, this structure strengthens the message by making its elements recognizable and memorable to hearers, but it also gives a structural elegance to the message. At the center of Obadiah’s argument, Dorsey maintains, is a list, an indictment of Edom in verses 12–14. Each statement is emphasized

<sup>13</sup> Regarding the angelic power who was King of Tyre mentioned in Ezekiel chapter 28, some people think this entity was Satan the Devil, but this is not the case. It was an ancient cherub who was in the Temple of God in Jerusalem along with a second cherub. One of the cherubs either was or became the King of Tyre during the life of Ezekiel. You can read about the situation in Ezekiel’s day at Ezekiel chapter 28. The cherub controlling Tyre is also an important factor in the End Times. *ELM*

See Dr. Martin’s articles which give more information about this cherub at “[Discovering the Mark of the Beast](#)” and “[How to Identify False Prophets](#).” Dr. Martin’s later biblical and historical research identified that cherub with the pagan god Moloch (“[Lingering Idolatry in the Temple of God](#)”). Again, the cherub of Ezekiel chapter 28 is a different entity than Satan the Devil. Dr. Martin at one time in the past thought that Melchizedek was an angel. He later modified that view to understand that Melchizedek was Christ’s personal angel. Read Dr. Martin’s understanding of this difficult subject and who this individual was in my article, “[Who Was Melchizedek](#).” *DWS*

<sup>14</sup> From David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p. 289. *DWS*

by a strong negative term and has the expression “**in the day of**” which closes each point. Here are verses 12–14 as I set them out previously in Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Most Significant Gentile Nation in the Bible.](#)”

- “But, [1] **you should NOT have looked on the day of your brother in the day that he became a stranger;**  
 [2] **NEITHER should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;**  
 [3] **NEITHER should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress.**  
 [4] **You should NOT have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity**  
 [to take over the territory of Judah]; **yea,**  
 [5] **you should NOT have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity,**  
 [6] **NOR have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity;**  
 [7] **NEITHER should you have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape;**  
 [8] **NEITHER should you have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”**

• *Obadiah verses 12–14*

There are times in life when those closest to us cause us the greatest harm, and no human relationship is closer than the bond between twins raised together. Yet even twins, like any two people, can become enemies and betray one another. Esau, the firstborn, and Jacob have struggled against each other even in the womb (Genesis 25:19–26), and that contest continued throughout their lives as individuals until they reconciled (Genesis 33:1–17). As rival peoples the struggle continues today, and will continue in the future. At the time of the end the struggle between the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob will reach a climax. When Jacob is attacked Esau will not help Jacob, but will aid his enemies. This indictment of Edom is the center of the Book of Obadiah. When the events of verses 12–14 occur, soon to follow will be another day, a day of judgment, the Day of the Lord. Verse 15:

“**For the day of YHWH** [the day of the Lord] **is near upon all the heathen** [*goyim*, the nations]: **as you have done, it shall be done unto you: your reward shall return upon your own head.**”

• *Obadiah 1:15*

The destruction of the nations will occur, and when it does there will be special punishment from God toward Edom. God’s garments will be spattered with the blood of Edom, according to Isaiah 63:1–6 which has a connection with Isaiah chapter 34 (as Dr. Martin discusses above).<sup>15</sup>

To sum up the short message of Obadiah:

“[T]he Book of Obadiah may be categorized as a theodicy (a study of God’s justice), since it, like Habakkuk, Nahum, and Job, seeks to defend the ultimate rightness of YHWH’s actions. **Obadiah’s message is this: it may appear for the moment that evil has triumphed; but be assured, in the end Yahweh will right all wrongs.** Yahweh is still in control; and he is worthy of Israel’s trust.”

• *David Dorsey, Literary Structure, p. 289*

### *Interconnections*

As mentioned earlier Israel often had conflict with Edom in history. Saul fought them (1 Samuel 14:47). David attacked them, was victorious, and his general Joab killed “**every male in Edom**” (1 Kings 11:15–16).

<sup>15</sup> James Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea–Jonah* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), p. 369. DWS

While there were Edomites outside of their homeland, within the original territory all males were killed. David then occupied their territory, built garrisons, and they were the servants of the Israelite kingdom (2 Samuel 8:14. Solomon also went to war with Edom (1 Kings 11:14). Later King Amaziah of the southern kingdom of Judah had a great victory over the Edomites, which he attributed to his own greatness (2 Kings 14:7). The Edomites in vengeance will call joyously for Jerusalem’s destruction (Psalm 137, especially verse 7). That being said, Israel should always keep in mind the admonition of Moses, **“You shall not abhor an Edomite,”** their brother (Deuteronomy 23:7).

Besides Jeremiah 49:7–22 having a relationship to Obadiah, James Nogalski writes,

**“.. the number of structural and thematic parallels between Amos 9 and Obadiah suggests that the compiler of Obadiah cast an eye toward Amos [chapter] 9 while putting the pieces of Obadiah together.”**

• *Nogalski, Book of the Twelve, pp. 371–372*

Nogalski lists the parallels on *Book of the Twelve* on page 372 and they are comprehensive:

<u>Structural and Thematic Parallels</u>	<u>Amos Chapter 9</u>	<u>Obadiah</u>
Vision	9:1	1
Five “if/though” clauses	9:2–4	4–5
No escape from YHWH: <b>“<u>from there I will bring them/you down</u>”</b>	9:2	4
Destruction & remnant motifs (using agricultural imagery)	9:7–10	5
Thematic shifts/text markers with: {		
<b>“<u>Is it not</u>”</b>	9:7	8
<b>“<u>on that day</u>”</b>	9:11	8
<b>“<u>utterance of YHWH</u>”</b>	9:7–8, 13	8
Introduction with eschatological <b>“<u>day</u>”</b>	9:11	15
Allusion to destruction of Jerusalem	9:11	16
Restoration of Davidic kingdom	9:11	19f.
“Possession” of Edom and other nations	9:12	17f., 19f.
Eschatological/agricultural abundance	9:13	—
Restoration of captivity/exiles	9:14	19f.
Restoration/reclamation of cities	9:14	20
Concluding promise for the restoration of the land/kingdom	9:15	21

These parallels are not coincidental. In seeming confirmation that Obadiah links to the passages of Amos chapter 9 and Jeremiah chapter 49, Nogalski writes:

**“The phrase ‘from there I will bring them/you down’ appears in only three places in the Hebrew Bible: Amos 9:2; Obadiah 4; and the parallel text from Jeremiah 49:16.”**

• *Nogalski, Book of the Twelve, p. 372*

These interconnected passages need to be studied in relationship with each other. It makes sense that these relationships are deliberate and much more than mere literary devices. These interlocking prophetic Scriptures tell a more complete story on the subject of Edom at the end of the age. If we do not connect all the pieces or misunderstand other connected parts, then we will not have all the information God has given us for these and all His prophecies. **“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter”** (Proverbs 25:2). We should consider it an honor from God the Father to be able to examine these interconnections of God’s Word as never before in history. Such study can keep us busy in a productive way while we wait for Christ to return.

David Sielaff