



THE
MINOR
PROPHETS

Obadiah & Jonah

Eric Hicks

Introduction to Obadiah

Authorship

Obadiah is the author of the book. However, very little is known about this prophet. “Who was this prophet? where born? of what country? at what time did he prophesy? who were his parents? when and where did he die? are questions which have been asked from the remotest antiquity; and which, to this day, have received no answer worthy of recording” —Adam Clarke’s Commentary

It is possible but not confirmed that he could be the Obadiah during the days of Elijah and Elisha (cf. 1Ki 18:3-ff).

Date of Composition

The most widely accepted date of writing is 845 B.C. A secondary date that has been proposed is 586 B.C.

Obadiah references an attack against Jerusalem (vs. 11-14). There are four possible attacks against Jerusalem that this could reference:

1. Shishak, king of Egypt (925 B.C.) during the reign of Rehoboam (1Kin 14:25, 26; 2Ch 12)
2. The Philistines and Arabians between 848-841 B.C. during the reign of Jehoram of Juda (2Ch 21:8-20)
3. Jehoash, king of Israel (790 B.C.) 2Ki 14; 2Ch 25).
4. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon in the fall of Jerusalem 586 B.C. (Macarthur, 1288)

Of these four possibilities, only the second and the fourth align with the historical data of the book. The second is preferred over the fourth. Obadiah does not include details of Babylonian captivity. “The destruction of the temple and the royal palace, the remnant that went into Egypt are not mentioned.” (Hailey, 29).

Background of Edom

The history of the struggle between Israel and Edom goes back to the pregnancy of Rebekah (Ge. 25:27-34). Later, Esau

sold his birthright for “bread and stew of lentils” (Gen 25:24; He 12:16). Jacob took Esau’s blessing by deceit (Ge 27). Edom would not let the Israelites pass through their land (Nu 20:14-21). David put the Edomites under subjection (2Samuel 8:13, 14). Edom later revolted (2Ki 8:20-22).

Purpose / Theme

Obadiah shows that pride truly goes before a fall. The Edomites joined with the enemies of Israel (vs. 11), plundered them (vs. 12, 13), and betrayed them (vs. 15). Therefore, their cruel actions will be punished. However, those who place their faith in God and turn to Him will be spared in the wrath to come.

Outline of Obadiah

- I. **THE PRIDE OF EDOM -1:1-9**
 - A. DESTRUCTION FOR THEIR PRIDE -vs. 1-4
 - B. DESTRUCTION WILL BE COMPLETE -vs. 5-9

- II. **THE VIOLENCE OF EDOM -1:10-14**
 - A. EDOM WAS AS THE ENEMY OF HIS BRETHREN -vs. 10, 11
 - B. THE ACTIONS OF EDOM -vs. 12-14

- III. **THE JUDGMENT OF EDOM -1:15-21**
 - A. EDOM WILL REAP WHAT THEY HAVE SOWN -vs. 15, 16
 - B. CONTRAST OF OUTCOMES BETWEEN JACOB AND EDOM -vs. 17, 18
 - C. THE DIVIDED LANDS -vs. 19-21

I. THE PRIDE OF EDOM -1:1-9

A. DESTRUCTION FOR THEIR PRIDE -vs. 1-4

1. The message -vs. 1, 2
 - a. Obadiah identifies himself as the author of the book.
 - b. He speaks the word of God, thus giving proper authority to his message.
 - c. The “We” in verse one could refer to Obadiah with other prophets or with the people of Israel. The latter is the preferred interpretation.
 - d. God will make Edom small and despised among the nations
2. The dwelling place of the Edomites
 - a. They dwelt in a mountainous region south of the Dead Sea.
 - b. “The mountainous area on either side of the mountain strongholds, and well-protected coves. In these the people felt themselves secure against their enemies.” (Hailey, 32)
 - c. They could see their enemies coming from a considerable distance and would have adequate time to prepare for battle.
 - d. Because of their location and stronghold, they believed they were invincible.
3. God is the One in control of the nations
 - a. He determines “their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings” (Acts 17:26)
 - b. “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, they watchman stays awake in vain.” (Ps 127:1)

B. DESTRUCTION WILL BE COMPLETE -vs. 5-9

1. The pride of Edom was not limited to their stronghold position but extended to the pride in their great wealth also.
 - a. "...he had grown wealthy through trade, through duty charged the caravans that traversed his land, and through his disposition to plunder weak caravans that passed through." (Hailey, 33)
 - b. Their wealth would be taken.
2. The two analogies: (vs. 5, 6)
 - a. The thieves. When thieves break in and steal, they take only what they can or what they perceive as valuable. Not so with Edom. They would be completely robbed of everything.
 - b. Grape-gatherers. No grape-gatherer collects all the grapes. This too would not be so with Edom. They would be completely stripped bare.
3. During this time their alliances would fail them. (vs. 7)
4. Their wisdom would be removed from them (vs. 8, 9)
 - a. The wisest men of Edom would be dismayed during this time. Their wisdom would be of no effect.
 - b. Teman was one of the two chief cities located in the southern region. It was from Teman that Eliphaz came from to visit with Job during his distress (Job 2:11).
 - c. "Eliphaz, one of the wise men who came to visit Job, was from Teman (Job 2:11), a city in Edom (Je 49:7, 20; Ez 25:13; Amos 1:11, 12)." (Roper, 16)

II. THE VIOLENCE OF EDOM -1:10-14

A. EDOM WAS AS THE ENEMY OF HIS BRETHREN -vs. 10, 11

1. Edom was condemned first for his pride and second for his mistreatment of his brother.
2. Edom stood on the other side during his brother's distress.
3. Most believe this attack against Israel is the one referenced in 2 Ch 21:8-18
4. Edom should have taken pity on his brethren but did not. Note a New Testament parallel -1Co 12:26.

B. THE ACTIONS OF EDOM -vs. 12-14

1. They should not have rejoiced in the day of their affliction -vs. 12
2. They plundered their possessions -vs. 13
 - a. They were greedy and filled with covetousness against their own brother.
 - b. Application: we see this today when disaster strikes our own nation. Whether it is a tornado or flood, looters will gather there to steal what they can. The National Guard must be called in to keep those people out. It is sad we do this to our own people.
3. They stood at the crossroads -vs. 14
 - a. The Edomites would position themselves at the crossroads to encounter any one fleeing from the attack against Jerusalem.
 - b. They would either rob them, kill them, or sell them into captivity.

III. THE JUDGMENT OF EDOM -1:15-21

**A. EDOM WILL REAP WHAT THEY HAVE SOWN
-vs. 15, 16**

1. The day of the Lord would be the day God overthrows the enemies of His people.
2. The deeds they have done would not be forgotten, but punished -cf. Ga 6:7, 8
3. They would ultimately be cut off as though they had never been.

**B. CONTRAST OF OUTCOMES BETWEEN JACOB
AND EDOM -vs. 17, 18**

1. In contrast to the mountainous regions of the Edomites, true deliverance would be found in Mount Zion. This is not just a reference to the descendants of Jacob, but ultimately it is a place of refuge for the redeemed! (cf. Lk 1:33)
2. The Edomites by contrast, would be completely consumed. Note a summary of the history:
 - a. Their destruction began with Nebuchadnezzar.
 - b. Arabs (also called the Nabataeans) invaded Edom between the sixth and fourth century. They removed them from their land bringing them to southern Judea.
 - c. The Maccabees killed around twenty thousand of them.
 - d. John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) forced the remnant of the nation to adopt circumcision in keeping with the Jewish religion.
 - e. "Under the Romans some time during the first century after Christ the remaining Edomites were absorbed by the Arabs and their identity was lost completely." (Hailey, 38)

C. THE DIVIDED LANDS -vs. 19-21

1. The complete fulfillment of the prophecy is found in Christ -vs. 19
 - a. Balaam's prophecy -Nu 24:15-24
 - b. Amos' prophecy -Amos 9:11, 12
 - c. James refers to the prophecy of Amos -Ac 15:15-18
 - d. Therefore, the prophecy of Obadiah 1:19-21 has been fulfilled in Jesus. It does not refer to a future date.
2. The remnant of Israel -vs. 20, 21
 - a. All would find their place of refuge in the kingdom of the Lord.
 - b. This is fulfilled in the preaching of the gospel and souls being added to the church (ie. The kingdom of God).

Conclusion:

1. Pride always goes before a fall. A nation or even a person can believe they stand, but if they are not right with God, they will surely fall.
2. Edom should never have rejoiced in the calamity of their brethren nor should they have taken advantage of them when they were weak.
3. Ultimately, God has established His kingdom that will never fall nor come to ruin. It is a tremendous blessing to be apart of His church / kingdom.

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Introduction to Jonah

Authorship

While the book does not say specifically who wrote the book, tradition believes that Jonah is the author. The name Jonah means, “Dove”.

Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. He is the son of Amittai. He ministered in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. Jonah is from Gath Hopher, a town located several miles northeast of Nazareth.

Date of Composition

About 780 BC.

Purpose/Theme

Jonah knows that God is over all creation (1:9). It is easy for him to understand God’s great love and patience towards Israel. However, God also has great love for all His creation. This includes those we would consider vile.

The great challenge of the book of Jonah is to learn from him. When we look at others who are lost in sin and depraved behavior, we must also see that God loves them and the angels of God are longing to rejoice at their repentance.

“The theme of this prophecy (which is really a biography rather than a sermonic discourse) is that God’s mercy and compassion extend even to the heathen nations on condition of their repentance. It is therefore Israel’s obligation to bear witness to them of the true faith; and a neglect of this task may bring the nation, like Jonah himself, to the deep waters of affliction and chastisement” (Archer, 341-342)

Book of History

Because the book of Jonah tells of him being swallowed by a great fish, some believe that this is just a story or a parable. It is important to note however, that Jesus treats the story of Jonah as one bearing historical significance. He does so by drawing parallels to His own life. He does this regarding His death,

burial, and resurrection (Matthews 12:39-41). He also does this concerning repentance (Luke 11:29-32). He mentions Jonah to the Pharisees in response for their desire of a sign (Matthew 16:4).

Outline of Jonah

- I. JONAH TRAVELS AWAY FROM NINEVEH
 - A. JONAH GOES TOWARDS TARSHISH -1:1-3
 - B. THE STORM UPON THE SEA -1:4-9
 - C. JONAH THROWN OVERBOARD -1:10-17
 - D. THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE FISH -2:1-10

- II. JONAH TRAVELS TO NINEVEH
 - A. JONAH PREACHES TO NINEVEH -3:1-4
 - B. NINEVEH REPENTS -3:5-10
 - C. JONAH ANGERED BY GOD'S MERCY -4:1-11

I. JONAH TRAVELS AWAY FROM NINEVEH

A. JONAH GOES TOWARDS TARSHISH -1:1-3

1. The word of the Lord came to Jonah
 - a. He is the son of Amittai
 - b. He was a prophet of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II -2Ki 14:25
2. God commissions Jonah to preach to Nineveh
 - a. “The city is among the oldest of civilization, extending back to shortly after the great flood (Ge 10:8-12), and estimated by archaeologists to have had its origin in the period between 5000 and 4000 B.C.” (Hailey, 67)
 - b. “Throughout their long history, the Assyrians often used Nineveh as a royal city. After making it the capital of Assyria around 700 B.C., Sennacherib doubled its size to a circumference of about eight miles.” (Roper, 39)
 - c. The citizens of Nineveh were deliberately wicked and cruel.
 - d. Jonah had no love for them, and no desire for God to spare them upon their repentance.
3. Jonah flees the presence of the Lord
 - a. Technically, no one can flee the presence of the Lord -Ps 139:7-12
 - b. There is little to no doubt that Jonah was aware of this. By fleeing the presence of the Lord, he was refusing to fulfill his role as a prophet of God.

B. THE STORM UPON THE SEA -1:4-9

1. The Lord sent out this great storm upon the sea.
2. The mariners were afraid.
 - a. The ship was about to be broken up.
 - b. Every man was crying out to his god. There was no response.

3. The captain awakens Jonah to have him cry out to his God.
4. The mariners cast lots to identify to source of trouble. It fell on Jonah.
5. Jonah identifies himself before them -vs. 9
 - a. He is a prophet of the God who made the sea and the dry land.
 - b. Perhaps Jonah had come to the realization that the storm was for his behalf. Therefore, he confesses the identity of his God and the actions he had taken against Him.

C. JONAH THROWN OVERBOARD -1:10-17

1. The mariners wanted to know what to do to him.
2. Jonah told them to throw him overboard.
 - a. Some believe he would rather die than preach to Nineveh.
 - b. More likely, since he was a prophet, he had knowledge from God that this was required.
3. The mariners tried to row harder to land first.
4. They prayed God would not hold innocent blood against them.
5. Jonah is thrown into the sea and the sea becomes calm.
 - a. The men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered sacrifice.
 - b. We are not told what happened to these men. We can only speculate whether they became worshippers of the one true living God or not.
 - c. We do know that even in Jonah's disobedience, worshippers of pagan deities saw the power of God first hand.

The heathen mariners rowed desperately to get back to land but made no progress against the storm. They then prayed Jehovah not to bring innocent blood upon them and cast Jonah into the sea. As the storm promptly subsided, the heathen sailors

offered a sacrifice to Jehovah and made vows. In this part of the story the mariners give an example of the capacity of the Gentiles to perform noble deeds and to offer acceptable worship to Jehovah. (Orr, 1728)

6. Jonah spent three days and three night in the belly of the fish.
7. A comparison and contrast between Jonah and Jesus:
 - a. Jonah willing sacrificed himself for the well-being of the crew. However, it should be equally noted that Jonah was the cause of the calamity the crew was facing.
 - b. Jesus sacrifice Himself for mankind (Jn 10:18; 15:13). However, Jesus committed no sin against God (Heb 4:15; 1Pe 2:22).
 - c. The mariners prayed that Jonah's innocent blood not be counted against them. (Jon. 1:14)
 - d. The crowd who condemned Jesus cried out, "His blood be upon us and our children." (Mt 27:25)

D. THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE FISH -2:1-10

1. Jonah prays to God using some words reflected from Psalms:
 - a. "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction..." (cf. Ps 120:1)
 - b. "For You have cast me into the deep..." (cf. Ps 88:6)
 - c. "All Your billows and Your waves passed over me" (cf. Ps 42:7)
 - d. "I have been cast out of Your sight..." (cf. Ps 31:22)
 - e. "...You have brought up my life from the pit..." (cf. Ps 16:10)

- 1) Note: this Psalm parallels with the resurrection of Jesus.
- 2) Peter mentions Ps 16:10 in his sermon -Ac 2:27
 - f. "...And my prayer went up to You..." (cf. Ps 18:6)
2. Jonah repents -vs. 7-9
 - a. He is going to fulfill his role as a prophet of God -vs. 9
 - b. "Salvation is of the Lord" (cf. Ps 3:8)
3. Jonah is vomited out onto dry land -vs. 10

II. JONAH TRAVELS TO NINEVEH

A. THE PEOPLE REPENT AT JONAH'S PREACHING -3:1-10

1. Jonah obeys the Lord -vs. 1-4
 - a. The Lord recommissions Jonah to go to Nineveh.
 - b. Note: The Lord does not bring up Jonah's failed past, but rather pushes him forward.
 - 1) Men will hold grudges against each other.
 - 2) God forgives and desires His people to get up and go again.
 - c. The Lord states, "...preach the message that I tell you." -vs. 2
 - 1) The only message that will bring about repentance is the one that comes from God.
 - 2) Too many today want to interject their own wisdom or philosophy into the message.
 - 3) Remember, today it is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation -Ro 1:16; cf. 1Co 2:2
 - d. "A three-day journey"

- 1) The exact meaning is unknown but has been debated among the scholars.
- 2) “After considering a number of possible explanations, it seems best to think that the reference is to Nineveh itself, to the seven or eight miles of its circumference.” (Hailey, 75)
2. The people of Nineveh repent -vs. 5-9
 - a. The people believed God and they repented in sackcloth and ashes.
 - b. The king set forth a decree in the land for all to fast unto God, to be covered with sackcloth, to cry out to God, and turn from their wicked ways.
 - c. “The covering of the animals was a custom practiced in mourning for the death of a great person” (Hailey, 77)
 - d. “...the haircloth was a harsh garment, irritating and afflictive to the body. They who did so, were (as we may still see from the Assyrian sculptures) men of pampered and luxurious habits, uniting sensuality and fierceness.” (E.B. Pusey, DD; pg. 415)
 - e. The people of Nineveh were filled with godly sorrow -cf. 2Co 7:10
3. The Lord relents from the disaster -vs. 10
 - a. God saw their works. Repentance is more than mere words. It is actively turning away from sin and unto God.
 - b. Because their hearts were right in the sight of God, He changed His mind and did not bring disaster upon them.
 - c. “The chapter clearly and nobly portrays the love and compassion of God for even the greatest and most cruel of the heathen.” (Hailey, 77)

B. JONAH ANGERED BY GOD'S MERCY -4:1-11

1. Jonah expresses his anger to God -vs. 1-4
 - a. He is angry because God has mercy upon Nineveh.
 - b. Although Jonah states this in anger, he reveals the wonderful character of God. "...I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm." (vs. 2)
 - c. Jonah would rather die than see the city spared.
 - d. It is characteristic of God's people to want His loving favor just for themselves.
 - 1) The Jews were God's people while the Gentiles were heathen.
 - 2) The prodigal son's older brother -Lk 15:11-32
 - 3) The Pharisees concerning the woman caught in adultery -Jn 8:1-12
 - 4) Therefore, we must be careful of our own attitudes today concerning those outside the body of Christ (ie. The church)
2. The plant and the worm -vs. 5-8
 - a. So far, God has used a storm and a great fish in instructing Jonah. Now He uses a plant and a worm.
 - b. The plant provided shade for Jonah. He was grateful for the plant.
 - c. The Lord prepared a worm to destroy the plant. The sun beat against Jonah's head and a "vehement east wind" also came against him. He was in misery.
 - d. "A small thing like a protective plant could bring joy, whereas the sparing of a city could bring anger." (Hailey, 79-80)

3. The Lord's Lesson vs. 9-11
 - a. Jonah thought it was right to be angry about the plant that had perished. He was angry even to death!
 - b. Jonah cared more about the plant that perished than the souls on Nineveh that could have been destroyed.
 - c. We see from this God's great love He has for all people. His desire is not that any should perish, but that all should repent -cf. 2Pe 3:9

Some lessons from Jonah:

1. The power of salvation is found in the message, not in the messenger -Ro 1:16; 1Co 2:1, 2
2. God loves all souls in every part of the world -cf. Mt 28:28; 2Pe 3:9
3. We too must have a love for all souls and a desire to see them right with God.

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