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Old Testament Exegetical Commentary of (Name of Book)

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Introduction to Obadiah

1 Historical Background

The nation of Edom had its genealogical roots in Esau (Gen. 25:30; 36). Esau was an ungodly man who despised his birthright (Gen. 25:19-34). His patriarchal blessing was stolen by Jacob, his devious brother. Rebekah, their mother, led Jacob in this plan of deception (Gen. 27). Rebekah lacked faith in God as she had already been told at the birth of the twin brothers that the older Esau would serve the younger Jacob (Gen. 25:23). There was no need to steal the blessing as it had already been bestowed by God at Jacob's birth.

2 Prevailing Conditions

The primary benchmark for determining the date of Obadiah is the identification of the invasion of Jerusalem (11-14). There are four major dates that must be considered. The earliest was the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt, in 926 B.C. This took place during the reign of Rehoboam of Judah (1 Kings 14:25-26; 2 Chron. 12). This event falls short of validity because Edom remained under subjection to Israel at this time. This invasion did not result in the plundering of Jerusalem.

A second view suggests the civil war between Jehoash of Israel and Amaziah of Judah. Jehoash invaded Israel about 790 B.C. and devastated the land (2 Kings 14; 2 Chron. 25). The difficulty with this view is that the invaders are called "foreigners" which would not be a proper designation for Jews living in the north.

A third viewpoint maintains the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. A problem for this view is that Obadiah does not reflect a complete destruction of Jerusalem.

The fourth date involves the warfare of the Philistines and Arabians against Jehoram of Judah (848-841 B.C.). In favor of this date (845 B.C.) are the following considerations:

1) The nation of Edom had revolted against the vassalage of Jehoram, and Edom was a bitter enemy of Judah during this time (2 Kings 8:20; 2 Chron. 21:16-17).

2) Nebuchadnezzar took the captives back to Babylonia (Daniel 1), and those in Obadiah's day were taken to Phoenicia and westward (20).

3) Other prophets like Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel are mentioned in the deportation of Nebuchadnezzar so that the absence of Obadiah's name in the deportation would argue for a different time.

4) The lack of identification of a specific invader by Obadiah would indicate that these enemies were different from the Chaldeans or Babylonians who are clearly identified by the prophets of the sixth century B.C.

5) A comparison of Obadiah to Amos (760 B.C.) and Jeremiah (627 B.C.) evidences the acquaintance of these prophets to his work (Ob. 14-Amos 1:6; Ob. 4-Amos 9:2; Ob. 19 - Amos 9:12; Ob. 1-9 -Jer. 49:7-22. See also Joel 3:3-6.).

6) Although minor, some weight for an earlier date should be given to the placement of Obadiah in the canon with the prophets that date to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.¹

¹ Hassler, Mark A. For additional discussion, see "*The Setting of Obadiah: When does the oracle concerning Edom transpire?*" *Journal of the Evangelical Society*, 59.2 (June 2016) 241-54.

3 Main Characters

3.1 Obadiah

The biblical record provides only nominal information about the prophet Obadiah. Walter Baker states: "At least 12 Old Testament men were named Obadiah including an officer in David's army (1 Chron. 12:9), Ahab's servant (1 Kings 18:3), a Levite in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:12), and a leader who returned from the Exile with Ezra (Ezra 8:9)."² Smith and Page note that: "The name 'Obadiah' is from a root meaning 'to serve,' with a shortened form (yâ) of the covenant name for Israel's God, Yahweh. Thus, the name means servant (or worshiper) of Yahweh."³ There is the suggestion that he may be identified with the chief officer of Ahab (1 Kings 18). If this identification is true, there must have been a meaningful change in his life after meeting with Elijah. Ahab's Obadiah was a man who was quite unwilling to help Elijah. Although he had protected a hundred prophets during the murderous terror of Jezebel, he sought every avenue to avoid association with Elijah. He feared the Lord greatly, but he also feared Ahab. Obadiah must have known Elijah personally since he easily recognized him. Even though these two Obadiahs may be placed during the same period, it is difficult to conclude that they are the same person.

3.2 Edomites

It is apparent from the history of the Edomites that Esau passed on to his descendants his immoral and idolatrous ways. The Edomites settled in the Trans-jordan region that is southwest of the Dead Sea. This region is traversed by rugged mountainous terrain that provided a natural barrier of protection. Sela (Petra), the capital, was accessed by a long and narrow passageway that led through the mountainous cliffs. A few soldiers were able to protect the city from a massive army due to the restricted entrance to the city. This fact, combined with the high fortification of their homes in the mountains, caused them to have a false sense of security.

Ever since Esau sold his birthright and Jacob stole his blessing, the Edomites and Israelites had been at enmity. The Edomites refused Moses and the exodus generation the freedom of passage along the Kings Highway that traverses Edom (Ex. 20). In spite of this maltreatment by their cousin, the Israelites were commanded by God not to take vengeance on their relatives (Deut. 23:7-8). King Saul fought against them and later David brought them under subjection (1 Sam. 14; 2 Sam. 8). The Edomites revolted against Solomon but they were not able to throw off his yoke (1 Kings 11). The Edomites gained a measure of freedom during the reign of Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20-22). Scrimmages and hostilities continued between these nations until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The Edomites survived in part until the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, and its surrounding regions in A.D 70.

4 Argument

² Walter L. Baker, "Obadiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1453.

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Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, vol. 19B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 179.

Yahweh (LORD) will bring retributive judgment on Edom because Edom reveled and participated in the destruction of Israel. Walter Baker argues that God's "righteousness demanded vengeance on Edom, Israel's perennial enemy. Judgment against Edom is mentioned in more Old Testament books than it is against any other foreign nation (cf. Isa. 11:14; 34:5–17; 63:1–6; Jer. 9:25–26; 25:17–26; 49:7–22; Lam. 4:21–22; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11–12; 9:11–12; Obad.; Mal. 1:4)."⁴

5 Purpose

Israel was to be encouraged and hope in Yahweh because He would avenge Edom's sin and restore Israel as a nation in His kingdom.

6 Key Verse

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 (15).

7 Major Themes

The judgment of the Edomites for attacking Israel.

The complete destruction of the Edomites.

The Edomites would be betrayed by their allies.

The arrogance of the Edomites.

The deliverance of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem by the LORD God.

The Day of the Lord brings judgment and deliverance.

The principle of *lex talionis*, corresponding punishment.

The Kingdom of LORD will be established on earth.

Interpretation and Exposition

1 The Lord Yahweh pronounces judgment on Edom 1-2.

Obadiah received his prophetic message from God through a vision. Walter Baker comments, "The word **vision** is also used in Isaiah 1:1, Micah 1:1, and Nahum 1:1 to introduce those prophetic books (cf. Dan. 1:17; 8:1; 9:24; Hosea 12:10). It suggests that the prophet "saw" (mentally and spiritually) as well as heard what God communicated to him."⁵ Apparently, this form of communication came on the prophets as well as others during a state of sleep. God would reveal the message to them within the consciousness of their minds (Gen. 46:2; Dan. 2:28; Joel 2:28).

The vision is a message of judgment against Edom. The imagery is that of the LORD (Yahweh) sending out an envoy or ambassador to call out the nations to rise with military action against Edom. Obadiah addressed God as "Adonai Yahweh", a designation that emphasized His sovereignty and covenant relationship to Israel. Yahweh would make Edom small among the nations. The Edomites would be despised by their neighbors. Just as Esau despised his birthright, so Yahweh and the nations would despise them (Gen. 25:34). Carl Armerding writes: "Edom" represents an

⁴ Walter Baker, 1453.

⁵ Ibid., 1455.

alternative name of 'Esau,' the brother of Jacob (Gen 36:1, 8, 43; cf. Obad 6, 8–9, 18–19, 21). It also denotes the descendants of Esau (Gen 36:9, 16–17; cf. 36:31, 43), whose blood relationship with Israel is invoked repeatedly in the OT (Num 20:14; Deut 23:7; Amos 1:11; Mal 1:2; cf. Obad 10, 12); and it describes the land inhabited by them (Num 20:23; 21:4; 34:3; cf. Obad 18–21)."⁶

2 Edom will not be able to protect itself from Yahweh's judgment 3-4.

The Edomites lived in a state of self deception Their pride or presumptuous insolence gave them a false sense of security. Living in the shadow of the mountains, protected by the rugged terrain and narrow gateway to their city, they thought that no one, not even God could bring them down. They carved their houses into the mountainous rock and in the highest places of the cliffs. The Edomites mocked the nations and God by stating: "Who will bring me down to earth (3)?" They thought they were both invincible and impregnable. Yahweh taunts them by His affirmation that they will be brought down. Their reasoning had blinded them because their hearts had been lifted up. Yahweh would bring down this people whose hearts had been lifted up by their insolence and false sense of security in their location at high elevations.

Yahweh continued to mock them: "Though you rise high as an eagle, and set your nest between the stars, I will bring you down, declares Yahweh (4)." Smith and Page observe that: "Obadiah compared Edom with the eagle, a bird known to soar high in the air and to nest in the mountain heights. From such lofty heights the eagle customarily launched deadly attacks on its victims below. Edom had been accustomed to doing that."⁷

Armerding adds that: "Its main centers of civilization were situated in a narrow ridge of mountainous land southeast of the Dead Sea (cf. v.1). This ridge exceeded a height of 4,000 feet throughout its northern sector, and it rose in places to 5,700 feet in the south. Its height was rendered more inaccessible by the gorges radiating from it toward the Arabah on the west and the desert eastwards."⁸

3 Yahweh's judgment will completely devastate Edom 5-9.

Obadiah details the devastating and horrific judgments that God would execute on the Edomites. David Baker elaborates: "The author highlights the heinous nature of the crime by inserting an almost involuntary exclamation, whose introductory interjection 'Oh' can indicate horror (Jer. 51:41) or lament (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 48:17)".⁹

The geographical location of Edomite cities provided the people a strategic opportunity for the accumulation of great wealth. One city, Petra was a great

⁶ Carl E. Armerding, "Obadiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 341.

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Smith and Page, 183.

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Armerding, 342–343.

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David W. Baker, *Joel, Obadiah, Malachi*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2006), 169–170.

commercial marketplace on the Syrian and Arabian trade route. It was situated in the rocks of a mountain plateau. "The term translated "rocks" (*sela'*) may be a pun on the name of Edom's capital city, Sela (cf. 2 Kgs 14:7; Isa 16:1; 42:11). Identification of Sela with Petra cannot be established absolutely for lack of adequate evidence."¹⁰

The Edomites had benefited greatly from this trade and had accumulated much wealth. The LORD exemplifies His devastating judgment on the region with two illustrations (5). When thieves break into a house, they take what they want, what they can carry, and are gone very quickly. They take as much as they can carry, but usually leave behind some possessions. The nations that judge Edom will ransack their cities so thoroughly that there will be nothing left. The invaders will search out all of the treasures, even the hidden treasures and carry them off as plunder (5-6).

The second illustration relates to the harvesting of grapes. When a person gleans from grapevines, there are usually some grapes that are missed, fall to the ground, or are purposely left for the poor to pick. The completeness of Yahweh's judgment is such that when He is through with the Edomites, there will be nothing left for them to find.¹¹

The city of Petra, although somewhat impregnable from the outside, would fall from the inside as allies betray Edom (7). The nations about Edom betrayed them by breaking covenants of peace and turning against them in war. Those nations who had cut a covenant with Edom would now cut off Edom (9). David Baker notes that: "Rather than criminals or ancient enemies plaguing Edom, it is her former friends and allies who turn against her. They are identified in Hebrew literally as covenant partners ("allies"; lit., "those of your covenant"), "friends" (lit., "those of your peace"; Jer. 38:22; cf. Ps. 41:9; Jer. 20:10), and "your bread."¹²

One form of a covenant was the meal or bread covenant. Any group of people or kings could sit down for a meal together in which they would share bread. This gathering showed their mutual acceptance of each other and at times would also involve the taking of an oath of allegiance and protection. The nations lured Edom into a trap by deceitfully sharing a bread covenant with them so that by gaining their trust, they could then turn and surprise them with destruction. Edom had been treacherous with their neighbors and cousins, the Israelites, and now this treachery would return on their own heads. Armerding comments: "It threatens Edom with deception by its "friends"; the noun "friends" translates a phrase implying not merely coexistence but communal commitment (lit., "the men of your peace" [*'anšê š'elōmekā*]; so Ps 41:9; Jer 20:10; 38:22)."¹³

The LORD's judgment would not only be on Edom's wealth but also Edom's wisdom. Smith and Page note that: "The rhetorical question raised in v. 8 demands a yes answer. "In that day" is prophetic language for a future intervention of God in human affairs (cf. Amos 2:16; 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11). Here it refers to the time of God's judgment of

¹⁰ Smith and Page, 183.

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See Moisés Silva and Merrill Chapin Tenney, *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, Q-Z* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 2009), 1024 for further discussion on the harvesting of grapes in the Ancient Near East.

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David Baker, 170–171.

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Armerding, 344.

Edom (cf. v. 15).¹⁴ The text is clear, “YES!” judgment would destroy all aspects of Edomite society and culture.

Leslie Allen remarks: “In the book of Job, Eliphaz, whose traditional wisdom is attacked, is stated to have come from Teman in Edom. To Edom’s bazaars thronged peoples of the east, who brought with their wares travellers’ tales of learning and lore. It was probably this byproduct of its being a center of trade and travel that gave rise to Edom’s awesome reputation for wisdom. Here its wisdom takes the form of skill in military strategy.”¹⁵ The men of wisdom and understanding would be destroyed. The counsel of the wise would be destroyed as they sought to deliver Edom with their military, religious and political strategies (8).

The prophetic woe pronounced on Teman focuses on the mighty men that dwelled in this city (9). Patterson and Hill suggest that Teman: “was one of Edom’s chief cities (Amos 1:12), located in the northern part of the country. The term could thus stand for a region in the northern sector or for the entire country (Jer 49:7; Hab 3:3).”¹⁶ A major city was likely to have a special military presence so as to protect the leaders and their wealth.

Donald Wiseman notes the complete devastation is indicated as: “These three oracles build toward a climax with: (1) the plunder of riches (5–6), (2) loss of wisdom and understanding (7–8), and (3) a loss of military capability (9). The very structures of society, in its constituent elements of economic well-being, wise rule and military security through armed force and international treaty, will topple.”¹⁷

4 Yahweh's judgment on Edom is because of their violence, arrogance, complacency and vengeance toward Israel 10-14.

The Edomites had violated the Abrahamic covenant through violent acts against Israel. They had cursed their relatives, God’s covenant people, and now Yahweh curses them. The Edomites had sought to cover their shame of violence against their brother Jacob. Yahweh’s vengeance returns that shame so that it covered them. This shame probably referred to their own captivity and humiliation by the conquering nations. It was not uncommon for a person to be put to shame by being stripped naked, face shaved and tied through the nose with a rope or fish hooks after being defeated.

Harold Shanks summarizes the charges from verses 10-14: “After announcing two more aspects of punishment this section lists twelve acts of treachery: (1) violence against Jacob (v. 10), (2) stood aloof (v. 11), (3) looted Jerusalem (v. 11), (4) looked down on Jacob (v. 12), (5) rejoiced when they were destroyed (v. 12), (6) boasted when they were in trouble (v. 12), (7) marched into their gates (v. 13), (8) looked down on

¹⁴ Smith and Page, 188.

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Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 152–153.

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Richard D. Patterson and Andrew E. Hill, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 10: Minor Prophets, Hosea–Malachi* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 224.

¹⁷

Donald J. Wiseman, T. Desmond Alexander, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 26, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 39.

them (v. 13), (9) seized their wealth (v. 13), (10) waited on their refugees (v. 14), (11) cut down their fugitives (v. 14), and (12) handed over their survivors (v. 14)."¹⁸

The Edomites not only withheld their help to Judah, but also participated in violence and aggression against them. They gave hearty approval to those who invaded Jerusalem and were accessories to the crimes. Their bitter hearts were void of compassion, and they reveled in Judah's destruction with boastful words. David Baker expresses the cruel irony in writing: "Violent Edom, instead of being cloaked by its pride (v. 3), is now "covered with shame," just as the flood covered Noah's violent neighbors (Gen. 7:19–20) or as one might be wrapped in a garment (e.g., Ex. 28:42; Deut. 22:12). The ironic twist is that garments are used most commonly to cover one's shame (e.g., Gen. 9:23; Hos. 2:9; cf. Gen. 3:7, 21), but here it is shame that covers the nation."¹⁹

The road of escape from Jerusalem and Judea led through the Judean wilderness to the Kings Highway in Trans-Jordan. A person would flee through the wilderness and then cross the Jordan River at Jericho or go farther south and cross below the Dead Sea. Once on the Kings Highway, the flight would lead to a crossroad that would go west to Egypt or east to Teman and Petra. At this junction in the road, the Edomites stood and cut down their helpless and exhausted cousins. Rather than offering them the safety of a cool mountain haven, they murdered and left them to rot in the desert sun. Those Judeans that were not killed were forced into imprisonment and slavery. Wiseman asserts: "Edom's despicable actions towards her brother climax with an attack on Judah's refugees (cf. v. 12; 2 Kgs 25:4–5). Not actively engaging in the conquest itself, Edom was doing something even crueler, callously handing over (cf. Deut. 23:15; 32:30; 1 Sam. 23:11; Amos 1:9; 6:8) *survivors* (v. 8; Josh. 10:20) caught in their demoralized flight. Edom's punishment fits her crime: they who *cut down* others will themselves be cut off (vv. 9–10)."²⁰

Commenting on the cadence of the Hebrew text, Smith and Page remark that: "This verse begins a series of eight prohibitions in vv. 12–14 (lit., "do not ..."). They employ the form of an immediate prohibition (using the negative particle 'al) rather than that of a general prohibition (using the negative particle *lō'*)... the impact Obadiah's repeated language pattern may have had on the listeners: The cadence is that of the incessant beat of a drummer leading troops into battle."²¹

5 Yahweh will judge all nations according to their deeds 15-16.

The prophecy of Obadiah looked beyond the days of Edom to include the day of the Lord at the end times. This is a day of judgment that will fall on all the nations because they have violated Yahweh's covenant with His people Israel (Gen. 12; Joel 2-3). The law of recompense will be executed as the dealings of the nations will fall back on their own heads.

¹⁸ Harold Shank, *Minor Prophets*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 2001–), 316.

¹⁹ David Baker, 180.

²⁰ Wiseman, Alexander, and Waltke, 41.

²¹ Smith and Page, 192–193.

David Baker summarizes the meaning of the Day of the LORD.

“The day of the LORD” is not a concept originating with Obadiah, but rather one that started with the earliest of the writing prophets (see Amos 5:18[2x], 20; cf. Isa. 13:6, 9; Ezek. 13:5; 45:35; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Zeph. 1:7, 14[2x]; Mal. 4:5). The origins of the concept are debated, but its contents are clear from what is probably the first of the biblical uses of the phrase—Amos 5:18. It concerns a time of divine intervention in history, bringing good and blessing on those who please God and gloom and destruction on his foes. The day is not only an eschatological concept at the end of the age, but a time that is near (Joel 1:15; 3:14; Zeph. 1:7) and approaching quickly (Zeph. 1:14).²²

The Edomites and nations had drunk in celebration of their devastation of Yahweh's Holy Mountain in Jerusalem and now they will drink of His wrath. In the last days an angel will cry out: "Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it" (Rev. 16:5-6, NASB).

Walter Baker identifies principles of Lex Talionis: “God’s judgments on Edom corresponded to her crimes. What she (**you** is sing^{.)} had **done** to Judah would then be **done to** her: (1) She looted Jerusalem (v. 13), so she was looted (v. 6; cf. Jer. 49:10). (2) Edom killed Judean fugitives (Obad. 14; cf. Amos 1:11), so she was slaughtered (Obad. 8; cf. Isa. 34:5–8; Ezek. 32:29; 35:8). (3) She handed over Judean survivors to the enemy (Obad. 14; cf. Ezek. 35:5), so Edom’s allies expelled her (Obad. 7). (4) Edom rejoiced over Judah’s losses (Obad. 12; cf. Ezek. 35:15), so she was covered with shame and destroyed (Obad. 10).²³

6 Yahweh will avenge Israel by expanding her borders after He has taken retribution on Edom 17-21.

Yahweh, true to His covenant with the patriarchs, will someday restore Israel in the land. Jerusalem, the city from which the people had to flee will be the place to which the victors will march (17-21). Armerding states: “As the visible expression of God’s sovereign holiness, Mount Zion becomes the source of judgment on man’s sin.... However, the Lord’s kingly rule is expressed equally by his salvation, which also emanates from Mount Zion (e.g., Pss 20:2; 53:6), and which restores to it the “holy” character consonant with his presence there.”²⁴

Those who escape the persecution of the Antichrist during the tribulation will be established again in Jerusalem (Rev. 12). The city and its people will prosper as Yahweh's blessings will pour forth. Some expositors believe that Petra is the place that

²² David Baker, 183.

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²³ Walter Baker, 1457–1458.

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Armerding, 353–354.

God will prepare for the Jews to flee to during the Tribulation. If Petra is that city, it is an interesting turnabout, as a city that was destroyed for not protecting Israel will be used by God to care for His people as originally intended.

The Abrahamic covenant promises that Israel will possess the land for eternity. Israel will avenge its destruction by Edom. Edom will be destroyed like the dry stubble of straw that is ignited by a fire (18). The Jews will possess the promised land and spread out to fulfill the covenant boundaries. The Negev to the south, the mountains of Esau to the east, the Philistines' low country to the west, the entire regions of Ephraim, Samaria, Benjamin and Gilead will be possessed by the restored nation of Israel.

"Fire is one means of divine punishment in the Old Testament (cf. Exod 15:7; Isa 10:17; Joel 2:5; Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5). The house of Jacob will serve as God's "fire," and the house of Joseph (Jacob's prominent son) will serve as God's torch ("flame"). These parallel lines identify God's reunited people (Judah and Israel) as the instrument of judgment on Edom (cf. Pss 77:15; 81:4–5; Jer 3:18; Ezek 37:16–28)."²⁵

The exiles will also return from other lands such as Sepharad and possess the cities of the southern Negev. The identification of some of these regions is difficult.²⁶ Allen suggests: "Judeans returning from exile to Jerusalem would penetrate southward and wrest *the Negeb towns* from Edomite interlopers. One might have expected a reference to Babylon as the domicile of Jewish exiles, but instead a mysterious *Sepharad* is named. The various identifications assigned to the place underscore the uncertainty of present knowledge."²⁷

This period of judgment and deliverance will bring a period of the reversal of fortunes. Douglas Stuart observes: "Any Edomites and any other foreign occupiers and interlopers, who pushed Israelites out of the city, will themselves be driven off. In effect all of Jerusalem, not just the temple area, will become a holy place where only righteous people, by reason of God's regulations of purity, are entitled to dwell (cf. Lev 21:11–23; Num 19:20)."²⁸ Bradford Anderson summarizes the concept in stating: "Obadiah uses a series of corresponding designations for Edom and Judah that draw on their shared history (Esau/Jacob) and their geography (Mount Esau and Mount Zion). Moreover, these juxtapositions depict a reversal of fortune for both these peoples; 'brother' Edom will be dispossessed and purged, while Judah and Jerusalem will be repossessed, and will be a place of refuge for YHWH's people."²⁹

Bob Spender captures the essence of this eschatological victory.

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Smith and Page, 199.

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See John D. Wineland, "Sepharad (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1089 for further discussion on the identification of Sepharad.

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Allen, 171.

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Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, vol. 31, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 420.

²⁹ Bradford Anderson, Poetic Justice in Obadiah, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Vol 35.2 (2010): 251.

“The message of Obadiah reminds us that the Lord is sovereign over all the earth, but it also reminds us that his plan for the future unfolds daily. For the believer this is centered in the person of God’s own Son. John records the announcement of the seventh angel in Revelation, who says, **“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He will reign forever and ever”** (Rev. 11:15). Yet we also understand from the author of the book of Hebrews that God’s plan for the future is still unfolding in that he writes, **“for in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him”** (Heb. 2:8). As believers we can affirm Obadiah’s message about the kingdom of the Lord, but we also can rejoice in the firmness of our present relationship in Christ.”³⁰

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Bob Spender, Obadiah: Accountability in Relationship, *Emmaus Journal*, 14, no.1 (Summer, 2005): 95.

Application

1 The Edomites violated Yahweh's covenant with Abraham and his descendants by murdering their cousins as they fled the invasion of Judea and Jerusalem. The violation of the Abrahamic Covenant is central to understanding God's dealing with Israel and other nations. The Israelites knew that those who bless Abraham are blessed, but the Edomites had cursed their brothers and so they were judged by God (Gen 12). The Israelites would have viewed the prophecy of Obadiah as Yahweh's righteous judgment. We must allow the LORD to judge even today. We need to treat our neighbors, co-workers, family, etc. in a loving way as God intends for us to do. We must love others with the love of Christ; even our enemies so that we might draw them to a saving knowledge of God (Mt. 5:43-44). We should also pray for the peace and evangelism of those living in Israel, both Jew and Gentile.

2 Esau despised his birthright and was an ungodly man. He passed down a godless, spiritual heritage to his children, and the result was a godless nation. The Edomites had rejected the wisdom of God for the wisdom of men. Israel was no better at times when it came to obeying the LORD. We must make Christ first in our lives, marriages, businesses, relationships, etc. so that our children will not only hear about God, but be shaped through seeing the model of Christ in us (Eph. 5-6).

3 The day of the Lord's judgment is drawing nearer on the nations. Israel had many prophets warn them of judgment, and in particular a final judgment of all of the nations. We must prepare ourselves to live with an all holy God. If we believe that Jesus died for our sins, and was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scripture, then we are saved (1 Cor.15). We must grow in Christ by reading God's Word, praying without ceasing, and fellowshiping with other believers in a local congregation. The endtimes will be a period of cultural degradation (2 Tim. 3). As Christians, we must the teachings of the Word of God knowing that all who desire to live godly will suffer persecution.

4 Obadiah prophesied of the restoration of Jerusalem. This would have been a source of great hope for the Israelites in his day. The collective voices of the Old Testament prophets promised of a day of revival and restoration. Jesus Christ will lead his people in a triumphal victory at His Second Coming. He will be accompanied by an angelic host and resurrected saints. Tribulation saints, who will be victorious over the Antichrist, will be resurrected; and then God's people will reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 19-20). We can embrace this same hope in the midst of the international crises that we face today.

5 The Edomites were arrogant and prideful. They attacked those whom they should have helped. The evil that the Edomites perpetuated came back on themselves. The Israelites understood the concept of divine justice returning evil for evil. We must be humble, gentle and compassionate people who return love for hatred and good for evil (1 Thess. 5:15).

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