



Week 28

Obadiah

Every Sunday evening at [Bible Explorer](#) we will explore the question

'What does this book from the Bible mean for us today?'

- Just 21 verses long it is shortest OT book.
- One of the least read prophetic books there is little information on the author or historical setting. Obadiah the prophet of Yahweh probably lived during 6th Century BCE and delivered his message in Jerusalem.
- It has a clear message of judgement against the people of Edom.
- Edom – land south of Dead Sea, surrounded by deserts to east and south and mountainous region to west. Small territory approximately 70 miles north/south and 15 east/west.

Fraternal relationship between Israel and Edom

Edom – Esau)

) brothers that struggled with one another even before they were born

Israel – Jacob)

Several passages in OT indicate a continuing and struggling fraternal relationship between Israel and Edom (the countries):

- Genesis 25;27;36;
- Num 20:14-21 (²¹ Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned away from them.);
- Deut 2:4-8; 23:7 (⁷ Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother)
- 1 Sam 14:47 (Saul fought against enemies on every side and lists Edom)
- 2 Sam 8:14 (David put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David)



Week 28

Obadiah

Obadiah's message is primarily one of judgement for Edom and hope for the community of Yahweh.

Divine justice – Edom had been involved in the plunder of Jerusalem therefore judgement would come. It was a betrayal of Judah and offense against God.

The Day of the Lord- God can and will intervene to defeat the enemies of his people. It is about judgment and destruction of those enemies as well as victory and salvation for God's people.

The Lord of History- God can and will intervene in history. His apparent absence from protecting his people when the Babylonians and Edomites brought about their downfall was not through inability to act; The God of Israel was not therefore defeated and will judge those who caused such devastation on his people. The destruction of Edom will not be a random event but the righteous action of the God of History.

The Kingdom of the Lord – the people's future will be transformed. Divine intervention will restore the order and liberate God's people.

So how does this relate to us today?

1. The relationship struggle between Israel and Edom had been going on for many years. Living alongside others and having family relationship with one another does not mean we necessarily see things the same way.
 - **When we look at the relationship between ourselves and those we live alongside can we see similarities with the struggles between Edom and Israel?**

Pray

Ask God to show you what you can do to as an individual to improve your relationships with those living near to you. Ask God to reveal to us, his church, how to draw alongside our neighbours so that we might work together for our community.

St Paul's Dorking

Exploring the Bible Together!

2. God saw what the Edomites did to his people; that they chose not to help them in their time of need and persecution. Their lack of sympathy was compounded by a betrayal of their brothers as they too plundered and ransacked the land.

- **Who do we chose not to help (or perhaps fail to notice needing help) in their time of need and persecution?**
- **What do we plunder and ransack in the name of "trade and commerce"?**
- **If we are not to be like Edom how should we respond to those who are persecuted? ... living in poverty? ...homeless? ...simply different to us?**

Pray

Ask God to forgive us when we fail to see the difficulties others are facing or when we simply do nothing in response to a problem because we feel it is not our responsibility or it is just too large for us to manage. Pray that our eyes and hearts will be open to respond to others in their suffering and that we will be able to consider the consequences of our actions (the food we eat/ the clothes we wear/the distances we travel etc) as we live out our lives. As we accept our birth right as a child of God ask Jesus to remind us of our responsibilities to our brothers and sisters.

3. Hope – that God is with his people and can and will intervene. We do not journey through life alone; God sees the injustice and will respond.

- **We are God's church and as such are part of that intervention, part of that hope for justice and restoration. We can look around us at our brothers and sisters (both locally and the global village) and can make changes to show solidarity with one another, to transform lives and bring hope to a generation of people who have no knowledge of God's love for them.**

Pray

Ask God to direct us in what we can do show those living in despair and without hope that there is a purpose and place for them that is not just for today but for a future that is rooted in love.

4. Obadiah ends on a message of hope – "And the Kingdom will be the Lord's". Persecution and injustice will be a thing of the past. That is a positive and uplifting message for those who are downtrodden and overlooked. It doesn't have to be for the few but is a message of love for all God's creation.

Pray

Ask that God's will be done on earth and for the restoration of His creation values. One day everything will be restored but in the meantime ask that we might seek to live out our lives in the understanding that the Kingdom is the Lord's.