

**The Kingdom Will Be the Lord's**  
**Obadiah 15-21**  
**ABC 11/24/19**

I trust our time in Obadiah has been profitable for you as we finish it today. As we all now know, Obadiah was a prophet who prophesied against the country of Edom. Their roots are traced back to Esau who was the older twin brother of Jacob. Esau hated Jacob because Jacob stole his birthright from him. The nation of Israel's roots are traced back to Jacob. This animosity between Esau & Jacob continued with a hatred between the Edomites & the Israelites. Edom's basic problem was pride, as it is with all of us. Obadiah 3 tells us their arrogance had deceived them. Because of their location in the cliffs & lofty perches, they thought they were unconquerable. They welled up with pride & said, **Who can bring us down?** God took up the challenge & said, **I will bring you down** (3-4). In vss 5-9 we're told Edom was also proud of their wealth, alliances, & wisdom. In vss 10-14, we're told of what their pride led them to do: Violence to the Jews. In their pride & hatred of Israel, they stood by & did nothing as they saw Jerusalem being destroyed, probably by the Babylonian armies in 587 BC. The Edomites went further & rejoiced & gloated in Judah's fall. They then entered the city & looted Jerusalem of what the Babylonians didn't take. But they didn't stop there. Jews fleeing were stopped by the Edomites & returned to the Babylonians or killed. Last week we looked at **the day of the Lord** (15a) & saw Obadiah's prophecy, as many OT prophecies, has a near & far fulfillment. **The day of the Lord** can refer to when God judges a nation in the here & now. But it can also have a future & universal aspect. Every judgment of God on a nation is a forerunner of & a guarantee of the great day of judgment at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ. Even though Obadiah's prophecy is directed primarily against Edom, the prophet declares that **the day of the Lord is near for all nations**. The day is coming when God will judge everyone. Edom was about to experience a judgment from God. **The day of the Lord** was upon them. But Obadiah, with a telescopic lens, looks down through history to that final **day of the Lord** when Jesus returns. Edom's **day of the Lord** foreshadows the great **day of the Lord**. **15-**

**21 PRAY**

Having made his accusation & having proven its validity, Obadiah goes on to declare the judgment of God. It wasn't based on whim or chance. It would be according to God's strict & right justice. The unchanging principle of judgment is, as you've treated others, you shall be treated.

### **15b**

This is a NT principle as well. **A man reaps what he sows.** God's judgments on Edom corresponded to its crimes. What they had done to Judah would be done to them. Edom had plundered Jerusalem, so God would plunder them (6, 13). Edom had betrayed Israel, likewise Edom's allies would betray them (7, 10). Edom was lifted up in pride but God would bring them low (3-4). God's judgment is such that He'd reverse the fortunes of Edom & Israel. He would lift up Israel where Edom had brought them low. & Edom would be brought low where they had been made high at the expense of God's people. **16**

Who is this referring to? At 1<sup>st</sup> glance, you think Edom. But there's a shift here in Hebrew grammar which makes it appear he's talking to Judah at this point.<sup>1</sup> This must have come as a surprise when they realized they, the people of God, are the ones now addressed. To find oneself the topic of conversation in the middle of a condemnation of the enemy must have startled them. Obadiah makes a comparison between Judah, who had already drunk of God's judgment, & all of the nations, who will drink. Obadiah is assuring the Jews that though the sufferings to which they'd been through were great, still greater punishment would be inflicted upon the hostile nations. Judah experienced the cup of God's wrath temporarily, but Edom & the nations **will drink continually.** There's a fuller description of this cup in Jeremiah (25:15-32) where he speaks of the judgment that will come against Judah & lead to her 70 years of captivity in Babylon, but he also makes the point that the judgment will not be restricted to Judah, it will be much more widespread. It will be a universal judgment for **all have sinned & fallen short of the glory of God** (Rom 3:23). As Judah experienced God's wrath against them through Babylon, so would Edom & all nations. The imagery is that God's cup of wrath is being poured continually down their throat, the idea of gulping down the wrath of God's vengeance with the sense of

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<sup>1</sup> David W Baker, *NIV Application Commentary: Joel, Obadiah, Malachi*, pp 189-191. Irvin A Busenitz, *Joel & Obadiah*, pp 271-274

having to drink without stopping. God's justice will be giving these nations what they rightly deserve. Edom's judgment seems to have come in stages. It was conquered by the Babylonians in 582 BC & from that time the nation was on the wane. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, they were overran by the Nabateans. Then about 120 BC, the Edomites were forced into Judaism by the Maccabees. & in 70 AD, the Edomites were wiped out, along with Jerusalem, by the Roman army under General Titus. From that time on they've ceased to exist as a nation, as a people. While judgment has fallen upon the Jews, by God's grace, they'll ultimately be restored. In vss 17-21 we see a number of God's blessings on His chosen people.

### 1. A Delivered People 17

Obadiah contrasts the judgment of Edom with the blessings of Israel. The **but** must have been music to the ears of the Israelites who at that moment were suffering as they saw Babylon's army on the march & the certain doom of Jerusalem. This prophecy would give hope to them as they were going into captivity for 70 years in Babylon because of their disobedience to God.

The substance of Obadiah's promises are also promises for those who are members of Christ's spiritual body, the church. There are 3 main emphases, all in vs 17.

1<sup>st</sup>, Obadiah promises that **the day of the Lord** will mean deliverance for God's people. Deliverance from what? In the case of Israel, this means a deliverance from her earthly enemies, like Edom & Babylon. There will be a return from exile & a re-establishment of worship in Jerusalem. (We see this in Ezra & Nehemiah.) **The day of the Lord** is coming but it won't touch a significant group of people & they will reach Mt Zion safely. He speaks of the remnant that shall come through the time of the great tribulation & shall be given the kingdom promised them in the OT. In an even greater sense, we have a promise that God's people, & that includes you & me, will be delivered from the bondage of sin by the Lord Jesus Christ. In a sense, we've already been delivered from sin. The moment we believed we were justified & the penalty of sin was forever taken from us. When we believed the Holy Spirit took up residence in us & delivered us from the power of sin. Before He came we could do nothing pleasing in God's sight (Rom 14:23). Now that we've been saved & indwelt by the Holy Spirit we've been set free to begin to do God's

will. We aren't perfect but we're on the road of sanctification & while we aren't yet what we will be, we aren't what we once were.

This is where the 2<sup>nd</sup> promise of Obadiah comes in. Obadiah speaks of a day when Mount Zion **will be holy**. We aren't holy, & **without holiness no one will see the Lord** (Heb 12:14, NIV). & there's nothing we can do. But God will do what needs to be done. He'll make us holy, little-by-little now & perfectly later on when we're taken out of this life into eternity. You can think of it this way: We're on the road of sanctification & that road leads to glorification, to a holiness full & complete & suitable for inhabitants of His kingdom. Frank Gaebelin comments,

*These are weighty words, because they show exactly why human efforts alone will never bring in the kingdom. For an essential element of that promised reign of worldwide peace & righteousness is holiness. & holiness is the one thing no man apart from Christ possesses. Let us not be deluded, no, not even by the idealism of our time. Christless peace conferences will never abolish war. No United Nations will bring in the kingdom without the King. The one essential element of holiness will be lacking. Had Obadiah written nothing but these five words, his prophecy would be immortal.<sup>2</sup>*

3<sup>rd</sup>, Obadiah promises that the future **day of the Lord**, which is judgment for Edom & the nations, will be a day of deliverance for God's people: **17c**

What does that mean? It means they will enter into the personal experience of the things that are theirs by God's Word. Which is a great practical application for us to possess our possessions. We've been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3). The whole story of our sanctification is the experience of possessing these possessions that are ours by virtue of what Jesus has done for us. This speaks of the sufficiency of God for Israel. When we read **the house of Jacob will possess their possessions** we aren't to think that **the house of Jacob** is reference to the Church of Jesus Christ. We can make an application of that expression, **possess their possessions**, but the text of Scripture says **the house of Jacob will possess their possessions**. That's not us. It's not saved Gentiles. It's not the Christian church. **The house of Jacob** is the nation Israel, to whom the great promises of the OT were made. **It's the house of Jacob** that shall **possess the possessions**. We don't read the Bible correctly if we look at this & read we will have these blessings. We may make an application because God deals with Israel in a similar way as

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<sup>2</sup> *Four Minor Prophets*, p 39

He deals with us. But it's **the house of Jacob that will possess their possessions**. What are their possessions? It certainly includes the land God promised them, a throne, & a worldwide kingdom. They will have their land. They will have their kingdom. They will have their throne. David's Descendant shall sit upon the throne. Who is this? Jesus, David's greater Son. Robert Lewis Stevenson isn't known for his biblical knowledge but in his latter years he studied the Scriptures. He made an interesting statement which was recorded by a missionary who was on one of the islands in the Pacific with Stevenson in his last days. He said this,

*I cannot understand how you theologians & preachers can apply to the church, or the multiplicity of churches, Scripture promises which, in their plain meaning, must apply to God's chosen people Israel, & to Palestine; & which, consequently, must be still future... The prophetic books are full of teachings which, if they are interpreted literally, would be inspiring, & a magnificent assurance of a great & glorious future; but which, as they spiritualized, become farcical—as applied to the church, they are a comedy.<sup>3</sup>*

When we read here, **on Mount Zion there will be those who escape & it will holy. & the house of Jacob will possess their possessions**, we're to understand this as a great & glorious prophecy of Israel & her great future. It reminds me Paul & Rom 9-11 where he agonizes over his people's rejection of Jesus. He writes,

**I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow & unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (9:1-4a).**

He speaks of his **heart's desire & his prayer to God for the Israelites is for their salvation (10:1)**. As he ponders this he concludes that the hardening that Israel has experienced is for the sake of the Gentiles because when Israel was hardened the gospel came to us. As he ponders these things he sees that when the full number of the Gentiles has come into the kingdom by God's mercy, **all Israel will be saved (11:26)**. Quoting Isaiah, Paul says, **The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins (11:26-27)**. As there will be restoration for the Jews, so there will be restoration for us, because we have an inheritance too. Here's Gaebelein again speaking about our inheritance:

*No people on earth have greater potential possessions than Christian believers... To them God has promised the supply of every need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus & for them*

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel James Whitmee, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol 131, p 348

*He makes everything work together for good. Moreover, Christians have in the Bible the full revelation of God. They have dwelling in their hearts the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. But how few of us even begin to enter into this heritage... When it comes to some of the choicest treasures of our faith, we simply do not possess our possessions. We repeat the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, for instance, & say to ourselves that it is marvelous to think of the Lord's being our Shepherd. But difficulty & trouble come, & we worry. What we have been doing with God's truth is merely to admire it. We have not possessed to the extent of putting it to full use by unwavering trust.<sup>4</sup>*

In the middle of a storm Jesus asked His frightened disciples, **Where is your faith?** (Lk 8:25). He wasn't saying they didn't have faith. He was asking why they weren't putting the faith they had to use. The next time you're worrying about something, think of your inheritance in Christ. Your sins are forgiven. New life has been given. The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in your life. Jesus is interceding for you at the right hand of the Father & God is using all things for your good & to your ultimate blessing. Remember you're a child of a King & not just any king but an Almighty King who is a loving heavenly Father to you. Meditate on that & then think about your worries. How do they compare? Step out in faith, with a heart of good cheer. Possess your possessions!

To the Jews who were hearing Obadiah's prophecy, they understood this prophecy was for them & their generation. While they'd be carried into captivity, they would return, Jerusalem would be delivered & set apart once again to God & Israel would possess its inheritance. Every Jew knew the ultimate boundaries of the promised land given by God to the Jews. **On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land—from the river of Egypt to the great River Euphrates"** (Gen 15:18-21). The land was to extend from the Nile to the Euphrates, which, as far as we know, Israel has never fully possessed. God is still promising them that land here in Obadiah. The Jews who heard this prophecy must have been encouraged that one day they'd return to the land & would possess it as it was promised to Abraham. These Jews returned 70 years later under the leadership of Ezra & Nehemiah, & the nation stayed on the land until 70 AD. But they never achieved the original dimension of the land. That day is still future.

## **2. A Victorious People 18**

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<sup>4</sup> *Four Minor Prophets*, p 41

The prophecy says that **the house of Jacob** (Judah of the southern kingdom) & **the house of Joseph** (Israel of the northern kingdom) will be united & together they'll burn the stubble of the house of Esau, destroying it. **Fire & flame** consume stubble completely. When did this happen? In the near view, it occurred when the Maccabees in 120 BC conquered the Edomites, the descendents of Esau. Yet, the Maccabees never totally conquered & occupied the land of the Edomites. Therefore, it seems there's a partial fulfillment seen in history & a complete realization yet future. How do we know all this will happen? **For the Lord has spoken.** Enough said.

### 3. A Conquering People 19-20

Obadiah gives a prediction on the territories to be restored to Israel. This territory will include the Mt of Edom, Shephelah, the Philistine plain, Ephraim, Samaria, Gilead, Zarephath, Sepharad, Negev. The important thing to note is this territory includes **the mountain of Esau** (Edom). The Jews have never really occupied this territory in history & today it's part of Jordan. When will Israel get this land? In the Messianic Kingdom to be established on this earth by Jesus at His 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. There's a lot of geography listed here as it talks about this restored kingdom. This serves 2 main points. 1<sup>st</sup>, there are geographical references to the remnant of God's people. The remnant of exiles who were originally from Jerusalem but ended up in exile in a variety of places will eventually come back & retake the land. The point is that part of the geographical references here tells us how God would gather up His people from wherever they're scattered among the nations & bring them back together in a restored kingdom. That was God's promise & prophecy from all the way back in Dt 30:1-4, long before the exile, & it's restated now as the people go into exile. The other point is it shows how far reaching & expansive this restored kingdom will be. The geographical references push every direction of the compass. The south is specifically mentioned & even how they'll push to the southeast to the territory of Edom. The lowlands of Philistia are to the southwest. References to Ephraim & Samaria represent the central area of the Promised Land. For Benjamin to possess Gilead is to go to Transjordan to the east. & to take the land as far as Zarephath is a reference to the north. North, south, east, & west, the Promised Land will be retaken. Obadiah pictures a new conquest when God's kingdom would be restored

to a glorious extent. & the center of that kingdom will be holy Mt Zion, Jerusalem. What's of primary importance here isn't the starting point of the exiles but their destination as returnees. They come back to the land promised to Abraham by God. When & how does this new conquest get fulfilled? Though there was an initial return from Babylonian exile among the Jews, such a glorious kingdom wasn't obtained at that time. Obadiah isn't the only prophet to prophesy this, & they all prophesied of a very glorious restoration. That's why when the NT begins that's the question on the Jews' mind. When will God keep His promise to bring this kingdom? When both John the Baptist & Jesus begin their ministry announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand, many were excited & hopeful. Many thought prophecies like Obadiah's were about to be fulfilled in an earthly sense. They thought the Messiah, a Savior would come, that would lead them in a glorious conquest of their Promised Land. But the restored kingdom that Jesus would reign over would be far more glorious than the prophets ever imagined (1 Pt 1:10). As the NT shows, the promises of a restored kingdom look beyond this age to the one to come. They look to Christ's return when He'll bring the real, heavenly Mt Zion down out of heaven & establish it upon a new creation where righteousness dwells. That will be the final **day of the Lord** when Christ judges all the nations & pours out the cup of His wrath upon them. At the end, only God's people will possess the new earth. The ultimate fulfillment will be far more glorious than just ethnic Israel securing a relatively small plot of land in the middle east. It looks to an awesome kingdom made up of both Jews & Gentiles united together through faith & salvation in Jesus Christ. In this kingdom, God's people will inherit the whole earth in the new creation, & **the kingdom shall be the Lord's**. But this promised kingdom isn't something just for the future. Jesus inaugurated this kingdom at His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent & is seen on earth in Christians living for Him. In His decisive victory over sin, death, & Satan at the cross, Jesus purchased all the people who will be a part of this kingdom. God's people go forth with the spiritual sword of God's Word to do spiritual battle among the nations. Our job is to conquer by conversion. The church overtakes her enemies not by violence but by winning them to Christ with the gospel. As people are saved, there is no longer Jew, Greek, or Edomite. We go & make disciples among the nations. Yes, when Jesus



comes back, He'll conquer the rest by judgment & God's wrath will be poured out in full measure. But this 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the new & final conquest is to conquer by conversion with the gospel of salvation. The good news of Jesus saves people from the wrath of God to come by making them citizens in this glorious prophesied kingdom.

#### **4. A Ruling People 21ab**

In the near view, **deliverers** like Ezra, Zerrubbabel, Nehemiah & Judas Maccabee came on the scene of history to help the Israelites return to the land after the Babylonian captivity. Yet, in the Messianic kingdom, Edom will be governed by rulers, saviors, **deliverers** in Israel who know & love the Lord Jesus Christ, but this is ultimately a reference to Jesus Himself. Jesus is the ultimate Deliverer of all **deliverers**. God's kingdom rule would be present in Jerusalem in a limited sense under the Maccabees & others, & the people would at least give lip service to the coming Messiah. But Obadiah skips ahead & looks down to the end time when the Lord Jesus Christ will establish His kingdom on earth.

**The LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, & His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise & remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, & from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. People will live in it, & there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security (Zech 14:9-11).**

There's a time coming when Jesus will make all the kingdoms of the world His. As Revelation says, **The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord & of His Christ; & He will reign forever & ever (11:15).** When Christ has completed His earthly, Messianic reign, He'll hand His kingdom over to God the Father & the eternal state will begin. 1 Cor 15:24 says, **then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God & Father, when He has abolished all rule & all authority & power.** The brief prophecy of Obadiah ends on this high note.

**5. A Kingdom People** The Edomites seemed to have their day against God's people but at the end of it all, **the kingdom shall be the LORD's.** This note of encouragement may be the central purpose for this prophecy of Obadiah. He tells all God's people: *Don't worry about those who ignore your need, those who rejoice at your problems, those who take advantage of your crises,*

*those who join their hands with others in attacking you. I will take care of them. The kingdom is Mine. I am the King!*

We read in Hebrews, **It is appointed for men to die once & after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him (9:27-28).** The Bible also says, **There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).** The only way to escape the horrors of eternal judgment is to flee to Jesus, trusting in Him alone to save you. Obadiah's words merely underscore what the NT teaches about God's judgment. **"VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY."** & again, **"THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:30-31). People can still be saved from the coming final day of judgment, if they turn to Jesus in faith & repentance. That's because on the cross Jesus took such horrible & terrible judgment upon Himself in the place of all sinners who look to Him for forgiveness & grace. Remember, Jesus spoke in Mk 10:38 of the cup of God's wrath that He'd have to drink in order to bring the promised salvation. Yet, we praise God that as Jesus endured on that cross the wrath of God, He endured it & overcame. He wasn't destroyed & left as stubble. By the power of the Spirit, & in vindication as the righteous one of the Lord, He rose in victory on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. That's the only hope for all people. Judgment is surely coming. **The day of the Lord** is coming. It will be a day of judgment & a day of deliverance. There will be a cup of wrath for those who've rejected Jesus & a cup of blessing for those who know & love Him. Because Jesus drained the cup of God's wrath at Calvary He opened up the way for us into God's eternal kingdom. If you are not yet a believer, God is inviting you to believe in Him today. Run to Mount Zion for salvation. Run to Jesus. In Isaiah 63 there's a dramatic scene in which a blood-stained divine warrior comes marching up the Kidron Valley toward Jerusalem, & the cry goes out: **Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength?** The warrior answers, **It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.** The prophet, watching from the walls of the city, still has this question: **Why is Your apparel red, & Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?** The traveler

answers, **I have trodden the wine trough alone, & from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger & trampled them in My wrath; & their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, & I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, & My year of redemption has come (1-4).** Who is this warrior? He's none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, returning to Jerusalem in the day of His wrath after having subdued the nations as Obadiah foretold. He is the great **I am**, speaking in righteousness (Is 63:1). He is Judge & Savior. The time is coming when God is going to sort things out & punish unrighteousness. In this world the ungodly often seem to flourish & the godly are afflicted. But God says in the ultimate working of His plan the ungodly are going to be punished. **The Day of the Lord** will come upon them while those who are His people will be lifted up & blessed in Jesus Christ. Since **the day of the Lord** has not yet come, it's so God might show grace to more people. In Peter's day skeptics were saying that because things seemed to continue as they've always been, there is no judgment. But Peter answered, **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Pt 3:9).** God is delaying the ultimate working out of His judgment until those whom He called to faith in Jesus do come. This is the day of His grace. If you aren't a believer in Christ, God tells you to believe in Him now. If you are a believer, then do as Israel will do & possess your great possessions.<sup>5</sup> **21c**

300 years later, Zechariah says that when Jesus returns to set up His millennial kingdom, **the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, & His name the only one (14:9).** Obadiah's prophecy speaks of God's great love for His covenant people & His sovereign intervention into the affairs of human history on behalf of His people so that He might rule over all the nations. The closing phrase reflects the certainty of Rev 11:15: **The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord & of His Christ; & He will reign forever & ever.** Be thankful, this week & always, that **the kingdom** is not American politics or any other government. No, be grateful that **the kingdom is the Lords!**

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<sup>5</sup> Conclusion adapted from Boice, J. M., *The Minor Prophets*, pp 257–258