

Obadiah

The Argument

This short prophecy will not need any long prefatory argument. He concealeth his nation, family, and place of his birth and abode, which he would not have done had it much concerned us to know, or would it have added any thing material to the authority and efficacy of his word. Yet perhaps we should be thought too slight, if we did not tell you, that some thought him to be a proselyted Edomite, filled with the prophetic Spirit, that he might be sent to declare God's judgments against Edom; but this suggestion will no more prove him an Idumean, than it will prove Jonah or Nahum to be proselyted Assyrians; or Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to be of so many different countries, because they prophesied against so many different nations. Some others will have him the same that was great with Ahab, but greater with God, hiding and feeding his prophets by fifty in a cave. But this is too early for this prophet, as is noted in the annotations. And that he was captain of the band of fifty whom, on his request, Elijah spared; or that he was one of those sent by Jehoshaphat, [2Ch 17:7](#), to instruct the Jews, as is said by some; hath more against than can be said for it. But it is certain he was a prophet sent of God, and that his diligence and faithfulness answered his name, *Obadiah*, i.e. *the servant of the Lord*, whose message he delivered, though we are not certain when, in what king's reign, or what prophets he was contemporary with: some guess he was contemporary with Jeremiah, and they think the 37th and 39th chapters, besides [La 4:21](#), afford arguments to prove it; but if they did not live in the same time, they preached the same things against Edom, which were in due time fulfilled, though we cannot precisely define the time. It is indisputable, that Edom's cruelty, perfidiousness, pride, and rapine against Jacob were the principal causes of this Divine anger against Edom, and yet it admits some dispute when it was Edom did so barbarously lay wait for, cut off, or deliver up the fleeing Jews, whether when Shishak spoiled Jerusalem, or when Nebuchadnezzar sacked it and led the citizens captives. I rather think it had been a constant course observed by Edom to run in with all that invaded Judea, whether Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, or Chaldeans, who were cruel enough, but yet Edom was more cruel; for this cause our prophet both threatens punishments upon them, and warns them of their approaching ruin. Some think the prophet warns Edom that they should not do what is here specified; I think he threatens because they had done it. In brief, the accommodating the particulars of this prophecy to their particular times and persons concerned, as it requires some good diligence and skill, so it will ever leave room for modesty towards those that it is likely will differ from us in accommodating them. Edom, type of all the church's enemies, shall be destroyed, and Christ's kingdom shall be set up; as Obadiah foretells, the church believeth, and so shouldst thou, reader.

Chapter 1

The destruction of Edom, [Ob 1:1-2](#), for their pride, [Ob 1:3-9](#), and for their unnatural behaviour in Jacob's distress, [Ob 1:10-16](#). The salvation and victories of Jacob, [Ob 1:17-21](#).

[Ob 1:1](#)

The vision, which the prophet received immediately from the Lord; so prophets are called seers, [1Sa 9:9](#); [Am 7:12](#); and their prophecy is vision, [Isa 1:1](#); [Joe 2:28](#).

Of Obadiah: who this was appears not on any certainty, or when he prophesied. That it was not Obadiah who hid and fed the prophets of the Lord in Ahab's time is evident, for that the prophet doth threaten Edom for their cruelty against Jerusalem in the day it was taken and sacked, which was three hundred and thirty or forty years after Ahab's time; he began to reign about A.M. 3025, and Jerusalem was sacked about 3363. His name speaks a servant or a worshipper of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God: this includes his authority, the certainty of the things he speaks of concerning Edom, or against Edom; both people and country are so called from their progenitor or founder, Esau, called Edom, [Ge 25:30](#). This country is called Idumea, [Isa 34:5-6](#); [Eze 35:15](#), which see; it was a part of Arabia Petrea.

We have heard; other prophets, as I, have heard this news to tell to Edom, or to send to them, [Isa 11:14](#); [Jer 27:3](#); [Joe 3:19](#); [Am 1:12](#).

A rumour; not an uncertain and vain report, but it comes from God by his prophets.

An ambassador, a herald, or muster-master, who should gather forces together for this expedition, is sent, by the Lord first, and next by Nebuchadnezzar, who executed on Edom what is here foretold. God stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar to make war on Edom, which was (as well as other nations) given up to Nebuchadnezzar, [Jer 27:3](#), [6](#).

Among the heathen, or nations, both those that were confederate with or subject to Nebuchadnezzar, whom all nations served, [Jer 27:6-7](#).

Arise ye: this is a summons to them from Nebuchadnezzar, that they send in their proportions of soldiers.

Let us rise up against her in battle: this seems the voice of soldiers willing to and desirous of the war.

[Ob 1:2](#)

Behold, ye Edomites, lay it to heart, and consider it well; be not secure amidst such dangers.

I have made thee small; thou art a small people for number, thy land mountainous, rocky, and barren, and it is little that which is of it, situate very incommodiously for any trade, which makes people great and famous; a country titled for moss-troopers, or banditti; and as such outlaws and robbers, thou art proud, and promisest great things to thyself.

Among the heathen, in comparison with other nations.

Thou art greatly despised, by those that do hear of thee, who know thy situation, government, manner of life, and what thy forces are, and how usually employed. Whatever these Edomites had been, now they are despised, and ere long should be more despicable, when, as [Jer 49:20](#), the least of Nebuchadnezzar's army should pull them out of their caves, houses, and strong holds.

[Ob 1:3](#)

The pride of thy heart: the Edomites were, as most mountaineers are, a rough, hardy, and daring people; necessitated sometimes to extraordinary adventures, and many times succeeded in attempts which others would not venture upon; hence they did swell in pride and confidence, and their hearts were bigger than their achievements, and they proud above measure.

Hath deceived thee; magnifying thy strength above what really it is.

Thou, people of Edom, that dwellest in the clefts of the rock; houses, fortresses, towns, and cities, built upon inaccessible rocks, which neither could be undermined nor scaled. Or: dwellest in dark deep, and unsearchable caves amidst the rocks.

That saith in his heart; who think with themselves, and are upon report of an invasion ready to say, *Who shalt bring me down to the ground?* it is not possible for armies to approach to us, nor bring their engines to shake or batter our walls. *Who shall?* i.e. none can.

[Ob 1:4](#)

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle: Edom boasted of his strength from the height of the rocks he dwelt on, [Ob 1:3](#), but here he is answered, if he could build his nest as the eagles, which build and fly much higher than any other bird, neither the height of the nest should save the young ones, nor the height of his flight save the old one.

Though thou set thy nest among the stars; nay yet, in a more lofty strain, suppose you could lodge your brood among the stars for safety, and there fly above the reach of man, yet should you not be out of the reach of danger.

Thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord; God who is in the heavens would throw thee down; when men could not marshal armies against thee, stars should fight in their courses against thee. Nothing can stand which God will cast down. See [Jer 49:16-17](#).

[Ob 1:5](#)

In this verse the prophet doth in an abrupt manner of speech, mixed of wonder and doubt, express the strange havoc and desolation made in Edom, as if he had said, Who have been here? or in what posture wast thou found, O Edom! that such strange desolation is found in thee?

If thieves by day had spoiled thee, they would not have thus stripped thee. *If robbers*, which practise their violences in the night, had been with thee, they would have left somewhat behind them.

How art thou cut off? here is either a trajection, this placed here which must be read first in the verse, or an exclamation of one as in haste to know whence such unexpected events; or an insulting derision of that pride which boasted so much and performed so little in self defence.

Would they not have stolen till they had enough? thieves and robbers take till they have what is sufficient for them at present and leave the rest, but here is nothing left.

If the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes? if Edom be a vine, and gathered, some gleanings would be left by grape-gatherers; but, alas, here have been those that have cut up the vine! and is all thy confidence and boasting come to this?

[Ob 1:6](#)

Esau; the father of this people, and here put for his posterity. All that the Edomites had laid up in the most secret places, in unsearchable caves, and deep abysses of hollow rocks, how are all his treasures found out, seized, and brought forth a prey to greedy soldiers! How durst they adventure here?

[Ob 1:7](#)

All the men of thy confederacy; they who by league had bound themselves to assist with men and arms, who had made an offensive and defensive league.

Have brought thee even to the border; either have conducted in honourable manner through their country the ambassadors thou didst send, concluded first a confederacy, and next conveyed home the ambassadors who made it; or else have counselled thee to meet the war before it entereth thy country, and have marched as confederates with thee until thou weft come to the borders of thy country, as if they would there fight for thee against the enemy.

The men that were at peace with thee: this is ingemination, or repeating of the same thing before mentioned, unless *men of thy peace* be men that did make peace, and accept the terms thou didst propose for thy advantage.

Have deceived thee; proved treacherous, nay, designed to betray thee.

Prevailed against thee; either thus their plot took, or else they turned to the enemy, and under his colours destroyed thee.

They that eat thy bread; thy friends, those thou hast maintained, the soldiers thou keptest in pay.

Have laid a wound under thee; have laid a snare, armed with some sharp and piercing instrument, that wounds as soon as thou fallest on the snare.

There is none understanding in him; either no prudence to foresee and prevent this, or to manage and lessen it.

[Ob 1:8](#)

Shall I not? this interrogation is a strong assertion, I certainly will.

In that day, of war and desolation of Edom, when Nebuchadnezzar with his armies shall invade Idumea.

Destroy; either by war or sicknesses take the wise men out of Edom, they shall die; or deprive them of places of trust where they might help to save Edom; or else turn their wisdom into foolishness, as Ahithophel's was.

The wise men; men of sound counsel and good conduct in the affairs of peace and war.

And understanding out of the mount of Esau; an elegant ingemination for illustrating and confirming the prediction. All Edom shall miserably perish, not a wise man left to foresee and prevent it.

[Ob 1:9](#)

Mighty men; valiant commanders and soldiers, who were never blemished with cowardice, who formerly durst adventure on greatest dangers and encounter most formidable enemies, and were never daunted with a slow-approaching enemy, how much soever over number to them, nor with any sudden surprising accidents; men of invincible courage, and most ready minds.

Teman; a principal city and munition of Idumea. See [Eze 25:13](#); [Hab 3:3](#); [Am 1:12](#).

Dismayed; astonished and surprised with such fear as disableth from action and counsel, shall neither dare to resist, nor hope to escape, but tamely give up all to the enemy.

To the end that every one may be cut off by slaughter; thus all shall be exposed to slaughter when they dare not fight, who should have saved themselves and defended others. Deplorable is their condition, who, surrounded every way with enemies, have neither strength nor counsel to resist their power or defeat their malice!

[Ob 1:10](#)

For thy violence; though Idumeans were guilty of many other and great sins, they are here charged with this as the great crying sin, inhuman cruelty and perfidiousness; they did mercilessly spoil and basely betray the Jews, which will be particularly mentioned in the following verses. Against thy brother: Edomites, the posterity of Esau, and the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, are here called brothers, for that the fathers of both people were brothers, twins; and this nearness of blood should have been remembered, and kindness should have still run through the blood and kindred. It is a great sin to be cruel and false to any, but greatest sin to be so to a brother. *Jacob;* put for his children.

Shame shall cover thee; contempt and reproaches shall by all men be cast upon thee, and cover thee as a garment, or swallow thee up. God and man shall pour shame upon thee, thy memory shall be retained with condemnation to shame, and thy end shall be in shame too.

Thou shalt be cut off for ever; never more be a nation or kingdom; which was in a very great degree fulfilled in the cutting them off by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar. See [Isa 34:5, 10](#); [Eze 35:9](#), threatens the like desolation.

[Ob 1:11](#)

In the day; during the war which the Babylonians made upon Judea, or in the day of battle when Jews fought with Chaldeans.

That thou stoodest on the other side; tookest up thy stand over-right them, observing with delight how they were worsted, slaughtered. and routed; or didst set thyself in battle-array

against thy brother Jacob. The strangers; the Babylonians. and the mixed nations which joined with them.

Carried away captive; first mastered the Jews, and then made them captives. and sent them away out of their own land, a sight which should have moved compassions in thee.

His forces; his strength, his troops, or multitudes that survived and were taken, and their wealth and riches too.

Foreigners entered into his gates; that invaded, slew the inhabitants, and forced the besieged places to open their gates; or took the fortresses by assault.

Cast lots; so robbers divided their prey, and conquerors, [Pr 1:14](#); [Joe 3:3](#), which see.

Upon Jerusalem; upon the citizens and their goods, which were found in Jerusalem when it was taken by the Chaldeans.

Even thou, a neighbour, who wast not molested by Israel when they marched through other nations from Egypt to Canaan, who wast a brother by descent, [Ob 1:10](#), *wast as one of them*, as merciless and insolent as any of those barbarous foreigners.

[Ob 1:12](#)

Thou shouldest not have looked with secret joy and satisfaction to thy eyes and mind; if thou wouldst have looked, it should have been with tears and grief, not with joy and gladness at the sight: so the word, [Ps 37:1-40](#); [44:7](#); [Pr 29:16](#).

On the day; on the affliction and sad misery which fell upon thy brother Jacob; so *day* in Scripture, thus absolutely put, doth often signify, [Ps 37:13](#); [Mic 7:4](#).

Became a stranger; having by the misery of war been made a captive, and lost his former right and liberty in his own country, was now looked upon as a stranger, i.e. one who had no more right to any thing in the land.

Neither shouldest thou have rejoiced: this explains the former.

Children of Judah: this expounds brother.

The day of their destruction: this tells us what day meant.

Neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly, vaunting over the Jews, insolently upbraiding and reproaching them with virulent words and exulcerated malice, *in the day of distress*, when Jerusalem was taken.

[Ob 1:13](#)

Thou shouldest not have entered, as an enemy, a conqueror, into the gate; by synecdoche, city is meant by gate. The Edomites warring among the Babylonians, did with them enter the gates of conquered Jerusalem, appeared a proud, insulting enemy of Judah.

My people; thou shouldst have remembered that the Jews thy brethren were my people, my peculiar people.

In the day of their calamity; when their city was broken up, their king imprisoned, and captive with his nobles and other subjects.

Thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction, as before, [Ob 1:12](#).

Nor have laid hands on their substance, or strength, the word notes both: Edom seized the persons of the Jews, and made them prisoners, and they plundered the city, seized the goods of the citizens; this they did with delight, but God will punish for it.

[Ob 1:14](#)

In the cross-way; or in the breaches, viz. of the walls, by which, when the city was taken, some might have made their escape from the enemy; thou didst, though thou shouldst not, spitefully and cruelly watch at such breaches, and preventedst their flight; or else thou didst post thyself at the head of the ways, where thou mightest seize fleeing Jews.

To cut off; either kill if they would not yield, or cut off their hopes of escape by making them prisoners.

Those of his that did escape out of the city, and were fleeing farther for safety.

Neither shouldst thou have delivered up, reserved them prisoners, and brought them back into the hands of the Chaldeans, *those of his*, of thy brother Jacob's posterity, which did remain, survived the taking of the city, and were fairly like to escape; but thou foundest them and betrayedst them, *in the day of distress*, when they could no longer defend their city, nor had any hope but in a flight through all the secret ways they knew; but thou didst watch these ways, and didst cut off many who sought to flee through them.

[Ob 1:15](#)

For the day of the Lord, of just revenge from the Lord upon this cruelty of Edom, the time which the Lord hath appointed for the punishing of this and other nations, is near upon all the heathen; which God had given to Nebuchadnezzar, and which by this man's arms God would punish, as [Jer 27:2-7](#); and that day may justly be accounted near, which shall come within the compass of one man's life, and that well advanced in years, as Nebuchadnezzar now was.

As thou hast done, perfidiously, cruelly, and ravenously against Jacob, with a hostile, revengeful mind, it shall be done by thine enemies *to thee*, as [Ob 1:7](#); and this came to pass on Edom within five years after Jerusalem was sacked and ruined; within which space of time Obadiah prophesied, reproving Edom, and threatening him for what he had done against Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

Thy reward, the punishment or retribution of evil for the evil thou hast done to Jacob, *shall return*; by God's just hand, and by thy enemy's cruel hand, shall be poured out upon thee.

Upon thine own head: thy chief men, chief in the cruelty, shall be chief in suffering, for the measure thou hast measured shall be measured to thee, as [Ps 137:8](#); [Eze 35:15](#); [Joe 3:7-8](#).

[Ob 1:16](#)

This, with some, is a confirmation of what is threatened against Edom, yet others make this verse the beginning of the consolatory sermon to Judah, and either suits well with the context.

As ye, O Edomites, or ye, O Jews.

Have drunk: if you interpret this drinking as feasting, revelling, and carousing, it is to be applied to the Edomites and others, who triumphed first by their arms, next in their cups, over conquered Judah.

Upon my holy mountain; either the whole land, or Jerusalem, or the temple, for all these are called by this name; and here these proud and insolent conquerors did drink confusion to the Jews.

All the heathen; the nations, enemies to Edom, shall on Mount Esau conquer first, and then triumph in their revelling feasts, and drink continually, till they have swallowed up Edom.

And they, Edomites, shall be as though they had not been; shall by this means perish utterly, and their memory cease with them; so it suits with [Eze 35:14-15](#), which see. Others refer the words to the Jews, thus: Ye have drunk the cup of astonishment in your land, and in Jerusalem, my holy mountain; so now ere long the nations which afflicted you shall drink of the cup of astonishment long, yea, drink the dregs of it, so that they shall perish, and be no more, when your day of dark affliction shall end in a day of light and salvation; and when other nations do this, Edom shall much more, because most deeply guilty above others' see [Jer 49:17-18](#), [21-22](#).

[Ob 1:17](#)

But. or *And,* Heb.

Upon Mount Zion; historically, and in the letter, this refers to the people of the Jews, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and those who worshipped God in the temple. In the mystical sense or typical, it refers. to the gospel church, and the setting up the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation and redemption of God's Israel.

Deliverance; a remnant that shall escape the enemies' sword, and which, after seventy years' captivity, shall be delivered and restored by Cyrus: a hieroglyphic of Israel's redemption by Christ.

There shall be holiness; or, it shall be holy, the temple, the city rebuilt, the people returned from captivity, shall be holy to the Lord; they shall obey his law, attend his temple service, and offer a pure offering to the Lord, &c. All this typical, and accomplished in the Christian church, though not fully and perfectly till the church is glorified in the heavenly Zion.

The house of Jacob; literally the survivors of the two tribes in the Babylonish kingdom, and some others of the ten tribes, but including the elect of God, the house of Jacob in the extent of it, as taken in [Isa 59:20](#); [Ro 11:26](#).

Shall possess their possessions; either the possessions of the heathen, their enemies, or rather their own ancient possessions, out of which the violence of their enemies did east them when they were led captive, and dispossessed of all.

[Ob 1:18](#)

Besides what Nebuchadnezzar shall do upon his particular quarrel against Edom, bringing them to a very desolate condition, there shall, (though it be not owned,) intermixed, be the quarrel of God for Israel's sake, which the Chaldeans shall avenge; or else, after the return out of captivity, and some settled state in their own land, Israel himself shall destroy the remnant of Edom, [Joe 3:16](#), with [Joe 3:19](#); [Eze 25:14](#).

The house of Jacob; either the kingdom of the two tribes, or else the whole twelve tribes, the residue of the ten tribes joined with the two in their return from Babylon.

The house of Joseph; the ten tribes, particularly here mentioned to comfort them. and assure them that they should not be cast off, though they were more notoriously guilty of idolatry, and a long apostacy.

The house of Esau for stubble; as unable to resist or secure themselves as stubble is to resist the flame.

They shall kindle in them: this was fulfilled in part by Hyrcanus and the Maccabees, but more fully to be accomplished in the mystical sense, when the Lord shall make his church as a fire to all its enemies, and Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all nations.

Devour them; as flame eats up the stubble.

There shall not be any; no considerable number or body of them, or none shall continue Edomites, but turn Jews, and be circumcised, be added to the church.

For the Lord hath spoken it; however or whenever this is done, it shall be done, because the Lord hath spoken it; this assures us of the thing.

[Ob 1:19](#)

They of the south; the Jews who lived in the south parts of Canaan, which was next to Idumea, shall, after their return and victories over Edom, possess his country, called here *the Mount of Esau*. *They of the plain the Philistines;* the Jews who dwelt in the plain country, which was next to Palestina, [Jos 15:33](#), shall enlarge their borders, and possess the Philistines' country, together with their ancient inheritance. Now of the possession of Mount Esau by the Jews, saith Grotius, it was most fully accomplished by Hyrcanus. Josephus, lib. 13. chap; 17, reports the matter thus, that the Idumeans were commanded either to depart their country, or be circumcised. If this were the time of fulfilling the one, it was also the time of fulfilling the other also.

And they shall possess the fields of Ephraim; and all the land which the ten tribes once did possess shall again be possessed by the Jews.

And the fields of Samaria; the fields also about Samaria, how greatly soever wasted, shall be replanted, and that by the Jews too.

Benjamin, either apart, or jointly with Judah, shall possess Gilead; a country beyond Jordan, assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, wasted by Hazael and Tiglathpileser some time before Samaria was taken, but should be inhabited by the Benjamites; and probably Gad, Manasseh, and Reuben did enlarge upon the Moabites and Ammonites. Here is promised a larger possession than ever they had before the captivity, and it doth no doubt point out the enlargement of the church of Christ in the times of the gospel, and particularly when antichrist, typified in this prophecy by Edom, shall be destroyed: but we are to give the literal meaning, and think we do not miss of it.

[Ob 1:20](#)

The captivity of this host of the children of Israel, those of the ten tribes that were carried away captive by Shalmaneser, one hundred and thirty years before Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, *shall possess that of the Canaanites*; all the country they anciently possessed, with this addition also, that what the Canaanites held by force, and the Israelites could not take from them, shall now be possessed by these returned captives.

Zarephath, called Sarepta, [Lu 4:26](#), near Sidon.

The captivity of Jerusalem; the two tribes, carried captive when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

In Sepharad; the modern Jews call Spain Sepharad, but without any good ground, nor was it so called anciently, nor doth the Chaldee paraphrase so interpret it; nor do I meet with any thing better than a tacit confession, that most believe it is a city of Chaldea or Assyria, and toward the northern and farthest bounds of it, but where it was exactly they know not.

Shall possess the cities of the south; all the cities, which were once their own, in Judea, which lay southward from this Sepharad, where the captives dwelt, and whence they return.

[Ob 1:21](#)

And, or For, so the Gallic version, printed at Rochelle, 1616.

Saviours; deliverers; literally, the governors or leaders of those captive troops, who shall come up from Babylon to their own country, such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, of whom it was said he came to seek the good of the Jews, [Ne 2:10](#), and successively after these many others, to the times of Hyrcanus and the Maccabees; mystically, Christ and his apostles, and other preachers of the gospel.

Shall come; literally, with leave and commission from the kings of Persia, such as Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes, to manage the affairs of the returned captives.

Upon Mount Zion; in Judea, at Jerusalem and the temple, and whatever might concern them, with their neighbours round about.

To judge; to avenge Israel upon Edom, to fight, subdue, and give laws to them, as Hyrcanus did when the Edomites were glad to be circumcised to keep their country.

The Mount of Esau; the whole country, so called from the father of that nation, who chose those mountainous countries for his habitation, as most suitable to his wild and rambling humour, which delighted in hunting.

The kingdom shall be the Lord's; the government, called here *the kingdom*, shall manifestly appear to be set up, maintained, and prospered by a power, wisdom, and goodness greater than human. The God of Israel, who is Jehovah, shall be honoured, obeyed, and worshipped by them, and they shall not, as formerly, rely on idols, or foreign aids. All which most fully is accomplished by Christ the Saviour, and now known in the Christian church, who do believe he will, and pray that he would, save his Zion, and destroy Edom, i.e. antichrist and his kingdom.