

DECEMBER 13

Obadiah

Welcome to the shortest book in the Old Testament. We know very little about Obadiah. It was a common name, but the most famous Obadiah was the guy who worked for King Ahab in 1 Kings 18. He was secretly a worshiper of Yahweh and hid the prophets of God from Jezebel, providing them with bread and water during the drought. But I don't think this Obadiah was that guy. Although we don't know when he wrote, the fact that Jeremiah quotes Obadiah gives us some direction. My guess is that Obadiah wrote after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. The object of God's message was judgment against the nation of Edom because of the actions of the Edomites during and after this event. It was because of these actions that God said:

²“I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob³ but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.”⁴If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins,” the Lord of hosts says, “They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called ‘the wicked country,’ and ‘the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.’” (Malachi 1:2-4)

Vs. 1-4 God's pronouncement against Edom is red-hot and v. 4 is very dramatic.

Vs. 5-10 There are at least three things God will do to the Edomites. Take time to note these. Notice how long God will be mad at Edom.

Vs. 11-14 Now, note what the Edomites did and how those things relate to what the Lord will do to Edom. Notice too, the phrase, *on the day...* On that particular day they betrayed their brothers. They looted their city. They cut off the fugitives and survivors. Do you see the connection?

Vs. 15-16 And now comes another day. What Edom did is a picture of the arrogance of all the nations against Israel. I think that something similar to this will happen during the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation when the temple in Jerusalem is desecrated. The Edomites would be repaid in kind. This will also be true of those who persecute the followers of Christ in the Tribulation. (Rev. 16:6)

Vs. 17-18 Notice God's jealousy for Zion and for His people. We've seen this before in the OT, and we'll see it again.

Vs. 19-21 When the Lord returns and Jesus sets up His kingdom, Israel will possess the lands of their enemies.

In all that we are reading, you would think that the nations of the world would take note that if God disciplines His own people, that is God's business. They should stand in awe. If God doesn't spare His own when they sin, He will not spare these Gentile nations either. When the nations strike God's own people, as will happen again in the future, God will unleash His fury. God loves Israel. And because He has called and used Israel as a servant for the nations He will save them and contend for them. Also, since this portion of the Bible has been in print for over 2000 years, you'd think that kings and governors would notice how God will treat nations who defy Him. If He didn't spare His own people, He certainly won't allow the unbelieving nations to dishonor Him. This stuff is all written down, but I'll bet reading it isn't a government priority in any country on this planet.

Revelation 4

This is a short, transitional chapter that gets us to the throne in heaven. It would have been good to have had chapters 4 and 5 together. Remember that this is still before the beginning of the Tribulation; in fact, we are seeing what happens in heaven at the throne of God to begin the Tribulation.

V. 1 Notice that in this verse, *after this* occurs twice. After what? I think it is not only after the letters to the churches, but it is after the church has fulfilled its mission.

Vs. 2-3 Here we see the throne and the One who sits on it. In some respect, this is like Daniel 7:9-14. In Daniel, the One on the throne is the Ancient of Days. Here, it is God the Father.

For the imagery of the rainbow, I'd go back to what God said the rainbow meant when He gave it to Noah. It might suggest that God is the embodiment of salvation or is "surrounded" by the will to save men.

V. 4 Twelve of these guys have to be the apostles. Jesus promised them this. Who the other twelve are is anyone's guess. The *golden crowns* have to do with living and conquering by faith before God in this fallen world. You can come up with your own list. Abraham might be one of them. Daniel, Noah and Job would be good guesses. I'd also think Moses and Elijah were there since they appeared with Jesus and spoke to Him about His sacrifice in Jerusalem. It's all speculation.

V. 5 Further setting the stage here, there is a dynamic representation of creation. Anyway, that's what I make out of it.

These *seven spirits*, which are the *seven torches* before the throne, we have met before and we'll see again. Somehow I think these seven spirits are related to the message of salvation. In Revelation 5:6, the spirits are seen with the slain lamb and sent by God into all the earth. Since they have already been related to the church in 3:1, it could be that they are "empowering angels," sent to give care and strength to the ministry of the church as it works in the harvest. After the Tribulation begins, neither the church nor these spirits are mentioned again.

Vs. 6-8 This should recall Isaiah 6 and the visions of Ezekiel and the glory of God.

Since the angels in Isaiah 6 and the angels here all sing *holy, holy, holy*, I would say that God's holiness is something very important to the angels. This is not choreographed; it is a natural shout of praise to God for something that must be very meaningful to them. Notice that the elders (v. 11) say something else that is almost the same thing they will say before the Lamb.

When you put together certain events in the Bible, you get the idea that Satan has called God's righteousness, even His holiness, into question. Satan's words to God in Job suggest this. Satan is shown as the accuser of mankind before God, demanding that God be holy and righteous in judgment. And then it says in Romans 3:25-26, (*Jesus*) *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.* ²⁶*It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

In Ephesians, Paul says that the principalities and powers in the heavenly places had something revealed to them in the church. I don't think Satan thought God could save mankind without violating His own holiness.

Anyway, I think it is very important for the angels that God is holy.

Vs. 9-11 The praise here of the elders for God the Father is expressed differently than the reason for which the angels praise Him.

What we are seeing is the ending of redemptive history. What a long, sad tragedy this has been for mankind. Yet, it will end in praise and in glory. We stand in that last part of history before God's judgment is revealed. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and are His witnesses to a dying world, testifying to what He has done. We get to present the offer of salvation, forgiveness and a new life. We get to work in the harvest making disciples, who make disciples. What we are seeing means that there will be total victory and fulfillment. In faith then

we need to keep working and serve our Lord in the harvest, even when it is rough now. We can see that the best is yet to come.

Psalm 132

This song of the pilgrims coming to worship in Zion was a remembrance and a prayer. They were praying for the continuance of the Lord's blessing on David, and that God would remember His selection of Jerusalem as the place of His blessing and presence. I get the impression that Solomon wrote this, possibly for the dedication of the temple.

Vs. 1-5 This is referring to David's desire to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. That wasn't a political move since the ark had been out of Israel's worship for many years. David himself loved God and wanted God's presence to be near to him.

Vs. 6-7 Here is all of Israel calling one another to go to the temple to the dwelling place of God.

Vs. 8-10 This may have been Solomon's call to the Lord to enter the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) and dwell there once the ark had been placed there.

Vs. 11-12 Solomon was referring to the promise to David and he saw himself as the fulfillment of this promise. Jesus, of course, will be the son of David who will reign there; and during the Millennium, all peoples and nations will be able to come to Jerusalem and worship Him. At the end of Revelation, we will be reading the fulfillment of this psalm.

Vs. 13-18 Not only did God say He would dwell in Jerusalem, at the end of the Millennium there will be a New Jerusalem and Jesus will dwell there.

Proverbs 29:24-25

It seems like both the thief and the man of fear destroy themselves in ironic ways. Trusting in the Lord might not seem logical, but it sure beats the alternatives.