

## Minor prophets #4 Obadiah

**HOSEA** took a faithless wife and spoke of judgement, love and life

**JOEL** told of locust plagues The Spirit and the end of the age

**AMOS** left his flocks and trees to call the nation to its knees

**OBADIAH** prophesied of Edom and its foolish pride

### Introduction

- Little is known of Obadiah
- His name means ‘Servant or worshiper of the Lord.’
- His mission was to declare God’s judgement on the nation of Edom
- Edom lay to the south of Israel
- Israel was descended from Jacob; Edom was descended from his brother Esau
- Although ‘brothers’, when the Hebrews left Egypt, Edom would not allow them passage along the King’s Highway to the Promised Land (Num 20:14-21)
- Obadiah identified two major sins

### Pride of heart (3-4)

- The Edomites felt they were secure and safe from attack
- They did live as it were ‘among the stars’ (v.3-4)
- The land of Edom was centred high in the craggy fastness of mountainous country. The city of Petra was built in a natural fortress with only one narrow entrance. Many of the dwellings were caves – but often quite ornate, with pillars and alcoves carved into the rock itself. A poet has called it a ‘rose-red city, half as old as time.’
- But God said he would bring them down
- Their pride ‘deceived’ them – as pride always does.
- Pride is offensive to God – perhaps even more so than grosser sins
- Proverbs 16:18; Isaiah 2:12; Philippians 2:3; James 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5
- The Bible warns us to boast only in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:29-31)
- Paul declared that his only boast would be in the cross (Gal 6:14).
- Nebuchadnezzar’s pride brought him low (Daniel 4)

**Hardness of heart (11-12)**

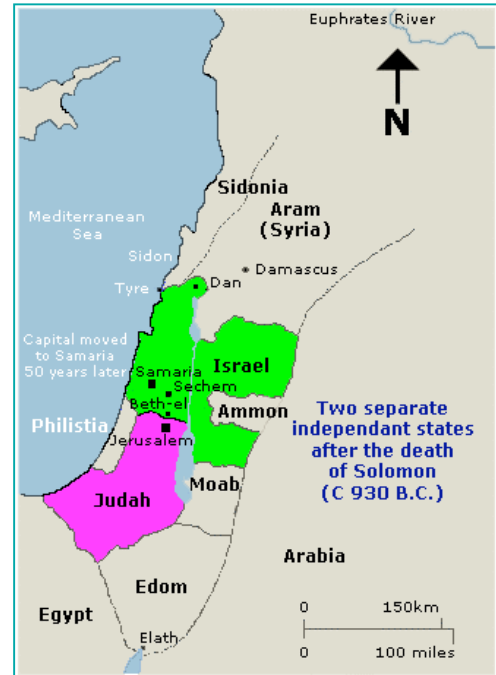
When Jerusalem was being attacked (perhaps by Nebuchadnezzar), Edom showed no compassion. Even though it was a day of:

- Misfortune (12)
- Ruin (12)
- Distress (12, 14)
- Calamity (3x in 13)
- Disaster (13)

**Seven acts of hardness.**

The Edomites—

- Stood aloof (11)
- Gloated (12, 13)
- Rejoiced (12)
- Boasted (12)
- Entered the city (13)
- Looted (13)
- Cut off fugitives (14)
- Handed survivors over (14)

**The question for us...**

- *How are our hearts towards the needy and the downtrodden?*
- Read Proverbs 19:17; 29:7
- Jesus said he came to bring good news *to the poor* (Luke 4:18).
- Read James 2:1-6
- William Booth: ‘You can’t preach to a man who has an empty stomach.’
- Wesley Mission philosophy: ‘Word and deed.’ Wesley has nearly 500 properties where care ministry is being provided. Over 3000 staff members and another 3000 volunteers.

Story of visit to the slums of Brazil with World Vision, where little children spend all day scrounging on rubbish dumps just to earn enough coins to eat. They live in squalor, dirt, dust and disease. One meal a day is provided by World Vision to some school children but those on the dumps cannot get to the school where the food is provided.

**The day of the lord**

- Like the other prophets, Obadiah warns them of the coming day of the Lord (15)
- No one will escape (18)
- The great day of the Lord is still to come
- Are we ready?

**Edom or Zion? (17)**

- While Edom will be destroyed, Zion will be a place of salvation
- Zion represents the Church
- Zion was a fortress on a spur reaching south from what is now Jerusalem which is almost impossible to assault from any direction except north. The original occupants, the Jebusites, said that even the blind and the lame could defend it, but David still conquered it. Hence it became the city of David (2 Sam 5:7; 1 Kings 8:1).
- In Scripture it represents the Church, the place of Christ's victory
- See Micah 4:2; Isaiah 28:16; Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 12:22-23
- Read Psalm 48.

**Zion is –**

- a place where God dwells (1, 3)
- a place of praise (1)
- a place of beauty (2)
- a place of safety (3)
- a place of rejoicing (11; Isaiah 12:6)
- a place of hope for eternity (8, 14; Isaiah 35:10; 51:11)

These are all true of the Church! Compare 1 Tim 3:15.

- Jesus said he would build His Church (Matt 16:18)
- Jesus loves the Church and gave Himself up for her (Eph 5:25)
- The only plan for salvation God ever made was through the Church! (Eph 3:10-11)
- There is no better place to be!

**SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT****Read Obadiah****Biblical**

1. How did Edom's pride express itself? (3)
2. What is the point behind verse 4?
3. What is the relationship between the names 'Edom' and 'Esau'? (See Genesis 25)
4. List the judgements on Edom foretold by Obadiah (7-9)
5. Of the seven things Edom did when Jerusalem was overrun, which do you think was the worst? Why? (12-14)
6. What does verse 15 tell us about God's justice? (When you have thought about this read 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)
7. What does Obadiah say about the Day of the Lord? (15-17).
8. What does Obadiah say about Zion? (17, 21)

**Personal and Practical**

9. Think about Edom's two great sins – pride of heart and hardness of heart (3, 11). How easily could these sins occur in today's church? In your life? Why?
10. While the names mentioned in 18-20 may not mean much to us today, the general drift is that God's people will possess the land (20). What is the message here for us? (Josh 12:3-9 and Eph 1:3 might be relevant.)
11. OT prophets often spoke of judgement but nearly always finished with a word of hope. What words of hope are to be found in Obadiah?
12. Consider what Psalm 48 says about Zion. How true are these qualities of your local church? What can you say about them?

**Prayer:** Thank you, Lord, that your justice always prevails and that at the end of the day, we have your promise of victory and peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

## Terms of Use

This material is not for sale. You are free to download and reproduce it for personal use or for free distribution to groups such as your local church Bible study group or Christian fellowship. Please include the following acknowledgement:

‘This study is copyright © Barry Chant 2005. Reproduced with permission from [www.barrychant.com](http://www.barrychant.com).’

This study is one of a series of 12 studies on this theme. The rest can be found at [www.barrychant.com](http://www.barrychant.com).