

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 40

Obadiah

INTRODUCTION: Though nothing whatever is told about Obadiah in the Bible, his name means “servant” or “worshipper of Jehovah.” It was a common name among the Hebrews, but nothing else is known about Obadiah. There are several Obadias in the Bible. It was like our common names, “John,” “James,” etc.

This one-chapter book of Obadiah is occupied with one subject—the punishment of Edom for cruel and unbrotherly conduct toward Judah at the time of some great and national calamity. It is divided into two different sections: (1) Verses 1-16 tell of the destruction of Edom and the causes thereof; (2) Verses 17-21 tell of the salvation and final victory of Israel over Edom.

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. Remember that Esau was the hunter, the outdoorsman who sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage and whose blessing Jacob received because he deceived his father, Isaac. This same Esau married an Ishmaelite. The Ishmaelites were descendants of Abraham and Hagar, the Egyptian bondswoman. God’s people were not to marry outside their own race. Hence, the wife of Esau was from a mixed marriage. Esau himself had a mixed marriage. From him came the Edomites, a hybrid race which caused lots of trouble to God’s people. (Teacher, warn the pupils here against marrying outside the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not want His people to marry the unconverted.)

The name Edom means “red.” Esau’s name was changed to “Edom” or “red” because he sold his birthright for the red soup.

Again and again in the Bible we find bad, mixed, idolatrous races whom God cursed because they were started by unholy alliances or marriages. For example, the Moabites and the Ammonites were the descendants of Moab and of Ammon, who were the children of Lot and his daughters. A wicked race followed. How careful Christian young people ought to be concerning their marriages!

The main thing about the book of Obadiah, however, is the fact that God is going to judge Edom because of her treatment of Israel. Let us notice some of the things that she did.

I. WHEN JUDAH WAS REDUCED TO HER LOWEST STATE, EDMON REJOICED IN HER CALAMITY, BEHELD HER DISASTER WITH MALICIOUS SATISFACTION, AND DID NOT COME TO HER RESCUE. In other words, though the Israelites were descendants of Jacob and the Edomites were descendants of his brother, Esau, there was no aid; in fact, there was delight in their suffering. These nations should have been close because of their ties, but they were not. (Teacher, stress the importance of standing by our friends and our loved ones!)

II. EDOM AIDED THE ENEMIES IN THE PLUNDER AND MURDER OF THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM. In other words, she fought against God’s people. This is never right. God’s people should never fight against each other. (Teacher, teach your pupils that they should never criticize God’s people. Teach them to love the people of God and stand for them.)

III. THE EDMONITES JOINED WITH MOAB AND AMMON IN AN INVASION OF JUDAH AT THE TIME OF JEHOSEPHAT. See II Chronicles 20:22. In other words, they fought against the people of God. Notice, they joined the Moabites and the Ammonites. Here is an unholy alliance. (Teacher, stress the importance of running with the right crowd.)

IV. THE EDMITES PLUNDERED THE KING'S PALACE IN JERUSALEM AND SLEW HIS SON. Read II Chronicles 21:8, 17; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11.

V. THE EDMITES WERE ALWAYS ON THE WATCH TO SMITE JUDAH AND TO CARRY AWAY CAPTIVES. See II Chronicles 28:17.

VI. WHEN NEBUCHADNEZZER BESIEGED JERUSALEM, THE EDMITES GLADLY JOINED THE INVADERS. Read Ezekiel 35; 36:5. They helped to plunder the city and to cut off the stragglers who endeavored to escape. How sad when the work of God is fought! (Teachers, stress this important truth to the pupils: They should never fight the work of God. Though another church might criticize us, we should not criticize them. Though another preacher might criticize our preacher, we should not retaliate. Vengeance belongs to God. We should never be guilty of fighting God's work or God's man.)

CONCLUSION: The Edomites were rather safe from attack. The territory occupied by the Edomites extended from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf and comprised an area of about 2,000 square miles. It was a mountainous district, and it was called the "Mount of Esau" or "Mount Seir." It was near the rose-red city of Petra and offered security and safety to the Edomites. In spite of this fact, God punished the Edomites with utter destruction. This is because they fought the people of God, aligned themselves with those who were not God's people, and would not stand by their friends, their family, etc. The book of Obadiah is a very small book and seemingly an insignificant one; however, in it, many lessons are taught. May we learn therefrom!