The Twelve



A STUDY ON THE MINOR PROPHETS

CORE TRAINING - WED NIGHTS

FALL 2026

What is the book about?

- The impending judgment described in this book is meant for the Edomites and is a consequence of their treatment of God’s people.

Introduction

- The shortest book in the Old Testament (only 21 verses).
- Edom is accused of violence against the people of Judah.
- Edom's long-term antagonism began in Rebekah's womb with Esau and Jacob (Gen 25).
- Canonically located between Amos and Judah.
- Two phrases may explain it: the day of the Lord, and Israel possessing "the remnant of Edom" (Amos 9:12; cf. Obad 17, 19–20).

Who is Obadiah?

- Not much biographical information is known about Obadiah.
- The OT references about 13 other Obadiahs.
- The book presents no genealogical information.
- Some guesses about his person include:
    - an officer in David's army (1 Chron. 12:9)
    - Ahab's servant (1 Kings 18:3)
    - a Levite in Josiah's day (2 Chron. 34:12)
    - a leader returning with Ezra (Ezra 8:9)

Who is Obadiah - Ahab’s Obadiah

- Chief palace administrator in charge of Ahab’s household, in a court dominated by Ahab and Jezebel.
- When Jezebel tried to slaughter God’s prophets, he hid 100 prophets in two caves and supplied them with bread and water.
- Same time period: b.oth lived about the middle of the ninth century.
- Identification unlikely: that Obadiah lived in the north, while the author probably lived in the south.
- Also, the Obadiah Elijah met was unsympathetic to Elijah’s interest, so it would mean a radical change of life.

Who is Obadiah - What We Can Know

- No evidence ties him to another Obadiah, so he cannot be positively identified
- His family, hometown, and date are not given
- A prophet of God at a time of calamity in Judah, with a message of condemnation for Edom and hope for Judah
- Evidence suggests a devoted follower of God who knew the world of his day

Who Was it Written to? - Audience

- The remnant of Jews left in Jerusalem, wondering whether God would judge Edom for their “spiteful hatred” (G. V. Smith).
- Edom and the Edomites
- Obadiah probably did not go to Edom as Jonah went to Nineveh; there is no explicit statement that it was delivered outside Israel.
- Judgment speeches against nations were normally intended for the ears of God’s people.

Edom’s Origin - Genesis 25

- Descended from Esau
- Esau was Isaac’s firstborn and Jacob’s twin brother
- God told Rebekah the two would become separate nations, the older serving the younger
- Esau traded his birthright to Jacob for red lentil soup, shaping both peoples
- Edom: a small kingdom southeast of Judah, in rugged, mountainous terrain between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba

Bitter Rivals - Israel & Edom

- Denied passage into Canaan (Num 20:14-21)
- Saul fought Edom (1 Sam 14:47)
- King David conquered Edom (2 Sam 8:13-14)
- Hadad returned to plague Solomon(1 Kings 11:14)

Bitter Rivals - Judah & Edom

- Sometimes subject to Judah, sometimes independent
- Under King Jehoram, Edom rebelled and became an independent monarchy (2 Kgs 8:20–22; 2 Chr 21:8–10).
- In 594 BC, Edom was among the small states allied with Judah against Babylon (Jer 27:2–7).
- A hostile act shortly after would explain Judah's impassioned prophecies against Edom (Jer 49:7–22; Ps 137:7; Lam 4:18–22; Ezek 25:12–14; 35:1–15).

The Land of Edom

- A small rugged land.
- 70 miles north to south; 15 miles east to west.
- From about 1300 BC, south of the Dead Sea
- Mountain range on the west, desert on the east and south, the brook Zered separating Edom from Moab.
- Reddish rocks and cliffs were the most striking feature (cf. Gen 25).


Key Takeaways
Location: Edom was located south of the Dead Sea, covering what is now southern Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia.
Neighbors: It bordered Judah to the north, Moab to the northeast, and the Arabian Desert to the east and south.
Mediterranean Sea
ISRAEL
AMMON
Jerusalem
JUDAH
Dead Sea
MOAB
EDOM
Wilderness of Zin
Egypt
Arabian Desert
N
0 25 50 75 100 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers
Mediterranean Sea
Egypt
The location of Edom in the ancient Near East

When Was it Written - Dating

- No king is mentioned and the text gives no specific time. It may be a clue that no king reigned: the period after Judah’s fall
- A timestamp I hold to: 586 BC, shortly after Jerusalem falls to Babylon
- Cresson lists six events when Edom was hostile to Judah; the last, Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion in 587 BC, is the most likely
- Edom’s fall had occurred by about 500 BC, so it was written between 587 and 500 BC.

When Was it Written - Dating

Mid to Late 9th Century

- Reign of Jehoram over Judah, when Edom revolted (2 Kgs 8:20–22; 2 Chr 21:8–17)
- Edomites raided Jerusalem (v. 17)
- Obadiah's place in the Hebrew canon suggests an earlier text
- Obad 3–4 is similar to Jer 49:16; Obadiah is less refined, so Jeremiah may elaborate on it

Mid to Late 6th Century

- Most natural reading: judgment on Edom, who exploited Jerusalem during the Babylonian raids
- Vv. 11–14 can be dated only to the period right after the 587 BC conquest (H. W. Wolff)
- Vv. 12–14 are rhetorical: the prophet places himself at the scene (Finley)

The Prediction of Edom’s Downfall (vv. 1-9)

- The call to the nations to destroy Edom (v. 1)
- Edom’s pride to be debased (vv. 2–4)
- Edom’s wealth to be plundered (vv. 5–7)
- Edom’s people to be slaughtered (vv. 8–9)

“From there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord. (Oba 4)

The Cause of Edom’s Downfall (vv. 10-14)

- Violations in attitudes (vv. 10–12)
- Violations in actions (vv. 13–14)

Do not gloat over your brother’s day, the day of his misfortune. (Oba 12)

The Coming Judgment of the Day of the Lord (vv. 15-21)

- God’s judgment on Israel’s enemies (vv. 15–16)
- God’s blessings on Israel’s people (vv. 17–21): the deliverance of Israel (vv. 17–18), the delineation of Israel’s territories (vv. 19–20), the establishment of the Lord’s kingdom (v. 21)

As you have done, it will be done to you. (Oba 15)

The Message - More than Edom

- Similar messages: Isaiah 21:11–12, Jeremiah 49:7–22, Ezekiel 25:12–14 and 35, Amos 1:11–12, Malachi 1:2–5
- Edom represents the nations that oppose God and his people (cf. Ps 2)
- Basis of judgment: Edom’s pride (vv. 1–4) and participation in Judah’s downfall (vv. 10–14)
- A day of judgment on all nations (vv. 15–16); deliverance on Mount Zion is final, the inheritance is forever (v. 17), and the Lord’s kingdom is universal (v. 21)

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