

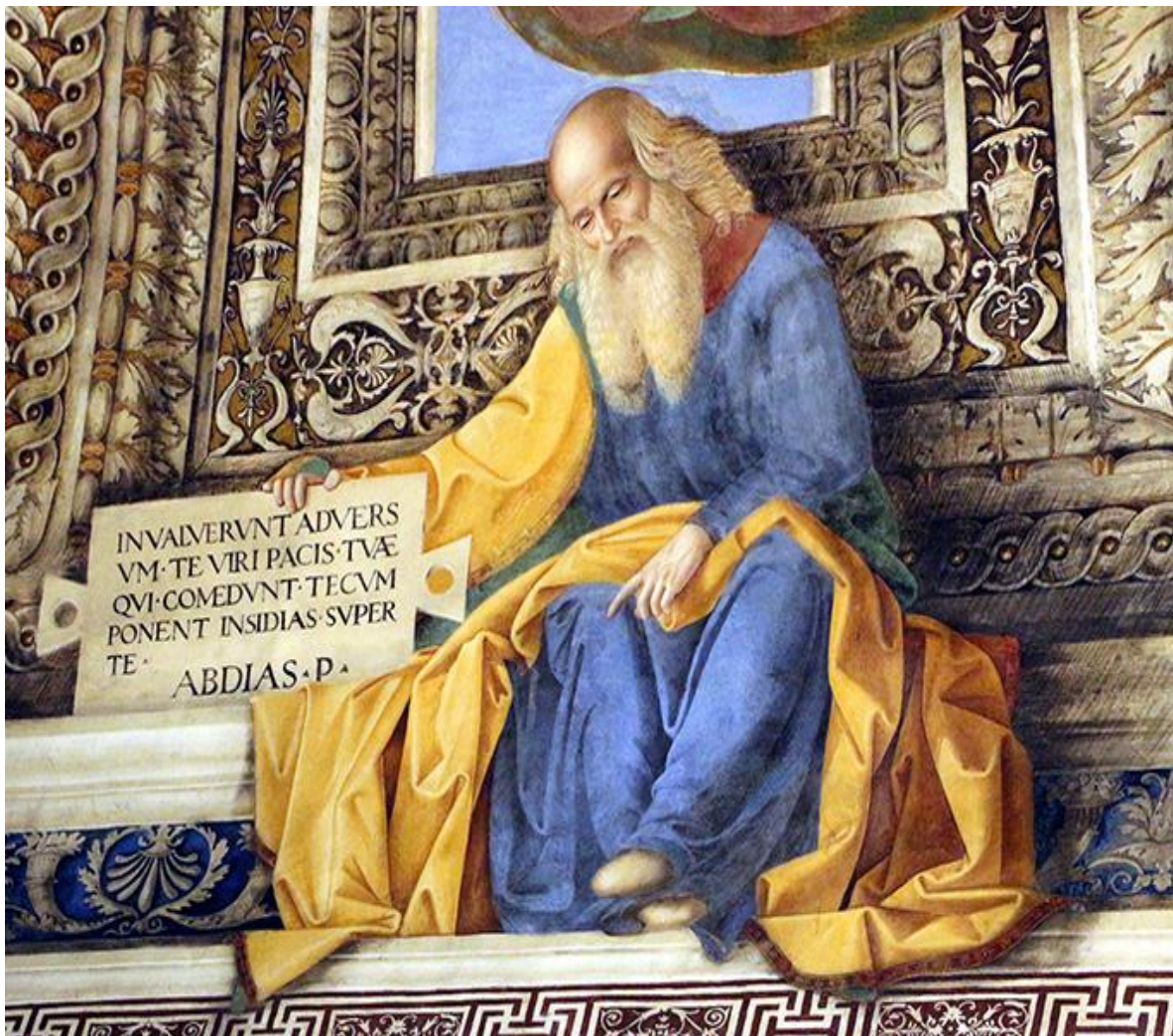
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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 31

OBADIAH



Obadiah in the sacristy of St. Mark by Melozzo de Forli

SUMMARY

The only book in the Bible in the entire Bible that begins with the letter "O," is Obadiah. It is also the briefest book in the Old Testament. Because of its brevity, it is often overlooked or skipped right over to the prophet Jonah.

But the briefest book in the Old Testament is indeed a great book with a great message that echoes an important principle taught and modeled by the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout His earthly ministry. The principle being: Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

Obadiah may be a small package, but it holds the best gifts of God's truth. Dr. McGee writes: It is a small thing, but it has a potent message. The prophet Obadiah was one of the most obscure prophets of the Old Testament. He prophesied of the doom of the proud nation of Edom and the restoration of God's chosen people, Israel.

The prophecy in the book was written in vivid, lucid, and forceful language. God fulfilled His prophetic word concerning judging Edom. Their rock fortress still stands, but their name and their nation have perished. Please look at the world map today! You will not find Edom on it as a nation. God completely wiped them out as He prophesied through Obadiah.

The message in Obadiah is certainly relevant for our times. Just as the nation of Edom, in her pride, chose to live without God, so also nations in this present era are living without God. And just as God brought a devastating judgment upon Edom for her arrogance, so He will do, if nations in our day continue to walk in their pride of heart.

The prominent doctrines in Obadiah include: the person of God, the power of God, the people of God, the possession of God, the punishment of God, the prediction of the Day of the Lord, the preservation of God's redeemed people, and the promise of God.

Although Obadiah is the smallest book in the Old Testament, it has several important lessons for God's people today. It is therefore our prayer that the Holy Spirit will enable us to pay careful attention to the truths revealed in it.

And that in doing so, He will draw us closer to God's heart and deepen our walk with Him and our witness of Him in such a time as this! May God richly bless you as you listen to the verse by verse exposition of the rich and remarkable prophetic book of Obadiah!

Chapter 1: Edom will be made small among the nations. It shall be brought down, though it ascends as high as an eagle. Whereas robbers leave when they have enough and grape-gatherers leave gleaning, the judgment against Edom will be complete.

Edom has exulted in the destruction of its brother Jacob. As you have done, it shall be done to you. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, but the house of Esau shall be stubble.

The children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites. Saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:2** *Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised.*
- 1:3** *The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; You who say in your heart, Who will bring me down to the ground?*
- 1:4** *Though you ascend as high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," says the Lord.*
- 1:15** *For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.*

BIBLE TIMELINE

853 BC

The Vision of Obadiah

Obadiah 1

CHARACTER Definitions

OBADIAH - In this, the shortest book of the Old Testament, it seems the prophet Obadiah considered each word a high-priced commodity. Apparently, he was unable to afford any words describing himself or his family in any way.

Therefore, while twelve other men named Obadiah appear in Scripture, Old Testament scholars cannot identify with certainty any of them as the author of this book.

Though the ultimate identity of this prophet is shrouded in mystery, Obadiah's emphasis on Jerusalem throughout this prophecy of judgment on the foreign nation of Edom, allows us at least to presume that Obadiah came from somewhere near the holy city in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Dating the book of Obadiah accurately is nearly impossible due to the scant historical information contained in the book. While several options have been proposed by scholars, the best argument places Obadiah in the 840s BC, making him the earliest writing prophet, a few years prior to Joel, and a contemporary of Elisha.

The biggest piece of evidence for this early date comes from Obadiah 1:10–14, which indicates an Edomite invasion of Jerusalem. While Edom was too weak a nation to ever invade Judah on its own, Edom no doubt participated with other nations when the winds of change blew in its favor.

In the 840s, when Edom rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah, the Philistines and the Arabians also invaded Jerusalem; While 2 Chronicles does not indicate the Edomites' participation in the invasion, Obadiah 1:10–14 pictures the violent behavior that the Edomites carried out on their neighbors, waiting on nearby roads to cut down those fleeing from the invaders within Jerusalem.

The Edomites could have easily heard of Jerusalem's invasion by foreign powers and entered themselves into the fray so that they too might benefit from plundering their neighbors in Jerusalem.

CHARACTERS Continued

The majority of the book pronounces judgment on the foreign nation of Edom, making Obadiah one of only three prophets who pronounced judgment primarily on other nations (Nahum and Habakkuk are the others).

While others of the prophetic books contain passages of judgment against Edom and other nations, Obadiah's singular focus points to a significant, albeit difficult, truth about humanity's relationship with God: when people remove themselves from or place themselves in opposition to God's people, they can expect judgment, rather than restoration, at the end of life.

Obadiah's name, meaning "worshipper of Yahweh," offers an interesting counterpoint to the message of judgment he pronounced on Edom, Judah's neighbor to the southeast. As a worshipper of Yahweh, Obadiah placed himself in a position of humility before the Lord; he embraced his lowly place before the almighty God.

That God sent a man named "worshipper of Yahweh" to the people of Edom was no mistake. Edom had been found guilty of pride before the Lord. They had thought themselves greater than they were; great enough to mock, steal from, and even harm God's chosen people.

But the "Lord GOD," a name Obadiah used to stress God's sovereign power over the nations, will not stand idly by and let His people suffer forever. Through Obadiah, God reminded Edom of their poor treatment of His people and promised redemption, not to the Edomites but to the people of Judah.

The nation of Edom, which eventually disappeared into history, remains one of the prime examples of the truth found in Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goes before destruction, / And a haughty spirit before stumbling."

Obadiah's prophecy focuses on the destructive power of pride. It reminds us of the consequences of living in a self-serving manner, of following through on our own feelings and desires without considering their impact on those around us. Do you struggle to set aside your own wants and desires for those of God and others?

Though such pride has been part of the lives of fallen human beings since the tragedy of the fall in Eden, Obadiah offers us a stark reminder to place ourselves under God's authority, to subject our appetites to His purposes, and to find our hope in being His people when the restoration of all things comes.

MAP REFERENCES

