

The Pilgrim Way Commentary on
Obadiah



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Apology for This Work

These notes, or “mini-commentary” on the second gospel follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound Obadiah’s prophecy.

This work grew out of over 35 years of both preaching through Obadiah in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the epistle as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from Obadiah, so this commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. There are many such commentaries on the market and they tend to be someone dull and not very practical in their application. I patterned the format after the format used by August Van Ryn and Thomas Robinson, in their commentaries on Luke and Romans respectively. They did not write full-blown prose commentaries but short thoughts that were designed to stimulate thought in the reader rather than spoon-feeding him. In this book, my thoughts are deliberately short and sometimes, full sentences are not used. These are more thoughts and observations than a full commentary.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”, he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a flawed, limited and uninspired theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin’s teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understandings of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems influence my understanding of what the clear teaching of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of

battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Matthews Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the book of Obadiah. A commentary over 35 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relation with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

Introduction to Obadiah

The shortest book in the Old Testament, dealing with the judgment upon Edom for their activities during the events that led to the Babylonian Captivity.

The Author

The author of the book is named Obadiah, which means “Servant of Jehovah.” The name was common in Israel with about a dozen men so identified (1 Kings 18:3-16; 1 Chronicles 3:21; 7:3; 8:38; 9:16; 12:9; 27:19; 2 Chronicles 17:7; 34:12.) We know nothing about him other than his name. Usually something about the writer accompanies his name at the beginning of each prophetic book, generally his father’s name, some of his ancestors, and or his hometown. This descriptive information is absent in only two of the prophetic books: Obadiah and Malachi.

The Date

We accept a date around the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, 586 B.C. The description of the events described in verses 11-14 fit most naturally into the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. It is known that Edom was hostile to Judah at this time (Psalm 137:7; Lamentations

4:20,21; Ezekiel 25:12-14) Obadiah is closely related to Jeremiah 49:7-16 which was written at the time of Judah's fall to Babylon.

There were no fewer than seven occasions in Old Testament times when Jerusalem experienced invasion and suffered a defeat.

During Rehoboam's reign (930-913 B.C.; 1 Kings 14:25-26; 2 Chronicles 12:2-9)

During Jehoram's reign (853-841 B.C.; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10, 16-17; cf. Amos 1:6)

During Amaziah's reign (796-767; 2 Kings 14:13-14; 2 Chronicles 25:23-24)

During Ahaz's reign (732-715 B.C.; 2 Chronicles 28:16-18)

During Jehoiakim's reign (609-598 B.C.; 2 Kings 24:1-4; 2 Chronicles 36:6-7)

During Jehoiachin's reign (598-597 B.C.; 2 Kings 24:10-16; 2 Chronicles 36:10)

During Zedekiah's reign (597-586 B.C.; 2 Kings 25:3-7; 2 Chronicles 36:15-20; cf. Lamentations 4:21-22; Psalm 137:7)

We take the dating of this book to be somewhere in the period of the 5th, 6th and 7th attack in the list above, but all three occurred in a very short span of time. The best guess would be the last on the list, around the reign of Zedekiah.

“The date of the Vision continues to be a matter of controversy, and the periods which have been assigned to the writer have a range of 600 years, a period longer than from William the Conqueror to Oliver Cromwell (W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*, 1:412).”

Historical Setting

There is a long history of enmity between Edom and Israel. The two nations originated out of two brothers, Esau and Jacob. The hostility began in an argument over the birthright, but during the time of Obadiah it centered on trade routes. The King's Highway ran all the way from Damascus to Egypt. Whoever controlled the highway controlled the flow of goods and became wealthy. The book is written at a time when Edom helped the invading Babylonian army attack Jerusalem and Edom took the opportunity to take over control of part of the Negev. Edom should have been Judah's ally, instead they encouraged the Babylonians. Obadiah writes to show that God is going to judge Edom for what she has done.

Purpose

The purpose of the book is to announce the destruction of Edom because of her pride and sin against Judah. The prophet also wants to comfort Judah by announcing Edom's destruction and Judah's restoration and deliverance in the Day of the Lord, or tribulation period. It is a book that deals with the judgment of the Gentiles, along with Jonah and Nahum.

As with the rest of the prophets, there is much information about the tribulation, or the Day of the Lord. The Law of Double Application is seen, where these prophecies have a near fulfillment but also a fulfillment that is much later in the future, sometimes up to 2,500 years in the future. Obadiah, as the other prophets, is pre-written history as well as past-recorded history. Jerusalem was attacked at the time of this writing. It was attacked many times after that, including 168 BC, AD 70, 135, and shall yet again be attacked by a hateful world under the leading of the Antichrist in the tribulation period.

“God does not pronounce morally on Esau in a full, complete, and absolute way until the last book of the Old Testament. It is only in Malachi that he says, "Esau have I hated." I could conceive nothing more dreadful than to say so in Genesis. Never does scripture represent God

as saying before the child was born and had manifested his iniquity and proud malice, "Esau have I hated." There is where the mind of man is so false. It is not meant, however, that God's *choice* was determined by the character of the individuals. This was to make man the ruler rather than God. Not so: God's choice flows out of His own wisdom and nature. It suits and is worthy of Himself; but the reprobation of any man and of every unbeliever is never a question of the sovereignty of God. It is the choice of God to do good where and how He pleases; it is never the purpose of His will to hate any man. There is no such doctrine in the Bible. I hold therefore that, while election is a most clear and scriptural truth, the consequence that men draw from election, namely, the reprobation of the non-elect, is a mere reproduction of fatalism, common to some heathen and all Moslems, the unfounded deduction of man's reasoning in divine things. But man's reasoning in the things of God, not being based on the divine revelations of His mind in His word, is good for nothing, but essentially and invariably false. It is impossible for man to reason justly in the abstract as to the will of God. The only safe or becoming ground is to adhere to the simple exposition of His own declarations; and this for the very simple reason that a man must reason from his own mind, and his own mind is far indeed from being God's mind. Reasoning means deduction according to the necessary laws of the human mind. Here, however, the groundwork being the will of God, faith to reason aright must reason from what God is according to what He Himself says. The danger is of inferring from what man is and from what man feels. Such is the essential difference between what is trustworthy and what is worthless in questions of the kind (William Kelly, *Lectures on Obadiah*).

Whoever Obadiah was, he possessed significant literary talent. He employed imagery, rhetorical questions, irony, repetition, and various forms of parallelism in his short prophecy. We wonder if this was a transcript of a sermon he preached.

No New Testament writer quotes from Obadiah.

Some writers hold that Obadiah is written in a covenant lawsuit form of address that was common in the ancient Near East. In this type of message, which many of the other writing prophets also used, there are certain formulaic sections. These are, most basically, a description of the scene of judgment and then the speech by the judge. This speech includes an address to the defendant (including reproach based on an accusation and a statement that the accused has no defense), the pronouncement of guilt, and the sentence. If so, Obadiah could be outlined as follows:

Outlines

I. Title (1a)

II. Description of the scene of judgment (nations arise for battle, 1b)

III. Speech by the Judge (2-21)

A. Three sentences (2-9)

1. First sentence (2-4)

. Second sentence (5-7)

. Third sentence (8-9)

B. Three pronouncements of guilt (10-14)

1. First pronouncement (10)

. Second pronouncement (11)

. Third pronouncement (12-14)

C. Sentence on the nations (15-16)

D. Promise of restoration (17-21) (Thomas Constable, *Notes on, Obadiah*, 2007, page 6)

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF EDOM (verse 1–16).

- THE CERTAINTY OF IT, verses 1–9.
 THE REASON FOR IT, verses 10–16.
 2. THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL (verses 17–21).
 THE PROMISE OF IT, verses 17–18.
 THE FULNESS OF IT, verses 19–21. (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*)

Booklist on Obadiah

- # By the author, John Cereghin
 @ Rosscup, James, *Old Testament Commentaries for Bible Expositors 1987-1992*
 ! Mathison, Keith, Top 5 Commentaries on Obadiah at Ligonier Ministries Website at <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-book-of-obadiah/>
 \$ *The Master's Seminary Journal*
 & Barber, Cyril, *The Minister's Library*

! Allen, Leslie C., *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 1976. A slightly technical work, but it should be accessible to most pastors and laymen.

@ Baker, D.W., Desmond Alexander, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary, 1988. 207 pages. Baker on Obadiah, Alexander on Jonah, and Waltke on Micah combine to write a good, concise conservative commentary. It is quite competent and carefully thought through. Baker sees Obadiah 21 fulfilled in a king on earth after the second advent (43) and defends the unity of vv. 17-21 with the earlier part of the book.

@ Beyer, Bryan and John H. Walton. *Obadiah/Jonah*. Bible Study Commentary, 1988. 122 pages.. Bryan teaches at Columbia Bible College and Walton at Moody Bible Institute. Bryan dates Obadiah after the 586 B.C. fall of Jerusalem, because vv. 10-14 describe Edom's gloating at that fall. He understands vv. 17-21 to teach a premillennial view with a future millennial kingdom after the second advent. Yet he never says it is millennial, only that it is God's kingdom. He finds a future resettling of Israel in its land.

! Busenitz, Irvin, *Joel and Obadiah*, Mentor Commentaries, 2003. Very clear and helpful contribution to the field. It is thorough yet accessible.

& Hillis, Don W., *The Book of Obadiah*, 1968. Studies based upon the English text. Will serve to introduce the layman to this particular prophecy.

& Feinberg, Charles Lee, *Obadiah: Doom Upon Edom*, 1948. An exposition of a brief but vital part of the prophetic Scripture.

! Niehaus, Jeff., *The Minor Prophets*, 2009. It is a technical but helpful study.

Phillips, John, *The Minor Prophets*, The John Phillips Commentary Series, 1998, 18 pages. A standard, conservative exposition with very useful outlines and illustrations.

Ruckman, Peter, *The Book of Minor Prophets, volume 1: Hosea- Nahum*. The Bible Believer's Commentary Series, 1979, 1984, pages 330-340. A solid work with a few unusual interpretations. Ruckman writes originally, with little influence from other commentaries, even to the point of disdaining the writings of other commentators. As all of his commentaries, this is

based on the King James Bible and is dispensational and premillennial, seeing many tribulation and millennial applications.

! Stuart, Douglas, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary, 1987. It is a must-read. Very highly recommended.

& Watts, John D. W., *Obadiah: A Critical, Exegetical Commentary*, 1969. A brief, scholarly treatment.

\$ Wolff, Hans Walter, *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*, 1986, 191 pages. The author, professor emeritus of Old Testament at the University of Heidelberg, views Obadiah and Jonah as addressing issues between Israel and the Gentile world by interpretation and the church and all humanity by application (p. 11). Yet in spite of this surface similarity, the books, the people addressed, and their contemporary counterparts differ considerably. Obadiah gathers prophetic sayings and has in view the suffering people of God, but Jonah is couched in narrative and struggles conversely with the duration and extent of God's mercy.

Commentary on Obadiah

1 The vision of Obadiah.^{a-b} Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumor from the LORD, and an ambassador^c is sent among the heathen,^d Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.

1a No introduction of Obadiah personally is given. He simply leaps into his burden and then disappears from the stage.

1b **“Obadiah”**= “Servant of Jehovah”.

1c Who is this ambassador? An unnamed prophet, or Jeremiah or maybe Obadiah himself? Obadiah may have worked with Jeremiah as there is some similar material between the two. But in days of great distress and in times of war, the rumors usually fly hot and heavy.

1d In this context, Edom.

2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen:^a thou art greatly despised.^{b-c}

2a As we will see, the Edomites were a very proud people, although they really had no reason to be. Edom was never a large kingdom nor a very important or powerful one. But that never stopped anyone from pride before. God always has a way of cutting the proud down to size. They became of no account in the latter Old Testament period and are of no consequence on a national or ethnic level today.

2b **“Greatly despised”** in Obadiah’s day. No one thought very well of the Edomites despite their self-serving propaganda. Today, who knows of Edom except for archaeologists and Bible scholars? And no one today lauds Edom for anything or for any of their accomplishments. People will laud ancient Rome or Greece but who praises Edom? Edom would be reduced from a potential regional power to a 4th-rate nation because they stood against Israel. One way to national suicide is to oppose Israel. England did that after World War I and that marked the end of the British Empire. Spain persecuted the Jews in the 1500s and God sunk their Great Armada and broke their power. The day the United States abandons Israel is the day that God will sign the death certificate for America once and for all.

2c The ESV translates the verse in the future tense while the Authorized Version says that Edom is small and is greatly despised NOW.

3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee,^a thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high;^b that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?^{c-d}

3a Pride is a great deceiver. It has us believe that we are something when we are really nothing. It has us believe that our name and our contributions to history will be remembered for ages when we may be forgotten soon after our death. It inflates our worth, our standing, our position and our status in the kingdom. No wonder it is one of the sins that God especially hates in Proverbs 6. No wonder this sin is constantly attacked in Scripture. Edom is as a smug, self-satisfied man who is deceived by his friends that he is safe.

3b **“habitation is high”** This may be a reference to Petra, a city carved out of cliffs, defended by very narrow passes. The entrance to Petra is a narrow passage about 4500 feet long, flanked by very high cliffs. The passage is so narrow that two horses cannot walk abreast through it. The layout of the area was such that a dozen men could have held off an army. But the judgment of God is not limited by geography or human defenses.

3c Part of Edom’s pride was in her natural defense, in her cliffs that she thought would protect her from any military invasion. It would be like England thinking that the seas around her would be a natural protection from invasion. After all, Hitler was never able to invade England during World War II. The United States may take similar pride in her natural defenses. But God has no difficulty overcoming any such barriers. He created the cliffs and topography of Edom, so He would have no difficulty overcoming it. To work your way into Edom, it was necessary to enter through narrow rocky terrain at an area called Petra. A million-man army would have to enter one man at a time. This caused the Edomites to feel very secure in their stronghold. Edom’s natural defenses were imposing. Its main centers of civilization were situated in a narrow ridge of mountainous land southeast of the Dead Sea, exceeding 4,000 feet throughout its northern sector, rising in places to 5,700 feet in the south. Its height was rendered more inaccessible by the gorges radiating from it toward the Arabah on the west and the desert eastwards. In addition to these natural fortifications, Edom was strongly defended by a series of Iron Age fortresses, particularly on the eastern frontier where the land descended more gradually to the desert. “One reason why Judean kings such as Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Amaziah and Uzziah warred against Edom was that they coveted control of the lucrative route that passed through Elath and Ezion-geber. But the Edomites were hard to subdue. They could sally out and wage war or hold up caravans and demand tribute, and no one could stop them, for their strongholds were virtually impregnable. So they became rich, insolent and proud (John Phillips, *The Minor Prophets*, page 123).” Since Edom controlled the area of the Gulf of Aqaba, they also demanded customs from the ships of Tarshish that carried the gold of Ophir through the area. The Edomites also exacted heavy tribute from the merchant caravans that passed through their territory.

3d **“Who shall bring me down...?”** Edom had high hopes of becoming at least a regional power, which would necessitate Israel’s destruction. In order to build themselves up, the Edomites believed they would have to tear Israel down and they saw an opportunity to do just that by helping the Babylonians. Who would bring Edom down? God certainly would have no difficulty in doing so, as He proved in history.

4 Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle,^{a-b} and though thou set thy nest among the stars,^c thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.

4a Exalting yourself is worthless and ultimately self-defeating unless God is also exalting you. Anyone can exalt himself. That takes no gifts, skills or talents. But all is vain unless it is God Who is doing the exalting.

4b **“eagle”** It is interesting that the Roman Empire would use an eagle on its standards, as does the United States. God brought down proud Rome, even as they exalted themselves as an eagle. America has always been a proud nation, likening itself to an eagle. But if God had no problem clipping the wings of the Roman eagle, what does that say about the American eagle?

4c **“set thy nest among the stars”** Man has reached the moon multiple times and has sent spacecraft to the ends of the solar system. But God can still bring down man from such lofty

perches without any difficulty. No matter how high you build your defenses or how strongly you fortify yourself, God still will have no difficulty bringing you down.

5 If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?^a

5a At least the thief doesn't completely clean you out. He will leave something of lesser value behind, or something he didn't want or couldn't take with him. But when God visited Edom, nothing would be left. He would totally clean Edom out and there would be nothing left when He was finished. Malachi, writing 400 years later, showed the fulfillment of Obadiah's prediction in Malachi 1:3. By 312 B.C. the capital of Edom was in Nabatean hands, and Edom had ceased to exist as a nation. God will promise to leave a remnant of Israel, even after the most severe of judgments but there would be no remnant of Edom left at all.

6 How are *the things* of Esau searched out!^a how are his hidden things sought up!^b

6a The ESV has "pillaged".

6b Nothing escapes the omnipresent eye of God, especially when He is undertaking a judgment like this.

7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat thy bread* have laid a wound under thee:^a *there is none* understanding in him.

7a Even Edom's allies would fail them in the day of God's judgment as no one wants to be tarred and feathered with the person under such a judgment. Many of Edom's "friends" would have helped the Lord in His judgment upon them if they could. There is no honor among thieves, nor is there any among the nations when one is going under.

8 Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?^a

8a If Edom had any "claim to fame", it would have had a reputation to contain some wise men, but they would be of no help in the day of the Lord's visitation. Because of its communications with Babylon and Egypt and because of the information gleaned through the caravans going to and from Europe and India,

Edom had also gained a reputation for wisdom. They were not a spiritual people as Father Esau was a man of the flesh.

9 And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.^a

9a These “**mighty men**” would be the military men. The “wise men” (scholars, politicians, diplomats, businessmen) and the “mighty men” (soldiers) would both be cut off in the day of judgment.

10^a For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob^b shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.^c

10a Verses 10-16 fill in some of the blanks in the historical account of Jeremiah 52, and gives some material that Jeremiah did not record about the fall of Jerusalem.

10b The Lord gives the reason for this judgment, for the way they treated Israel in the day the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem.

10c “**cut off forever**” The judgment on Edom would be thorough and eternal. They would not rise again from the ashes of this judgment.

11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.^{a-b}

11a Edom did not physically invade Judah or Jerusalem, but the fact that they helped and encouraged the Babylonians and hindered the Jewish defense and flight made them an accomplice. They did nothing to aid their brother but rather did what they could to harm Israel. They instead encouraged the Babylon army and acted as a cheerleader, as recorded in Psalm 137:7, when they said “Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation.”

11b Edom’s sins:

1. They stood on the other side 11
2. They assisted the Babylonian army 11
3. They looked upon the distress of Israel and did nothing 12
4. They rejoiced over the suffering of Israel 12
5. They spoke proudly against Israel in that day 12
6. They entered into the city with the Babylonian army 13
7. They looked upon the affliction of the city 13
8. They partook in the plundering of the city 13
9. They cut off the escape routes of fleeing Jews 14
10. They delivered up escaping Jews they captured to the Babylonians 14

12 But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.^{a-b}

12a Attitude is everything. Edom rejoiced and boasted against Israel in this day, for which the Lord condemns. God commanded the Jews not to abhor the Edomite in Deuteronomy 23:7,8 because they were brothers. The Jews never really lived up to that command and the Edomites were not about to extend any brotherly kindness to Israel.

12b The ESV totally butchers the verse. The Authorized Version condemns Edom for what they have already done. The ESV translates it as an admonition, as if warning Edom that they should not rejoice at Israel's misfortune. The ESV does the same thing in verse 13 and 14.

13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity;^a

13a The Edomites profited from the destruction of Jerusalem by partaking in the spoil. Whether they snatched it themselves or whether the Babylonians cut them in as a reward for their help is not mentioned, but it makes no difference as one was as bad as the other and God would judge them regardless. The Edomites looted Jerusalem like some would loot a city after a hurricane.

14 Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.^a

14a The Edomites did everything they could to help the Babylonians and to hinder the Jews during the invasion. The Edomites guarded the escape routes to block any fleeing Jews. When they caught any fleeing Jews, they turned them over to the Babylonian army, where they faced death. Those who were not killed were probably sold into slavery.

15 For the day of the LORD^{a-b} is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.^c

15a The **Day of the LORD** involves the judgments of God upon both the Babylonians and the Edomites in this context, but especially the Edomites. Prophetically, it involves the tribulation period judgments against the Gentiles. The judgment of Edom was near time-wise at the giving of this prophecy, as Edom soon fell under the hand of God after their activities at the fall of Jerusalem. The tribulation fulfillment of this prophecy will take a little longer, 2,500 years or so right now and still counting.

15b Biblical unfolding of the "Day of the Lord":

1. It is among those who are proud and lofty

1. Isaiah 2:12) For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

2. It comes as a destruction from God

1. Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

2. Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

3. It is cruel, with wrath and fierce anger

1. Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

2. Zephaniah 2:2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

4. It will lay the land desolate

1. Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
2. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
5. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance
 1. Isaiah 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.
 2. Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.
 3. Zephaniah 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.
6. None will escape it
 1. Lamentations 2:22 Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.
 2. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
7. It is a cloudy day
 1. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.
8. It is a day of the heathen, when they will be judged
 1. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.
 2. Obadiah 15 For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.
9. It is "at hand"
 1. Joel 2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;
10. It is great and very terrible
 1. Joel 2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?
11. The sun will be darkened and the moon "turned to blood" before that day
 1. Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.
 2. Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come
12. It is a day of darkness
 1. Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.
 2. Amos 5:20 Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
13. Some people were actually looking forward to it and are rebuked
 1. Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.

1. Zephiniah1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.
14. It is associated with a sacrifice
15. The strong and mighty men will cry because of it
 1. Zephiniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.
16. Elijah will return before that day
 1. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
17. It is a great and dreadful day
 1. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
18. It comes as a thief in the night
 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
 2. 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.
19. The heavens will pass away and the elements will melt in that day
 1. 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

15c **“thy reward shall return upon thy head”** As Edom refused to aid or comfort his brother in the day of his visitation, no one would help Edom in the day when God would visit them. They also would suffer alone, without friend, and no one would mourn them when they were gone.

16 For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.^a

16a The picture is God forcibly making Edom drink from the cup of His judgment, regardless of any attempts of the Edomites to prevent it. God’s judgments simply cannot be avoided. The heathen will be judged and they will be forced to drink deep of this cup. In the tribulation, God will judge the Gentile world powers under the Antichrist, despite their best efforts to avoid it. This cup is similar to the one Jeremiah talks about in Jeremiah 25:15-38.

16b “This “cup of fury” (Psalm 75:8) will be poured out as a recompense for the heathen getting drunk on Mt. Zion (Obadiah 16) following Nebuchadnezzar’s carnage (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, volume 1).”

17^a But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.^b

17a Verses 17-21 is mainly yet prophetic, pointing to the tribulation period and the millennium. While Edom had only condemnation to look forward to, Israel had restoration promised in their future.

17b Despite the best attempts of the Gentile world powers (Edom and Babylon in this context), God will save His people and bring deliverance to them. Israel would end up possessing the land possessions and the riches of their enemies. Israel would own those who tried to destroy them. This was never fulfilled in the Old Testament, so the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy would be millennial.

18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them;^a and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau;^b for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

18a See Zechariah 12:6. Edom would be destroyed by those they tried to destroy. Edom may have thought that the Babylonian invasion, coupled with the Assyrian Captivity of the northern tribes would spell the end of Israel and they would never rise again. Yet Israel would be back in the land and possessing Jerusalem in just 70 short years later. The beaten and exiled people would return to consume their enemies. Again, this did not happen in the Old Testament but it will be fulfilled in the Millennium when Israel would be the praise of the whole earth and none will be able to stand against them. Israel, thought to have been destroyed, shall be the instrument of the final overthrow and destruction of Edom. This was not fulfilled in the Old Testament so its fulfillment must yet be future, in the tribulation and millennium. There is no restoration of a remnant, as in the case of Elam and others (Jeremiah 49:39).

18b "...**not be any remaining...**" Malachi 1:3-5 says "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel." This makes it clear that over 200 years later, Edom was still suffering the effects of God's judgments. The land was still impoverished and desolate. The remaining Edomites were determined to rebuild their kingdom and reclaim their former glory, but God would not allow it. Whatever they managed to rebuild, God would simply tear it down.

19 And *they of the south*^a shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they of the plain the Philistines*: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.^b

19a The ESV has "Negeb" for "the south", obscuring the meaning.

19b This was partially fulfilled in the Old Testament as Israel did come into some control of the land of the Philistines and the Edomites, but never fully or finally. That will be fulfilled in the Millennium when Israel will come into their full land grant as laid out in the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel never did come into possession of all the land promised to them, even in the glory days of David and Solomon, But they will in the millennium.

20 And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, *even* unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which *is* in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.^{a-b}

20a Although Israel was being removed from the land in exile, they would return after 70 years and repossess the lands that they had lost. This would also included the second fulfillment, after the tribulation and into the millennium, when Israel would enter into its full land grant that was promised to Abraham. This would include the land of the Canaanites. Were there still a remnant of Canaanites in the land in this day?

20b The ESV has “Negeb” for “the south”, obscuring the meaning.

21 And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau;^a and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.^{b-c}

21a See Micah 5:5, where God says that He will raise up “seven shepherds and eight principle men” against “the Assyrian” (the Antichrist) when he comes into the land towards the end of the tribulation period. These will be seven religious leaders and eight political and military leaders in Israel that will lead the defense against the Antichrist. Could these 15 men be the saviors upon Mount Zion that Obadiah mentions?

21b This has to be millennial for Israel never judged Edom like this in the Old Testament. The millennial context is seen in the last phrase regarding the Kingdom. There would be saviors on Mount Zion to deliver Israel from the genocide of the Antichrist in the tribulation. What the Edomites did in 586 BC is a type of what the Antichrist and his followers will do, leading up to the assault on Jerusalem just before Armageddon and the Second Coming.

21c Most of the commentator’s will change the idea behind the “saviours” and make them anything but what we proposed above, in their unwillingness to interpret and apply the verse literally or prophetically. They also tend to do this in verse 17. Arno Gaebelin, in the *Annotated Bible*, proposes the “saviours” are “The Saviours mentioned in the last verse of this prophecy (or deliverers) must mean the chosen instruments which go forth to teach all nations and make known the glory of the King in their midst. For "the Kingdom shall be the Lord's." No, they must refer rather to the leaders of Israel’s resistance to the Antichrist in the tribulation.

J. Vernon McGee offers “saviours” should be translated “deliverers” (*Thru The Bible*, 3:736). Not even the ESV makes that mistake.

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Wordlist in Obadiah (words followed by number of appearances in the book)

day	12	hands	1	captive	1
Esau	7	people	1	mighty	1
lord	6	battle	1	escape	1
mount	6	ground	1	grapegatherers	1
possess	6	stubble	1	saviours	1
house	5	possessions	1	delivered	1
cut	4	exalt	1	stood	1
even	4	thieves	1	lots	1
men	4	hidden	1	God	1
heathen	4	pride	1	away	1
off	4	dwellest	1	continually	1
calamity	3	remaining	1	strangers	1
against	3	sent	1	prevailed	1
down	3	Philistines	1	enough	1
Jacob	3	kingdom	1	Ephraim	1
bring	2	clefts	1	Benjamin	1
children	2	return	1	eagle	1
laid	2	rejoiced	1	rock	1
captivity	2	rise	1	slaughter	1
fields	2	made	1	host	1
brother	2	every	1	devour	1
deceived	2	crossway	1	let	1
drink	2	gate	1	grapes	1
understanding	2	Canaanites	1	cities	1
south	2	bread	1	come	1
distress	2	rumour	1	stoodest	1
spoken	2	brought	1	substance	1
one	2	stranger	1	violence	1
Jerusalem	2	holiness	1	greatly	1
entered	2	leave	1	swallow	1
heart	2	night	1	own	1
Zion	2	small	1	drunk	1
Edom	2	robbers	1	habitation	1
looked	2	side	1	despised	1
ambassador	1	vision	1	Joseph	1
lords	1	judge	1	stars	1
Zarephath	1	set	1	destruction	1
foreigners	1	affliction	1	became	1

head	1	flame	1	wound	1
holy	1	confederacy	1	Gilead	1
fire	1	Sepharad	1	other	1
proudly	1	kindle	1	forces	1
concerning	1	deliverance	1	destroy	1
Israel	1	arise	1	behold	1
eat	1	near	1	dismayed	1
carried	1	high	1	Obadiah	1
none	1	heard	1	nest	1
stolen	1	sought	1	gates	1
wise	1	border	1	cover	1
shame	1	mountain	1	remain	1
plain	1	end	1	searched	1
will	1	Samaria	1	reward	1
cast	1	Judah	1		
Temán	1	peace	1		

