

Obadiah—Inductive Bible Studies for Youth

For best results, because we carefully examine the meaning of many words, all members of the class should use the New King James version of the Bible.

Vs 1

- Obadiah is part of a group of books called the Minor Prophets (in contrast to the Major Prophets). The designation major and minor prophets was made by Bible scholars. It has nothing to do with the importance of the book or the message, since all of God’s Word is important. Compare the lengths of the major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel with the minor prophets like Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. Why do you think the last three are called minor prophets?
- Who had this vision?
- From Bible Dictionaries we learn this about Obadiah:
 - His name mean’s “Yahweh’s (God’s) servant
 - Eleven different men named Obadiah are mentioned in the Bible, all around the time of the kings and the prophets, as well as the time of the return of Israel to Jerusalem after the exile. However, the prophet Obadiah who wrote the book Obadiah seems to have been a different person from any of these. We know nothing about his personal life.
 - Because of the message he gives, he is believed to have been a contemporary of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, at the time preceding and going into the exile.
- Which is more important in your opinion—that the man is remembered, or that his message for God is remembered? Why?
- If Obadiah had not written this book, he might have been forgotten entirely. Are you doing something with your life that will be remembered

after you are gone from this earth?

- From whom did Obadiah get his message?
- What nation did his message concern?
- Who was Edom? From whom were they descended? (See Genesis 25:30.)
- Esau was lacking in self control and in spiritual discernment from the beginning. He does not seem to have had a heart for God. To make matters worse, he married two Canaanite women who were wicked and idolatrous. Therefore his descendants, also closely related to Israel, tended not to seek the God who had revealed Himself to their father Abraham. Do you come from a believing family? Are you yourself seeking God?
- The land of Edom was south of the Dead Sea. It was almost a desert with infertile soil that did not grow good crops. The people who lived there were semi-nomadic, moving around a lot and living in tents. What people have you heard of who live like this even today?
- One area had access to more water and was home to several villages. The modern town called Buseirah is built in that area on the ruins of the ancient capital from Bible times, Bozrah. That ancient capital was named after the great Edomite leader who is also mentioned in Isaiah 63:1 and in Jeremiah 49:22 and in Amos 1:11-12. How are the men of Bozrah described in Jer. 49:22?
- The city Petra (also called Sela) was also a part of Edom. What does 2 Kings 14:7 say about this great city?
- Another name for Edom was Teman (Amos 1:12) and another Idumea. Teman was one of Esau's sons who became a great chief over the southern part of the land of Edom. How is this similar to or different from the way

cities in your country are named?

- The Israelites regarded the Edomites as close relatives, descendants of their father Abraham. However, they were also regarded as bitter rivals, probably going back to the strife between Jacob and Esau, and Esau's treachery in that case. When Israel was returning from the Exodus in Egypt, the Edomites refused to let them go through their land (Numbers 20:14-21). Both King Saul and King David fought battles with the Edomites. Do you know of closely related groups in your country who have difficulties getting along?
- Israel gained ascendancy over the Edomites in the time of King Jehoshaphat. Do you know of ethnic groups where the ascendancy or power seems to go back and forth?
- The Edomites later came under control of the growing kingdoms of Assyrian, then Babylonia and Persia. Some believe they assisted the Babylonians in their attacks against Israel. Keep this in mind as you read the prophecies Obadiah wrote about them. We don't know for sure that Edom aided Babylon in attacking Israel, but can you see how this must have been a big temptation for them? Why?
- Another passage similar to the message of Obadiah is Jeremiah 49:7-22. Look at the beginning of this passage. Is it for Edom or against it?
- In Jeremiah 49:8, what does God say He is going to do to Edom?
- By New Testament times, Arabic people groups had invaded and taken over the fertile part of Edom to the east, and only the western part was still referred to as Idumea. Herod the Great, who ruled Israel at the time of the birth of Jesus, was of Idumean descent. Of course, this was after the time when Obadiah wrote his prophecy. Keep this in mind as we look in detail at

what God inspired Obadiah to write.

Now, back to Obadiah vs. 1

- Who is ultimately giving judgment on Edom?
- What is going to happen to Edom?
- Who is it who will be putting in the hearts of nations to fight against Edom?

Obadiah vs. 2

- What will Edom's position be amongst the nations?
- What will the attitude of nations toward them be?
- Why do you think this would bother the leaders of Edom?

Obadiah vs. 3

- What is the big sin of the Edomites?
- What effect has this sin had on them?
- The Edomites lived in rocky land and had built fortresses there high up in the rocks that were very strong and provided excellent defense against enemies. What did this cause them to say in their hearts?

Obadiah vs. 4

- God gives examples of two other great heights. What were they?

- Could they have reached these heights?
- They felt they had reached the highest heights possible. What do you think God intends to do by mentioning these other heights?
- Yet even if they did, what does God say He will do to them?
- Of what other character does this passage remind you? (It reminds many of Satan, who was also lifted up by pride and was also brought down by God.)

Obadiah vs. 5

- Verse 5 again gives two comparisons. What are they?
- Is Edom compared positively or negatively with them?
- What do you think is the point of the verse? (The Edomites were apparently very greedy. They have taken far more than they need, far more than they can use.)
- Why are they worse than robbers who come in the night?
- The law of gleaning said that when reapers picked grapes (or any crop), they must not pick up what fell on the ground and must not go over the plants again to get every last fruit. They must leave some to be available for the poor. Apparently Edom did not do this. What does this imply about Edom?

Obadiah vs. 6

- With what founding ancestor did God identify Edom? How was the Edom of Obadiah's time like their founding ancestor? What traits did they share

in common?

- Are the traits you are displaying today in your life those that you would like to pass on to your children?
- Edom's treasure were hidden high up in rocky fortresses in an out-of-the way place in the middle of an arid, semi-desert like land. Yet what does God say will happen to them?

Obadiah vs. 7

- What is a confederacy? Should those in Edom's confederacy be for them or against them?
- What will happen to Edom in the future?
- Who will do this to them?
- How will they be drawn away from their carefully hidden treasures in their rocky fortresses?
- One would think that since God clearly gave them this warning, they would have avoided the trap. How is it that God could so clearly warn them of this plan and yet they would fall into it?
- Is God warning you about something, but you are trying to ignore His warning?

Obadiah vs. 8

- What kind of men lived in Edom?

- What would God do to them, despite their wisdom?
- What would they have done if they had true godly wisdom?

Obadiah vs. 9

- Besides wise men, what other kind of men lived in Edom?
- Teman was the southernmost town in Edom, founded by Esau's son Teman. What will happen to the mighty men of Teman?
- What will happen to the entire population?
- Do you sometimes act as if you are wiser or stronger than God? How? What should you remember?

Obadiah vs. 10

- Why will Edom be covered with shame and cut off forever?
- When did this violence begin?
- At what times in Edom's history did they show violence toward their brother Jacob (who became the nation Israel)?

Obadiah vs. 11

- What has Edom done that angered God?
- What was their offense against Jerusalem?

- Who did they aid that they should not have?

Obadiah vs. 12

- What was Edom's offense when Israel was in trouble?
- What does God say about this?
- Do you ever rejoice when something bad happens to a rival? What does God think about this?
- The children of Edom spoke proudly in the day of Israel's distress. When someone else was in trouble, have you ever talked as if you were proud that you were better than they?

Obadiah vs. 13

- How did Edom take advantage of Israel in the day of their calamity?
- What does God call Israel in this verse? Why do you think God called them in such a way?
- What was God's evaluation of Edom's acts?

Obadiah vs. 14

- What further crimes did Edom commit against Israel?
- What was God's evaluation of these acts?
- Notice that God judged not only their general enmity toward Israel, but each specific act of hostility. Have you ever acted or spoken against Israel?

If so, what do you need to do?

Obadiah vs. 15

- Obadiah warned that what time was near?
- Obadiah warns that “as you have done, it shall be done to you.” What words of Jesus does this remind you of? How was this teaching of Jesus different?
- Where will the reprisal of Edom return?
- Does this remind you of the statement that “Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7)? In what way?

Obadiah vs. 16

- Where did Edom drink?
- Mount Zion is another name for what city? In what country?
- We are not told exactly what kind of drinking this was, but we can tell that it was not good. What do you envision?
- The words “drank on my holy mountain” gives a sense of trespassing, or being where one should not be. What was wrong with Edom being on the holy mountain? For what purpose did Edom go there?
- God did not view Edom’s transgression as an isolated incident. In what way was it part of a larger picture or the larger pattern of events? (Let the students try to answer this. Hint: God saw the nations of the world persecuting and finally gathering against Israel to try to destroy her in the end times. Maybe God even foresaw this when he told Abraham that “he

who blesses you I will bless and he who curses you I will curse” (Genesis 12:3). Edom’s act was one step in that direction.

- What will be the final result of nations who come against Israel?

Obadiah vs. 17

- In contrast to utter destruction, what will happen on Mount Zion?
- God says that “the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions”. Who was Jacob in relation to Esau? Who was he in relation to the Messiah?

Obadiah vs. 18

- What metaphor does God use to describe the house (family) of Jacob? (Hint: A metaphor is when we compare one thing to another by saying it is that thing, such as “my love is a sweet flower.”)
- What metaphor does God use to describe the house (family) of Joseph?
- Who was Joseph? (He was one of the 12 sons of Jacob, founder of two tribes of the Israelites—Ephraim and Manasseh).
- What was the house (family) of Esau (Edom) be in comparison?
- What will Israel do to Edom?
- Every family wants the family name to be passed down to future generations through its sons. Every family wants to grow large and prosperous. Yet because of Edom’s treachery against Israel, what terrible

thing will happen to them?

Obadiah vs. 19

- What shifts in borders or ownership of land did God predict for the future? Who would possess the mountains of Esau in the future?

Obadiah vs. 20

- What was the condition of some of the children of Israel at the time Obadiah wrote his message?
- What change in their condition would take place in the future?
- What totally pagan people would they displace?
- What was the condition of some of the people of Jerusalem at the time Obadiah wrote?
- What change would take place for them in the future?
- Bible scholars are not sure where “Sepharad” was, and there are many interpretations and different thoughts on the issue. It seems to be some land far away from Jerusalem to which inhabitants of Jerusalem were taken in captivity. Even the location is uncertain, what is the clear meaning of the prophecy?
- “The cities of the south” is a reference to Edom. Do you remember the name of the southernmost city of Edom, founded by one of Esau’s sons? (Teman)

Obadiah vs. 21

- Then what will come to Mount Zion?
- Is this word singular or plural, and what is the significance of that? (Plural—It refers to deliverers and not to the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.)
- “Mount Zion” is another name for what city? (Jerusalem)
- These deliverers will come to Jerusalem, but they will judge Edom. Where, then, will Edomites be found at the time?
- Think back to previous verses in Obdiah. Why will they be in Jerusalem?
- What will God do to them there?
- Against this background of human struggle over territory, riches, and power, what is the conclusion of the whole matter?
- If you can remember that ultimately, the kingdom is the Lord’s, how can this help you in your daily life?

Looking Back

- Can you summarize God’s judgment against Edom?
- Can you summarize God’s gracious promises to Israel in this book?
- What big principles have you learned from the book of Obadiah?
- What changes will you make in your life as a result of these teachings?
- The Edomites seem to have inherited from their ancestor Esau a hatred of the Israelites. This could have been passed on by word of mouth or even by

tone of voice and body language when speaking about them. It could have had a spiritual basis. That is, Esau could have opened himself to demonic influence and passed on these familiar (family) spirits to his offspring. This ultimately brought them to destruction. What evil tendencies might you have inherited from your ancestors? Will you seek deliverance from any spiritual influences inherited from your ancestors?

- The Edomites were judged for hostility to Israel. Will you conclude this study with a prayer of blessing on God's ancient people?

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