

## **You Stood Aloof: Obadiah 1 Explained**

### **Scriptures for Today**

#### **Obadiah 1:10-14**

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. 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. 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. 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; 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.

### **Introduction — The Book of Obadiah**

The book of Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It contains only one chapter, but the message is very powerful. Obadiah is a prophecy against the nation of Edom. To understand this book, you have to go all the way back to the book of Genesis. Edom comes from Esau, and Israel comes from Jacob. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers.

#### **Genesis 25:23**

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels.

From those two brothers came two nations. Jacob became the father of the nation of Israel. Esau became the father of the nation of Edom. So the conflict between Israel and Edom goes back generations. These were brother nations, but Edom continually acted like an enemy.

Throughout the Old Testament we see tension between them. Edom refused to help Israel during their journey to the Promised Land.

#### **Numbers 20:18**

And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

Later, Edom continued to oppose Israel again and again. Then toward the end of the history of Judah something devastating happened. The city of Jerusalem was invaded and destroyed by the Babylonians. The temple was burned. The walls were broken down. The people were taken captive. The Bible records this event very clearly.

**2 Kings 25:8-10**

And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Jerusalem was destroyed. The temple was burned. The people were taken away into captivity. And during that time of disaster, Edom did something shameful. Instead of helping their brother nation, they celebrated the destruction. The Bible even records what Edom said while Jerusalem was being destroyed.

**Psalm 137:7**

Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

So by the time we get to the book of Obadiah, something very serious has happened. Jerusalem has been attacked. Enemies came into the city. The people were taken captive. The nation was suffering.

And during that time of disaster, Edom did something shameful. Instead of helping their brother nation, they stood by and watched. They even took advantage of the situation. They celebrated Judah's fall. They participated in the destruction. And because of that, God pronounces judgment on Edom. That's what this passage is about.

## **Violence Against Your Brother**

**Obadiah 1:10**

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

The problem begins with violence against their brother. Notice the wording carefully. God calls Israel "thy brother Jacob." That language reminds us that this was not just another foreign nation. Edom and Israel came from the same family line.

These were not strangers. These were relatives. Yet Edom treated their brother nation with violence. They showed hostility, cruelty, and hatred toward the people that came from the same family.

Because of that, God says something very serious. "Shame shall cover thee." Instead of honor, they will receive shame. Instead of victory, they will be remembered for their disgrace. Then the verse continues with an even stronger statement.

“Thou shalt be cut off for ever.” That means the nation of Edom would eventually disappear. Their pride and violence would lead to their destruction.

History confirms this. The nation of Edom eventually vanished. Their cities disappeared. Their kingdom collapsed. The people were scattered. God’s word came to pass exactly as He said.

## **You Stood on the Other Side**

### **Obadiah 1:11**

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.

This verse describes the moment when Jerusalem was under attack. Strangers carried away the people captive. Foreigners entered the gates of the city. They took control of Jerusalem. They cast lots over the city, dividing the spoils among themselves.

Jerusalem was being destroyed. And what did Edom do? The Bible says “**thou stoodest on the other side.**” They stood back and watched. They did nothing to help. But the verse ends with a very important statement.

“**Even thou wast as one of them.**” God says that standing by and watching made them just as guilty. They may not have started the invasion, but their indifference made them participants. They acted as if the destruction of their brother nation meant nothing to them.

God makes it clear that indifference during injustice is not innocent. It is wrong.

## **Rejoicing in Your Brother’s Destruction**

### **Obadiah 1:12**

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.

Now God begins listing specific things Edom did wrong.

First, they **looked on**. They watched the destruction happen. Second, they **rejoiced**. They celebrated the downfall of Judah. Instead of mourning the suffering of their brother nation, they were glad to see it happen. Third, they **spoke proudly in the day of distress**. That means they mocked Judah. They spoke arrogantly about the destruction.

God says they should never have done these things. Watching disaster with pleasure reveals a wicked heart. When your brother falls, and you rejoice over that, this shows a wicked heart.

## Taking Advantage of Disaster

### Obadiah 1:13

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;

Edom did more than just watch. They entered the city. They came into the gates of Jerusalem while the nation was suffering. They looked at the destruction. And then they **laid hands on their substance**.

That means they took the possessions of the people. They looted the city. They took advantage of Judah's weakest moment. God calls it "**the day of their calamity.**" Instead of helping their brother nation, Edom used the disaster as an opportunity to gain wealth.

## Cutting Off the Escape

### Obadiah 1:14

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.

This verse describes one of the worst things Edom did. When people were fleeing the destruction of Jerusalem, Edom stood at the crossroads. They waited along the escape routes. When fugitives tried to escape, Edom captured them.

They handed them over to the enemy. Instead of helping their brothers escape danger, they helped capture them. This was betrayal. They betrayed their own relatives. They helped deliver them into the hands of those who wanted to destroy them. God saw this cruelty, and He would not ignore it.

## The Eight Sins of Edom

In Obadiah 1:10–14, God is not speaking in vague terms. He actually lists the specific things Edom did when Jerusalem was under attack. As you read the passage carefully, you can see eight sins that build on each other.

First, Edom committed **violence against their brother**. They acted with hostility toward a nation that came from the same family. Israel was their brother nation, yet they treated them like enemies.

Second, they **stood on the other side** while Jerusalem was attacked. Instead of helping, they stood back and watched.

Third, they **became like the attackers themselves**. By standing with the enemies of Judah, they placed themselves on the side of the invaders.

Fourth, they **looked on the destruction**. They watched the disaster with interest instead of grief.

Fifth, they **rejoiced over Judah's destruction**. They celebrated the downfall of their brother nation.

Sixth, they **spoke proudly in the day of distress**. They mocked the suffering of the people.

Seventh, they **entered the city and took the spoils**. They took advantage of the disaster and looted the city.

Eighth, they **captured the escaping fugitives**. They stood at the crossroads and captured people who were trying to flee.

### **The Progression of Sin**

Notice how the sin grows worse step by step. First they **watched**. Then they **celebrated**. Then they **mocked**. Then they **looted**. Then they **captured people trying to escape**.

Sin often works this way. It rarely starts with the worst action. It grows step by step until people are doing things they never thought they would do. That is exactly what happened with Edom.

And because of these actions, God declared that the nation would be judged and eventually destroyed.

### **Practical Applications**

- 1. God Sees How We Treat Others.** Edom thought no one would notice. But God saw their actions.
- 2. Standing By Can Still Be Sin.** Edom didn't always attack directly. Sometimes they simply stood by and watched. God still held them accountable.
- 3. Rejoicing at Someone's Fall Is Wicked.** God condemns Edom for celebrating Judah's destruction.
- 4. God Judges Pride and Cruelty.** Edom's pride led them to mistreat their brother nation.

## Conclusion

Edom thought they were safe. They stood on the sidelines. They watched Judah fall. They celebrated the disaster. They took advantage of the suffering. They captured those who were trying to escape.

But God saw everything. And God declared judgment. The message of Obadiah reminds us of something very important. God sees how we treat people. Especially those who are closest to us.

And when people stand by during injustice, celebrate destruction, or take advantage of suffering, God will hold them accountable. Because the God of the Bible sees everything. And He is the righteous judge.

Let's pray.