

Ricardo Scheffer: Obadiah - Jehovah's Servant (15/12/18)

Introduction:

Obadiah is one of the Minor Prophets; but not because it is minor in importance. It is the shortest book in the Old Testament - it only contains 21 verse.

It is about the Divine judgments of God upon the people of Edom (an ancient kingdom located between Moab to the northeast).

The author of the book is Obadiah; however, it is uncertain which of the many Obadiah's that get a mention in the Old Testament.

In the times of Obadiah it was common for the rulers to have servants, but Obadiah identifies not as the servant of a ruler, but of God.

The message of Obadiah is relevant to us today. It is easy to recognise that God is always right when things are going well, but what about when things don't go as planned? What about when bad things happen to us or around us? What do we perceive then?

Obadiah's Message:

Obadiah 1:1 - Obadiah didn't truly understand why God's wrath was about to be cut loose on Edom. "It's not fair" he thought.

Even though Obadiah didn't think it was fair, or understand why, he trusted God and believed He was right.

The Vision in Three Parts:

1. Revelation
2. Inspiration
3. Action

Who was Edom? and why did he get that name?

- Genesis 36:1,8 - Esau is Edom. The kingdom that Obadiah was addressing began with the descendants of Esau.
- Genesis 25:30 - He was given the name because he was a man of the flesh. A man who gave up the spiritual blessing of the birth right for a pot of red stew. He was not so spiritual as Jacob was.
- The principles of Edom were very "instant gratifications" focussed. They wanted what they wanted, and they wanted them now.

Obadiah 1:1 - "we have heard a report..."

- Other translations say "we have heard the good news"
- The gospel had been preached.

Obadiah 1:2 - "small..."

- Nobody wants to small (unrecognised).
- Edom tried to be big (by using the mountains as their strength), but they were made small.
- The first problem identified with Edom was pride.

Obadiah 1:3 - "the pride in their heart..."

- Sometimes we ignore the sin of pride in society and the church...
- Proverbs 6:16 - Yet pride is identified as the chiefest of sins - the root of all other sins.
- "Pride is the crazy idea to intend to live without God." Ricardo Scheffer
- Edom was also known as Idumea. There was a point where the mountain had an altitude of about 1700m above sea level.
- They felt confident in the fortification of their surroundings.

Obadiah 1:4 - "though you exalt yourself... I will bring you down..."

- We are all tempted to trust in our own sufficiency.
- This is how we know that Obadiah's prophecy is for us!

The Reasons for Edom's Pride:

- Treasures/Riches (vs 6)
- Allies/Friends (vs 7)
- Wisdom (vs 8)
- Army (vs 9)

They were a centre of commerce. They became rich, obtained many allies and friends, and had much confidence/pride in these things. They felt secure in their position, but they were betrayed by their friends. They trusted in human wisdom and felt confident/proud because of what they knew. They also had a great army which made them feel invincible. But no one is invincible outside of their connection with God.

Obadiah 1:5 - Contrary to the way things usually work, Edom was completely plundered when they came against it - nothing was left.

Edom's Sins:

- Violence (vs 10,11)
- Indifference/Cynicism (vs 12,13)
- Cruelty (vs 14)

God condemns violence, but Edom was a violent people. God cannot be indifferent and it is therefore against His principles to be indifferent and cynical toward others. Cruelty is something that will incur the judgment of God, as with the other two.

Obadiah 1:15,16 - "the day of the LORD..."

- In the judgment God promised to make right the wrongs of Edom by putting it back on their own heads.
- So too with the coming judgment.

Obadiah 1:17 - "upon Mt Zion shall be deliverance..."

- Other versions say "the remnant will escape on Mt Zion"
- All the world needs Salvation. God says we need to "go to Zion!"
- Why Mt Zion? Because that is the gathering place.
- Deuteronomy 30:1-3 - Blessing is found in being gathered, not scattered.
- Israel failed and God called this "servant" Israel (Jesus) to be the gatherer.
- Ezekiel 34:11,12 - God is gathering His sheep. To be gathered we need to submit ourselves to God in trustful obedience.
- John 10:9 - Jesus is the door to this Salvation. To get to Zion we need to leave Edom and go through the door (Christ).
- James 2:19 - It is not just about believing - but trustfully depending on God and going through the door.
- Mark 16:16 - The belief of the Christian is an active obedience.
- Matthew 7:14 - The path and gate are narrow. The journey is not always easy, but it is the way if Jesus calls you in it.

Call:

If anyone has not committed fully to God and been baptised to demonstrate that commitment Ricardo invites you to do so now. If you are baptised, but you desire to renew your commitment to God then do so today!!