

June 9

Obadiah

Hey, I'm Dave Irwin. Thanks for joining me for the Project 4:4 Daily Accelerator for June 9. Today we're covering the very short book of Obadiah.

The book of Obadiah has a couple hallmarks that make it special. One, it is the shortest book in the Old Testament. Yeah! Two, it is our first encounter with what is known as a "writing prophet." There have been many prophets preceding Obadiah, but he is the first we've encountered who also wrote down their messages from God.

Let's start with what we don't know for sure. When we look at the who and when of Obadiah, it's not as simple as it might seem. In fact, we don't really know who Obadiah was or when he wrote this prophecy. There are 11 Obadiah's listed in the Old Testament, but we have no clear indication that this Obadiah correlates to any of them. On top of that, we don't have any of the usual details of who was king of the nation or any other historical facts to help us narrow down a time frame for when Obadiah made his prophecy. Even the content of the writings leaves room for several points in time that fit Obadiah's message. The chronological Bible we are using for Project 4:4 has chosen to place Obadiah's book here, at an early point in history that is commonly accepted as a possibility. Placing Obadiah here correlates his prophecies with Edom's involvement of the invasion of Judah recorded in 2 Chronicles 21. Others correlate Obadiah's prophecy with the Babylonian invasion of Judah hundreds of years later.

Now, let's move on to what we do know for sure. The message of Obadiah is a powerful one. It was written for a specific point in time, but it has significant application to our lives today. At the time it was written, Obadiah's message was one of coming destruction to Edom because of their pride and the role they played in an attack on Judah. Edom was a nation to the East and South of Judah and they weren't exactly great neighbors. Remember that the Israelites and Edomites both trace their lineage to Isaac, Abraham's son. Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob is the father of Israel and Esau is the father of Edom. The tension between those two men will carry down through the generations to these two nations so that there is a nagging animosity between them.

God tells Edom that their pride and sense of security is misplaced and that He will bring them down. The land that Edom occupied is filled with rocky mountain terrain and is pretty inhospitable. In addition to the security derived from these natural features, they were also pretty proud of the cities they had built directly into the mountain cliffs. That's why God mentions that they "live in the clefts of the rocks" and make their "home on the heights." If you have seen the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* you have seen one of the Edomite cities. They used the city of Petra, carved directly into the face of a cliff, for the setting where Indiana Jones finds the Holy Grail. But as much as God hates pride, that is not the extent of Edom's guilt. God also details an account of how Edom assisted in an attack against Judah. First, Edom did not take action to help while Judah was being attacked. God says that Edom "stood aloof" and even celebrated Judah's distress rather than helping. But perhaps worse than that is God's charge that Edom did take action in

the aftermath of the attack by killing the refugees and taking plunder left behind by the attacking nation.

As often happens in Biblical prophecy, Obadiah concludes with an element of hope. Hope for Israel, not Edom. Verses 19-21 tell us that God will protect a remnant of His people and that the covenant He made to Abraham will not be undone by any king or nation. The LORD is the King of Kings and His plans cannot be stopped. His people will possess the land He promised to give Abraham's descendents.

The final words of Obadiah's prophecy are powerful – *and the kingdom will be the LORD's*. May that give us a renewed sense of hope and assurance regardless of what goes on in our lives, in our nation, in our world. The LORD will punish those who do evil and the kingdom will be His.

Thanks for joining me today.