



## Obadiah

The short book of Obadiah uttered judgement against the kingdom of Edom because of how it treated Judah and Jerusalem. It is set at the time of the exile and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 bc and criticizes Edom for looting Jerusalem when the city was at its lowest ebb. The book holds up as a vision a time when Judah's enemies will be defeated and Judah will be restored once more. It is an unusual prophecy in that it defends Judah entirely and is not interested in anything that Judah might have done wrong in the run up to the exile.



### How long will it take?

**Reading time:** 4 mins  
**Short of time?** It's only 21 verses, read it all!



### Genre

Prophecy



### Anything tricky?

The book focuses on revenge on a nation that has treated God's people unfairly – revenge never makes easy reading.



### Inspiring quotes

Not the kind of book to produce inspiring quotes.



### About the Author

Someone called Obadiah

#### *What do we know about him?*

Nothing at all – there is little evidence about him either in this book or elsewhere. All we know is that he lived at the time of the exile – though probably had not been taken to Babylon as he was there so see the aftermath – and protested at what the Edomites had done.



### About the times

This book is set at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587 bc.

#### *What were people feeling?*

The start of the exile was a time of desperate loss and bereavement, the anger in this book reflects that.

#### *Other books set around this time*

Jeremiah, Lamentations and Ezekiel



## What kind of Book is it?

A very short book of prophecy, revealing the anger and resentment felt by the people of Judah that the Edomites, their near neighbours, were prepared to cash in on their time of devastation.



## Look out for...

What in Obadiah's opinion were Edom's crimes against Judah?

Compare Obadiah 1.1-6 with Jeremiah 49.9-16 – why do you think the similarity is so great?

What you think Obadiah's vision of hope for Judah was.



## What could this mean for me?

Obadiah is one of the angry books of the Bible and, as with a number of the psalms, challenges us to think deeply about how we express our more negative emotions to God. Reflect on whether there is anything that you are deeply angry about that may need expressing in God's presence.



## How is it structured?

1.1-4	Introduction
1.5-9	Judgment on Edom is pronounced
1.10-14	How Edom sinned against Judah
1.15-18	The punishment that will happen on the day of the Lord
1.19-21	A vision of the restoration of Israel



## Discussion group questions

- Were there any parts of the book that you particularly liked or which inspired you?
- Were there any parts of the book that you disliked or which troubled you?
- What did *you* think the book was about?
- What had Edom done to Judah that Obadiah thought was so awful? Do you agree with him?
- What place do you think anger has in our lives with God? Are we good at expressing anger today? What would be appropriate and inappropriate ways to express anger to God? Is there ever a place for expressing anger in public worship? If we were to be better at expressing anger in our spiritual lives, what might this look like?
- Did you read anything in the book that touched you, expanded your faith or made you think more deeply about your life and how you live it?



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