

# Obadiah: Family Feud



Have you ever had someone explain how you were kin to them because their great-great granddaddy and your great-great granddaddy were actually brothers? In other words, the person you were just introduced to as kinfolk have the same great-great-great grandfather. That is the background for our story as we continue on Route 66 to exit 31, the book of Obadiah. It is a prophecy regarding Edom. Edom's great-great-great (add a lot more greats) grandfather was Esau. Israel's great-great-great (add a lot more greats) grandfather was Jacob. They were brothers. This is why I am entitling Obadiah, Family Feud.

We are still in the mountain range of the Minor Prophets. Obadiah is a book of brevity and severity. It is very brief, just one chapter, just a few verses. In those very few verses, the judgment of God is very, very harsh, very, very severe, on a people called Edom. Obadiah verse 15 will give us a snap shot as to why this book is in the Word of God.

## Scripture

***"For the Day of the Lord is near upon all the nations.  
As you have done, it shall be done to you;  
your deeds shall return on your own head."***

## **A Tale of Two Brothers**

If your great-great granddaddy and my great-great granddaddy were brothers, you and I would claim to be cousins, not brothers. Yet in the Biblical world, God describes the relationship between Israel and Edom as a brother-brother relationship. Some 400 years after Jacob and Esau, the children of Israel were coming out of Egypt and God instructed the Israelites not to ever abhor the Edomites. Deuteronomy 23:7 tells us the reason is because "he is your brother."

- **Jacob and Esau**

In order for us to understand this short book, we have to start in the book of Genesis. Isaac, the promised son to Abraham and Sarah, marries at age forty to a woman who cannot give birth to a child. He prays to God for her. Twenty years later, Rebecca gives birth to twins Jacob and Esau. While she was pregnant, every day was like a wrestling match going on in her womb. Finally, she brings that to the Lord and asks Him what was going on in her belly! He tells her there are two nations growing in her stomach, and the older shall serve the younger.

When she gave birth to those two boys, the one who came out first was really hairy, and they named him Esau, but Jacob came out smooth. As those boys grew up, Esau was daddy's boy and Jacob was momma's boy. Esau loved to be with his daddy outside in the woods and in the fields, and he loved to hunt. Jacob loved to tag along with mom. He loved to stay in the tents. So you can describe Esau as a man that loved the outdoors and Jacob as a man that loved the indoors.

The Bible tells us of a time when Esau was out in the fields hunting but he doesn't get anything. He comes in thinking he is going to starve to death and there Jacob is making his famous red stew. Remember, Esau's name means red...Red needs red stew! Jacob being pretty sharp, just said, "What would you give for a good pot of red stew?" Esau asked what he wanted and Jacob said, "How about your birthright?" "Sure!" Esau said, because

here was his thought; *if I am going to die, if I am going to starve to death what good will my birthrights do me!* This is why the book of Hebrews, chapter 12, calls Esau a profane person. In the Biblical world, to be profane meant you had no regard for spiritual reality; you had no regard for spiritual things. So, Esau sells his birthright.

- **Jacob the Deceiver**

As the story unfolds, Isaac has gotten old and ready to die, so he is getting ready to give the blessings to the boys. While Esau didn't want his birthright, he does want his father's blessing. They are getting ready for the blessing, and while Esau is out in the woods doing what his father told him to do, Rebecca comes up with a plan for Jacob to get it instead. The next thing you know, Jacob has deceived his father, and he gets the blessing. Esau comes back and has done everything his father asked him to do. His father realizes he has been tricked, but he has already given the blessing away and he can't take it back. We don't understand that kind of tradition!

- **Esau's Hatred**

The Bible says Esau "hated" his brother. As a matter of fact, he hated him to the point that he wanted to kill him. Jacob, being a momma's boy, had her come to his rescue, and she sends him away to her brother's house. Before he left, one of the last things Isaac instructs him in is not to take a Canaanite wife. When Esau hears that dad doesn't want Jacob to have a Canaanite wife, you know what he does; he goes out and gets himself a Canaanite wife. He particularly takes a woman from the clan of Ishmael. Whoa! Now you are starting to understand what kind of man Esau was.

Let me tell you what is behind this story of Obadiah. It is about a man who couldn't get over what happened to him. Have you ever noticed what happens to people who do not get over things? Have you ever met someone who couldn't get over something? Have you noticed how not getting over something breeds a deep hatred for certain things, certain

sins, or certain people? People, who haven't gotten over their past, are always talking about their past. They just can't get it off their minds. Esau couldn't get it off his mind.

- **Perpetual Enmity**

Do you remember when Ezekiel was prophesying to the Southern Kingdom while he is in exile after the temple had burned? He also prophesied about Edom. Now, you have to remember that this is over a thousand years later! Ezekiel described the Edomites as having a perpetual hatred, a perpetual enmity. Where do you think they got that from? They got it from Esau. Let me give you the background of this story. Because Esau couldn't get over what happened to him with his brother, he continually talked about it, so the children continually hear, over and over again, what their uncle did to daddy. Soon, they talk about it to their generation, who talks about it to their generation, and so on and so forth. The next thing you know, we have a family feud. For generations, this thing never dies!

Have you ever noticed that sometimes the next generation takes it to another level? Now, there is a family in this church that I love with all my heart. I don't want to embarrass them with their family 'sins,' 😊 but the man of this family loves John Deere tractors! He so loves John Deere tractors that he has talked about those green John Deere tractors to his family over and over. So now, his girls have taken that love for John Deere tractors to a whole other level than he has never taken it to...in my opinion...Now if you talk to him privately, he doesn't really knock the other color (red, the color of my International tractor). But if you talk to one of his girls, they don't like red tractors!

You get the problem, don't you? A family was torn apart because daddy couldn't get over what had happened to him, and he just wouldn't leave it alone. When Isaac died, those boys realized that the land wasn't big enough for the both of them. So Esau goes into the mountain region of Seir, which used to be held by the Horites. The mountain range is about 100 miles long and 20 miles wide, and is southeast of Jerusalem. That is

where Esau went. His descendants became known as Edomites because the word, Edom, means 'red,' so they called him Edom.

## **Generations of Unforgiveness**

Now watch this; Scripture is clear that if you have been forgiven, you forgive. Amen? Now let me give you the opposite of that. If Scripture teaches that the forgiven forgive, then it means if you don't forgive, you haven't been forgiven. I shudder when someone who believes they are a Christian will say, "I will never forgive them!" What you are really saying is "I am not a Christian." I am not exaggerating. In Matthew chapter 6, when Jesus was speaking about the Lord's Prayer, He taught that if you don't forgive others of their sins against you, He would not forgive your sins against Him.

Can you imagine generation after generation after generation of unforgiveness? It is ugly; it is nasty! You don't want to be around it. That is what is happening in the book of Obadiah. Now, scholars aren't sure if Obadiah is preaching to the Edomites or preaching to the Israelites, but I think he is preaching to the Israelites. I think he is telling the Israelites what is going to happen to their enemy the Edomites, their brother, because of the life they have been living for centuries.

- **Pride of Edom**

Here is how this book opens up. Do you know what the problem in Edom's heart is? It is pride. When you read the first 9 verses, God is going to say to the Edomites through Obadiah, "yes, you fly the way the eagles fly and you have made your nest among the stars." This is a reference to the ancient city of Petra. That gorgeous city was built out of the mountains of Hor, Mount. Seir. The ruins of that city are beautiful! That was home to the descendants of Esau. That mountain range was over 700 feet high. The people who descended from Esau went into that region and began to carve their homes out of the rocks. They literally lived above everyone else. They

lived above their brother Jacob, and the next thing you know, there is pride in their hearts.

Let me tell you what I think pride does; pride actually causes you to look down instead of looking up. Proud people just have this attitude that they are self-made people, and they have risen to a place where they are living a little better, a little higher, than the rest of us. From their perspective, they are always looking down at everyone else. Now, maybe we can't imagine that, but that is how the Edomites felt. The danger with pride is that you always look down and realize who you are above, but you never look up and realize who you are. You get a false sense of security if you are a proud person. As a matter of fact, Proverbs 16:18 clearly teaches that "pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." That proverb teaches that what flows from pride is a haughty spirit. We have a saying that says, "The bigger you are the harder you fall." If we were to apply that saying to the book of Obadiah, it would be "the higher you are, the farther you fall."

The Edomites believed they were safe from their enemies because of where they lived and because of what they had built for themselves on Mount Seir. God said, "I am going to bring you down." The book of Obadiah is an open letter from God to all of the enemies, and the allies of Edom, that says, "I am going to rally you together and we are going to go up that narrow passage and we are going to bring Edom down!" The reason is because of the way Edom had treated Judah, (in other words, Jacob) his brother.

In verses 10-14, he said the first thing that happened was they stood aloof. Have you ever seen those aloof people? They really just don't know what is going on. Jerusalem was being ransacked. Scholars don't know if this was in the 9<sup>th</sup> century or the 6<sup>th</sup> century. There was about four times in the biblical world when Jerusalem was under attack. Most scholars believe that the Minor Prophets are in chronological order, so because of Obadiah's order at the beginning of the Minor Prophets, some scholars believe that

this was talking about an invasion of Jerusalem in about 850-851 BC. Others believe though it describes the fall of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587-86BC. It doesn't matter; here is the truth. Can you imagine your brother losing everything he has, and then you act like you don't know what is going on? You are oblivious to it. But once the damage is done, you decide if everyone else is going to get everything your brother has worked his life for, then you might as well get a little bit of it too. So you come down off your high perch and you ransack the city too. While you are getting what is his, you, in your heart of hearts, rejoice that he is finally getting what you thought he deserved! You knew that eventually his sin was going to be exposed, and he would be exposed for who he really was. Then, because you are close by, some of the cousins are actually running to you. You are standing in the crossroads so you intercept them and turn them in.

- **The Day of the Lord is Near**

It took me a long time wrestling with the book of Obadiah. As a matter of fact, I have never heard a sermon on Obadiah. I have never even heard anyone quote a verse on Obadiah. So I have no Bible school memory of Obadiah. I have had no Sunday school teacher ever teach me Obadiah. But if there is one thing I know now, it is that God hates family feuds. Woe to that one who takes that pride stand. If my Bible teaches one thing in the New Testament, it is that God resists the proud. He has promised if you exalt yourself, He will humble you. But if you humble yourself, He will exalt you. He tells these prideful people, "The Day of the Lord is near upon all nations."

We know from the earlier Minor Prophets that their beginning to introduce the Day of the Lord. They are beginning to tell Israel to beware of the Day of the Lord. It is not going to be a good day for you. It is going to be a day of darkness, not light. When God steps in to make wrongs right, He is going to start with them, His own people. The Bible clearly teaches that judgment will begin in the House of God. God is saying to the nation of

Israel through Obadiah, on the Day of the Lord, God will not only deal with your sin, He will deal with your enemy's sin. He tells Edom that when the Day of the Lord comes, and it is near, it will be done to you as you have done. We have this little saying that what goes around comes around. There are people who live in this world that seem to dish it out but never get it back! But the Bible teaches that there is coming a day, called the Day of the Lord, when a person is going to stand before God and they will be judged. And their judgment will be based on what they did here toward other people. Can you imagine being Edom with perpetual hatred toward the people of God, and now to stand before God, and getting it back from Him? Whoa! I think Obadiah made it into the Bible because there is going to be a day when God is going to rally all the nations of the earth and they will stand before Him, and they are going to be judged. You see, Edom ran to Mount Seir believing they had a mountain where they were safe. They had trusted in what they had done, what they had built for themselves.

## **Mount Zion**

The last prophecy of this says you don't need to run to Mount Seir, you need to run to Mount Zion. Yes, right now it looks like Mount Zion is not a big deal. The people of God are going to be scattered, and the very people who are rejoicing right now at the destruction of God's people are going to discover one day that the only place of safety when God begins to judge the world is to stand on Mount Zion.

What makes Mount Zion different from all other mountains? What was built on Mount Zion was not built with human hands; it was built by God's hands. God did something that man could not do. In His Son on Mount Zion, God dealt with our sin. Do you realize that? Every wrong you have ever done was judged in Christ so that you could be made right with Him. That is why the writer to Hebrews writing to the Jewish people tells them not to flee to a physical Mount Zion, but to flee to the spiritual Mount Zion. Which he basically teaches is the Church of Jesus Christ, who is built around the Person and the provision of God's Son. This is teaching that



ultimately, the sin of the Church has been dealt with at the cross, it has been atoned for, atonement has been applied to you and I, and we will not be judged based on how we have dealt with other people. We will be judged on how God dealt with Christ.

- **Trusting in the Work of Another**

Do you realize what salvation really is? It so goes against humanities thought process. You are not trusting in what you can do; you are trusting in what someone else has done for you. That is a blow to human pride, is it not, to know we are not good enough! Our only hope is what Another has done for us. We trust is that what Another did was good enough to get the job done. When you put your trust in Him, you move from the mountain of your own security and salvation to trusting in the work of Another. You don't stand on the hill of your accomplishment; you stand on the hill of God's accomplishment at Mount Zion!

In Matthew chapter 25, the Bible teaches that at the return of Christ there is going to be a judgment of the nations. At that judgment, God is going to separate the nations and separate the sheep from the goats. He is going to turn to the sheep and say, "Thank you for feeding Me when I was hungry and giving Me water when I was thirsty. Thank you that when I was naked you put clothes on My back. Thank you that when I was sick you came and visited Me. Thank you for that visit you made to Me in prison." The sheep are going to say, "Lord, when did we ever do that to You? The Lord said, "When you have done it to the least of these, my brothers, you have done it to Me." Then He will turn to the goats and say, "Get out of My presence. You are not going to enter into a place that was prepared before the foundation of the world for the righteous. You are now going to spend eternity in a place that was prepared for the devil and his angels, because I was hungry and you never feed Me. I was thirsty and you never gave Me a drink of water. I had no clothes on My back, and never one time did you give Me the extra shirt you've got. You never stopped your busy schedule when I was in the hospital and came to see Me. While I was in prison,

never once did you come!" The nations of the world will say, "Lord, when did we ever had the opportunity to do that to You? We never had the opportunity." He said, "Oh yes you did, because when you didn't do it to the least of these, you didn't do it to Me."

## **The Book of Deeds**

Revelation 20 teaches that at the return of Jesus Christ when the Kingdom age is over, humanity is going to stand before the Judgment Seat of God and the books are going to be opened. The books record the totality of a man's life, and there will be a judgment according to your deeds. Now listen to me, this is the Day of the Lord that Obadiah is talking about. The Day of the Lord had a short term fulfillment in the life of the nation, but it shadowed the ultimate reality, which is the return of Jesus Christ. I'll ask again; can you imagine standing before God as an Edomite and as you dished it out, as you did it to others, it would be done to you, and there is every deed?

It doesn't just say the Day of the Lord is near upon Edom, it says the Day of the Lord is near upon ALL nations. Whoa! Is there anything that is going to come back to you? Is there something that has happened to you that you haven't gotten over and there is a deep resentment? It causes you not to be able to forgive, or causes you not to want to have a relationship with someone. Scripture teaches if that is you, you will be cast into an everlasting lake of fire! Can you imagine standing there knowing it is over? When the books are opened, you can't stop it, you can't change it. You don't get a do over. It's over.

## **The Book of Life**

Now there is some good news on the day. In the midst of the books that record our deeds, there is a book that records His deed and the names of those who have trusted in His deed. It is called the Book of Life. Everyone who is found in the Book of Life will enter into the presence of the Lord forever and ever! Those not found in the book are cast into eternal fire.

Can I ask you a question? If the Day of the Lord was near in Obadiah's day, and it came but it foreshadowed the Day of the Lord, (I'm talking about the Christ event, the Second Coming) are you ready to stand before the great white judgment of God and have the books open? Is your name in the Book of Life? Have you turned from a life of sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ so that you have dealt with your past. Being a Christian means that you not only deal with your past, but you deal with other people's past. You can not only get over what you have done wrong, but you can get over what others have done wrong to you. If you can't get over what others have done wrong to you, there is a great possibility you might not be a child of God. If your name is not in the Book of Life, you are going to be on your own on the Day of Judgment.

If you repent, make a change, turn and come to the place where you trust is in Jesus Christ and Him only, you can trust God has dealt with everything that is wrong with you, and He will make you right. He will give you the ability to acknowledge that Jacob is now Israel. Jacob changed from being a deceiver to a prince of God, but Esau never saw it. It is amazing what ability God will give you when you become a believer in what His Son did for you. He didn't just do it for you; He did it for the nations of the world.

## **Forgiveness**

Obadiah is a terrible book, it's a terrible prophecy, and it's a terrible message! In New Testament terms, this book is teaching us what God is going to do to the enemy of the Church! They may glory in our failures right now, but one day they are going to pay a terrible price. They will be separated from God forever and ever. God wants us to have a concern for them. Those of us who have been forgiven can forgive. We can forgive our family and our neighbors. We can get over what we think the previous church done to us. We can let go of our past! Let us not have a family feud. Let us understand what Obadiah is talking about, because it is a terrible place to be on the outside of the people of God.

