

June 28, 2011

The Prophet Obadiah

“The Day of Yahweh Is Near upon All Nations”

Introductory Details

Author: Obadiah the Prophet, name means “Servant of Yahweh”

Subject: Denounce the abuses of Edom and announce the restoration of God’s people

Date: c587 – 553 BC (sometime between the Fall of Judah in 587 and Nabonidus’ battle against Edom)

Mission Field: The Nation of Judah

Current Kings: Zedekiah is the last king before the Fall of Judah in 587

Contemporary Prophets: *Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel*

Style: Obadiah sounds like other “oracles” (Nahum, Habakkuk), with the last verses being redemptive

Luther on Obadiah: “This hurts beyond measure when men mock and laugh at those who are wretched and troubled, defying them and boasting against them. It constitutes a great and strong assault upon their faith in God and a powerful incentive to despair and unbelief. Therefore God here appoints a special prophet against such vexatious mockers and tempters, and comforts those who are troubled, strengthening their faith with threats and denunciations against such hostile Edomites – those who mock the wretched – and with promises and assurances of future help and rescue. In such distress this is truly a needed comfort, and [the one who brings it] a veritable Obadiah.”

Interesting Features

Obadiah & Jeremiah- Obadiah may have modified Jeremiah’s Oracle against Edom (Jer 49:7-22)

Never cited in the NT- but the NT picks up where Obad. ends: in Christ the kingdom has become the Lord’s.

Structure of the Book

I. Proclamation against Edom (vv 1- 16)

II. The Great Reversal under the Kingship of Yahweh (vv 17- 21)

Edom was a country southeast of Judah, settled in and around Mt. Seir (hence vv 3-4)

How are Israel and Edom related?

v1 “The Vision”- used about a divine revelation (Is 1:1 and Nahum 1:1)

v7 This prophecy is fulfilled in 553/2 BC when King Nabonidus of Babylon levels Edom

Edom’s Sin: When Jerusalem was attacked Edom did nothing to help them (v11). Instead they gloated (v12, Ps 137:7), entered the gates of Jerusalem to loot (v13), and even attacked the refugees (v14).

v15 The Day of YHWH- a dreadful day for God’s enemies, a victorious day for His people

v16 the great exchange begins early, God exchanges Edom’s Cup of Victory with His Cup of Wrath

v19 Negeb- desert wilderness, Shephelah- low foothills- in poetic terms the Nothings shall be raised up

v21 Saviors (plural?)- Israel will have good rulers, ultimately fulfilled in Christ and flowing out of Christ into the New Testament age. *Luther: So here the apostles and other disciples are called ‘saviors,’ men who by preaching that joyful Gospel message have certainly freed them from all the assaults of Satan and from the gates of hell; men who have judged them in faith, who have ruled them with just judgment, and thus have prepared the eternal kingdom for the Lord.”*

Luther: “At the end he prophesies of Christ’s kingdom, that it shall not be at Jerusalem only, but everywhere. For he mixes all the nations together, Ephraim, Benjamin, Gilead, the Philistines, the Canaanites, Zarephath. This cannot be understood to refer to the temporal kingdom of Israel, for according to the law of Moses these tribes and people had to remain separate and distinct in the land.”

In between Obadiah and Haggai: The Persians & Medes defeat the Babylonians, Cyrus the Persian decrees that exiles may return to Judah and rebuild God's temple (538 BC). Read Ezra 1 – 7 if you would like the history behind this time period and the long delay between the decree (538 BC) and the actual rebuilding (520 BC).

The Prophet Haggai

“In This Place I Will Give Peace”

Introductory Details

Author: The Prophet Haggai- also mentioned in Ezra 5:1 & 6:14, his name means “the festive one”

Subject: The exiles must rebuild the Jerusalem temple rather than focus on personal gain

Date: 520 BC

Mission Field: The Nation of Judah

Current Kings: Darius I of Persia

Contemporary Prophets: *Zechariah*

Style: Direct instruction and declaration to the exiles returning to Judah

Luther on Haggai: “Haggai is the first prophet given to the people after the Babylonian captivity, and by his prophecy the temple and the worship of God were set up again. In addition Zechariah was later given to him as a companion for a period of two months, so that by the mouth of two witnesses the word of God might the more surely be believed. For the people had fallen into great doubt whether the temple would ever be rebuilt.

Difficulties

A Narrow Focus- Since the book is specifically addressed to the Judeans of 520 BC, relevance to today is often difficult to see and understand. However, the problem of focusing on self-serving priorities at the neglect of God's priorities is always relevant to sinful mankind. God's word serves to unite the people in God's work. And there is also a clear looking forward to Christ Jesus (Hag 2:20-23).

Structure of the Book

I.	Haggai's First Sermon (1:1-11)	1 st of Elul (29 th of August 520 BC)
II.	The People Obey (1:12-15)	24 th of Elul (21 st of September 520 BC)
III.	Haggai's Second Sermon (2:1-9)	21 st of Tishri (17 th of October, 520 BC)
IV.	Haggai's Third Sermon (2:10-19)	24 th of Kislev (18 th of December 520 BC)
V.	Haggai's Fourth Sermon (2:20-23)	24 th of Kislev (18 th of December 520 BC)

Summarize the content of Haggai's first “sermon” (1:1-11)

Haggai's second sermon (2:1-9) considers the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be greater than the glory of the beautifully decorated Temple built by Solomon. Would Haggai object to building beautiful and impressive church buildings today? Why or why not?

2:9- “In this place I will give peace”- as Eph 2:14 says of Jesus, “he is our peace”

From Haggai's third “sermon” (2:10-19), summarize YHWH's words about Defilement and Blessing.

From Haggai's fourth “sermon” (2:20-23), Zerubbabel never becomes a king like David, how will Zerubbabel be made the signet ring and chosen one of YHWH?