THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

The King Who Brings Down the Proud

Obadiah, Unfiltered

For teens who think they've heard it all

BILL McLEOD

Papa Bill Books

THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR TEENS

The King Who Brings Down the Proud: The Book of Obadiah, Unfiltered

Part of The Old Testament for Teens series.

Copyright © 2026 Bill McLeod. All rights reserved.

Published by Papa Bill Books.

Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, which is in the public domain.

All Scripture quotations in this book are from the WEB. Some are abridged, with omissions marked by ellipses; paraphrases are not placed in quotation marks.

In the author's own text, pronouns referring to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are capitalized for reverence. Scripture quotations follow the WEB Protestant Edition exactly, including its capitalization.

AI Disclosure. This book was written by Bill McLeod with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools for drafting, research, and editing. All content was reviewed and approved by the author, who takes full responsibility for it. Readers are encouraged to open the Scriptures and study them for themselves.

A WORD TO THE READER

Before You Start

Think about the worst fight you've ever had with a brother, sister, or cousin. Now imagine that fight never ending. Imagine it getting passed down to your kids, and their kids, for more than a thousand years, until your families became two nations who couldn't stand each other.

That's the story behind Obadiah. It starts with twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, wrestling before they were even born. It ends with Esau's descendants, the nation of Edom, standing on the sidelines and cheering while Jacob's descendants were attacked, looted, and carried away. Some of them even blocked the roads so refugees couldn't escape.

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, only twenty-one verses long. You can read the whole thing in about three minutes. But it packs a punch. It's about pride that makes you feel untouchable, about what happens when you stand by and watch someone get hurt, and about a God who sees it all and promises that, in the end, the kingdom will be His.

Let's go.

How This Book Works

This book walks through Obadiah in three chapters: the eagle's nest of pride (verses 1-9), you stood on the other side (verses 10-14), and the kingdom will be the LORD's (verses 15-21).

Before chapter 1, a section called Setting the Scene explains the long history between Israel and Edom, where the Edomites lived, and the main views about when Obadiah was written. Read it first.

Each chapter ends with a Key Verse quoted word for word from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain modern translation used for every Scripture quotation in this book (Scripture is quoted exactly as the WEB prints it; in the rest of the book, pronouns for God are capitalized out of reverence); Real Talk questions to think through alone or talk over with someone you trust; and a Try This challenge.

On questions where sincere Christians disagree, such as when Obadiah was written, I'll try to be fair and leave the decision to you, your family, and your church. This book quotes Obadiah in places and explains it mostly in my own words, so keep a Bible open next to it. Don't take my word for it. Take His.

FOR THE ADULTS

A Note for Parents and Youth Leaders

Thank you for putting this book in a teenager's hands. It's the thirty-first book in The Old Testament for Teens, a companion to the New Testament for Teens series, written for readers who can smell a sermon coming a mile away. I've tried to write honestly, directly, and with real respect for what these readers can handle.

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. This book traces the long rivalry between Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom) from Genesis onward, describes the rugged red-rock country where the Edomites lived, and notes the later connection to King Herod the Great, whose family was Idumean, the later name for Edomite. It presents the two main views of Obadiah's date, around 845 BC or shortly after 586 BC, fairly and without insisting on one.

Obadiah condemns Edom's pride and its betrayal of Judah in a time of disaster. Because these themes connect with bullying, piling on, and standing by while someone is hurt, Real Talk boxes address those topics directly. A safety box encourages teens who are being bullied or betrayed, or who are thinking about hurting themselves, to talk with a trusted adult, call or text 988, or call 911 in an emergency. The book is careful to apply Obadiah's message about ancient Edom to attitudes and actions, never to any modern ethnic group.

The closing section, Where This Points, contrasts Jesus with Herod the Idumean, shows that Jesus did not stand aloof when we were crushed but came close and took our place, and notes that people from Idumea came to Jesus (Mark 3:8). Wherever Scripture is quoted directly, the wording is from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain translation.

My prayer is that every reader will choose humility over pride, stand with people who are hurting, and trust the King whose kingdom will never end.

Grace and peace,

Bill McLeod

Papa Bill Books

BEFORE YOU OPEN THE BOOK

Setting the Scene

The Shortest Book

Obadiah has only twenty-one verses, making it the shortest book in the Old Testament. We know almost nothing about the prophet himself. His name means servant of the LORD or worshiper of the LORD, and it was a common name. At least a dozen different men named Obadiah appear in the Old Testament. The book doesn't tell us his hometown, his family, or his job. All we have is his message, a vision about the nation of Edom.

Twins at War

The story behind Obadiah goes all the way back to Genesis. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. While they were still in the womb, the babies struggled so much that Rebekah asked God what was going on. God told her, "Two nations are in your womb." Esau was born first, red and hairy, with Jacob grabbing his heel. Later, Esau traded his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red stew, which is why he was also called Edom, a name that sounds like the Hebrew word for red. Then Jacob tricked their father into giving him Esau's blessing. Esau was so furious he planned to kill his brother. Years later, the brothers made peace. Esau ran to meet Jacob, hugged him, and they cried together. But the peace didn't last between their descendants.

A Rivalry Through the Centuries

Jacob was later renamed Israel, and his descendants became the nation of Israel. Esau's descendants became the nation of Edom, living southeast of the Dead Sea. When Israel came out of Egypt, Edom refused to let them pass through its land. God still told Israel not to hate Edomites, because they were their brothers. But over the centuries, the two nations fought again and again. King Saul fought Edom. King David conquered it. Later, Edom rebelled and won its independence. By the time of Obadiah, the bitterness ran deep.

Red-Rock Fortress

The Edomites lived in rugged mountains of red sandstone, full of cliffs, gorges, and caves. Their cities were perched high on rocky heights that seemed impossible to attack. One of their strongholds was called Sela, which means rock. Many people connect Edom's rock country with the famous city of Petra in modern Jordan, with its buildings carved into towering red cliffs. Petra's famous carved buildings were made later by a people called the Nabataeans, and scholars debate whether biblical Sela was at Petra or at another nearby rock fortress. Either way, the landscape helps us picture why the Edomites felt untouchable.

When Was It Written?

Obadiah describes a time when foreigners attacked Jerusalem and Edom joined in. But the book doesn't name the attackers. Christians hold two main views. Some date Obadiah early, around 845 BC, when Edom rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah and Philistines and Arabians raided Jerusalem. These scholars point out that Obadiah is placed early in The Twelve, near Joel and Amos. Many others date it shortly after 586 BC, when Babylon destroyed

Jerusalem and Edom cheered the destruction. These scholars note that Psalm 137 and Ezekiel 35 describe Edom's gloating then, and that Obadiah's words are very similar to Jeremiah 49. Both views take the book seriously, and its message is the same either way.

What Happened to Edom?

After Babylon's conquest, the Edomites were pushed out of their mountain homeland by Arab tribes, including the Nabataeans. Many moved west into southern Judah, an area that came to be called Idumea, the Greek form of Edom. Around 125 BC, a Jewish ruler conquered Idumea and forced its people to convert to Judaism. About a century later, an Idumean named Herod became king of Judea under the Romans. He was the King Herod who tried to kill baby Jesus. After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, the Edomites disappear from history.

The Map

Chapter 1 (Obadiah 1-9): The eagle's nest of pride.

Chapter 2 (Obadiah 10-14): You stood on the other side.

Chapter 3 (Obadiah 15-21): The kingdom will be the LORD's.

Contents

Setting the Scene.....

1 The Eagle's Nest of Pride *1–9*.....

2 You Stood on the Other Side *10–14*.....

3 The Kingdom Will Be the LORD's *15–21*.....

Where This Points.....

CHAPTER 1

The Eagle's Nest of Pride

Obadiah 1–9

Obadiah opens like a news bulletin. "The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord GOD says about Edom." Then comes breaking news: a messenger has been sent among the nations, calling them to rise up and attack Edom.

Edom was a small nation, but it didn't feel small. Its people lived high in the mountains southeast of the Dead Sea, in a land of red cliffs and narrow canyons. Their cities sat on rocky heights that were almost impossible to reach. For centuries, armies had looked up at those cliffs and decided not to bother.

So when God says, "Behold, I have made you small among the nations," it's a shock. Edom thought it was a giant. God says it's tiny.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Obadiah and Jeremiah**
>
> If you read Obadiah 1-9 and then Jeremiah 49:7-22, you'll notice something surprising. Many of the lines are almost identical. Both talk about the pride of Edom's heart, its home in the clefts of the rock, its nest as high as the eagle, and thieves and grape pickers who would leave something behind. Scholars debate who borrowed from whom. Some think Jeremiah used Obadiah. Others think Obadiah used Jeremiah, or that both drew on an older prophecy about Edom. Either way, it shows that God's warning to Edom was serious enough to be repeated.

Then comes the heart of the chapter. “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who says in his heart, Who will bring me down to the ground?”

Notice the word deceived. Pride is a liar. It tells you that you’re safe when you’re not. It tells you that you’re better than others when you’re not. It tells you that you don’t need anyone, including God. And the scary thing is that pride usually feels like confidence, so you don’t notice you’re being fooled.

Edom’s pride was built on its geography. They looked at their cliffs and thought, Nobody can touch us. Their question, Who will bring me down? wasn’t really a question. It was a boast.

God answers it anyway. “Though you mount on high as the eagle, and though your nest is set among the stars, I will bring you down from there,” says the LORD.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Sela and Petra**

Second Kings mentions that King Amaziah of Judah captured Sela, an Edomite stronghold whose name means rock. Many people have connected Sela with Petra, the breathtaking city in southern Jordan carved into rose-red sandstone cliffs, reached through a narrow gorge called the Siq. Petra’s famous carved tombs and temples were built later, mostly by the Nabataeans, who moved into Edom’s territory after the Edomites were pushed out. Some scholars place biblical Sela at Petra, while others point to a rocky fortress called es-Sela, about thirty miles north. Either way, visitors to the region today can see exactly why Edom felt untouchable.

The eagle was the perfect picture. Eagles build their nests on the highest cliffs, far out of reach of predators. Edom thought it had done the same thing. But God says, Even if your nest were among the stars, I could reach it. No height is too high for God.

REAL TALK **Feeling Untouchable**

Pride doesn't always look like bragging. Sometimes it looks like feeling untouchable. Maybe you're the smartest kid in class, the best athlete, the most popular, or the one with the most followers. Maybe you think, Rules don't really apply to me, or, I'll never get caught, or, I don't need anyone's help. That's Edom's nest. The Bible says, "Pride goes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall." The higher you think you are, the harder the fall. Real security doesn't come from being on top. It comes from being held by God.

Next, God describes how complete Edom's downfall would be. If thieves broke into your house at night, they would take only what they wanted. If grape pickers came to your vineyard, they would leave a few grapes behind. But Edom's destruction would be total. "How Esau will be ransacked! How his hidden treasures are sought out!"

Edom was rich. It sat along the King's Highway, a major trade route, and controlled copper mines in the region. Archaeologists working in the Arabah valley, south of the Dead Sea, have found huge ancient copper-mining and smelting sites, some of them linked to Edom. Edom's wealth was hidden away in mountain caves. But none of it would be safe.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Copper and the King's Highway**

The King's Highway was an ancient road running north and south east of the Jordan River, connecting Egypt and Arabia with Damascus and beyond. Caravans carried spices, incense, gold, and other goods along it. Edom sat right on this route and could charge travelers for passing through. That's the same road Israel asked to use in the days of Moses, when Edom refused to let them pass. Edom also controlled copper mines at places like Khirbat en-Nahas in the Arabah. Archaeologists have found mountains of ancient slag

there, the leftover waste from smelting copper, showing that the region was an industrial center.

Then comes betrayal. “All the men of your alliance have brought you on your way, even to the border. The men who were at peace with you have deceived you, and prevailed against you. Friends who eat your bread lay a snare under you.”

Edom had allies, nations it trusted and shared meals with. In the ancient world, eating someone’s bread meant you were committed to their safety. But Edom’s friends would turn on it. And this is a painful irony, because, as we’ll see in the next chapter, Edom had done the very same thing to its own brother.

REAL TALK **Friends Who Turn on You**

Few things hurt as much as betrayal by a friend. Maybe someone you trusted shared your secrets, joined a group chat that mocked you, or suddenly acted like they didn’t know you. If that’s happened to you, you’re not alone. Even Jesus was betrayed by a friend who ate bread with Him. God sees that pain, and He’s not going to betray you. It’s also worth asking a harder question: Have I ever been the friend who turned on someone? If so, it’s not too late to apologize and make it right.

Edom was also famous for its wise men. The town of Teman, in Edom, was known for wisdom. One of Job’s friends, Eliphaz, came from Teman. But God says He would “destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mountain of Esau.” All of Edom’s cleverness would fail. Its mighty warriors would be terrified.

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Wisdom of Teman**

Edom had a reputation for wisdom, the way some cities today are known for universities or tech companies. Jeremiah asks, Is wisdom no more in Teman? The book of Job, which many scholars think is set in or near Edom’s territory,

features Eliphaz the Temanite. Being wise, smart, or educated isn't bad. The Bible praises wisdom. But Edom's wisdom had become a source of pride. When intelligence makes you feel superior and independent from God, it stops being real wisdom. The Bible says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

Here's the big idea of these first nine verses. Edom trusted in three things: its location, its allies, and its intelligence. Its cliffs made it feel safe. Its friends made it feel secure. Its wise men made it feel smart. And God says all three would fail.

We do the same thing. We trust in our looks, our grades, our friends, our talents, our money, or our plans. None of those things are bad. But if they become the place where we find our security, they will eventually let us down. Only God is a rock that never fails.

REAL TALK **Where Is Your Nest?**

Take a minute and be honest. What makes you feel safe, important, or in control? Is it your friend group, your reputation, your phone, your performance in sports or school, or your family's money? Those can all be gifts. But they can also become an eagle's nest, the high place where you think nothing can touch you. James says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humility isn't thinking you're worthless. It's knowing that everything you have comes from God, and that you need Him every day.

KEY VERSE

The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who says in his heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'

Obadiah 3 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think the Bible says pride deceives us?
2. What were the three things Edom trusted in, and how did each one fail?
3. Where are you most tempted to feel untouchable?
4. What's the difference between healthy confidence and pride?

TRY THIS *This week, look for one chance each day to put someone else first, like letting someone go ahead of you, asking for help, or giving credit to someone else. Notice how it feels.*

CHAPTER 2

You Stood on the Other Side

Obadiah 10–14

Now we find out what Edom actually did. “For the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame will cover you, and you will be cut off forever.”

Notice the word brother. God doesn’t say, For the violence done to your enemy, or, to your neighbor. He says brother. Edom and Israel were family. They both came from Isaac and Rebekah. Their ancestors were twins. That’s what made Edom’s betrayal so terrible.

Then Obadiah describes the scene. Foreign armies broke into Jerusalem. They carried away its wealth. They threw dice, or cast lots, to divide up the city and its people. And where was Edom? “In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, even you were like one of them.”

> BACKGROUND CHECK **Edom in the Day of Jerusalem**
>
> If Obadiah describes the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, other parts of the Bible fill in the picture. Psalm 137, written by exiles in Babylon, prays, “Remember, LORD, against the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Raze it! Raze it even to its foundation!” Ezekiel 35 and Lamentations 4 also mention Edom rejoicing over Judah’s destruction. If Obadiah describes the earlier attack around 845 BC, it fits a time when Edom had rebelled against Judah

and raiders plundered Jerusalem. Either way, Edom's behavior was remembered with deep pain.

Edom didn't start the attack. But Edom stood on the other side. They watched and did nothing. And God says that made them just as guilty as the attackers. Even you were like one of them.

REAL TALK **The Other Side**

Jesus told a story about a man who was beaten by robbers and left on the side of the road. A priest came by, saw him, and "passed by on the other side." So did a Levite. Then a Samaritan, someone from a group the man's people despised, stopped and helped. Standing on the other side is one of the most common sins there is. It's watching someone get mocked and saying nothing. It's seeing someone sitting alone and walking past. It's scrolling past a cruel post without speaking up. Obadiah and Jesus agree: when you could help and don't, you're not neutral.

Then Obadiah lists eight things Edom should never have done. Each line begins with Don't, like a series of warnings. It's as if the prophet is replaying the scene in slow motion, wishing he could stop each step.

First, Edom gloated. "But don't look down on your brother in the day of his disaster, and don't rejoice over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. Don't speak proudly in the day of distress."

Edom looked down on Judah, enjoyed watching them suffer, and bragged while they were in pain. They mocked their brother when he was at his lowest.

REAL TALK **When Someone Else Falls**

It can feel good when someone you don't like gets in trouble. Maybe a rival loses, an ex gets dumped, or the kid who was mean to you gets caught. Proverbs warns, "Don't rejoice when your enemy falls. Don't let your heart be

> glad when he is overthrown." That doesn't mean pretending everything is fine or that what they did was okay. It means not celebrating someone else's pain. Paul says to "weep with those who weep." That's hard, especially with enemies. But it's the way of Jesus.

Second, Edom looted. "Don't enter into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Don't look down on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither seize their wealth on the day of their calamity."

Notice how the phrase in the day of their calamity repeats three times in one verse. Obadiah is hammering home the point. Edom took advantage of Judah at the worst possible moment. When their brother was down, Edom walked in and took his stuff.

> **REAL TALK** **Piling On**
>
> There's a word for what Edom did: piling on. It's when someone is already hurting and others join in to make it worse. Online, it can look like a flood of mean comments on someone who made a mistake. At school, it can look like everyone joining in once one person starts teasing someone. Piling on happens because it feels safe to attack someone who's already down. But God takes it seriously. If you see someone getting piled on, you don't have to join the crowd. Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is refuse to add one more blow, or to quietly reach out to the person being attacked.

Third, and worst of all, Edom trapped refugees. "Don't stand in the crossroads to cut off those of his who escape. Don't deliver up those of his who remain in the day of distress."

Picture families running from a burning city, carrying children and whatever they could grab. They head for the roads leading out of the country. And at the crossroads, Edomite soldiers are waiting. They block the way. They capture the survivors and hand them over to the enemy.

That's not just standing by. That's active betrayal. Edom went from watching to helping the attackers.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Brothers Who Should Have Helped**

The law of Moses specifically told Israel, "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother." Even after Edom refused to let Israel pass through its land in the wilderness, God told Israel not to attack Edom. God expected these brother nations to treat each other with basic kindness. In the ancient world, refugees often fled to neighboring nations, and hospitality to people in danger was considered a sacred duty. By blocking the roads and handing refugees over, Edom broke one of the most important moral codes of the ancient world.

Notice the progression in these verses. Edom started by watching. Then it gloated. Then it bragged. Then it walked in and looted. Then it trapped refugees and handed them over. Sin often works that way. It starts with a small step, like a look or a laugh, and grows into something much worse.

That's why it matters what you do in the small moments. Laughing at a cruel joke can lead to telling one. Watching someone get bullied can lead to joining in. Small choices shape who you become.

REAL TALK **If You're the One Being Hurt**

Maybe you've been on the other end of what Edom did. Maybe friends turned on you, people piled on, or someone who should have protected you betrayed you instead. That hurts deeply. God sees it, and He doesn't take it lightly. Obadiah exists in part because God noticed what was done to Judah. You don't have to face it alone. Talk to a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher, school counselor, coach, or pastor. If you're being bullied, keep a record, like screenshots of messages, and report it. If you ever feel like you might hurt yourself, call or text 988 any time, day or night. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911.

REAL TALK **Standing on the Right Side**

You don't have to be a superhero to stand on the right side. You can sit with someone who's alone. You can refuse to forward a hurtful post. You can say, That's not cool, when someone is being mocked. You can tell a trusted adult when someone is being bullied or is in danger. You can send a message to someone who's having a hard day. Those small choices are the opposite of what Edom did. They're the way of Jesus, who always moved toward hurting people.

KEY VERSE

In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, even you were like one of them.

Obadiah 11 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think God said Edom was like one of them, even though Edom didn't start the attack?
2. Which of Edom's actions, gloating, looting, or trapping refugees, seems worst to you? Why?
3. When have you seen someone stand on the other side? When have you done it yourself?
4. What's one way you could stand with someone who's being hurt?

TRY THIS *This week, find one person who is being left out, teased, or ignored, and do something to stand with them, like sitting with them, inviting them in, or telling a trusted adult if they're in danger.*

CHAPTER 3

The Kingdom Will Be the LORD's

Obadiah 15–21

In verse 15, the camera pulls back. Obadiah has been talking about Edom. Now he talks about the whole world. "For the day of the LORD is near all the nations! As you have done, it will be done to you. Your deeds will return upon your own head."

That's the justice boomerang. Whatever Edom threw at others would come flying back. Edom gloated, so it would be shamed. Edom looted, so it would be ransacked. Edom betrayed its brother, so its own allies would betray it.

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Day of the LORD**

We've seen the phrase the Day of the LORD in Joel and Amos. It describes a time when God steps into history to judge evil and set things right. Sometimes it refers to a nearby event, like an invasion. Sometimes it refers to the final day when God will judge the whole world. Obadiah seems to have both in view. Edom's downfall would be one example of the Day of the LORD, and it would point to a bigger day when all nations would answer to God.

REAL TALK **The Boomerang**

Paul wrote, "God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." That's not karma, a cold, automatic force. It's the justice of a personal God who sees everything. It's a warning: how you treat others matters, because God notices. But it's also a comfort. If you've been hurt, you don't have to get revenge. Paul says, "Don't seek revenge yourselves, beloved, but

> give place to God's wrath." You can leave justice in God's hands, and let Him deal with what's not yours to carry.

Then Obadiah uses a picture of drinking. "For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations will drink continually." Edom had celebrated on Mount Zion, maybe even partying in the ruins of Jerusalem. But the prophets often use drinking as a picture of judgment, drinking the cup of God's anger. The nations who had celebrated Judah's fall would one day drink a much more bitter cup.

But then the tone changes completely. "But in Mount Zion, there will be those who escape, and it will be holy." The very refugees Edom tried to trap at the crossroads would survive. God would protect a remnant. And Mount Zion, the hill where Jerusalem's temple stood, which had been looted and mocked, would be holy again.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Mount Zion**
>
> Zion was originally the name of a fortress in Jerusalem that King David captured. Over time, it came to mean the temple mountain, the city of Jerusalem, and even God's people as a whole. In the prophets, Zion often represents the place where God lives among His people. In the New Testament, Hebrews says believers in Jesus have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God. Obadiah contrasts two mountains: the mountain of Esau, a symbol of pride, and Mount Zion, a symbol of God's kingdom.

Obadiah then describes a great reversal. "The house of Jacob will be a fire, the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble." Stubble is the dry leftover stalks in a field after harvest. It burns instantly. The proud nation that thought it was untouchable would go up in smoke.

Verses 19 and 20 read like a map. God's people would return and spread out in every direction. Those in the south would possess the

mountain of Esau. Others would reclaim the lowlands, Ephraim, Samaria, and Gilead. Even exiles scattered far away, as far as a place called Sepharad, would come home and possess the cities of the Negev.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Where Was Sepharad?**

No one knows for sure where Sepharad was. Many scholars think it was Sardis, a city in Asia Minor, modern Turkey, where Jewish exiles lived. Much later, Jewish tradition identified Sepharad with Spain, which is why Jews of Spanish and Portuguese background are still called Sephardic Jews today. Obadiah's point is that no matter how far God's people were scattered, God would bring them home.

REAL TALK **Is This About Hating Edomites?**

Reading Obadiah, someone might wonder, Is God against a certain group of people? It's important to read carefully. Obadiah's judgment was aimed at Edom's pride, violence, and betrayal, not at people for their ethnicity. In fact, the law told Israel not to hate Edomites, and the New Testament shows Idumeans coming to Jesus. The Bible never gives anyone permission to hate a group of people today. Obadiah is a warning to all of us, whatever our background: God opposes pride and cruelty wherever He finds it, including in our own hearts.

Then comes the final verse, the climax of the whole book. "Saviors will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD's."

The word saviors can also be translated deliverers. In the book of Judges, God raised up deliverers to rescue Israel from its enemies. Obadiah promises that God would raise up deliverers again. And the result would be clear: the kingdom will be the LORD's.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Saviors on Mount Zion**

Who are the saviors of verse 21? Some interpreters think Obadiah meant leaders like the judges, or later rulers like the Maccabees, who would rescue God's people. Others see it pointing forward to the Messiah and those who serve with Him. Christians have often read it as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, the one true Savior, who rules from the heavenly Mount Zion. These readings don't have to cancel each other out. God has raised up many deliverers, and all of them point to the final Deliverer.

That last line is the point of the whole book. Edom thought the world belonged to the strong, the clever, and the ruthless. It thought it could live high above everyone else and take what it wanted. But history doesn't belong to Edom. It doesn't belong to Babylon, Rome, or any nation. It doesn't belong to the most popular kids, the richest people, or the strongest armies. In the end, the kingdom will be the LORD's.

REAL TALK **Whose Kingdom Are You Building?**

Everyone is building some kind of kingdom. Maybe it's your reputation, your social media presence, your future career, or your friend group. Those things aren't wrong. But Obadiah reminds us that every human kingdom eventually falls. Only God's kingdom lasts forever. Jesus taught us to pray, "Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That prayer is about more than the future. It's about letting God be King of your choices, your relationships, and your plans right now.

Edom's mountain cliffs still stand today, but the Edomites are gone. Their proud cities are ruins. The nation that asked, Who will bring me down? was brought down. But God's kingdom is still growing, as people from every nation come to know Him.

REAL TALK **When Evil Seems to Win**

Sometimes it feels like proud, cruel people get away with everything. Bullies seem to win. Liars seem to get ahead. People who hurt others seem to face no

consequences. Obadiah was written for people who felt exactly that way, people who had watched their city burn while their enemies laughed. God's answer was, I see it, and it won't last. The last word belongs to God. That doesn't mean you should stay silent about wrong things. Tell a trusted adult, report abuse, and stand up for what's right. But you can do it with hope, knowing that the kingdom will be the LORD's.

KEY VERSE

Saviors will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD's.

Obadiah 21 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. What does Obadiah 15 mean when it says your deeds will return upon your own head?
2. Why is it a relief that you don't have to get revenge yourself?
3. Why do you think the book ends with the kingdom will be the LORD's?
4. What would it look like to let God be King of one area of your life right now?

TRY THIS *Pray the line "Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done" every morning this week. Before you pray it, name one specific area of your life where you want God to be King that day.*

THE END (AND THE BEGINNING)

Where This Points

Obadiah ends with a promise that saviors will go up on Mount Zion and the kingdom will be the LORD's. Jewish readers treasure that promise as a hope for God's final reign. Christians believe it points to Jesus.

Think about the irony. When Jesus was born, the king in Jerusalem was Herod the Great, an Idumean, a descendant of Edom. Herod was proud, paranoid, and brutal. When he heard that wise men were looking for the newborn "King of the Jews," he tried to kill Jesus by murdering the baby boys of Bethlehem. It was the old rivalry between Esau and Jacob, playing out one more time. But the proud king died, and the humble King lived. Jesus did the opposite of Edom. Edom stood on the other side when its brother was crushed. Jesus didn't stand aloof when we were crushed by sin and pain. He came close. He "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," and "humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death." The prophet Isaiah said, "He was crushed for our iniquities." Jesus let Himself be crushed so we could be rescued. And the story has an amazing twist. When crowds came to hear Jesus, they came from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, and "from Idumaea." Even Esau's descendants were coming to Jacob's greatest Son. That's how the kingdom becomes the LORD's: not by wiping out enemies, but by turning enemies into family. One day, heaven will announce, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."

Here's what that means for you, as plainly as I can put it.

1 God made you, and He loves you.

God made you on purpose, and He loves you. He sees when you are hurt and when you are left alone.

> *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* **John 3:16 (WEB)**

2 We've all sinned.

Like Edom, all of us have been proud or stood by while others were hurt. The Bible says all of us have sinned.

> *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;* **Romans 3:23 (WEB)**

3 Sin has a real cost.

God is holy, so He doesn't shrug off evil. The Bible says its result is death, separation from God forever.

> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* **Romans 6:23 (WEB)**

4 Jesus came close.

Jesus didn't stand on the other side. He came close, died for our sins, and rose again, so even His enemies could become His family.

> *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. You were healed by his wounds.* **1 Peter 2:24 (WEB)**

5 You can't earn it. You receive it.

Pride says you can climb high enough on your own. Salvation isn't a reward for being good enough. It's a gift you receive by trusting Jesus.

> *for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.*
> **Ephesians 2:8–9 (WEB)**

6 Make Him your King.

Turn from running your own life, and trust Jesus as your Savior and King. Then you can know, not just hope, that you have eternal life.

> *that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
> **Romans 10:9 (WEB)**

So what do you do with that? Obadiah says the kingdom will be the LORD's. You can make Him your King today. You don't need perfect words. You can talk to God right now, wherever you are. If it helps, you could pray something like this:

> *God, I've gone my own way. I've been proud, and sometimes I've stood by while others were hurt. I can't fix that myself. Thank You that Jesus didn't stand far away, but came close, died for my sins, and rose again. Forgive me, and make me Yours. Help me to be humble and to stand with people who are hurting. I trust Jesus as my Savior, and I want Him to be my King. In Jesus' name, amen.*

If You Just Said Yes

Tell someone. A parent, a youth leader, a pastor, or a Christian friend. Start there.

Read the real thing. Read all of Obadiah, then Matthew 2 and Philippians 2:1-11.

Find your people. Get connected to a church where the Bible is taught and Jesus is honored. Ask about being baptized.

Stand with someone. Look for one person this week who is being left out or picked on, and stand with them.

Not Sure Yet?

Not ready? That's honest, and honesty is a good place to start. Obadiah is short, but its questions are big. Keep asking. Keep reading. Just don't settle for "I already know all that."

Because if Obadiah is right, every proud throne will fall, and the kingdom will belong to the humble King who came close.

Saviors will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD's.

Obadiah 21 (WEB)