

# Comfort For The Afflicted

Intro: While it might seem strange for this lesson, I want to direct your attention to the shortest book in the Old Testament—Obadiah. The theme of Obadiah is the destruction of Edom.

## I. BACKGROUND

### A. There had always been strife between Israel and Edom.

1. Israel was a descendant from Jacob; Edom was from Esau.
  - a. In the womb the two struggled; Gen. 25:22 <sup>“22</sup> And the children struggled together within her; and she said, *If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.*”
  - b. God had chosen Jacob, thus Esau’s descendants were to serve him; Gen. 25:23 <sup>“23</sup> And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”
2. Esau despised his birthright selling it to Jacob; Gen. 25:29-34 <sup>“29</sup> And Jacob sod pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: <sup>30</sup> And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. <sup>31</sup> And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. <sup>32</sup> And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? <sup>33</sup> And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised *his* birthright.”
3. Jacob deceived Isaac to obtain the blessing belonging to Esau (Gen. 27).
4. When Isaac died, because of Esau’s hatred Jacob fled to Laban’s house in Haran; Gen. 27:41-46 <sup>“41</sup> And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. <sup>42</sup> And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. <sup>43</sup> Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; <sup>44</sup> And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother’s fury turn away; <sup>45</sup> Until thy brother’s anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? <sup>46</sup> And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?”

### B. This animosity passed from the fathers to the two nations (Israel and Edom).

1. When Israel left Egypt they were refused permission to pass through Edom; Num. 20:17-21 <sup>“17</sup> Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink *of* the water of the wells: we will go by the king’s *high way*, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. <sup>18</sup> And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. <sup>19</sup> And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without *doing* any thing *else*, go through on my feet. <sup>20</sup> And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. <sup>21</sup> Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.”
2. The Edomites fought against David but were defeated.
  - a. David put garrisons in Edom and made them servants.
    - (1) 2 Sam. 8:14 <sup>“14</sup> And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David’s servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.”
    - (2) 1 Chr. 18:11-13 <sup>“11</sup> Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all *these* nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek. <sup>12</sup> Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand. <sup>13</sup> And he put

garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."

- (3) 1 Kings 11:15-17 <sup>15</sup>For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; <sup>16</sup>(For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:) <sup>17</sup>That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child."
- b. During Jehoram's reign, Edom rebelled but was defeated; 2 Kin. 8:20-22 <sup>20</sup>In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. <sup>21</sup>So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. <sup>22</sup>Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time."

## II. OBADIAH THE BOOK

### A. Obadiah is the author writing to the Edomites.

1. We do not know anything else about Obadiah (there are 13 different ones who wore that name in the Old Testament).
2. His name means "servant of Jehovah."
  - a. He was a man of God, who loved Him, and respected His Word.
  - b. He lived up to his name.
    - (1) He stood in contrast to the Edomites who had failed to obey God, thus they were going to suffer God's punishment.
    - (2) Obadiah had obeyed God and now was receiving comfort from God.
    - (3) When we obey God we will receive His blessings and comfort, when we disobey we will suffer His punishment.
  - c. Christians should live up to their name.
    - (1) It is a name Jehovah gave.
      - (a) Isa. 62:2 <sup>2</sup>And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."
      - (b) Acts 11:26 <sup>26</sup>And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
    - (2) We are His servants;
      - (a) Rom. 6:16-18 <sup>16</sup>Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. <sup>18</sup>Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
      - (b) Offering up our bodies as living sacrifices; Rom. 12:1-2 <sup>1</sup>I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
    - (3) We are to walk worthy of that calling.
      - (a) Eph. 4:1 <sup>1</sup>I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,"
      - (b) 1 The. 2:12 <sup>12</sup>That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

(4) In walking worthy, we are adorning the doctrine of God; Tit. 2:10 <sup>10</sup> "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

**B. We do not know the date of the prophecy.**

1. Some have stated as early as 845.
2. Others state as late as 400.
3. The dates of 845 and 586 receive the most support.

**C. The book divides itself into two divisions.**

1. The destruction of Edom (Oba. 1-16).
  - a. God announces the punishment (Oba. 1-9).
  - b. God informs us the cause and guilt of Edom (Oba. 10-14).
  - c. General principle of sowing and reaping (Oba. 15-16).
2. Prophecies of Israel's restoration (Oba. 17-21).

### III. EDMOM AND HER SINS

**A. Pride**

1. God is against the proud.
  - a. Jam. 4:6 <sup>6</sup> "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
  - b. 1 Pet. 5:5 <sup>5</sup> "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."
  - c. *Resisteth* is a military term meaning to rage in battle against, used in the middle voice signifies to set oneself against.
2. The Edomites were proud, arrogant.
  - a. They did not believe any people could do anything against them.
  - b. Oba. 3 <sup>3</sup> "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?"
    - (1) Their pride had deceived them.
    - (2) They lived in the clefts of the rocks seemingly made it impossible for any nation to gain access making them secure in their own hearts.
  - c. They should have learned:
    - (1) Pro. 16:18 <sup>18</sup> "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
    - (2) Pro. 11:2 <sup>2</sup> "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom."
    - (3) Pro. 18:12 <sup>12</sup> "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."
    - (4) Pro. 29:23 <sup>23</sup> "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."
  - d. They did not believe that God could bring them down, but He would and did; Oba. 4 <sup>4</sup> "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD."
3. Pride causes one to trust his own strength instead of relying on God.
  - a. Edom grew to possess some degree of strength; Oba. 9 <sup>9</sup> "And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter."
  - b. Notice what pride brings:
    - (1) Oppression:
      - (a) Psa. 10:2 <sup>2</sup> "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

- (b) Psa. 119:122 <sup>“122</sup> Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.”
- (2) Contention and strife;
  - (a) Pro. 13:10 <sup>“10</sup> Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom.”
  - (b) Pro. 28:25 <sup>“25</sup> He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.”
  - (c) Even among the apostles; Luke 22:24 <sup>“24</sup> And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.”
- (3) Is a scorner and deals in wrath; Pro. 21:24 <sup>“24</sup> Proud *and* haughty scorner *is* his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.”
- (4) Lies about others; Psa. 119:69 <sup>“69</sup> The proud have forged a lie against me: *but* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.”
- 4. Today people trust in their own strength instead of God and deny Him.
  - a. They persecute, revile, and ridicule the righteous.
  - b. They trust in scientific knowledge, military might, and other things.
  - c. The righteous can take comfort that God will bring them down.

## B. Violence

1. Brother Coats well said, “Isn’t it strange that the first violence every committed was brother against brother? Cain slew his brother and the murderous spirit has been on the rampage ever since.”
2. God considered the nations of Israel and Edom as brothers.
  - a. Israel was not to loath an Edomite; Deu. 23:7 <sup>“7</sup> Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he *is* thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.”
  - b. Yet there was hostilities between them.
3. The Edomites looked for ways to harm the Israelites.
  - a. They encouraged others to destroy Jerusalem; Psa. 137:7 <sup>“7</sup> Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase *it*, rase *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof.”
  - b. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* wrote, “Edom’s crimes against Judah went beyond being spectators who rejoiced over Judah’s misfortune. Because of wrong attitudes, sinful actions followed. Edom even entered Jerusalem’s **gates**, looking **down** (cf. v. 12) in arrogance on God’s people **in their calamity**. Edom looted **their wealth**, killed those who tried to escape, and handed **over** any **survivors** to the attacking armies.”
    - (1) Edom should have offered aid and assistance, instead they made Israel’s burden heavier.
    - (2) Many make it difficult for the Christian to life acceptably before God.
      - (a) Even some within the Lord’s church have done this.
      - (b) Consider how some preachers have been treated, or how many treat elders, etc.
      - (c) God will not overlook these evils and will take retribution.
4. Enemies of God.
  - a. Opposition:
    - (1) There will always be enemies of God and His people; they will do anything to stop the right.
    - (2) Others cannot decide whose side they are on (issues arise which are clear-cut but they cannot choose).

- (3) Some wait for the majority to decide.
  - (a) They hold their finger in the air and go with what is popular.
  - (b) They will not stand for the right and are enemies of God.
- b. Partakers with the enemies.
  - (1) Edom looted the goods of Jerusalem.
    - (a) Oba. 13 <sup>“13</sup> Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity;”
    - (b) They became parkers with the enemy and thus stood condemned by God.
  - (2) Many brethren join with the works of those who are evil.
    - (a) Eph. 5:11 <sup>“11</sup> And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.”
    - (b) 2 John 9-11 <sup>“9</sup> Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup> If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: <sup>11</sup> For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
- 5. God’s prophets denounced Edom.
  - a. Amos 1:11 <sup>“11</sup> Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:”
  - b. Joel 3:19 <sup>“19</sup> Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.”

### C. Cut Off Israel’s Escape

- 1. An enemy had come against Jerusalem.
  - a. Some citizens of Jerusalem tried to escape through the crossways to the desert, through Edom and into Egypt.
  - b. The Edomites intercepted them preventing their escape to safety.
    - (1) They killed some.
    - (2) They took others prisoners and returned them to the enemy.
    - (3) Oba. 14 <sup>“14</sup> Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”
  - c. Matthew Henry wrote, “One cannot read this without a high degree of compassion towards those who were thus basely abused, who when they fled from the sword of an open enemy, and thought they had got out of the reach of it, fell upon and fell by the sword of a treacherous neighbour, whom they were not apprehensive of any danger from. Nor can one read this without a high degree of indignation towards those who were so perfectly lost to all humanity as to exercise such cruelty upon such proper objects of compassion.”
- 2. Some people, like the Edomites, have difficulty figuring out who the enemy is.
  - a. When Thomas Warren met atheists in debate, some in the Lord’s church condemned his actions.
  - b. When I debated Baptist Bob L. Ross on mechanical instrumental music in worship, a member of the church served as his moderator.
  - c. These types of things have happened many times through the years, because some cannot decide who the enemy is.

- d. They are spiritually blind, traitors to the cause of Christ.
  - (1) Mat. 12:30 <sup>30</sup> He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
  - (2) If you do not help God’s people, you do not help God.

#### D. Rejoiced Over Israel’s Disaster

1. Edom rejoiced when Jerusalem was destroyed.
  - a. Oba. 12 <sup>12</sup> But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.”
  - b. This showed their true feeling of hatred.
  - c. What it should have been: 1 Cor. 12:26 <sup>26</sup> And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”
2. They were worse than someone who is neutral.
  - a. They were too cowardly to fight against Jerusalem themselves.
  - b. They stood on the sidelines and gloated over Jerusalem’s demise at another’s hand.
  - c. They also gave aid and support to the enemy.
3. Christians must not rejoice over the wrong things.
  - a. We must find our delight in spiritual (good) things, not evil.
    - (1) Psa. 37:4 <sup>4</sup> Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”
    - (2) Phi. 4:8 <sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”
  - b. Instead how often do we find our joy in evil.
    - (1) Consider some of the things we watch on television today (shows and advertisements) that a few years ago would make us blush.
    - (2) Rom. 1:32 <sup>32</sup> Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”
    - (3) We must be careful where we find our pleasure.
4. Do not think we can stand on the sideline when evil men attack the right and escape the judgment of God.
5. If we fail to come to the aid of righteous men who have had their character’s assassinated, God will condemn us.

### IV. ISRAEL’S COMFORT

#### A. Comfort is found in God.

1. 2 Cor. 1:3-4 <sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; <sup>4</sup> Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”
2. Paul was comforted by Titus’ coming as well as from God; 2 Cor. 7:6 <sup>6</sup> Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;”
3. Obadiah was giving comfort to Israel.
  - a. God gives comfort to those who suffer unjustly from the evils of others.
  - b. This is the importance of the phrase “day of the Lord.”
    - (1) Oba. 15 <sup>15</sup> For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.”
    - (2) It is a day of destruction for those who have not lived faithful to God.

(3) It is a day of deliverance for those obedient to God.

**B. God will take vengeance upon those who mistreat the righteous.**

1. 2 The. 1:5-10 <sup>45</sup> *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: <sup>6</sup> Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; <sup>7</sup> And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>9</sup> Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; <sup>10</sup> When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”
2. We do not need to avenge ourselves.
  - a. Rom. 12:19 <sup>49</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
  - b. Mat. 5:44 <sup>44</sup> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

**C. Comfort from God’s promises.**

1. Obadiah reminds Israel of the promise of deliverance which will come through Christ.
  - a. Oba. 17 <sup>17</sup> But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.”
  - b. God’s promised to bring the Messiah through them.
    - (1) God will be faithful to His promise.
    - (2) Thus, they know that even if a nation conquers and afflicts them, they will not be destroyed till the fulfillment of the promise.
2. We can take comfort in the Message through whom comes true deliverance.
  - a. His holiness makes us holy; 1 Pet. 1:15-16 <sup>15</sup> But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; <sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
  - b. We will be His children and He our Father; 2 Cor. 6:17-7:1 <sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup> And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. <sup>7:1</sup> Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
  - c. We will receive His blessings; Eph. 1:3 <sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:”
  - d. He will be with us; Heb. 13:5-6 <sup>5</sup> *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. <sup>6</sup> So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
  - e. We can take Him all our burdens; 1 Pet. 5:7 <sup>7</sup> Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

**Conclusion:** If we continue faithful to the end we will receive the final comfort God gives.

Rev. 2:10 <sup>10</sup> Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” They would suffer (some even suffering death) and God would give them the crown of life.

2 Tim. 4:6-8 <sup>6</sup> For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” This is the greatest comfort a person could receive.