

OBADIAH

Author: Obadiah

Date: Uncertain, 597 B.C.

Consisting of only twenty-one verses, Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It deals with the bitter rivalry between Edom, the descendants of Jacob's twin brother, Esau, and the people of Israel. Throughout history the Edomites had constantly fought against Israel and demonstrated their contempt for God's chosen people. This book gives a dramatic example of God's response to anyone who would harm His children.

Obadiah means "servant of Yahweh." He was an obscure prophet who probably lived in Judah.

Theme: God will bring total destruction upon Edom for opposing His people.

Key verse: *"For the day of the LORD upon all nations is near; as you have done, it shall be done unto you; your reprisal shall return upon your head"* (verse 15).

Outline

- I. The Predictions of Judgment on Edom (1-9)
- II. The Reasons for the Judgment on Edom (10-14)
- III. The Results of the Judgment on Edom (15-16)
- IV. The Restoration of Israel and Extinction of Edom (17-21)

JONAH

Author: Jonah

Date: 782 – 753 B.C.

God's loving concern for the Gentiles is not a truth disclosed only in the New Testament. More than seven centuries before Christ, God commissioned the Hebrew prophet to proclaim a message of repentance to the Assyrian city of Ninevah. Jonah lived in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. The Assyrians were a great, but evil empire and were Israel's most dreaded enemy. Therefore, when God told Jonah to go to Assyria and call the people to repentance, he ran the opposite direction. Although it is an incredible story, a man surviving three days in the belly of a fish, it is not a myth. Scripture presents the story as historical not only in the Old Testament, but when Christ refers to it in Matthew 12:39-41.

Theme: The story of Jonah is one of the clearest demonstrations in Scripture of God's love and mercy for all peoples who will accept His salvation.

Key verse: *"...for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm"* (4:2b).

Application: God's love and compassion show us that no one is beyond redemption. The gospel is for all who will repent and believe. Pray for those who seem furthest from the kingdom, and look for ways to tell them.

Outline

- I. Jonah Flees (Chapter 1 - Running from God)
- II. Jonah Prays (Chapter 2 - Running to God)
- III. Jonah Preaches (Chapter 3 - Running with God)
- IV. Jonah Learns (Chapter 4 - Trying to Run God)

Micah

Author: Micah

Date: 735-700 B.C.

Micah's name means "who is like the LORD?" He was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. While his contemporary, Isaiah, was prophesying to the royal court in Jerusalem, Micah was preaching to the common people of Judah. The kings at the time of his ministry were Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Burdened by the abusive treatment of the poor, the book of Micah rebukes anyone who would use social status or political power for personal gain. The corruption of the political and religious leaders of Judah is emphasized.

Theme: Samaria's doom is certain and Judah is not far behind. God will restore His people and give them a true Ruler who will lead them in victory. That hope stands only on the other side of the judgment that is coming because the people have failed to accept their covenant responsibilities as God's chosen people.

Key verses: "But you, Bethlehem...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be the ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days," (5:2). "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8).

OUTLINE

- I. Coming Judgment for Samaria and Judah (1:1 - 3:12)
- II. The Coming Kingdom (4:1 - 5:1)
- III. The Coming King (5:2-15)
- IV. Prediction of Repentance (6:1 - 7:10)
- V. Blessings for Israel (7:11-20)

Application: God still hates unkindness, idolatry, injustice and empty ritual. He expects his people to be just, merciful and humble. Only when we live according to God's way will we begin to have a positive effect on our homes, society and world.