

A SURVEY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

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MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
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ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL TERMS

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
ECB: *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: Septuagint
m. Mishnah
MT: Masoretic Text
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: New English Bible (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: New International Version (1984)
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

BOOK OF OBADIAH

PERSONAL SURVEY OF OBADIAH

*Read through the Book of Obadiah, keeping a journal log of:
people, places, key themes and events, and major Scripture passages*

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF OBADIAH

Approximate date: 853-841 B.C.E. (some Right); 586-553 B.C.E. (some Right, some conservative-moderate); 400s B.C.E. (some conservative-moderate, Left)

Time period: fall of Edom following the fall of Judah

Author: Obadiah and/or a close associate (Right, conservative-moderate); Obadiah and anonymous others (Left)

Location of prophet/author(s): somewhere in the Land of Israel (Right, conservative-moderate, Left)

Target audience and their location: Southern Kingdom Israelites, Edomites

The Book of Obadiah is the shortest text in the Hebrew Tanach. The name of the Prophet Obadiah (Heb. *Ovadyah*) means “servant of the LORD.” While a common name in Ancient Israel, nothing is stated in the text concerning Obadiah’s upbringing or background. Later Jewish tradition associates the Prophet Obadiah with the Obadiah of 1 Kings 18, who controlled the household of prophets against Jezebel (b.*Sanhedrin* 39b),¹ although most today discount this as speculation. Due to the lack of explicit biographical data, it is difficult for interpreters to not only pinpoint a time of Obadiah’s prophesying, but also the specific location where he prophesied. It is known that the purpose for Obadiah’s prophecies was to

¹ “Said R. Isaac, ‘On what account did Obadiah have the merit of receiving prophecy? Because he hid a hundred prophets in a cave. For it is said, “For it was so when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty to a cave” (1Ki. 18: 4)”’ (b. *Sanhedrin* 39b; *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. MS Windows XP. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. CD-ROM).

Cf. R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 898; Peter R. Ackroyd, “Obadiah, Book of,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:2.

make light of the conflict between Israel and Edom,² and Edom's rejoicing over Judah's destruction.

The most serious debate as it concerns the Book of Obadiah, among interpreters, relates to when Obadiah prophesied.³ It is quite valid to point out that one "runs the risk of constructing history largely out of prophetic oracles or poetry" (ABD),⁴ and so any interpretation of Obadiah must be guarded by remembering that one's dating of the text is speculative. The two proposals, which are widely made among interpreters, is that Obadiah prophesied during (1) the rebellion against Judah during the reign of Jehoram (853-841 B.C.E.; cf. 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-15), or during (2) the Babylonian attacks on Jerusalem (605-586 B.C.E.).

Previous conservatives tended to favor a dating of Obadiah during the Edomite rebellion against Jehoram,⁵ but conservatives today largely recognize the calamity which Obadiah described as being the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.⁶ Indeed, the widest amount of discussion concerning Obadiah often relates to the connection of Obadiah 1-6 and Jeremiah 49:9-10, 14-16, and how these sets of verses are related.⁷ Some suggest that one borrows from the other, while others argue that since the doom of Edom was a theme of many of the Prophets (cf. Isaiah 34:5; 63:1-6; Ezekiel 25:12-17; 35; Amos 1:11-12; Malachi 1:2-4), both were relying on some kind of common knowledge. It is also argued among interpreters that Obadiah may have been one of those who remained in Jerusalem after the city's fall. A few go even further and propose that Obadiah is post-exilic, composed around 450 B.C.E.⁸

Some liberal examiners adhere for a unity of Obadiah's composition, while others argue that the text is an expanded edition of an original source, or a series of several oracles strung together.⁹ Liberals tend to argue for a post-exilic composition of Obadiah.¹⁰

² Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp 898-899; Carl E. Amerding, "Obadiah," in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. et. al., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 7:335.

³ Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pp 386-387.

⁴ Ackroyd, "Obadiah, Book of," in ABD, 5:4.

⁵ Arthur B. Fowler, "Obadiah, Book of," in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 715.

⁶ D.W.B. Robinson, "Obadiah," in D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, eds., *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 742; J.D.W. Watts, "Obadiah, Book of," in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 3:574; Carl E. Amerding, "Obadiah," in EXP, 7:337.

⁷ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 901; Watts, "Obadiah, Book of," in ISBE, 3:575; Ackroyd, "Obadiah, Book of," in ABD, 5:3; Anthony Gelston, "Obadiah," in James D.G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 979.

⁸ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 902.

⁹ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp 899-900; Watts, "Obadiah, Book of," in ISBE, 3:574; Ackroyd, "Obadiah, Book of," in ABD, 5:3.

¹⁰ J. Muilenburg, "Obadiah, Book of," in George Buttrick, ed., et. al., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:579.

The Hebrew MT of Obadiah is generally in good condition,¹¹ and the Greek Septuagint seldom has to be consulted to correct potential scribal error.

A major theme seen in Obadiah is that Edom had rejoiced over Judah's devastation at the hands of foreign powers (Obadiah 14-15). Edom would be subjected to God's punishment as a result of its gloating.¹² Edom was an ancient adversary of Israel, and as such would be judged by the Lord. Edom's judgment was more severe, though, because the Edomites were ethnically related to the Israelites (Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:3; Romans 9:13), and not a total outside party like the Babylonians (cf. Psalm 137:7; Lamentations 4:21-22).

Obadiah presents the tensions between Israel and Edom (Genesis 36; Deuteronomy 2), and the conflict between the two peoples which had started via the twin brothers Esau and Jacob.¹³ Edom was rejected by God, whereas Jacob was accepted. Paul used this analogy in Romans 9:13 to describe the First Century condition of Israel,¹⁴ and the ancient comparisons of Israel and Edom have caused many to wonder whether Paul was speaking of individual election (as commonly interpreted) or corporate election. The Book of Obadiah does contain a warning of what will happen when one fights against God's people, or rejoices when they are judged. God's judgment on the nations indicates His universal control of the world.¹⁵

In the Jewish theological tradition, Obadiah was commonly read to represent God's disdain for Rome ("Edom"), and then later Christendom.¹⁶ In the Sephardic and Yemenite communities, the entire Book of Obadiah is read as the Haftarah for *V'yishlach* (Genesis 32:4-36:4).

Currently, there has been no distinct Messianic handling with the Book of Obadiah. This is likely due to the text's smallness, rather than deliberate omission. Obadiah does ask the Messianic interpreter questions about Judah and Edom as corporate entities, which could alter some perceptions of Romans 9 and God's "election," which will undeniably have to be considered in future theological studies.

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¹¹ Muilenburg, "Obadiah, Book of," in *IDB*, 3:579; Harrison, *Introduction to Old Testament*, 903; Paul R. Raabe, "Obadiah, Book of," in *EDB*, 979.

¹² Muilenburg, "Obadiah, Book of," in *IDB*, 3:578.

¹³ Gelston, in *ECB*, 696.

¹⁴ Dillard and Longman, 390.

¹⁵ Watts, "Obadiah, Book of," in *ISBE*, 3:575.

¹⁶ Ehud ben Zvi, "Obadiah," in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1193.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ON OBADIAH:

1. Why do you think God's message of judgment upon Edom was so pronounced and thorough?

2. Do you think that today's Messianic community takes the message and themes of Obadiah seriously?

REFLECTION ON THE PLACE OF OBADIAH IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Write two short paragraphs about what struck you about reading the Book of Obadiah: