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“Book of Obadiah, Part 1”

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With

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Book of Obadiah, Part 1

Chances are good that you've never read the book of Obadiah. If you have, you likely haven't given it much thought. In this first of two episodes devoted to the book, we get a bird's eye view of what Obadiah is about and why it's important for forming our theological thinking in some unexpected ways.

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 106, Book of Obadiah, Part 1. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike, how are you?

MSH: Good, how are you doing this week, Trey?

TS: I'm doing pretty good. I'm excited to get back to the books of the Bible here.

MSH: Yeah, back into the Old Testament here, back into everyone's favorite book, book of Obadiah.

TS: This is one book that I am clueless. I do not remember anything so I'm excited to hear it fresh.

MSH: Odds are good that you've never heard a sermon or anything on it. It's very neglected. With only 20 some verses or 21 verses, what can you expect? I think it's fair to say that this will be yet another example of many that we've had on the podcast of why it's important to have the Old Testament or Old Testament theology floating around in your head in order to understand New Testament theology. That might sound crazy like I've never heard anybody going through the New Testament anywhere talk about Obadiah. That's the problem. That's the whole point. It actually does contribute to a number of things, theological points, in the New Testament. So I think we'll get an illustration of that and the corollary to that is kind of why it's a travesty to not hear the Old Testament preached, and we can do probably a whole episode on why that is, why it's neglected, willful neglect, laziness, just lack of training, who knows.

I've run into people who have sat under ministries that are very public, very high profile where they've just been told we're not going to bother with the Old Testament because we're Christians. It's really a shame. I think going into this subject, even a book as "insignificant" as Obadiah, we'll sort of reveal why that's a mistake. So we're going to do this in two parts. What I want to do in this part, the first one, is essentially overview the book and get into some of the content, some of the theological touch points, things that will once we get into them will sound familiar because of things in the New Testament but I want to save most of that for part two but we'll get into some of it here. So as far as an overview, the book of Obadiah is about Edom. It's a judgment oracle against Edom. So we need to start with why Edom is important, why should we even care about Edom in biblical thinking. Well, because it does have a theological role. So the entire book of Obadiah, all 21 verses, is broadly speaking about the relationship between Israel and Edom. And Edom, both in Obadiah and other prophetic books, sort of transcends just being a place and becomes kind of paradigmatic or a symbolic representative of the hostile nations that surround Israel, especially Babylon. We know Babylon is important for lots of things in biblical theological thinking. So Edom is going to connect into some of those things and hence, the book of Obadiah's going to play a role in that. So, as far as Edom itself, what is it? Well, it's a place name. I think most listeners are going to know that. Harper's Bible dictionary defines it this way.

“A name derived from the Semitic root meaning “red,” “ruddy.” 1 A descendant of Esau ([Gen 36:1](#); [Gen 36:8](#)), the brother of Jacob-Israel, and

the elder of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah ([Gen 25:19-26](#)). Esau-Seir is the ancestor of the Edomites in the same way that Jacob-Israel is the eponym of the Israelites. 2 The area situated south of the Dead Sea on both sides of Wadi Arabah because of the reddish color of the sandstone of that district.”

MSH: So that gives you a little bit of the geographical orientation, south of the Dead Sea. Now the land of Edom is also known as Seir in the Old Testament. And Edom was the place where the descendants of Esau, who is the brother of Jacob who is Israel, it's where they settled. So Edom is the older twin Esau, Edom, the Edomites, Esau's the older twin of Jacob and Israel. We know the story about Isaac Rebekah Jacob and Esau, all that sort of stuff. Well, Esau's descendants are associated with Edom because that's where his descendants eventually settle. The point isn't, by mentioning all that, that Edomites were all descendants of Esau. They weren't. When Esau and his descendants eventually settle there, there were already people there, so not every resident of Edom was from the line of Esau. But this is what the area's known for. There's this antipathy all the way back into the Jacob and Esau story, there's this, they don't have the best of relationships and that is going to eventually play out.

But in Genesis as opposed to the prophets, the portrait of Esau and Edom is a little bit more positive in Genesis than it is in the prophets. By the time we get to the prophetic period, the relationship has really soured. People will remember in Genesis that Jacob and Esau sort of patch things up, maybe took it from a hostile relationship to that of an uneasy one but at least not combative. That's going to get worse because of historical circumstances in the Old Testament. So as far as how the place is portrayed or how Edomites are portrayed in the prophetic books, because I mentioned it's going to get a little bit worse, Edom's land is sort of symbolic of the adversarial nations for a simple reason, because Edom, like all the other nations is not Canaan. And Canaan is the promise land, Canaan is the land where Israel is supposed to dwell. It's the land God gives Israel. It's the land God gives to the chosen seed of Abraham, and the Edomites are on the peripheral of that. They're not included in the line of Jacob. It's a different line, it's related but it's not the same. And so Edom becomes viewed the same way as foreign nations would.

You aren't Canaan. You're not in sort of in the covenantal fold, that idea. That's just the way the prophets start to talk about the place and the people. In the biblical story, Edom ultimately and unfortunately assist Babylon in the destruction of Judah. Judah is the Davidic Kingdom, remember your history of Israel. After Solomon, the kingdom splits into North and South, northern kingdom called Israel or Ephraim, sometimes called Samaria in the prophets. You have 10 tribes and the two remaining tribes are in the south. The biggest one of the two is Judah so the southern kingdom is referred to as Judah. But that's where David's line is living. That's where Jerusalem is. That's where the temple is and so on so forth. So Edom is not included in the southern kingdom. Edom is peripheral to that and eventually this relationship deteriorates from the days of Jacob and Esau. And Edom winds up helping Babylon in some way, and the book of Obadiah actually goes into some of that, helps Babylon to destroy Judah and to essentially cut off in a political sense the line of David. So Obadiah along with other passages in another prophetic books foretells Edom's own doom and destruction because of what they have done. It's basically a mirror repayment.

What I mean by that is some of the language in Obadiah and elsewhere in the prophets describe Edom's doom and destruction in the same way as Israel's land had been destroyed prior to that in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. So after we get the fall of the southern kingdom and Edom helps Babylon out, the prophets are going to come back and say you're going to get yours, too. It's going to happen just pretty much in the same way, some of the same awful things happen to the people of Jerusalem are going to happen to you. So it's this mirror repayment idea for Edom's treachery against Israel. Now the way it's cast though, and this is going to take us into, your ears are already going to perk up here as far as New Testament connections with something we just talked about recently. The destruction and judgment on Edom is cast as occurring in conjunction with Israel's return from exile to repossess the land. So there's this whole idea of Israel coming back, when we talked in recent episodes about eschatology, all Israel will be saved and all that kind of stuff, what that language means, but with the idea of Israel coming out of exile for real, not just the two tribes but all the tribes coming out of Israel and taking possession of not only their land but all the nations.

The way Obadiah talks about Edom in that way, and other prophets as well, there's this symbiotic relationship between when Edom gets judged, this is also going to be part of it. This is in conjunction with the return from exile, the deliverance from exile, and Yahweh asserting his authority over all the nations. We know that is quite eschatological so Edom is therefore a place or an item of interest in both Old Testament and when we start thinking about what's going to happen to Edom, cast in books like Obadiah, then that's going to take us into this thinking about what does it mean for Israel to be out of exile. What does it mean for Israel to be a kingdom again? What does it mean for Edom to be dealt with and since there's sort of this symbolic reference to Babylon or symbolic reference to all the nations, how does that play into sort of an already but not yet eschatology?

Obadiah actually has something to contribute to the already but not yet eschatology that we've talked about so many times on the podcast. Back in Genesis, you don't see a whole lot of this. It's a little more positive or at least neutral. Edom's not Canaan but Edom's still a nice place. Esau isn't going to be where you the Israelites are but it's not this awful place. It's still a good land. He'll still make a good living there. They'll still be happy. But when you get to the prophets, Edom is just a place of doom and it's because of the history that accrues from the time of Jacob all the way up into the monarchy when the classical prophets are writing. There's just a lot of baggage that comes with it. Now in the Old Testament more broadly speaking, there are essentially four sort of main prophetic oracles in the Old Testament that concern Edom. We have Obadiah, obviously. Ezekiel 35 and 36 is one of these. The language is fairly neutral. It sounds a lot like the Genesis kind of relationship, at least neutral if not somewhat positive of a portrayal. Edom in Ezekiel 35 and 36 sort of represents the neighboring nations around Israel that were said to originate out of Abraham's lineage, out of his family. So it's just sort of historical and kind neutral.

But when you get into the other prophets, the other major oracles, Isaiah 34, Jeremiah 49:7-22, they link Edom with Babylon and it's not good news. They're very negative. So at issue with all of this is who occupies the promised land, what's going on as far as God paying Edom back for what they had done, how is this going to work, because God isn't going to forget his promises. Is Edom going to get theirs? Is Israel going to come back? How does that affect the relationship? These are all sorts of things that are talked about and portrayed in the book of Obadiah. The possession of the promise land is an issue in all of the Oracle references in the

prophets. In Genesis, Jacob was promise land of Canaan and we know the story when Jacob goes off and does his own thing in Haran with Laban. When he decides to come back, when he gets prompted by God through circumstances to come back, on his way back, he hears Esau is coming out to meet him with lots of men and he gets scared. Maybe intercepted would be a better way to put it, at least that's how Jacob reads it. So Jacob prays and reminds Yahweh of his promise. That in Genesis 32.

He says I thought I was going to become a great nation here so what's up with Esau coming with all these men? We know the outcome of the story. Jacob is safe. Esau's men don't attack them. There's at least a decent, maybe a little bit of an uneasy relationship there but not overt hostility. Much later historically in the book of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, some of these other books, Israel's land is in danger of being taken, that's the language of Ezekiel 35:10-12, taken by Mount Cyr. So when you read things like that, it's like what's going on. And now, all of the sudden, Edomites want to do something harsh, take the land or invade or something like that. You'll see in those instances Yahweh will reiterate the promise through Ezekiel, through Jeremiah, through Obadiah, that Israel will possess this land. It's not going to be somebody else. It's going to be Israel. Now in terms of the specific incidents that prompt some of the hostility. If you go to the book of Numbers, Edom refused to allow Israel passage. Remember in the wilderness wanderings, Numbers 20:14-21, Edomites, these are descendants of Esau. Esau was the brother of Jacob Israel but the Edomites refused to allow Israel passage through their territory during that period of wilderness wanderings.

So that isn't good. David later conquers Edom in 2 Samuel 8:13-14. There's actually a violent conquest of the territory. Edom eventually revolts against the line of David. They revolt against Judah in about 850 BC, so this is after David's time in 2 Kings 8:20-22. So during the monarchy, during the days of David and Solomon, there was apparently a policy among the kings of David's line to maintain as much control as possible over Edomite territory. If you were an Edomite, you resent that and so these historical circumstances create an antipathy between the two groups, between the two people. So it's no surprise that Edom didn't regret Jerusalem's demise at the hand to Babylon and even contributes to it, even helps Babylon. There's no love lost between them by that time. So Obadiah about this very clearly suggests that Edom helped out the Babylonians against their own brethren. Jeremiah 49, Ezekiel 25:12-14, Amos 1:11-12, Malachi 1:2-5, all of them rebuke Edom for its treatment of Israel.

So there is a clear indication that they played a role in the decimation of Judah ,the destruction of the Temple, the cutting off politically of David's line, all the sort of stuff, and Obadiah is about the fact that God knows that and he isn't going to forget it. Edom will get what it deserves. That's the backdrop. What I want to do in the rest of the time that remains is talk about some of what's actually in the book of Obadiah. There are some really interesting phrases, some interesting vocabulary, that will take your mind to certain other passages and that will show you really how negative and evil Obadiah really gets when it comes to describing the Edomites. Some of this I'm going to save for part two. We're going to read through the whole book. It's only 21 verses. I'll tell you what things we're going to pick-up in part two for the next episode. But there are some other things to camp on here that are really quite interesting when it comes to why should I be interested in the book and what could I possibly get out of this thing. So let's go to the beginning of Obadiah and it says, and this is the ESV by the way. I'm reading from the ESV. It says,

¹ The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom:

We have heard a report from the LORD,

and a messenger has been sent among the nations:

“Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!” [MSH: Messenger here is not the word *malak*. It’s not a term you can read a double reference into like an angelic messenger or something to do with the Divine Council, at least yet, in the book. It’s a different set of vocabulary that’s not elsewhere not associated with Divine Council references. So we can set that aside.]

² Behold, I will make you small among the nations;

you shall be utterly despised. [MSH: This is God speaking to Edom.

This is not good news.]

³ The pride of your heart has deceived you,

you who live in the clefts of the rock,

in your lofty dwelling,

who say in your heart,

“Who will bring me down to the ground?”

⁴ Though you soar aloft like the eagle,

though your nest is set among the stars,

from there I will bring you down,

declares the LORD.

MSH: That's Obadiah 3 and 4, and just a few things to notice here. If you're a paper person, I'm sorry. You're not going to get this really anywhere. But if you're using something like Logos Bible software or you're using Blue Letter Bible, something online that can penetrate the English text, and trust me, I recommend that, because there's a lot to see here that you wouldn't normally see just reading it off paper. Here are a few things. In verse 3,

³ The pride of your heart has deceived you,

you who live in the clefts of the rock,

MSH: Edom was mountainous and had cliffs and crags so it's a reference to the people living in the hill country there in the heights. But the phrase here is “in your lofty dwelling”. Now the word there for lofty is kind of interesting. If you've read Unseen Realm, this is sort of almost a point of trivia. I don't expect people to sort of pluck this out of their head. If you've read my content for a while, this term will trigger something in your head. The Hebrew term here is *maon*, which is elsewhere translated the heights and that is an interesting term because heights is used in the Hebrew Bible for not just physical heights but like the heights Zaphon, the cosmic theological supernatural heights. The place where God lives, the place where the Council and all that sort of stuff. So you say does the Edomites have anything to do with the Divine Council? Not per se, but just listen to the vocabulary. Edom is viewed as wicked and rebellious and this is the first term, this is the start in verses 3-4 of using vocabulary to label Edom, vocabulary that is associated with Council rebellion elsewhere. So the pride of your heart, just think about the pride of your heart. Who gets judged in the Council for pride? Just start thinking about it.

³The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rock,
in your lofty dwelling,
who say in your heart,
“Who will bring me down to the ground?”

MSH: Where does the phrase in your heart, who said something in their heart about rebellion and the Divine Council, where does this come from? It's the same phrasing. It comes from Isaiah 14 and this is Helel Ben Shachar, shining one, the son of the dawn, the Lucifer figure. Isaiah 14:13,

You said in your heart,
‘I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God

MSH: Look at verse 4 in Obadiah,

⁴Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the stars,

MSH: It's the same term *kôkâb*. What about being brought down to the ground? In Isaiah 14:12 that is where Helel ben Shachar, day star, son of the dawn, you are cut down to the ground, to the *erets*. It's the same word here in Obadiah. Who will bring me down to *erets*, to either the ground or to *sheol*, the underworld? Who's going to kill us off? Who's going to beat us? Look at the vocabulary. You've got the heights. You've got *erets*, the ground or the underworld. You've got the stars, therefore I will bring you down, this is the same of vocabulary in Isaiah 14:12 about God cutting the day star down to the ground. What's happening here is Obadiah is taking something from Isaiah or, it's hard to know which literary direction but this kind of works. If you're going to say Isaiah's an 8th century prophet, then Isaiah 14, even if you think it's late, the whole Deutero-Isaiah thing, let's just go with the Deutero-Isaiah.

One through thirty is typically associated with Isaiah in the 8th century. It's before Obadiah. If Obadiah is about the rebellion or the devastation with Babylon, that's post-Isaiah. So chances are really good that Obadiah is taking this language of this sort of arch divine rebel, this arch criminal, and he's using vocabulary to label Edom with it. And what's really cool, what's really interesting, is if you recall Isaiah 14, who is Isaiah 14 directed at? If you've read Unseen Realm and if you've read anything else about Isaiah 14, you know that Isaiah 14 is not about the Lucifer figure. It's not about Genesis 3. It's not about these passages. But Genesis 3, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 all draw on the back story to all of them is a divine rebellion in the Council. You have a divine rebel and that story is used to castigate, in Ezekiel 28, it's the prince of Tyre. Who is the target in Isaiah 14? It's the King of Babylon and Babylon is associated with Edom in the book of Obadiah because the Edomites help the Babylonians to destroy Judah. And so Obadiah takes this language used of supernatural wicked forces that were used to describe Babylon's arrogance, Babylon's pride, and conceptually linked them anyway with supernatural

divine darkness that rebelled against the Divine Council where Helel Ben Shachar wanted to ascend above the stars of God (Isaiah 14:13),

You said in your heart,
‘I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God
I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on the mount of assembly
in the far reaches of the north;
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.’

MSH: This language is used in Obadiah to paint Edom with the same brush. It just gives you an idea of not only the contempt that Obadiah would've brought to it because Edom is just awful. To have done this to Jerusalem is just awful. But it creates this sort of theological bad guy linkage between the Edomites and the Babylonians, and of course the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 with the original divine rebel, they're just getting portrayed the same way. This is how serious it is in the mind of Obadiah. And also since this is God's speech through Obadiah, God is creating these linkages as well and basically saying if you don't think you're going to get judged, think again. I have had to deal with much bigger problems than you bunch of Edomites down there. I have dealt with rebellion on a supernatural level, on a cosmic level, in my own Council. So don't think that you're getting away with anything because you're not. It's just really interesting language. Let's just go back to Obadiah and keep reading, verse 5,

⁵ If thieves came to you,
if plunderers came by night—
how you have been destroyed!—
would they not steal only enough for themselves?
If grape gatherers came to you,
would they not leave gleanings?
⁶ How Esau has been pillaged,
his treasures sought out!
⁷ All your allies have driven you to your border;
those at peace with you have deceived you;
they have prevailed against you;
those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you—
you have no understanding.

⁸ Will I not on that day, declares the LORD,
destroy the wise men out of Edom,
and understanding out of Mount Esau?
⁹ And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman,
so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

MSH: Now just a word on a little bit of the language here, we have a reference here to mighty men. This is *gibbor*. Plural its *gibborim*, *gibbore* in construct. Sorry for the Hebrew grammar

lapse there. We're not talking about giants here because the very next line says that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter. I am hoping that you out there in the audience realize on one level this has nothing to do with giants, *gibborim*, even though *gibborim* is used in Genesis 6:4 and all that stuff. Do you realize that *gibbor* is a term that is used broadly and neutrally in the Old Testament? David is called a *gibbor* and he wasn't a giant. He wasn't like this spawn of the Nephilim. It just means a valiant warrior. Now theologically though, when people see this term in the text, it will invariably raise the specter, I guess I could put it this way, is there a connection back to the evil of Genesis 6:1-4?

If you've read Unseen Realm, you know that the connection between Genesis 6 and the whole episode, sons of God, Nephilim, that has deep deep Mesopotamian roots and specifically going back to Babylon. So we do have *gibborim* here and it could be an oblique reference to maybe the gods that that you think are going to help you or you're going to get supernatural assistance or whatever, you can read that way and say they're not going to be any good either. I personally don't think that's what's going on here but I do think the vocabulary would suggest to Edomites just like it did with Helel Ben Shachar, that language drawn from Isaiah 14. The point is that God has dealt with bigger fish than you and you are not going to escape. You are light work compared to what God has had to deal with before. I think the vocabulary connections would be better thought of in those terms, that Edom is being portrayed with this sort of language to make sure that readers know how wicked God views them because God is painting them with the brush of the divine supernatural rubble of the Council. And now we get this *gibbor* reference, part of the Divine Council worldview kind of thinking, God's supernatural enemies. The language of his supernatural enemies is being used to portray this earthly enemy of God's people and when the writer does that, when biblical writers do this, they're trying to communicate just how bad or negatively God views whoever the object or target is. Verse 10,

¹⁰ Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob,
shame shall cover you,
and you shall be cut off forever.

MSH: Now that's kind of an interesting reference, that this whole cutting off forever because what we're going to talk about next week. Edom has this eschatological link to the re-conquest of the nations. Catch my language here now, to the reversing of Babel or Babylon. Here we go with Babylon again. So this whole cutting off together, what does that mean? If it's going to be reversed, are there going to be any then that could be saved? What's going on, because the nations, there are lots of people among the nations that believed in the Messiah? We'll get to that next week but start thinking about the vocabulary. Verse 11, Obadiah starts into a grocery list of offenses, what Edom did. You can read what's coming here and get a glimpse at least of how they helped Babylon and hurt their brother Jacob, Israel.

¹¹ On the day that you stood aloof,
on the day that strangers carried off his wealth
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them.

¹² But do not gloat over the day of your brother

in the day of his misfortune;
do not rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their ruin;
do not boast
in the day of distress.
¹³ Do not enter the gate of my people
in the day of their calamity;
do not gloat over his disaster
in the day of his calamity;
do not loot his wealth
in the day of his calamity.
¹⁴ Do not stand at the crossroads
to cut off his fugitives;
do not hand over his survivors
in the day of distress.

MSH: This is essentially a grocery list of what they did to their own people, essentially their own brother. They're not from the line of Jacob but they are from the line of Isaac. And so this is why it's so heinous, it's so bad. It's one family member rebelling against, doing the other one dirty. And if you think about the Divine Council rebellion stuff, this is what you have at a cosmic level. So the language just helps bring out the severity of what they're doing, to compare it to supernatural rebellions

¹⁵ For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations.
As you have done, it shall be done to you;
your deeds shall return on your own head.
¹⁶ For as you have drunk on my holy mountain,
so all the nations shall drink continually;
they shall drink and swallow,
and shall be as though they had never been.

MSH: Now in this section, this drinking language I want to read a bit of an excerpt from the Anchor Yale commentary on Obadiah by, I think his first name is Paul Raabe. He writes this,

“In contrast to verse 15b, the second half of verse 15, which created a correspondence between Edom’s sin and its punishment, “just as you have done it will be done to you,” verse 16 correlates the punishment experienced by two different groups. “For just as you [plural] have drunk on my holy mountain so all the nations will drink.” The comparison begins by referring to the experience of Judah and Jerusalem, you plural, whereas in verses 11 to 14 Obadiah portrayed the fall of Judah and Jerusalem from a human point of view when strangers and foreigners attacked, or Edom, filling in the blank, reading between the lines, they helped. Now he interprets the same event as Zion’s experience of Yahweh’s wrath. He presupposes the hearers or the readers familiarity with the cup of wrath metaphor found elsewhere. Given the metaphor’s

prominence in Jeremiah, who greatly influenced Obadiah, an explicit connection to Jeremiah 49, it comes as no surprise to see its presence in Obadiah. In light of the many parallels between Jeremiah's Edom Oracle and Obadiah's Edom Oracle, it is especially significant that the former uses the metaphor. Note that Jeremiah locates Jerusalem's cup drinking in the future while Obadiah places it in the past, a sure sign that Jeremiah's Edom Oracle predates and Obadiah postdates the 586 BC crisis. That's when Jerusalem was destroyed. And Jeremiah 49:12 he quotes the passage. It says this. "For thus says the LORD: "If those who did not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, will you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you must drink."

MSH: The point here is that this language is like, Jerusalem and Judah had a very bitter cup to drink from. They were destroyed. It was horrific and it's the cup of wrath metaphor. And so this little section of Obadiah saying guess who's drinking next? You're going to drink the same cup. You're not getting away with anything. So Zion has already experienced Yahweh's wrath but the nations including Edom have yet to experience it. That's what the day of the Lord is about. If you had prior in your Bible study or maybe preaching about the day of the Lord, the day of the Lord is this time in the future when all that is wrong gets set right. All of God's enemies are judged and those who are faithful to God get rewarded for their faithfulness either in the current life and the life to come. It's the day when everything just gets set right. So this is part of what Obadiah's looking at. Zion has already experienced Yahweh's wrath but the nations have not. Now think about that, think about that line.

I'm going to read it again. Zion has already experienced Yahweh's wrath but the nations have yet to experience it. In the future, they're going to be repaid. All of the nations are going to get repaid. There's going to be wrath come against all the nations because the wrath against Israel and Zion has already occurred. That was the exile. That's what happened in the northern kingdom at the hand of the Assyrians and the southern kingdom at the hand of the Babylonians. Obadiah announces that the nations will drink of the same cup as Jerusalem. Now here's why I'm belaboring this. Here's my question, especially for those of you who are into eschatology. We've drifted into it again. What does this say? What does this whole message about Jerusalem Israel has already drunk from the cup of God's wrath and the nations are going to drink from it. What does this say? What does this do to a theology that interprets the tribulation period as a judgment against Jews as a judgment against Israel? This is very common in pop eschatology, the seven-year tribulation.

The church is taken away to escape the wrath of God and this is God's judgment being poured out on Israel. Wait a minute. Really? I thought Israel's sins had been paid for, even like Isaiah said, in a double portion. Here we have a prophetic oracle saying Zion has drunk from this cup. The next ones who are going to drink it are the nations, day of the Lord kind of stuff. We talked about the tribulation in an earlier episode of the podcast. The tribulation language in the New Testament is not referring to the punishment of Jews. It's referring to the persecution of people who embrace the Messiah. Jesus says when I show up, I'm going to bring persecution, bring a sword. This is what's going to happen. But yet pop eschatology so often takes this language to justify certain eschatological schemes or systems and they say this is against the Jews. This is against Israel. Maybe this is why nobody ever teaches from Obadiah or frankly lots

of the Old Testament. What happens is the Old Testament gets filtered through a theological system. It gets filtered through an already existing system of end times thinking. And what I'm suggesting here is that stuff really needs to be rethought. These Old Testament statements, instead of filtering them through Prof. so-and-so or best-selling author so-and-so's latest book or some recent eschatological system that's been around a couple hundred years or who cares how long it's been around.

It could be around for a millennium. Instead of filtering the Old Testament through these systems to understand end times, why don't we just let the Old Testament be read in its own context? Why don't we try that? If you do that, it's going to mess up the systems. If you're a listener of this podcast, you know that I really don't care. I'm sort of here to mess up the system. If I have a ministry, it's messing up the systems. I'm trying to get people to just read the text on its own terms and this is one of those fundamental points, these fundamental little pieces of popular eschatology that really needs examination and scrutiny because you're going to get language in here, the oracles against the nations, that they just don't really work well with it. So if you have, think about the book of Acts. We went through the whole book of Acts on this podcast. The whole book of Acts shows salvation and forgiveness being extended to Israel, to Jews, to Jews first and also to the Greek. Everywhere Paul went, for the first nine chapters of Acts and all these places that Apostles go to are constituent parts of the territories that lie within the boundaries of the promised land, including the those portions that went apostate. And the messaging is we are bringing the message of the Messiah to the Jew, to all of the people within Israel who need to hear the news about the Messiah because it's their Messiah. And once that task is done then the narrative turns to the Gentiles, Peter's vision, Paul's calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. But the point is nobody's walking around saying who gives a rip about what happens if the Jews believe or not because they're going to get punished later anyway. They got the seven-year tribulation bearing down on them.

That's God's wrath against the Jews. That is not the picture that you get in the book of Acts. Forgiveness and salvation are extended to them just as equally as it is to the Gentile. And next week we're going to get into specifically Amos 9:10-12 and how it's quoted in Acts 15 because the Amos passage references Edom directly, about the house of David being restored. But what Acts 15 does with it, and I've mentioned this before in our series of the book of Acts a little bit more, Edom, you're going to have to go back and look at it, in the Old Testament reference is changed to different word when James cites it in Acts 15. And it's a really telling word, especially with what we've been talking about in these last few minutes. Even a book like Obadiah, if you think about Edom as this representative of Babylon and the other nations and you compare, we'll do some of this next week very specifically, comparing what is in Obadiah with some Old Testament passages and some New Testament touch points, it does take you into this whole thing about when did the exile end? What is the tribulation? What's going on here? What about the exile ending and that happening in conjunction with Edom being restored, brought back into the fold with all the other nations? How do we parse that? How do we interpret that? It's taking you into the same questions. Back to Obadiah, verse 17. Think about this one. We're going to talk about this one next week, too.

¹⁷ But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape,
and it shall be holy,
and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.

¹⁸ The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
and the house of Joseph a flame,
and the house of Esau stubble;
they shall burn them and consume them,
and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau,
for the LORD has spoken.

MSH: What is this house of Joseph thing? I can see the house of Jacob, that's Israel. David's in that line. Joseph's a tribe, too. Why bring Joseph up? There are some connections here to how Jews were thinking about end times eschatologically that spring from this passage, Jacob Joseph, and of course Esau is the one who's going to be overturned

¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau,
and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines;
they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria,
and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

²⁰ The exiles of this host of the people of Israel
shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
shall possess the cities of the Negeb.

²¹ Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion
to rule Mount Esau,
and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

MSH: We're going to save a lot of that for the second installment but I think you can see just by reading it that, believe it or not, Obadiah has things to contribute that need to mold our thinking about how we understand what it means to return from exile, what it means for all Israel, the true Israel, to be saved, what it means for the nations to be re-possessed by Yahweh in the kingdom. The tiny little book of Obadiah has things in it that need to inform our thinking about these topics and they are inherently eschatological. So next time we're going to return to some of these sections and factor in specific connections to New Testament thinking, New Testament language, and, in particular, the Amos 9 passage where it talks about and connects the rebuilding of David's house and taking possession of the remnant of Edom, that sort of language and how that's used in the New Testament and why it's important.