
OBADIAH

The Most Terrifying Message in the Bible

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The book of Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. But it has the single most terrifying message of any book in the Bible! There is a vital reason why God is finally revealing it now. Perhaps this message should be more sobering to the saints than any of God's messages. However, God doesn't end on a negative note. Obadiah also has one of the most inspiring conclusions of any biblical book!

BY GERALD FLURRY

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THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS ALL HAVE AN END-TIME message. Some people might say Obadiah is not for us today. But it contains the MOST FRIGHTENING MESSAGE IN THE BIBLE FOR GOD'S CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY HIS *END-TIME CHURCH!*

Obadiah utterly condemned Esau, or Edom (Genesis 25:30; 36:1, 8). But how does Esau relate to us today? Herbert W. Armstrong often said the Bible is a coded book. God must reveal the code. So before we turn to Obadiah, let's look at another book that has an urgent warning for God's Church today.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

"The *burden* of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi" (Malachi 1:1). The word *burden* here means a prophetic oracle—or *warning*. We have clearly shown that this book is a strong rebuke for God's own Church. (Request a free copy of *Malachi's Message to God's Church Today*.) Malachi 4:5-6 prove this is an end-time book.

Notice what Malachi immediately begins to discuss: "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not *Esau Jacob's* brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved *Jacob*, And I hated *Esau*, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness" (Malachi 1:2-3). Why Jacob and Esau? They were twin brothers who had a long history of war. If we apply this to the Church today, we can see God is telling us that the main problem is **FAMILY DIVISION**.

This is the main problem Malachi is attacking. His message is not for the world. It's for God's divided Church today, which is rapidly becoming more divided.

“Whereas *Edom* [or *Esau*] saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath INDIGNATION FOR EVER. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel. A SON HONOURETH HIS FATHER, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, WHERE IS MINE HONOUR? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?” (Malachi 1:4-6).

There is deep spiritual division in God's Family, just as there was deep division between Jacob and Esau! Only a small minority of God's people serve Him in the end time (Malachi 3:16). The majority are rebelling against God. Jacob and Esau are only a *type* of that rebellious majority.

JACOB AND ESAU

Both Jacob and Esau dishonored their father. There is a spiritual counterpart today. God's Laodicean Family dishonors Him in this end time, as Jacob and Esau did. They were sons of the same father. The Edomite and Jacobite Laodiceans are all begotten sons of God the Father.

When Jacob was converted, His name was changed to Israel. So Jacob represents an unconverted attitude in God's own Church today. But Esau represents an even worse attitude. God has “INDIGNATION FOR EVER” against him! He was incorrigible. And many of God's people are becoming that way today! Whatever these Edomite Laodiceans try to build, God says He will *tear down*.

Esau was Jacob's twin brother and was born first. Therefore he was heir to the physical birthright. (Our free book *The*

United States and Britain in Prophecy explains this subject in detail.) Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup (Genesis 25:29-34; Hebrews 12:16-17). Jacob deceitfully schemed to receive that birthright (Genesis 27:1-40), as many in God's Jacobite Laodicean Church are doing today. (For more information, request our free booklet *God's Family Government*.)

God's firstfruits have been called out of this world (John 6:44). They now have a birthright to be the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7). But like Esau, many of God's people are selling their birthright for a bowl of soup. Fifty percent of God's people today are going to lose their salvation (Matthew 25:1-13).

The book of Obadiah is specifically about that lost 50 percent. It is a rebuke of mind-splitting magnitude! You and I urgently need to understand *why* God judges them so harshly.

We shall see there is a very good reason why God discussed Esau in the book of Malachi. Also, we will see abundant evidence within Obadiah to prove that God is addressing His own people today.

ESAU'S SIN

Obadiah means *worshiper of God*. That is all we know about this prophet. God wants us to focus on the message. The prophet remains almost hidden.

The "vision" of Obadiah is a technical term for an end-time prophecy. Verse 21 states that it is a time just before God's Kingdom rules this Earth—obviously the time we are living in right now. Verse 15 states that "the day of the Lord is *near*." So this sets the time frame for Obadiah's message.

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an *ambassador* is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle" (Obadiah 1). The word *rumor* should be *report*. It was prophesied that GOD WOULD SEND A MESSAGE IN THIS END TIME ABOUT EDMOM. Where is it?

Turkey is the modern-day nation of Edom. This prophecy

may well apply to betrayals of Jacob—or Israel—by Turkey, but the primary meaning is directed to a spiritual Esau.

The physical man Edom and God's Laodicean Church today *both* received a birthright promise from God. Edom was accepted into God's congregation (Deuteronomy 23:7-8). So were those members who became Edomite Laodiceans.

Edom has a history of betraying the nations of Jacob, or Israel. The historian Josephus records that 20,000 Edomites, or Idumeans, were accepted as defenders of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Once inside, they betrayed the Jews by robbing and killing them—their own brothers! The book of Obadiah applies to the nation of Turkey. Again, it is only a *type* of what will happen to the incorrigible Laodiceans in this end time. They are going to betray their spiritual brother—their own family.

God's people who received His report, or message, are told, "Arise ye, and let us rise up against HER in battle." Esau is referred to in the masculine gender every place in Obadiah, except verse 1. Here Esau is referred to as *her*. Why? Because this prophecy is actually referring to a *church*, which in the Bible is symbolized by a woman. God's very elect are to do battle against a woman, or a sinning Church of God, which has the attitude of Esau. God's very elect must fight against what these Edomite Laodiceans are doing against God and His own Church. The Church that does this is God's only end-time *ambassador*.

Esau drank upon God's holy mountain (verse 16). Since the primary focus of this book is on God's Church today, how does this apply to God's people? *Only* God's Church drinks spiritually upon God's holy mountain today. So this verse could only apply to God's begotten sons in these latter days. Only they are being judged with eternal consequences.

The Philadelphia Church of God has a strong warning message for the Laodicean churches. **HALF OF GOD'S LAODICEANS ARE SELLING THEIR BIRTHRIGHT AS ESAU DID!** The other half are being very deceptive about working to receive that birthright, just as Jacob was! Today, **GOD IS WARNING HIS SPIRITUAL**

BIRTHRIGHT PEOPLE. This is a big part of the subject in all of the major and minor prophets.

“Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. 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?” (verses 2-3). “Who shall bring me down to the ground?”—a proud and defiant question. These Laodiceans are so proud, they refuse to hear God’s warning message.

REFUGE IN THE ROCKS

The Hebrew word for *rock* is *sela*. In Greek, *rock* is translated as *petra*. The capital of ancient Edom was PETRA. Today, Petra is located in the southern part of Jordan. It is Jordan’s number-one tourist attraction. Petra truly is a unique area—there is no place on Earth like it. The Edomites found it to be the best place to protect themselves from their enemies. It was so good that their pride led them to believe they were invulnerable. That attitude led to their downfall.

This same attitude will cause 50 percent of God’s people today to lose their eternal lives.

Edom “dwellest in the CLEFTS of the rock.” The *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* defines *clefts* this way: “PLACES OF REFUGE IN THE ROCKS (perhaps *dwelling*s CARVED IN THE ROCKS) . . .” (emphasis mine throughout). If you have ever visited Petra, as I have, you know this is a perfect description of its estimated 10,000 caves.

Mr. Armstrong believed the Bible indicates Petra *could be* the place God uses to protect His Church during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:12, 14), though he never stated that dogmatically.

The *clefts* are “PLACES OF REFUGE” in this prophecy, and therefore become more interesting to God’s very elect.

Most of God’s Laodiceans know a great deal about Petra. Many of their top leaders have even visited this world-famous

tourist attraction. But most are not receptive toward it as a place of refuge. That seems logical, since we know none of the Laodiceans will be protected by God during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:10, 18-19; 12:14, 17).

Why would God use Petra to discuss the Edomite Laodiceans, since they won't be going there even if it is the place of refuge? These Laodiceans are "blind" and "have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). Perhaps Petra is used to indicate how secure they feel about their spiritual welfare. They act like they don't really need God. Their sense of godly protection is a fantasy. They are so proud, nobody can correct them—not even God!

We must trust in God, not in a physical place. However, just going to such a desolate place as Petra would take strong faith. We need to be building faith for such a journey. After all, it is prophesied. That time is very near, so God wants us to think about it in the context of faith.

Some critics may think this sounds like dangerous reasoning. But when the nuclear tribulation comes, their thinking will quickly change! A nuclear holocaust will occur that is so severe, all flesh would be destroyed if Christ didn't intervene (Matthew 24:21-22).

"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" (Obadiah 4). In Revelation 12:14, we see that God's people are going to be taken to a place of safety on "two wings of a great EAGLE." The Laodiceans think they have this miraculous help from God, but they don't. Obadiah says they are exalted *as the eagle*. But these lukewarm Christians are in for a rocky fall. *God* is going to bring them down.

There is a small river bed in Petra called the Wadi Mousa. Recently, the water was cut off and it is now dry. This is exactly what has happened to the Edomite Laodiceans, spiritually. Water is a type of God's Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39).

Wadi Mousa in English means "stream or river of Moses." Apparently, Moses spent time in Petra. What a rich and glorious past this region of the world has!

Herbert W. Armstrong founded the Worldwide Church of God. People can still see signs of its past glory. Perhaps this could be why God uses Petra to illustrate the condition of the Edomite Laodiceans. The Laodiceans had such a glorious past. But like Petra today, they *ONLY HAVE SIGNS* of a fabulous *past!*

Esau did look to be invulnerable to his enemies when Petra was the capital city. The Edomites probably lived within the greatest rock fortress on Earth. It was not *men* who brought them down. It was God. God will do the same to these rebellious Laodiceans.

OUR SPIRITUAL ROCK

It is interesting to note that Christ used a *Petra* to teach *us*. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). The word *rock* should be capitalized. It comes from the Greek word *Petra*. Christ likened Himself to this great *Petra*. *Petra* is a symbol of Christ’s enormous strength. I know of no place on Earth that comes close to being such a powerful symbol of Christ.

The one who became Christ was also a “Rock” to those who followed Him in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 10:4). Through Mr. Armstrong, Christ built the WCG on this Rock. God empowered and protected that Church for over 50 years. The members were in a spiritual Rock fortress—just as *Petra* is *physically*.

Isn’t it logical to think God would use *Petra* to show these Laodiceans how they falsely assume themselves to be secure? And at the same time, to show them how secure they should be now and in the Great Tribulation—perhaps protected in *Petra*? Also, the multi-dimensional mind of God could reveal more about the real place of safety to His very elect! It would also be the **STRONGEST WARNING** to God’s very elect and the Laodiceans of just how dangerous it is to take God’s Word lightly—and also a message about how rewarding it is to be totally submissive to God.

It is not illogical to think that Christ would protect His people physically in the greatest rock fortress on Earth—which at the same time is a dramatic symbol of our spiritual Rock, Jesus Christ. I believe a person could reason soundly that our practical God is apt to do just that. We must remember this is a prophecy for the end time. God’s people are going to be taken to a place of safety. However, we are not certain at this time where that place will be.

Since there are so many prophecies about this escape, I do believe God has given us some indication of where it is. God in His time will *clearly* reveal this truth.

“If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?” (Obadiah 5). If thieves rob us, they usually don’t take everything we have. Or a farmer doesn’t take all of the grapes from the field. But THESE LAODICEANS ARE GOING TO BE COMPLETELY DESTROYED AND EFFACED FROM THIS EARTH! This is not the work of men—only God destroys so completely! Only God could be the author of this catastrophe.

JEREMIAH’S VERSION

“Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?” (verse 8).

Jeremiah also has a version of Obadiah’s message. The words of Obadiah 8 are expressed more eloquently in Jeremiah 49:7: “Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?” Here is what *Barnes’* commentary relates about this verse: “He speaks as though Edom were a KNOWN ABODE of human *wisdom*, so that it was STRANGE THAT IT WAS FOUND THERE NO MORE. He speaks of the Edomites ‘as prudent,’ discriminating, full of judgment, and WONDERS THAT COUNSEL SHOULD HAVE ‘PERISHED’ FROM THEM. They

had it eminently then, before it perished. They thought themselves wise; they were thought so; but God took it away at their utmost need.”

Here is how the word *prudent* is defined by *Gesenius' Lexicon*: “TO STAND APART, to be separate and distinct; ... to be easily distinguished ...”

Look at the history of the Worldwide Church of God under Mr. Armstrong. It was a known abode of spiritual wisdom. And it is “strange that it was found there no more” after he died! That wisdom has perished from the WCG and the Laodicean groups which have departed from it.

It did “stand apart” from any other religion on Earth. It was “easily distinguished” from every other church. People in the world often recognized that fact just by watching a few of its television programs.

Most of the Philadelphia Church of God members have come from the WCG or one of its offshoots. And almost every one of them says they were starving spiritually. Many people in the world MARVELED AT THE WISDOM OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD UNDER MR. ARMSTRONG. But not today. It is collapsing because it lacks those wonderful qualities listed in Jeremiah 49:7.

“Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him” (verse 8). Dedan was Esau’s commercial ally. Its inhabitants were told to *flee*, or suffer Esau’s fate!

And so it is today spiritually. Those people who *still* try to remain a part of such an Edomite Laodicean group ARE GOING TO LOSE THEIR ETERNAL LIVES IF THEY DON’T FLEE! No message is more urgent to these people than this one! A chilling fate awaits the spiritual Edomites.

ORPHANS AND WIDOWS

“But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled,

and his brethren, and his neighbours, and *he is not*. Leave thy FATHERLESS CHILDREN, I will preserve them alive; and let thy WIDOWS trust in me” (Jeremiah 49:10-11). ESAU FELL APART, *just as* the Edomite Laodiceans are collapsing today. And God tells us why. We must look at these verses spiritually today. Why don’t these verses discuss *wives* and *children* instead of orphans, or “FATHERLESS CHILDREN,” and “WIDOWS”? In this end time, these Laodiceans have REJECTED GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST THEIR HUSBAND! They have no spiritual Father or Husband. *Spiritually*, they are ORPHANS AND WIDOWS! (James 1:27; this verse is explained in our free booklet on James).

They have accepted the pagan Trinity doctrine, which destroys God’s family relationship (request our free booklet *God Is a Family*).

If you have understood God’s family relationship and then turn and accept the satanic Trinity doctrine, it is tantamount to blasphemy! Verses like these are the reason we believe this.

Why does God say “let thy widows trust in me”? This is Christ, their Husband, talking today. These Laodicean widows (several groups have left the WCG) trust in men, not their Husband (Revelation 19:7). They have been unfaithful to their *only* Husband! Now they have *no* Husband.

Only one group has remained faithful to what Christ taught through Mr. Armstrong.

Several of these verses do not make sense unless you apply them spiritually! These Edomite Laodiceans must wake up and see what they are doing. In Jeremiah 49:10, God says of Esau, “HE IS NOT.” That is where these rebellious saints are headed—to a condition of “he is not”—FOREVER!

When God’s people turn away from Him, it is the most colossal tragedy there is—even if they don’t know it!

God tells the leaders to “[l]eave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive.” Those leaders who are filling the false father role are asked to leave the orphans so God might be able to “preserve them alive.” This means that *many* of these leaders HAVE MOVED BEYOND BEING SAVED SPIRITUALLY! God

makes no appeal to them! They are already lost. The only hope any of them have is heeding this message!

Do we see what a curse it can be to follow a man?

Mr. Armstrong often said, “This is dangerous knowledge.” How devastatingly sad that so many of God’s own people have forgotten those words.

Study the commentaries and see how confused they are about these verses. We must look at these prophecies *spiritually* to understand them. ONLY GOD CAN REVEAL the meaning of these words. The primary meaning is for God’s Church today!

“Thy terribleness hath deceived thee” (verse 16). These people don’t see how horrendously *terrible* they have been toward God and their brethren. And most of them refuse to hear God’s warning. We can only warn them and pray that they will respond.

“CUT OFF FOREVER”

“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” (Obadiah 9). This refers to the 50 percent of the Laodiceans who are going to lose their salvation. All of the Laodiceans are perishing (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Thankfully, 50 percent of them will repent in the Great Tribulation.

“For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be CUT OFF FOR EVER” (Obadiah 10). This is not referring to their physical lives. Notice, they will be CUT OFF *forever*. That means exactly what it says. They will lose their eternal lives.

Teman was the grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:1-11). Obadiah refers to him as “O Teman.” This is how the Turks got the name Ottoman. The Ottoman Turks ruled the Middle East for about 400 years. That rule ended just before World War II.

It is very likely that the *name* of Esau, or Turkey, will be cut off forever because of its treachery to the nations of Jacob. But this verse says *thou*, or *you*—ESAU—shall be “CUT OFF FOR

EVER.” This could only refer to God’s own Laodicean Church in this end time—Church members losing their eternal lives!

It appears that their greatest shame will be what they do in the future to their brother Laodiceans (Jacob). “In the day that thou STOODEST ON THE OTHER SIDE, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, EVEN THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM” (Obadiah 11). This is discussing a time when the nations of Israel become enslaved by the Holy Roman Empire. These *Edomite* Laodiceans join forces with their captors and probably reveal who their fellow Laodiceans are—those who are *repentant*.

We know God’s repentant Laodiceans *reject* the *mark* of the BEAST. They are killed for doing so (Revelation 12:11, 17; 13:15).

The Edomite Laodiceans *accept* the *mark* of the BEAST. This is the day that they “stoodest on the other side.” They were “as one of them”—the beast power. They went from God’s side to Satan’s side! These treacherous Laodiceans are in the grip of Satan.

“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. 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; 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” (Obadiah 12-14). The Edomite Laodiceans “entered into the gate of MY people”—God’s Church! They “stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his [Family] that did escape.” The Edomite Laodiceans kept their own spiritual Family from escaping physical death. They help the BEAST power capture God’s repentant Laodiceans and kill them physically.

The vicious cycle is then complete. The people who once loved God now hate Him and His people.

SAVIORS

“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” (verse 15). When this is all being fulfilled, it is a time when “THE DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR.” That expression always refers to this end time. “For as YE HAVE DRUNK UPON MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been” (verse 16). The commentaries are very confused about this verse. They don’t look at this verse spiritually. God states that *Esau* has “DRUNK UPON MY HOLY MOUNTAIN.” This is where God’s temple is. Of course, this refers to God’s own Church today. These Edomite Laodiceans were given a SPECIAL BIRTHRIGHT UPON GOD’S HOLY MOUNTAIN! But like Esau, they rejected it. They fell off the mountain!

This verse does not make sense unless you apply it spiritually today. Physical Esau, or Turkey, has never drunk upon God’s holy mountain in this end time!

These Laodiceans will “BE AS THOUGH THEY HAD NOT BEEN.” It’s going to be as if they were never born—COMPLETELY DESTROYED! They will be left with “neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1). Malachi is discussing the same Edomite Laodiceans.

“But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions” (Obadiah 17). There is going to be indescribable destruction on Earth. Out of all this devastation, Zion, or GOD’S CHURCH, RISES IN ALL ITS MAJESTY!

There is no deliverance to a place of refuge unless God is with the people. Only God can protect His people.

“And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they

shall kindle in them, and devour them; and THERE SHALL NOT BE ANY REMAINING OF THE HOUSE OF ESAU; for the Lord hath spoken it” (verse 18). NONE will remain alive from the house of Esau! They will be only *stubble*—ashes under the saints’ feet (Malachi 4:3). God’s Laodiceans DESPERATELY NEED TO SEE THAT THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES ARE IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY!

“And *saviours* shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (Obadiah 21). Esau and all of God’s people are being judged today (1 Peter 4:17). God is sending *saviors*. This is the good news. If God’s Laodiceans and the world heed our message, it will save them physically *and* spiritually!

The loyal bride of Christ is being used as a savior even today. This wife has influence with her all-powerful Husband!

Some Laodiceans say we are attacking them. These people are deeply deceived. We are *warning* them with the hope of saving them—physically and spiritually!

THIS WORLD’S GREATEST NEED IS FOR SAVIORS! God is sending them now. And whether people listen to us now or not, we shall be even more powerful saviors in God’s Kingdom.

Strife on our weary planet is about to end forever! Jesus Christ is about to rule this Earth. We must not overlook the greatest Savior of all pictured in this book. “[T]he kingdom shall be the Lord’s”—FOREVER!

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