

The Death of Jehoshaphat (849t BC)

1 Kings 22:45, 50	2 Chr 20:34; 21:1–3
<p>Before His Death, Jehoshaphat Gives Gifts to His Sons</p>	<p>21:2 He [<i>Jehoram</i>] had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these <i>were</i> the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.</p> <p>3a Their father gave them many gifts of silver, gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah,</p>
<p>Jehoshaphat Gives the Kingdom to Jehoram</p>	<p>3b but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.</p>
<p>Jehoshaphat Dies</p> <p>45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might which he showed and how he warred, are they not written in the</p> <p>Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?</p> <p>50 And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his father David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place.</p>	<p>20:34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first to last, behold, they are written in the annals of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel.</p> <p>21:1 Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place.</p>

Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's Son, Begins Sole Reign of Judah (848n/848t BC)

2 Kings 8:16–17	2 Chronicles 21:5
<p>16 Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then the king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah became king.</p> <p>17 He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.</p>	<p>5 Jehoram <i>was</i> thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.</p>

Jehoram's [Judah] Early Reign Characterized by Murder, War and Idolatry (848n/848t BC)

2 Kings 8:18–22	2 Chronicles 21:4, 6–11
<p>Jehoram Murders His Brothers</p>	<p>4 Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also.</p>
<p>God Has Mercy on Judah in Spite of Jehoram's Wickedness</p> <p>18 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife;</p>	<p>6 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife),</p>

and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.
 19 However, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised him to give a lamp to him through his sons always.

With Jehoshaphat Dead, Edom Rebels Against Judah

20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.
 21 Then Joram crossed over to Zair, and all his chariots with him. And he arose by night and struck the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; but *his* army fled to their tents.
 22a So Edom revolted against Judah to this day.

Libnah Also Rebels

22b Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

Jehoram's Idolatry

and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.
 7 Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.

8 In his days Edom revolted against the rule of Judah and set up a king over themselves.
 9 Then Jehoram crossed over with his commanders and all his chariots with him. And he arose by night and struck down the Edomites who were surrounding him and the commanders of the chariots.
 10a So Edom revolted against Judah to this day.

10b Then Libnah revolted at the same time against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray.

Jehoram [Judah] Receives Elijah's Letter (c. 848 BC)

2 Chronicles 21:12–15

12 Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you, behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity; and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.'"

Judah is Pillaged by the Philistines and the Arabs (c. 845 BC)

2 Chronicles 21:16–17

16 Then the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians; and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

Obadiah's Prophecy Against Edom (c. 845 BC)

Obadiah 1

Yahweh Promises to Destroy Edom

1 The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom—

We have heard a report from the LORD,
And an envoy has been sent among the nations *saying*,
“Arise and let us go against her for battle” —

2 “Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
You are greatly despised.

3 “The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,
Who say in your heart,
‘Who will bring me down to earth?’

4 “Though you build high like the eagle,
Though you set your nest among the stars,
From there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.

5 “If thieves came to you,
If robbers by night—
O how you will be ruined!—
Would they not steal *only* until they had enough?
If grape gatherers came to you,
Would they not leave *some* gleanings?

6 “O how Esau will be ransacked,
And his hidden treasures searched out!

7 “All the men allied with you
Will send you forth to the border,
And the men at peace with you
Will deceive you and overpower you.
They who eat your bread
Will set an ambush for you.
(There is no understanding in him.)

8 “Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD,
“Destroy wise men from Edom
And understanding from the mountain of Esau?”

9 “Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman,
So that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.

Edom's Wrongs against Judah

10 “Because of violence to your brother Jacob,
You will be covered *with* shame,
And you will be cut off forever.

11 “On the day that you stood aloof,
On the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
And foreigners entered his gate
And cast lots for Jerusalem—

- You too were as one of them.
- 12 “Do not gloat over your brother’s day,
The day of his misfortune.
And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Yes, do not boast
In the day of *their* distress.
- 13 “Do not enter the gate of My people
In the day of their disaster.
Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity
In the day of their disaster.
And do not loot their wealth
In the day of their disaster.
- 14 “Do not stand at the fork of the road
To cut down their fugitives;
And do not imprison their survivors
In the day of their distress.

The Coming “Day of the LORD”

- 15 “For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head.
- 16 “Because just as you drank on My holy mountain,
All the nations will drink continually.
They will drink and swallow
And become as if they had never existed.
- 17 “But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, [cf. [Joel 2:32](#)]
And it will be holy.
And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.
- 18 “Then the house of Jacob will be a fire
And the house of Joseph a flame;
But the house of Esau *will be* as stubble.
And they will set them on fire and consume them,
So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,”
For the LORD has spoken.
- 19 Then *those of* the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau,
And *those of* the Shephelah the Philistine *plain*;
Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria,
And Benjamin *will possess* Gilead.
- 20 And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel,
Who are *among* the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
Will possess the cities of the Negev.
- 21 The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion
To judge the mountain of Esau,
And the kingdom will be the LORD’s.

Chronological Notes

1) The date of Obadiah.¹

A) Since we do not know who the author of Obadiah was (there are many Obadiah's mentioned in Scripture²), it is difficult to date this prophecy. Archer remarked, "This shortest book in the Old Testament, consisting of only twenty-one verses, bears the distinction of being the most difficult of all the prophecies to date."³ There are three clues concerning when Obadiah was written:

B) Internal references to historical events.

(1) Obadiah referred to a time in the apparently recent past when the Edomites gloated over a successful invasion of Jerusalem (1:10–14, esp. v. 11). There are several occasions mentioned in Kings and Chronicles in which Judah was defeated and Jerusalem invaded:⁴

- (a) Shishak's invasion during Rehoboam's reign (927t BC; 1 Kgs 14:25–28; 2 Chr 12:2–12).
- (b) Philistine/Arab invasion during Jehoram's reign (c. 845 BC; 2 Chr 21:16–17; 22:1).
- (c) Jehoash's [Israel] invasion during Amaziah's reign (c. 790 BC; 2 Kgs 14:13–14; 2 Chr 25:23–24).
- (d) Nebuchadnezzar's invasion during Jehoiakim's reign (609t–598t BC; 2 Kgs 24:1–4; 2 Chr 36:6–7).
- (e) Nebuchadnezzar's invasion during Jehoiachin's reign (598t BC; 2 Kgs 24:10–16; 2 Chr 36:10).
- (f) Nebuchadnezzar's invasion during Zedekiah's reign (9 Tammuz, 587 BC; 2 Kgs 25:3–7; 2 Chr 36:15–20).

(2) Of these invasions, the two that best fit the descriptions in Obadiah are the Philistine/Arab invasion during Jehoram's reign (c. 845 BC) and the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar at the end of Zedekiah's reign (587 BC). Currently most scholars favor a date of 587 BC,⁵ but the 845 BC date also has many adherents.⁶

¹ Most of this material is sourced from Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Obadiah, 2012 Edition" and Allan P. Brown, "Introduction to Obadiah."

² Tradition connects this Obadiah to the Obadiah who protected God's prophets during the reign of Ahab.

³ Gleason L. Archer Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 299.

⁴ I am excluding the Edomite invasion of Judah during Ahaz's reign (732t–716t BC; 2 Chr 28:16–18) since no mention is made of Jerusalem.

⁵ E.g., Watts, pp. 8–9, 19, 27, 54; Allen, pp. 129–33; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, pp. 403–4, 416; Thomas J. Finley, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah*, p. 340–42; Billy K. Smith, "Obadiah," in *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, p. 172; David W. Baker, *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 23; Carl E. Armerding, "Obadiah," in *Daniel–Minor Prophets*, vol. 7 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 337; Frank E. Gaebelien, *Four Minor Prophets [Obadiah, Jonah, Habakkuk, and Haggai]: Their Message for Today*, pp. 13, 28; G. Herbert Livingston, "Obadiah," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 839; Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 898, 902; John Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 356, 417; Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "A Theology of the Minor Prophets," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 418; idem, *Handbook on the Prophets*, p. 403; *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 939; and Waltke, p. 845.

⁶ E.g., Keil, 1:341–49; Walter L. Baker, "Obadiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 1454; Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, p. 136; Archer, pp. 299–303; Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 262–64; Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Israel: A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 382; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 186; Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 277; Charles H. Dyer, in *The Old Testament Explorer*, pp. 765–66; and Warren W. Wiersbe, "Obadiah," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary/Prophets*, p. 371. See especially Jeffrey Niehaus, "Obadiah," in *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 496–502.

(a) Arguments for the Early Date (c. 845 BC).⁷

- (i) Edom had revolted during the reign of Jehoram and was a bitter antagonist of Judah at this time (2 Kgs 8:20–22; 2 Chr 21 :8–20).
- (ii) There is no mention in Obadiah of the deportation of the entire population which was part of the Babylonian invasion of 587 BC.
- (iii) The captives were not taken to Babylon as in 587, but to Phoenicia and the West (Obad 1:20).
- (iv) All the later prophets who speak of the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity mention the Chaldeans, often including the name of Nebuchadnezzar himself, whereas Obadiah leaves the enemy unidentified.
- (v) No reference is made to the total destruction of the city and temple which took place in 587. Verse 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” (ESV) is hardly appropriate if Jerusalem were already a desolate heap of ruins, as the 587 date would imply.

(b) Arguments for the Late Date (587 BC).⁸

- (i) During Nebuchadnezzar’s invasions, the city suffered seizure of its “wealth” and wholesale deportation of its population (2 Kgs 24:13–16; 25:4–17; 2 Chr 36:18, 20).
- (ii) In 587 the city was virtually burned to the ground, including the temple (2 Kgs 25:9, 10; 2 Chr 36:19), and many of its inhabitants were massacred (2 Kgs 25:8–21; 2 Chr 36:17; cf. Jer 6:1–9:22; Ezek 4:1–7:27). There is specific reference to unsuccessful “fugitives” in the account of the king’s escape with his retinue (2 Kgs 25:4–5).
- (iii) Of particular significance are the accounts of Edom’s conduct at this time. There is evidence for its participation as an ally in a coalition of Palestinian states against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:3; 40:11); yet it was later accused of taking vengeance on Judah (Ezek 25:12), and of delivering the Israelites “over to the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time their punishment reached its climax” (Ezek 35:5–6; cf. Lam 1:17).
- (iv) Edom was equally guilty at this time of rejoicing in Jerusalem’s destruction (Ps 137:7; Lam 2:15–17; 4:21; Ezek 35:11–15; 36:2–6); and it is therefore at this time that the prophetic announcements of Edom’s annihilation reached a climax (Jer 9:26; 25:21; Lam 4:21–22; Ezek 25:13; 32:29; 35:3–4; 7–9, 11, 14–15; 36:7). Specific correlations include numerous points of contact in Jeremiah 49:7–22 and in Ezekiel 35–36.

⁷ Cf. Freeman and Archer.

⁸ Cf. Armerding and Allen.

C) The book's placement in the Hebrew canon.

- (1) The Jews put all 12 of the Minor Prophets on one scroll for convenience sake and to keep them from getting lost. The order in which they appear in the Hebrew Bible is basically chronological, and this order continued in later translations of the Old Testament, including English translations. This would lead us to conclude that the ancient Jews regarded Obadiah as one of the earlier prophetic books.
- (2) The order is not completely chronological. Freeman comments, "In the arrangement of The Twelve in the Hebrew Bible the chronological principle which seems to have determined the over-all order was as follows: (1) the prophets of the Assyrian period were placed first (Hosea to Nahum); (2) then followed those of the Babylonian period (Habakkuk and Zephaniah); (3) the series closed with the three prophets of the Persian period after the exile (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi)."⁹

D) Possible quotations/allusions to the writings of other OT prophets.

- (1) There are similarities between Obadiah 1:1–6 and Jeremiah 49:9 and 14–17 and between Obadiah 1:10–18 and Joel 1:15; 2:1, 32; 3:3–4, 17, and 19.¹⁰ There are also similarities between Obadiah 1:9–10, 14, 18, and 19 and Amos 1:2, 6, 11–12, and 9:13. However, in all these instances it is really impossible to determine if Obadiah referred to the other prophets, if they referred to Obadiah, if they all depended on another common source, or if the Holy Spirit simply led each prophet independently to express himself in similar terms.

E) At this time I personally favor an early date of c. 845 BC and so Obadiah will be placed in today's reading.

⁹ Freeman, 135. See also Greg Goswell, "The Order of the Books in the Hebrew Bible," *JETS* 51:4 (Dec 2008): 673–88.

¹⁰ For a defense of the priority of Obadiah to Jeremiah, see Niehaus, 501.