

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

Jehoram Murders His Brothers

God Has Mercy on Judah in Spite of Jehoram's Wickedness

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.
19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, *and* to his children.

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 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.
22a Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.

Libnah Also Rebels

22b Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

Jehoram's Idolatry

4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel.

6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD.
7 Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.

8 In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.

9 Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.

10a So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.

10b The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand; 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 commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*.

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

2 Chronicles 21:12–15

12 And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,
13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself:
14 Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:
15 And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.

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

2 Chronicles 21:16–17

16 Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians:
17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save 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 saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumor from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.
- 2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.
- 3 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?
- 4 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.
- 5 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 grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave *some* grapes?
- 6 How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up!
- 7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat* thy bread have laid a wound under thee: *there is* none understanding in him.
- 8 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?
- 9 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.

Edom's Wrongs against Judah

- 10 For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 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;
- 14 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.

The Coming "Day of the LORD"

- 15 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.
- 16 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.
- 17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, [cf. [Joel 2:32](#)] and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
- 18 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*.
- 19 And *they of* the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they of* the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.
- 20 And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, *even* unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which *is* in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.
- 21 And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

Elisha Raises the Shunammite Woman's Son (c. 844 BC)

2 Kings 4:18–37

The Boy Dies

- 18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.
- 19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.
- 20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died.

The Mother Goes to See Elisha

- 21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.
- 22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.
- 23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be well*.
- 24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.
- 25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he

said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite:

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it* well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she answered, *It is* well.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

Elisha Raises the Son from the Dead

31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

Seven Year Famine in Israel Begins (c. 844 BC)

2 Kings 8:1–2

1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

Elisha Cures the Poison Stew (c. 844–841 BC)

2 Kings 4:38–41

38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.

40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*.

41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

Elisha Feeds 100 People (c. 844–841 BC)

2 Kings 4:42–44

42 And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.

44 So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

Elisha Heals Naaman (c. 844–841 BC)

2 Kings 5

Naaman's Disease

- 1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, *but he was* a leper.
- 2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.
- 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.
- 4 And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.
- 5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment.
- 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.
- 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.
- 8 And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

The Jordan River

- 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.
- 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.
- 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.
- 12 *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.
- 13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?
- 14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Elisha Will Not Accept Naaman's Gifts

- 15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.
- 16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused.
- 17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.
- 18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.
- 19a And he said unto him, Go in peace.

Gehazi's Greed

- 19b So he departed from him a little way.
- 20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.
- 21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is* all well?
- 22 And he said, All *is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.
- 23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him.
- 24 And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.
- 25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?
 27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.

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. Gaebelain, *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*, p. 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.

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.

⁷ Cf. Freeman and Archer.

⁸ Cf. Armerding and Allen.

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

(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.

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