

**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**

4 When Jehoram ascended to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and murdered all his brothers with the sword, and even some of the princes of Israel.

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

18 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife, and he did evil in the eyes of Yahweh.

19 Yet Yahweh was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, as he had promised to give him a lamp for his sons always.

6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife.

And he did evil in the sight of Yahweh.

7 But Yahweh was not willing to destroy the house of David on account of the covenant that he had made with David and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his descendants forever.

**With Jehoshaphat Dead, Edom Rebels Against Judah**

20 In his days, Edom rebelled against the rule of Judah, and they set up a king over them.

21 So Joram crossed over to Zair and all the chariots with him.

It happened that he arose *by* night and attacked Edom who had surrounded him and the commanders of the chariots; but the army fled to their tents.

22a So Edom has rebelled against the rule of Judah until this day;

8 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and they set up a king of their own.

9 Then Jehoram passed over with his commanders and all the chariots with him, and when night came he struck Edom who *was* all around him and the commanders of his chariots.

10 So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah until this day.

**Libnah Also Rebels**

22b then Libnah *also* rebelled at that time.

Then Libnah *also* revolted at that time from under his hand, because he had forsaken Yahweh, the God of his ancestors.

**Jehoram's Idolatry**

11 Moreover, he made high places in the hill country of Judah, and he enticed the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be unfaithful, and he led Judah astray.

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

2 Chronicles 21:12–15

12 And a letter from Elijah the prophet came to him, saying, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of David your father: 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father or in the ways of Asa, the king of Judah,  
13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel and have enticed Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be unfaithful like the unfaithfulness of the house of Ahab, and have also murdered your brothers of the house of your father who *were* better than you,  
14 behold, Yahweh is inflicting a great plague on your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions,  
15 and you yourself *will be afflicted* with great illness, with sickness in your bowels, until your bowels come out on account of the illness, day by day.'"

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

2 Chronicles 21:16–17

16 And Yahweh stirred up the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who *were* near the Cushites against Jehoram.  
17 And they came up against Judah and invaded it and carried away all the possessions found in the house of the king, and also his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz his youngest son.

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

Obadiah 1

**Yahweh Promises to Destroy Edom**

1 The vision of Obadiah. Thus says my Lord Yahweh concerning Edom:

2 “Look, I will make you insignificant among the nations. You *will be* utterly despised!  
 3 The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of a rock, the heights of its dwelling, *you who* say in your heart: ‘Who can bring me down *to the ground?*’  
 4 *Even* if you soar like the eagle, *even* if your nest is set among *the* stars, from there I will bring you down!” declares Yahweh:  
 5 “If thieves came to you, if plunderers of *the* night—How you have been destroyed!—would they not steal what they wanted? If grape gatherers came, would they not leave gleanings?  
 6 How Esau has been pillaged; his treasures have been ransacked!  
 7 All of your allies have driven you up to the boundary; your confederates have deceived you and have prevailed against you. *Those who eat* your bread have set an ambush for you, there is no understanding of it.  
 8 On that day,” declares Yahweh, “will I not destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountain of Esau?  
 9 And your warriors will be shattered, *O Teman*, so that everyone from the mountain of Esau will be cut off because of the slaughter!

#### Edom’s Wrongs against Judah

10 “Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame will cover you and you will be cut off forever.  
 11 On the day you stood nearby, on the day strangers took his wealth, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots over Jerusalem, you were also like one of them.  
 12 But you should not have gloated over your brother’s day, on the day of his misfortune, and you should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah on the day of their perishing, and you should not have opened your mouth wide on the day of distress.  
 13 You should not have entered the gate of my people on the day of their disaster. You also should not have gloated over his misery on the day of his disaster, and you should not have stretched out *your hands* on the day of his disaster.  
 14 And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives and you should not have handed over his survivors on the day of distress.

#### The Coming “Day of the LORD”

15 “For the day of Yahweh *is* near against all the nations! Just as you have done, it will be done to you. Your deeds will return on your *own* head.  
 16 For just as you have drunk on my holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and they will slurp, and they will be as *if* they had never been.  
 17 But on Mount Zion there will be an escape, [cf. [Joel 2:32](#)] and it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will take possession of their dispossessors.  
 18 And the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; and they will set them on fire and will consume them. And there will not be a survivor for the house of Esau,” for Yahweh has spoken.  
 19 Those of the Negev will take possession of the mountain of Esau, and those of the Shephelah *will possess the land of* the Philistines, and they shall take possession of the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, and Benjamin *will take possession of* Gilead.  
 20 And the exiles of this army of the people of Israel *will possess* Canaan up to Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who *are* in Sepharad will take possession of the cities of the Negev.  
 21 And those who have been saved will go up on Mount Zion to rule the mountain of Esau. And the kingdom will belong to Yahweh.

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

2 Kings 4:18–37

#### The Boy Dies

18 The child grew older, and it happened one day that he went out to his father *and* to the reapers.  
 19 Then he said to his father, “My head, my head!” So he said to the servant, “Carry him to his mother.”  
 20 So they carried him and brought him to his mother; he sat on her lap until noon and then died.

#### The Mother Goes to See Elisha

21 She went up, laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed *the door*, and went out behind it.  
 22 She called to her husband and said, “Please send one of the servants and one of the female donkeys for me, so that I can go quickly up to the man of God and return.”  
 23 And he said, “Why are you going to him today? *It is* neither the new moon nor the Sabbath!” And she said, “Peace.”  
 24 She saddled the female donkey, and she said to her servant, “Drive along and go; you must not hold me back from riding, unless I tell you.”  
 25 So she went and came to the man of God by Mount Carmel. It happened when the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, “There is this Shunammite.  
 26 Now, please run to meet her and ask her, ‘Is it peace for you? Is it peace for your husband? Is it peace for the boy?’” She said, “Peace.”

27 So she came to the man of God at the mountain, and she caught hold of his feet. Then Gehazi came near to push her away, but the man of God said, "Let her alone, for her soul is bitter, and Yahweh has hidden it from me and has not told me."

28 Then she said, "Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say that you must not mislead me?"

29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, you must not greet them; if anyone greets you, you must not answer them. You must put my staff on the face of the boy."

30 Then the mother of the boy said, "As Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, I will surely not leave you." So he got up and went after her.

### **Elisha Raises the Son from the Dead**

31 Gehazi crossed over before them, and he put the staff on the face of the boy; but there was no sound, and there was no sign of life, so he returned to meet him. He told him, saying, "The boy did not wake up."

32 When Elisha came to the house, here *was* the boy dead, lying on his bed.

33 He went and closed the door behind the two of them and prayed to Yahweh.

34 Then he went up and lay upon the child and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his palms on his palms. As he bent down over him, the flesh of the boy became warm.

35 He returned and went to and fro in the house one time, then he went up and bent over him. Then the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36 *Elisha* called to Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her and she came to him; then he said, "Pick up your son."

37 She came and fell at his feet and bowed down to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.

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

2 Kings 8:1–2

1 Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Get up and go, you and your household, and dwell as an alien wherever you can, for Yahweh has called for a famine, and it will come to the land *for* seven years."

2 So the woman got up and did according to the word of the man of God. She and her household went and dwelt as an alien in the land of *the* Philistines for seven years.

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

2 Kings 4:38–41

38 So Elisha returned to Gilgal. Now the famine *was* in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. He said to his servant, put on the large pot and cook a stew for the sons of the prophets.

39 One went out to the field to gather herbs, and he found a wild vine and gathered wild gourds from it *and* filled his cloak. Then he came and cut them into the pot of stew, but they did not know *what they were*.

40 They served the men to eat, but when they ate from the stew, they cried out and said, "There *is* death in the pot, *O* man of God!" They were not able to eat *it*.

41 Then he said, "Bring *some* flour," and he threw it into the pot. He then said, "Serve the people and let them eat." There was nothing harmful in the pot.

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

2 Kings 4:42–44

42 A man came from Baal-Shalishah and brought food to the man of God: firstfruits and twenty loaves of barley bread, with ripe grain in his sack. He said, "Give *it* to the people and let them eat."

43 Then his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" He said, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus Yahweh says, 'They shall eat and have some left over.'"

44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of Yahweh.

## **Elisha Heals Naaman (c. 844–841 BC)**

2 Kings 5

### **Naaman's Disease**

1 Now Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man before his master and highly regarded, for by him Yahweh had given victory to Aram. Now the man was a mighty warrior, *but he was* afflicted with a skin disease.

2 When the Arameans went *on* a raid, they brought back a young girl from the land of Israel, and she came into the service of the wife of Naaman.

3 She said to her mistress, "If only my lord would *come* before the prophet who *is* in Samaria; then he would cure his skin disease."

4 He came and told his master, saying, "Thus and so the girl who *is* from the land of Israel said."

5 So the king of Aram said, "Go, I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He went and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand *shekels* of gold, and ten sets of clothing.

6 So he brought the letter of the king to Israel, saying, "Now, when this letter comes to you, I have just sent Naaman my servant to you that you may cure him from his skin disease."

7 It happened that when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God to cause death or to give life? This man *is* sending a man to me to cure his disease. Indeed! But know and see that he seeks an opportunity against me."

8 It happened that as soon as Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why did you tear your clothes? Please may he come to me, that he might know that there is a prophet in Israel."

#### **The Jordan River**

9 Then Naaman came with his horses and his chariots, and he stopped *at* the doorway of the house of Elisha.

10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, you must wash seven times in the Jordan, then your flesh shall return to you, and you shall be clean."

11 But Naaman became angry and he went and said, "Look, I said to myself, 'Surely he will come out, stand, call upon the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hands over the spot; then he would take away the skin disease.'

12 Are not the Abana and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all of the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them that I may be clean?" Then he turned and left in anger.

13 But his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, *if* the prophet had spoken a difficult thing to you to do, would you not have done *it*? *Why not* even when he says to you, 'Wash and you shall be clean'?"

14 So he went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh returned as the flesh of a small boy, and he was clean.

#### **Elisha Will Not Accept Naaman's Gifts**

15 When he returned to the man of God, he and all of his army, he came and stood before him and said, "Please now, I know that there is no God in all of the world except in Israel. So then, please take a gift from your servant."

16 And he said, "As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand, I surely will not take *it*." *Still* he urged him to take *it*, but he refused.

17 Then Naaman said, "If not, then please let a load of soil on a pair of mules be given to your servants, for your servant will never again bring a burnt offering and sacrifice to other gods, *but* only to Yahweh.

18 As far as this matter, may Yahweh pardon your servant when my master goes *into* the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he *is* leaning himself on my arm, that I also bow down *in* the house of Rimmon: when I bow down *in* the house of Rimmon, may Yahweh please pardon your servant in this matter."

19 He said to him, "Go in peace,"

#### **Gehazi's Greed**

19b so he went from him a short distance.

20 But Gehazi the servant of Elisha, the man of God, thought, "Look, my master has refrained from taking what this Aramean Naaman brought from his hand. As Yahweh lives, I will certainly run after him, and I will accept something from him."

21 So Gehazi pursued after Naaman. When Naaman saw *someone* running after him, he jumped off his chariot to meet him and asked him, "*Is it* peace?"

22 He said, "Peace. My master has sent me saying, 'Look, just now two servants from the hill country of Ephraim came to me, from the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

23 Then Naaman said, "Be prepared to accept two talents." So he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing and gave it to two of his servants and they carried it before him.

24 When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, then sent away the men so that they went.

25 When he went and stood by his master, Elisha asked him, "From where have you come, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant has not gone anywhere."

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you* as the man turned from on his chariot to meet you? *Is it* time to take silver, clothes, olive orchards, vineyards, sheep, oxen, male slaves, and female slaves?"

27 The skin disease of Naaman shall cling to you and to your offspring forever." Then he went out from before him having a skin disease like the snow.

**Chronological Notes**1) The date of Obadiah.<sup>1</sup>

A) Since we do not know who the author of Obadiah was (there are many Obadiah's mentioned in Scripture<sup>2</sup>), 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."<sup>3</sup> 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:<sup>4</sup>

- (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,<sup>5</sup> but the 845 BC date also has many adherents.<sup>6</sup>

(a) Arguments for the Early Date (c. 845 BC).<sup>7</sup>

- (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.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Gleason L. Archer Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 299.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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. Gaebelin, *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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Freeman and Archer.

- (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).<sup>8</sup>

- (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).”<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Armerding and Allen.

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

<sup>10</sup> For a defense of the priority of Obadiah to Jeremiah, see Niehaus, 501.