

**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 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; 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**

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.

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), 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,

13 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,

14 behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity;

15 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;

17 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.

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

2 Kings 4:18–37

**The Boy Dies**

- 18 When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers.  
19 He said to his father, “My head, my head.” And he said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”  
20 When he had taken 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 and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* behind him and went out.  
22 Then she called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return.”  
23 He said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath.” And she said, “*It will be well.*”  
24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, “Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you.”  
25 So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Behold, there is the Shunammite.  
26 “Please run now to meet her and say to her, ‘Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?’” And she answered, “It is well.”  
27 When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the LORD 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, ‘Do not deceive me?’”  
29 Then he said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and lay my staff on the lad’s face.”  
30 The mother of the lad said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” And he arose and followed her.

**Elisha Raises the Son from the Dead**

- 31 Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad’s face, but there was no sound or response. So he returned to meet him and told him, “The lad has not awakened.”  
32 When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.  
33 So he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD.

34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.

35 Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

36 He called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Take up your son."

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

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

2 Kings 8:1–2

1 Now Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go with your household, and sojourn wherever you can sojourn; for the LORD has called for a famine, and it will even come on the land for seven years."

2 So the woman arose and did according to the word 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 When Elisha returned to Gilgal, *there was* a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets."

39 Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know *what they were*.

40 So they poured *it* out for the men to eat. And as they were eating of the stew, they cried out and said, "O man of God, there is death in the pot." And they were unable to eat.

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

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

2 Kings 4:42–44

42 Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give *them* to the people that they may eat."

43 His attendant said, "What, will I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give *them* to the people that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, '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 the LORD.

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

2 Kings 5

#### Naaman's Disease

1 Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, *but he was* a leper.

2 Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."

4 Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel."

5 Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand *shekels* of gold and ten changes of clothes.

6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending *word* to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent *word* to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

#### The Jordan River

9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.

10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and *you will* be clean."

11 But Naaman was furious 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 wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’”

12 “Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more *then*, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’”

14 So he went down and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

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

15 When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.”

16 But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing.” And he urged him to take *it*, but he refused.

17 Naaman said, “If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules’ load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.

18 “In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.”

19a He said to him, “Go in peace.”

#### **Gehazi’s Greed**

19b So he departed from him some distance.

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, “Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, by not receiving from his hands what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.”

21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw one running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him and said, “Is all well?”

22 He said, “All is well. My master has sent me, saying, ‘Behold, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes.’”

23 Naaman said, “Be pleased to take two talents.” And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of clothes and gave them to two of his servants; and they carried *them* before him.

24 When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed.

25 But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant went nowhere.”

26 Then he said to him, “Did not my heart go *with you*, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?

27 “Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever.” So he went out from his presence a leper *as white as snow*.

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#### **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:

<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.

## 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.
    - (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.

<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. 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.

<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.

(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.

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<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.