

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Obadiah

THE BIG YEAR SEASON 3 WEEK 6

1

WHAT YOU NEED

- "Match that Prophet" card game (printed and cut out)

LET'S READ THE BIBLE

Take turns reading the following passages:

- Obadiah 1:1-7
- Obadiah 1:8-14
- Obadiah 1:15-21

2

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Today we've read the entire book of Obadiah. It's a very short book, only 1 chapter long, and Obadiah doesn't tell us anything about himself. We don't know exactly when the book of Obadiah took place, but Obadiah did say that at the time, Israel was suffering greatly at the hands of its enemies. In verse 1 we read that God gave Obadiah a message about Edom. But who is Edom?

If you can remember back to the beginning of the year when we started the "Big Year" series, you might remember a story about twin brothers called Esau and Jacob from the book of Genesis (chapter 25-27). They were Isaac and Rebekah's sons. Before the boys were born, God told Rebekah that the older brother (Esau) would serve the younger brother (Jacob) and this was not normal at the time in history when this family lived.

As the boys grew up, their parents unwisely played favourites. Esau became his father's pride and joy, and Jacob was their mother's favourite. This probably meant that these boys grew up competing for their parents love and attention and become very jealous of each other.

Esau really didn't care about his birth-right as the firstborn son and he ended up selling his birth-right to his brother for a bowl of stew. Rebekah also decided to hurry things along and she helped Jacob to trick his father and brother so he would get the firstborn son's blessing from his father. This was the last straw for Esau and he threatened to kill his brother as soon as their father died. So, Jacob ran away and only returned many years later to see Esau again.

Over the years, Esau became less angry, and Jacob became humbler. Eventually the brothers forgave each other and fixed their relationship. Unfortunately the two brothers' families could not forgive each other and move on and as time went on, the nations of Edom (Esau's decedents) and Israel (Jacob's decedents) cared for each other less and less. Eventually it got so bad that the people of Edom started treating the people of Israel like they were their enemies.

God speaks to the nation of Edom through His prophet, Obadiah, to warn them of the judgement that would come on them. Instead of showing compassion for Israel when they were suffering, Edom showed cruelty. While Obadiah's words were written to a specific people at a specific time in history, there are a lot of things we can learn from this book. Let's take a look at 4 things we can learn from the book of Obadiah.

1. God hates pride

The word "pride" can be used in a good sense and in a bad sense.

"Good pride" means having a feeling of self-respect. Being satisfied with what you've achieved or being proud of something good that you have done. You can also be proud of someone else for doing something good.

3

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

“Bad pride” means that someone has an exaggerated sense of feeling good. It means that they have no respect for what other people do and only respect what they themselves do. Someone who is described as “proud” may be arrogant.

Proverbs 16:18 warns us that “pride goes before destruction.” This is the bad kind of pride. God hates this kind of pride. Bad pride is at the root of many sins. It keeps people from acknowledging how great God is and it also causes people to look down on and belittle others. This is exactly what was happening with the people of Edom. They did not respect God and they thought they were better than the Israelites. They even celebrated and were pleased when bad things started happening to Israel.

God warns the people of Edom through Obadiah that they will be destroyed and disgraced because of their pride.

2. God is bigger, stronger and smarter than any person

Edom thought that they were going to win their battle because of their strategic position. They had probably beaten many other enemies, but they forgot that God was not like any of their other enemies. God reminded the people of Edom that His judgment would be complete, and that no human wisdom would be able to rescue them.

We are foolish to think that we can outsmart God and when we try to do this it shows that we don't understand who God is. Fortunately, God is a God of grace, and He is very patient with us. We might try to fool God and hide our sin from Him, but when we turn back to Him and repent, He is quick to forgive us and to bring us back to Him. Unfortunately, Edom did not rely on God's mercy and their strategies and prideful schemes all failed.

3. Do not brag when other people get in trouble

That is what Edom was doing to Israel. Obadiah 1:12 says, “Do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his misfortune. ”A good paraphrase of this verse is: “Do not say to your brother, ‘Ha, ha, you got in trouble!’”

It's very tempting to laugh at or gloat over others when things start going badly for them or when they get in trouble. It's very easy for this to happen in our families and even in our relationships with friends. Even adults struggle with this sometimes. We think that somehow, we are “better” than others when they get in trouble, and we don't.

But that's not how God wants us to live. He wants us to have compassion for others, to love others like we love ourselves and to care for others. Jesus even said that we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

4. Do not hold onto grudges

The story that we read in Obadiah is a good reminder to us that we shouldn't hold onto grudges. Here we see how the problems between two brothers, Jacob and Esau, snowballed into problems between the nations of Israel and Edom. Most probably, the Israelites and Edomites didn't even all know why they were enemies, but they kept fighting because “that's how it's always been.”

Holding grudges instead of forgiving others just causes bitterness and causes people to treat each other like enemies. But that's not what God wants for us. Paul says in Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” In other words, if you've done something wrong, apologise and ask for forgiveness and if wrong has been done to you, be quick to forgive.

4

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

- Who was Obadiah called to prophecy to?
- Whose descendants were the nations of Israel and Edom? (*Jacob & Israel*)
- Did Edom help God's people when Babylon attacked them?
- What did God say would happen to Edom?

5

LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

- Can you think of an example from your own life of someone "bragging" when another person got in trouble?
- Is it easy to brag or laugh at or gloat when another person gets in trouble? What should we be doing instead?
- Why were the nations of Israel and Edom enemies?
- Do you find it easier to hold onto grudges or to forgive and let go? Why?
- What does God expect us to do when others wrong us?
- What does God expect us to do when we wrong other people?
- Is there anyone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from? Will you commit to doing it this week?

6

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Pray together:

- Thank Jesus for His forgiveness of our sins.
- Ask God to help you not "brag" when others get in trouble, but rather to point them to Jesus.
- Ask God to help you to forgive quickly and to not hold onto grudges.
- Ask God to help you admit when you've wronged someone else and to ask for their forgiveness.

7

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

- Print out and cut out the "Match the Prophet" cards
- Separate the "Name Cards" from the "Description Cards" and shuffle both piles.
- Place the "Description Cards" upside down in a pile and spread out the "Name Cards" so everyone can see them.
- Family members take turns to draw a "Description Card" and then they have to match it to a "Name Card". If they are right, they keep both cards. If they are wrong, they must put the "Name Card" back and put the "Description Card" at the bottom of the pile.
- Keep playing until all the cards have been matched.
- The winner is the player with the most cards at the end of the game.