



Minor Prophets – Major Challenges

Cell Notes 2019

Study 3. Obadiah - God and the Nations

Aim: To understand the background and context of the shortest of the prophetic writings – Obadiah – and to consider how its themes apply to our world and lives

To start with:

- How do you feel when a person, organisation or even nation you dislike meets with misfortune or defeat?
- (What would you say that reveals about us as people?)

Engaging the Text:

1. The book of Obadiah concerns the nation of Edom. What (if anything) do you know about Edom and its relationship with the nation of Israel?

Read **Obadiah 1-14**

2. What do these verses suggest about (a) the nation of Edom, and (b) God's view of them?

Read Aloud: *Edom occupied the mountainous region south of Judah. The capital Sela (now Petra) was perched high on a plateau above a sheer rock cliff approached by a narrow gorge. It was virtually impregnable. From mountain strongholds like this the Edomites launched their raids on Judah.*

Ask people to read out the following verses:

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Gen 25.21-30 | * 2 Kings 8.20-22 |
| • Num 20.14-20 | * Psalms 137.7 |
| • 2 Sam 8.13-14 | * Ezekiel 35.5-6 & 15 |

3. How would you describe the relationship between Israel and Edom now you know some of the back story? How might that influence God's judgement on them?
4. Read **Verses 15-16**. What seems to have changed in these verses (*N.B. Leader – the prophecy is now referring to all nations not just Edom*)

Read Aloud: *Edom here is a case study, or parable representing the fate of all nations. 'Edom' is the same word as 'Adam' in Hebrew – translated as 'Humanity'. So, Edom's pride is an example of the wider human condition.*

5. In what way are modern nations (or even international organisations and multinational companies) prideful about their own defences/security/resources. How far would you say we buy in, or contribute to that?

Read **Verses 19-21**

6. a. light does this shed on God's purpose for Edom and other nations?
b. Since God's purpose is to bring all nations and peoples into his kingdom of justice, how do you think we should interact with individuals, organisations or nations (including our own) that seem full of pride?

Response:

Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies and pray for those in authority. Spend some time praying for those individuals, organisations or nations that you have identified as in rebellion towards God by being proud of their own security. Pray for yourselves for wisdom to know how to engage and respond in word, deed and attitude.