

When Country Comes to Town

Obadiah and Jonah Overview

(preached Pine Grove 1/10/15; Sunday PM)

Introduction

A man turns 40 and has a mid-life crisis.

He begins to think that he hasn't accomplished very much, so he sets his mind to do something very difficult for a 40 year old man..

He talks with his wife, who challenges him to complete top 10 list that she makes..

He agrees to do it, and she hands him the list.

Once he opens the list, the first thing that his wife challenges him to do is a split...

So, the man sets up an appointment at a local gym in order to learn how to accomplish this task..

He walks in and meets the instructor and tells him that he is there to learn how to do a split...

The instructor says, "Ok. How flexible are you?"

The man responds, "Well, I am usually off on Tuesday and Thursday."

Tonight, I hope y'all are real flexible because we are going to attempt to get through two books in our overview of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Tonight, we plan to look at the books of Obadiah and Jonah...

You are most likely familiar with one and not familiar with the other..

Jonah is a book that you probably learned about in Sunday school...

It is the historical account of an incredible miracle and a giant fish...

Obadiah is a book that may have never ever heard of...

It is just one chapter, and very rarely even preached, but I think it you will find it very helpful even in your life tonight...

So, let's dig into these books tonight beginning with the book of Obadiah...

Here is an outline of the 21 verses of Obadiah...

I. Judgment on Edom (1-14)

II. Judgment on the Nations (15-16)

III. Restoration of Israel (17-21)

I. Judgment on Edom (1-14)

If we take a quick look at our list of the prophets, we will see that Obadiah was one of the prophets that didn't speak directly to Israel...

Though he was a prophet of Israel, his message went to a group other than the northern or southern kingdom...

You can see from the chart that Obadiah was most likely the earliest of this last group of prophets..

The best estimate places Obadiah around 850 BC..

At that time in history, Israel would have already been split into 2 kingdoms...

There would have been two kings for each of the kingdoms...

And though the people of Israel were not living lives of obedience to God, it was still a time of relative peace and safety...

It is in this climate that God called Obadiah to go and prophesy to Edom...

Now, what and where is Edom?

I am so glad you asked..

Here is a map of the Middle East in the days of Obadiah..

And you can see the land of Edom was an area south of the Dead Sea..

Here is picture of what that area looks like today...

Edom is no longer a country today; we will talk about that later...

But as you can see, this is a pretty rugged geography...

And the people who lived here often lived in the caves in the side of these rock mountains...

They were a very nomadic people; they roamed all over...

They lived outdoors; they made a living from the land that was very dry and rough...

And even though they were a very isolated people, they had it out for Israel.

And they would often join other countries who went in to attack Israelites..

Obadiah is going to pronounce judgment on them because of their attacks on Israel and Judah..

However, you need a little background on the country of Edom to get a good picture of them as a nation...

The country of Edom was made up of the descendants of Esau...

Now if you remember Esau was the brother of Jacob and they were both the sons of Isaac and Rebekah.

Take your Bibles and turn to the very first book of the Bible and find Gen 25...

Let me begin reading in Gen 25:19...

19 Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham [n]became the father of Isaac; 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the [o]Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the [p]Aramean, to be his wife. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord [q]answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she

went to inquire of the Lord. 23 The Lord said to her,

*“Two nations are in your womb;
And two peoples will be separated from your body;
And one people shall be stronger than the other;
And the older shall serve the younger.”*

24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so his name was called [r]Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a [s]peaceful man, [t]living in tents. 28 Now Isaac loved Esau, because [u]he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was [v]famished; 30 and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of [w]that red stuff there, for I am [x]famished.” Therefore his name was called [y]Edom.

Couple things to notice here....

Jacob and Esau were rivals even in the womb of their mother Rebekah.

And the reason for that is that two different nations would come from these men...

Jacob's descendants would become Israel, while Esau's descendants would become Edom...

You can even see that Esau and Edom were the same name...

As the boys grew up, Esau came to despise Jacob more and more...

So, let's fast forward to Gen 36 for a minute...

36 Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).

2 Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3 also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. 4 Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, 5 and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. 6 Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all [a]his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. 7 For their property had become too great for

them to [b]live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. 8 So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom.

Descendants of Esau

9 These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of [c]the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

As Esau grew and married foreign women, he decided to move away from living near his brother Jacob..

And so he settled in the area to the south of the Dead Sea...

And his descendants were the Edomites..

And like we said before, they were a rugged people like their father Esau...

They lived outside in the elements in the caves and they were skilled hunters...

But they also came to be a people who kept a hatred for Jacob and his descendants...

And that explains why the Edomites often joined in to fight against Israel....

The two twins who kicked at each other in their mother's womb became the two boys who fought against each other..

And they eventually gave birth to the two nations, Israel and Edom who also battled one another...

If you remember in the story of the birth of birth of Jesus, King Herod had all the boys under 2 killed in the land of Israel...

Herod was hoping that Jesus would be in that group..

However, an angel had told Joseph and Mary to go to Egypt to escape this slaughter and protect Jesus from death...

People often assume that Herod was simply an evil king who wanted Jesus dead...

And that is part of it, but what you may not know is this...

Herod's family tree stretched back to the Edomites...

Though the country of Edom was gone in Herod's day, he still came from the Edomite people...

And since Herod was a descendant of Esau, the reason he wanted Jesus dead was because Jesus was the ultimate descendant of Jacob...

The two babies who struggled in the womb....

Would eventually lead to two Kings, Herod and Jesus who would battle 1000s of year later...

However in Obadiah's day, Edom was a country deserving judgment...

And the reason it deserved judgment was simply because of Gen 12, when God first when to Abraham and established the nation of Israel...

*12 Now the Lord said to Abram,
 "[a]Go forth from your country,
 And from your relatives
 And from your father's house,
 To the land which I will show you;*

2

*And I will make you a great nation,
 And I will bless you,
 And make your name great;
 And so [b]you shall be a blessing;*

3

*And I will bless those who bless you,
 And the one who [c]curses you I will [d]curse.
 And in you all the families of the earth will be
 blessed."*

A simple promise of God to Abraham and to the nation that would come from Abraham is that God would bless nations that treated Israel rightly....

And He would judge nations that treated Israel wrongly...

The simple truth is that Edom was a nation that had cursed Israel...

They had attacked Israel.

They had joined other nations who seized Jerusalem.

And because of that, God was going to curse them...

And Obadiah was simply given the job to pronounce God's curse on them..

We aren't going to look at every verse in the book, but let's look at a few of them..

In the opening 14 verses of Obadiah, the prophet simply tells Edom that judgment is coming to them...

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 [b]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.*

You see there a reference to the fact that the Edomites lived in the rocks of their mountainous region...

Yet, there are no hiding places from the Lord's wrath.

He will find them and judge them no matter where they are located.

II. Judgment on the Nations (15-16)

Obadiah then describes the judgment of Edom up through verse 14, but then...

In verse 15 and 16, Obadiah reminds all the nations of coming judgment because of their sins against God...

Here is a chilling reminder to everyone and every nation that disobeys the LORD in verse 15...

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.

Here is a reverse of the golden rule...

The wrath that you do to others will return to you in the same measure..

Then Obadiah finishes up his prophecy in verses 17-21 with a promise to Israel...

III. Restoration of Israel (17-21)

And the summary of this promise to Israel is this..

One day, Israel will be given the land of the Edomites..

One day, all the borders of Israel will extend the borders that God promised Abraham...

And all of Edom will be included in that area...

That is a day that is still future to us tonight...

Israel includes part of the old Edomite territory today but not all of it, but one day, the nation will encompass all the Edomite territory and more...

However, part of Obadiah's prophecy is fulfilled today...

And it is this...

The Edomites would be wiped out as a people...

If you search for an Edomite today, you will never find one...

They were judged for their treatment of Israel and the truth that God spoke to Rebekah was eventually fulfilled...

Esau would serve his younger brother Jacob, and Jacob would survive but Esau would not make it...

And that is exactly what happened..

So, let's move from Obadiah to the book of Jonah, which is the book that follows...

Here is the outline that we will follow for the book of Jonah...

I. Running from God's Will (1)

II. Submitting to God's Will (2)

III. Doing God's Will (3)

IV. Questioning God's Will (4)

The book of Jonah comes at the perfect place in the OT..

Because if you thought that God dealt harshly with the Edomites...

You often forget that God is a not just a God of justice but also a God of mercy...

The truth is that he was very kind even to the Edomites...

He gave them time to change their ways...

Though we don't read about it, God didn't immediately destroy them after they attacked Israel...

Rather, HE delayed judgment hoping that they would repent and turn to Him..

However, he that didn't happen, God sent judgment...

The same is going to be true about the book of Jonah...

God is sending Jonah to a foreign land as well..

As you can see from our chart, Jonah was a prophet sent to Assyria.

Specifically, Jonah was sent to Nineveh, which was a capital city of Assyrian empire.

And Nineveh was a huge city...

It had two huge outer walls, and most estimate the size of the city was about 60 miles across..

And home to about 600,000 or more people..

That would have been a huge number in that day...

And what God is going to do by sending Jonah there is this...

He is going to show His compassion and mercy for every man...

The Assyrians were not Jewish...

In fact, the Assyrians were the enemies of Israel..

And they often came down from the north to attack Israel...

And they were very cruel in their warfare.

Often tying Israelites who were still very much alive to the back of their horses and dragging them all the way back to Assyria...

They were not fair fighters...

They had no respect for women or children...

They were violent blood thirsty pagans who raided villages to satisfy their sinful desires...

They would be the worst kind of people that we could think about today..

Similar in some ways to the violence that we see from ISIS and other terrorist groups...

However, God is a God of mercy and compassion...

And His patience is incredible...

And to model to Israel how great his mercy was, God calls to Jonah in chapter 1 to go to Nineveh...

I. Running from God's Will (1)

Look with me at verses 1-3 of Jonah 1....

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me." 3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

Now, most of you know the story of Jonah...

God said go north to Nineveh and Jonah went in exactly south to Joppa so he could head for Tarshish..

Here is a map of the area in Jonah's day...Jonah would have lived in the in between the arrows that point to Nineveh and Joppa...

So, God calls him north, but goes south and then plans to head as far west as he can go..

Tarshish would have most likely been at the other end of the known world in the days of Jonah...

In other words, Jonah was planning to head as far from Nineveh as humanly possible in his day...

Here is a little close up map of just Joppa and Nineveh...

The point of these first three verse is this...

Jonah had no interesting going to Nineveh...

Now, why was that?

Was Jonah just a rebel?

Did he not like the colder weather of Nineveh?

Did he dread the walk through the desert to get there?

Was he just wanting to watch the football game?

Why would he refuse to go?

And here is the simple truth that he will eventually tell us later in the book...

Jonah knew when God sent a prophet and preached truth to people that people often responded by repenting and believing in God...

Jonah had seen it happen too many times...

And he knew that even the pagan people of Nineveh would respond to God and repent and believe and God would save them..

Bottom line, Jonah knew if he went to Nineveh that God would show them mercy...

And he wouldnt stand for those ruthless violent people to be shown mercy from God...

How horrible is that, right?

Who would ever act like that?

Who would ever sink so low that you didn't want God to save certain people...

Well, someone like the one who is preaching to you tonight..

I have told this story before but I will tell it again because there always someone who needs to hear it...

When I got saved, I got swept in politics pretty quickly...

And I read and put signs in the yard and sent emails and signed petitions...

Now, none of that is bad, dont get me wrong...

I just say all that to tell you that I was pretty much involved in the political scene...

But I still remember the day that the news ran a picture of Billy Graham going to meet with President Bill Clinton..

Now I have no idea what Graham said to Clinton...

I dont even know if Billy Graham shared the gospel with him that day...

All i know is I saw a picture of them together in the Oval Office shaking hands...

And I flew into a rage...

What was Billy Graham doing?

I sure hope he wasn't telling Clinton how to get saved...

That would be awful I thought...

I needed Clinton to continue in his sin so that my party would stand a chance at the new election...

How dare Billy Graham go up there and try to help Bill Clinton come to repentance and faith in the Lord!

Did you know who I became in that moment?

I became Jonah.

I don't want my political enemies to hear the gospel, and I sure didn't want someone in an opposing political party to get saved...

That would be awful I thought..

But how wrong was Jonah and how wrong was I!

But I tell that story not to talk about the dangers of politics...

And there are dangers for the Christian there for sure...

I tell you that story to prevent you from becoming like me and like Jonah...

Do you want God to save the terrorist?

Do you want God to save that family member who truly gets on your nerves?

Do you want God to save that boss that drives you crazy?

Do you want God to save that person who isn't on your political side?

Or does it enrage you to think that God may save those people?

You better check your heart...

Your boss, your annoying family member, the terrorist, the liberal politician is not your enemy...

He is your mission field...

And you need to be praying for him or her and begging God to save them not destroy them...

For this simple reason...

You were no different than they are...

You were a sinner and God showed you grace and mercy that you didn't deserve....

No one can claim they deserved to be saved, and no one can claim that someone doesn't deserve to be saved...

All salvations are a result of God's grace and mercy to undeserving sinners...

And that is true from the world's greatest Christian to the world's greatest criminal..

Jonah didn't get that..

In his mind, Israel deserved God's mercy but Nineveh didn't...

And so he wasn't going to take any part in the process of God saving them...

However, your will doesn't over ride the will of God, and God has ways of getting your attention and even your obedience one way or the other...

And in the second half of chapter 1...

God sent a great storm to stop Jonah and he sent a great fish to swallow Jonah....

That brings us to chapter 2, which is simply Jonah's prayer while inside the fish....

II. Submitting to God's Will (2)

Chapter 2 ends with a submissive Jonah covered in the insides of fish being coughed up on dry land...

III. Doing God's Will (3)

In chapter 3, Jonah gets to Nineveh and walks 3 days across the city preaching the world's shortest sermon...

You can see it hear in Jonah 3:4...

4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

That is all we know of his message...

But it was enough because in the last half of chapter 3, the entire repents and believes in God...

God sees their belief and repentance and does not overthrow the city.

Now, we know that 150 years later God did overthrow the city of Nineveh, but no one from the generation who repented at Jonah's message would have been alive for that destruction...

Many see the salvation of that city as the greatest miracle of the entire OT...

600,000 people repenting and turning in faith to God is quite the miracle for sure...

I pray we would see a miracle like that in our world today...

However, that isn't all to the story...

You would think that a preacher would be on top of the world if God used his preaching to save so many people...

But not Jonah...

IV. Questioning God's Will (4)

And in chapter 4, Jonah goes to pouting...

Pouting so much that he would rather be dead than see his enemies saved....

Yet in that final chapter, God reminds him though the life and death of a shade tree He loves to show compassion to sinners...

Whether that is a disobedient prophet like him who get two chances at his mission or whether that is a city of hundreds of thousands of people....

IT makes no difference to God who shows compassion and mercy to all sorts of people...

Conclusion

As I consider how these two books, Obadiah and Jonah are side by side in the OT....

They seem to be a perfect match, and a perfect picture of how to do evangelism....

Obadiah tells Edom that Judgment is Coming, but Jonah reminds us that Judgment can be avoided through repentance and trust in the Lord..

People often worry about what to say to someone who needs needs the gospel...

There are all sorts of plans out there and tracts out there....

But you know what to tell people who need to be saved....

Tell them this....

You life deserves judgment and God will bring it to you one day....

But at this moment, there is an opportunity to turn from your sin and to be saved from the coming judgment...

And then you point them to Jesus Christ....

Who came and died to save them from the coming wrath...

That is the gospel and that is what the OT preaches as well...

We have certainly seen that tonight in Obadiah and Jonah...

Let us pray.