

Title: Who are the Edomites

Description: Brief study on the Edomites, the descendants of Esau

Who Are the Edomites?

The Edomites were the descendants of **Esau**, the twin brother of Jacob. Scripture is explicit about this connection. Esau is Edom, and Edom comes from Esau.

This matters because Obadiah is not speaking about a distant enemy or an unrelated nation. He is speaking about **brothers**.

From the beginning, there was tension between Jacob and Esau. They struggled in the womb. Esau sold his birthright. Jacob received the blessing. Although the two brothers eventually reconciled, that conflict continued through their descendants. Israel came from Jacob. Edom came from Esau. The rivalry never fully went away.

The Edomites lived in the mountainous region of **Mount Seir**, southeast of Judah. The land was rocky, elevated, and naturally fortified. They carved dwellings into the cliffs and controlled important trade routes between Egypt and the north. This brought wealth, influence, and a strong sense of security.

Over time, Edom became known for several things Scripture repeatedly highlights: they were proud, self-confident, wise in their own eyes, strong, and cruel. They trusted their geography, their wealth, their alliances, and their wisdom.

Despite their history with Israel, God repeatedly instructed Israel **not** to hate the Edomites because they were brothers. Israel was even commanded to treat them fairly when passing through their land. The relationship was meant to carry restraint and responsibility.

Edom did not return that spirit.

When Israel was weak, Edom refused help.

When Israel was attacked, Edom stood aside.

When Jerusalem fell, Edom rejoiced.

When fugitives fled, Edom blocked the roads, captured them, and handed them over.

They did not merely watch. They benefited.

This is why Obadiah is so severe. Edom's guilt is not only violence. It is **betrayal**, **indifference**, **gloating**, and **exploitation** of a brother's suffering.

Throughout Scripture, Edom becomes more than a nation. It becomes a **pattern**.

Esau represents the **flesh**: self-reliant, impulsive, earth-focused, and resistant to God's purposes. Jacob, though deeply flawed, represents the line of promise chosen by grace. Over time, Edom comes to picture the flesh's posture toward the things of God: resentful, competitive, proud, and willing to rejoice when the spiritual suffers.

This is why later prophets continue to speak against Edom long after the nation declines. And this is why Obadiah's message does not end with Edom's fall, but with this declaration:

"The kingdom shall be the LORD's."

Historically, Edom eventually disappeared. After being conquered and absorbed by surrounding powers, they faded from history as a people. What they trusted did not last.

Obadiah shows that what comes from the flesh may look strong for a time, but it does not endure. What belongs to the Lord does.

Why This Matters

Obadiah is not only about **who Edom was**.

It is about **what Edom represents**.

The book asks whether we are living out of the flesh or under the Lord's rule.

Whether we protect ourselves or trust God.

Whether we stand with those who suffer or stand at a distance.

Edom shows us where pride, self-reliance, and comfort lead.

Zion shows us where holiness, dependence, and God's rule lead.

And Obadiah reminds us: **the flesh does not win in the end**.