

WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

Warm up:

It is a great worship that we stand for the reading of God's Word as we are able. So I want to say very sincerely that I'd like for you to turn in your Bibles to the Table of Context. Please locate in the Old Testament section the book of Obadiah and please turn to it.

READING OF THE WORD

Obadiah 15-18

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been. But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, for the LORD has spoken.

INTRODUCTION

The title of my message today is "Where is God in all of this?"

Obadiah is probably the last book that you would think about going to for a word from the Lord. Its not Romans and its not the Gospel of Luke. It is the smallest book in the Old Testament. We know nothing about the author except his name means servant of the Lord. There are 12 Obadiah's in the OT and none of them is this prophet.

But throughout history when the church has suffered at the hands of God's enemies, the message of the prophecy of Obadiah, has provided inspiration and support. It reminds us that the Lord cares for his persecuted people and that behind their present circumstances He is at work for them.

WARM UP

Let me ask you Have you ever asked **Where is God in all of this?** Have you ever been in circumstances that have left you wonder if God has abandoned you? Maybe even betray you? Circumstances that based on appearances shows that the Lord is not strong enough. That he is powerless in light of the evil you are experiencing?

That, my friend, is a spiritual and theological crisis.

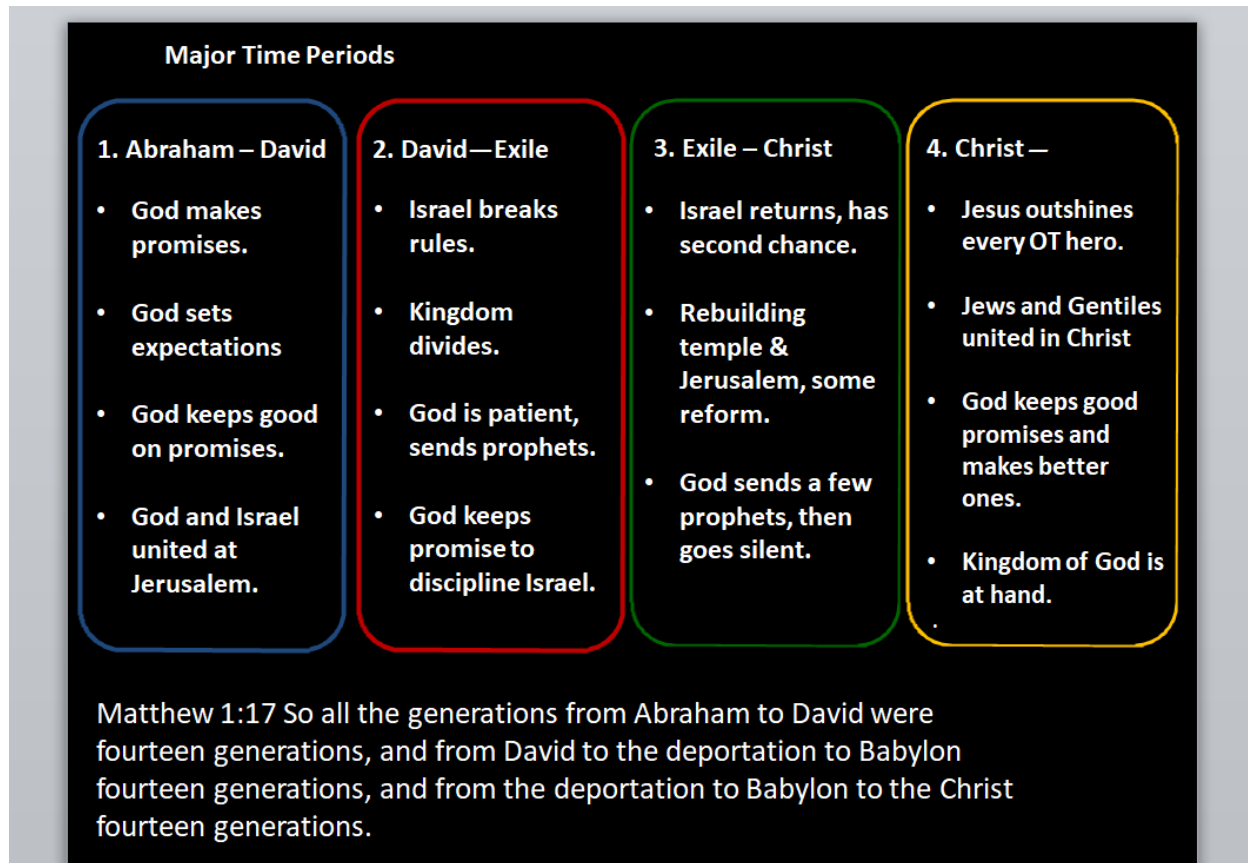
And that is what Obadiah's audience was going through. When God's people go through these circumstances that rock there trust IN God, His exist, His power, His relevancy in the here and now, Obadiah poetically rekindles our hope and remind us of a covenant

keeping God. Obadiah reminds us of who God is. We are going to look at 4 attributes of who He is as revealed in this book.

Before we answer the question of Where is God in all of this, lets first ask “Where is God’s people who are hearing this prophesy”

Let me give you a little history to understand. Look at this chart with me:

In biblical history for the People of God : Matthew 1:17 recaps that up to Christ birth: there are three major time periods. Overview **Abraham-David David-Exile Exile-Christ & Christ-**



Go through Abraham-David highlights.

To understand where Obadiah’s prophesy comes in take a look

- **God makes promises (comment)**

This is the start of the covenant the God makes with Abraham and ultimately His people

The first promise

Gen 12:1-3:

“Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a

blessing. 3 ***I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse,*** and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

- **God sets expectations. (comment)**

Within the covenant the expectations of a life of obedience and a life set apart and holy before God is stated..

Deuteronomy 28:1,2

“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 **And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God.**

So the nation of Israel goes through centuries where they are hot and cold in their worship and loyalty to the one true almighty God. But it got to a point, everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Kings walked in the sins of their fathers more than the kings who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

So we find ourselves in the second major time period from David until the exile

- ***Israel breaks the rules***

From this, more covenant promises are to come true. Specifically the promise to discipline Israel:

Deuteronomy 28:15

“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

25 “The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies.

36 “The Lord will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone.

64 “And the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other,

All that happens to Israel is because of their idolatry and disobedience. They were being disciplined. All of this contributes to their spiritual and theological crises. Based on all appearance, Marduk the god of Babylon had prevailed. Enemies were mocking and enslaving God’s people

That is where God’s people are at:

Being Disciplined. Taken out of their land. Homeless insecure ravaged. Broken, scattered and losing faith.

Now where we find the prophecy of Obadiah is during the Exile of Judah. Starting in verse 1,2 we see God's Spirit fill the prophet and the Lord brings a message through a vision where Obadiah is alert and conscious

The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom:

We have heard a report from the Lord,

and a messenger has been sent among the nations:

“Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!”

Behold, I will make you small among the nations;

you shall be utterly despised

- When we see the phrase “Thus says the Lord” it is the signature of declaration and all authority.. When we see God prophecy in this book, it is a judgment speech that predicts disaster- particularly for one nation Edom and ultimately all of nations that are enemies of God.. **And from this, we will begin to answer the question**

Where is God in all of this?

First we understand that...

1. God is Omniscient- all knowing

To Be Omniscient means That God is all knowing and has perfect knowledge of himself and all things actual and possible in one simple act.

A. God has full knowledge of the past present and the future.

1) God has full understanding of the past.

Woven throughout this prophesy of Obadiah, God show his full command of the history between the nations of Israel and Edom.

- Edom as a nation is only mentioned twice in the whole book. But there is a subtle shift in verse 8

Will I not on that day, declares the LORD,
destroy the wise men out of **Edom**,
and understanding out of **Mount Esau**?

9 And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman,
so that every man from **Mount Esau** will be cut off by slaughter.

Then verse 10:

Because of the violence done to your brother **Jacob**...

Do you hear it?

Edom's fraternal relationship is explicitly declared here: It's the struggle of the twin brothers Jacob and Esau.

Genesis 25:21-23 gives us that origin story
And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 And the Lord said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other,
the older shall serve the younger."

- The struggle and birth of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25) form the ultimate background to the fact that, "two nations are in your womb."
- Their respective descendants, Israel and Edom, were perpetual enemies.
- When Israel came out from Egypt, Edom denied their brother Jacob passage through their land, located S of the Dead Sea (Num. 20:14–21).
- Nevertheless, Israel was instructed by God to be kind to Edom (Deut.23:7,8).

God is omniscient.

2) God has full understanding of the present.

Verse 11-14 Show that the Lord God almighty is aware of not only Edom's crime against Israel - which is summarized in the unbrotherliness of Edom to stand by and watch foreigners a.)rape and murder and pillage the place, b.) capture and deport the upper classes and c.) cast lots for the remaining spoils of the land and people.

But that the all know God is full acquainted with Edom's attitudes of gloating, rejoicing boasting over the pain and suffering and ruin inflicted on Israel- God's people.

And if that wasn't enough **God's saw Edom's active participation** of aiding the enemies by cutting the fugitives off and handing them over. And they themselves claiming Jacob's property.

God is all knowing

3) God has full understanding of the future.

Verse 15 says it all in the predictive foreknowledge of the Lord.

15 For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations.

As you have done, it shall be done to you;
your deeds shall return on your own head.

(We will look at this verse closer in a little bit.)

Verse 16 is the declarative future prediction coupled with opening verses where God is say “I’m going to humble you. You will be despised and the Lord will bring you down. Ultimately verses 5-9 God is saying he will exterminate Edom to the point where there will be little trace of their existence..

Our God is like no other there is none like him. It says in Isaiah that God declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done.

God is all knowing of the past the present and the future.

Let’s look at a 2nd Attribute of God

2. God is Sovereign- God exercises his rule over all creation

Verse 2

Behold, **I will** make you small among the nations;
you shall be utterly despised.

The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rock,
in your lofty dwelling,
who say in your heart,
“Who will bring me down to the ground?”

Though you soar aloft like the eagle,
though your nest is set among the stars,
from there **I will** bring you down,
declares the Lord.

- Note that God says “He will bring them down”
- In this prophecy of Obadiah the Lord is not just seeing the future and therefore warning Edom. Rather He is saying I see the future of your destruction, because I am the one that will make it happen.
- Back in verse one.. the title Lord GOD written in the manner of Lord with a capital L an lowercase “ord” and God with all caps just slightly smaller “od” indicates the title for God as Adonai YHWH. That title means Lord, sovereign, master. YHWH mean I am who I am.
- The Lord starts this whole prophecy to reiterate to both Edom and Israel “I am who I am and I am in charge.”

God is providentially sovereign. That means he is purposefully and providing for and sustaining and governing the world exercising his rule over creation.

I like how the Belgic Confession states it:

“We believe that this good God, after creating all things, **did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs** them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without **God’s orderly** arrangement.”

Heidelberg Catechism says “all thing ,come to us not by chance but by his **fatherly** hand.”

For Edom no amount of Pride and power and political persuasion was going to resist God’s sovereign judgment to finally rid the earth of His enemies.

- **It is tough for us to think about the fact that God is providential and sovereignly in control of a world that has suffering, evil trials and miscarriages of justice.**
- Why in a world that celebrates sin daily, monthly maybe even hourly if you watch enough news, is this evil tolerated if God is providentially sovereign.

My daughter Allison and I have a podcast called Daughter Dad and Doctrine. It’s a simple program that we go through questions that have arisen over the years of listening and talking about the sermon or Bible studies that she has.

A few weeks ago one question came from Pastor Dan’s sermon from Hebrews talking about the Lord’s discipline of those He loves. And her question was something like this: We understand that trials and disciplines that God permits or causes in a believer life can be used to prepare us and grow us up in trusting and loving God more. But what about suffering and trials for unbelievers? What is that for? That’s good question. We are going to tackle it in our podcast but I want to address it here as well.

222 Principle-

When looking at the umbrella of Providence and sovereignty of God there are basically 2 types of people in the world.

1. Those in Christ.
2. Those out of Christ

And God has 2 way that he deals with the 2 types of People

1. He causes things to happen- hard things not sinful things
2. He permits things to happen- he allows evil things to happen but he is not the author of it and he isn’t responsible for it. Now Many of us have had some awful things happen to us. I’m not minimizing that.

This is the hard pill to swallow, because many of us have had a tragedy or long term suffering you are going through. I'm trying to help us get a perspective about where God is in it and help us grow through it. Stay with me.

Testimony: Let me give you a testimony before I conclude this thought about suffering for the unbeliever...

Exodus 4:11 says: Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"

From this verse, I came to realize that Scripture sometimes regards, physical afflictions as consequences of the Fall, sometimes the work of demons but ultimately Scripture sees them as from God. (recommend If God is Good Randy Alcorn)

That means while I believe in God as Jehovah Rophe that can heal me and still heals people today.. He created me with a disability. Why? Don't know the full reason But I know its for my Good and God is preparing me and in someway God is Big enough to glorify himself through it. That was years ago I learned this.

Fast forward to just few months ago. I learned in a conversation with my mom that there was contributing factor that scientifically probably aided in causing my cells in my cerebral portion of my brain to die. That was permitted in my life. I struggled with that. You see I found more comfort in just knowing that God created me with a disability than knowing **what** God permitted in order to create me that way and in that manner.

But God is who He is and he is in charge and I find great comfort in that. And stops me from having a victim mentality and to pursue God's best for me with what I have and with what I can.

So Back to the question What is God doing when he cause or permits suffering and evil in the lives of unbelievers

2 things he is doing for the unbeliever

1. God is actually judging them and pouring out his wrath here and now. Romans 1:18 tells us that the wrath of God is "revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." God doesn't always wait to judge them to hell he maybe punishing them temporarily

But he's maybe doing something else with tragedy and suffering and Jesus actually addressed it:

Luke 13:1-5

Jesus addresses three tragedies here:

- a. Pilate killed in the temple people who were in the act of worship and scarifices
- b. Disaster of a tower that fell and killed 18 people. And not necessarily because they were wicked people Jesus said.
- c. The third tragedy is that Jesus says they didn't have time to repent and be saved. Jesus then says something that sound cold but is truly loving.. he says repent or you will perish likewise

So what God is doing with those who are not in Christ and they experience tragedy and trials. It could be judgement. That is what is happening to Edom

But He also could be

2. Using suffering to save them. To get them to the end of themselves and to cry out to God for grace and mercy. And that is for their Good and God's glory. In God's patient grace he is allowing more time for the Church to be light in dark times and share the hope in Christ. He's also allowing more time for those who are lost to repent. But make no mistake. God says today is the day of salvation. He's calling you today to repent and believe.

Where is God in all of this?

1. God is Omniscient all knowing
2. God is sovereign and is exercising his power over all creation

We also understand that

3. God is Just

Back to verse 15

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.

- "The day of the Lord" is an expression for the future moment when the Lord God almighty would personally break into human history, intervene in perfect righteousness on behalf of his people, lavish his blessing on them, defeating their enemies and set his people on high above all nations.
- For a deed to be "returned on your own head" means as Edom has do to others so others will do to Edom.
- Remember the Abrahamic covenant the God will bless those who bless Israel and he will curse those who curse Israel? Here it is.

- With poetic justice, God will permit rising nations- some who were former allies,-to do to Edom what Edom did to Judah and the nation of God's people Israel.
- God's people have suffered their own discipline going through their own crisis and tragedy. But that darn pesky nation Edom is getting away with it scott-free... until God declares now that He will break into human history and defeat their enemies.
- **IT IS A TOUGH THING TO THINK ABOUT THAT GOD HAS ENEMIES.** Sure Satan is his enemy- We have this inanimate forkpitch demonic idea that is pure evil that we can mental agree to.
- But when Colossians 1:21 says: Once you were alienated from God and were **enemies** in your minds because of your evil behavior.
- And when Roman 5:10 says: For if **while we were enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..."

WE DON'T HEAR THAT WORD ENEMIES THE SAME AS

Psalm 92:9 For behold, your enemies, O Lord, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered.

- When the idea that good intentioned friends family, sweetest gal and nicest human beings, the seemingly innocent, beautiful and privilege are the enemy that God hates. Should spur us to preach the whole gospel correctly- That God is loving but he is also just. That sins seperates and makes us enemies.
- And the right response is to realize **not** that you are not special and unique and God needs you. But you are a sinner in need of a saving God.
- God is lovingly calling you to repent and place your trust not in your specialness and uniqueness , but in Christ who is the rescuer for all sinners

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:14

Acts 17 say God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice.

In Scripture we see where people have struggled with waiting for justice. Our cry is How long oh Lord? In Revelation there is a picture of souls under the alter crying out the very question and they are told to wait a little longer.

Jesus says Luke 18:7-8

And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

- Once God acts, he will act quickly.

The duration of suffering in this world is temporary. But the correction of evil and the relief of suffering will be permanent.

That idea is not wishful hoping. Biblical hope means to anticipate with trust.

WE trust that God is Just. That God will act and judge in accordance to what is right as found within himself as the final standard of what is right. That should give us comfort in our mistreatment or trials. That was Obadiah's intention in comforting the Israelites in Exile.

But that should also put some shivers down your back. Why? Because we know in justice, evil doers and sinners will get what they deserve. Of which we can count ourselves as evil doers and sinners.

Don't be self righteous. We don't have this all together. We are in need of understanding the last attribute which is that

4. God is Merciful- God will show goodness to those who are in distress and misery

Verse:17

But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.

Obadiah declares the word of God that now speaks of restoring Israel in a complete turnaround in fortunes. Obadiah declares that Israel's relationship to God and to its former territory of land will be restored

Through the prophet Isaiah: God says it like this:

"For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you."

Isaiah 54:7

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:12,13

God promises to respond to all who call out to him in the distress and misery. All those who ask for mercy and grace of forgiveness and rescue.

- David said: "let us fall into the hand of the Lord for his mercy is great.(2 Sam 24:14)
- Two Blind men called out to Jesus," Have mercy on us the son of David: (Matt. 9:27)
- Paul speaks of God in affliction as the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. (2 Cor 1:3)

- Hebrews implores us to draw near to God's throne so that we may receive both mercy and grace.

Conclusion:

Where is God in all of this?

God is right next to us. Calling to us to cry out for mercy and to draw near to Him. He knows all that has happened and is happening. And he know the final result of it. Nothing has been hidden from him. He is intentionally providing and exercising his rule for his ultimate Glory and for those in Christ our ultimate good. We can trust that God will be just and when he says vengeance in mine. He means for us to leave it in his hands.

God says " I will show mercy on whom I show mercy and compassion to whom I will show compassion"

For those who reach out in the distress, you will find a God who will do what Psalm 30:11 says: You'll find an almighty God who will turn for you your mourning into dancing. Who will loosen our sack cloths of mourning and cloth us with gladness.

When we are in the times of spiritual and theological distress. I hope that what you have learned today about God allows you to not be like the prideful Edomite's who hated God and didn't turn to him. But rather it will be robust enough to be real before God but never permit you to turn away from God in your adversity.

Lets pray.

WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

Obadiah

I. Where are God's People?

Major Time Periods

1. Abraham – David	2. David—Exile	3. Exile – Christ	4. Christ –
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God makes promises.• God sets expectations• God keeps good on promises.• God and Israel united at Jerusalem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Israel breaks rules.• Kingdom divides.• God is patient, sends prophets.• God keeps promise to discipline Israel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Israel returns, has second chance.• Rebuilding temple & Jerusalem, some reform.• God sends a few prophets, then goes silent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus outshines every OT hero.• Jews and Gentiles united in Christ• God keeps good promises and makes better ones.• Kingdom of God is at hand.

Matthew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

2. GOD IS _____

3. GOD IS _____

II. WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

TO ANSWER THIS WE MUST UNDERSTAND 4 ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

1. GOD IS _____

4. GOD IS _____