

OBADIAH

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Introduction

As to the *person* and *circumstances* of Obadiah, nothing certain is known, since the heading to his prophecy simply contains the name עֲבַדְיָהוּ, i.e., servant, worshipper of Jehovah (Ὀβδίου *al.* Ἀβδίου, sc. ὄρασις, LXX), and does not even mention his father's name. The name *Obadiah* frequently occurs in its earlier form *Obadyâhû*. This was the name of a pious governor of the palace under king Ahab (1Ki. 18: 3ff.), of a prince of Judah under Jehoshaphat (2Ch. 17: 7), of a grave Gadite under David (1Ch. 12: 9), of a Benjamite (1Ch. 8:38), of an Issacharite (1Ch. 7: 3), of a Zebulunite (1Ch. 27:19), of several Levites (1Ch. 9:16, 44; 2Ch. 34:12), and of different men after the captivity (1Ch. 3:21; Ezr. 8: 9; Neh. 10: 6). The traditional accounts of our prophet in the rabbins and fathers, some of whom identify him with Ahab's pious commander of the castle, others with the third captain sent by Ahaziah against Elisha (2Ki. 1:13), whilst others again make him an Edomitish proselyte (see Carpzov, *Introd.* p. 332ff., and Delitzsch, *de Habacuci vita atque aetate*, pp. 60, 61), are quite worthless, and evidently false, and have merely originated in the desire to know something more about him than the simple name (see C. P. Caspari, *Der Proph. Ob.* pp. 2, 3).

The *writing* of Obadiah contains but one single prophecy concerning the relation in which Edom stood to the people of God. It commences with the proclamation of the destruction with which the Lord has determined to visit the Edomites, who rely upon the impregnability of their rocky seat (vv. 1-9); and then depicts, as the cause of the divine judgment which will thus suddenly burst upon the haughty people, the evil which it did to Jacob, the covenant nation, when Judah and Jerusalem had been taken by heathen nations, who not only plundered them, but shamefully desecrated the mountain of Zion (vv. 10-14). For this the Edomites and all nations will receive retribution, even to their utter destruction in the approaching day of the Lord (vv. 15, 16). But upon Mount Zion there will be delivered ones, and the mountain will be holy. The house of Jacob will take possession of the settlement of the Gentiles, and, in common with Israel, will destroy the Edomites, and extend its territory on all sides (vv. 17-19). That portion of the nation which has been scattered about in heathen lands will return to their enlarged fatherland (v. 20). Upon Mount Zion will

saviours arise to judge Edom, and the kingdom will then be the Lord's (v. 21). This brief statement of the contents is sufficient to show that Obadiah's prophecy does not consist of a mere word of threatening directed against Edom, or treat of so special a theme as that his *châzôn* could be compared to Ahijah's *n^ebhū 'âh*, and Yehdi's (Iddo's) *châzôth* against Jeroboam I (2Ch. 9:29); but that Obadiah takes the general attitude of Edom towards the people of Jehovah as the groundwork of his prophecy, regards the judgment upon Edom as one feature in the universal judgment upon all nations (cf. vv. 15, 16), proclaims in the destruction of the power of Edom the overthrow of the power of all nations hostile to God, and in the final elevation and re-establishment of Israel in the holy land foretels the completion of the sovereignty of Jehovah, i.e., of the kingdom of God, as dominion over all nations; so that we may say with Hengstenberg, that "Obadiah makes the judgment upon the Gentiles and the restoration of Israel the leading object of his prophetic painting." Through this universal standpoint, from which Edom is taken as a representative of the ungodly power of the world, Obadiah rises far above the utterances of the earlier prophets contained in the historical books of the Old Testament, and stands on a level with the prophets, who composed prophetic writings of their own for posterity, as well as for their own age; so that, notwithstanding the small space occupied by his prophecy, it has very properly had a place assigned it in the prophetic literature. At the same time, we cannot agree with Hengstenberg, who gives the following interpretation to this view of the attitude of Edom towards the people of God, namely, that Obadiah simply adduces Edom as an example of what he has to say with regard to the heathen world, with its enmity against God, and as to the form which the relation between Israel and the heathen world would eventually assume, and therefore that his prophecy simply individualizes the thought of the universal dominion of the kingdom of God which would follow the deepest degradation of the people of God, the fullest and truest realization of which dominion is to be sought for in Christ, and that the germ of his prophecy is contained in Joe. 3:19, where Edom is introduced as an individualized example and type of the heathen world with its hostility to God, which is to be judged by the Lord after the judgment upon Judah. For, apart from the fact that Obadiah does not presuppose Joel, but *vice versa*, as we shall presently see, this mode of idealizing our prophecy cannot be reconciled with its concrete character and expression, or raised into a truth by any analogies in prophetic literature. All the prophecies are occasioned by distinct concrete relations and circumstances belonging to the age from which they spring. And even those which are occupied with the remote and remotest future, like Isa. 40-66 for example, form no real exception to this rule. Joel would not have mentioned Edom as the representation of the heathen world with its hostility to God (Joe. 3:19), and Obadiah would not have predicted the destruction of Edom, if the Edomites had

not displayed their implacable hatred of the people of God on one particular occasion in the most conspicuous manner. It is only in this way that we can understand the contents of the whole of Obadiah's prophecy, more especially the relation in which the third section (vv. 17-21) stands to the first two, and explain them without force.

The *time* of the prophet is so much a matter of dispute, that some regard him as the oldest of the twelve minor prophets, whilst others place him in the time of the captivity, and Hitzig even assigns him to the year 312 B.C., when prophecy had long been extinct. (For the different views, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 88). That Obadiah does not belong to the prophets of the captivity, or to those after the captivity, but to the earlier prophets, may be generally inferred from the position of his book in the collection of the twelve minor prophets; for although the collection is not strictly chronological, yet it is so arranged as a whole, that the writings of the captivity and the times after the captivity occupy the last places, whereas Obadiah stands among older prophets. More precise information may be obtained from the contents of his prophecy, more especially from the relation in which it stands on the one hand to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 49: 7-22) concerning Edom, and on the other hand to the prophecy of Joel. Obadiah so thoroughly coincides with these in a number of characteristic thoughts and expressions, that the one must have known the other. If we examine, first of all, the relation which exists between Obadiah and Jeremiah (*l.c.*), there can be no doubt, (and since the thorough investigations of Caspari [p. 5ff.] it has been admitted by every one with the exception of Hitzig,) that Obadiah did not use Jeremiah, but that Jeremiah read and made use of Obadiah. This might indeed be conjectured from the peculiar characteristic of Jeremiah, namely, that he leans throughout upon the utterances of the earlier prophets, and reproduces their thoughts, figures, and words (see A. Kueper, *Jeremias librorum ss. interpretes atque vindex*, 1837). Thus, for example, nearly all his prophecies against foreign nations are founded upon utterances of the earlier prophets: that against the Philistines (Jer. 47) upon Isaiah's prophecy against that people (Isa. 14:28-32); that against the Moabites (Jer. 48) upon that of Isaiah in Isa. 15, 16; that against the Ammonites (Jer. 49: 1-6) upon the prophecy of Amos against the same (Amo. 1:13-15); that against Damascus (Jer. 49:23-27) upon that of Amos against this kingdom (Amo. 1: 3-5); and lastly, that against Babylon (Jer. 50, 51) upon the prophecy of Isaiah against Babylonian Isa. 13-14:23. To this we may add,

(1) that the prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom contains a number of expressions peculiar to himself and characteristic of his style, not a single one of which is to be found in Obadiah, whilst nothing is met with elsewhere in Jeremiah of that which is common to Obadiah and him (for the proofs of this, see Caspari, pp. 7, 8); and

(2) that what is common to the two prophets not only forms an outwardly connected passage in Obadiah, whereas in Jeremiah it occurs in several unconnected passages of his prophecy (compare Oba. 1: 1-8 with Jer. 49: 7, 9, 10, 14-16), but, as the exposition will show, that in Obadiah it is more closely connected and apparently more original than in Jeremiah. But if it be a fact, as this unquestionably proves, that Obadiah's prophecy is more original, and therefore older, than that of Jeremiah, Obadiah cannot have prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, but must have prophesied before it, since Jeremiah's prophecy against Edom belongs to the fourth year of Jehoiakim (see Caspari, p. 14ff., and Graf's *Jeremias*, pp. 558-9, compared with p. 506).

The central section of Obadiah's prophecy (Oba. 1:10-16) does not appear to harmonize with this result, inasmuch as the cause of the judgment with which the Edomites are threatened in vv. 1-9 is said to be their rejoicing over Judah and Jerusalem at the time of their calamity, when foreigners entered into his gates, and cast the lot upon Jerusalem; and they are charged not only with looking upon the destruction of the brother nation with contemptuous pleasure, but with taking part themselves in the plundering of Judah, and murdering the fugitives, or giving them up to their enemies. These reproaches unquestionably presuppose a conquest of Jerusalem by foreign nations; but whether it is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, is by no means so certain as many commentators imagine. It is true that Caspari observes (p. 18), that "every one who reads these verses would naturally suppose that they refer to that catastrophe, and to the hostilities shown by the Edomites to the Judaeans on that occasion, to which those prophets who lived after the destruction of Jerusalem, viz., Jeremiah (Lam. 4:21, 22), Ezekiel (Ezek. 35), and the author of Psa. 137, refer to some extent in almost the same words in which Obadiah speaks of them." But of the passages cited, Lam. 4:21, 22 cannot be taken into account at all, since it simply contains the thought that the cup (of affliction) will also reach to the daughter of Edom; and that she will be intoxicated and stripped, and that Jehovah will punish her guilt. The other two are no doubt similar. The Psalmist in Psa. 137 utters this prayer in v. 7: "Remember, Jehovah, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who say, Strip, strip (i.e., demolish) even to the foundation thereof;" and Ezekiel threatens Edom with everlasting desolation, because it has cherished everlasting enmity, and given up the sons of Israel to the sword, **בַּעַת אִיְדָם בַּעַת עֵוֹן קָץ** (v. 5), because it has said, The two nations (Judah and Israel) shall be mine, we will take possession of them (v. 10); because it has cherished hatred toward the sons of Israel, and spoken blasphemy against the mountains of Israel, and said they are laid waste, they are given to us for food (v. 12); because it has taken pleasure in the desolation of the inheritance of the house of Israel (v. 15). There is a most

unambiguous allusion here to the desolating of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the hostilities which the Edomites displayed when this calamity fell upon Judah. On the other hand, Obadiah does not hint at the destruction of Jerusalem in a single word. He neither speaks of the *everlasting* enmity of Edom, nor of the fact that it wanted to get possession of Judah and Israel for itself, but simply of the hostile behaviour of the Edomites towards the brother nation Judah, when enemies forced their way into Jerusalem and plundered its treasures, and the sons of Judah perished. Consequently Obadiah has before his eyes simply the conquest and plundering of Jerusalem by foreign, i.e., heathen foes, but not the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. Even Caspari is obliged to admit, that there is no necessity to understand most (or more correctly “any”) of the separate expressions of Obadiah as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; but, in his opinion, this allusion is required by “what is said in vv. 11-14 when taken all together, inasmuch as the prophet there describes the day of Jerusalem by the strongest possible names, following one upon another, as the day of his people’s rejection, the day of their distress (twice), and the day of their calamity (three times).” But even this we cannot regard as well established, since neither **יּוֹם נִכְרָו** nor **יּוֹם אִידוֹ** designates the calamitous day as a day of rejection; and **יּוֹם אֲבָדָם** cannot possibly denote the utter destruction of all the Judaeans, but simply affirms that the sons of Judah perished *en masse*. The other epithets, **נִכְרָו**, **אִידוֹ**, **צָרָה**, do not enable us to define more precisely the nature of the calamity which befel Judah at that time; and the crowding together of these expressions simply shows that the calamity was a very great one, and not that Jerusalem was destroyed and the kingdom of Judah dissolved.

But before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, it was several times taken and plundered by foes: viz.,

- (1) by Shishak king of Egypt in the fifth year of Rehoboam (1Ki. 14:25, 26; 2Ch. 12: 2ff.);
- (2) by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram (2Ch. 21:16, 17);
- (3) by the Israelitish king Joash in the reign of Amaziah (2Ki. 14:13, 14; 2Ch. 25:23, 24);
- (4) by the Chaldeans in the time of Jehoiakim (2Ki. 24: 1ff.; 2Ch. 36: 6, 7); and
- (5) by the Chaldeans again in the reign of Jehoiachin (2Ki. 24:10ff.; 2Ch. 36:10).

Of these different conquests, the first can have no bearing upon the question before us, inasmuch as in the time of Rehoboam the Edomites were subject to the kingdom of Judah, and therefore could not have attempted to do what Obadiah says they did; nor can the two Babylonian conquests under Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, inasmuch as, according to the relation in which Obadiah stood to Jeremiah, as shown above, he must have prophesied before they occurred; nor can the conquest in the reign of Amaziah, because Obadiah describes the

enemies as *zârim* and *nokhrim* (strangers and foreigners), which clearly points to Gentile nations (compare Joe. 3:17; Lam. 5: 2; Deu. 17:15), and does not apply to the citizens of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Consequently there only remains the taking of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram; and the relation in which Obadiah stood to Joel clearly points to this.

There is so remarkable a coincidence between vv. 10-18 of Obadiah and ch. 2:32 and ch. 3 of Joel, in a very large number of words, expressions, and thoughts, considering the smallness of the two passages, and especially of that of Obadiah, that the dependence of one upon the other must be universally acknowledged. ^{f1}

But this dependence is not to be sought for on the side of Obadiah, as Caspari and others suppose; for the fact that Joel bears the stamp of originality in a greater degree than any other prophet, and the circumstance that we meet with references to him in not a few of the later prophets from Amos onwards, furnish no evidence that will bear a moment's test. "The originality of Joel," as Delitzsch observes, "is no disproof of this dependence; for, on the one hand, the reproduction of certain elements from Obadiah's prophecy does not in the least invalidate his originality, inasmuch as the reproduction is itself original; and, on the other hand, not one of the prophets with whom we are acquainted (not even Isaiah) is so original as that the prophecies of his predecessors are not echoed by him, just as Obadiah, even if he were original in relation to Joel, had the prophecies of Balaam as his original, and imitates them in several passages (compare Num. 24:21, 18, 19 with Oba. 1: 4, 18, 19)." But the fact that Joel rests upon Obadiah is proved in the most decisive manner by the expression in Joe. 2:32, "as the Lord hath said," where the foregoing thought, which is common both to Joel and Obadiah, viz., "in Mount Zion...shall be *ph^elētâh*" (see Oba. 1:17), is described as a well-known word of the Lord. Now Joel can only have taken this from Obadiah, for it occurs nowhere else; and the idea suggested by Ewald, that it is derived from an older oracle that has been lost, would only be feasible if the later date of Obadiah, or his dependence upon Joel, could not be demonstrated by conclusive arguments, which is not the case.

A correct determination of the relation in which Obadiah stood to Joel, especially if we compare the prophecies of Amos, who also alludes to Joel (compare Joe. 3:16 with Amo. 1: 2, and Joe. 3:18 with Amo. 9:13), leads with the greatest probability to the conclusion that Obadiah reproaches the Edomites with the hostility which they displayed when Judah and Jerusalem were plundered by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram. In the reign of Jehoram the Edomites threw off the Judaeen supremacy (compare 2Ki. 8:20-22, and 2Ch. 21: 8-10); and in connection with this rebellion, they appear to have planned a great massacre upon the Judaeans, who were in their land at the time

(compare Joe. 3:19 with Amo. 1:11). Libnah also fell away from Judah at the same time (2Ki. 8:22; 2Ch. 21:10), and Philistines and Arabians penetrated victoriously into Judah. This expedition of the Philistines and (Petraean) Arabians against Jerusalem was not merely “a passing raid on the part of certain of the neighbouring nations who had been made tributary by Jehoshaphat (2Ch. 17:11), and had rebelled in the time of Jehoram,” as Caspari says; but these hordes continued their ravages in the most cruel manner in Judah and Jerusalem. According to 2Ch. 21:17, they burst into the land, forced their way into Jerusalem, plundered the royal palace, and carried away the children and wives of the king, so that only the youngest son, Jehoahaz or Ahaziah, was left behind. We also learn from Joe. 3: 5 that they took away gold, silver, and jewels from the temple; and from Joe. 3: 3, 6, that they carried on the vilest trade with the men and women of Judah, and sold the captives to the Greeks, and that, as we see from Amo. 1: 6, 9, through the medium of the Phoenicians and Edomites. This agrees perfectly with Oba. 1:10-14. For, according to this passage also, the Edomites themselves were not the enemies who conquered Jerusalem and plundered its treasures, but simply accomplices, who rejoiced in the doings of the enemy (vv. 11 ff.), held carousals with them upon the holy mountain Zion (v. 16), and sought, partly by rapine and partly by slaying or capturing the fugitive Judaeans (v. 14), to get as much gain as possible out of Judah’s misfortune. We must therefore regard this event, as Hofmann and Delitzsch have done, as the occasion of Obadiah’s prophecy, and that all the more, because the historical allusions which it contains can thereby be satisfactorily explained; whereas the other attempts at solving the difficulties, when we look at the thing more closely, prove to be either altogether untenable, or such as will not apply throughout.

Thus, for example, Ewald and Graf (on Jer. 49: 7ff.) have endeavoured to reconcile the fact that Jeremiah had read the first part of Obadiah as early as the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and had made use of it in his prophecy, with the opinion that vv. 10-16 (Ob.) refer to the Chaldean conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, by the hypothesis that the first part of Obadiah, as we possess it, was founded upon an earlier prophecy, which was adopted by the later editor of our book, and incorporated in his writings, and which had also been made use of by Jeremiah. In support of this hypothesis, the circumstance has been adduced, that Jeremiah’s references to Obadiah only extend to v. 9, that the introductory words in Obadiah, “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom,” do not stand in a close connection with what follows immediately after and thus appear to have been added at a later period, and that the rare word *tiphlatst^ekhâ* (Jer. 49:16), which is not met with anywhere else in Jeremiah, is wanting in Obadiah. But the first phenomenon may be explained very simply, from the fact that the remaining portion of Obadiah (Oba. 1:10-21) furnished nothing which

Jeremiah could make use of for his object, and that we have an analogy in the relation between Jer. 48 and Isaiah's prophecy concerning Moab (Isa. 15, 16), where in just the same manner certain portions, viz., Isa. 16: 1-5, have not been made use of at all. Again, the want of any closer logical connection between the introduction, "Thus hath the Lord said with regard to Edom," and what follows, "We have heard a rumour from Jehovah," arises from the circumstance that these introductory words do not apply exclusively to what follows immediately after, but belong to the whole of Obadiah's prophecy (see at 1: 1). Moreover, these words could not have been wanting even in the supposed earlier or original prophecy, inasmuch as what follows would be unintelligible without them, since the name *Edom*, to which the suffixes and addresses in vv. 1c -5 apply, would be altogether wanting. and lastly, the word *tiphlatst^ekhâ*, which is otherwise strange to Jeremiah, proves nothing in favour of an earlier source, which both Obadiah and Jeremiah employed; nor can we see any sufficient reason for its omission when the earlier oracle was adopted. The other arguments adduced in support of this hypothesis are entirely without significance, if not absolutely erroneous. The fact that from v. 10 onwards, where Jeremiah ceases to make use of our prophecy, the connection between Obadiah and Joel commences, of which there is not the slightest trace in vv. 1-9, has its natural foundation in the contents of the two parts of Obadiah. The announcement of the judgment upon the Edomites in Oba. 1: 1-9 could not be made use of by Joel, because, with the exception of the casual allusion in Joe. 3:19, he does not treat of the judgment upon Edom at all. The contents of Oba. 1: 1-9 also show the reason why no allusion whatever is made in these verses to Israel and Jerusalem. The judgment predicted here was not to be executed by either Israel or Judah, but by the nations. Graf's assertion, that v. 7 contains an allusion to totally different circumstances from those referred to in vv. 10ff., as the verses mentioned relate to altogether disproportionate things, is decidedly incorrect. So also is Ewald's opinion, that half our present Obadiah, viz., vv. 1: 1-10, and vv. 17a and 18, "clearly points to an earlier prophet in contents, language, and colour." Caspari has already replied to this as follows: "We confess, on the contrary, that we can discover no difference in colour and language between vv. 1-9 and 10-21. The latter has its *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα* and its rare words just like the former (compare *סִלַע* חֲגִי v. 3, נִבְעוּ v. 6, מִצְפָּנָיו v. 6, מְזוֹר v. 7, קָמַל v. 9, in the first paragraph; and נִכְרוּ v. 12, תִּשְׁלַחְנָה v. 13, פָּרַק v. 14, לָעוּ v. 16, in the second); and precisely the same liveliness and boldness which distinguished the first part of the prophecy, prevail in the second also. Not a single later word, nor a single form of more recent date, is met with to indicate the later origin of the second part." Moreover, it is impossible to discover any well-established analogy in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament to support this hypothesis.

The attempt made by Caspari, Hengstenberg, and others, to reconcile the opinion, that Obadiah alludes in Oba. 1:11 ff. to the Chaldean destruction of Jerusalem, with the fact that Jeremiah has made use of our book of Obadiah in his prophecy against Edom, which was uttered in the reign of Jehoiakim, by the assumption that Obadiah is not describing something that has already happened, but giving a prophetic picture of the future, is wrecked on the wording of the verses in question. When Obadiah threatens Edom with shame and destruction on account of its wickedness towards its brother Jacob (v. 10), and then describes this wickedness in preterites — "On the day of thy standing opposite when strangers had come into his gates and cast the lot upon Jerusalem" (v. 11); and, "As ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so will all the heathen drink," etc. (v. 16) — no one would understand these preterites as used prophetically, i.e., as referring to what was not to take place till a far distant future, except on the most conclusive grounds. Such grounds, however, some imagine that they can find in vv. 12-14, where the prophet warns the Edomites not to rejoice over their brother nation's day of calamity, or take part in the destruction of Judah. Hengstenberg and Caspari follow Theodoret, Michaelis, and others, in the opinion that Obadiah is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, and that v. 11 can only be interpreted prophetically, and cannot be taken as referring to an ideal past. For, as Caspari adds (p. 29), "I might very well be able to warn a person against an act, even though he were just about to perform it, and I were perfectly certain that he would perform it notwithstanding, and my warning would be fruitless, and though I merely warned him, that he might not perform it without warning; but to warn a person against an act which he has already performed would be a most marvellous thing, even though the warning were only given in the spirit and with the deed standing out as a present thing." No doubt it is perfectly true that "such a warning after the deed was done would be quite out of place," if it had reference merely to one isolated act, a repetition of which was not to be expected. But if the act already performed was but one single outbreak of a prevailing disposition, and might be repeated on every fresh occasion, and possibly had already shown itself more than once, a warning against such an act could neither be regarded as out of place, nor as particularly striking, even after the thing had been done. The warnings in vv. 12-14, therefore, do not compel us to interpret the preterites in vv. 11 and 16 prophetically, as relating to some future deed. Moreover, "the repeated warnings against so wicked a deed were simply the drapery in which the prophet clothed the prediction of the certain coming of the day of Jehovah, which would put an end to the manifestation of such a disposition on the part of Edom" (Delitzsch). There is still less ground for the further remark of Caspari, that the allusions to Joel in Obadiah's description of the day of calamity (not "of the destruction") of Jerusalem, unquestionably preclude the supposition that he was an eye-witness of that

event, and require the hypothesis that he wrote either before or a long time afterwards. For these allusions are not of such a nature that Obadiah simply repeats and still further develops what Joel had already prophesied before him, but, on the contrary, of such a nature that Joel had Obadiah before his mind, and has expanded certain features of his prophecy still further in Joe. 3: 3-6. The description of the hostilities of the Edomites towards Israel, Obadiah could not possibly take from either Joel, or Amo. 9:12, or the sayings of Balaam in Num. 24:18, 19, as Caspari supposes; because neither of these prophets has depicted them any more fully, but can only have drawn it from his own experience, and from what he himself had seen, so that his prophecy is thereby proved to be the original, as compared with that of Joel and Amos.

All this leads to the conclusion, that we must regard Obadiah as older than Joel, and fix upon the reign of Joram as the date of his ministry, but without thereby giving him “an isolated position;” for, according to the most correct chronological arrangement of their respective dates, Joel prophesied at the most twenty years after him, and Hosea and Amos commenced their labours only about seventy-five years later. The calamitous event which burst upon Judah and Jerusalem, and gave occasion for Obadiah’s prophecy, took place in the latter part of Joram’s eight years’ reign. Consequently Obadiah cannot have uttered his prophecy, and committed it to writing, very long before Jehoram’s death. At the same time, it cannot have been at a later period; because, on the one hand, it produces the unquestionable impression, that the hostilities practised by the Edomites were still kept in the most lively remembrance; and on the other hand, it contains no hint of that idolatrous worship to which the ruthless Athaliah endeavoured to give the pre-eminence in Judah, after the one year’s reign of Ahaziah, who succeeded Joram. For the commentaries on Obadiah, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 88.

EXPOSITION

The Judgment upon Edom, and the Establishment of the Kingdom of God upon Zion

The prophecy of Obadiah, which is headed the *châzôn, visio* (see at Isa. 1: 1), is divisible into three sections: vv. 1-9, 10-16, and 17-21. In the first section the prophet proclaims —

Oba. 1: 1. Edom’s Ruin, setting forth, in the first place, the purpose of God to make Edom small through the medium of hostile nations, and to hurl it down from the impregnable heights of its rocky castles (vv. 1-4); and then depicting, in lively colours, how it will be plundered by enemies, forsaken and deceived by

allies and friends, and perish in helplessness and impotence (vv. 5-9). V. 1 contains, in addition to the brief heading, the introduction to the prophecy, which gives in a brief form the substance of the first section: “*Thus hath the Lord Jehovah spoken of Edom, A report have we heard from Jehovah, and a messenger is sent among the nations: Up, and let us arise against it in battle.*”

The first clause, **כֹּה אָמַר... לְאֶדוֹם**, does not harmonize with what follows, inasmuch as we should expect it to be followed with a declaration made by Jehovah Himself, instead of which there follow simply tidings heard from Jehovah. The difficulty cannot be removed by assuming that these introductory words are spurious, or were added by a later prophet (Eichhorn, Ewald, and others); for the interpolator could not fail to observe the incongruity of these words just as well as Obadiah. Moreover, **לְאֶדוֹם** could not be omitted from the opening, because it is required not only by the suffix in **עָלֶיהָ** (against *her*), but also by the direct addresses in vv. 2ff. Nor is the assumption that the prophet suddenly altered the construction any more satisfactory, or that the declaration of Jehovah announced in **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה** (“thus saith the Lord”) commences in v. 2, and that the words from **שְׂמוּעָה** to the end of the verse form an explanatory parenthesis to **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**. For such an alteration of the construction at the very beginning of the address is hardly conceivable; and the parenthetical explanation of the last three clauses of v. 1 is at variance with their contents, which do not form by any means a subordinate thought, but rather the main thought of the following address. No other course remains, therefore, than to take these introductory words by themselves, as Michaelis, Maurer, and Caspari have done, in which case **כֹּה אָמַר** does not announce the actual words of Jehovah in the stricter sense, but is simply meant to affirm that the prophet uttered what follows *jussu Jehovae*, or *divinitus monitus*, so that **כֹּה אָמַר** is really equivalent to **זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר** in Isa. 16:13, as Theodoret has explained it. **לְאֶדוֹם**, not “to Edom,” but with reference to, or of, Edom. On the occurrence of *Y^hōvâh* after ‘*Adōnâi*, see the comm. on Gen. 2: 4. What Obadiah saw as a word of the Lord was the tidings heard from the Lord, and the divine message sent to the nations to rise up for war against Edom. The plural **שָׂמַעְנוּ** (*we have heard*) is communicative. The prophet includes himself in the nation (Israel), which has heard the tidings in him and through him. This implies that the tidings were of the greatest interest to Israel, and would afford it consolation. Jeremiah (Jer. 49:14) has removed the pregnant character of the expression, by introducing the singular **שָׂמַעְתִּי** (*I have heard*). The next clause, “and an ambassador,” etc., might be taken, as it has been by Luther, as a statement of the import of the news, namely, that a messenger had been sent; inasmuch as in Hebrew a sentence is frequently co-ordinated with the preceding one by *Vav cop.*, when it ought really to be subordinated to it so far as the sense

is concerned, from a simple preference for the parallelism of the clauses. But the address gains in force, if we take the clause as a co-ordinate one, just as it reads, viz., as a declaration of the steps already taken by the Lord for carrying out the resolution which had been heard of by report. In this case the substance of the report is not given till the last clause of the verse; the summons of the ambassador sent among the nations, “to rise up for war against Edom,” indicating at the same time the substance of the report which Israel has heard. The perfect *shullâch* with *qâmets* in the pause, which is changed by Jeremiah into the less appropriate passive participle *kal*, corresponds to שָׁמַעְנוּ, and expresses in prophetic form the certainty of the accomplishment of the purpose of God. The sending of the messenger (*tsîr* as in Isa. 18: 2) among the nations (כּ as in Jud. 6:35) is an assurance that the nations will rise up at the instigation of Jehovah to war against Edom (compare Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51: 1, 11). The plural *nâqûmâh* (let us rise up), in the words of the messenger, may be explained on the simple ground that the messenger speaks in the name of the sender. The sender is Jehovah, who will also rise up along with the nations for war against Edom, placing Himself at their head as leader and commander (compare Joe. 2:11; Isa. 13: 4, 5). עָלֶיָּהּ, against Edom, construed as a land or kingdom, *gener. faem.* The fact that it is the nations generally that are here summoned to make war upon Edom, and not only one nation in particular, points at once to the fact that Edom is regarded as a type of the power of the world, and its hostility to God, the destruction of which is here foretold.

Oba. 1: 2-4. The Lord threatens Edom with war, because He has determined to reduce and humble the nation, which now, with its proud confidence in its lofty rocky towers, regards itself as invincible.

V. 2. “Behold, I have made thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised.

V. 3. The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee; thou that dwellest in rocky castles, upon its lofty seat; that saith in its heart, Who will cast me down to the ground?: V.

4. If thou buildest high like the eagle, and if thy nest were placed among stars, thence will I cast thee down, is the saying of Jehovah.”

V. 2 is correctly attached in Jeremiah (v. 15) by כִּי, inasmuch as it contains the reason for the attack upon Edom. By *hinnēh* (behold), which points to the fact itself, the humiliation of Edom is vividly presented to the mind. The perfect *nâthatti* “describes the resolution of Jehovah as one whose fulfilment is as certain as if it had already occurred” (Caspari). What Jehovah says really takes place. קָטַן refers to the number of the people. The participle בְּזוּי is perfectly appropriate, as expressing the ideal present, i.e., the present which follows the קָטַן בְּזוּי. When the Lord has made Edom small, it will be very much despised. It is only through an incorrect interpretation of the historical present

that Hitzig would possibly be led to regard the participle as unsuitable, and to give the preference to Jeremiah's **בְּזוּי בְּאֲדָם**.

Oba. 1: 3. Ver. 3 contains a consequence which follows from v. 2. Edom will be unable to avert this fate: its lofty rocky castles will not preserve it from the overthrow which has been decreed by the Lord, and which He will carry out through the medium of the nations. Edom has therefore been deceived by its proud reliance upon these rocky towers. **שֹׁכְנֵי**, which the connecting sound **י** attached to the construct state (see at Gen. 31:39), is a vocative. **חֲגוּרֵי סֶלַע** are rocky towers, though the primary meaning of **חֲגוּרֵי** is open to dispute. The word is derived from the root **חָגַה**, which is not used in Hebrew (like **קָצַיִן** from **קָצַה**), and is found not only here and in the parallel passage of Jeremiah, but also in the Son. 2:14, where it occurs in parallelism with **סִתְרָה**, which points to the meaning *refugium*, i.e., asylum. This meaning has also been confirmed by A. Schultens (*Anim-adv. ad Jes.* xix. 17) and by Michaelis (*Thes. s.v. Jes.*), from the Arabic *h̄j^ʿa*, *confugit*, and *mahjā^ʿu*, *refugium*.¹²

In the expression **מְרוֹם שְׁבָתוֹ** the **ב** is to be considered as still retaining its force from **חֲגוּרֵי** onwards (cf. Isa. 28: 7; Job. 15: 3, etc.). The emphasis rests upon *high*; and hence the abstract noun *mārōm*, height, instead of the adjective. The Edomites inhabited the mountains of *Seir*, which have not yet been carefully explored in detail. They are on the eastern side of the Ghor (or Arabah), stretching from the deep rocky valley of the Ahsy, which opens into the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and extending as far as *Aela* on the Red Sea, and consist of mighty rocks of granite and porphyry, covered with fresh vegetation, which terminate in the west, towards the deeply intersected sand-sea of the Ghor and Arabah, in steep and lofty walls of sandstone. The mountains are hardly accessible, therefore, on the western side; whereas on the east they are gradually lost in the broad sandy desert of Arabia, without any perceptible fall (see Burckhardt in v. Raumer's *Pal.* pp. 83-4, 86; and Robinson's *Palestine*, ii. p. 551ff.). They also abound in clefts, with both natural and artificial caves; and hence its earliest inhabitants were Horites, i.e., dwellers in caves; and even the Edomites dwelt in caves, at least to some extent.¹³

The capital, *Sela (Petra)*, in the Wady Musa, of whose glory at one time there are proofs still to be found in innumerable remains of tombs, temples, and other buildings, was shut in both upon the east and west by rocky walls, which present an endless variety of bright lively colours, from the deepest crimson to the softest pale red, and sometimes passing into orange and yellow; whilst on the north and south it was so encircled by hills and heights, that it could only be

reached by climbing through very difficult mountain passes and defiles (see Burckhardt, *Syr.* p. 703; Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 573; and Ritter, *Erdk.* xiv. p. 1103); and Pliny calls it *oppidum circumdatum montibus inaccessis*. Compare Strabo, xvi. 779; and for the different roads to Petra, Ritter, p. 997ff.

Oba. 1: 4. Ver. 4 shows the worthlessness of this reliance of the Edomites. The object to תַּגְבִּיחַ, viz., קִנְיָד, does not follow till the second clause: If thou makest thy nest high like the eagle, which builds its nest upon the loftiest jagged rocks (Job. 39:27, 28). This thought is hyperbolically intensified in the second clause: if thy nest had been placed among stars. שִׁים is not an infinitive, but a passive participle, as in the primary passage, Num. 24:21, which Obadiah had before his mind, and in 1Sa. 9:24, 2Sa. 13:32; but קִנְיָד is nevertheless to be taken as an accusative of the object, after the analogy of the construction of passives *c. accus. obj.* (see Ges. § 143, *l, a.*).

Oba. 1: 5-7. The prophet sees this overthrow of Edom from its lofty height as something that has already happened, and he now depicts the utter devastation of Edom through the medium of the enemies whom Jehovah has summoned against it.

V. 5. "If thieves had come to thee, if robbers by night, alas, how art thou destroyed! would they not steal their sufficiency? If vine-dressers had come to thee, would they not leave gleanings? V. 6. How have the things of Esau been explored, his hidden treasures desired! V. 7. Even to the border have all the men of thy covenant sent thee: the men of thy peace have deceived thee, overpowered thee. They make thy bread a wound under thee. There is no understanding in him."

In order to exhibit the more vividly the complete clearing out of Edom, Obadiah supposes two cases of plundering in which there is still something left (v. 5), and then shows that the enemies in Edom will act much worse than this. אִם with the perfect supposes a case to have already occurred, when, although it does not as yet exist in reality, it does so in imagination. גַּנְבִּים are common thieves, and שֹׁדְדֵי לַיְלָה robbers by night, who carry off another's property by force. With this second expression, the verb בָּאֵן לְךָ must be repeated. "To thee," i.e., to do thee harm; it is actually equivalent to "upon thee." The following words אִךְ נִדְמֵתָה cannot form the apodosis to the two previous clauses, because *nidmêthâh* is too strong a term for the injury inflicted by thieves or robbers, but chiefly because the following expression יִגְבּוּ וְגוֹ' הָלוֹא is irreconcilable with such an explanation, the thought that thieves steal הָלוֹא being quite opposed to *nidmâh*, or being destroyed. The clause "how art thou destroyed" must rather be taken as pointing far beyond the contents of vv. 5c and 6. It is more fully explained in v. 9, and is thereby proved to be a

thought thrown in parenthetically, with which the prophet anticipates the principal fact in his lively description, in the form of an exclamation of amazement. The apodosis to *im gannâbhîm* (if robbers, etc.) follows in the words “do they not steal” (= they surely steal) *dayyâm*, i.e., their sufficiency (see Delitzsch on Isa. 40:16); that is to say, as much as they need, or can use, or find lying open before them. The picture of the grape-gatherers says the same thing. They also do not take away all, even to the very last, but leave some gleanings behind, not only if they fear God, according to Lev. 19:10, Deu. 24:21, as Hitzig supposes, but even if they do not trouble themselves about God’s commandments at all, because many a bunch escapes their notice which is only discovered on careful gleaning. Edom, on the contrary, is completely cleared out. In v. 6 the address to Edom passes over into words concerning him. עֲשׂוֹ is construed as a collective with the plural. אִישׁ is a question of amazement. *Châphas*, to search through, to explore (cf. Zep. 1:12, 13). *Bâ’âh* (*nibh’û*), to beg, to ask; here in the *niphâl* to be desired. *Matspôn*, ἀπ. λεγ. from *tsâphan*, does not mean a secret place, but a hidden thing or treasure (τὰ κεκρυμμένα αὐτοῦ, LXX). Obadiah mentions the plundering first, because Petra, the capital of Edom, was a great emporium of the Syrio- Arabian trade, where many valuables were stored (vid., Diod. Sic. xix. 95), and because with the loss of these riches the prosperity and power of Edom were destroyed.

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Oba. 1: 7. In the midst of this calamity Edom will be forsaken and betrayed by its allies, and will also be unable to procure any deliverance for itself by its own understanding. The allies send Edom even to the border. The meaning of this is not that they will not receive the Edomitish fugitives, but drive them back to the frontier, so that they fall into the hands of the enemy (Hitzig and others); for the suffix ך cannot refer to the small number of fugitives from Edom who have escaped the massacre, but applies to Edom as a nation. The latter seeks for help and support from their allies, — namely, through the medium of ambassadors whom it sends to them. But the ambassadors, and in their persons the Edomites themselves, are sent back to the frontier by all the allies, because they will not entangle themselves in the fate of Edom. Sending to the frontier, however, is not to be understood as signifying that the allies “send their troops with them as far as the frontier, and then order them to turn back,” as Michaelis supposes; for “if the allies were unwilling to help, they would hardly call out the army to march as far as the frontier” (Hitzig). Nor is this implied either in שְׁלַחְךָ or הִשִּׁיאוּךָ; for *shilleäch* means to send away, to dismiss, and both here and in Gen. 12:20 to send across the frontier. This was a deception of the expectation of the Edomites, although the words “have deceived thee” belong, strictly speaking, to what follows, and not to the conduct of the allies. שְׁלַחְךָ

אֲנָשִׁי, an expression taken from Psa. 41:10, both here and in Jer. 38:22 (cf. 20:10), the men or people with whom thou didst live in peace, are probably neighbouring Arabian tribes, who had made commercial treaties with the Edomites. They deceived, or rather overpowered, Edom. יָכְלוּ is the practical explanation and more precise definition of הִשִּׂיאוּ.

But the answer to the question whether the overpowering was carried out by cunning and deception (Jer. 20:10; 38:22), or by open violence (Gen. 32:26; Psa. 129: 2), depends upon the explanation given to the next sentence, about which there are great diversities of opinion, partly on account of the different explanations given of לֶחְמֶךָ, and partly on account of the different renderings given to מְזוֹרָה. The latter occurs in Hos. 5:13 and Jer. 30:13 in the sense of a festering wound or abscess, and the rabbinical commentators and lexicographers have retained this meaning in the passage before us. On the other hand, the older translators have here ἔνεδρα (LXX), תְּקֵלָה, offence, σκάνδαλον (Chald.), *k^emi^h nā^h*, *insidiae* (Syr.), Aq. and Symm. σύνδεσμος and ἐπίδεσις, Vulg. *insidiae*; and hence the modern rendering, they lay a snare, or place a trap under thee. But this rendering cannot be vindicated etymologically, since *zūr* (= *zârar*) does not mean to bind, but to press together or squeeze out. Nor can the form *mâzôr* be taken as a contraction of *m^ezôrâh*, as Hitzig supposes, since this is derived from *zârâh*, to strew or scatter. And no weight is to be attached to the opinion of Aquila with his literal translation, for the simple reason that his rendering of Hos. 5:13 is decidedly false. Ewald and Hitzig prefer the rendering “net;” but this, again, cannot be sustained either from the expression *m^ezôrâh hâresheth* in Pro. 1:17 (Hitzig), or from the Syriac, *m^ezar, extendit* (Ges. *Addid. ad thes.* p. 96). The only meaning that can be sustained as abscess or wound. We must therefore adhere to the rendering, “they make thy bread a wound under thee.” For the proposal to take *lachm^ekhâ* (thy bread) as a second genitive dependent upon *anshê* (the men), is not only opposed to the accents and the parallelism of the members, according to which *anshê sh^olōmekhâ* (the men of thy peace) must conclude the second clause, just as *anshê b^rîrithekhâ* (the men of thy covenant) closes the first; but it is altogether unexampled, and the expression *anshê lachm^ekhâ* is itself unheard of. For this reason we must not even supply *anshê* to *lachm^ekhâ* from the previous sentence, or make “the men of thy bread” the subject, notwithstanding the fact that the LXX, the Chald., the Syr., and Jerome have adopted this as the meaning. Still less can *lachm^ekhâ* stand in the place of אֲכָלוּ לֶחְמֶךָ (they that eat thy bread), as some suppose. *Lachm^ekhâ* can only be the first object to *yâsîmû*, and consequently the subject of the previous clause still continues in force: they who befriended thee make thy bread, i.e., the bread which they ate from thee or with thee, not “the bread which thou seekest from them” (Hitzig),

into a wound under thee, i.e., an occasion for destroying thee. We have not to think of common meals of hospitality here, as Rashi, Rosenmüller, and others do; but the words are to be taken figuratively, after the analogy of Psa. 41:10, which floated before the prophet's mind, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up the heel against me," as denoting conspiracies on the part of those who were allied to Edom, and drew their own sustenance from it, the rich trading nation, to destroy that very nation which was now oppressed by its foes. The only difficulty is in the word **תַּחֲתֶיךָ**, under thee, inasmuch as the meaning "without thy knowledge" (*clam te*), which Vatablus and Drusius adopt, cannot be sustained, and least of all from 2Sa. 3:12. We must connect **תַּחֲתֶיךָ** closely with **מַזּוֹר**, in this sense, that the wound is inflicted upon the lower part of the body, to express its dangerous nature, inasmuch as wounds upon which one sits or lies are hard to heal. Consequently **יִכְבְּלוּ לְךָ** (they prevail against thee) is to be understood as denoting conquest, not by an unexpected attack or open violence, but by cunning and deceit, or by secret treachery. The last clause, **וְגַם אֵין תְּבוּנָה**, does not give the reason why the thing described was to happen to the Edomites (Chald., Theod.); nor is it to be connected with *mâzôr* as a relative clause (Hitzig), or as explanatory of **תַּחֲתֶיךָ**, "to thee, without thy perceiving it, or before thou perceivest it" (Luther and L. de Dieu). The very change from the second person to the third (**בָּו**) is a proof that it introduces an independent statement, — namely, that in consequence of the calamity which thus bursts upon the Edomites, they lose their wonted discernment, and neither know what to do nor how to help themselves (Maurer and Caspari). This thought is expanded still further in vv. 8, 9.

Oba. 1: 8.

"Does it not come to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, that I destroy the wise men out of Edom, and discernment from the mountains of Esau? V. 9. And thy heroes despair, O Teman, that every one may be cut off by murder from the mountains of Esau."

In order to give up the Edomites to destruction at that time, the Lord will take away discernment from their wise men, so that even they will not be able to help them. The destruction of the wise men is not to be understood as signifying that the wise men will all be slain, or slain before any others, but simply that they will be destroyed as wise men by the withdrawal or destruction of their wisdom. This meaning is sustained, not only by the fact that in the second clause *t^ebhūnâh* only is mentioned as that which is to be destroyed, but also by the parallel passages, Jer. 49: 7, Isa. 19:11; 29:14. Jeremiah mentions here the wisdom of the Temanites in particular. That they were celebrated for their wisdom, is evident not only from this passage, but also from the fact that

Eliphaz, the chief opponent of Job in argument, was a Temanite (Job. 2: 1, etc.). With this withdrawal of wisdom and discernment, even the brave warriors lose their courage. The heroes are dismayed (*chattū*), or fall into despair. *Tēmân*, which the Chaldee has rendered incorrectly as an appellative, viz., inhabitants of the south (*dârômâ*), is a proper name of the southern district of Idumaea (see at Amo. 1:12), so called from Teman, a son of Eliphaz and grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11, 15). *Gibbōrekhâ* (thy heroes), with the masculine suffix, the people inhabiting the district being addressed under the name of the district itself. God inflicts this upon Edom with the intention (*l'ma'an*, to this end) that all the Edomites should be cut off. *Miqqâtel*, from the murdering, by murder (compare Gen. 9:11, where *min* occurs after *yikkârēth* in this sense); not “without conflict,” as Ewald renders it, for *qetel* signifies slaying, and not conflict. The thought of connecting *miqqâtel* with what follows cannot for a moment be entertained (vid., LXX, Syr., Vulg.). It is opposed not only by the authority of the Masoretic punctuation, but still more decisively by the fact, that the stronger and more special word (*qetel*) cannot precede the weaker and more general one (*châmâs*), and that the murder of certain fugitives is placed first in the list of crimes committed by Edom upon the Israelites (vv. 10-14).

Oba. 1:10-16. The Cause of the Ruin of the Edomites is their wickedness towards the brother nation Jacob (vv. 10 and 11), which is still further exhibited in vv. 12-14 in the form of a warning, accompanied by an announcement of righteous retribution in the day of the Lord upon all nations (vv. 15, 16).

V. 10. “For the wickedness towards thy brother Jacob shame will cover thee, and thou wilt be cut off for ever. V. 11. In the day that thou stoodest opposite, in the day when enemies carried away his goods, and strangers came into his gates, and cast the lot upon Jerusalem, then even thou (wast) like one of them.”

Châmas *âchîkhâ*, wickedness, violent wrong towards (upon) thy brother (*genit. obj.* as in Joe. 3:19, Gen. 16: 5, etc.). Drusius has already pointed out the peculiar emphasis on these words. Wrong, or violence, is all the more reprehensible, when it is committed against a brother. The fraternal relation in which Edom stood towards Judah is still more sharply defined by the name *Jacob*, since Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. The consciousness that the Israelites were their brethren, ought to have impelled the Edomites to render helpful support to the oppressed Judaeans. Instead of this, they not only revelled with scornful and malignant pleasure in the misfortune of the brother nation, but endeavored to increase it still further by rendering active support to the enemy. This hostile behaviour of Edom arose from envy at the election of Israel, like the hatred of Esau towards Jacob (Gen. 27:41), which was transmitted to his descendants, and came out openly in the time of Moses, in the

unbrotherly refusal to allow the Israelites to pass in a peaceable manner through their land (Num. 20). On the other hand, the Israelites are always commanded in the law to preserve a friendly and brotherly attitude towards Edom (Deu. 2: 4, 5); and in Deu. 23: 7 it is enjoined upon them not to abhor the Edomite, because he is their brother. **תִּכְסֶּף בּוֹשָׁה** (as in Mic. 7:10), shame will cover thee, i.e., come upon thee in full measure, — namely, the shame of everlasting destruction, as the following explanatory clause clearly shows.

וַיִּכְרַתָּ with *Vav consec.*, but with the tone upon the *penultima*, contrary to the rule (cf. Ges. § 49, 3; Ewald, § 234, *b* and *c*). In the more precise account of Edom's sins given in v. 11, the last clause does not answer exactly to the first. After the words "in the day that thou stoodest opposite," we should expect the apodosis "thou didst this or that." But Obadiah is led away from the sentence which he has already begun, by the enumeration of hostilities displayed towards Judah by its enemies, so that he observes with regard to Edom's behaviour: Then even thou wast as one of them, that is to say, thou didst act just like the enemy. **עָמַד מִנְּגֵד**, to stand opposite (compare Psa. 38:12), used here to denote a hostile intention, as in 2Sa. 18:13. They showed this at first by looking on with pleasure at the misfortunes of the Judaeans (v. 12), still more by stretching out their hand after their possessions (v. 13), but most of all by taking part in the conflict with Judah (v. 14). In the clauses which follow, the day when Edom acted thus is described as a day on which Judah had fallen into the power of hostile nations, who carried off its possessions, and disposed of Jerusalem as their booty. *Zārīm* and *nokhrīm* are synonymous epithets applied to heathen foes. **שָׁבָה** generally denotes the carrying away of captives; but it is sometimes applied to booty in cattle and goods, or treasures (1Ch. 5:21; 2Ch. 14:14; 21:17). **חַיִל** is not used here either for the army, or for the strength, i.e., the kernel of the nation, but, as **חֵילוֹ** in v. 13 clearly shows, for its possessions, as in Isa. 8: 4; 10:14, Eze. 26:12, etc. **שַׁעְרָיו**, his (Judah's) gates, used rhetorically for his cities.

Lastly, Jerusalem is also mentioned as the capital, upon which the enemies cast lots. The three clauses form a climax: first, the carrying away of Judah's possessions, that is to say, probably those of the open country; then the forcing of a way into the cities; and lastly, arbitrary proceedings both in and with the capital. **יָדָו גִּזְרָל** (*perf. kal* of **יָדָה** = **יָדָה**, not *piel* for **יָדָו**, because the *Yod praef.* of the imperfect *piel* is never dropped in verbs **פִּי**), to cast the lot upon booty (things) and prisoners, to divide them among them (compare Joe. 3: 3 and Nah. 3:10). Caspari, Hitzig, and others understand it here as in Joe. 3: 3, as denoting the distribution of the captive inhabitants of Jerusalem, and found upon this one of their leading arguments, that the description given here refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which Obadiah either foresaw in the Spirit, or

depicts as something already experienced. But this by no means follows from the fact that in Joel we have **יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** instead of **אֲמִי**, since it is generally acknowledged that, when the prophets made use of their predecessors, they frequently modified their expressions, or gave them a different turn. But if we look at our passage simply as it stands, there is not the slightest indication that Jerusalem is mentioned in the place of the people. As **שְׁבוֹת חֵילוֹ** does not express the carrying away of the inhabitants, there is not a single syllable which refers to the carrying away captive of either the whole nation or the whole of the population of Jerusalem. On the contrary, in v. 13 we read of the perishing of the children of Judah, and in v. 14 of fugitives of Judah, and those that have escaped. From this it is very obvious that Obadiah had simply a conquest of Jerusalem in his eye, when part of the population was slain in battle and part taken captive, and the possessions of the city were plundered; so that the casting of the lot upon Jerusalem has reference not only to the prisoners, but also to the things taken as plunder in the city, which the conquerors divided among them. **גַּם אֶתָּה**, even thou, the brother of Jacob, art like one of them, makest common cause with the enemy. The verb **הִיָּתָה**, *thou wast*, is omitted, to bring the event before the mind as something even then occurring. For this reason Obadiah also clothes the further description of the hostilities of the Edomites in the form of a warning against such conduct.

Oba. 1:12.

“And look not at the day of thy brother on the day of his misfortune; and rejoice not over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing, and do not enlarge thy mouth in the day of the distress. V. 13. Come not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; thou also look not at his misfortune in the day of his calamity, and stretch not out thy hand to his possession in the day of his calamity: V. 14. Nor stand in the cross-road, to destroy his fugitives, nor deliver up his escaped ones in the day of distress.”

This warning cannot be satisfactorily explained either “on the assumption that the prophet is here foretelling the future destruction of Judah and Jerusalem” (Caspari), or “on the supposition that he is merely depicting an event that has already past” (Hitzig). If the taking and plundering of Jerusalem were an accomplished fact, whether in idea or in reality, as it is shown to be by the perfects **בָּאוּ** and **יָדוּ** in v. 11, Obadiah could not in that case warn the Edomites against rejoicing over it, or even taking part therein. Hence Drusius, Rosenmüller, and others, take the verbs in vv. 12-14 as futures of the past: “Thou shouldest not have seen, shouldest not have rejoiced,” etc. But this is opposed to the grammar. **אֵל** followed by the so-called *fut. apoc.* is jussive, and cannot stand for the *pluperf. conjunct.* And Maurer’s suggestion is just as untenable, namely, that *yōm* in v. 11 denotes the day of the capture of

Jerusalem, and in vv. 12, 13 the period after this day; since the identity of **יֹם עֲמָדָךְ** (the day of thy standing) in v. 11 with **יֹם אֲחִיךָ** in v. 12 strikes the eye at once. The warning in vv. 12-14 is only intelligible on the supposition, that Obadiah has not any particular conquest and plundering of Jerusalem in his mind, whether a future one or one that has already occurred, but regards this as an event that not only has already taken place, but will take place again: that is to say, on the assumption that he rises from the particular historical event to the idea which it embodied, and that, starting from this, he sees in the existing case all subsequent cases of a similar kind. From this ideal standpoint he could warn Edom of what it had already done, and designate the disastrous day which had come upon Judah and Jerusalem by different expressions as a day of the greatest calamity; for what Edom had done, and what had befallen Judah, were types of the future development of the fate of Judah and of the attitude of Edom towards it, which go on fulfilling themselves more and more until the day of the Lord upon all nations, upon the near approach of which Obadiah founds his warning in v. 15. The warning proceeds in vv. 12-14 from the general to the particular, or from the lower to the higher. Obadiah warns the Edomites, as Hitzig says, “not to rejoice in Judah’s troubles (v. 12), nor to make common cause with the conquerors (v. 13), nor to outdo and complete the work of the enemy (v. 14).” By the cop. *Vav*, which stands at the head of all the three clauses in v. 12, the warning addressed to the Edomites, against such conduct as this, is linked on to what they had already done.

The three clauses of v. 12 contain a warning in a graduated form against malicious pleasure. **רָאָה** with **בְּ**, to look at anything with pleasure, to take delight in it, affirms less than **שָׂמַח בְּ**, to rejoice, to proclaim one’s joy without reserve. **הַגְדִּיל פִּה**, to make the mouth large, is stronger still, like **הַגְדִּיל בְּפִה**, to boast, to do great things with the mouth, equivalent to **הִרְחִיב פִּה אֵל**, to make the mouth broad, to stretch it open, over (against) a person (Psa. 35:21; Isa. 57: 4), a gesture indicating contempt and derision. The object of their malicious pleasure mentioned in the first clause is *yōm ‘āchikhâ*, the day of thy brother, i.e., the day upon which something strange happened to him, namely, what is mentioned in v. 11. *Yōm* does not of itself signify the disastrous day, or day of ruin, either here or anywhere else; but it always receives the more precise definition from the context. If we were to adopt the rendering “disastrous day,” it would give rise to a pure tautology when taken in connection with what follows. The expression *‘āchikhâ (of thy brother)* justifies the warning. **נִכְרָו בְּיֹם** is not in apposition to **בְּיֹם אֲחִיךָ**, but, according to the parallelism of the clauses, it is a statement of time. **נִכְרָו**, *ἀπ. λεγ. = נִכְרָו* (Job. 31: 3), *fortuna aliena*, a strange, i.e., hostile fate, not “rejection” (Hitzig, Caspari, and others). The expression **יֹם אֲבָדְכֶם**, the day of their (Judah’s sons) perishing, is stronger

still; although the perishing (*ʿābhōd*) of the sons of Judah cannot denote the destruction of the whole nation, since the following word *tsārāh*, calamity, is much too weak to admit of this. Even the word אָרַח, which occurs three times in v. 13, does not signify destruction, but (from the root אָרַח, to fall heavily, to load) simply pressure, a burden, then weight of suffering, distress, misfortune (see Delitzsch on Job. 18:12). In v. 13 Obadiah warns against taking part in the plundering of Jerusalem. The gate of my people: for the city in which the people dwell, the capital (see Mic. 1: 9). Look not thou also, a brother nation, upon his calamity, as enemies do, i.e., do not delight thyself thereat, nor snatch at his possessions. The form *tishlachnâh*, for which we should expect *tishlach*, is not yet satisfactorily explained (for the different attempts that have been made to explain it, see Caspari). The passages in which *nâh* is appended to the third pers. fem. sing., to distinguish it from the second person, do not help us to explain it. Ewald and Olshausen would therefore alter the text, and read אָרַח אֶת־יְדֵיךָ. But אָרַח is not absolutely necessary, since it is omitted in 2Sa. 6: 6; 22:17, or Psa. 18:17, where *shâlach* occurs in the sense of stretching out the hand. אֶת־יְדֵיךָ, his possessions. On the fact itself, compare Joe. 4: 5. The prominence given to the day of misfortune at the end of every sentence is very emphatic; “inasmuch as the selection of the time of a brother’s calamity, as that in which to rage against him with such cunning and malicious pleasure, was doubly culpable” (Ewald). In v. 14 the warning proceeds to the worst crime of all, their seizing upon the Judæan fugitives, for the purpose of murdering them or delivering them up to the enemy. *Pereq* signifies here the place where the roads break or divide, the cross-road. In Nah. 3: 1, the only other place in which it occurs, it signifies tearing in pieces, violence. *Hisgîr*, to deliver up (lit., *concludendum tradidit*), is generally construed with אָרַח (Deu. 23:16) or בָּיַד (Psa. 31: 9; 1Sa. 23:11). Here it is written absolutely with the same meaning: not “to apprehend, or so overpower that there is no escape left” (Hitzig). This would affirm too little after the preceding אֶת־כַּרְיִית, and cannot be demonstrated from Job. 11:10, where *hisgîr* means to keep in custody.

Oba. 1:15, 16. This warning is supported in v. 15 by an announcement of the day of the Lord, in which Edom and all the enemies of Israel will receive just retribution for their sins against Israel.

V. 15. “For the day of Jehovah is near upon all nations. As thou hast done, it will be done to thee; what thou hast performed returns upon thy head. V. 16. For as ye have drunken upon my holy mountain, all nations will drink continually, and drink and swallow, and will be as those that were not.”

בִּי (for) connects what follows with the warnings in vv. 12-14, but not also, or exclusively, with vv. 10, 11, as Rosenmüller and others suppose, for vv. 2-14

are not inserted parenthetically. “The day of Jehovah” has been explained at Joe. 1:15. The expression was first formed by Obadiah, not by Joel; and Joel, Isaiah, and the prophets that follow, adopted it from Obadiah. The primary meaning is not the day of judgment, but the day on which Jehovah reveals His majesty and omnipotence in a glorious manner, to overthrow all ungodly powers, and to complete His kingdom. It was this which gave rise to the idea of the day of judgment and retribution which predominates in the prophetic announcements, but which simply forms one side of the revelation of the glory of God, as our passage at once shows; inasmuch as it describes Jehovah as not only judging all nations and regarding them according to their deeds (cf. vv. 15^b, and 16), but as providing deliverance upon Zion (v. 17), and setting up His kingdom (v. 21). The retribution will correspond to the actions of Edom and of the nations. For גַּמְלָהּ וְגוֹרֵם, compare Joe. 3: 4, 7, where (vv. 2-7) the evil deeds of the nations, what they have done against the people of God, are described. In v. 16 Obadiah simply mentions as the greatest crime the desecration of the holy mountain by drinking carousals, for which all nations are to drink the intoxicating cup of the wrath of God till they are utterly destroyed. In *sh^ethithem* (ye have drunk) it is not the Judaeans who are addressed, as many commentators, from Ab. Ezra to Ewald and Meier, suppose, but the Edomites. This is required not only by the parallelism of בָּאֲשֶׁר שְׁתִּיתֶם (as ye have drunk) and בָּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ (as thou hast done), but also by the actual wording and context. בָּאֲשֶׁר שְׁתִּיתֶם אֶל הַר cannot mean “as ye who are upon my holy mountain have drunk;” and in the announcement of the retribution which all nations will receive for the evil they have done to Judah, it is impossible that either the Judaeans should be addressed, or a parallel drawn between their conduct and that of the nations. Moreover, throughout the whole of the prophecy Edom only is addressed, and never Judah. Mount Zion is called “my holy mountain,” because Jehovah was there enthroned in His sanctuary. The verb *shâthâh* is used in the two clauses in different senses: viz., *sh^ethithem*, of the drinking carousals which the Edomites held upon Zion, like *yishtū* in Joe. 3: 3; and *shâthū*, in the apodosis, of the drinking of the intoxicating goblet (cf. Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; 49:12, etc.), as the expression “they shall be as though they had not been” clearly shows. At the same time, we cannot infer from the words “all nations will drink,” that all nations would succeed in taking Zion and abusing it, but that they would have to taste all the bitterness of their crime; for it is not stated that they are to drink upon Mount Zion. The fact that the antithesis to שְׁתִּיתֶם is not תִּשְׁתּוּ (“ye will drink”) but יִשְׁתּוּ בְּלִי-הַגּוֹיִם, does not compel us to generalize *sh^ethithem*, and regard all nations as addressed *implicite* in the Edomites. The difficulty arising from this antithesis cannot be satisfactorily removed by the remark of Caspari, that in consequence of the allusion to the day of the Lord upon all nations in v. 15, the judgment upon all

nations and that upon the Edomites were thought of as inseparably connected, or that this induced Obadiah to place opposite to the sins of the Edomites, not their own punishment, but the punishment of all nations, more especially as, according to v. 11, it must necessarily be assumed that the foreign nations participated in the sin of Edom. For this leaves the question unanswered, how Obadiah came to speak at all (v. 15) of the day of the Lord upon all nations. The circumstance that, according to v. 11, heathen nations had plundered Jerusalem, and committed crimes like those for which Edom is condemned in vv. 12-14, does not lead directly to the day of judgment upon *all* nations, but simply to a judgment upon Edom and the nations which had committed like sins. The difficulty is only removed by the assumption that Obadiah regarded Edom as a type of the nations that had risen up in hostility to the Lord and His people, and were judged by the Lord in consequence, so that what he says of Edom applies to all nations which assume the same or a similar attitude towards the people of God. From this point of view he could, without reserve, extend to all nations the retribution which would fall upon Edom for its sins. They should drink *tâmid*, i.e., not at once, as Ewald has rendered it in opposition to the usage of the language, but “continually.” This does not mean, however, that “there will be no time in which there will not be one of the nations drinking the intoxicating cup, and being destroyed by drinking thereof; or that the nations will come in turn, and therefore in a long immeasurable series, one after the other, to drink the cup of intoxication,” as Caspari supposes, but “continually, so that the turn never passes from the heathen to Judah, Isa. 51:22, 23” (Hitzig). This drinking is more precisely defined as drinking and swallowing (𐤒𐤓𐤕, in Syriac, to devour or swallow, hence 𐤒𐤓, a throat, so called from the act of swallowing, Pro. 23: 2), i.e., drinking in full draughts; and the effect, “they will be like such as have not been, have never existed” (cf. Job. 10:19), i.e., they will be utterly destroyed as nations.

Oba. 1:17-21. The Kingdom of Jehovah Established upon Zion. — The prophecy advances from the judgment upon all the heathen to the completion of the kingdom of God by the raising up of Israel to world-wide dominion. While the judgment is falling upon all the heathen nations, Mount Zion will be an asylum for those who are delivered. Judah and Israel will capture the possessions of the nations, destroy Edom, and extend its borders on every side (vv. 17-19). The Israelites scattered among the nations will return into their enlarged inheritances, and upon Zion will saviours arise, to judge Edom, and the kingdom will then be the Lord’s (vv. 20, 21). This promise is appended as an antithesis to the proclamation of judgment in v. 16.

Oba. 1:17.

“But upon Mount Zion will be that which has been saved, and it will be a sanctuary, and the house of Jacob will take possession of their possessions.”

Upon Mount Zion, which the Edomites have now desecrated by drinking carousals, there will then, when the nations are obliged to drink the cup of intoxication even to their utter destruction, be *p'letâh*, that which has escaped, i.e., the multitude of those who have been rescued and preserved throughout the judgment. See the explanation of this at Joe. 2:32, where this thought is still further expounded. Mount Zion is the seat of the kingdom of Jehovah (cf. v. 21). There the Lord is enthroned (Joe. 3:17), and His rescued people with Him. And it (Mount Zion) will be *qōdesh*, a sanctuary, i.e., inviolable; the heathen will no more dare to tread it and defile it (Joe. 3:17). It follows from this, that the rescued crowd upon it will also be a holy people (“a holy seed,” Isa. 6:13). This sanctified people of the Lord, the house of Jacob, will capture the possessions of their foes. The suffix attached to **מִן־רְשִׁיָּהֶם** is supposed by many to refer to **בֵּית יַעֲקֹב**: those of the house of Jacob, i.e., the rescued Israelites, will take their former possessions once more. This view cannot be overthrown by the simple remark that *yârash* cannot mean to take possession again; for that meaning might be given to it by the context, as, for example, in Deu. 30: 5. But it is a decisive objection to it, that neither in what precedes nor in what follows is there any reference to Israel as having been carried away. The penetration of foes into the gates of Jerusalem, the plundering of the city, and the casting of lots upon the booty and the prisoners (v. 11), do not involve the carrying away of the whole nation into exile; and the *gâluth* of the sons of Israel and Jerusalem in v. 20 is clearly distinguished from the “house of Jacob” in v. 18. And since we have first of all (vv. 18, 19) an announcement of the conquest of Edom by the house of Jacob, and the capture of the mountains of Esau, of Philistia, etc., by the inhabitants of the south-land, i.e., by Judaeans; and then in v. 20 the possession of the south-land is promised to the *gâluth* (captivity); this *gâluth* can only have been a small fragment of the nation, and therefore the carrying away can only have extended to a number of prisoners of war, whilst the kernel of the nation had remained in the land, i.e., in its own possessions. The objection offered to this, namely, that if we refer the suffix in *mōrâshêhem* (their possessions) to *kōl-haggōyîm* (all nations), Judah would have to take possession of *all* nations, which is quite incredible and even at variance with vv. 19, 20, inasmuch as the only enemies' land mentioned there (v. 19) is the territory of the Edomites and Philistines, whilst the other countries or portions of country mentioned there are not enemies' land at all. For there is no incredibility in the taking of the land of all nations by Judah, except on the assumption that Judah merely denotes the posterity or remnant of the citizens of

the earthly kingdom of Judah. But this is not what Obadiah says. He does not mention Judah, but the house of Jacob, and means thereby not the natural Israel, but the people of God, who are eventually to obtain the dominion of the world. The discrepancy between v. 17b and v. 19 is not greater than that between **שְׂתִיתָם** in v. 16a and **יִשְׂתּוּ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם** in v. 16b, and disappears if we only recognise the fact that Edom and the Philistines are simply mentioned in v. 19 as types of the heathen world in its hostility to god. We therefore regard the application of the expression *mōrāshēhem* to the possessions of the heathen nations as the only correct one, and that all the more because the **וַיִּרְשׁוּ** in v. 19 is very clearly seen to be a more exact explanation of the **וַיִּרְשׁוּ** in v. 17b. In v. 17 Obadiah gives, in a few brief words, the sum and substance of the salvation which awaits the people of the Lord in the future. This salvation is unfolded still further in what follows, and first of all in vv. 18, 19, by a fuller exposition of the thought expressed in v. 17b.

Oba. 1:18.

“And the house of Jacob will be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble. And they will burn among them, and consume them, and there will not be one left to the house of Esau, for Jehovah hath spoken.”

This verse not only resumes the discussion of the retribution, so that it corresponds to v. 15, but it also affirms, as an appendix to v. 17, that Edom is to be utterly destroyed. By the “house of Jacob” Judah is intended, as the co-ordination of the house of Joseph, i.e., of the ten tribes, clearly shows. The assumption that “house of Jacob” signifies all Israel, in connection with which that portion is also especially mentioned, which might be supposed to be excluded (Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and others), is at variance with such passages as Isa. 46: 3, “the house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel,” where the reason assigned for the co-ordination is not applicable. Obadiah uses the name Jacob for Judah because ever since the division of the kingdoms Judah alone has represented the people of God, the ten tribes having fallen away from the kingdom of God for a time. In the future, however, Judah and Israel are to be united again (vid., Hos. 2: 2; Eze. 37:16; Jer. 31:18), and unitedly to attack and overcome their foes (Isa. 11:13, 14). Obadiah distinctly mentions the house of Joseph, i.e., of the ten tribes, in this passage and in this alone, for the purpose of guarding against the idea that the ten tribes are to be shut out from the future salvation. For the figure of the flame of fire which consumes stubble, see Isa. 5:24 and 10:17. For the expression, “for Jehovah hath spoken,” compare Joe. 3: 8.

Oba. 1:19, 20. After the destruction of its foes the nation of God will take possession of their land, and extend its territory to every region under heaven.

V. 19. "And those towards the south will take possession of the mountains of Esau; and those in the lowland, of the Philistines: and they will take possession of the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; and Benjamin (will take possession) of Gilead. V. 20. And the captives of this army of the sons of Israel (will take possession) of what Canaanites there are as far as Zarephath; and the prisoners of Jerusalem that are in Sepharad will take possession of the cities of the south."

In וְיָרְשׁוּ אֹנֶן the expression וְיָרְשׁוּ בֵּית י׳ in v. 17b is more precisely defined, and the house of Jacob, i.e., the kingdom of Judah, is divided into the Negeb, the Shephelah, and Benjamin, to each of which a special district is assigned, of which it will take possession, the countries being mentioned in the place of their inhabitants. The *negebh*, or southern land of Judah (see the comm. on Jos. 15:21), i.e., the inhabitants thereof, will take possession of the mountains of Esau, and therefore extend their territory eastwards; whilst those of the lowland (*sh^ophēlâh*; see at Jos. 15:33), on the Mediterranean, will seize upon the Philistines, that is to say, upon their land, and therefore spread out towards the west. The subject to the second וְיָרְשׁוּ is not mentioned, and must be determined from the context: viz., the men of Judah, with the exception of the inhabitants of the *Negeb* and *Shephelah* already mentioned, that is to say, strictly speaking, those of the mountains of Judah, and original stock of the land of Judah (Jos. 15:48-60). Others would leave *hannegebh* and *hassh^ophēlâh* still in force as subjects; so that the thought expressed would be this: The inhabitants of the south land and of the lowland will also take possession in addition to this of the fields of Ephraim and Samaria. But not only is the parallelism of the clauses, according to which one particular portion of territory is assigned to each part, utterly destroyed, but according to this view the principal part of Judah is entirely passed over without any perceptible reason. *Sâdeh*, fields, used rhetorically for land or territory. Along with Ephraim the land, Samaria the capital is especially mentioned, just as we frequently find Jerusalem along with Judah. In the last clause יָרְשׁוּ (shall take possession of) is to be repeated after *Benjamin*. From the taking of the territories of the kingdom of the ten tribes by Judah and Benjamin, we are not to infer that the territory of the ten tribes was either compared to an enemy's land, or thought of as depopulated; but the thought is simply this: Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes, which formed the kingdom of God in the time of Obadiah will extend their territory to all the four quarters of the globe, and take possession of all Canaan beyond its former boundaries. Hengstenberg has rightly shown that we have here simply an individualizing description of the promise in Gen. 28:14, "thy seed will be as the dust of the ground; and thou breakest out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south," etc.; i.e., that on the ground of this promise Obadiah predicts the future restoration of the kingdom of God, and its extension beyond the borders of Canaan. In this he looks away from the ten tribes, because in his esteem the kingdom of Judah alone constituted the

kingdom or people of God. But he has shown clearly enough in v. 18 that he does not regard them as enemies of Judah, or as separated from the kingdom of God, but as being once more united to Judah as the people of God. And being thus incorporated again into the people of God, he thinks of them as dwelling with them upon the soil of Judah, so that they are included in the population of the four districts of this kingdom. For this reason, no other places of abode are assigned to the Ephraimites and Gileadites. The idea that they are to be transplanted altogether to heathen territory, rests upon a misapprehension of the true facts of the case, and has no support whatever in v. 20. “The sons of Israel” in v. 20 cannot be the ten tribes, as Hengstenberg supposes, because the other portion of the covenant nation mentioned along with them would in that case be described as Judah, not as Jerusalem. “The sons of Israel” answer to the “Jacob” in v. 10, and the “house of Jacob” in v. 17, in connection with which special prominence is given to Jerusalem in v. 11, and to Mount Zion in v. 17; so that it is the Judaeans who are referred to, — not, however, as distinguished from the ten tribes, but as the people of God, with whom the house of Jacob is once more united. In connection with the *gâluth* (captivity) of the sons of Israel, the *gâluth* of Jerusalem is also mentioned, like the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem in Joe. 3: 6, of whom Joel affirms, with a glance at Obadiah, that the Phoenicians and Philistines have sold them to the sons of Javan. These citizens of Judah and Jerusalem, who have been taken prisoners in war, are called by Obadiah the *gâluth* of the sons of Israel and Jerusalem, the people of God being here designated by the name of their tribe-father Jacob or Israel. That we should understand by the “sons of Israel” Judah, as the tribe or kernel of the covenant nation, is required by the actual progress apparent in v.20 in relation to v. 19.

After Obadiah had foretold to the house of Jacob in vv. 17b -19 that it would take possession of the land of their enemies, and spread beyond the borders of Canaan, the question still remained to be answered, What would become of the prisoners, and those who had been carried away captive, according to vv. 11 and 14? This is explained in v. 20. The carrying away of the sons of Israel is restricted to a portion of the nation by the words, “the captivity of *this* host” (*hachêl-hazzeh*); no such carrying away of the nation as such had taken place at that time as that which afterwards occurred at the destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The enemies who had conquered Jerusalem had contented themselves with carrying away those who fell into their hands. The expression *hachêl-hazzeh* points to this host which had been carried away captive. חַל, which the LXX and some of the Rabbins have taken as a verbal noun, ἡ ἀρχή, *initium*, is a defective form of חַיִל, an army (2Ki. 18: 7; Isa. 36: 2), like חַק for חֵיק in Pro. 5:20; 17:23; 21:14, and is not to be identified with חַל, the trench of a fortification. The two clauses in v. 20 have only one verb, which renders

the meaning of **אֲשֶׁר כִּי... צָרְפַּת** ambiguous. The Chaldee (according to our editions, though not according to Kimchi's account) and the Masoretes (by placing *athnach* under *s^cphârâd*), also Rashi and others, take **אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵעָנִים** as in apposition to the subject: those prisoners of the sons of Israel who are among the Canaanites to Zarephath. And the parallelism to **אֲשֶׁר בְּסִפְרָד** appears to favour this; but it is decidedly negated by the absence of **ב** before **בְּנֵעָנִים**. **כִּי אֲשֶׁר** can only mean, "who are Canaanites." But this, when taken as in apposition to **בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, gives no sustainable meaning. For the sons of Israel could only be called Canaanites when they had adopted the nature of Canaan. And any who had done this could look for no share in the salvation of the Lord, and no return to the land of the Lord. We must therefore take **אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵעָנִים** as the object, and supply the verb **יִרְשׁוּ** from the first clauses of the preceding verse. Obadiah first of all expresses the verb twice, then omits it in the next two clauses (v. 19*d* and 20*a*), and inserts it again in the last clause (v. 20*b*). The meaning is, that the army of these sons of Israel, who have been carried away captive, will take possession of what Canaanites there are as far as *Zarephath*, i.e., the Phoenician city of *Sarepta*, the present *Surafend*, between Tyre and Sidon on the sea-coast (see comm. on 1Ki. 17: 9). The capture of the land of the enemy presupposes a return to the fatherland. The exiles of Jerusalem shall take possession of the south country, the inhabitants of which have pushed forward into Edom. **בְּסִפְרָד** (in Sepharad) is difficult, and has never yet been satisfactorily explained, as the word does not occur again. The rendering *Spain*, which we find in the Chaldee and Syriac, is probably only an inference drawn from Joe. 3: 6; and the Jewish rendering *Bosphorus*, which is cited by Jerome, is simply founded upon the similarity in the name. The supposed connection between this name and the *ÇPaRaD*, or *Çparda*, mentioned in the great arrow-headed inscription of Nakshi Rustam in a list of names of tribes between *Katpadhuka* (Cappadocia) and *Yunâ* (Ionia), in which Sylv. de Sacy imagined that he had found our Sepharad, has apparently more to favour it, since the resemblance is very great. But if *Çparda* is the Persian form for *Sardis* (**Σάρδις** or **Σάρδεις**), which was written *Çvarda* in the native (Lydian) tongue, as Lassen maintains, *Sepharad* cannot be the same as *Çparda*, inasmuch as the Hebrews did not receive the name **סִפְרָד** through the Persians; and the native *Çvarda*, apart from the fact that it is merely postulated, would be written **סוּרַד** in Hebrew. To this we may add, that the impossibility of proving that *Sardis* was ever used for Lydia, precludes our rendering *Çparda* by *Sardis*. It is much more natural to connect the name with **Σπάρτη** (*Sparta*) and **Σπαρτιάται** (1 Macc. 14:16, 20, 23; 12: 2, 5, 6), and assume that the Hebrews had heard the name from the Phoenicians in connection with Javan, as the name of a land in the far west. ¹⁵

The cities of the south country stand in antithesis to the Canaanites as far as Zarephath in the north; and these two regions are mentioned synecdochically for all the countries round about Canaan, like “the breaking forth of Israel on the right hand and on the left, that its seed may inherit the Gentiles,” which is promised in Isa. 54: 3. The description is rounded off by the closing reference to the south country, in which it returns to the point whence it started.

With the taking of the lands of the Gentiles, the full display of salvation begins in Zion. V. 21. “*And saviours go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau; and the kingdom will be Jehovah’s.*” עֲלֶה followed by בֵּ does not mean to go up to a place, but to climb to the top of (Deu. 5: 5; Psa. 24: 3; Jer. 4:29; 5:10), or into (Jer. 9:20). Consequently there is no allusion in וְעָלוּ to the return from exile. Going up to the top of Mount Zion simply means, that at the time when Israel captures the possessions of the heathen, Mount Zion will receive and have saviours who will judge Edom. And as the mountains of Esau represent the heathen world, so Mount Zion, as the seat of the Old Testament kingdom of God, is the type of the kingdom of God in its fully developed form. מוֹשִׁיעִים, which is written defectively מוֹשְׁעִים in some of the ancient MSS, and has consequently been rendered incorrectly σεσωσμένοι and ἀνασωζόμενοι by the LXX, Aq., Theod., and the Syriac, signifies *salvatores*, deliverers, saviours. The expression is selected with an allusion to the olden time, in which Jehovah saved His people by judges out of the power of their enemies (Jud. 2:16; 3: 9, 15, etc.). “The מוֹשִׁיעִים are heroes, resembling the judges, who are to defend and deliver Mount Zion and its inhabitants, when they are threatened and oppressed by enemies” (Caspari). The object of their activity, however, is not Israel, but Edom, the representative of all the enemies of Israel. The mountains of Esau are mentioned instead of the people, partly on account of the antithesis to the mountain of Zion, and partly also to express the thought of supremacy not only over the people, but over the land of the heathen also. *Shâphat* is not to be restricted in this case to the judging or settling of disputes, but includes the conduct of the government, the exercise of dominion in its fullest extent, so that the “judging of the mountains of Esau” expresses the dominion of the people of God over the heathen world. Under the saviours, as Hengstenberg has correctly observed, the Saviour *par excellence* is concealed. This is not brought prominently out, nor is it even distinctly affirmed; but it is assumed as self-evident, from the history of the olden time, that the saviours are raised up by Jehovah for His people. The following and concluding thought, that the kingdom will be Jehovah’s, i.e., that Jehovah will show Himself to the whole world as King of the world, and Ruler in His kingdom, and will be acknowledged by the nations of the earth, either voluntarily or by constraint, rests upon this assumption. God was indeed Kings already, not as the Almighty

Ruler of the universe, for this is not referred to here, but as King in Israel, over which His kingdom did extend. But this His royal sway was not acknowledged by the heathen world, and could not be, more especially when He had to deliver Israel up to the power of its enemies, on account of its sins. This acknowledgment, however, He would secure for Himself, by the destruction of the heathen power in the overthrow of Edom, and by the exaltation of His people to dominion over all nations. Through this mighty saving act He will establish His kingdom over the whole earth (cf. Joe. 3:21; Mic. 4: 7; Isa. 24:23). “The coming of this kingdom began with Christ, and looks for its complete fulfilment in Him” (Hengstenberg).

If now, in conclusion, we cast another glance at the fulfilment of our whole prophecy; the fulfilment of that destruction by the nations, with which the Edomites are threatened (vv. 1-9), commenced in the Chaldean period. For although no express historical evidence exists as to the subjugation of the Edomites by Nebuchadnezzar, since Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9, 7) says nothing about the Edomites, who dwelt between the Moabites and Egypt, in the account which he gives of Nebuchadnezzar’s expedition against Egypt, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in which he subdued the Ammonites and Moabites; the devastation of Edom by the Chaldeans may unquestionably be inferred from Jer. 49: 7ff. and Eze. 35, when compared with Jer. 25: 9, 21, and Mal. 1: 3. In Jer. 25:21 the Edomites are mentioned among the nations round about Judah, whom the Lord would deliver up into the hand of His servant Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25: 9), and to whom Jeremiah was to present the cup of the wine of wrath from the hand of Jehovah; and they are placed between the Philistines and the Moabites. And according to Mal. 1: 3, Jehovah made the mountains of Esau into a wilderness; and this can only refer to the desolation of the land of Edom by the Chaldeans (see at Mal. 1: 3). It is true, that at that time the Edomites could still think of rebuilding their ruins; but the threat of Malachi, “If they build, I shall pull down, saith the Lord,” was subsequently fulfilled, although no accounts have been handed down as to the fate of Edom in the time of Alexander the Great and his successors. The destruction of the Edomites as a nation was commenced by the Maccabees. After Judas Maccabaeus had defeated them several times (1 Macc. 5: 3 and 65; Jos. *Ant.* xii. 18, 1), Joh. Hyrcanus subdued them entirely about 129 B.C., and compelled them to submit to circumcision, and observe the Mosaic law (Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 9, 1), whilst Alexander Jannaeus also subjugated the last of the Edomites (xiii. 15, 4). And the loss of their national independence, which they thereby sustained, was followed by utter destruction at the hands of the Romans. To punish them for the cruelties which they had practised in Jerusalem in connection with the Zelots, immediately before the siege of that city by the Romans (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, iv. 5, 1, 2), Simon the Gerasene devastated their land in a fearful

manner (*Wars of the Jews*, iv. 9, 7); whilst the Idumaeans in Jerusalem, who took the side of Simon (v. 6, 1), were slain by the Romans along with the Jews. The few Edomites who still remained were lost among the Arabs; so that the Edomitish people was “cut off for ever” (v. 10) by the Romans, and its very name disappeared from the earth. Passing on to the rest of the prophecy, Edom filled up the measure of its sins against its brother nation Israel, against which Obadiah warns it in vv. 12-14, at the taking and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (vid., Eze. 35: 5, 10; Psa. 137: 7; Lam. 4:22). The fulfilment of the threat in v. 18 we cannot find, however, in the subjugation of the Edomites by the Maccabeans, and the devastating expedition of Simon the Gerasene, as Caspari and others do, although it is apparently favoured by the statement in Eze. 25:14, that Jehovah would fulfil His vengeance upon Edom by the hand of His people Israel. For even if this prophecy of Ezekiel may have been fulfilled in the events just mentioned, we are precluded from understanding Oba. 1:18, and the parallel passages, Amo. 9:11, 12, and Num. 24:18, as referring to the same events, by the fact that the destruction of Edom, and the capture of Seir by Israel, are to proceed, according to Num. 24:18, from the Ruler to arise out of Jacob (the Messiah), and that they were to take place, according to Amo. 9:11, 12, in connection with the raising up of the fallen hut of David, and according to Obadiah, in the day of Jehovah, along with and after the judgment upon all nations. Consequently the fulfilment of vv. 17-21 can only belong to the Messianic times, and that in such a way that it commenced with the founding of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, advances with its extension among all nations, and will terminate in a complete fulfilment at the second coming of our Lord.

FOOTNOTES

- ^{ft1} Compare מַחְמָס בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה in Oba. 1:10 with יַעֲקֹב in Joe. 3:19; וְאֵל-אֲמֵי יְדֹו גְזָרֵל in Oba. 1:11 with וְאֵל יְרוּשָׁלַם יְדֹו גְזָרֵל in Joe. 3: 3; בִּי-קְרוֹב יוֹם-יְהוָה אֵל כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם in Oba. 1:15 and בְּרֵאשֶׁתָּהּ בִּי קְרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה בַּעֲמַק הַחַרְוִיץ (Joe. 3:14, *ibid.* with גְּמֵלָה יָשׁוּב compare 1:15; 2: 1, and 3:12, (לְשֹׁפֵט אֶת-כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם, and בְּרֵאשֶׁתְּכֶם and וְהָיָה קִדְשׁ בְּהַר צִיּוֹן תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Oba. 1:17 with כִּי בְהַר-צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Joe. 2:32, and וְהָיָה יְרוּשָׁלַם קִדְשׁ in Joe. 3:17; and lastly, כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר in Oba. 1:18 and Joe. 3: 8.
- ^{ft2} The renderings adopted on the authority of the ancient versions, such as clefts of the rock, *scissurae*, jagged rocks, fissures (*ὄπαι*, LXX), caves, which are derived either from the supposed connection between חָגָה and חָקָה, and the Arabic *chij*, *fidit*, *laceravit*, or from the Arabic *wajah*, *antrum* (with the letters transposed), have far less to sustain them. For the meanings assigned to these Arabic words are not the primary meanings, but derivative ones. The former signifies literally *propulit*, the latter *confugit*, iv. *effecit ut ad rem confugeret*; and Arabic *mawjahun* means *refugium*, *asylum*.
- ^{ft3} Jerome observes on v. 6: “And indeed...throughout the whole of the southern region of the Idumaeans, from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Hala (for this is a possession of Esau), there are small dwellings in caves; and on account of the great heat of the sun, since it is a southern province, subterranean huts are used.”
- ^{ft4} Jeremiah (Jer. 49: 9) has greatly altered the words of Obadiah, dropping the comparison of the enemy to thieves and grape-gatherers, and representing the enemy as being themselves grape-gatherers who leave no gleaning, and thieves who waste till they have enough; and thereby considerably weakening the poetical picture.
- ^{ft5} The appellative rendering ἐν διασπορῇ (Hendewerk and Maurer) is certainly to be rejected; and Ewald’s conjecture, סְפָרָם, “a place three hours’ journey from Acco,” in support of which he refers to Niebuhr, *R.* iii. p. 269, is a very thoughtless one. For Niebuhr there mentions the village of *Serfati* as the abode of the prophet Elijah, and refers to Maundrell, who calls the village *Sarphan*, *Serephat*, and *Serepta*, in which every thoughtful reader must recognise the biblical Zarephath, and the present village of *Surafend*.