**Lesson 17**

**7-8 February 2022**

**Genesis 37-41**

***Another Perspective*: Obadiah**

**Who Was He? –** The name “Obadiah” means “one who serves Yahweh”. It is not certain whether this was actually the prophet’s name or the way he described himself to others. For example, several years ago Tom and I met a very earnest young Mennonite woman who chose “slave-to-righteousness@...” as her email address.

**Date of His Ministry –** When I filled out the timeline chart, I realized that I had put Obadiah’s number (8) in the wrong spot above the line. His circle should be between the lightning bolts for 586 BC and 553 BC. He had witnessed the fall of Jerusalem and saw that instead of coming to the aid of their neighbors and brothers, the Edomites “gloated over [Judah’s] demise, looted valuables, and sold captives as slaves.”1

**His Message –** The Lord speaks through Obadiah to warn the Edomites that they will be punished for their violent misdeeds. Verse 15b says, “As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.” This happened in 553 BC when Babylonia attacked Edom and destroyed it.

**Near and Far Fulfillments of God’s Word –** The judgment that Obadiah predicted happened just a few years after he gave his warning to the Edomites. But the Lord also tells us that “those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau” and that “saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau”, i.e. that the descendants of the Israelites will one day take possession of Mount Esau and rule it. As we now know, the Lord Jesus Christ, David’s greatest descendant, will rule from Mount Zion when He returns to earth, and “the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” indeed.

**Marking Your Map –** Since Obadiah’s message was for the Edomites, draw a “talking head” symbol somewhere in the yellow “Kingdom of Edom” region and label it with his name.

1 *Women’s Study Bible,* “Profile of Obadiah”, page 1391

***Bible Study Fellowship’s Perspective:*** The following comments were taken from Lesson 23 of the BSF course on Genesis.

**Good from Evil –** Favoritism in [Jacob’s] family continued to create disaster. Joseph’s brothers cruelly sold him into slavery. Judah committed sexual immorality with his daughter-in-law Tamar. The people were sinful, the dysfunction evident and the pain real. How could anything good emerge from something so bad? God delights to take broken things and broken people and redeem them for His glory through His power alone. Isaiah 61:3 reflects God delight “to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor.” **God can redeem what sin destroys.** What a God! page 1

**Regret Remains Even If Suppressed –** God inspired Moses to record this event [throwing Joseph into a cistern to die] without mentioning Joseph’s response. **We know the brothers tried without success to suppress their memories of the mournful cries of their 17-year-old brother.** Though ignored, the emotional trauma of this scene was not forgotten. Later the brothers admitted, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that’s why this distress has come on us.” page 2

**God’s Purpose** – **The truth not yet revealed in this horrific account is that God would work through this unimaginable suffering to do unbelievable good**…Joseph later said, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” God is never hindered by the worst mankind offers; He will allow the hard thing to accomplish the better thing. The invisible God works through visible circumstances. page 3