

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17, Session 19, Obadiah Continued, Introduction to Joel

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17, Session 19, Obadiah Continued, Introduction to Joel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Vannoy's lecture explores the Old Testament books of Obadiah and Joel. For Obadiah, the lecture outlines the book's content, focusing on the pronouncement of judgment on Edom and the restoration of Israel. **Vannoy discusses the reasons for Edom's judgment, and various interpretations of Obadiah 17-21, including whether its prophecies have already been fulfilled or are yet to come.** Shifting to Joel, Vannoy examines the complexities surrounding the book's dating, weighing arguments for both post-exilic and pre-exilic periods. **The lecture then investigates the book's potential apocalyptic nature, citing dualism, pessimism, determinism, and ethical passivity.**

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17,
Session 19 – Double click icon to play in Windows media
player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the
audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets →
Foundations).**



**Vannoy_FoundProp
hecy_Session19.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17, Session 19, Obadiah Continued, Introduction to Joel

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Robert Vannoy's lecture on Obadiah and Joel:

Briefing Document: Obadiah and Joel (Robert Vannoy)

I. Obadiah

A. Overview

- Obadiah is a short book (one chapter, 21 verses) packed with significant prophetic themes. Vannoy highlights that despite its size, it's often overlooked but deserves close study.
- The book neatly summarizes major prophetic themes: judgment against Israel's enemies (specifically Edom), the Day of the Lord, *lex talionis* (retribution), Zion theology, Israel's possession of the land, and Yahweh's kingship.
- Vannoy notes that Obadiah provides a remarkable view into the future, encompassing judgment on Edom, potential destructions of Jerusalem (with a warning for the future), the scattering of Israel, the return from exile during Maccabean times, and potentially a future Messianic kingdom.

B. Structure and Content

Vannoy divides Obadiah into the following sections:

1. Judgment on Edom (verses 1-9):

- Edom, the brother nation to Israel (descended from Esau), will be made small and despised. "See I will make you small among the nations. You will be utterly despised" (NIV).
- Edom's pride and reliance on its secure dwellings (possibly Petra/Sela) will not save it.
- Vannoy interprets the prediction of Edom's downfall as historically fulfilled by the Nabatean Arabs driving them out of their territory by the time of Malachi (430 BC). Malachi 1:3-5 is cited: "Esau I have hated and have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

- The Edomites eventually settled in southern Judah (Idumea), were forcibly Judaized, and later disappeared as a distinct people. Herod the Great was of Idumean stock.

1. Reason for Judgment and/or Warning for the Future? (verses 10-14):

- This section focuses on Edom's actions during the plundering of Jerusalem: "Because of violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, you will be destroyed forever. On the day you stood aloof, while strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gates, and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them."
- The central interpretive question is whether verses 12-14 are a continuation of the reason for judgment (past) or a warning for the future. This hinges on the interpretation of the *waw* 'al plus jussive verb forms.
- Vannoy leans toward viewing 12-14 as a warning for the future, suggesting Edom could have repented. He argues that Jeremiah 18 and Amos 5 provide examples of warnings given alongside pronouncements of judgment.
- How this section is interpreted also impacts dating: seeing it all as past might suggest a 586 BC dating, while seeing 12-14 as future allows for an earlier date (time of Jehoram).

1. Judgment on All Nations (verses 15-16):

- The scope expands from Edom to all ungodly nations: "The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done it will be done to you, your deeds will return upon your own head."
- Vannoy connects this to the theme of the Day of the Lord, which he defines as a time when God will judge his enemies and bless his people. The "Day of the Lord" is not necessarily one specific day, but can refer to different times of God's judging activity.
- The "drinking" in verse 16 is interpreted in two senses: Edom celebrating the plundering of Jerusalem, and all nations "drinking the cup of God's wrath" (tasting judgment).

1. **Restoration and Blessing for Israel (verses 17-21):**

- A contrasting message of deliverance and restoration for Israel: "But on Mount Zion will be deliverance, it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess his inheritance."
- This section is subject to various interpretations:
- **Spiritualization (Church):** The verses describe the extension of God's kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel (Laetsch). Geographical details are allegorized to represent the spread of the Church (e.g., Philistia = Acts 8:40).
- **Return of Israel to Possession:** Predicting the return of Israel to the land and judgment on Edom. Some (Aalders, Payne) believe this was largely fulfilled in the inter-testamental period (Maccabean era), while others see it as yet to be fulfilled.
- **Future Fulfillment:** Gaebelin sees a final re-apportionment of the land in the future (millennium), with a human deliverer.
- Vannoy is inclined towards the more literal interpretation of fulfillment in the inter-testamental period, particularly with the activities of the Maccabees.

II. Joel

A. Author and Date

- Vannoy moves onto discussion of the Book of Joel, beginning with consideration of the author and date of composition.
- The book itself identifies the author as "Joel son of Pethuel." Beyond this there is no information available regarding the author's background.
- Scholarly consensus regarding the date of composition is widely varied, with suggestions ranging from as early as the 9th century BC to the post-exilic period.

B. Arguments for a Late Date (Post-Exilic)

- **References to the Dispersion:** Some scholars argue that statements in the book, such as Joel 3:2b referring to the scattering of Israel among the nations, could only have been written after the Babylonian exile (586 BC) or even the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- **Arguments from Silence:** The prophecy concerns only Judah and Jerusalem, with no mention of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

- There is no mention of a king in the book.
- **Apocalyptic Sections:** Some scholars point to the presence of so-called apocalyptic sections in Joel as evidence for a late date.

C. Counterarguments

- **Pre-exilic Date:** The book is usually placed in the time of Joash (around 835 BC).
- The nations mentioned as enemies (Phoenicians, Philistines, Egyptians, Edomites) fit a pre-exilic time better, as Assyria and Babylon are not mentioned.
- The position of the book in the order of the Minor Prophets is cited: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are post-exilic, so if Joel were also post-exilic, why isn't it grouped with them?

III. Key Themes and Interpretive Challenges

- **The Day of the Lord:** A major theme in both Obadiah and Joel, requiring careful contextual interpretation to avoid assuming it always refers to the eschatological end times.
- **Literal vs. Spiritual Interpretation:** The tension between literal and spiritual interpretations of prophecies, especially concerning the restoration of Israel.
- **Dating of Prophetic Books:** How one interprets specific passages (e.g., Obadiah 10-14, Joel 3) can significantly impact the proposed date of the book.
- **Apocalyptic Literature:** Distinguishing between biblical and later non-biblical apocalyptic literature is crucial when evaluating arguments for a late date based on apocalyptic features.

This briefing provides a foundational understanding of the key issues and interpretations surrounding the books of Obadiah and Joel, based on the provided lecture excerpts.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17, Session 19, Obadiah Continued, Introduction to Joel

Obadiah and Joel: A Comprehensive Study Guide

I. Study Guide

A. Obadiah

1. Outline and Content:

- **Judgment on Edom (vv. 1-9):** Focus on Edom's pride and vulnerability despite their seemingly secure location. Consider the significance of Petra/Sela.
- **Reason for Judgment (vv. 10-11):** Understand Edom's role in the plundering of Jerusalem.
- **Warning for the Future? (vv. 12-14):** Analyze the jussive verbs and the debate over whether these verses are a continuation of the reason for judgment or a warning. Understand the different translations and their implications.
- **Judgment on All Nations (vv. 15-16):** Trace the shift from Edom to a broader judgment on the ungodly and the introduction of the "Day of the Lord."
- **Restoration and Blessing for Israel (vv. 17-21):** Examine the different interpretations of these verses: spiritualization, predicting Israel's return to the land (already fulfilled or yet to be).

1. Key Themes:

- **Brotherly Betrayal:** Edom's relationship to Israel and the consequences of violating that bond.
- **Pride vs. Humility:** Edom's pride as a source of their downfall.
- **Divine Justice:** The principle of "as you have done, it will be done to you" (lex talionis).
- **The Day of the Lord:** Understand the different uses of the term, it's not always referring to end times.
- **Restoration:** The promise of restoration for Israel in contrast to judgment on Edom and other nations.

1. Interpretive Challenges:

- **Dating the Book:** Understand the arguments for both early and late dates.
- **Understanding Obadiah 12-14:** Is it a continuation of the reason for judgment, or a warning for the future?
- **Interpreting Obadiah 17-21:** Literal vs. spiritual interpretations, and the timing of fulfillment.

B. Joel

1. Author and Date:

- **Authorship:** Understand that the author is Joel, son of Pethuel.
- **Dating the Book:** Explore the different arguments for pre-exilic (around 835 B.C.) and post-exilic dates. Be able to evaluate the strength of each argument.

1. Arguments for a Late Date:

- **References in Chapter 3:** Focus on statements that could only have been written after the Babylonian exile of 586 B.C.
- **Arguments from Silence:** Note the lack of mention of the king and the potential significance.
- **The So-Called Apocalyptic Sections:** Know what "apocalyptic" means and be familiar with the genre of Jewish literature. Understand that a distinction must be made between biblical and non-biblical apocalyptic literature.

1. Arguments for a Pre-Exilic Date:

- **The Nations Mentioned:** Know what countries were mentioned and why that would fit pre-exilic times better than post-exilic times.
- **Lack of Mention of Assyria and Babylon:** Understand that the enemy nations mentioned in chapter 3 are early (Phoenicians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Edomites).
- **The Position of the Book:** Know that Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi were post-exilic, and consider the arguments on why this wouldn't be put there if Joel was post-exilic.

1. Key Themes:

- **Locust Plague and Drought:** The immediate crisis facing Judah.
 - **Repentance and Turning to God:** The call to national repentance in the face of judgment.
 - **The Day of the Lord:** As a day of judgment and salvation.
 - **The Outpouring of the Spirit:** The promise of spiritual renewal.
 - **Judgment on the Nations:** God's judgment on the enemies of Israel.
 - **Restoration of Israel:** The promise of physical and spiritual restoration for Israel.
1. **Key Passages:**
 - **Joel 1-2:** The description of the locust plague and drought, and the call to repentance.
 - **Joel 2:28-32:** The prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit.
 - **Joel 3:** Judgment on the nations and the restoration of Israel.

II. Quiz

1. What is the primary reason for the judgment pronounced on Edom in Obadiah?
2. What are the two possible ways to interpret Obadiah 12-14, and how does this impact the dating of the book?
3. Briefly explain what the "Day of the Lord" means and why Amos rebukes those who long for it.
4. What are the three basic ways Obadiah 17-21 have been interpreted?
5. What is the TaNaK?
6. What are two reasons often cited for dating Joel as post-exilic?
7. What is apocalyptic literature?
8. How does biblical apocalyptic literature differ from non-biblical apocalyptic literature?
9. What are the enemy nations mentioned in Joel chapter 3?
10. What is the central message of Joel in response to the devastation described in the first two chapters?

III. Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary reason for the judgment on Edom is their violence against their brother Jacob and their indifference or participation in the plundering of Jerusalem. They stood aloof and acted like enemies when Jerusalem was vulnerable.
2. Obadiah 12-14 can either be interpreted as a continuation of the reason for judgment, referring to past actions during the plundering of Jerusalem, or as a warning for the future, urging Edom not to repeat such actions. The interpretation impacts dating because taking it as a warning for the future suggests an earlier date with a later event in view.
3. The "Day of the Lord" is a time when the Lord will bring judgment on his enemies and blessing to his people. Amos rebukes those who long for it because they mistakenly believe it will only bring blessing to Israel, while Amos warns that it will also bring judgment on Israel for their sins.
4. The three basic ways to interpret Obadiah 17-21 are: spiritualization as the expansion of God's kingdom through the Church, predicting the return of Israel to her land (already fulfilled), or predicting the return of Israel to her land (yet to be fulfilled).
5. The TaNaK is the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Old Testament, and is an acronym derived from the names of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).
6. Two reasons often cited for dating Joel as post-exilic are: the references in chapter 3 that seem to presuppose the Babylonian exile has already occurred, and the lack of a mention of the king.
7. Apocalyptic literature is a genre of Jewish literature, which claims to be giving revelation, that flourished from about 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. It features vivid symbolism, visions, and eschatological themes, often focused on future events and divine judgment.
8. Biblical apocalyptic literature places the final redemption of the elect in this world, is continuous with the present world sequences, and is different because suffering, violence and evil, would be absent from the scene, whereas non-biblical apocalyptic literature involves ideas of dualism, pessimism, determinism, and resignation.
9. The enemy nations mentioned in Joel chapter 3 are the Phoenicians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Edomites.

10. The central message of Joel in response to the devastation is a call to national repentance and a turning back to God with fasting, weeping, and mourning. It also promises a future restoration and outpouring of God's spirit if the people repent.

IV. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Edom in the book of Obadiah, exploring their historical relationship with Israel and how their actions led to divine judgment. Analyze the various interpretations of Obadiah 17-21 and argue for the most convincing understanding of these verses.
2. Explain the debate surrounding the dating of the book of Joel, presenting the arguments for both pre-exilic and post-exilic dates. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each argument and offer your conclusion on the most likely dating.
3. Describe the concept of the "Day of the Lord" as it appears in Obadiah and Joel. How is this concept used by the prophets, and what does it reveal about God's character and his relationship with his people?
4. Analyze the differences between biblical and non-biblical apocalyptic literature. How does this distinction impact our understanding of the prophetic books of the Old Testament?
5. Compare and contrast the messages of Obadiah and Joel, highlighting their common themes, unique perspectives, and relevance for contemporary readers.

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Edom:** A nation descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (Israel). They were often hostile towards Israel.
- **Petra/Sela:** An ancient city located in present-day Jordan, known for its rock-cut architecture. It was inhabited by the Edomites and later by the Nabataeans.
- **Prophetic Perfect:** A verbal form in Hebrew that describes a future event as if it has already happened, emphasizing the certainty of its fulfillment.
- **Jussive:** A verbal mood in Hebrew used to express commands, wishes, or permissions, often translated as "let," "do not," or "may."

- **Lex Talionis:** The principle of retaliation or retribution, often expressed as "an eye for an eye."
- **Day of the Lord:** A time in which the Lord will bring judgment on his enemies and blessing to his people.
- **Eschatology:** The study of end times or last things.
- **Millennium:** A period of one thousand years, often associated with the future reign of Christ on earth.
- **Amillennialism:** A theological view that rejects a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, interpreting the millennium as a symbolic representation of Christ's current reign in heaven and the church.
- **Premillennialism:** A theological view that holds that Christ will return before a literal thousand-year reign on earth.
- **Idumea:** A region in southern Judah where the Edomites settled after being driven out of their original territory.
- **Nabateans:** An ancient Arab people who inhabited northern Arabia and later conquered Edom, establishing their own kingdom in Petra.
- **Apocalyptic Literature:** A genre of Jewish literature that flourished from about 200 B.C. to 100 A.D., featuring vivid symbolism, visions, and eschatological themes.
- **Tanak:** The Hebrew Bible, consisting of the Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).
- **Diaspora:** The dispersion of the Jewish people beyond their ancestral homeland.
- **Typology:** The study of how events, people, or institutions in the Old Testament foreshadow or prefigure events, people, or institutions in the New Testament.
- **Judah:** The Southern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Ephraim:** The Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Joash:** A king of Judah in the 9th century B.C.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 17, Session 19, Obadiah Continued, Introduction to Joel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Obadiah and Joel

1. What is the main theme of the Book of Obadiah?

Obadiah primarily focuses on God's judgment against Edom for their violence and mistreatment of their "brother" nation, Israel, particularly during a time of Jerusalem's plundering. The book transitions to a broader judgment against all ungodly nations and concludes with the promise of restoration and blessing for Israel. It emphasizes themes like divine justice, the consequences of pride, and the ultimate sovereignty of God.

2. Why is Edom singled out for judgment in Obadiah?

Edom, descendants of Esau, is condemned because they stood aloof and even rejoiced during Jerusalem's distress, failing to assist their relatives in the line of Jacob, and at times, actively participating in the plundering. This violated the brotherly bond and demonstrated a lack of compassion, incurring God's wrath.

3. What is the significance of "the Day of the Lord" as mentioned in Obadiah?

The Day of the Lord signifies a time when God intervenes in history to judge His enemies and bless His people. It's not necessarily a single, specific day but rather refers to various instances of God's judging and punishing activity. In Obadiah, it expands from the judgment of Edom to include a judgment on all ungodly nations. The day of the Lord was also expected to be a day of blessing on Israel, but prophets such as Amos warned that it would also be a day of judgment on Israel's sins as well.

4. How should Obadiah 17-21, which speaks of restoration and blessing for Israel, be interpreted?

There are several ways to interpret these verses:

- **Spiritualization:** Some view it as a symbolic depiction of the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the Church.
- **Past Fulfillment:** Some interpret it as primarily fulfilled in the inter-testamental period, particularly during the Maccabean era, with the Maccabees being human deliverers.

- **Future Fulfillment:** Others see it as a prophecy yet to be fully realized, potentially during the millennium, involving a literal restoration of Israel to the land.

5. What are the major arguments for dating the Book of Joel before the Babylonian exile?

Key arguments include:

- The nations mentioned as enemies of Judah and Jerusalem (Phoenicia, Philistia, Egypt and Edom) are those who were enemies before the Assyrian and Babylonian empires came to dominate the region.
- There is no mention of Assyria or Babylon, which would be expected if the book was written after the exile.

6. What are the major arguments for dating the Book of Joel after the Babylonian exile?

Some argue for a later date because:

- Chapter 3 seems to assume that 586 BC has already occurred because of the statements that Judah and Jerusalem have been sent far from their homeland.
- The focus is primarily on Judah and Jerusalem, suggesting a time when the northern kingdom of Israel no longer existed as an independent entity.
- The lack of mention of a king and the references to elders.

7. What is "apocalyptic" literature and how does it relate to the Book of Joel?

"Apocalyptic" refers to literature that claims to be revelatory and discloses hidden truths, often about the end times. Some see elements of apocalyptic literature in Joel, such as the descriptions of cosmic disturbances and divine judgment. However, it's important to distinguish between biblical and non-biblical apocalyptic literature. Non-biblical apocalyptic literature flourished from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. and has features such as a sharp dualism, ethical exhortation and a loss of a sense of sinfulness that differentiate it from literature such as Joel.

8. What is the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context when interpreting prophetic books like Obadiah and Joel?

Understanding the historical and cultural setting is vital because it sheds light on the specific issues, audiences, and events the prophets addressed. It helps to avoid anachronistic interpretations and to grasp the original meaning of the prophecies. This allows for a more accurate understanding of the message and its application to contemporary contexts.