

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 20, Obadiah, Part 2, Habakkuk Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 20, Obadiah, Part 2, Habakkuk, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's session 20 lecture focuses on the Old Testament books of Obadiah and Habakkuk. The lecture begins with a prayer asking for clarity and discernment in understanding God's word and theological concepts. Wilson then discusses Obadiah, emphasizing Edom's pride and lack of brotherliness towards Judah, and how God will bring judgment upon all nations. Transitioning to Habakkuk, he introduces the concept of theodicy—exploring God's justice in a world filled with injustice and suffering. Wilson also encourages questioning God, viewing it as a valid approach to biblical understanding, and he highlights the importance of continuous engagement with scripture across generations. He concludes by stating the theodicy in Habakkuk wrestles with a mighty problem of divine justice in a mixed-up world.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 20 – 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 → Prophetic Literature).



**Wilson_Prophets_S
ession20.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 20, Obadiah, Part 2, Habakkuk

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson_Prophets_EN_Session20.pdf":

Briefing Document: Prophets - Obadiah and Habakkuk

Introduction:

Dr. Wilson's lecture focuses on two Old Testament prophetic books: Obadiah and Habakkuk. He frames the discussion by connecting the timeless themes of these ancient texts with contemporary issues of suffering, justice, and faith. He also emphasizes the importance of questioning and engaging with scripture, drawing on Jewish traditions of interpretation.

Key Themes and Ideas from Obadiah:

- **Pride and Its Downfall:** The book of Obadiah criticizes the pride and arrogance of Edom, who felt secure in their location among the cliffs of Sela (Petra). Dr. Wilson notes, "The poetry here suggests a people who are very, very secure. No one is going to bring us down. God says I will bring you down." The lecture underscores that no nation is above God's judgment. "There's only one person in scripture who gets the last word, and it's not Edom." This theme of pride leading to a downfall is a major one.
- **Complete Destruction:** Edom's destruction is depicted as complete and total. "If people are going to steal grapes, they'll only steal as much as they can carry and leave some. But you're like people coming in to pick grapes and clean every last grape out of there. So, it's a complete sweep." The destruction is thorough, highlighting the severity of God's judgment.
- **The Sin of Indifference:** A major theme of Obadiah is the condemnation of Edom's indifference to the suffering of their "brother," Jacob (Israel). "The violence done to your brother Jacob is the reason you are going to be cut off. Because you stood aloof." This parallels the concept of bystanders during the Holocaust, who are also condemned for their inaction. Dr. Wilson quotes Abraham Joshua Heschel saying, "Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself."

- **Family and Brotherliness:** The lecture highlights the importance of family within Jewish tradition and the idea that "When one member of the community suffers, we all suffer." Edom's lack of brotherly concern is a central issue.
- **The Role of the Bystander:** The lecture draws a parallel between Edom's inaction during Judah's suffering and the role of bystanders during atrocities like the Holocaust. The idea of "standing aloof" while others suffer is presented as a major sin.
- **God's Universal Judgment:** While Obadiah initially focuses on Edom, the scope widens to encompass judgment upon all nations. "What was true specifically of the Edomites, so now is going to be true of all nations." This introduces the theme of God's judgment upon all people for their actions, a theme that will be continued in other prophets, and notably by Jesus. "For the day of the Lord is upon all nations."
- **Measure for Measure:** This concept of retribution is emphasized – "as you have done, it will be done to you." Dr. Wilson connects this with modern concepts of justice. "Your deeds will return on your own head." He then quotes C.S. Lewis, stating that at the end of time, we are judged by our decisions, which show whether we have said "my will be done or your will be done". "Decision determines destiny."
- **The Restoration of Israel:** While judgment is a theme, so is the promise of restoration. Israel is compared to a "torch" that will consume the "stubble" of Esau. There will be no survivors from the line of Esau, but there will be survivors in Israel. "The house of Jacob will be fire and the house of Joseph a flame...there will be survivors in the land of Israel."
- **"Going Up" to Zion:** The recurring motif of "going up" (Hebrew: *Allah*) to Zion represents a return and restoration. This is a common theme in scripture. "The last word in the Bible is go up." The last verse states the remnant will go up to Mount Zion, and that all these other nations with whom Israel has hassled throughout her history will eventually be ruled by the Lord.
- **God's Kingdom is Universal:** The lecture discusses the expansive nature of God's kingdom. "His kingdom is a universal kingdom. He will reign and rule from sea to sea." This connects to prophetic passages like Revelation 11:15.

Key Themes and Ideas from Habakkuk:

- **Theodicy:** The primary theme of Habakkuk is theodicy - the attempt to reconcile the existence of evil and suffering with a just and good God. This is a response to the question, "How can we believe in that good and just and loving and compassionate God when all of life seems to be falling apart?" This is introduced as the main theme of the book, with Habakkuk asking "Why should we get kicked if we're God's own people? Why not the other guy?"
- **Wrestling with God:** Habakkuk is portrayed as "the embracer" or "the clasper," one who wrestles with God and the problem of evil in the world. He's asking questions and God is giving answers, although not always the answers he was looking for. "And in this little book there is this wrestling with a mighty problem. The problem for Habakkuk is divine justice in a mixed up world."
- **God Respects Honest Questions:** The lecture emphasizes that God is not threatened by human questions and that the Jewish tradition embraces a "dialogical engagement with the text." Dr. Wilson states, "We learn from our Jewish friends that God respects honest questions." He adds that the Hebrew approach to truth is not systematically laid out, but is a dialogical engagement with the text.
- **The Bible as a Continuing Conversation:** The lecture highlights the importance of engaging with the Bible as a continuing dialogue across generations, "exploring anew, never accepting Scripture as an artifact or as an heirloom, but owning it once again for each new generation, as each new generation asks a new set of questions." The rabbis viewed reading the Bible as peeling an onion, not simply finding one answer.

Additional Points:

- **Relevance of Old Testament Prophets:** The prophets are presented as not just figures from the past, but as voices that speak to contemporary challenges. Their calls for justice and righteousness are timeless.
- **The Nature of Prophecy:** The prophets combined judgment and deliverance, and spoke out on moral issues. "When the prophets speak, they take us to the slums, and they rave as if the whole world were a slum." They meddled in society with powerful, stinging language.

- **God's Choice of Israel:** The lecture touches upon God's choice of Israel, a flawed people, as a way to confound the nations. Dr. Wilson notes, "Israel had zero claim to fame. And yet God used them."
- **The Church's Understanding of Israel:** Dr. Wilson acknowledges that the Church has historically struggled to understand God's relationship with the Jewish people, and many denominations have recently repented.

Conclusion:

Dr. Wilson's lecture provides a rich exploration of the books of Obadiah and Habakkuk, highlighting timeless themes of pride, justice, indifference, faith, and God's sovereignty. It connects these ancient texts with contemporary realities and underscores the importance of honest questioning, engaging with Scripture, and the universal scope of God's judgment and redemptive plan.

4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 20, Obadiah, Part 2, Habakkuk

The Prophets: Obadiah and Habakkuk Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What is the main theme of the book of Obadiah regarding Edom's actions?
2. What is the significance of the location of Edom and its city Sela, later known as Petra?
3. How did the Edomites end up living in the area south of Judah, known as Idumea?
4. How does Obadiah move from the specific judgment of Edom to a more universal theme of judgment?
5. What does the text mean by the phrase "the day of the Lord," and how is it connected to the themes of judgment?
6. What does Obadiah say about God's care for a "holy remnant" in comparison to the fate of Edom?
7. What are the three ways that Dr. Wilson summarizes the themes of the book of Obadiah?
8. What is the "theodicy" and how does this connect to the book of Habakkuk?
9. What is the significance of the name "Habakkuk," and what does it suggest about the prophet's relationship with God?
10. How does the Jewish approach to biblical study differ from a systematic approach, according to Dr. Wilson?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The main theme of Obadiah regarding Edom is their prideful actions and lack of brotherliness towards Judah, including their gloating and indifference during Judah's downfall. The book emphasizes their violence, gloating, and lack of assistance, which resulted in their complete destruction.

2. The location of Edom in the cliffs east of the Arabah and the city Sela (Petra) contributed to their sense of security and impregnability. It is a region known for its rock formations, and the city was a symbol of their pride.
3. The Edomites moved into the area south of Judah, known as Idumea, after being displaced by the Nabateans in the 6th or 5th century BC. They were later forcibly converted to Judaism under John Hyrcanus.
4. Obadiah transitions from the specific judgment of Edom to a universal theme by stating that all nations will be judged. The book of Obadiah also teaches that nations will be judged according to the measure with which they have treated others.
5. "The day of the Lord" in Obadiah refers to a time of divine judgment upon all nations for their actions. This judgment will be based on their deeds, reflecting a measure-for-measure principle of retribution.
6. Obadiah states that God is concerned with preserving a holy remnant from the house of Jacob (Israel). However, in contrast, he said that the house of Esau would have no survivors.
7. The three themes summarized from Obadiah are the pride of Edom, the lack of brotherliness, and the way that God rebukes those who find sadistic joy in others' misfortune.
8. The "theodicy" is the study of the goodness, justice, and presence of God in a mixed-up world. This directly relates to Habakkuk, as the prophet grapples with questions of divine justice, specifically, why God would allow the wicked to prosper.
9. The name "Habakkuk" may come from a root meaning "to clasp" or "embrace." This suggests a relationship with God characterized by wrestling, questioning, and engaging with difficult questions of faith.
10. The Jewish approach to biblical study is dialogical, involving commentary and diverse interpretations, unlike the systematic approach which seeks to provide a systematic, schematic approach to the truth. The Jewish tradition views scripture as something to peel back to find layers of meaning.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Write a well-organized essay in response to each of the following questions.

1. Analyze the symbolic importance of Edom's geographic location and its implications for their worldview, as presented in Obadiah. How does this contribute to the message of the book?
2. Compare and contrast the themes of judgment and redemption in the book of Obadiah. How does this reflect a broader pattern in the prophetic tradition?
3. Discuss the concept of "brotherliness" in Obadiah and its relevance to modern ethical considerations of bystander responsibility during injustices.
4. Explore the concept of theodicy as it is presented in Habakkuk. How does the prophet's wrestling with divine justice contribute to our understanding of faith and doubt?
5. How does the concept of divine retribution ("measure for measure") in Obadiah connect to C.S. Lewis's ideas in *The Great Divorce*? Discuss the implications of this concept for human responsibility and destiny.

Glossary of Key Terms

Arabah: A 90-mile dry gulch that is a significant geographic feature of the area where Edom was located.

Edom: Descendants of Esau, who are presented in Obadiah as a prideful and unbrotherly nation that was judged by God.

Idumea: The area south of Judah where the Edomites migrated after being displaced from their original territory.

Theodicy: The study of divine justice. Specifically, it considers questions of how a good and just God can allow evil to exist.

Petra: The Greek name for Sela, an Edomite city characterized by its rocky, impregnable location.

Yom Yahweh: Hebrew for "the day of the Lord." A time of divine judgment and intervention in the world, emphasized in the prophets.

Nasa: The Hebrew verb that means to lift up. When it is reflexive it means, "to lift yourself up" and is connected to pride.

Midrash: A method of Jewish biblical interpretation that involves engaging with the text through commentary and dialogue.

Holy Remnant: A group of faithful people that God preserves, often contrasted with the wicked or those who will not survive judgment.

Theophany: A visible, tangible appearance or manifestation of God.

5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 20, Obadiah, Part 2, Habakkuk, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Key Themes from Obadiah and Habakkuk

1. **What is the main sin that the book of Obadiah condemns in the Edomites?** The primary sin condemned in Obadiah is the Edomites' lack of brotherly love and their malicious indifference towards their kin, the Jacobites. This is shown through their gloating, taking part in their brother's downfall, and remaining aloof when their brother faced devastation rather than helping. The Edomites stood by as bystanders and even celebrated their misfortune, further illustrating the heart of their transgression. Their actions are condemned, demonstrating that indifference and sadistic pleasure in the suffering of others are reprehensible in God's eyes.
2. **What does the book of Obadiah say about pride and national arrogance?** Obadiah strongly condemns the pride and self-exaltation of the Edomites. They were geographically secure in their rocky cliffs, leading them to believe they were invulnerable. They soared "like an eagle" and set their "nest among the stars," symbolizing extreme arrogance. However, the book emphasizes that all nations that defy the living God will eventually be brought down, which means no matter how secure or powerful they may seem, their arrogance is a delusion and their actions will have consequences. Ultimately, God will bring them down, as He is the only one with the ultimate authority.
3. **How does the concept of "measure for measure" or retribution play out in Obadiah?** The principle of "measure for measure" is a central theme in Obadiah. It's expressed through the idea that as the Edomites have done to others, so it will be done to them. This is an idea found throughout scripture including in Jesus' teachings. If they inflicted evil, they will receive evil. Their deeds will "boomerang," returning to affect them negatively, illustrating the concept of divine justice and the law of retribution, which means one's actions will have consequences that directly impact the actor.

4. **What is the significance of the concept of a "remnant" in the book of Obadiah?**

The concept of a holy remnant is vital in Obadiah. The book contrasts the fate of the Edomites who will be completely destroyed without a survivor, with God's covenant people where there will be survivors who go up to Mount Zion. This idea of God always preserving a remnant highlights His commitment to keeping His covenant and ensuring that a portion of His chosen people endures, despite widespread judgment or destruction. The concept emphasizes God's grace and commitment to his covenant.

5. **What is the central question or problem that the book of Habakkuk grapples with?**

The central problem Habakkuk addresses is the problem of theodicy. He grapples with the question of how to reconcile the goodness and justice of God with the existence of evil and suffering in the world. He particularly questions why God's own people are suffering at the hands of a nation more sinful than them. He struggles to understand how God can allow injustice and pain in the world, especially among those faithful to Him.

6. **What is the significance of the dialogue between Habakkuk and God in the book?**

The dialogue between Habakkuk and God is essential to the book. It shows that God respects honest questions and encourages dialogue and wrestling with deep theological concerns. The approach to truth in Habakkuk and in the ancient Hebrew tradition is dialogical engagement rather than a systematic approach. It encourages questioning and discussion and explores layers of meaning through ongoing conversation. It also shows that while God's answers may not always be what we expect, God engages with questions and provides His answers, not necessarily the answers we expect.

7. **What does this source mean when it says that decision determines destiny and ties it to C.S. Lewis?**

The source connects the idea of decision determining destiny to C.S. Lewis, who believed that at the end of time, one's choices reveal whether they have lived by their own will or God's will, which in turn determines their eternal fate. This reflects the idea that our accumulated choices shape our character and ultimately dictate where one will spend eternity. These decisions demonstrate whether we have lived according to our own will or in submission to God's will. It is a summation of a person's will.

8. **What are some other main themes from the text beyond the texts of Obadiah and Habakkuk?** Some other main themes from the text include the idea that God has a special covenant relationship with a chosen people, and it is a mystery why that people were chosen. The text also discusses the tendency of people and nations to elevate themselves and not recognize their dependence on God. The concept of being family with others is another theme, which extends beyond just being a human but being a part of the human community. The text also delves into ideas of indifference to others, which is a grave sin in God's eyes. Lastly, the idea that the nations can have a delusional sense of invulnerability is also explored in the text.