
Getting To Know The Minor Prophets
OBADIAH

# History

**721 BC** - The fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria

**587 BC** - The fall of the Southern Kingdom to Babylon

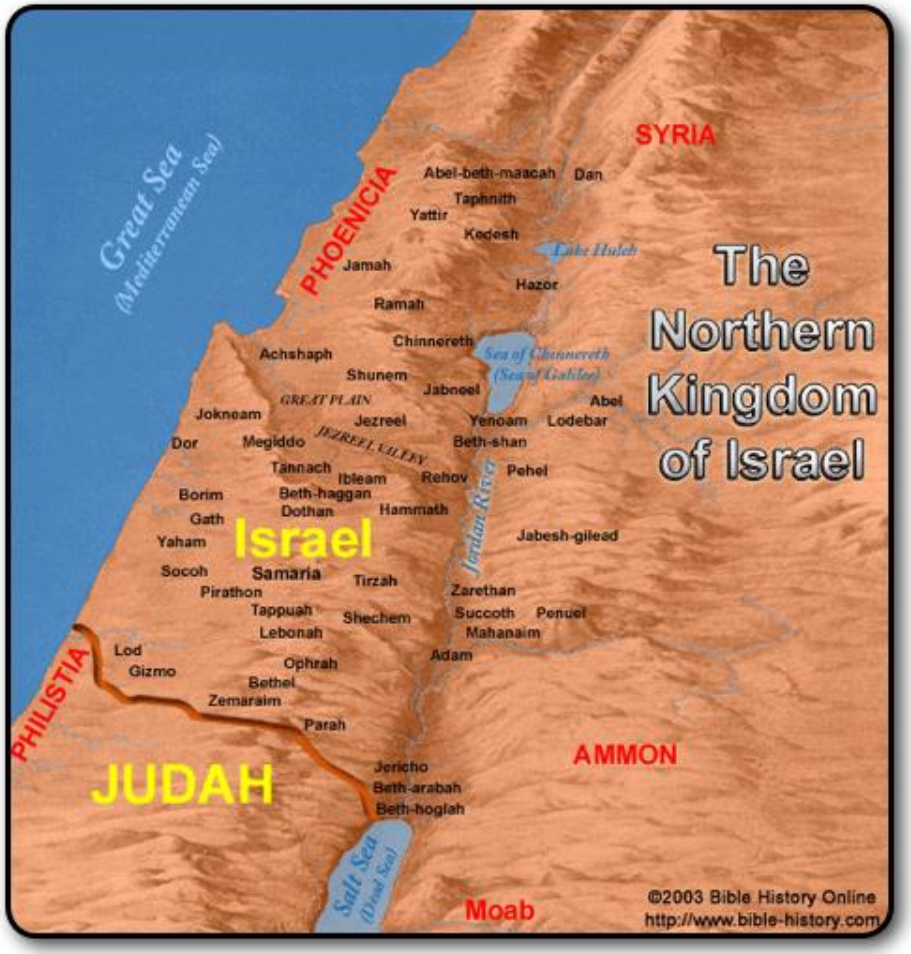
**539 BC** - Beginning of the Persian Period

**536 BC** - Cyrus permits the return from exile

**516 BC** - Completion and dedication of 2nd temple

**445 BC** - Jerusalem wall completed

# OBADIAH




- Obadiah means - "servant of the Lord"
- Nothing within the book to furnish a convincing, definitive picture of the prophet's life and time
- This book is called a vision (v. 1)
- What we know of Edom is found in the Old Testament, their neighbors, and archeology

# History of Edom

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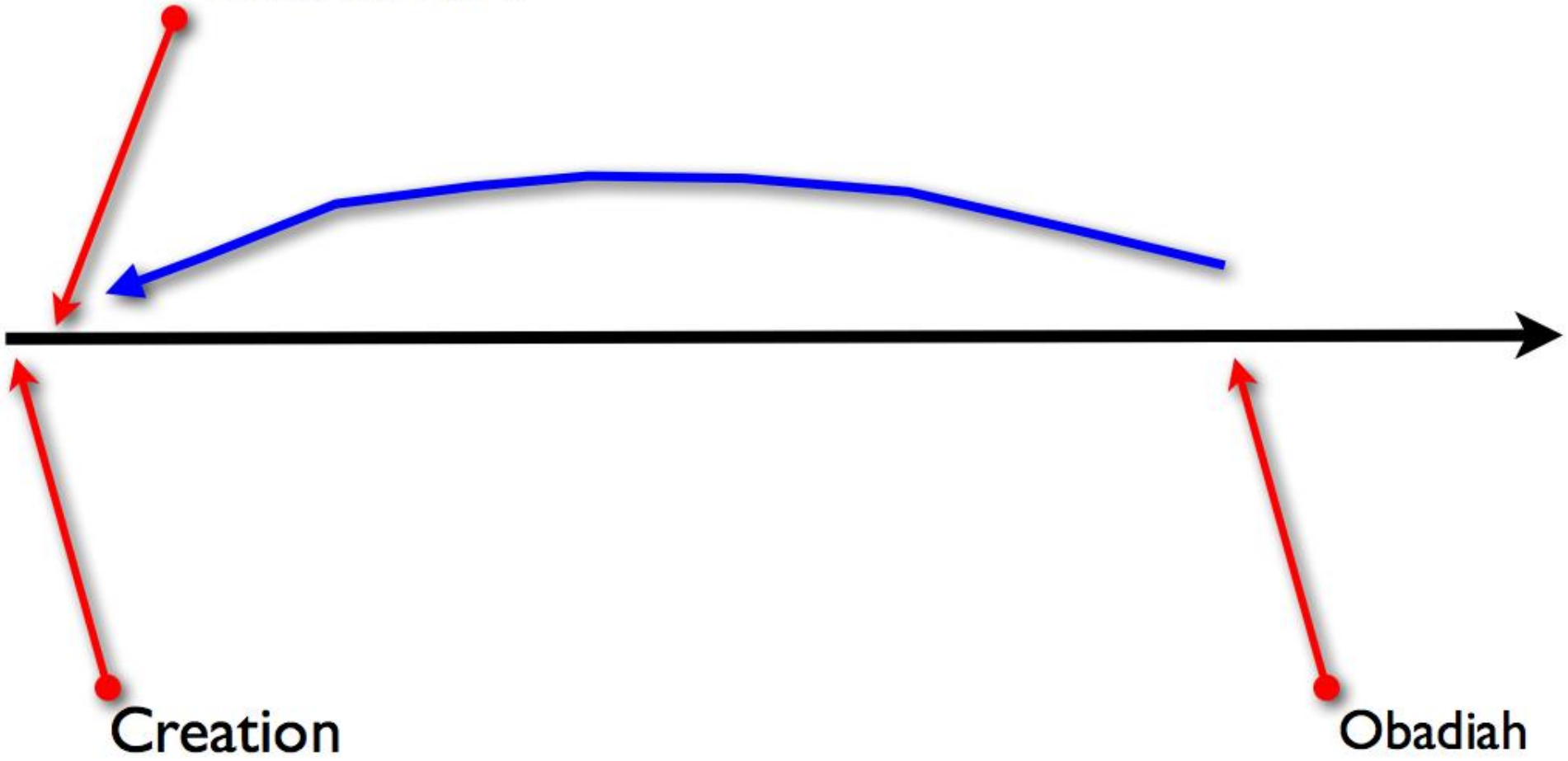

Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from a well. We will go along the King's Highway. We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.

- Numbers 20: 14-22 -

And David made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. Then he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.

- 2 Samuel 8: 13-14 -

# High-precision radiocarbon dating and historical biblical archaeology in southern Jordan

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**Recent excavations and high-precision radiocarbon dating from the largest Iron Age (IA, ca. 1200–500 BCE) copper production center in the southern Levant demonstrate major smelting activities in the region of biblical Edom (southern Jordan) during the 10th and 9th centuries BCE. Stratified radiocarbon samples and artifacts were recorded with precise digital surveying tools linked to a geographic information system developed to control on-site spatial analyses of archaeological finds and model data with innovative visualization tools. The new radiocarbon dates push back by 2 centuries the accepted IA chronology of Edom. Data from Khirbat en-Nahas, and the nearby site of Rujm Hamra Ifdan, demonstrate the centrality of industrial-scale metal production during those centuries traditionally linked closely to political events in Edom's 10th century BCE neighbor ancient Israel. Consequently, the rise of IA Edom is linked to the power vacuum created by the collapse of Late Bronze Age (LB, ca. 1300 BCE) civilizations and the disintegration of the LB Cypriot copper monopoly that dominated the eastern Mediterranean. The methodologies applied to the historical IA archaeology of the Levant have implications for other parts of the world where sacred and historical texts interface with the material record.**

archaeometallurgy | social evolution | Iron Age | Levant | StarCAVE

In 1940, the American archaeologist Nelson Glueck summarized his extensive 1930s archaeological surveys in Transjordan in his book *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1), asserting that he had discovered King Solomon's mines in the Faynan district (the northern part of biblical Edom), ≈50 km south of the Dead Sea in what is now southern Jordan. The period between the First and Second World Wars has been called the "Golden Age" of biblical archaeology (2) when this subfield was characterized by an almost literal interpretation of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible, HB) as historical fact. Archaeologists such as Glueck metaphorically carried the trowel in 1 hand and the Bible in the other, searching the archaeological landscape of the southern Levant for confirmation of the biblical narrative from the Patriarchs to the United Monarchy under David and Solomon to other personages, places, and events mentioned in the sacred text. Beginning in the 1980s, this paradigm came under severe attack, primarily by so-called biblical minimalist scholars who argued that as the HB was edited in its final form during the 5th century (c.) BC (3), any reference in the text to events earlier than *ca.* 500 BC were false (4). Accordingly, the events ascribed to the early Israelite and Judean kings from the 10th–9th c. BCE were viewed as concocted by elite 5th c. BCE editors of the HB who resided in postexilic times in Babylon and later in Jerusalem. Some of the casualities of the scholarly debate between the traditional biblical scholarship and biblical minimalists has been the historicity of David and Solomon–the latter of which is traditionally cross-dated by biblical text (1 Kings 11:40; 14:25; and 2 Chronicles 12:2–9) and the military topographic list of the Egyptian Pharaoh Sheshonq I (Shishak in the HB) found at the Temple of Amun in Thebes and dated to the early 10th c. BCE (5).

The power and prestige of Solomon as represented in the Bible has been most recently challenged on archaeological grounds by I. Finkelstein and N. Silberman in their book *David and Solomon* (6). When British archaeologists carried out the first controlled excavations in the highlands of Edom (southern Jordan) in the 1970s–1980s (7), using relative ceramic dating methods, they assumed that the Iron Age (IA) in Edom did not start before the 7th c. BCE, confirming the minimalist position concerning the HB and archaeology. On the basis of the dating of the Edom highland excavations, Glueck's excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh (which he identified with Solomon's Red Sea port of Ezion Geber in south Edom) and most IA sites in this region were reinterpreted as belonging to the 7th c. BCE and hence, in no way connected to the 10th c. and Solomon (8). Coinciding with the general "deconstruction" of Solomon as an historic figure, Glueck's identification of the Faynan mines as an important 10th c. BCE phenomenon was discarded and assumed to date to the 7th–8th c. BCE. The new dates associated with smelting debris layers from Faynan reported here demonstrate intensive 10th–9th c. BCE industrial metallurgical activities conducted by complex societies.

The analytical approach advocated here argues for an historical biblical archaeology rooted in the application of science-based methods that enables subcentury dating and the control of the spatial context of data through digital recording tools. Advances in IA Levantine archaeology can serve as a model for other historical archaeologies around the world that engage ancient historical texts such as the Mahabharata and other ancient writings in India (9), the Sagas of Iceland (10), and Mayan glyphs (11).

**Archaeological Context and Discussion.** The work reported here represents the large-scale excavations at the IA copper production site of Khirbat en-Nahas (KEN) (12) and is a part of a deep-time study of the impact of mining and metallurgy over the past 8 millennia in Jordan's Faynan district. Faynan is part of an IA polity known from the HB as Edom, located in the Saharo-Arabian desert zone in southern Transjordan. By the 7th–6th c. BCE, Edom extended westward across the Wadi Arabah, from Transjordan into the Negev Desert. Edom is characterized by 2 major geomorphologic units, the highland plateau and the lowlands that border Wadi Arabah. Before our project, most IA excavations were carried out

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OBADIAH

# Structure of the Book:

Verses 1-14 — Cruelties toward Israel

Verses 15-21 — Comfort for Israel


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