



### Ovadiah Introduction

Ovadiah is the fourth Navi of the Trey Asar prophets and is one perek long, which makes Ovadiah the shortest book in the entire Tanach.

#### **History:**

Ovadiah solely prophesies about the downfall of the nation of Edom. The current Roman nation comes from Edom, as does Christian ideology, by extension. The Jewish nation has a long history with the nation of Edom, dating back to Yaakov and Esav since Edom comes from Esav. The passuk describes Esav's appearance as edomi – red. In Ovadiah we will see how in the end of days Edom will fall, and the struggle between light and darkness – the Jewish nation and the nations of the world, will be resolved, and the true light of redemption, the lights of Mashiach and of Hashem will shine and radiate throughout the entire world.

Ovadiah prophesied during the reign of Yehoshafat, king of Yehudah, and Achav, king of Israel, which is only sixty years after the split in the kingdom occurred. This was also 300 years prior to the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash.

Ovadiah was a student of Eliyahu Hanavi, one of the greatest prophets of all time. He was a contemporary of Elisha, Yona and Michayahu.

#### **Why did Ovadiah merit to receive prophecy?**

**Sanhedrin 39B** explains that Ovadiah was a convert from the nation of Edom.

That **Gemarah in Sanhedrin** also explains, as does **Melachim 1 perek 18**, that Ovadiah had hid one hundred prophets in two caves during the time of King Achav. Izevel, who was the queen at the time, had ordered all the prophets to be killed. It was Ovadiah who had taken upon himself the great risk and financial burden of hiding and supporting these hundred prophets so that they would not be killed by the evil Queen Izevel. Also noteworthy is that Ovadiah was an advisor to the king, which made his mission even more risky. He therefore merited prophecy.

**Mikra'os Gedolos' introduction brings from the Zohar:** Its precisely because Ovadiah comes from the nation of Edom that he knows what's going to happen to Edom at the end of days.

It can also be said, it is precisely the wooden handle from the ax, which comes from the tree, that is used to cut down the tree itself. Since Ovadiah had come from Edom, it was specifically he who would prophesy and cause their downfall.

Sanhedrin 39B also brings that this was so because Ovadiah lived in the midst of two resha'im, Izevel and Achav, and he didn't learn from their ways, unlike Esav, who grew up near Yaakov and Yitzchak, but didn't learn from their ways.

**Zohar Chadosh in Rus** brings that when Ovadiah died, Yehoram the son of Achav came to collect Ovadiah's debt to him from Ovadiah's wife, who was considered a tzadekes. She didn't know how she would be able to pay the debt owed. She went to the kever of Ovadiah and poured out her heart, because Yehoram was threatening to take her two sons, who were now orphans, in lieu of payment of the debt. The reason that Ovadiah owed this money was that he had borrowed it to support the hundred prophets whom he was hiding in a cave. Ovadiah heard her prayer in heaven and went to Chizkiyahu and then to the Avos to request heavenly help. Then it was told to Ovadiah in heaven that his wife's salvation was already on the way from the great navi Elisha. Ovadiah then told his wife to go and seek Elisha.

This is one of the great miracles that Elisha Hanavi performed, which is described in great detail in **Melachim II, perek 4**. Elisha had the woman take all of the vessels that she could find, and miraculously, from that one jug of oil, she was able to fill up every single vessel. Ovadiah's wife then had enough money to pay back the debt.

**A word on the name:** The name Ovadiah is compound word, consisting of "oved" which means to serve, and "Yah", which means Hashem. Perhaps it could be said that a person who serves Hashem even when he's in a yerida, a low place, is called an oved Hashem – a servant of God. It would stand to reason that Ovadiah, as a convert, served Hashem from the lowest of places, until he came to the truth of Torah, Hashem and Am Yisrael.

It's also worth mentioning that many of the meforshim learn that Ovadiah's prophecy about the downfall of Edom has yet to occur, and will happen during the times of Mashiach and the war of Gog u'Magog.

May we merit to see the prophecy of Ovadiah come true with our very own eyes, when the entire Jewish nation will unite on Har Habayis, the temple mount. As the nation begins to rebuild the ancient ruins of Eretz Yisroel and restore Eretz Yisrael to a state nicer than it was originally, with the building of the third Beis Hamikdash with the revelation of Mashaich ben Dovid, as described in the vision of Yechezkel.