



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH

JULY 15th 2026

PRAYERS AND REFLECTION



Obadiah 15-21

¹⁵ For the day of the Lord is near against all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. ¹⁶ For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and gulp down and shall be as though they had never been.

Israel's Final Triumph

¹⁷ But on Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall take possession of those who dispossessed them. ¹⁸ The house of Jacob shall be a fire, the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor of the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken. ¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. ²⁰ The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah shall possess Phoenicia as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the towns of the Negeb. ²¹ Those who have been saved shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of justice, on the day of your return, I pray for my heart to turn toward that of humility. Let those who are hardhearted with pride melt into awe with a realisation of just how awesome you are. May I continue to seek the mountain where your glory rests. Raise up deliverers among us; restore what was broken. May I continue to be amongst those who praise your goodness, faithfulness, love, mercy and grace. Lord, I thank you for keeping your promise of eternal life. In the name of my advocate and intercessor Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKSGIVING

- Thank you for your justice and timing; that on your terms we will all know your faithfulness.
- Thank you for rising disciples who are helping to restore what has been broken and rebuilding what remains of your people.

- Thank you for creating such a wonderful universe, land, rivers, sea, sky, mountains and plains.

PRAYER POINTS OF PRAISE

- Praise the Lord for bringing all those who belong to God into God's kingdom and restoring the broken relationships.
- Praise God for not making false promises but keeping the Covenant.
- Praise God's justice and mercy; God's graciousness in calling people even in times of chaos and uncertainty.

PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION

It's time to confess:

- pride and self-sufficiency
- A hard heart towards others
- Complicit in exclusion of those who are 'difficult or different'
- A failure to reflect the kingdom of God.

WORDS OF GRACE

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matt 11:28-30

REFLECTION

Obadiah, whose Hebrew name means "servant of Yahweh," is one of the lesser-known prophets. His book, the Bible's shortest, offers insight into God's justice and reveals how God's judgment stresses the pride of nations and individuals alike. The prophet declares: "As you have done, it will be done to you." Yet the message doesn't end in defeat; it pivots toward restoration and reign. There is, for us today, a clear invitation to humility and spiritual strength that can go a long way to becoming the anchor of our lives as we navigate our way in a turbulent world.

First, humility before the Lord's sovereignty. Obadiah makes God's rule explicit: the day of the Lord will bring final reckoning, and in that reckoning God's justice stands firm even when our plans crumble. In a world that prizes swagger, success, and loud voices, the text invites us to bow, before a King whose kingdom is not subject to human power plays. Humility is not weakness but steadiness and self-awareness: a stance that acknowledges our limits, our dependence on God's wisdom, and our need for mercy as much as for justice.

Second, the call to strength pinned by our trust in God's faithfulness. The return of the remnant and the restoration of Jacob's inheritance point us toward a spiritual resilience that doesn't depend on circumstances but on God's enduring promises. Obadiah's vision of a "house of Jacob" possessing their possessions, and the Lord's kingship overall, offers a paradox: true strength is exercised through faithful allegiance to God's purposes, especially when things are uncertain, and when power seems to be shifting around us. Strength embedded in trust becomes our stay in the face of fear, perseverance in times of trial, and a willingness to work for restored relationships rather than revenge.

Thirdly, humility and strength are expressed in justice and mercy. The prophecy is as much about how we treat one another as about national triumph. The chapters of Obadiah call us to renounce pride, exclusivity, and harsh judgment, replacing them with mercy that seeks the good of the vulnerable. Spiritual strength, in this light, includes choosing reconciliation over triumphalism, hospitality over suspicion, and stewardship over self-advancement. It means using our influence to bless rather than to berate, to build up rather than to break down.

In our modern world where divisions run really deep and cynicism often seems easier than compassion—Obadiah 15-21 invites a practical humility: acknowledge God's rightful place on the throne; rest in the promises of God even when outcomes aren't what we thought or wanted leading to disappointment; choose mercy in place of pride; and lean into humble, purposeful strength that works for healing, justice, and restoration. Let the Lord's kingship form our hopes and dreams, shape our actions, and give us courage to persevere with grace.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Lord of justice and mercy, I lift up those who have been overlooked, abused, or broken by the proud, and powerful people in the world. Like Obadiah's warning, reminds me that pride harms neighbours and threatens everyone. Raise defenders of the faithful, of the humble and bring comfort to those who are living with sufferings of any kind.

Lord of peace, heal the many divisions that shame me and others into having a hard and harsh outlook toward others. I pray for the courage to seek reconciliation, to speak the truth without vengeance, and to extend the right hand of friendship and mercy as you extend the right hand of love and mercy to me. May your day of vindication spark a real and honest desire to change, in turn restoring unity among nations, tribes, and families, until everyone walks in humility, peace, and steadfast love together. Amen

