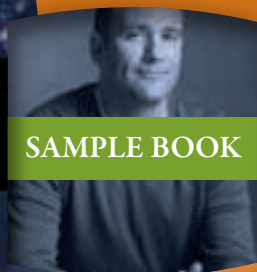




THE NEW  
INDUCTIVE  
STUDY SERIES



SAMPLE BOOK

# Discovering the God of Second Chances

KAY ARTHUR  
PETE DE LACY

Jonah/Joel/Obadiah/Amos



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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*Discover.*  
 "I love that the New Inductive Study Series books provide a big-picture overview of entire books of the Bible. The fact that they're in daily and weekly chunks make it easy for people to keep the same pace."

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## HOW TO GET STARTED...



Reading directions is sometimes difficult and hardly ever enjoyable! Most often you just want to get started. Only if all else fails will you read the instructions. We understand, but please don't approach this study that way. These brief instructions are a vital part of getting started on right foot! These few pages will help you immensely.

### FIRST

As you study Obadiah, Joel, Amos, and Jonah, you need four things in addition to this book:

1. A Bible that you are willing to mark in. The marking is essential. An ideal Bible for this purpose is *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*. The *NISB* is in a single-column text format with large, easy-to-read type, which is ideal for marking. The margins of the text are wide and blank for note taking.

The *NISB* also has instructions for studying each book of the Bible, but it does not contain any commentary on the text, nor is it compiled from any theological stance. Its purpose is to teach you how to discern truth for yourself through the inductive method of study. (The various charts and maps that you will find in this study guide are taken from the *NISB*.)

Whichever Bible you use, just know you will need to mark in it, which brings us to the second item you will need...

*Discover.*

"I'm new at this. That's why these easy-to-follow instructions make it easy for me to get into the Bible."

2. A fine-point, four-color ballpoint pen or various colored fine-point pens that you can use to write in your Bible. Office supply stores should have these.

3. Colored pencils or an eight-color leaded Pentel pencil.

4. A composition book or a notebook for working on your assignments or recording your insights.

## SECOND

1. As you study these four minor prophets, you will be given specific instructions for each day's study. These should take you between 20 and 30 minutes a day, but if you spend more time than this, you will increase your intimacy with the Word of God and the God of the Word.

If you are doing this study in a class and you find the lessons too heavy, simply do what you can. To do a little is better than to do nothing. Don't be an all-or-nothing person when it comes to Bible study.

Remember, anytime you get into the Word of God, you enter into more intensive warfare with the devil (our enemy). Why? Every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God. And our one and only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The enemy wants you to have a dull sword. Don't cooperate! You don't have to!


2. As you read each chapter, train yourself to ask the "5 W's and an H": who, what, when, where, why, and how. Asking questions like these helps you see exactly what the Word of God is saying. When you interrogate the text with the 5 W's and an H, you ask questions like these:

- a. **What** is the chapter about?
- b. **Who** are the main characters?
- c. **When** does this event or teaching take place?

d. **Where** does this happen?


e. **Why** is this being done or said?

f. **How** did it happen?

3. The "when" of events or teachings is very important and should be marked in an easily recognizable way in your Bible. You could mark it with a clock (like the one shown here)  in the margin of your Bible beside the verse where the time phrase occurs. You may want to underline or color the references to time in one specific color.

4. You will be given certain key words to mark throughout these four Old Testament books. This is the purpose of the colored pencils and the colored pens. If you will develop the habit of marking your Bible in this way, you will find it will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your study and in how much you remember.

A **key word** is an important word that the author uses repeatedly in order to convey his message to his readers. Certain key words will show up throughout each book, but others will be concentrated in specific chapters or segments of a book. When you mark a key word, you should also mark its synonyms (words that mean the same thing in the context) and any pronouns (*he, his, she, her, it, we, they, us, our, you, their, them*) in the same way you have marked the key word. We will give you suggestions for ways to mark key words in your daily assignments.

You can use colors or symbols or a combination of colors and symbols to mark words for easy identification. However, colors are easier to distinguish than symbols. When we use symbols, we keep them very simple. For example, you could color *repent* yellow but put a red diagram like this over it  because it indicates a change of mind.

When marking key words, mark them in a way that is

*Go Deeper.*

"I'm excited to learn how to study the Bible for myself!"

easy for you to remember.

If you devise a color-coding system for marking key words throughout your Bible, then when you look at the pages of your Bible, you will see instantly where a key word is used.

You might want to make yourself a bookmark listing the words you want to mark along with their colors and/or symbols.

5. AT A GLANCE charts are located at the end of each book's study. As you complete your study of each chapter, record the main theme of that chapter under the appropriate chapter number. The main theme of a chapter is what the chapter deals with the most. It may be an event or a particular subject or teaching.

If you will fill out the AT A GLANCE charts as you progress through the study, you will have a complete synopsis of the books when you are finished. If you have a *New Inductive Study Bible*, you will find the same charts in your Bible (pages 1461, 1478, 1482, and 1487). If you record your chapter themes there, you'll have them for a ready reference.

6. Always begin your study with prayer. As you do your part to handle the Word of God accurately, you must remember that the Bible is a divinely inspired book. The words that you are reading are truth, given to you by God so you can know Him and His ways more intimately. These truths are divinely revealed.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Therefore ask God to reveal His truth to you as He leads

and guides you into all truth. He will if you will ask.

7. Each day when you finish your lesson, meditate on what you saw. Ask your heavenly Father how you should live in light of the truths you have just studied. At times, depending on how God has spoken to you through His Word, you might even want to record these "Lessons for Life" in the margin of your Bible next to the text you have studied. Simply put "LFL" in the margin of your Bible and then, as briefly as possible, record the lesson for life that you want to remember.

### THIRD

This study is set up so that you have an assignment for every day of the week—so that you are in the Word daily. If you work through your study in this way, you will find it more profitable than doing a week's study in one sitting. Pacing yourself this way allows time for thinking through what you learn on a daily basis!

The seventh day of each week differs from the other six days. The seventh day is designed to aid group discussion; however, it's also profitable if you are studying this book individually.

The "seventh" day is whatever day in the week you choose to finish your week's study. On this day, you will find a verse or two for you to memorize and STORE IN YOUR HEART. Then there is a passage to READ AND DISCUSS. This will help you focus on a major truth or major truths covered in your study that week.

To assist those using the material in a Sunday school class or a group Bible study, there are QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Even if you are not doing this study with anyone else, answering these questions would be good for you.

If you are in a group, be sure every member of the class, including the teacher, supports his or her answers and insights from the Bible text itself. Then you will be handling the Word of God accurately. As you learn to see what the text says and compare Scripture with Scripture, the Bible explains itself.

Always examine your insights by carefully observing the text to see what it *says*. Then, before you decide what the passage of Scripture *means*, make sure that you interpret it in the context of its context. Scripture will never contradict Scripture. If a passage ever seems to contradict the rest of the Word of God, you can be certain that something is being taken out of context. If you come to a passage that is difficult to understand, reserve your interpretations for a time when you can study the passage in greater depth.

The purpose of the THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK is to share with you what we consider to be an important element in your week of study. We have included it for your evaluation and, hopefully, for your edification. This section will help you see how to walk in light of what you learned.

Books in The New Inductive Study Series are survey courses. If you want to do a more in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible, we suggest you do a Precept Upon Precept Bible study course on that book. You may obtain more information on these courses by contacting Precept Ministries International at 800-763-8280, visiting our website at [www.precept.org](http://www.precept.org), or filling out and mailing the response card in the back of this book.

Discover.

"I was blown away when I discovered the Bible really speaks to where I'm at."

## DISCOVERING THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES



What do you do when you've blown it? Can you recover? Can God still use you, or will He consign you to the dustbin of life?

Seven hundred years had passed since Israel covenanted with God to obey Him. Israel had blown it. They had committed adultery, worshipping idols and forsaking the God who had brought them out of slavery in Egypt and into the land of promise.

What would God do with Israel? Would they get a second chance?

God sent prophets with a message of judgment for sin and a call to repent, to turn from their ways—a message that also held hope for the future. The four prophets you will study in this booklet all help us learn about the second chances that God gave Israel and other nations. As we look at the messages of Obadiah, Joel, Amos, and Jonah, remember that they were God's messengers, bringing His Word to turn people toward Him and away from their idols, away from their self-centeredness, away from all that kept them from seeing Him and knowing Him.

Their messages have much in common with today's world. Christians today need to hear this call from God. Some need to return to Him. God also calls to nations today.

He calls us to shape our thinking and behavior by His holy Word delivered through His messengers, the prophets. He calls us to return if we have strayed, to turn to Him in obedience and true worship, for He gives us another chance.

Study with expectancy, Beloved, for God will show you truth through His Holy Spirit that you cannot see in any other way. Look for His personal message to you and your situation, and let it change your life and the lives of those around you. Discover the God of second chances!

*Go Deeper.*

"I'm excited to learn HOW to study the Old Testament. I want to unlock these books for myself!"

## *A BRIEF BACKGROUND* FOR STUDYING THE *PROPHETS*



In the Bible, we find two kinds of prophets: those whose spoken messages became parts of books of the Bible (mixed in with history) and those whose messages became whole books of the Bible. The Old Testament of the Christian Bible includes four “major prophets” and twelve “minor prophets.” Major and minor refer to the length and significance of the books.

The minor prophets can be divided into two groups, preexilic and postexilic, based on whether their messages pertained to times before or after the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylon from 605 to 536 BC. Obadiah, Joel, Amos, and Jonah are four of the nine preexilic minor prophets. The postexilic prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, are covered in *Opening the Windows of Blessing*, and the rest of the preexilic prophets are the subjects of other booklets of the New Inductive Study Series.

To understand the four prophets in this booklet, let’s summarize the historical setting of Israel, God’s chosen people, when these four men of God delivered their messages. When Solomon grew old, his many foreign wives turned his heart away from worshipping God alone, and he worshipped foreign gods, sacrificing to idols made with men’s hands. This legacy of idolatry plagued Israel from that



day forward. After Solomon's death, the nation split into a northern kingdom, usually called Israel, and a southern kingdom, Judah.

The king of the northern kingdom immediately instituted worship of golden calves and other gods, turning away from God's appointed worship system at the temple in Jerusalem. The southern kingdom still had Jerusalem and the temple, but high places and pagan altars dotted the land, pulling the people's hearts toward idol worship.

Into this environment, God sent His prophets to both kings and peoples—the northern kingdom of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah, and surrounding nations like Assyria. These prophets preached messages that were unique to their circumstances but have common threads. You will discover the themes they share as you study. The four prophets in this study are related by time and circumstance as well as by certain direct statements from God, yet each has a unique message from God for a particular audience at a particular time and for a particular purpose.

In the same way that God had a message in the days of the prophets for the kings and nations to understand, He has a message for you to understand today. Examine your circumstances, your life, and your relationship to God. See how His message through the prophets pierces your heart into your daily living to instruct you, to shape your thinking, to compel you toward a life of worshipping Him. If you have strayed from loving God, from obeying Him, from worshipping Him in spirit and truth, our prayer is that God's message will call you to return to Him and experience a closer walk with the God of second chances.

Seek diligently, Beloved, to understand God's message to you. Meditate on the truths in His holy Word. Bow before your Father in humble adoration at His graciousness toward those who love Him, obey Him, and serve Him.

## OBADIAH

### Discover.

"I'm learning that God wants to speak to me and He does it through prayer and His Word."

## INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH



Obadiah, whose name means “my servant,” was a prophet to Judah, the southern kingdom. The date of his writing is obscure and much debated. Some think it was as early as the ninth century BC, during the reign of Jehoram, while others give it a date soon after 586 BC, when the Babylonians took the last of the captives from Judah. But Obadiah brings a message applicable to nations at any time and people of all times. The Scriptures clearly describe Israel’s relationship with God and with the surrounding nations.

The title of this booklet is *Discovering the God of Second Chances*. As you study Obadiah, your goal will be to see how God gives second chances. You need to understand how Judah will receive this message. What will the message bring to their spirits? What would it mean to their hopes and dreams?

Look for the principles Obadiah presents about God’s dealings with us; they can fill you with hope. Ask how you might use the message of Obadiah to help someone else know that God gives second chances.

Our days so desperately need revival. Our communities need revival. We need a clear, uncompromising message from God of the sureness of right and wrong, of justice, of God’s triumph over those who oppress His people.

What will you learn from Obadiah? Will you find hope? Will you find encouragement? Will you find something that will give you solid ground on which to declare, “Thus says the Lord”?

## WHAT SHOULD GOD DO WITH THOSE WHO SIN?




God uses different ways to get our attention when we sin. Sometimes God sends another person to us in love to help us see our error and correct our ways. Sometimes He uses less comfortable circumstances to expose our sin in embarrassing ways. Sometimes He delivers a rebuke through His Word as we read God’s message and the Holy Spirit quickens our spirit, reproving and correcting us.

Often God used Israel’s enemies to show the nation and its kings their sin. But according to the prophet Zechariah, whoever came against Israel, whoever touched Israel, touched the apple of God’s eye. Thus God judged nations who afflicted Israel. God might temporarily afflict Israel by another nation, but He also protected Israel in the long term by judging that nation, stopping it in its tracks.

God delivered a message through Obadiah. Will we listen to that message and let it ring in our ears and pierce our hearts? Will we see the love God has for Israel and the justice He imposes on those who harm the one He loves?

*Discover.*

“This is a burning question for me. I’m glad that there is an answer I can believe.”





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 DAY ONE
 

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Obadiah is a short book—just 21 verses. Although prophecy can be complicated, this message isn't; the subject is clear. Quickly read through the book to get the flavor of the message. Then go back and read verse 1 and note who has the vision, what the vision is about, and whom Obadiah is addressing.

Before we do any more in Obadiah, you should understand who Edom is and what its relationship to Israel is. Read the following passages and in a separate notebook, summarize what you learn about Edom: Genesis 25:20-34; 27:1–28:9; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:1-8,12; 1 Kings 11:14-17; 22:45-47; 2 Kings 8:16-22; Romans 9:10-13; Hebrews 12:15-17.




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 DAY TWO
 

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Today, read through Obadiah again, marking every reference to *Edom* or *Esau*. As you read and mark key words and phrases in the Word of God, keep focused by asking questions and letting the text give you the answers. Be an investigator—ask Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? We call these the 5 W's and an H questions. They help you find truth that is there. Marking key words will help you see God's emphasis on people, places, and ideas. Use a symbol or color to distinctively mark each key word. Genesis 25:25 and 30 give a pretty good idea of what color to mark *Esau* and *Edom*.

In your notebook, list what you learn in Obadiah about Edom. Listing what you observe is a good technique to summarize and crystallize what you learn. Writing also helps seal truths in your memory. How does this description of Edom compare to what you saw in the cross references yesterday?

Verse 7 speaks of allies and those at peace. Read the following and note which nations have been allies or at peace with Edom at various times: 1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:11-14; 2 Kings 3:5-27; 1 Chronicles 18:9-13.




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 DAY THREE
 

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You'll find several key words and phrases that show you clearly what the message of Obadiah is about, so mark them to help you see the message. To help you remember what to mark and how, make a bookmark from an index card. Write the words and mark them on the card. This will also help you keep track when you mark the same words or phrases elsewhere in the Bible. As you observe and mark, remember to ask the 5 W's and an H questions.

Read Obadiah again, and mark any references to God speaking such as *Thus says the LORD*, or *declares the LORD*, references to *Jacob*, and references to *the nations*.<sup>1</sup> Choose a different color or marking symbol for each. Jacob is Israel, so mark both blue, the color of the star of David in Israel's flag. Be sure to mark synonymous references to Jacob besides Israel. One way to mark *the nations* is to color it green and underline in brown. *The nations* refers to Gentiles—any nation other than Israel.

*Go Deeper.*

"These daily devotions are great, but what makes them supernatural is the way they take me into the Bible for myself."

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 DAY FOUR
 

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Today read through Obadiah and mark *that day* and *the day of the LORD*, which are key in much of prophecy. If you don't know how to color it, color it pink with an orange box. Make sure you include any pronouns or synonyms used for the day of the Lord.

This phrase answers a “when” kind of question, but not by setting a specific date. The time phrase *the day* is quite different from *that day*. *That day* speaks of a future event, while *the day of his/their destruction, distress, or disaster* in verses 11-14 speaks of a past event. Mark the phrase *the day of* in these verses differently from the way you mark *that day*. This will help you understand the context of Obadiah's message. What does the Lord say He will do to Edom? What or whom will God use against Edom? When will this happen?

Among the things God declares He will destroy are the “wise men” and “understanding.” Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. How would you compare these verses to Obadiah 8-9?

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 DAY FIVE
 

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Read through Obadiah one more time, and this time mark any reference to *Mount Zion* or *My holy mountain*.<sup>2</sup>

Now that you've read Obadiah and marked key words and phrases, let's see what truths we can glean from all your hard work. Make a list of the offenses of Esau/Edom. The wording might sound like it points to the future, but God is reviewing what Edom has already done. What did God tell Edom not to do?

Also read Jeremiah 49:7-22 and record your insights. This cross-reference will show you that God didn't bring a message about Edom through only one prophet. What similar phrases do you see? Note the verb tenses of Jeremiah 49:10,15.

What did God promise Mount Zion in contrast to the mountain of Esau? To whom does Mount Zion refer?

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 DAY SIX
 

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Read Obadiah 10-14 again. Be sure you have noted and perhaps underlined each *do not* phrase and each *in the day of* phrase. Verse 11 says that “strangers” carried off Jacob's wealth and that Edom stood aloof as “foreigners” entered Jerusalem's gates. The text does not clearly state when this took place, and commentators are divided. However, despite the uncertainty we have about the dating of the event, Obadiah 10-14, is there any uncertainty in verse 10?

What does this say about the certainty of verse 8, even if we don't know that date either? In other words, what understanding, what principle, can we learn from the phrase *declares the LORD*?

When we read, study, and meditate on God's Word, how should we take it—as stories, suggestions, ethical principles rooted in fables? What do you say?

What does God promise Israel?

In light of all you have studied in this short prophecy, what do you think is the central theme (message)? Record it on OBADIAH AT A GLANCE on page 25.

You'll also see on OBADIAH AT A GLANCE a place to record the themes of the three paragraphs of Obadiah.

Disciple.

"I love reviewing the week's study with the girl I'm discipling. There are so many 'a-ha!' moments where God is showing both of us who He is and how He wants us to live."

Determining the main idea in each paragraph and recording it on the AT A GLANCE chart will help you remember the message later when you come back to Obadiah.

The additional chart THE DAY OF THE LORD on pages 26–27 is taken from the *New Inductive Study Bible*. If you record what you learn about the Day of the Lord from Obadiah there and add to it as you study Joel and Amos, you'll have the start of a great topical study of that important prophetic day.

## DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Obadiah 21

Read and discuss: Obadiah 1-21; Matthew 25:31-33

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ☞ What did Edom do that displeased God?
- ☞ What did God say He would do to Edom?
- ☞ What will happen in the day of the Lord?
- ☞ In what way can we apply this lesson about Edom to our own dealings with Israel?
- ☞ How do you think God will deal with nations that behave in the way Edom did? With individuals? How certain is God's justice?
- ☞ What kind of relationship to Israel pleases God? How do you view Israel?

- ☞ How do the warnings God gives to Edom apply to us today? What is God saying about behavior toward His people? What is God saying to you and how you act toward His people?
- ☞ What do you think the Lord's *attitude* is toward arrogance directed to Him and His Word? What is His *response*?

### THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Esau was Jacob's twin brother. While they were still in the womb, God declared that the elder would serve the younger, and what God said came to pass as it always does. Consequently, although Esau was Isaac's firstborn, Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for a single meal. Later, Jacob deceived Isaac and secured for himself the blessing intended for Esau. While many get stuck on Jacob's methods, the important point is that God said the older would serve the younger, and that's exactly what happened.

If this order was God's decree, Esau should not have been jealous, envious, angry, or malicious toward Jacob. Nor should he have had these attitudes toward God. Esau (Edom) should not have gloated over Jacob's (Israel's) misfortune or in any way participated in the evil that others directed toward Jacob. Jacob, whose name God later changed to Israel, was God's chosen heir to His original promise to Abraham and Isaac. Nothing Esau thought, felt, said, or did would change the truth that God chose Jacob over Esau, because God Himself, not man, chose Jacob. Isaac didn't, Rebekah didn't, and Jacob didn't. God did.

But Esau (Edom) did not accept that truth. The nation of Edom stood by while others plundered Jacob, and then Edom gloated over Jacob's losses and looted and enslaved its

Discover.

"I'm blown away—the Bible is relevant to ME!"

remnant (survivors). For this, God would judge Edom. No amount of confidence in their safety, no amount of arrogance would prevent the judgment of God. Judgment for Esau and vindication for Jacob were equally certain.

If a man acts like Esau, seeking revenge for a perceived offense, can he be sure he’s right? Can he be sure what has occurred is not part of God’s plan to refine us, to shape us, to mold us into the image of Christ?

Think about the injustice of Jesus’ death on the cross. He committed no crime and never sinned. But it was according to God’s plan. Should Jesus have reviled Jewish or Roman authorities?

In the end, God will judge those who act as Esau did against Israel (as we saw in Obadiah). They act against God, and God will cause the end to be just.

So it is with you and me and everyone else. Justice from God will be the result. Anyone who acts *against* the Word of God will be judged *by* the Word of God (John 12:48). Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. God will be perfectly just. Each of us is accountable before God, and each nation is accountable before God. The day of the Lord is a day of judgment, a day of reckoning, a day of recompense, a day of justice. The wicked will be laid low, and the righteous will be exalted.

God will judge the “brother” of Israel for participating in destroying Israel. The “brother” of Israel who gloats over Israel’s misfortunes, who arrogantly stands aloof in their day of trouble and does not lend a hand, will be consumed.

Obadiah’s message presents three points to consider, three questions for you to answer for yourself: How do I respond when things don’t go the way I think they should? How do I respond to events in Israel’s life? And how does God deal with sin?

Your answer to the first question may well determine your answer to the second. Your answer to the third should guide your answers to the first two. “For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye’” (Zechariah 2:8).

*Go Deeper.*  
 “When I do the at-a-glance exercises, I remember more of what I’ve studied. When I remember more, I’ve been FED on the truth of the Bible!”

OBADIAH AT A GLANCE

**Theme of Obadiah:**

SEGMENT DIVISIONS

SEGMENT DIVISIONS		PARAGRAPH THEMES	<i>Author:</i>
		VERSES 1-9	<i>Date:</i>
		VERSES 10-14	<i>Purpose:</i>
		VERSES 15-21	<i>Key Words:</i>

*Author:*

*Date:*

*Purpose:*

*Key Words:*

- the day
- day of the Lord
- Edom (Esau)
- Jacob (Judah)
- the nations
- Mount Zion (My holy mountain)
- declares the Lord (or any phrase having to do with the Lord speaking or reporting)



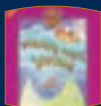






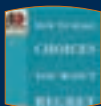
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- Revolutionary no-homework, 6-week studies
- Easy introduction to inductive study
- Great for small groups
- Unique format includes Scripture alongside the text



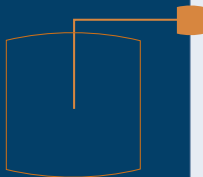
### 40 Minute Bible Studies

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- Easy introduction to inductive study
- Great for small groups
- Unique format includes Scripture alongside the text



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- Topical inductive Bible studies that apply God's truth right where you need it
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### Precept Upon Precept

- In-depth inductive study
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- Companion lecture CDs and DVDs available
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