

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XVI: Obadiah - Dealing With Animosity From Relatives"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Some years ago, as I was settling down for a night's sleep in the summertime, I heard some people arguing up the street on what at the time was a vacant, wooded lot. The noise was loud and troublesome, so I craned my ear at the open bedroom window to see if I needed to get involved in some way.

One man was furious, shouting that the property was intended as **his** inheritance, not for the **other** party's! I could tell that the matter had been a very sore spot for a long time, and felt a concern for the welfare of the **other** relative **regardless** of who really had a right to own the land! Fortunately, the shouting stopped, and, since then, a home has been built on that land, hopefully resolving the dispute. However, that summer night, it was a catastrophe waiting to happen!

(2) We at Nepaug also have problems with facing oppression from extended family members! In the month of December alone, while either considering gathering with relatives for the holidays or **reacting** to those gatherings, Nadine and I received **8** different expressions from people on oppression they face from their relatives! One party put it this way: "After all was said and done, you wonder if our gathering was such a good, edifying idea after all!"

Well, what can be done about difficult animosities expressed by our relatives?! (We turn to the "Need" section . . .)

Need: Whenever I get together with CERTAIN relatives, old unsettled, interpersonal grievances invariably crop up, making even WEDDINGS a headache! Can it ever end?! What does God want ME to DO about this concern?!"

- I. **With history's increasing apostasy, oppression from RELATIVES against their KIN grew to challenge God's kingdom on earth!**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, so Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy, opposing God's rule on earth, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check this sin, Gn. 12:1-3
 - E. However, **as** his family unit **expanded**, competition erupted between its **relatives**, causing the unit nearly to self-destruct and ruin God's Abrahamic Covenant, Gn. 25 & 37.
 - F. Though the rift between Joseph and his brothers was settled in time, the breach between Esau and Jacob grew into Esau's hatred of Jacob that threatened God's Kingdom on earth:
 1. Jacob tricked his aged father, Isaac into granting Esau's rightful birthright to him, tempting Esau to want to kill Jacob, Gn. 27.
 2. Yet, **God** wanted His Abrahamic Covenant to come through Jacob **anyway**, Gn. 28:10-14. Thus, in time, the Lord arranged for Jacob and Esau to meet & agree so as to bless **both** men, Gn. 32:6-33:2.
 3. When Esau and Jacob met, they embraced, Gn. 33:3-20. Still, out of distrust, Jacob failed to rendezvous **again** with Esau in Edom as he had agreed, Gn. 33:12-18. Being thus stood up irritated Esau's unresolved anger against Jacob, so it **passed on** to his posterity, the **Edomites**, who came to hate Jacob's offspring, Israel, Ez. 35:1-5.
 4. Nevertheless, God urged **Israel** to **respect** Edom, treating that nation well as the Edomites were Israel's **relatives**, Dt. 23:7a!
 5. **However, the Edomite animosity GREW until it threatened Israel's national existence:**
 - a. In Moses' era, the Edomites refused to let Israel pass through their land as they traveled to Canaan, Num. 20:14-21.
 - b. Saul, David, Joab and Solomon all had conflicts with them as well, Bible Knowledge Commentary, O.T., p. 1454-1455.
 - c. Finally, most likely in Joram's era, Edom sacked Jerusalem and hindered its people from fleeing Gentile attackers, Ob. 11-14!
 - d. **When Edom aided Israel's destroyers, She helped foster destruction of the Abrahamic Covenant invested in Israel by God. Thus, God HAD to take drastic action against Edom!**
- II. **The book of Obadiah predicts God's drastic solution to Esau's hatred -- Gods ANNIHILATION of Edom as a NATION!**
 - A. God predicted the certainty of Edom's fall, Obadiah, verses 1-4.

- B. Edom's fall would be complete, verses 5-9.
 - C. The **reasons** are detailed in verses 10-14 as follows:
 - 1. Edom stood by while Jerusalem was invaded by Gentiles, v. 11.
 - 2. Though **related** to Israel, she rejoiced over Israel's captivity, v. 12.
 - 3. Edom then even **sacked** the city **with** the Gentile invaders, v. 13.
 - 4. Finally, she even set up roadblocks to inhibit fleeing Jews, v. 14.
 - D. Hence, God promised to end the threat of Edom to Israel's existence by **annihilating** Edom as a **nation**, v. 16-18, 19-21.
 - E. Historically, the Edomites were increasingly pressured by Gentiles until they rebelled against Rome in A.D. 70. Rome's Titus then nearly obliterated them, but a few Edomites escaped. Yet, with Titus' rout, they vanished entirely from history as a people, *Ibid.*, p. 1455.
- III. **Obadiah contributes to the "thread of redemption" by showing God's annihilating a RELATED nation of Israel's to preserve His Abrahamic Covenant through Jacob's line and promote His plan on earth, cf. Gen. 12:1-3 with Gen. 28:10-14 and Gal. 3:16, 13-14.**

Application: To address troublesome relationship tangles with extended family, (1) believe on Christ as Savior from sin to become part of GOD'S eternal family in Christ, *Jn. 1:12-13!* (2) As such, operate with our Heavenly Father's blessing by (a) confession of sin (*1 Jn. 1:9*) and (b) dependence on the Spirit for behavior control (*Gal. 5:16-23*) to (c) obey His Word, *1 Jn. 2:1-6*. (3) **IN THIS STATE**, (a) recall that animosity from relatives is subject to our Heavenly Patriarch's eternal plan (Obadiah); so, (a) treat all relatives well (*Dt. 23:7a*) regardless of their attitude(s) toward us (*Ez. 35:1-5*) and (b) let GOD worry about preserving us from their animosities. After all, HE will stop at NO lengths with even the RELATIVES to accomplish HIS plan in Christ FOR US!

Lesson: Though God calls Christians to conserve their extended family ties, God sovereignly LIMITS what animosity can be expressed from difficult relatives to achieve HIS purposes in the believer!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

Dr. James Dobson's March 1994 issue of Focus on the Family magazine ran a story about Jami, a former lesbian who came to Christ. She gave her testimony of God's power.

Jami became a lesbian at a **Christian Bible college** much to her godly parents' **horror!** Devastated, Jami's parents went forward in their church one evening when the pastor asked for parents of homosexuals to come forward to request **prayer** for their children. Jami reports: "My folks stood up and walked down the aisle, even though it must have been very difficult to admit publicly their daughter was a lesbian."

The Lord led a man named Ben Breedlove into Jami's life, and he decided to befriend her as a witnessing opportunity. He showed her unconditional, Christian love that impressed her. Though she had unsuccessfully been married twice to lesbian lovers, Jami found herself impressed with Ben's testimony, and desired out of her wicked lifestyle. In time, she accepted Christ as her Savior, **married** Ben Breedlove, and has since given birth to a daughter and an infant son. The Breedloves direct His Heart North, a ministry in evangelizing the gay community and people who have the AIDS virus.

Jami's testimony is this: "God **can** change a homosexual's heart. I know, because not only have I seen it, I've **experienced** it." "Two verses . . . keep coming back to me . . . 1 Cor. 6:9-10, which lists the sins that will keep people from entering the kingdom of heaven. Homosexuality is one of them. But the next verse says, 'And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.' We have to remember what the **changing power of God does** . . ." (Incidentally, the pastor has this article on file if needed!)

God can accomplish great things with the relatives. Jami's parents sought God's help by a courageous step of faith in front of the whole Church, going forward in a public meeting to request prayer for the spiritual awakening of their errant daughter who had gone into lesbianism at a Bible College! God is Almighty, so let's look to Him with the relatives!