

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES
Part XVIII: God's Work To Overcome Jealous Opponents Of His People
(Ezekiel 35:1-15)

I. **Introduction**

- A. Proverbs 27:4 states: "Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" (NIV) This statement is true, for facing jealousy from relatives in particular or from fellow believers is something that is an almost impossible hurdle to overcome.
- B. Whether we face jealousy, or whether we **feel** envy against another, God has important truth for us to learn from Ezekiel 35:1-15 on how He handles this problem:

II. **God's Work To Overcome Jealous Opponents To His People, Ezekiel 35:1-15.**

- A. Ezekiel was ordered by the Lord to predict the divine judgment of the people of Edom, here personified as a notable Edomite mountain known as Mount Seir, Ez. 35:1-4.
- B. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac **from whom** his brother, Jacob **unjustly stole** his birthright, cf. Genesis 25:19-27. Esau's descendants, like their father, could not accept the birthright transfer to Jacob because of the **way** it happened. Thus, they hated Jacob's descendants.
- C. When God judged Jerusalem, the Edomites "rubbed it in" to the people of Judah, turning their fierce envy into helping the enemy capture fleeing Jews so that the Babylonians could execute them, 35:5-9.
- D. Specifically, God itemizes what went on in the thinking of these Edomites in Ez. 35:10:
 - 1. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah fell, the Edomites concluded that they would take possession of Palestine as they deserved the inheritance of Abraham!
 - 2. The problem with this conclusion is that **God** was the real **Landowner** of Palestine -- not Israel or Judah, and that Edom's trespassing the land was a violation of GOD'S will as to WHO was there, 10b! (The Lord had not sanctioned Jacob's evil **means** of obtaining Esau's inheritance, but God had desired that Jacob **have** the inheritance anyway!) (Gen. 25:23-26; Malachi 1:2-3)
- E. Accordingly, the **Lord** got involved to deal out judgment on Edom for violating **His** concerns: as Edom had boasted against the land of Israel as becoming its possession, Edom would become an uninhabited lot of deserted land, Ez. 35:11-14; as Edom did not hate the bloodshed of "related" fleeing Jewish "relatives," God would hound the Edomites with bloodshed themselves, v. 6b.

Lesson: Jealousy is a sin, and as a sin, Almighty God will judge it.

Application: (1) If we are jealous, (a) we must confess this attitude as sin and get right with God. (b) We must realize that if some other party possesses something that we do not possess, that this is in at least the permissive plan of GOD (c) regardless if there has been a heinous plot by the "haves" party to get what originally rightfully belonged to the "have nots!" (Ez. 35:10b with Gen. 25:23-26; Malachi 1:2-3) (d) Then we need to accept the calling of God as to what we DO have and to what we DO NOT have; otherwise we are covetous, Lk. 12:13-15! (2) If we are the object of fierce jealousy, (a) we must not handle this evil according to Proverbs 27:4. Any effort to battle it only enforces the sense of lack in the jealous party's thinking, augmenting his anger. We must leave the problem for God to handle, Romans 12:19. (b) Additionally, we do a lot to diffuse jealousy's clutches by treating those who are jealous of us with respect and kindness, Romans 12:20 in light of Proverbs 25:21-22. (Note: to "heap coals of fire on another's head" does not mean that we harm another person's head! Rather, it was an act of kindness to heap up live coals from one's hearth onto the firepan held on the head of a neighbor who had come asking for coals to rekindle his fire. Kindness shown in helping another shames him away from being an enemy, and brings God's blessing on the one who shows kindness.)