



# FEED MY SHEEP

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## Should Christians Hate?

*The Story of Joseph, Part 57*

As we concluded the last issue, one of the last verses which we read from Jasher was this:

Jasher 58:28 But from that day forward the children of Esau **hated** the sons of Jacob, and **the hatred and enmity were very strong between them all the days, unto this day.**

There is a considerable degree of confusion in some circles of believers regarding this issue of hatred. There is not space herein to cover the topic exhaustively, but allow me to at least present an object lesson for my readers. You noticed that in the verse from Jasher above, I emphasized how the Edomites have perpetual hatred for the Israelites. That fact is confirmed in the Bible. Let me ask you, knowing that I and many of my readers understand that we ourselves are actually the literal descendants of Jacob, that we are Israelites: Do you believe that Israel is supposed to hate the Edomites?

I am saddened to have to admit that there are some who understand that we are Israel and who do believe that we, in fact, must hate the Edomites, the children of Esau. I have been at Bible camps and conferences where I have met people with that belief. That was mostly many years ago; not so much anymore since I and those types of believers have gone in separate directions. I will give an example in a moment. First, I deplore that attitude. I disavow hatred of any people, *even enemies*. Consider the example of Joseph.

Joseph made war against the sons of Esau, it is true; but does that prove that he hated them? ...“hate” mean-

ing an extremely negative, visceral, emotional response. No, I don't think so. The wars against them were all necessary and in national self-defense. Having now thoroughly studied the life and character of Joseph for these many months, can we honestly picture him possessing this raging, rancorous malice and bitter abhorrence of the Edomites? I cannot picture that in Joseph.

We have all heard the term “blind hatred.” Metaphorically speaking, hatred can make you blind. I want to share an example of that with you. I am going to quote from a newsletter from an identity ministry. This kind of thinking is still being spread. I am not going to mention any names. I actually feel sorry for this man because it is clear from his article that he is looking for biblical ways to justify his hatred of Edomites. All emphases are mine. The article begins:

QUOTE I am going to clear up and document the problem with Deuteronomy 23:7

**KJV Deuteronomy 23:7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he *is* thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.**

From this verse it would appear that we should welcome all Edomites into our congregations with open arms and with no questions asked, and that we are somehow guilty of some dire contemptible sin for even thinking an evil thought against them. I ask you: Is this not the impression which seized upon you when you read this passage for the first time? END QUOTE

My answer is: “No, I did not feel that way, but I do

confess that many years ago, it confused me because I saw hatred for the Edomites by some of our Israelite people. Continuing the article:

QUOTE: Remember the guilty, dirty, condemning feeling which came over you for even giving the Edomites the slightest hint of disparaging thought, that somehow Yahweh might suddenly kill you in your very tracks for even blinking your eye? If this has been your reaction when reading this passage in the past, forget it, for that is not what this verse is saying—not even remotely. END QUOTE

The writer then goes on to tell how he got into the study of the word “Edomite” about 15 years ago, and how he looked it up in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance and Lexicon where it says for #130:

Édomiy, ed-o-mee’; or (fully) ‘Edowmiy, ed-o-mee’, patronymic [which means it is derived from a father’s name—JWB], from #123; an Edomite, or desc. from (or inhab. of) Edom:—Edomite. See 726.

Then the author says that since he didn’t want to overlook anything important, he went to Strong’s #726, which says this: “ ‘Arowmiy, ar-o-mee’; **clerical error** for 130; an Edomite (as in the marg.): —Syrian.” Now quoting the author of this article again:

QUOTE: At once this struck me (and this was about 15 years ago), for if proper rendering was “Syrian” instead of “Edomite,” it would make all the difference in the world. Over the years, I have pointed this clerical error out to many people of our persuasion. At the time, I knew this made more sense if Deuteronomy 23:7 were to read Syrian rather than Edomite **for the Syrians were Abraham’s relatives**, [emphasis mine—JWB] in which case this would read: Thou shalt not abhor a Syrian; for he *is* thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. END QUOTE

Then that writer goes on to tell how he was satisfied that it should have been Syrian instead of Edomite, but he didn’t feel like he could prove it, that is, until recently when he discovered what the nature of the clerical error was. He found in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, this entry under “Edom”

“...there are places where, because of the similarity between the letters [Hebrew daleth—d and resh—r], the text has wrongly read “Aram” (i.e., Syria), and

“Arameans” (i.e., Syrians) for “Edom”, and “Edomites”, such as 2 Kings 16:6; 2 Chronicles 20:2, where the KJV has followed the MT, but the RSV has followed an emended text.”

The author of the article then goes on to show the similarity of the two Hebrew letters *daleth* and *resh*. There is no question about that, the two letters are very similar. Thus, if there were a slip of the scribe’s quill pen, the word for “Edomite” in Hebrew becomes the word for “Syrian” or vice versa.

The author then goes on to quote *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, which states that “...in 2 Kings 16:6, ‘Edom’ should be read for ‘Aram’...”

Thus if we read the King James Version, it says:

**KJV 2 Kings 16:6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.**

Next the author quotes from the Modern Language Bible. I will use the New Revised Standard version because I do not have the Modern Language version. Compare the rendering below with the KJV rendering above.

**NRS 2 Kings 16:6 At that time the king of Edom recovered Elath for Edom, and drove the Judeans from Elath; and the Edomites came to Elath, where they live to this day.**

I will not critique the differences between the Bible versions at this point, as that would distract from the point of the writer I am quoting. He then gives the second example in 2 Chronicles 20:2.

**KJV 2 Chronicles 20:2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazon-tamar, which *is* Engedi.**

**NIV 2 Chronicles 20:2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).**

You noticed that in addition to the King James

Version, I have used different modern versions than the ones the author of this article uses. Nonetheless, they make the same point that he makes. So once again I quote this author who states:

QUOTE You can see very readily, from the two translations on each of these two verses, how great an error can come from a slight change in the Hebrew letters. If we are truly interested in Bible history, these passages can really be confusing if we didn't know someone had made an error and how the text should really read. Now we know something that is absolutely not true about Esau-Edom. If Yahweh says that He hates Esau and all of his progeny, we, being kinsman to Him, have the same right. As a matter of fact, to hold back this hatred and keep it within us, can and will make us mentally and physically ill. END OF QUOTE [All emphases mine—JWB]

Perhaps some of my readers agree with that author, and if so, that is precisely why I am detouring briefly to address this subject of hatred this month. I want to persuade you otherwise. When I gave this as part of a live lecture, I was reading the faces of my audience, and at the end of that last quote, their faces were exhibiting puzzlement, shock, dismay and astonishment.

Did any of you pick up on this man's egregious error in his analysis of the word mix-up? He correctly quotes the dictionaries and concordances. He quotes the Bible encyclopedia correctly. (I am not going to dispute about Bible versions here because I have a series of 20 Bible study lectures on CD concerning that issue. See flier enclosed with this mailing.)

But let's give the writer of this article the benefit of the doubt that there really *is* a clerical error (and that is by no means a given). We will assume that the dictionaries and concordances are correct about the mix-up.

***However...the author of this article misunderstands completely what those reference books are saying!*** He is looking for an excuse to hate and his hatred has blinded him to what the "helps" books are saying. In each of those examples, it was the words for "Syria" or "Syrian" which should have been "Edom" or "Edomite," not the other way around, as he contends!

Remember, in Strong's, under #726 it said that

"Aramean" or "Syrian" was a clerical error for Strong's #130, "Edomite." In other words, the KJV translated it "Aramean" or "Syrian" and it should have been "Edom" or "Edomite." But the author of this article turns it upside down and claims *on his own authority* that in Deuteronomy 23:7, it should be "Syrian" instead of "Edomite!"

Furthermore, did you catch where he said that his "correction" would make better sense in the context of "he is thy brother," because the *Syrians were Abraham's relatives*? Excuse me?! Yes, they were, but how close? Answer: Eight generations back! Compare that to how close the Edomites were. Esau-Edom was Jacob-Israel's twin brother. How much closer can a brother be defined?! I realize the word "brother" can have an expanded meaning, but the only way this man can claim the Syrians are Abraham's relatives is because the Bible says in

**KJV Genesis 25:20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.**

And so it *appears* that the Syrians are only *one* generation or so removed from Jacob-Israel, since his mother, Rebekah, was a Syrian (Aramean), ...or was she? Due to space limitations, I cannot do all the genealogical tracing from the Bible itself in this study. I hope you will do that on your own.

Your study will show that Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel who was the son of Nahor and Nahor was the brother of Abraham. Clearly then, if Bethuel is identified as an Aramean (Syrian), then Abraham would likewise be an Aramean (Syrian), but that is *not* the case. What gives here? What is the explanation?

Your study will also show that Abraham, *eight generations back*, was the descendant of Arphaxad who had a brother named Aram and it was Aram who was the progenitor of the Syrians-Arameans. How "related" do you feel to someone from a different line eight generations back?!

Here is the solution to this puzzle: It is very clear that Rebekah and her brother, Laban, and her father, Bethuel were Syrians by *geography*, but not by ancestry. They lived in the land of the Arameans-Syrians. If you want to locate it on Bible maps, Padanaram is at

the top of the Fertile Crescent. Centuries after Abraham, we will find a similar case in that Ruth was a Moabite by geography but not by blood. (See next column regarding my detailed, analytical study with maps, charts, etc. on DVD.) By blood, Rebekah, Laban and Bethuel were Hebrews, i.e., descendants of Eber. The Arameans or Syrians were not Hebrews.

Therefore, when the writer of this article suggests that we substitute the word “Syrian” for “Edomite” in Deuteronomy 23:7, as in: “Thou shalt not abhor a Syrian; for he *is* thy brother:... and then he claims that this makes more sense than “Edomite” because the Syrians were Abraham’s relatives; well, the writer is just plain ignorant or dishonest, *or* as I suspect, this is a classic example of blindness induced by hatred.

Moreover, did you notice his claim that “to hold back this hatred and keep it within us, can and will make us mentally and physically ill?” Well, to hold back hatred and keep it within you implies that you must have hatred for the Edomites within you to begin with. We all have that potential due to our mortal condition and consequent iniquity. But the answer is neither to repress it or to vent it, but to learn from Jesus’ example to love your enemies!

The venting (through his article) has apparently had an effect on this man, who cannot see that he has made two critical errors in his analysis, errors which make his entire article without substance. Let us hope that anyone who reads his article can see through his errors and not be taken in by this poor fellow’s self delusion.

This has not been a Bible study on hatred *per se*. I have much more material on that, but that will have to wait for another time. I am well aware of the two primary big guns, the “powerful” verses which supposedly are irrefutable in support of Christians hating certain people. These are (1) where God says that He hates Esau (Malachi 1:3, Romans 9:13), and (2) where David said, Do I not hate them with a perfect hatred? (Psalm 139:21, 22).

There are other such verses, but dealing with them is beyond our scope herein. Make no mistake, though, I do know what I am talking about when I assert that these can all be answered, refuted and reconciled biblically. Perhaps some readers do not know that many years ago, I was on the other side of this issue, in that I had presented a series of four lectures teaching peo-

ple how to “pray curses” on those whom it was supposedly “God-approved” to hate. That is called “imprecatory prayer.” I withdrew them from circulation, asked my tape ministry recipients to destroy them, and confessed my error on this subject of hatred. So I implore my readers, who may come across material such as the writer whom I have quoted herein, to not go down that path. It leads to destruction—*your* destruction, not theirs, because it leads to anger, resentment, bitterness and more which leads to ill health in a multitude of potential diseases of the *body*, not to mention the poisoning of your *mind* and the quenching of the *Holy Spirit*.

Our next issue will continue with the story of Joseph as we approach the end of the life of Joseph not too many issues hence.

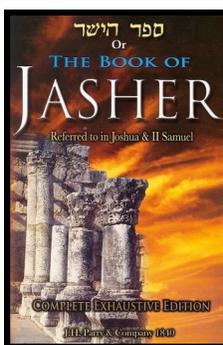
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D-102 *Ruth, the Israelite* ... Or was she a Moabitess? Critics of the Christian Israel message think that this presents a real dilemma for us. It does not. In this lecture, (first given in 1987, this revised presentation is from 1998) Dr. Bruggeman provides the scriptural proof that Ruth had to have been an Israelite by ancestry, not a “Moabitess.” This presentation utilizes numerous overhead transparency maps and charts to show critical chronological and geographical details. Ca. 1:35 long. DVD only. \$12 + \$4 s & h\*.

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