

GOD'S WORD

to the

UNITED STATES

**The Book of
OBADIAH**

Dr. James M. Tarter

PREFACE

Many Christians have wondered why there is no prophecy about the United States in the Bible, because it contains many specific prophecies about the current world situation. In this book we can see clearly that God prophesies about the U.S. in the Bible, even though none of us sees this word until He opens it up to us.

The Minor Prophets, the twelve shortest prophetic books in the Old Testament, provide a great prophetic word about nations in our day. Within them is the shortest book of the Old Testament, Obadiah. There God placed His word in Scripture to the mighty United States – a word that an arrogant U.S. and its Christians truly need to hear.

Much of Obadiah also applies to other Gentile nations today with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations. We shall see (Chapter 2) that such a nation is well described by the term “Edom”, and so I call this kind of nation today a “modern Edom”.

Except for addressing the prophecy to Edom in Ob. 1 and saying that arrogance has deceived you in v. 3, v. 1-9 are specific for the U.S. In contrast, Ob. 10-21 applies to all modern Edoms.

In this book I primarily address U.S. believers. If believers in other modern Edoms see how Obadiah applies to the U.S., then they can realize what fits and what is different for their own nation. This also helps me to be more specific than abstract and to go beyond my limited knowledge of another modern Edom. I use “modern Edom” especially when I want readers to realize that a standard or principle applies to all nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage today, which include the U.S.

Concerned spiritual believers in the U.S. are busy with things they believe that God has called them to do. I don't want to distract you into anything less. I'll tell you what I offer, and you can read what helps.

I recommend reading Chapters 1-3: they are a foundation for accurately applying Obadiah to the U.S. Chapters 4-10 are more optional, although Chapters 6-8 provide a fresh perspective about the U.S. and Israel, and Chapter 9 provides a unique perspective of the spiritual war raging in the U.S. now. Chapter 10 shows the horror if we do poorly in this war, but Chapter 11 shows a wonderful transformation of a U.S. or other nation disciplined to Jesus. Finally, I must recommend reading Chapters 12-15: they show from the Bible what the Church must do in order for the U.S. to receive Jesus for its healing.

I put the key insights in each chapter into an appendix on p. 163-177. It can be used as a summary or as a quicker way to see highlights of a skipped chapter.

Jim Tarter, 2014

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DEDICATION

to

Amber

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I call the New American Standard Bible the NAS or NASB. I add boldface to specific words and phrases in Scriptures to add my emphasis for discussion.

Sixth Edition, 2014

This book is essentially duplicates *A Prophecy for the United States* – don't buy both! *A Prophecy* has highlights at the end of each long chapter instead of the summary of all chapters on p. 163-177 in your book. See p. 179 for more information about other books related to healing a nation today.

Chapter 1

OBADIAH FOR THE UNITED STATES NOW

*The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom....
“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations” (Ob. 1a, 15a).*

The man Obadiah was seeing only ancient Edom centuries before Christ, but God inspired him to speak a word about Edom that applies to many nations today as well. As we shall see soon (Chapter 2), a modern Gentile nation with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations is well described by the term “Edom”. Therefore I call such a nation today a “modern Edom”.

The United States is the leading example of a modern Edom now. Each verse in Obadiah (1-21) contains at least two significant potential applications for the U.S. either now or in the near future. Furthermore, we shall see that Ob. 3-9 is so specific for the U.S. that most of it does not apply to any other modern Edom. These features give us many confirmations that all of Obadiah applies to the U.S.

The Day of the Lord drawing near on all nations (Ob. 15a, above) was a very important characteristic of the time of Obadiah and ancient Edom long ago. This also is a major source of the often-bizarre actions of the nations today. The Bible shows that Ob. 15 can refer to both 2600 years ago and this time that leads up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Christians might wonder if v. 15 applies now, but we shall see that the Day of the Lord is drawing near on all nations as we see how all of Obadiah describes the U.S. today so precisely.

I use “today” and “our day” to refer to a time which began in the 1940s and leads up to the return of the Lord Jesus. “Now” has this meaning or else is explicitly contrasted in the context with the past few decades or “the near future” of 2014. Many major developments in the Bible began in the 1940s and are moving toward their consummation at Jesus’ return, but discussing them is not within the scope of this book about Obadiah and the U.S. (for that topic see the footnote* on p. 8). Here it is enough to simply identify this time period.

One key development in the nations now makes our day special and can affect our understanding of parts of Obadiah. In order to be a commission, Jesus’ Great Commission to disciple all the **nations** must be fulfilled before He returns, not afterward (Matt. 28:18-20). Like an individual, a nation can accept or reject God’s call to be joined to the Lord Jesus as a disciple, and many nations will accept it: “*Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people*” (Zech. 2:11a). However, Satan’s deceptions and Christian inactivity can cause other nations to reject their great opportunity for life in Jesus. Wherever this happens, the nation will receive a terrible national judgment that the Minor Prophets call “*the day of the Lord*”.

The Basic Message of Obadiah to the United States

Obadiah reveals that the U.S. is now making its crucial choice for or against Jesus, and reveals the opposite directions it takes us. Our nation’s choice produces one of two starkly contrasting futures.

One is a deterioration into gross sin and a resulting just judgment of being permanently and completely annihilated from being a people. The terrible destruction of “Edom” is obvious from reading Obadiah.

Another national future is a remarkably wonderful transformation of the U.S. by being joined to the Lord Jesus as one of His national

disciples. This picture of blessing is contained in v. 15-21, but it is harder to see than the devastating future.

Obadiah also reveals what the U.S. needs most from its Christians in order to receive its blessed future.

The Prophetic Purpose of God's Word in Obadiah to the U.S.

Consider God's purposes for prophetic words to the Church in 1Cor. 14:3: *"But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation."* Translations of the last word vary, but a literal meaning is to come beside an afflicted one to speak words of comfort or encouragement. God gives prophetic words in order to build us up in Christ and to help us respond better to Him.

A plausible interpretation of everything in Obadiah meaningfully applies to the U.S. and its Christians since the 1960s or into an easily projected near future. All of these applications to the U.S. now fit into God's purposes for prophetic words. This is unique: I do not see any other large Biblical prophecy about a Biblical nation that fully applies to a modern Gentile nation. Therefore I conclude that Obadiah is a prophetic word from God about the U.S. to especially its Christians.

Jer. 18:7-10 shows us how to interpret any prophecy from God about the destiny of any nation. Here God says:

At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.

These principles from God are essential for understanding His prophecy about any nation. He will relent if it repents. Therefore His clear words of a future national devastation in Ob. 1-18 are better

interpreted as solemn warnings that can stir the U.S. and its believers to repent. Without repentance, these prophecies will be completely fulfilled on the U.S. and its people.

Jer. 18:7-10 can help us give the correct balance to the great and awful futures prophesied in Obadiah. More than a threat of getting devastated due to sin, this is a strong exhortation to repent. The picture of a blessed national future in Jesus can give direction, a vision, and great encouragement to believers who see the mighty forces for evil at work in the United States. Both visions can stimulate us to turn to God and do what He shows us to do.

What is the prophetic purpose of learning about current and future developments? To give us head knowledge that can help us get puffed up with pride? No, to help us grow and do better. Obadiah can help us move toward fulfilling this purpose: as we understand this word, we can see God's perspective about the U.S. and the current world situation, and see what God wants His people and the U.S. to do now and in the future. Our obedience by faith would bring His kingdom and His will to earth in the way that He desires, and would save the U.S.

Chapter 1 is intended to provide the gist of the word in Obadiah for modern Edoms and especially the U.S. now. In Chapters 2-12 we shall systematically examine the major words from Obadiah for these nations. We shall begin in Chapter 2 by seeing how "Edom" is a most meaningful name for a nation today with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations.

* Apx. 9-10 of *God's Just Judgment of a Nation Supplement* discuss unique prophesied developments of nations since the 1940s. See p. 179 or type "James Tarter" in search at www.lulu.com for this and other related books from the Bible about healing nations in our day.

Chapter 2

THE NATIONS IN OBADIAH THEN AND NOW

*...Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom....Because of violence to **your brother Jacob**, you [Edom] will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever. On the day that **you** stood aloof, on the day that **strangers** carried off his wealth, and **foreigners** entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem – you too were **as** one of them. (Ob. 1, 10-11).*

Ob. 10-11 identifies the three types of nations in Obadiah: the nation descended from Jacob, its brother nation Edom or Esau, and nations that are called “strangers” and “foreigners” to these brother nations. Examining these descriptive terms for these nations will reveal God’s values and how He views nations, and will help us understand how the book of Obadiah is being worked out before our eyes today.

Who are Jacob and Edom in Obadiah? The origin of these nations can show us. Abraham received God’s promises in his generation, and God continued them with Abraham’s son Isaac in his generation. Isaac’s two sons were Esau and Jacob – God later named him Israel. Near 600 BC Judah (with its capital, Jerusalem) was the only nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Edom was the nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’s brother Esau. This is the way that these two nations were brothers, and near 600 BC they were the only nations descended from these key people before God.

The Epistles let us see that receiving God’s promises is a key feature in our life and relationship with Him. In Rom. 9:6-9 Paul even uses the term “children of the promise” to specify those descendants of Abraham who are the children of God:

⁶*But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; ⁷nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named."* ⁸*That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but **the children of the promise** are regarded as **descendants**.* ⁹*For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." (Rom. 9:6-9).*

*And if you belong to Christ, then you are **Abraham's descendants, heirs** according to **promise** (Gal. 3:29).*

2Pet. 1:3-4 shows that receiving God's promises is tremendously important for us, equipping us even to partake of His divine nature:

*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these **He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises**, so that **by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.***

Gen. 28:13-15, Rom. 11, and Rom. 4 show that our faithful God continues to work with His chosen physical descendants of Abraham in addition to working with all who are spiritual descendants by faith:

*And behold, the Lord stood above it and said [to Jacob], "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; **the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and your descendants.** Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the **west** and to the **east** and to the **north** and to the **south**; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will **bring you back to this land**; for I will **not leave you** until I have done what **I promised you.**" (Gen 28:13-15).*

*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a **partial hardening** has happened **to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles** has come in; and so **all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will **remove ungodliness from Jacob.**" (Rom. 11:25-26).*

*He [Abraham] might become the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised....For this reason it is **by faith**, in order that it may be in accordance with **grace**, so that **the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all**.* (Rom. 4:11b-16).

Rom. 4 and related Scriptures show that believers in Christ Jesus are like Isaac in a most vital way: we are the sons of Abraham and the heirs of God's promises and blessings to him by faith.

In past generations of many nations today, believers in the Lord Jesus worked to establish a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage for their nation. These Christian forefathers of each nation today had no more than partial success in creating this foundation. I call a nation now that does have a partial Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from the nation's past generations a "modern Edom". Its Christian forefathers are precisely like Isaac – sons of Abraham – in forming the ancient nations descended from Abraham: Judah and Edom.

After its "Isaac" generation of forefathers, every modern Edom has also had a subsequent "Esau" generation, which lost the vision of building the nation on Biblical or Judeo-Christian principles.

God chose Jacob over Esau for His promises before their birth, but the way this was worked out in practice can teach modern Edoms. Esau was Jacob's older twin brother and in line to inherit God's invisible promises through Abraham and Isaac, but Esau's lack of faith for God's invisible promises caused him to sell his right to them to Jacob for a single meal (Gen. 25:29-34). Esau had come back from hunting and wanted food to satisfy his appetite – he was not starving! In v. 34 God describes his attitude: "*Thus Esau despised his birthright.*"

As we shall see soon, each modern Edom has an opportunity to join itself to Jesus as His national disciple. It will also be strongly tempted to sell its right to this blessing in order to satisfy its appetite – especially for Islamic oil.

In Gen. 28:13-15 (on p. 10) God confirms that Esau did sell His promises to Jacob and his descendants, even shortly after sinful Jacob manipulated his father for his blessings and Esau wanted them back. Specifically, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants was given to Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants (Gen. 26:3, 28:13-15). And today, it is the modern Edom's response to Jesus that destroys or saves it. If it fails to value God's offer to join to Jesus as a nation, then it will be unable to resist the temptation to sin like Esau and will get destroyed like ancient Edom. Obadiah shows how all of this happens.

What have we seen so far? Judah and ancient Edom were the only nations near 600 BC with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from the past generations of the nations. Today the only two kinds of nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from the past generations of the nations are Israel and the nations where Christian forefathers had laid this national foundation: modern Edoms. In practice, every Gentile nation today with a past generation corresponding to Isaac has also had a later “Esau” generation that lost the vision of further laying the Judeo-Christian part of the national foundation or building on it a more Judeo-Christian culture.

More about an Edom's National Foundation and Heritage

Esau created further problems for his nation of descendants by choosing wives from the Canaanites, who “*brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah*” (Gen. 26:34-35). These wives surely did not adopt the heritage and culture that God had established in the families of

Abraham and Isaac, because if these wives were converted, Isaac and Rebekah would have been blessed instead of grieved. Therefore their grief indicates that Esau's wives were maintaining the pagan practices of the Canaanite nations in their family. God repeatedly emphasizes His rejection of this culture: its pagan customs, accepted practices, ways of living, and laws.

Afterward Esau added a wife from Abraham through Ishmael (Gen. 28:8-9). Superficially this act might seem good, because this wife was even a descendant of Abraham. But this act was surely done "in the flesh" and is a type of religious exercise. This act could give a "form of godliness" to a sizable fraction of Esau's descendants without rooting out the ungodliness in anyone. The Bible gives no indication that this act helped ancient Edom in any way.

The one distinct feature common to the whole nation of ancient Edom is that it originated from Esau and his wives. This surely caused ancient Edom to trace its national foundation and heritage to this family. This foundation and heritage was a mixture of pagan cultures from his wives and a Judeo-Christian culture from God's people of the promise: Abraham and Isaac through Esau. By considering Esau's nature of lacking faith, we can know that the Judeo-Christian part of the foundation and heritage was weak.

Likewise, every modern Edom has also had some major sources of pagan culture – hostile to God and His ways in the Bible – as well as a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage. In each national origin and in the "generation of Esau", pagan religious practices were established in the nation. These practices and empty forms of godliness were brought into most of the churches in the nation by its people.

This pagan influence corresponds to the influence of Esau's wives from one of the pagan nations and also even from Ishmael.

This pagan influence fights against having God's ways of living and His laws established or merely continued in the modern Edom.

A church weak in faith cannot remove the pagan influence from itself or the nation. The growth of the pagan influence would also not be significantly hindered by adding respectable forms of godliness or empty religious practices. Therefore this pagan influence has grown deeper and broader in every Edom during the many years since the generation corresponding to Esau.

As a result, today the vision of a truly "Christian nation" needs to be restored in every modern Edom, and the Judeo-Christian part of the Edom's heritage and culture needs to be greatly strengthened.

Of course, imperfect Christian forefathers also contributed some ungodly influence to a modern Edom's foundation, even like Isaac and Esau did to ancient Edom. Some non-Christian forefathers also helped to contribute some Judeo-Christian principles to it. This reality does not disturb the basic pattern in a modern Edom's foundation and heritage. The good part is laid not by mere "good people", but by God's power.

The Strangers and Foreigners to the Brother Nations in Ob. 11

*Because of violence to **your brother Jacob, you** [Edom in v. 1] will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever. On the day that **you stood aloof**, on the day that **strangers** carried off his wealth, and **foreigners** entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem – **you too were as one of them.** (Ob. 10-11).*

As we have seen, the brother nations in Ob. 10 were ancient Edom and Judah near 600 BC, and modern Edoms and Israel today. The key feature common to these brothers and different from all other nations at both times is their national foundation and heritage from Abraham's descendants of promise in each nation's past. This is the way that the nations in v. 10 are brothers.

Eph. 2:12 provides the identifying features of the “strangers” and “foreigners” in Ob. 11 as it describes ancient Gentiles:

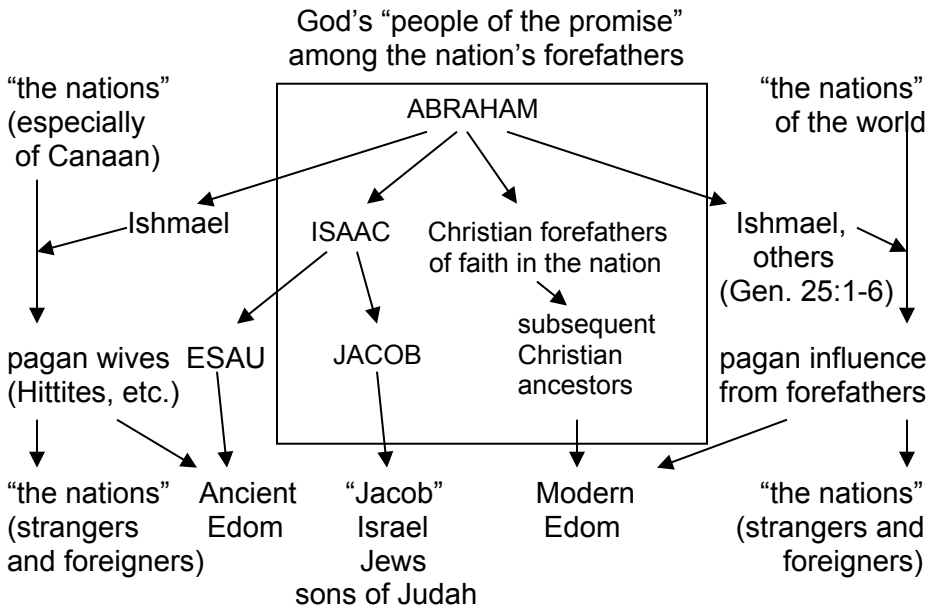
...excluded from the commonwealth of Israel [foreigners], and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph. 2:12).

In Ob. 11 we see strangers and foreigners executing aggressions against Israel while Edom “*stands aloof*”. These nations are not directly related to God’s people of promise and would have no inheritance in them – truly foreigners. These nations are also strangers, not knowing or recognizing the God of the Bible, His people, or His covenants of promise. And these nations do not have a Judeo-Christian foundation or heritage that would have been established by God’s people of the promise in the past generations of the nation.

Behold: the aggressive Islamic-Arabic nations today in Ob. 11! Although these nations against Israel were exposed to Christianity long ago, by now each government has systematically wiped out the Judeo-Christian part of the nation’s foundation. This religion totally rejects the idea that God works through His promises to Isaac or to Christians.

A Clear Pattern for Ancient and Modern Edoms

A diagram on p. 16 lets us study this whole analogy of ancient and modern Edoms – lets us see many corresponding key features in both kinds of Edoms. We can see the corresponding national heritages of the Edoms in the upper three fourths of the diagram, which involve the corresponding relationships of the Edoms to “the nations” and to God’s people of the promise in each Edom’s own past generations. In the bottom fourth we can see the corresponding relationships of the Edoms to “the nations” and to God’s people of promise at the two times for the fulfillment of Obadiah’s prophecy.



Here is a good way to examine this diagram. Begin at the center and read down to Abraham (in the box representing God's people of the promise). Then examine the left half of the diagram, which was fulfilled near 600 BC. Then examine the right half, where the bottom line applies today. Then compare the two halves at each level.

The Situation in Ob. 10-11 Precisely Repeated Today

The meanings of the terms in Ob. 10-11 (p. 14-15) and the parallel situations described by this Scripture are displayed in this diagram. We can see that God regards the nations which have arisen out of His people of the promise to be "brother" nations before Him, even if they don't act like brothers or desire this relationship. Ancient Edom and Judah treated each other as brothers even less than many Gentile "Judeo-Christian nations" with Israel. The third kind of nation is attacking Jacob and is called "strangers and foreigners" to the nations

descended from Abraham through God's people of the promise. This precisely describes Islamic-Arabic nations. All of this is discussed on p. 9-15.

Today the situation in Ob. 11 is occurring for the first time in 2600 years. Every nation of each kind in both the diagram and Ob. 11 is doing precisely what v. 11 shows for the first time since 2600 years ago. Edom's role in the attack against Jerusalem and Judah near 600 BC provides a pattern of modern Edoms in the controversy over Israel. This situation sets up all modern Edoms to be tempted to cause their own judgment in the way that both Esau and ancient Edom fell.

How did ancient Edom fall? It followed in the ways of Esau and his wives, repeated his failure from its own lack of faith in the true God, and received God's just judgment of total annihilation from being a people or a nation. When nations that were strangers and foreigners to God's people of promise came against Edom's brother nation from Jacob, Edom was standing aloof from Jacob and simultaneously had hearts that were "*as one of them*" (Ob. 11c). Furthermore, ancient Edom would soon turn savagely against Jacob, which established the Edom's own devastating judgment (Ob. 12-15).

When the pressure was on Jacob and Edom, and the value of God's promise to His people could be seen only by faith, ancient Edom arrogantly turned away from God and against His people and toward the nations that did not know God and that were against His people.

This is precisely what any modern Edom must not do in the same kind of situation today.

Jesus Great Commission Before He Returns: National Discipleship

"Today" is very important in Scripture because it is this time that leads up to Jesus' return. Ob. 15a refers to this special time for the

fulfillment of Obadiah's whole prophecy: *"For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations."* The Day of the Lord on a nation has already come on many nations and will come on other nations before reaching a climax at the global Day of the Lord. Biblical examples of the Day of the Lord on a nation include ancient Israel near 750-720 BC, Judah near 600 BC, Judea near 30-70 AD, ancient Edom and the other nations in Amos 1-2, and many others.

The Day of the Lord on a nation is the time when He makes it fully accountable to Him for its sins. As with individuals, every nation has earned an awful just judgment, because each nation has done some awful things that cannot be cleansed from their record by better actions in other situations. Individual people live forever and can be made fully accountable in God's judgment after their lives on earth. But a nation must be fully accountable on earth – the only time a nation exists.

Much Scripture and God's justice convince me that every nation will have its Day of the Lord before the Lord Jesus returns: its time to be fully accountable for the sins that are still on its record. As with individuals, God has created a way in Christ Jesus to be both just and merciful as He justly judges nations. His just judgment will not necessarily be awful for a nation that has sinned awfully.

Here is the way: *"and He Himself [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world"* (1John 2:2). On the cross the world's Creator – God the Son – paid the just penalty for the sins of His creation, and not for believers only. As with any person, Jesus paid the just penalty deserved by any nation that joins itself to Him and becomes a part of His people. He can justly remove all sins from a nation's record, so that its just judgment can be a great blessing instead of a curse. Even if many individuals in a nation refuse to repent and receive Jesus (so that they choose to pay

the eternal price for their sins and sinfulness), their contribution to the nation's sin problem has been justly covered by Jesus' sacrifice.

Any person who joins himself to the Lord Jesus and becomes one of His people is aptly called His disciple. This is also true for any nation, and Zech. 2:11a shows that many nations will become His national disciples: ***"Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people."*** The context describes this time when God's people should flee from the land of the north and escape from the daughter of Babylon (v. 6-7) – now and not the millennium, when Jesus has subdued the idolatry and rebellion of the nations (how the full context of v. 11 – Zech. 2:6-13 – applies in our day is discussed on p. 148-152 in Apx. 4).

When a nation chooses to join itself to Jesus and become a part of His people, His Great Commission to His personal disciples to make disciples of all the nations before He returns is fulfilled for that nation:

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them [His disciples], saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the **nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matt. 28:18-20).

As some people refuse Jesus' payment for their sins, some nations will refuse God's loving grace to become His national disciple. What enables a nation to make its vital decision for Jesus instead of rejecting Him? The preparation by the Christians in the nation.

Rival Cultures in Modern Edoms: One Chosen, One Rejected

Though compromised versions of a Judeo-Christian culture and a pagan culture have co-existed in each modern Edom for a long time, they conflict with each other and take the Edom in different directions.

In this time leading up to Jesus' return, each modern Edom must choose between these mutually incompatible cultures as it makes its crucial decision for or against national discipleship to the Lord Jesus. This is deciding how it is related to God and His people of promise in the nation today: Christians and Jews. The key issue is whether the nation wants to join itself to Jesus Christ and thereby strengthen its weak Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage, or else to reject this opportunity in order to become like a stranger or foreigner nation. Ob. 11c concisely describes the choice of an unrepentant Edom: "*You too were **as** one of them.*" Edom was like a stranger and foreigner nation.

The U.S. provides a good example of this conflict, and it is generating many of the most controversial issues within the U.S. today. This conflict is often called "Biblical Christianity vs. Secular Humanism". A basic goal of the latter can be described as making our nation to become like it had never received the Judeo-Christian part of our heritage, so that our nation is like a stranger or foreigner. Ob. 11c gets to the heart of this war tearing the U.S. apart, for we are near the point of choosing which national culture will prevail.

Ob. 11c is discussed much further in Chapter 9.

The Warning in the Parable of the Wedding Feast

In the parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt. 22:1-14), many people decline the king's invitation to the wedding feast for his son. At first all were unwilling to come, and with a later invitation many mistreated or killed the inviters while others continued to ignore it. The king slew the murderers and did not let the other rejecters in with the new guests.

This parable shows the privileged calling, natural attitudes (that is, attitudes not affected by faith in God), natural responses, and the consequent judgment of unrepentant modern Edoms among the

nations in our day.

In this time leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus, God gives Gentile nations a special grace to join themselves to Him by faith. Like Judea at the time of Jesus, God's word and ways have had many generations to take root in a modern Edom. Like Judea, God gives modern Edoms the first opportunity and responsibility among nations now to receive the "wedding feast" which God provides for His chosen nations. Like Judea, an unrepentant Edom would not be bothered or distracted from its way by His invitation – people in the U.S. now tend to stumble in this way. Some modern Edoms will persecute or even kill God's servants who bring His invitation to these Edoms (this is predominantly a future development described in Ob. 13).

Like Esau and unlike the nations that begin the aggressions on Israel, a modern Edom that stumbles would despise and reject its privileged opportunity to receive its own inheritance from God through His people of the promise. Like Esau, this Edom has an unchecked appetite for material comfort and convenience, which causes the Edom to choose objects of temptation instead of faithfully holding on to God's invisible promise: the Edom's inheritance in Christ Jesus through His believers. Like Esau, the Edom does not appreciate the value of its inheritance, which can be seen only by faith.

Both this parable and Ob. 16 (Chapter 11) show that after modern Edoms make their decisions, God will give other nations an opportunity to receive the blessing of national discipleship to the Lord Jesus that unrepentant modern Edoms would arrogantly disdain and refuse. The good news is that modern Edoms still have the grace to repent and be saved by Jesus (Chapters 11-15), but I do not know of any Edom that is moving in this direction now.

A Conclusion about Ancient Edom and Modern Edoms in Obadiah

We have seen that a nation today with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations is like ancient Edom in their corresponding national foundations, heritages, and development:

- * their corresponding relationships with God's people of the promise in past generations (Abraham, and either Isaac or a modern Edom's Christian forefathers);
- * their corresponding relationships with their brother nation from Jacob in the two times for the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy (both 2600 years ago for ancient Edom and Judah, and today for modern Edoms and Israel);
- * their coming to similar "points of decision" as to whether or not the Edom would become like a stranger and foreigner to God's people;
- * their having the same characteristic weaknesses (the lack of faith, a consequent lack of vision of the unseen things of God, and an unchecked appetite for the comfort of material things) that lead to destruction if they are not corrected; and
- * their having the whole situation of Ob. 11 remarkably develop again in intricate detail for the first time in 2600 years (this includes some impending future events for some modern Edoms).

The situation of Ob. 11 progresses through v. 14. In it the modern Edom is tempted to seal its turning away from God by turning against Jacob in its time of great need – just like ancient Edom did.

For all these similarities, I call such a nation today a "modern Edom". This name is not a loose fit for a modern nation with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations, but is a most descriptive and instructive name for every such nation at this time when Obadiah's prophecy is being fulfilled again in amazingly precise ways.

Chapter 3

ARROGANCE: KEY INIQUITY OF THE U.S.

“The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to earth?’ Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord. (Ob. 3-4).

We are now ready to consider what Obadiah shows the U.S. and other modern Edoms verse by verse. The arrogance in Ob. 3a is a warning to every modern Edom, but Ob. 3b-9 is so specific to the U.S. that it normally does not apply to other modern Edoms. In Chapters 3-5 I shall discuss Ob. 2-9 for the U.S., and believers in another modern Edom can easily see what fits their nation from this discussion.

V. 3a shows the underlying iniquity that led to further sin in ancient Edom and provoked its national judgment. Arrogance will do the same to any Edom if it does not repent. The Hebrew word for arrogance means pride, presumption, and lack of fear of God, which causes a self-exaltation that defies Him. Arrogance causes a nation to despise God’s word of truth and reject His ways of living. In the Bible this presumption often developed during an apparent freedom from God’s judgment, and without repentance this consistently grew into further sins and a rebellion that caused a very forceful judgment.

The arrogance of Edom sets it up for being deceived, because it cuts itself off from the only One who can both reveal the vital truth to it and protect it from the schemes that Satan has been setting up against it for generations. Prov. 13:10 says: *“Through presumption [the same*

Hebrew word] *comes nothing but strife, but with those who receive counsel is wisdom.*” The contrast here shows the barrier that this arrogance provides to receiving the much-needed wisdom from God.

How does this apply to the United States? The U.S. has made and is set up to make important decisions about crucial issues without respecting what God's word says about them. Our arrogance is already causing the U.S. to be terribly deceived about an ambush, about Israel and its God, and toward foolishly choosing to be like a “stranger or foreigner” to the true God and to His people of promise. The latter two deceptions lead the U.S. directly into committing judgment-provoking sins against Jacob and Christians. We shall see all of this as we go through Obadiah.

Ob. 7-9 can show that the United States will be deceived further and will lack understanding even more if our nation continues in its arrogance until its day of judgment – the Day of the Lord on the U.S.

Ob. 3b: the Conditions Enabling Arrogance to Blossom in the U.S.

Ancient Edom was protected by an inaccessible mountain, which enabled people to dismiss the possibility of being invaded by a ruthless foreign power. Therefore Edom said in its heart, *“Who will bring me down to earth?”* The people trusted in their nation's ability without God to protect them from any national enemy, so that they did not fear Him. This arrogance led ancient Edom into further sins and lawlessness, and eventually sealed its fierce just judgment from God.

Likewise, the U.S. has long been secure about invasions because of inaccessible borders and military strength. This enables many people here to believe in their hearts that the U.S. could not be brought down in the near future. Therefore efforts to ignore God and establish practices contrary to His word to us have been alarmingly successful.

Consider how Ob. 3b describes this security of the U.S.: *“you who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to earth?’”*

The two phrases in v. 3b refer to the natural defense that ancient Edom had, but they also are excellent metaphors for two special blessings that God has granted the U.S.

“In the clefts of the rock” describes the long-term national security from being conquered in an invasion, which has nurtured arrogance in the U.S. The only real difference is that the U.S. received its shelter from strong national enemies by inaccessible oceans, and ancient Edom by an inaccessible mountain. For over one hundred years God has given our nation an easily defensible coastline and friendly or co-operative neighbors, and now the U.S. has awesome nuclear weapons in addition to a highly respected and well-equipped military.

As in v. 3b and unlike most modern Edoms, the U.S. has grown arrogant from having a natural defense that gives an exceptionally great national security, a shelter from a tangible threat of being invaded and stripped by a national enemy.

“In the loftiness of your dwelling place” is a good metaphor for “the exalted position of the U.S. among the nations”, which feeds our arrogance and causes us to think that no one can bring us down.

Because of our long-term national security and exaltation, many people here think in their hearts that we can make our own decisions about issues like abortion or policies toward Israel without bothering to consult God’s word about them. Arrogance has deceived these people into not considering that we can be brought under a horrible slavery if we choose to ignore God and His word, and so they ignore Him.

For example, many fear awful terrorist strikes, but so many have a striking lack of fear that our arrogance against God would cause us to

be brought down from our lofty standards of living – that is, to be stripped by a brutal nation as Ob. 5-6 describes. Many people do not believe in their hearts that any nation can get past our military might and defenses to gain control over us, and then to forcefully remove our food so thoroughly that we would be starving – literally!

Arrogance from a great national security has caused perhaps a majority of the people of the U.S. to say in their hearts: “Who will bring us down to earth?” What other nation has this basis for asking this question? What other modern Edom has had this security and strength in the last 60 years?

The One Who Will Bring Down an Unrepentant United States

Ob. 4 is God's promise to bring down the arrogant nation, even if it could accomplish its wildest dreams: *“Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord*” (Ob. 4).

Notice how perfectly this fits an arrogant U.S. The U.S. has been a leader in space travel and has boasted much about it (a disaster in 1987 shut down a lot of the boasting). But “though we set our nest among the stars”, from there the Lord will bring us down.

Even if other nations lack the natural strength to capture the U.S. without being destroyed themselves, the Lord would enable them to bring us down as an instrument of His just judgment – if we keep our iniquity by refusing to repent and turn to Him.

God used ruthless world powers to judge ancient Israel, Judah, and Judea. As in those cases, the real issue is not whether the U.S. is better or worse than our instrument of judgment, but whether or not we refuse our own opportunity to repent and turn to God. The time for many other nations to “repent or be judged” will come later.

Habakkuk explains, and Jer. 37:7-10 and Amos 2:13-16 illustrate this principle: God often raises up mighty, wicked, and idolatrous nations to judge seemingly less wicked nations that refuse their own callings to repent. This principle should not surprise believers. As with a nation, each person must repent by a time that God sets just for him, lest he die without Jesus while some “more wicked” people continue to live, and afterward repent and receive Jesus for their salvation.

The Cultivation of Arrogance in the U.S.

For many years a major political movement in the U.S. and other modern Edoms has embodied this Hebrew word for arrogance. This movement is empowered by a spiritual power with the same name.

“Secular Humanism”, working through organizations like the ACLU, has vigorously pushed for many political actions in the U.S. that help to estrange people from the God of the Bible. This movement seeks to remove from public life the calling upon God and the official mention of God, to establish practices like abortion and pornography (in the name of choice, rights, or free speech), and to establish lifestyles alien to the God of the Bible. The spirit behind this movement also presents a world-view without God and replaces Him by “mankind”, which is presented as the pinnacle of evolution and as the only object worthy of life-service and dedication.

In short, Secular Humanism works to sever the relationship of the U.S. to the God of the Bible – to declare our national independence from Him! This is the essence of the arrogance of Ob. 3: many people in the U.S. presume that we are free to make our own choices about lifestyles and abortion while dismissing God’s word about them. His word is readily available in the U.S., but an arrogant nation despises His word and rejects His law without fearing the consequences.

The Church's Role in Our National Arrogance

During our long time of national security, the spirit behind secular humanism cultivated arrogance in the U.S. Christians here have also allowed it to develop by our own arrogant negligence (like in 1Cor. 5), because we could have used the power available in Jesus to disarm this spiritual power and demolish its deadly work. But it infiltrated the U.S. Church and made it largely ineffective, so that this movement has grown into a huge enemy of God's work to save people and the nation.

We have been like the church in Sardis in Rev. 3:2: ***“Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.”*** Most of us believers in the U.S. have not had any idea about God's calling for us to disciple the U.S. to our Lord Jesus in our day: our deeds are quite incomplete and we need to wake up to Jesus.

Arrogant negligence of the Church in the U.S. has caused it to be blind to arrogance in and around us and to not know what God would have His people do to correct these great problems. This is like the lukewarm church in Laodicea. Jesus tells this church in Rev. 3:15-17:

*¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and **blind** and naked.*

In v. 18 Jesus advises this church to *“buy from Me gold refined by fire...and eye salve to anoint your eyes **so that you may see.**”*

When the Church in a nation corporately becomes arrogant like the lukewarm church in Laodicea, the blind church cannot see the developing arrogance in the nation. This has happened in the U.S. Being arrogantly complacent with a sick relationship with God, the

nation's Church cannot see its own shortcomings and cannot correct them by God's power. Then the Church cannot fulfill the requirements of 2Chron. 7:13-14 for His healing the land (this promise shows what is needed to truly heal the U.S. and is examined in Chapter 13).

The first requirement of v. 14 for a land to receive God's healing is for His people there to humble themselves. This includes repenting of their own complacency. Believers must correct our own arrogance before we can remove the arrogance from the nation by God's power. God's promises to us believers show clearly that He makes His power available to the Church to do these things.

One of God's solutions for the awful lukewarmness described in Rev. 3:15-17 comes by the U.S. Church's repentance and obedience of faith without the devastation of the land. The Church in the U.S. still has an opportunity to be like the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13) and use a little of the power available in Christ (v. 8) to bring the U.S. to receiving Him. This would keep it from a devastating just judgment that ultimately comes on all of the nations that refuse to become one of His disciples before Jesus returns (p. 17-21).

Rev. 3:18-21 gives a glimpse into another solution. In v. 19 Jesus tells this church: *"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."* Jesus will spit the lukewarm church out of His mouth (v. 16, p. 30), but in love He disciplines individuals in the church for repentance. Out of this remnant refined by fire can come a church that is "hot" toward God.

If the Church in the U.S. does not repent enough or soon enough to enable the U.S. to repent of its arrogance as a nation, then our national judgment would bring the fire of persecution to God's people. People can be lukewarm only if it does not cost much to be a believer: if it might cost everything on earth, then each person will choose to be

hot or to be cold. Those who realize that their entire being is found in Jesus will strive to stay with Him (as Peter and the disciples did in John 6:68-69). Church members who are doing “the right things” for the sake of prestige, selfish gain, or other bad reasons will have these rewards removed or have the cost to get them become far too high.

Therefore if the Body of Christ in the U.S. does not repent before its Day of the Lord or “critical time of decision”, then God will perfect the remnant of His people through the national judgment. God will purge the U.S. Church of its impurities, so that a remnant would accomplish what the corporately lukewarm church failed to accomplish by not fully obeying in the more subtle conditions of prosperity. God will fulfill His prophecy in Ephesians 3-4 (Chapters 14-15) to perfect or mature the whole Body of Christ by one means or another before He returns for it. His corporate people will be glorious in every land, but this might not come soon enough to bring the land to repentance and salvation in Christ.

At this point I want to speak personally to you the reader about Chapters 4-15. The national devastation from a just judgment of the national sins of an unrepentant Edom in Ob. 2-18 is discussed in Chapters 4-10. This is a heavy word, even like death and hell are heavy words to people who refuse to repent. If you already know that your modern Edom and its believers desperately need to repent and turn to God in truth, and if you know what God wants you to know about the issues in Ob. 5-18 for unrepentant Edoms, then you could go directly to Chapters 11-12 for the profound applications of Ob. 15-21 to repentant modern Edoms. (The “Key Insights” on p. 165-171 provide a quicker way to see highlights or conclusions in Chapters 4-11, but with less explanation). Believers do need to understand and move into God's provisions to heal our land in Chapters 12-15.

Chapter 4

A JUST JUDGMENT OF AN ARROGANT U.S.

⁵“If thieves came to you, if robbers by night – O how you will be ruined! – would they not steal only until they had enough? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings? ⁶O how Esau will be ransacked, and his hidden treasures searched out!” (Ob. 5-6).

Ob. 5-6 describes the national judgment of an arrogant U.S. – if we refuse to repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first part of Ob. 5 shows the general nature of the judgment on the U.S. Notice that the national judgment is compared to thieves stealing, not terrorists destroying. This is one of many indications in Obadiah and the rest of the Bible that the national judgment of an unrepentant U.S. is a very brutal national enslavement. Moreover, the conquerors of an unrepentant U.S. are contrasted to robbers and thieves with the suggestion that our ruthless conquerors would steal even beyond what they could use. That is cruelty!

Ob. 5b gets more specific: *“If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings?”* This shows the national conquerors of the U.S. as coming and removing our characteristically abundant food, to the extent that nothing is left for us.

This situation is plausible. Deliberately induced starvation is a proven weapon of ruthless rulers against a resistant people: in the Ukraine in the USSR in the 1930s, and in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Cambodia. Reports show that in the Ukraine, Soviet soldiers went into houses to utterly destroy all the food in the region, while leaving many people alive to compete with each other for the almost nonexistent

food in that major agricultural region of the USSR. This produced a massive starvation that killed many millions of people.

Ob. 6 reinforces v. 5 and adds another specific feature: "*O how Esau will be ransacked, and his hidden treasures searched out!*" What are the "hidden treasures" of modern nations? Certainly one treasure of a modern nation would be its precious natural resources, and then "hidden treasures" would include the undeveloped natural resources of that nation. Indeed, such natural resources of a modern nation are well described by the term "hidden treasures".

Ob. 6 suggests that in the national judgment of an arrogant U.S., our conquerors would take from our beaten survivors the natural resources that we would not develop even for ourselves.

Removing Our Reliably Abundant Material Blessings

Therefore Ob. 5-6 portrays the utter ravaging of all possessions, and then gets specifically to the two characteristic material blessings that God has given the U.S.: abundant food and natural resources.

Indeed, God has provided food to the U.S. so abundantly for so long that our smug nation pays many farmers to not produce foods. (Isn't this an immoral solution to a complex economic problem?)

Likewise, God has given the U.S. great reservoirs of many kinds of natural resources: modern hidden treasures such as gold, copper, oil, uranium, plus other sources of energy that we could use. These are so plentiful that the U.S. freely chooses to not disturb major portions of our land for the hidden natural resources that might be there. (Although this national choice is not immoral, it touches on a very relevant issue of energy resources from the perspective of Ob. 10-11 and 18-19, and our lack of knowledge is not innocent).

The Little Known Basis for These National Blessings

Let's consider the connotation of "Esau" wherever it is used in Obadiah. As we saw on p. 9-17 in Chapter 2, Esau was the forefather of Edom from Abraham and Isaac, who were God's people of the promise in their two generations. Esau means Edom (Gen. 36:1), but Esau adds a reminder of its forefathers who laid the Judeo-Christian part of its foundation: they were the basis for Edom to receive its abundant material blessings. In Deut. 2:5 God says: *"I have given Mt. Seir to Esau as a possession."* Mt. Seir was the land possessed by Esau's descendants, ancient Edom.

This pattern applies to the U.S. as an Edom today. Our nation now enjoys its abundant material provisions through its relationship as a nation to the Christian forefathers here. In Ob. 6 "Esau" can remind some people and inform others in the U.S. that our bountiful material blessings come through these forefathers. This is a timely reminder for a nation that is actively thinking about rejecting and repudiating its Judeo-Christian heritage that came through them. Because many people in the U.S. don't realize this truth, the U.S. is tempted more strongly to carry out this rejection and repudiation.

Rejecting our Judeo-Christian God and the heritage He provided also removes the foundation for a democratic-republic government to work well. If most citizens get focused on "my needs" or "my group's needs" at the expense of justice and mercy to all, then we lose the ability to govern ourselves well, and will approve unjust laws that feed our greed or envy or other egocentric desires that God identifies as sins. We ignore the cries of the poor and needy who lack the strength to provide for themselves. Or we take the possessions of the rich that we decide have more than they need. But the God of the Bible shows

us to provide compassionately for the poor and weak and outsiders, to refuse to steal or take unjustly, and to *“not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Phil. 2:4).

This Judgment Is Just and Rough

An unrepentant U.S. will decisively reject its Judeo-Christian heritage and repudiate its relationship to God's people of the promise. Therefore the U.S. would no longer qualify for inheriting or possessing these abundant provisions from God through His people – even as ancient Edom became “like a stranger or foreigner” to God and His people (Ob. 11) on its way to having its abundant provisions utterly taken away from those descendants of Esau (Ob. 5-6, 18-19, p. 128).

Ob. 5-6 can provide the U.S. and its Christians the following ghastly picture: alien conquerors come and remove essentially all of the food and natural resources that they can. This ravaging is beyond what they want, and cruelly they seek to leave nothing at all for the survivors. Examples show that this starvation could last years.

A Conclusion for the United States

Ob. 5-6 begins with a general description of the treatment of our people in our national judgment and then gets specifically to the two reliably abundant material blessings that God has provided the U.S. as a nation: our food and natural resources. Once again, when we get specific in Obadiah, we find a custom fit for the United States.

This judgment is very appropriate and just for an arrogant U.S. If secular humanists get their way in this country, we will not only refuse to thank God for greatly blessing us, but will refuse to acknowledge that He has even given us anything. We will also take ourselves out of the inheritance that would have been ours through God's people here. We shall justly lose huge blessings that He had faithfully provided us.

Chapter 5

THE AMBUSH OF AN ARROGANT U.S.

“All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border, and the men at peace with you will deceive you and overpower you. They who eat your bread will set an ambush for you. (There is no understanding in him.)” (Ob.7).

Ultimately blindness comes with arrogance, because this prideful presumption cuts people off from the God who gives real knowledge and understanding of the truth. This is the Edom’s condition in v. 7-9. They reveal the means of God’s judgment of an arrogant U.S. while describing some prominent features of the U.S. global foreign policy since World War II – and not before then!

The U.S. Global Foreign Policy: History

Ob. 7a says: *“All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border.”* The “men”, or nations, allied with us did cause our soldiers to be sent to the borders formed by both the Iron Curtain and the Bamboo Curtain on a chronic basis, in several undeclared wars, and in specific crises.

This is not a reproof for helping South Korea or other nations to escape or delay their national judgment. This Scripture does help to specify the U.S. today, which systematically avoided alliances before 1941, but then abruptly switched into making alliances the cornerstone of our foreign policy to this day. Therefore Ob. 7a did not apply to the U.S. before the 1940s, but describes a key feature in our interaction with other nations since then.

Surprise

Ob. 7a is active history. The rest of Ob. 7-9 prophesies what will happen to the U.S. if we refuse to repent. V. 7b and 7c reveal that an arrogant U.S. will get deceived, ambushed, and overpowered.

*“The men at peace with you will **deceive** you and **overpower** you”* (Ob. 7b). This is a timely Scriptural warning for us to beware of being deceived by men who seem to be at peace with us, but who have themselves been deceived by the devil to do his will. These deceivers can include Russia, China, other “stranger and foreigner” nations like Saudi Arabia, some more surprising nations, and arrogant people in the U.S. – including some government leaders and/or the TV and news media establishments – who deceive us into making deadly choices contrary to God’s words for us. The overpowering can be a devastation or be an overpowering of our better judgment from God, but this too ultimately leads to devastation.

Statements in Ob. 1 and 2 confirm this picture in v. 7b: *“An **envoy** has been sent among the nations saying, ‘Arise, let us go **against her for battle**’”* (Ob. 1b). This suggests a conspiracy among nations against Edom, which is not aware of it. Ob. 2 adds: *“...You [Edom] are **greatly despised**.”* And Ob. 7c adds the punch line to the U.S. global foreign policy: *“They who **eat your bread** will set an **ambush** for you.”*

Consider: out of all nations of all time, the U.S. is surely one of the greatest suppliers of grains for bread to other nations, including to Europe after World War II, to China, and to the USSR. Also consider that an effective ambush will not be fully confirmed before it is sprung. Therefore as we briefly discuss potential situations in this and the next section, we cannot expect the current visible situation to provide a firm confirmation of them. In these sections a reader may correctly think, “This is no problem”, but do not discard the truths in Ob. 7 and 1-2.

Notice a few recent developments in the U.S. The manufacture of essential products (like shoes, etc.) has been removed from the U.S. especially to China, but also to Mexico and other places. Also, oil is not only used for U.S. transportation, but also for the manufacture of all plastics. The U.S. has become an economy that does not manufacture key products and a population that removes leaders whom it blames for relatively mild economic problems. Our trade imbalance is already causing us to lose some of our “possessions”, but we are kept from feeling most of the consequences of this entrapping loss until it is too late to rescue ourselves – even like in an ambush!

Notice also that TV networks and the established news media have demonstrated their arrogance and their ability to help people to focus on economic problems and forget other key issues. Hollywood and TV have worked for decades to undermine Biblical morality with all of the arrogance contained in that Hebrew word in Ob. 3.

Is the U.S. ready to do without Arabic oil for a long time in order to defend Israel against their united aggressors in Ob. 10-11? If these aggressors can enlist the support of other major oil exporters or China or Russia, is the U.S. population ready to trust Jesus and help all the helpless with greatly reduced supplies? Ob. 1 suggests a conspiracy like this, and the major media would most likely continue to be arrogant. If the U.S. fails to truly support Israel in a situation like this (Ob. 10-11, Chapters 6-9), then the devil is ready to take our nation down the road of much further sin in Ob. 12-14 and a resulting national destruction of Ob. 15-18 (Chapter 10). The horror of Ob. 5-6 (Chapter 4) by the ambush of Ob. 7 could come at any time along this road.

The healthy response to all of Obadiah, especially v. 1-2 and 7, is not to become paranoid, but instead to seek God and His word for direction. This section can help us see how far short of where we need

to be in perhaps the very near future. True believers in Jesus greatly need to help others to see, know, and receive Him, so that they too can receive His life and exercise true faith in very difficult situations.

Russia May Lead the Ambush on the U.S.

A broader view of God's word about nations today in the Bible may give us further insight into the deceptive ambush of Ob. 7b-c. As discussed briefly in Apx. 4 and more fully in *God's Just Judgment of a Nation* (its PDF file is free at www.lulu.com under "james tarter"), Joel, Amos, and Jonah provide an especially meaningful context of Obadiah in the Bible. Together they form a coherent unit describing the just judgment of nations in our day in addition to specific ancient nations.

Joel provides the pattern and general principles for every nation in our day, but this comes through some figurative language like locusts. In Amos (the next book), God provides ancient Israel to illustrate how the principles of Joel are worked out for nations that refuse to repent before its devastating national judgment.

Joel 2:20 calls the potential instrument of national judgment "the northern army". The U.S. could also easily call Russia "the northern army", which has been a crushing instrument of national judgment on many nations in the last century. Amos 5:19 calls the instrument of national judgment on the unrepentant nation a "bear". The bear is a national symbol of Russia. And for a role in Ob. 7 on the U.S., Russia (or the USSR) historically has been a notable eater of the U.S. bread.

Surely Russia is a potential leader in the devastating ambush of an unrepentant U.S. Russia does not need its great strength to judge a U.S. that refuses to repent at God's final callings. In Ob. 4 (p. 26) the Lord declares that even if we set our nest among the stars, from there He will bring us down.

The situation in Jer. 37 captures the heart of what is happening today involving the U.S. and its potential instrument of judgment. God was near the end of calling Jerusalem to repent. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (the Chaldeans) served as His instrument to justly judge many nations near 600 BC. Babylon was given great strength to be this instrument, but did not need its great strength to ransack a Jerusalem and Judah that refused to repent. In Jer. 37 Babylon's siege of Jerusalem was lifted, and during this time the Lord told them:

*Thus says the Lord, "Do not deceive yourselves, saying, 'The Chaldeans will surely go away from us,' for they will not go. For **even if you had defeated the entire army of Chaldeans who were fighting against you, and there were only wounded men left among them, each man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire**" (Jer. 37:9-10).*

It is this way in the ambush by God's instrument of national judgment now. Its strength is not the crucial issue, but our refusal to repent is. With or without allies, Russia could spring quite an ambush on the U.S., and so could other key nations.

The Crucial Lack of Understanding of the U.S.

Ob. 3 warns that our heart arrogance would deceive the U.S., and our foreign policy is one of the major areas of deception that Obadiah reveals. The last part of Ob. 7 says: "*There is no understanding in him*" [or, "*of it*"]. Regardless of the specific translation of the last words, this Scripture shows that the U.S. simply does not understand its situation. The picture from Obadiah shows that the arrogance of the U.S. has produced our lack of understanding of our world situation, because we have not been hearing God's insights and wisdom for us with faith.

Our lack of understanding will get worse in an unrepentant U.S.:

*"Will I not on that day," declares the Lord, "**destroy wise men from Edom and understanding from the mountain of Esau?** Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O **Teman**, in order that every one may be cut off from the **mountain of Esau** by slaughter." (Ob. 8-9).*

What does the "mountain of Esau" represent for the U.S. in Ob. 8-9 and 21? Remember (p. 33) that "Esau" in Obadiah should draw our attention to the forefathers who laid the Judeo-Christian part of the U.S. foundation and heritage. And for these three applications to the U.S., "mountain" is a symbol for kingdom or government, even as it used with this meaning in many other verses in the Bible (Apx. 3).

With these meanings, the "mountain of Esau" in Ob. 8-9 refers to the government of the U.S., which arose out of our partly Judeo-Christian foundation and really because of it. This foundation provides a good framework for our government, but the quality of government in practice depends upon the quality of people who staff it. Ob. 8-9 shows that government leaders of the U.S. will not have even ordinary wisdom and understanding when judgment comes on an arrogant U.S.

V. 9 also shows that everyone in our national government will be systematically slaughtered. Most government officials would have been elected by arrogant people and would be among its leaders in arrogance. They also would have been establishing laws and policies to promote further arrogance.

In ancient Edom "Teman" was noted for its wise men and wisdom. The U.S. has likewise established a worldwide reputation for American ingenuity and for mighty men who have produced great breakthroughs when needed. Some examples include developing miniaturized circuits and advanced computers for space technology, producing synthetic rubber in World War II, boldly breaking through the battle lines in World War I, and using the assembly line in factories. In Ob. 9 "Teman"

acknowledges this historical record of the U.S. while showing that our mighty men will utterly fail to live up to their reputation if our nation is still arrogant when its judgment comes.

An Alternative to Ob. 7-9

Ob. 7-9 shows the means of judgment of Edom and precisely fits an arrogantly unrepentant U.S. The picture is alarming. But there is a way for the U.S. to escape this judgment: national repentance through church repentance (Chapters 3, 11-15). Jer. 18:7-8 (p. 7-8) shows that any nation can escape an awful prophecy from God by repenting. If our nation repents and joins itself to Jesus as one of His national disciples, then He will defend and protect the U.S. like He has Israel in our day. Jesus has already paid the just penalty for our national sins (p. 18-19), and the U.S. and its Church will no longer be arrogant, so that we would not need a forceful correction of this terrible sin.

Whether the U.S. is devastated or repents and is saved in Christ, our Father will watch carefully for each person to make sure that He is fully just to everyone: His nature is to be just and to be the Provider, and He will not owe anyone anything when all accounts are settled in eternity. Because of His sacrifice in Jesus for the sins of the whole world (1John 2:2), He can also justly forgive His people and fulfill Rom. 8:28 for each of us: ***“And we know that God causes **all things to work together for good** to those who **love God**, to those who are called according to **His purpose**.”***

A Conclusion to Ob. 1-9 for an Unrepentant U.S.

Ob. 5-6, 9, 10, and 14-18 show that an unrepentant U.S. will have a bloody and catastrophic judgment. Many readers do not need a further description in order to realize the gruesome picture that Ob. 1-9

provides for an arrogant U.S.

If you have read Chapters 1-5, I recommend that Ob. 1-9 be read now with a view of applying this specifically to a U.S. that refuses to repent (Obadiah from the New American Standard Bible is quoted in Apx. 1 on p. 128-129).

Chapter 6

TESTING THE U.S.' HEART TOWARD GOD

“Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be **cut off forever**” (Ob.10).

Violence to Jacob causes any modern Edom’s judgment. Ob. 10 directly says this about Edom, and this entire book can help us to see that all of Obadiah applies to the U.S. as a modern Edom. (Ob. 10-21 is examined in Chapters 6-12 and applies to all modern Edoms. The U.S. is an Edom, so that I can freely use “Edom” instead of “the U.S.” to remind that a statement applies to any Edom as well as the U.S.)

The U.S. commits other sins, but God establishes violence to our brother Jacob as the cause for permanent destruction. Because God is fully just, this basis for judgment will represent the true heart condition, repentance, faith, and righteousness of the U.S. We shall see how.

Indeed, violence to Israel by the U.S. or any other modern Edom would be a result of its arrogant rejection of God and His word. Edoms joined to Jesus won’t turn against Israel. Ob. 18 and related Scriptures will show us how Israel can provide a valid test of any modern Edom’s heart-attitude toward and working relationship with God in our day – before Israel comes to really know Him through its Messiah, Jesus.

Ob. 18: the House of Jacob Will Be a Fire to Edom

Like the rest of Obadiah, v. 18 is especially relevant now:

“Then the **house of Jacob** will be a **fire** and the **house of Joseph** a **flame**; but the **house of Esau** will be **as stubble**. And they will

*set them on **fire** and **consume** them, so that there will be **no survivor of the house of Esau**,” for the Lord has spoken. (Ob. 18)*

The practical meaning of v. 18 is contained in its terms, which other Scriptures can open up for us. In the next three sections we shall see a scriptural basis that the house of Jacob (Israel) is a fire to Edom.

Two Relevant Meanings of “Fire” in Scripture

In the Bible God sometimes uses the term “*fire*” to indicate a test for the purpose of objectively showing whether or not something is acceptable to the Lord. This includes a purifying test, which exposes impurities for their removal, so that an impure thing gets purified. For examples, Peter called the trials that prove a believer’s faith “*testing by fire*” (1Pet. 1:6-7). Paul declared that each man’s works (gold, wood, straw, etc.) will be tested by fire (1Cor. 3:13). And in Mal. 3:2 the Lord compares Himself to a “*refiner’s fire*”. This term is followed by the analogy of refining His priests like gold and silver (v. 3).

When refined by fire, gold ore is melted so that its impurities rise to the surface – exposed and separated for an efficient removal by the refiner. Israel will be a refiner’s fire that reveals an Edom’s purity or brings its impurities to the surface. Exposed impurities can be justly removed by the blood of Jesus, or else provide the basis for a just destruction if the Edom rejects Jesus and thereby holds onto its sins.

God has another meaning of fire in some Scriptures: a consuming national judgment. This is well illustrated by the seven briefly described just judgments on ancient nations in Amos 1-2. After briefly showing that the judgment is just – specifying a sin and saying that there are others – God begins every pronouncement of a national judgment with a promise to send fire upon the nation. Then He concisely describes a specific devastation that shows the nature of this fire on the nation.

Scriptures in this section show us what *“the house of Jacob will be a fire”* can mean in Ob. 18. Now let us see in Scripture and in practice how this fire affects each kind of Edom in completely different ways.

How Edoms That Reject Jesus Become As Stubble for the Fire

Isaiah 5:12-24 shows the arrogance that caused Judah to become as stubble to be consumed by fire and flame. An arrogant modern Edom – including an arrogant U.S. – would create the same nature for itself by doing the same basic things. V. 24 concludes:

Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Rejecting God's law and despising His word get to the heart of the arrogance of unrepentant modern Edoms in Obadiah and in practice. The people regard God's word with contempt, so that they reject Jesus. Like God's people in Isaiah 5:12-24, the people of a Christ-rejecting Edom could get to know His word, but they don't want Him or it or His ways of living for them (His law).

The key word in v. 24 is ***“for”***. Despising God's word and ways causes an Edom's roots in Him and in His people to rot. That causes it to become as stubble to be consumed in the fire of a just judgment. If the U.S. rejects God's law and despises His word, then the U.S. will become as stubble to be consumed by the fire of a just judgment.

“The house of Joseph a flame” in Ob. 18 helps us see how bad this just judgment is. Consider Isaiah 7:8: *“within another sixty-five years Ephraim [the name of the house of Joseph at the time of Isaiah] will be shattered, so that it is **no longer a people**.”* The just standard applied to the unrepentant house of Joseph will be applied to

unrepentant modern Edoms as it was to ancient Edom: any such arrogant nation will be totally destroyed from being a people.

The Fire and Flame Do Not Harm an Edom With Jesus

Isaiah 5:24 accurately describes all modern Edoms that reject Jesus. But as we saw on p. 18-20 of Chapter 2, a modern Edom can join itself to the Lord Jesus in our day and become a part of His people as a nation, and Zech. 2:11a shows that many nations will do this: ***“Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people.”*** Jesus changes the nature of every Edom that stays joined to Him, which changes what the fire does to it.

A second Scripture from Isaiah helps us see how Ob. 18 applies to modern Edoms in Christ differently from those that reject Him:

*When you walk through the **fire**, you will **not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you**. For I am the **Lord your God**, the Holy One of Israel, **your Savior**.* (Isaiah 43:2b-3a).

Israel and the house of Joseph are also a fire and flame to modern Edoms that are joined to the Lord Jesus, but they are not like stubble and are not harmed by the fire and flame in a just national judgment. Instead, they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit and cleansed from all of their sins by the blood of Jesus for His people.

We can easily see how this conclusion is worked out in practice.

The Nation of Israel As a Fire for Every Modern Edom

During this time that leads up to the return of the Lord Jesus, the national enemies of the Holy One of Israel – especially Islamic nations – have made even the mere existence of the nation of Israel to be a fire for all modern Edoms in precisely the ways that we have seen in the previous three sections.

The fire tests every modern Edom's heart-attitude toward and practical relationship with the Lord. Israel actually helps a repentant modern Edom to be purified by bringing the impurities in its heart to the surface like a refiner's fire. There they can be removed by intercession by believers, and by confession, repentance, and faith in Jesus by most people (as briefly explained on p. 48, with more in Chapters 12-15). This kind of modern Edom will not be burnt by the fire.

The same test causes any Christ-rejecting Edom to be consumed like stubble in a just judgment, because the arrogant Edom refuses to remove its sins or sinfulness. Every bad meaning in Obadiah applies to this unrepentant Edom, and it is fully destroyed.

A Specific Example of This Test: How Islamic Oil Can Work

As Israel does what it considers to be necessary to survive and to protect its citizens and the possessions that God has given them to possess now, its aggressive enemies will create subtle deceptions, pervasive lies, devil-inspired temptations, and strong pressures. All of this together will reach deep into the heart of every modern Edom and bring its many sinful tendencies to the surface, because every modern Edom has strong desires for comfort and convenience. They have the potential to become idols: any Edom can be greatly tempted to serve these desires over its allegiance to the true God, the God of the Bible.

More explicitly, if Israel's enemies promise to cut off their oil to any nation supporting Israel, every modern Edom must choose between God or its desires for the comfort and convenience that oil produces (plastics, normal transportation, etc.).

An arrogant modern Edom will have rejected the word of God, which shows the truth about Israel and what the Edom should do about this. It will have severed itself from the Lord Jesus, who provides the

only way for it to escape from being bound by its iniquity. Then this Edom can't remove its sins that surface before holy God and won't be willing to set aside its lust for immediate gratification.

Therefore, when a crisis between Israel and its enemies threatens the comfort and convenience provided by an Edom's abundant oil supply, any arrogant Edom will not seriously try to search through the conveniently provided lies and deceptions for the truth, and cannot stand up against the enormous pressures to turn against Israel from both within and without the Edom. It will be powerless to resist being swept into the full measure of its prophesied sins (Ob. 12-14) by these mighty testings. These sins against Israel provoke and seal an Edom's permanent destruction in God's just judgment (Ob. 10-18).

In contrast, any repentant Edom would be purified of its iniquity in the very same crisis with the house of Jacob. The potential idols of comfort and convenience, which are served by abundant oil, will be set aside as a modern Edom continues to be faithful to Israel when it is attacked. When an iniquity of a repentant modern Edom is exposed by accused actions of the house of Jacob or its enemies, this Edom will receive vital wisdom and understanding from God, will know the truth, will remain faithful to Israel through faith in God and His word, and will be cleansed and purified of its sins and iniquity by the perfect blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

A repentant Edom can do all of this because many of its people will have learned to come before God honestly in tempting situations because of Jesus' loving sacrifice for them. These people know Jesus and His word. They will intercede for their government and for others (Chapter 12). And most of the people in this Edom will know that God is too good and great to let anything cause their nation to defy Him, so that they strongly prefer to repent even if that causes great discomfort.

A Conclusion about Modern Edoms and Israel in Our Day

We have seen how a modern Edom's arrogance would ultimately produce violence to Israel in a very severe oil crisis. In the same crisis a modern Edom that has repented and joined itself to the Lord Jesus can receive and know God's word, be purified, and treat Israel well.

This separation of the two kinds of modern Edoms can take place even before Israel comes to know its Messiah Jesus. What is really tested isn't the faithfulness of a modern Edom to a religion or a people, but is the nation's heart-attitude toward and working relationship with God: the Edom's willingness to hear His inconvenient words and to turn to Him with repentance and faith when the Edom sees its desire to sin in a tempting situation.

Indeed, Obadiah shows that an Edom's arrogance against the true God with His word and laws produces many sins in addition to the one against brother Jacob, but God specifies it as the cause of the Edom's destructive judgment. We've seen how this can be a truly just criterion for the national judgment of a modern Edom, because its violence or else faithfulness to Israel can accurately indicate the heart condition, repentance, faith, and righteousness of the modern Edom.

Chapter 7

TAKING JACOB'S POSSESSIONS

*“On the day that **you** [Edom] **stood aloof**, on the day that **strangers** carried off his [Jacob’s] **wealth**, and **foreigners** entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem – you too were as one of them.” (Ob.11).*

Ob. 11 says that Edom is standing aloof from brother Jacob when “strangers and foreigners” carry out three specific kinds of aggressions against it. This describes exactly what is taking place today with three kinds of nations, and these aggressions are key issues for modern Edoms to handle in their crucial test involving Israel (Chapter 6).

Who Are These “Strangers and Foreigners” Today?

The three kinds of nations in Ob. 10-11 are the nation descended from Jacob, its brother nation Edom, and nations called “strangers and foreigners”. As discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 9-17), today “Jacob” is Israel, and “Edom” is each Gentile nation with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from God’s people of the promise (Christians) in the past generations of the nation. The strangers and foreigners are aggressors against Israel, do not know or recognize the God of the Bible, and have no part in the family of these nations that He calls “brothers” through His covenants of promise.

Notice that Islamic-Arabic nations are aptly described by the terms strangers and foreigners to both Israel and modern Edoms. Those that are aggressors against Israel have no Judeo-Christian foundation or heritage. They are strangers by not really knowing or recognizing God or His people of promise; and they are foreigners by having no part in

His people or His covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12, p. 15). Atheistic-communistic nations are strangers and foreigners in the same ways.

More precisely, both Arabic nations and most Communist nations have been exposed to Christianity. But by now the Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage in each nation have been systematically wiped out, so that they are truly strangers and foreigners to the God of the Bible, to His people of the promise in the past generations of these nations, to Israel, and to Christians – His people of the promise today.

Jacob's Possessions: God's Surprising Priority for Today

Ob. 11 is the first of four verses in Obadiah that explicitly involve Jacob's wealth and possessions in our day:

...on the day that strangers carried off his [Jacob's] wealth... (v. 11);

...do not loot their [Jacob's] wealth on the day of their disaster (v. 13);

...the house of Jacob will possess their possessions (v. 17); and

Then those of the Negev will possess.... (v. 19).

Notice that it is the “strangers” who carry off Jacob's wealth in Ob. 11. At this point modern Edoms merely “*stand aloof*” from Jacob. But this situation changes in an unrepentant Edom: in v. 13 God warns it to not loot the wealth of His people (this includes Jacob) in the day of their disaster.

In v. 17 God declares that Jacob will “*possess their possessions*”. V. 17 also shows that God makes this issue a high priority, because here He brings out three issues that He will not compromise regardless of the world's response – and Jacob's possessions is one of them. (Apx. 5 explains how Ob. 17 specifies three of God's uncompromising priorities for this time leading up to Jesus' return).

It could surprise many believers that “Jacob’s possessions” is one of God’s top priorities for our day. However, the real issue is not possessions, but God’s faithfulness to fulfill His promise at His intended time. Will the intense opposition of aggressive or arrogant nations cause Him to postpone fulfilling His promise that He made over 40 times in His Scriptures for mankind?

In Ob. 17 God lets Christians and Gentile nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation know that He shall be faithful to fulfill this promise when all the rest of Obadiah is being fulfilled, no matter how much opposition Satan can arouse among the nations, and no matter which nations fall by opposing God’s choice on this issue. Psalm 2 clearly shows God’s fierce fury to the wild uproar of rebellious nations.

Then what are the possessions for Jacob to possess in our day? In Ob. 19 God lets modern Edoms and their Christians know key specific lands. Here I give a conclusion needed for discussing v. 11a, and on p. 54-56 we shall systematically examine v. 19. Included in these lands are the territory within Israel’s 1948-67 boundaries, plus the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and territories within the present nation of Jordan. Also, a large part of Jerusalem is in the West Bank.

Ob. 11 Aggressions to Carry Off Jacob’s Wealth Today

Aggressive Islamic-Arabic nations, with strong support from especially the atheistic government of the USSR, have repeatedly come from every side with huge, well-equipped armies to carry off Jacob’s wealth, including the whole land of Israel.

After direct military attempts have failed miserably (even supernaturally), the enemies of Israel have diligently sought any other means to carry off Jacob’s possessions that were gained in 1967 – especially the “West Bank”.

The Record of Modern Edoms in This Aggression

During all of these attempts, no modern Edom has directly carried out this aggression, but has done just as Ob. 11 describes: “standing aloof” or being detached from its brother nation, with various Edoms leaning slightly toward or against Israel in their heart attitudes. In other words, every Edom has had neither a brotherly support for Israel nor a malice comparable to the Islamic-Arabic aggressors.

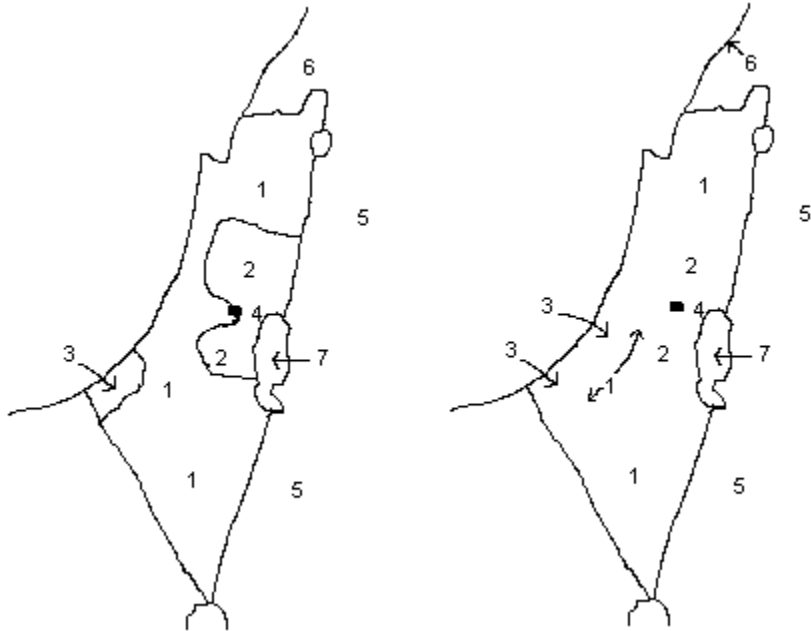
More precisely, modern Edoms have tended to blindly agree with the arguments proposed by the enemies of Israel to justify their aggressions. For example, no Edom has been willing to affirm Israel's right to keep the West Bank, Israel's God-given possession and wealth in our day. Instead, in the U.N. every Edom has been ready to support giving the West Bank to the PLO (or Hamas, etc.) if it will merely agree that the nation of Israel has a right to exist.

While this may seem reasonable, it has been repeatedly proven to be a sham by the PLO's persistent vows to utterly destroy all Israel from its land, and by the PLO's frequent record of lying and breaking agreements when that is to their own advantage. Their religion even specifically allows this kind of lying to “infidels” like Israel.

Specifying Jacob's Inheritance for Our Day

As indicated on p. 53, Ob. 19 identifies some key possessions that provide major issues for modern Edoms and strangers and foreigners today by using names in Biblical times:

Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, and those of the shephelah the Philistine plain; also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead (Ob. 19).



Names Now

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Israel, in
1948-1967 | 4. Jerusalem |
| 2. West Bank | 5. Jordan |
| 3. Gaza Strip | 6. Lebanon |
| | 7. Dead Sea |
- (In names for numbers in the Ob. map,
t = top, m = middle, b = bottom number)

Names in Ob. 19 (and Obadiah)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1t, 2t. Ephraim
and Samaria | 3. Philistine plain |
| 1m. shephelah | 4. (Jerusalem) |
| 1b. Negev | 5t. Gilead |
| 1m, 1b, 2b. (Judah) | 5b. Mt. of Esau
(Edom) |
| | 6. (Zarephath) |

The Negev and the shephelah were major parts of Israel's land at its beginning in 1948, and Benjamin is a tribe descended from Jacob. The Philistine plain is now called the "Gaza Strip", and the territory of Ephraim and Samaria is most of the land area that is now called the "West Bank". Gilead and the mountain of Esau are both located within the present nation of Jordan.

Ob. 19 provides a picture that remarkably describes what has, is, and surely will take place in our day. Israel began with the land area given to it in 1948. Then those within the 1948 borders would possess the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Both of them were obtained in the six-day war in 1967, although Israel has not yet taken full possession

of them, and the demands of the stranger and foreigner nations have kept this issue quite active since then.

Ob. 19 does go further than what is already fulfilled, because it shows descendants of Jacob as possessing Gilead and the mountain of Esau – lands in the present nation of Jordan.

The Upcoming Greater Crisis Over Jacob's Possessions

If the aggressive nations can't accept Israel's gaining of Jerusalem and the West Bank now, consider how outraged they will be when Israel gets these lands in Jordan. Consider also the demanding attitude of most Islamic nations: their religion does not tolerate a defeat like this.

How can knowledge of this unfulfilled prophecy help Christians now? It is vital information for Christians and those modern Edoms that seek to join themselves to the Lord and be a part of His people. Ob. 19 shows what He regards as crucial possessions of Jacob today – during this time of vehemently bitter disputes, subtle deceptions, and conflicting historical and religious claims for these lands. Insight into this future development can help believers in modern Edoms realize the level of faith in God's word that must be established soon in the people of the U.S. or of any modern Edom. Consider these three problems:

* The U.S. is a mighty nation, while Israel is tiny and besieged. This makes it easy for the U.S. to misunderstand the situation described in Ob. 11, and even easier if the U.S. is arrogant. We would arrogantly look with pride at our own natural strength and become indignant when that little upstart nation refuses to take our "reasonable advice", which is contrary to God's word that He has put into their hearts (to possess specific lands, etc.). Notice that up to now, the U.S. has repeatedly demonstrated that it does not understand what God has decided about these lands.

- * Satan will work through his deceived and deceiving instruments in the very arrogant news media of the U.S. and other modern Edoms to lie skillfully about the nature of the aggression, so that Israel will appear as the cruel villain. (Let me give a relevant perspective. Most people in the major news media are think quickly and persuade glibly, and their natural talents help them to be presumptuous and proud. Also, a well-publicized secular survey has shown that very few accept the Bible as God's word. In short, such people embody the arrogance of Ob. 3, so that they are easy prey for the unseen devil to deceive and manipulate. Being deceived, they deceive others by manipulating them into believing their own deceptions. After all, they are "educating the public").
- * The nations that are intensely against God's people of promise from Jacob always put great pressure on modern Edoms to side with them in their fight against Jacob's possessing the lands in Ob. 19.

Arrogance, deceptions, and pressures in upcoming crises will surely push the U.S. and every other modern Edom into directly opposing God's will on one of His uncompromising priorities – unless the nation does exercise the necessary faith in God and His word.

Now these external factors do not make this a sin of "innocent ignorance". The U.S. and other modern Edoms would have refused much opportunity to hear from God and the Bible about His view on Jacob's possessions today. The real problem is the heart-attitude of the modern Edom toward God. Indeed, this is one of the issues in which the arrogance of an unrepentant U.S. would deceive us, and this is totally preventable. Satan will fail in all his mighty efforts in every Edom where believers have been doing their work by God's power before and during such a crisis.

More about Jacob's Possessing These Possessions Now

If you realize that everything in Obadiah is relevant for the U.S. and its Christians now, then you know that this prophecy in Ob. 19 about Jacob's inheritance is also for now (many Christians assume

that it is only for the millennium). But if you have not yet come to this conclusion about Obadiah, then Apx. 5 shows how a combination of six Scriptures from outside of Obadiah also uniquely specify now as the time for the remnant of Jacob to possess this same inheritance.

Chapter 8

THE OTHER TWO AGGRESSIONS TODAY

*“On the day that **you** [Edom] **stood aloof**, on the day that strangers carried off his [Jacob’s] **wealth**, and **foreigners entered his gate** and **cast lots for Jerusalem** – you too were as one of them.” (Ob.11).*

In Chapter 7 we identified the strangers and foreigners today as the Islamic-Arabic nations against Israel, and we began to examine Ob. 11 by considering the practical outworking of the first aggression now: carrying off Jacob’s wealth. Here we consider the practical outworking today of “entering Jacob’s gate”, “entering the gate of the Lord’s people” (Ob. 13), and “casting lots for Jerusalem”.

The Practical Outworking of Entering Jacob’s Gate

The second kind of aggression against Jacob today in Ob. 11 is that foreigners seek to enter Jacob’s gate.

This “gate” was the seat of government of an ancient sovereign people, the normal meeting place of leaders for government business. When *“foreigners entered the gate”* of a sovereign people like Jerusalem of Judah, the foreigners exercised authority in issues (the choice of king, tribute or taxes, etc.) that the government normally decides – if it is free. 2Kings 23:31-35 and 24:10-17 both show this takeover of authority as they record how first Egypt and then Babylon fulfilled Ob. 11 on Judah near 600 BC.

God shows clearly (Chapter 7) that He has given the West Bank to the descendants of Jacob to possess now. Hostile nations used all kinds of pressure to prevent Jewish settlements in the West Bank

Territory while demanding that land for a Palestinian state. What is this? Foreigners were entering Jacob's gate: Islamic nations that have no part in God's promise of this land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are trying to exercise authority there as forcibly as possible at that time – without harming their strategies to ultimately remove Jacob from the entire promised land.

A Truly Serious Aggression

Let me help people in the U.S. realize how aggressive this action is. Consider that God is more explicit about Israel's possession of the West Bank than about the U.S.' possession of California, Arizona, and New Mexico, which were also taken by force. What if our allies supported strong demands and pressures by hostile nations that we not settle in the lightly settled regions of this territory, with a stated goal of giving it to a people who have repeatedly sworn to utterly wipe out our nation? What would be our attitude in the U.S.?

What is the best that any modern Edom has done on the West Bank settlement issue? To "stand aloof from Israel" while showing displeasure about such settlements by Israel. Most modern Edoms have even openly agreed with Israel's enemies against its fully possessing this possession from God.

Also, claims by "moderates" that "now" is not a good time for the settlements simply do not stand up. The conditions for Jacob to fully possess this land won't get significantly better while Islam is producing its dominant influence, because the religion of Islam prevents Israel's most aggressive enemies from compromising on the West Bank issue, or even on Israel's existence in its promised land.

Another example of this aggression is the Lebanon issue, which reached a peak in 1982. Terrorists fired missiles into schoolyards

inside Israel, and Lebanon's government did not do anything about it, and really was not able to do anything effective. Israel took matters into its own hands in order to protect its people within its own borders.

The U.S. should regard this action to be right: the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution says that a basic purpose for the existence of our own government is to "provide for the common defense". Despite this, the U.S. and every other nation condemned Israel (with threats) for work that should have been within Israel's sovereign jurisdiction. Modern Edoms generally failed to support Israel's right and denounced its actions to protect its innocent citizens from this callous slaughter.

Another example of this aggression against Israel is that Gentile nations forcefully told Israel how to handle unrest in the Gaza Strip (some of them covertly crush dissidents in their own lands). Ob. 19 calls this land "the Philistine plain", and it is one of the possessions specified for Israel to possess at this time.

Christians, Beware of This Aggression Against You Also

In Ob. 13 God warns Edom to "*not enter the gate of **My people** in the day of their disaster*". This warns an Edom directly against joining the foreigners when they gather against Israel on issues like the West Bank settlements. But the warning goes beyond that, because God's people also include genuine Christians and Jews within the Edom.

This "entering the gate of God's people" by a modern Edom is its establishment of secular authority over matters that should lie within the sovereignty of church government. In the U.S. free speech from the Bible could be suppressed on hot issues (homosexuality, abortion, etc.) by selected application of IRS audits, huge tax changes, zoning laws, and far stronger measures. History confirms this warning: any Edom that established a state church – the government tried to pick

the religion for everyone – suffered a great spiritual loss. As we shall see, a nation joins itself to Jesus in our day by an overwhelming choice of the hearts of the people there, not by a government edict.

Much could be said about attempts in the U.S. to usurp authority over churches in order to get control over them, even to restrict their obeying God's word. But not here, except to say that these issues are important and do have evil long-range designs by Satan, the deceiving enemy of all people – even his instruments. Ob. 13 warns the U.S. against committing these aggressions against His people, but a more practical effect of this warning at this time is to alert Christians about this scheme of Satan. Then we can recognize such attempts and can know to resist them with the wisdom and power that God supplies.

Who Gets Jerusalem? The Third Aggression in Ob. 11

The third kind of aggression in Ob. 11 against Jacob today is that foreigners are attempting to “*cast lots for Jerusalem*”. This is a way to say that foreigners are presumptuously trying to decide how to divide Jerusalem among themselves.

The Crucial Difference Between “Now” and Before Now

Jesus says: “*Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled***” (Luke 21:24). “Trampled underfoot” in the Bible consistently shows a “trampling with impunity”. (The meaning of this Greek word is best illustrated by Luke 10:19, where it is translated “tread upon” as Jesus tells His 70 disciples: “*I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.*”)

This word in Luke 21:24 shows that God would give various Gentiles – not Jews – a dominant hold on Jerusalem for a limited time.

This verse also shows that God decides who gets Jerusalem, and that Israel is unable to regain it before God ordains this change.

V. 24 has been fulfilled. Through the centuries Edoms, churches, and Islam have fought each other for the possession of their holy places while God has generally kept the Jews in exile from Jerusalem. From 70 AD to 1948 Jews had no real control over what some Gentiles did in or to Jerusalem. Then Israel obtained part of Jerusalem in 1948, and the rest of it was captured in 1967, so that from then on all of it has been solidly under Jewish authority.

Israel's ability to possess Jerusalem proves that God has removed the temporary right of various Gentiles to decide among themselves who can get parts of His chosen city. Therefore "casting lots for Jerusalem" is a completely different kind of issue for Gentiles now.

The Current Response of Gentile Nations to This Change

Gentile nations and Islam are still trying to decide how Jerusalem should be divided, even though God shows that they can no longer make this decision. For example, when Israel's Prime Minister Begin declared that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital 30+ years ago, every Gentile nation refused to locate its embassy in Jerusalem for years. Nearly all still refuse in order to not affirm Israel's claim on Jerusalem. The U.S. still refuses to locate its embassy there, but locates it in the city that the host nation chooses in all other nations. To confirm that the issue is the possession of Jerusalem, the U.S. insists that Israel negotiate Jerusalem, because a large part of it is within the West Bank Territory.

These actions show that the U.S. has refused to stand with Israel by declaring that we regard Jerusalem to be non-negotiable, or even by merely not creating a double standard in locating our embassy. But

the U.S. has also maintained its general support for Israel, so that we are truly standing aloof from Israel – we don't want to take Jerusalem from it, but are unwilling to stand up to oil-rich aggressors about this.

Compared to the U.S., most modern Edoms have more easily agreed with the foreigner nations about Jerusalem. But if this aggression was left up only to modern Edoms, it would die out. All are interested in getting their oil far more than who owns Jerusalem now.

Each Nation's Position in These Aggressions Is Documented

In the United Nations, each nation puts its hypocrisy on record by showing where it stands concerning Israel. Let's consider generally what each kind of nation has already done in all three kinds of aggressions in Ob. 11.

Islamic-Arabic nations have been the real aggressors in each specific aggression of Ob. 11 in our day. Atheistic-communistic nations have actively supported these aggressions against Israel, while nations other than modern Edoms have supported them either weakly or with enthusiasm. In the U.N. modern Edoms usually have stood aloof from Israel by not standing solidly with it when terrorists execute savage aggressions against it and its people.

The Custom Fit of Ob. 11 and 13 for Modern Edoms

V. 13 warns Edom against two of the three aggressions in v. 11: against looting the wealth and entering the gate of the Lord's people, but not against casting lots for Jerusalem. This shows that a modern Edom which refuses to repent will move from standing aloof into being an aggressor against Israel.

Every unrepentant modern Edom really does not desire Jerusalem for itself, and this is unlikely to change in such thoroughly secularized

nations: they do not need to be warned about this. This is one more specific way that God inspired Obadiah to say precisely what pertains to modern Edoms. In Ob. 11 the custom fit is for all modern Edoms now – in contrast to the aggressive foreigner nations now (v. 11) and in contrast to arrogant modern Edoms in the future (v. 13).

Also consider that the aggressions in v. 13 by unrepentant modern Edoms are against God's people, which include Christians within the Edoms in addition to Israel. This is likely to develop in any Christ-rejecting modern Edom, and is another way that everything in Ob. 10-21 precisely fits modern Edoms – and in v. 2-9, usually only the U.S.

A Conclusion to the Aggressions of Ob. 11

We've seen that Ob. 11 precisely describes the present situation with Israel, modern Edoms, and nations that are aptly called strangers and foreigners. This situation will continue to unfold. We've seen from Ob. 19 that it will become even harder to stand with Israel than now, because God will add even more territory for Israel to possess, which will serve to intensify the rage of the aggressors against it.

Chapter 9

THE WAR RAGING IN THE U.S. NOW

*“On the day that **you** [Edom] **stood aloof**, on the day that **strangers** carried off his [Jacob’s] **wealth**, and **foreigners** entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem – **you too were as one of them.**” (Ob.11).*

The tiny comment at the end of Ob. 11 gets to the heart of the war between Biblical Christianity and Secular Humanism raging in the U.S. today: the choice whether or not the U.S. will be like a stranger or foreigner. The war is spiritual with tangible expressions. The comment reveals a crucial choice that every modern Edom makes for choosing destruction and death or else repentance and life in the Lord Jesus. If a modern Edom arrogantly chooses to be “*as one of them*”, then from that point onward it is being hardened against choosing life in Jesus.

Modern Edoms and Strangers and Foreigners Today

The characters in Ob. 10-11 and all Obadiah were introduced and explained in Chapter 2. Here I’ll give a key conclusion. (Be sure to go to Chapter 2 if seeing the firm foundation for this conclusion will help you. The meanings of names are also briefly identified on p. 51-52).

When God says that an Edom was like a stranger and foreigner, He is saying that the Edom became like a nation: (1) which does not recognize or know the true God; (2) which does not know and has no part in God’s covenantal promises to His people of promise; and (3) which does not have a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage.

This Edom had a relationship with God’s people of the promise, knew about the true God, and is given a great opportunity to come to

know Him, but an arrogant Edom rejects it. As a result, such an Edom hardens itself against God, so that even its long exposure to Him is no longer producing its good fruit.

Now that we have seen how Ob. 10-11ab is being worked out in our day (Chapters 6-8), we are better prepared to consider further the meaning of an Edom becoming like a stranger or foreigner. This will reveal the nature of the spiritual war in the U.S.

The Key Issue in the War Raging in the U.S. Now

The war now between Secular Humanism and Biblical Christianity for the nature of the U.S. culture will produce our nation's ultimate choice to become like a stranger and foreigner, or else to become a national disciple of the Lord Jesus in reality (p. 17-20).

We identified Secular Humanism as a movement and spirit on p. 27. It seeks to remove all calling on God or official mention of God in public, and seeks to have the nation endorse lifestyles (homosexuality, promiscuity, etc.), pseudo-family arrangements (unmarried couples as legal families, etc.), and other practices like abortion. The God of the Bible condemns all of these practices. Officially endorsing or approving these things that the true God identifies as abominations is arrogantly rejecting Him and His ways of living for us.

What would the U.S. do if it embraced Secular Humanism? The U.S. would reject the true God, reject its opportunity to have a living relationship with Him as its Lord and King, reject the relevance and authority of His word in the Bible, reject a major portion of His ways of living for us, and reject our nation's inheritance in His people of the promise. Then the U.S. would not know Him or demonstrate positive effects of ever having had a relationship with Him or His people, and the U.S. would practice lifestyles as Godless as many nations without

a Judeo-Christian heritage and foundation. In short, we would truly be as a stranger and foreigner.

How can humanists in the U.S. develop a national foundation without its Judeo-Christian input? The Supreme Court's decision for abortion is a good example. The majority opinion relied on ancient Roman law and completely omitted Judeo-Christian law in establishing the basis for this murderous decision. Therefore this bloody ruling was justified by the heritage from a culture that was pagan in origin and in practice – a culture that accepted infanticide.

The pagan heritage from ancient Greece, Rome, and other pagan cultures can be used as a basis for allowing other humanistic practices that are abominations to God – hindering people from developing Godly character and doing things according to His word.

There are awful consequences if a pagan heritage is established in the U.S. Ob. 12-18 (Chapter 10) shows the lethal sin and judgment that arise out of the national choice to be like a stranger or foreigner.

On the other side, Biblical Christianity seeks to disciple the U.S. to the Lord Jesus, so that the U.S. would join itself to Him and become a part of His people as a nation (Matt. 28:18-19, Zech. 2:11, p. 17-20). This is receiving Jesus as the invisible King of the U.S. (Chapter 12) – receiving the true God and His ways of living for us as a nation.

As we see in Chapters 12-15, believers make the difference: we will equip the U.S. to choose Jesus and His ways of living for us, or will leave the U.S. unwilling and unable to find Him and the life-giving truth.

Clearly the choice for Secular Humanism or Biblical Christianity will reject the other. Will God allow the U.S. to remain uncommitted between Him and Secular Humanism? In our day when the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations (Ob. 15), the answer is no! Each nation will receive or reject its opportunity for discipleship to the Lord

Jesus before He returns. Like Israel at the time of Elijah in 1Kings 18:21, the people of the U.S. must soon choose one or the other.

The War in Every Modern Edom Now

The U.S. is not alone in having a “war to the death” emerging for the culture of the nation. Secular Humanism has established an even greater base in many Edoms than in the U.S., and an Edom becomes like a stranger and foreigner if Secular Humanism does prevail.

Indeed, “now” is the crucial time when each modern Edom is making its heart-decision to become a national disciple of the Lord Jesus – reinforcing the Judeo-Christian foundation and culture there – or else to arrogantly turn away from the true God while establishing a foundation, heritage, and culture like “the nations” of the world.

In contrast to now for every Edom, the crucial time for many other Gentile nations to turn to Jesus is later in our day. This conclusion can be obtained from the parable of the Wedding Feast (p. 20-21) and from Ob. 16 (*“just as you drank...all the nations will drink”* – p. 145-146).

A Deep Change, or Merely an Attitude Against Jacob?

Superficially, an Edom’s “being as one of them” could seem to say much less than the deep transformation of the Edom described here. Could this comment in v. 11 refer to the similar heart-attitudes against only Jacob by both Edom and Jacob’s aggressive enemies?

No! We can see many reasons to believe that the Lord is pointing out the much deeper transformation of an Edom, and not its heart-attitude and actions against only the descendants of Jacob.

First, remember that Edom is only standing aloof when Jacob’s enemies are attacking it. In both Hebrew and English, *“stand aloof”* carries the idea of detaching oneself and keeping a distance between

the two, in contrast to being like a brother to Jacob in this time of great need. We have seen that this accurately describes what all modern Edoms have done – normally without a fierce hatred – when Israel's enemies have sought to carry out those three kinds of aggressions against it with a fierce hatred. The attitudes about Jacob are not alike!

Next, Ob. 11-14 reveals a steady growth of the crucial sin against Jacob in v. 10, and this sin leads an Edom into its justly devastating judgment in v. 15-18. In Ob. 11 an arrogant Edom merely stands aloof (detached) from Jacob. V. 12 shows Edom's developing an attitude against Jacob. V. 13 shows the development of an Edom's aggressive actions against Jacob. V. 14 shows the ultimate development of an Edom's sin: its savagely pitiless violence against Jacob, which causes the Edom's just judgment in v. 15 to be so devastating.

Once again, the hateful heart-attitude of the foreigner nations against Jacob is quite different from the detached heart-attitude of the modern Edoms about Jacob in v. 11 or from the early stages of v. 12. (This second reason is examined more explicitly in Chapter 10).

In the third reason, Edom's becoming as a nation without a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage fits precisely into the picture from all of Obadiah. This deep transformation arises out of Edom's unrepented arrogance and causes an Edom to move decisively toward committing its crucial sin against Jacob, which in turn provokes a devastating just judgment. "Being as a stranger" reveals the source and the nature of this deep change: choosing to reject the true God and to keep a self-imposed estrangement from Him, the only Source of full goodness for mankind. This key choice keeps an arrogant Edom firmly on its road to gross sin and devastation at the last good exit.

Finally, this deep transformation pinpoints what is taking place in every modern Edom when the rest of Obadiah is being fulfilled. We've

already seen that every modern Edom is now getting very close to the point of decisively choosing to be as a stranger and foreigner, or else decisively rejecting that deep change for the deep change involved in being a national disciple of the Lord Jesus in reality.

A Conclusion: The Heart of the Conflict Within Edoms Now

We have seen that an arrogant Edom reaches a critical point in which the Edom becomes like a nation: that neither recognizes nor knows the true God; that neither knows nor has any part in His people of promise either now or in the nation's past; and that has no Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage.

Secular Humanism seeks to establish all these goals for the U.S. and other modern Edoms, while Biblical Christianity seeks the positive goals for the Edom and its people. This war for the national culture has emerged in the U.S. and all other Edoms, and in the near future either one side or the other will prevail as dominant in each modern Edom. This will set the modern Edom firmly on its road to destruction or to life in Christ Jesus.

The key problem is the heart-attitude of the people toward God. A modern Edom is not only making a decision like Esau to forsake God's promises as worthless (p. 11-15), but the nation is also choosing to reject the Lord as its King, even as Israel did in 1Sam. 8:4-7:

*⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; ⁵and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint **a king for us to judge us like all the nations**."....⁷The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have **not rejected you, but they have rejected Me** from being king over them.*

Like Samuel's sons, the Church in an arrogant Edom had not walked in God's ways, but the key is the people's rejection of God in

order to become ***“like all the nations”*** that do not know the true God.

If deceiving arrogance causes the U.S. (or any modern Edom) to decisively embrace Secular Humanism, then the U.S. would be choosing to be like a stranger or foreigner, and our nation will quickly proceed down the path of gross deterioration that Ob. 12-14 describes – even like Nazi Germany did. This is described in Chapter 10. The blessed alternative is also fully contained in Obadiah, but this blessing in v. 15-21 is less obvious and will be discussed in Chapters 11-15.

The Fulfillment of Ob. 11 Now

We have taken three chapters to examine the applications of Ob. 11 in our day. Let us pull these insights together in this section.

V. 11 describes precisely what is occurring today in each of three major types of modern nations: (1) strangers and foreigners carry out aggressions against (2) the nation from Jacob, and (3) every Edom is standing aloof from its brother in his time of great need. Scriptures (in Chapter 2) put many nations today into types 1 and 3, and each nation of each type keeps doing precisely what v. 11 specifies.

V. 11 specifies the three kinds of aggressions now: to take away Jacob’s possessions, to prevent its government from operating sovereignly in domestic matters, and to decide who will possess Jerusalem (all three are explained with examples in Chapters 7-8).

Furthermore, many resolutions in the U.N. reveal every nation’s attitude toward Israel – an Edom cannot hide its choices. Every Edom not supporting Israel in these issues documents its hypocrisy, which Satan will use to call for the Edom’s just judgment (Ob. 15). They are issues in which Israel’s enemies are now able to rally the support of almost all of the nations to their side too quickly and easily.

Every Edom is also close to decisively choosing to become like a

stranger and foreigner after allowing its roots in God and His people to rot (Isaiah 5:24, p. 45). Before this choice, every Edom is getting its best opportunity to join itself to the Lord Jesus as one of His national disciples. In contrast, the calling of many nations to become national disciples of Jesus has not yet approached its peak (Ob. 16).

All these events in v. 11 are vitally important to modern Edoms, and all are taking place simultaneously in our day! I marvel at how much pertinent, intricate detail about every Edom's current national and international situation that God has put into one verse. This is not a vague prophecy: it was not being fulfilled for 2500 years before 1948, and after 1948 it describes what is happening with very many nations, each of which is descriptively labeled in Ob. 10-11.

Chapter 10

GROSS SIN AND AWFUL JUDGMENT

“Do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress. For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.” (Ob. 14-15).

Ob. 11 describes now, when each modern Edom makes its great choice for or against King Jesus. If the U.S. chooses “against”, then Obadiah’s description of our national future is simple but shocking. In Ob. 12-15 the Lord says:

¹²Do not gloat over your brother’s day, the day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; yes, do not boast in the day of their distress. ¹³Do not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster. ¹⁴Do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress. ¹⁵For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.

Meanings of “Gloat Over” and “Boast”

Gloat over in Ob. 12 and 13 is the common Hebrew word for see, but this word is also used to express the ideas of perceiving, enjoying, approving, etc. The U.S. begins to approve of Jacob’s calamity when standing aloof. Arrogance causes this to grow into a more perverted rejoicing in Jacob’s misfortune and the disaster of God’s people.

Boast in Ob. 12 is literally “make the mouth large”. Here the U.S. verbally exalts itself over its brother Jacob in his time of distress, while

also destroying itself by hypocritically ignoring its own sinfulness. This callous attitude and slight action arises from the U.S. rejecting God (the only Source of full goodness for mankind) and repudiating our Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage – severing our national relationships with Jacob and with all of God's people of promise.

Ob. 11-14: The Awful Growth of Sin in an Unrepentant U.S.

In v. 11 the U.S. is standing aloof from Jacob when strangers and foreigners attack it, and we have also arrogantly become like one of them. V. 12 warns us against first approving, then rejoicing, and then hypocritically exalting ourselves over our brothers from Jacob and Judah in the aggressions against them.

Then v. 13 warns against executing two of the three aggressions in Ob. 11 on God's people: against entering the gate and looting the wealth of both Israel and the genuine Christians and Jews within the U.S. We saw how precisely v. 11 now and 13 later fit an unrepentant U.S. or other modern Edom in Chapters 7-8, especially p. 64-65.

Ob. 13 also warns our nation about its attitude when carrying out these aggressions against the Lord's people: the U.S. enjoys this and gloats over them while being arrogantly secure – not considering its own accountability to our just God. This attitude will be a part of the aggressions of v. 13 and will further proceed into the awful actions in v. 14 and the results in v.15.

In v. 14 God warns our nation against slaughtering fugitives and imprisoning survivors of His people, who are desperately fleeing from malicious enemies. The arrogant unrepentance and pitiless atrocities by the U.S. against His people cause His pronouncement of the just judgment in v. 15 to mean a horrible devastation of our nation.

Not Only More Sinful, But Harder to Truly Repent

This development from Ob. 11 to 14 is a progressive deterioration of the U.S. or other Edom and takes it further from ever repenting in practice for its salvation. This happens because Satan strengthens his deceptions, footholds, and strongholds in the nation. Some modern Edoms may have already entered into Ob. 12 as a nation, but I am convinced that it is still quite possible and practical with God's power for each modern Edom to repent as a nation.

The Road to Destruction of the U.S. in Obadiah

Obadiah shows how the U.S. moves to its destruction by refusing to repent of the arrogance of our national heart. With arrogance the U.S. decisively rejects God's words, laws, and ways for our approved practices, lifestyles, and laws – our culture. Therefore in practice the U.S. becomes like a nation that does not know God or have a Judeo-Christian foundation, and that has no part in God's people of promise. Secular Humanism, which now wars against many Biblical practices in the U.S., would do these very things (p. 68).

With the national decision to sever itself from the God of the Bible, His people, and the Judeo-Christian part of its national foundation and heritage and culture, the U.S. is left without the blood of Jesus and the greatly needed wisdom and power from God: our nation is left bound in its iniquity and guilt without a remedy. By rejecting the Judeo-Christian influence, the U.S. casts off the helpful restraints that had kept it from gross national sinfulness. Then Satan is able to easily manipulate our deceived nation into carrying out his own desires, which are especially against Christians and Jews in the U.S. and against Israel.

For example, a spirit of murder has been deposited into many people through abortion for convenience, pornography, TV, movies,

video games, etc. If the U.S. chooses to divorce itself from the God of the Bible, then our nation becomes hopelessly bound by the iniquity that has long been deposited into people here, because we are estranged from the only Source of effective help. By rejecting the love of the truth in Jesus, the U.S. gets deceived into receiving Satan.

Then Satan's lies and evil deposits would "have their day" in our land. The gross hatred and sinfulness that had been festering in the hearts of many people would not be restrained like it had before this. The crucial sin against Jacob and the atrocities against God's people emerge according to the description of Ob. 12-14, and the U.S. is changed so much that the "peaceful" U.S. of today "*becomes as if it had never existed*" (Ob. 16, which is discussed in Chapter 11).

Where is the U.S. on this road to destruction? National elections in the last 20 years reveal an increasingly divided heart-attitude toward our Judeo-Christian heritage. People vote for candidates for various reasons, and very few voted primarily for or against a national heritage and foundation. But it is an issue for anyone if it is important to him: a leading political party has demanded a "secular humanist" agenda for over 20 years. Before the election of our current President, he openly declared (in June, 2006) that he believed that the U.S. should be not run by Judeo-Christian principles, and the election showed this to be an acceptable position to most people. Our national sin in this issue now is like Esau's blindness and indifference toward his birthright.

We are not yet hardened into this indifference or rejection. Again, people support candidates for many reasons, and God knows how important He and His ways are in each one's vote. It is too little now.

How the Gross Deterioration Can Develop So Quickly

An arrogant U.S. is moved surprisingly rapidly down this road to

gross sin and destruction by its decisive national choice to become like a stranger and foreigner nation. Nazi Germany gives us a frightening example of how rapidly and forcefully an Edom (before “our day”) can deteriorate grossly when it becomes like a stranger and falls into Satan’s hands. Arrogance helped Germans to form a bad attitude against the sons of Jacob. It got worse as the Nazi government persecuted them, and arrogance also moved the nation into further evil actions and eventually pitiless violence against the Lord’s people – both Jews and committed Christians.

Now remember (Ob. 7, Chapter 5) that an arrogant U.S. will be conquered and will not stay in control of its destiny. Where does the ambush by those who eat our bread fit into our national deterioration? Any time after the U.S. decisively chooses Secular Humanism over the Lord Jesus. Satan gets a greater domination over the U.S. than we offer him by our choice for Secular Humanism, so that victorious secular humanists are slaughtered like Ob. 9 indicates. Indeed, the gross sin in Ob. 14 might not surface in the U.S. before our ambush, but v. 12 and 13 are already far along in the formative stages.

The Awful Results of the Gross Sin of the U.S.

¹⁴“Do not stand at the fork of the road to **cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors** in the day of their distress. ¹⁵For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. **As you have done, it will be done to you.** Your dealings will return on your own head. ¹⁶Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and **become as if they had never existed.** ¹⁷But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. ¹⁸Then the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau will be as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, so that there will be **no survivor of the house of Esau,**” for the Lord has spoken. (Ob. 14-18).

Ob. 18 “finishes off” a Christ-rejecting Edom from being a people. The devastation upon the U.S. should be clear from v. 14-18, except that “*no survivor of the house of Esau*” does not imply a complete annihilation of the U.S., even as ancient Edom was not wiped out like that. Probably not all die, but v. 18 shows that our national heritage will be wiped out so thoroughly that no survivor would regard himself to be an American, even as no one now claims to be an Edomite. This picture suggests that connections to previous generations of a family would also be lost. A U.S. that does not repent would be crushed so much that it becomes “*as if it had never existed*” (v. 16).

Remember that Ob. 5-9 (Chapters 4-5) supplements v. 15-18 by giving further insights into the judgment of an unrepentant U.S. V. 10 adds that Edom will be cut off forever because of its violence to its brother Jacob (Chapter 6). “*The house of Joseph a flame*” in Ob. 18 confirms that this destruction is forever (p. 45-46). This judgment is not a national “setback”, but is a permanent destruction.

The Alternative to the Utter Devastation of a Modern Edom

God's word in Obadiah does much more than warn about a great disaster. God offers the U.S. and other modern Edoms a better future than the devastation described in Ob. 2-18 and Chapters 3-10. This is seen in Ob. 15-21 and Chapters 11-15. If an Edom decisively chooses to turn to the Lord Jesus as a nation, then it receives the deliverance of Ob. 21, in which the Edom becomes a part of His people with Jesus functioning as its King in practice. Obadiah and other Scriptures give insights to His people in order to enable their nation to repent and be delivered.

Chapter 11

GOD OFFERS THE U.S. A BETTER FUTURE

“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.” (Ob. 15).

The Day of the Lord is now drawing near on all the nations. On p. 18 we saw that this Day of the Lord on a nation is the time when He makes it fully accountable to Him for its sins. As with a person, every nation has earned an awful just judgment, because each nation has done some awful things that cannot be cleansed from their record by better actions in other situations. As with a person, Jesus paid the just penalty earned by any nation that joins itself to Him and becomes a part of His people (1John 2:2, Zech. 2:11a, Matt. 28:18-19). These Scriptures on p. 17-20 all fit together, but Zech. 2:11 specifically shows that many nations will make the good choice for Jesus in our day.

I recommend reading p. 17-20 again because it is so foundational, but here are its other conclusions for Chapters 11-15. A nation must be fully accountable while a nation exists, whereas people can be made accountable after this life. Before Jesus returns, each nation decides for or against being His national disciple and becoming a part of His people as a nation. Every nation will be justly judged in our day, but the just penalty for the many sins of a nation does not need to be suffered by the people there if it has become a part of His people. Jesus’ payment of the just penalty for the past sins of a nation joined to Him (Zech. 2:11) lets God work freely with it to remove the sinfulness that remains in hearts and produces such sins.

Our national judgment will come, whether bad or good for us. Ob. 15 proclaims and emphasizes only a just judgment. This can be a blessing to repentant nations in Jesus while being awful to others.

We read Ob. 15-18 for arrogantly unrepentant modern Edoms on p. 79. But everything in v. 15-18 has a different meaning for repentant modern Edoms: everything has a dual meaning. In this section we see that v. 15 refers to two completely different kinds of just judgments.

V. 16: How to Perish Without a Trace in a Good Way

*“Because just as **you drank on My holy mountain**, all the nations **will drink** continually. They will drink and swallow, and become **as if they had never existed**”* (Ob. 16). In view of every unrepentant Edom's sins (for example, Ob. 14), Ob. 15-16 is fulfilled by its total destruction. And what other nation can be justly saved without Jesus' sacrifice?

All the nations today will become as if they had never existed. Can Ob. 16 be fulfilled in a better way? Yes, a repentant nation can become as if it had never existed in our day by joining itself to the Lord Jesus Christ and being completely transformed in Him. This choice makes a total difference in the nature of the nation and its judgment.

A Nation Joined to Jesus as His Disciple

To better understand what it means for a nation to join itself to the Lord Jesus as His national disciple, consider personal discipleship to Jesus, which includes our baptism. We shall not discuss most of the insights here, but the nature of this discipleship of a nation to Jesus can be seen by considering only the meaning of “baptizing a nation” – a commandment in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). 1Cor. 10:1-2 adds insight by an explicit example of a national baptism: the baptism of the nation of Israel in the cloud and in the sea.

*For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were **all under the cloud and all passed through the sea**; and **all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**. (1Cor. 10:1-2).*

*...**all of us** who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death. Therefore we have been **buried with Him through baptism into death**, so that as Christ was **raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, so **we too** might **walk in the newness of life**. For if we have become **united with Him** in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him**, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would **no longer be slaves to sin**; for he who has died is **freed from sin**. (Rom. 6:3-7)*

*And in Him [Jesus] you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the **removal of the body of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ; having been **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you were also **raised up with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from the dead. (Col. 2:11-12).*

When Israel went through the Red Sea, Israel was cut off from Egypt, a type of “the world system”. As in the baptism of a repentant individual (Rom. 6, Col. 2), in a national baptism the repentant nation is buried – cut off from its sinful past – so that the sinful past is no longer a key factor in shaping the present or future of the nation (usually it is).

Therefore a repentant U.S. is cut off from its past sins by the blood of Jesus that was shed for His people, so that the sinful past of the U.S. would not be a key factor in shaping our nation’s future as we continue with Jesus. His blood totally cleanses a repentant U.S. from its sins – righteously removing the ledger of our past national sins and breaking their power to produce further corruption.

Through faith in the working of God, a baptized individual is raised up to walk with Christ in the newness of life. Likewise, a baptized nation walks by faith in the newness of life, which provides a testimony and witness to the whole world. After being baptized in the sea, Israel

was led through the wilderness by the cloud, which represents the Holy Spirit. In this walk of testing and trials, God transformed Israel into a nation that was capable of possessing its promised land by faith. As the testimony of Rahab shows (Josh. 2:9-11), this walk provided a witness of the Lord to all the unrepentant heathen nations of Canaan.

Therefore a repentant, baptized, and discipled U.S. will no longer walk in the sinful ways of the "old U.S.", but instead in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. As the U.S. walks obediently by faith and the Holy Spirit through the testing in our day, God will transform our nation so thoroughly that the U.S. which we know now will no longer exist. The sins and spiritual bondage that have characterized the old U.S. will be broken, so that they would no longer mar its culture or afflict its people. Such sinful characteristics would become only history and a memory, because they would no longer be practiced or affecting people.

God thoroughly changes a nation in a true baptism. Due to His marvelous work in the people of the U.S., it would be "as if the U.S. of today had never existed". And it will be this way for every nation that joins itself to the Lord and becomes His people, even as Zech. 2:11 and the Great Commission are fulfilled for many whole nations in our day. As a person dies in a good way by being baptized into Jesus, so a nation that is baptized into Jesus perishes in a good way.

"Becoming as if they had never existed" in Ob. 16 can show us how thoroughly a repentant U.S. or any other repentant nation will be changed. God will make the U.S. a much better place to live because of the great transformation He makes in His people and His land. This change includes a massive release from satanic bondage – both demons in individuals and principalities over regions of the land. And because so many people are letting God's Spirit lead them, the fruit of the Spirit will also be especially abundant in the land (Gal. 5:22-23).

An Example of How the U.S. Still Lacks This Transformation

For a specific example of how a past sin of the U.S. is shaping our nation now, notice that black fathers were often kept from carrying out their proper role in their families in slavery, so that many families were disrupted. We can see that this problem has not yet been corrected, because we are still reaping the consequences of the breakdown of black families. Fatherless families, a problem anywhere but especially common in black communities in the U.S., have produced increased aimlessness, hopelessness, poverty, anger, and crime that afflict the entire nation. In a transformed U.S., God's order will be re-established in all kinds of families, but specifically including black families.

Ob. 17 for Repentant and Unrepentant Modern Edoms

V. 17 expresses three priorities of God for our day when whole nations are either destroyed in their just judgments or righteously delivered in Christ Jesus. The contents of this verse for the U.S. and other modern Edoms are examined in Apx. 5, which includes this conclusion: Ob. 17 reveals three priorities of God that will be handled well in all repentant modern Edoms, but are key stumbling blocks to any unrepentant modern Edom and lead to its judgment.

The Dual Meaning of Ob. 18 for Modern Edoms

Ob. 18 was examined from the perspective of Ob. 10 in Chapter 6: that violence to Jacob is God's test to show accurately the failure of a modern Edom to repent and turn to Him. There we saw how a Christ-rejecting Edom would become like stubble to be consumed in the fire of a just national judgment that would destroy it from being a people. Rejecting God's law and despising His word causes the roots of the U.S. in God and His people to become like rot, so that if the U.S. does

not repent, it will become like stubble to be consumed (p. 45).

We also saw (p. 46) how the same fire and flame would not harm a modern Edom that had joined itself to the Lord Jesus to become a part of His people. It will be cleansed from all of its sins by the blood of Jesus for His people, so that justice does not demand a destructive judgment for past sins. Jesus' sacrifice lets our just God to work freely to remove the sinfulness remaining in the hearts instead of having to execute so many just penalties for sins. God's Spirit will transform the repentant Edom, so that its previous sinful nature will not be there to continue to produce sins for a just destruction.

Therefore the annihilation in Ob. 18 does not apply to repentant modern Edoms. Instead, the blessing of Ob. 21b applies: *"the kingdom will be the Lord's"* (Chapter 12).

A Conclusion about Ob. 15-18

V. 15-18 consistently provide two different pictures for repentant and unrepentant modern Edoms, and each picture aptly fits that type of nation. Every nation today will be changed so drastically that it will become **as if** it had never existed (Ob. 16). This means an awful, just destruction for arrogant modern Edoms – which will become very sinful – but also means a great, just blessing for nations that are transformed in Christ Jesus. All arrogant Edoms are finished off in Ob. 18, but the word for repentant Edoms continues to the end of Obadiah (v. 21).

Chapter 12

THE KEY TO SAVING THE U.S.

*“The **deliverers** will ascend **Mt. Zion** to **judge** the **mountain of Esau**, and the **kingdom will be the Lord’s**.” (Ob. 21).*

Ob. 16 (Chapter 11) helps us to see that a modern Edom will be fully changed if it joins itself to Jesus and becomes a part of His people as a nation. Now we shall begin to see how God will use His people in the land to produce this wonderful change.

Ob. 21 (above) reveals the crucial ingredient that Christians must supply for our nation to repent. We come to God in His pure holiness and intercede according to His will. Doing this well enough to fulfill v. 21 delivers the U.S. so that it joins itself to the Lord Jesus in our day of powerful pressures, temptations, and deceptions.

In order to see how Ob. 21 shows this for the U.S. or any modern Edom, we need to know how the terms in v. 21 can apply to the U.S.

- * *Mt Zion* is the Mt Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 (Apx. 3) and Micah 4:1-3a, which is the Lord’s holy throne room in heaven. V. 2b-3a says: *“**For from Zion** will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And **He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations.**”*
- * The *deliverers* are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. His believers are the only ones who can come before Him in the pure holiness of heaven’s Mt. Zion, and still live on earth.
- * *Judge* means to govern, in contrast to its common use in the U.S. with the separation of powers in our government. Good examples for the meaning of the Hebrew word for judge are the Judges of ancient Israel, who were deliverers and government leaders instead of only deciding between contenders or being rulers in court cases.

- * The *mountain of Esau* is the government of the U.S. (or any modern Edom). The U.S. government arose out of the Judeo-Christian part of our foundation and really because of it (p. 40, 127, and Apx. 3).
- * Finally, a repentant U.S. would truly be a *kingdom*, because Jesus would be its invisible King in real practice.

Showing How the U.S. Can Become the Lord's

We could confirm that each term has the above meaning in some Scriptures. (Apx. 3 confirms Mt. Zion and mountain, and *MOUNT ZION How to Get There and What to Do* – its PDF is free at www.lulu.com – shows more fully that the Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 is also God's holy throne room and the Holy of Holies in heaven). But the picture from Ob. 21 is far more important for this book and is what we discuss now.

How can the U.S. be delivered from its sins and consequent destruction? Let's apply the terms to v. 21. Deliverers ascend into the Lord's holy throne room on the Mt. Zion in heaven, which is before His face. There they ***"judge the mountain of Esau"*** – "govern the government of the U.S." – by intercession. In this way the U. S. will become the Lord's with Jesus functioning as its invisible King in reality.

Ob. 21 shows a key need of the U.S. in order to become the Lord's. Where in Obadiah is Edom's salvation without these deliverers? But with them a modern Edom will be the Lord's.

Who are these deliverers? They are believers in Jesus. Being saved by His perfect provision for them, they approach God in His Holy of Holies as holy sons. They enter the Lord's holy throne room on Mt. Zion by Jesus, and govern and intercede in other ways as God leads.

Therefore believers can save the U.S. from its impending sin and destruction by interceding before God in His holy throne room. This requires personal holiness in their lives (a practical "setting apart" to God). This intercession would move the U.S. into becoming a kingdom

under King Jesus, even if the visible government is in the form directed by the U.S. Constitution. Most of the deliverers who would really shape the quality of life in the U.S. and determine the decisions by its government would not be government officials or even highly visible Christians, but interceding believers in Jesus whom God receives. As Ob. 21 reveals, they shall “govern the government of the U.S.”

What does this mean? On the Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 and Micah 4:1-3a (or Isa. 2:2-4a), deliverers release the will of King Jesus and His Father for the U.S. and its visible government: **“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matt. 6:10).

The meaning of governing the U.S. or any modern Edom (or nation) is further revealed by seeing how Ob. 21 fits into God’s more general promise to heal any land in 2Chron. 7:13-14:

*If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people,¹⁴ and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and **pray and seek My face** and turn from their wicked ways, **then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.***

How Ob. 21 Fits into 2Chron. 7:14

What is this general promise? God heals a land if His people in it have fulfilled all four actions in v. 14 in the season of v. 13: to humble ourselves, pray, seek the Lord’s face, and turn from our wicked ways. As we see in Chapter 13, our fulfilling these actions enables the U.S. to receive Jesus for His full healing, to repent and not become ripe for the devastating but just judgment of Obadiah.

Ob. 21 mentions only two actions: if the deliverers in an Edom will ascend Mt. Zion to govern their government, then the Edom will become the Lord’s. 2Chron. 7:14 calls these actions **“pray and seek My face”**. They require holiness and are the key missing actions of

Christians in prosperous modern Edoms: we have many distractions from praying and seeking His face, and we rarely do it as needed.

Ob. 21 and 2Chron. 7:14 combine to show that if these two actions are fulfilled in any Edom before its judgment, then the other two in v. 14 will also be met, and then the Edom will be delivered and become the Lord's. We are to govern our government by praying and seeking the Lord's face on Mt. Zion, which have contrasting goals and focus. Therefore let us examine these actions.

Consistent Power in the Hebrew Word for Pray

This Hebrew word for pray means to intercede or to call on God as judge (Harris, Archer, and Waltke, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1980, word 1776). God's people pray to Him to bring Him and His will decisively into a situation: "praying" consistently starts only after recognizing a great need.

The English word for prayer includes ceremonial prayers, ritualistic or standardized prayers, traditional public invocations, etc. While there can be a place for such things, they are never included among the eighty times that this word for pray is used in Hebrew.

Three exceptions to its normal use are found in Isa. 16:12, 44:17, and 45:20. These involve praying in idolatry to a "god" who cannot answer or save. In Isa. 44 God even ridicules this praying as foolish. This shows that God normally answers real praying to Him.

The consistent power implied by this word in all of its Scriptures is impressive: the normal result of God's people praying to Him is that He answers or acts decisively. Therefore praying by His people in 2Chron. 7:14 is to intercede or to call on Him until He answers in word or deed. In Ob. 21 this praying starts by realizing a need to govern our national government, and we can realize more specific needs within that need.

With so much power available in this praying, believers who truly pray will face subtle but intense spiritual opposition, so that we must persevere. We “pray” for a need until God answers in word or deed. The necessary perseverance is less for a long prayer session than for continuing a prayer request days or years.

A Practical Meaning of “Seek God’s Face”

The focus and goal of “seek My face” differ from praying. I seek to come before the eyes of my holy Judge for personal fellowship: He sees me fully, but by Jesus’ blood, I do not try to hide from Him due to shame, fear, or an unrepentant heart that wants to hold onto a sin that must be judged with the justice of unveiled holiness. To seek His face, I hold onto Jesus more than any other heart-desire or even any prayer need, which I release to Him in order to fellowship with our holy God. Indeed, keeping a prayer goal as the priority is not seeking His face, but really is seeking to receive from His hand. We often start to seek Him with a goal for His hand in a situation, but as we continue to seek Him, He changes us to be more like Christ, so that we seek His face.

Gen. 32:22-32 is an example. Jacob feared that Esau would kill him as they were about to meet for the first time since he offended Esau so badly. Jacob met God with this priority, but it and his nature were changed after he wrestled with God face-to-face (Peniel in v. 30 means the face of God, and the change in Jacob’s life after Gen. 32 shows that God changed his nature).

Dan. 9 illustrates a prayer for a nation that arose out of a need and turned into seeking God’s face. Daniel read in Jer. 29:10-13 that God would bring the Jewish people back to their land after 70 years. V. 12-13 specify actions to accompany their return: *“Then you will call upon Me and come and **pray** to Me, and I will listen to you. You will*

seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Daniel's prayer arose out of a need to end the desolation of Jerusalem at the specified time, but he went on to seek the Lord with all his heart, and God's answer addressed far more than what Daniel asked at first. (Habakkuk and Psalm 73 also illustrate this turn).

Believers can come to Father God at any time through our High Priest Jesus, but seeking His face is special: we come to Him in the Holy of Holies of Heb. 9-10 and the Mt. Zion of Heb. 12. Describing Mt. Zion by a series of word pictures, Heb. 12:22-24 brings out only one of God's many features when it mentions God: He is the Judge of all. This emphasis is fitting: v. 22-24 describe the Lord's holy throne room, the Mt. Zion of Ob. 21 and Micah 4:2b-3a (p. 87-89, Apx. 3).

As Micah 4:2b-3a shows (p. 87), He sends forth His law from Zion. Judgment between peoples and decisions for mighty nations come from heaven's Mt. Zion, heaven's Holy of Holies and God's holy throne room. There the government of a disciplined Edom (and I believe other disciplined nations) is itself governed by believers under King Jesus (Ob. 21). This is the "center of the Lord's government" of all the earth.

Where is a better place to intercede than intimately before God's face in His holy throne room? There we worship Him and fellowship with Him. Praise and worship of God reminds us of His nature, so that we can better hear and discern His heart and soft words – embrace Jesus' love, wisdom, and justice. In close fellowship with Him, we can better hear His heart and His whispers, and see His eyes and where He is looking – better hear and see what is important to Him (because one looks at what is important to him). As He communicates with His children, our hearts can see Him, ourselves, and situations better than ever. And as we seek His face, He might bring us back to intercede with a better understanding than we had when we began seeking Him.

Focused on our King and His heart instead of reacting to needs

that we recognize, our hearts are better prepared to hear His creative wisdom for changes before we realize a need for them. This can solve or prevent problems in ways that we would fail to consider without His input. Before His face in His holy throne room, we participate in His government of the earth with His creativity and without the limits of what we think – our natural knowledge. Interceding with His guidance, we can bring His power to heal specific individuals, situations, and the whole land by praying that He send it His Spirit, laws, mercy, and judgments – including for its leaders and for vital national decisions. This will transform both our government and many people.

Governing the Government of the U.S. from Mt. Zion

We can ascend Mt. Zion in order to govern by praying. We cannot ascend Mt. Zion in order to govern by seeking God's face: that is seeking His hand (to govern) instead of His face. What we can do is understand that He calls us to participate in His governing the earth. We might "seek His face" many times while we "pray" for an issue like abortion in the U.S. When we do seek His face, we will respond if He does direct us to govern our government in various specific ways.

God gives us an opportunity to intercede for His mercy on our land, so that His will is done in our nation on earth as it is in heaven. Consider these key practical effects that can be produced:

- * In general, we can govern our government, helping it to do God's will. This enables officials to go beyond themselves and make good practical decisions – providing justice and destroying evil (Rom. 13).
- * Intercession can break the grip of satanic rulers on our land. Then government officials can be led by the Holy Spirit and not be under its satanic princes – even helping to bring down strongholds of evil.
- * Intercession also reconciles God and many sinners, who need to be redeemed by His grace and power. This enables many people in the land to become healthy in the fullest sense of the word. Without this

work at the personal level, a nation would not keep a healing with even a perfect government.

- * This intercession can be a key to freeing localities within a nation.
- * Intercession is the key to freeing God's people in a land to turn from their wicked ways. Individuals and small groups of believers should intercede for other believers: turning from our wicked ways must be widespread to reach the hearts of most people (Chapters 13-14). This is essential for the land as a whole to receive God's healing.

Impossible Without Jesus, and a Challenge Even With Him

While Jesus' sacrifice alone qualifies a believer to come to Him, God has special requirements for believers to abide and stand at this place of enormous authority and power, and Satan does all he can to prevent us. Psalm 24:3-6 shows that clean hands, a pure heart, and a personal righteousness from God (*"he shall receive...righteousness from the God of his salvation"*) are needed to seek His face effectively. Who has this righteousness besides believers in Jesus?

In addition, this righteousness from God needs to be lived out on earth. Psalm 15 shows that those who may abide in His pure holiness fulfill specific requirements which represent a lifestyle of discernment from God and personal integrity. For example, v. 4 says: *"In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; he swears to his own hurt, and does not change."* To prevent the sin of judging someone wrongly, the first part of v. 4 requires a consistent discernment of what God is saying. The other part requires a commitment to righteousness even when it personally hurts oneself.

Both are perfect requirements for good governing. They justly remove undiscerning and self-seeking people, including Christians in the flesh, from those who will govern righteously by intercession at the center of God's government of the earth. The earth is already full of governments with self-seeking leaders. This is the place of ultimate

authority and power for the earth; and He protects it with His unveiled holiness. It does not allow sin to enter without its just judgment – rightly a terrifying situation for an unrepentant sinner, who insists on keeping his sin instead of truly wanting to be separated from it.

What Ob. 21 Promises

Consider the meaning that our nation “*will be the Lord’s*”. This describes what happens to any nation that joins itself to the Lord and becomes His people (Zech 2:11) as His national disciple (Matt. 28:18-20). (National discipleship is discussed on p. 17-19, especially p. 19). Therefore Ob. 21 shows a key need of the U.S. for obtaining and maintaining a national discipleship to the Lord Jesus as well as for mere national survival: with His leading, believers intercede before His face in His holy throne room, and specifically govern our government from there. We believers have not yet done this adequately in the U.S.

Chapter 13

HOW TO HEAL OUR SICK LAND

*“If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴and **My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**” (2Chron. 7:13-14).*

For decades v. 14 (above) has been the theme of many major rallies of believers to heal our land. This is great. The tragedy is that few believers realize the content of what God calls for us to do to heal our sick land. Many correctly think: “I have humbled myself, prayed, sought my Lord’s face, and turned from my wicked ways as well as I know how, and my land is continuing to get sicker over the years.”

Especially these believers need to understand this promise, so that they will be encouraged to continue their good work and to better help other believers do all that we must do to produce God’s healing of our land. Indeed, we all need to understand this: as believers fulfill 2Chron. 7:13-14, God will heal our land through our actions.

This promise for the U.S. or any land is the topic of Chapter 13.

God Heals the Land – Through Whom and What?

In order for God to heal a land, He calls for specific actions from only *“My people who are called by My name”*. This is an obscure way to say “My people Israel” (as in 2Chron. 7:10), but is an amazing Old Testament description of the term “CHRISTians”! If the Christians in a land merely do what God says in v. 13-14, then (as we shall see) this

will cause the Body of Christ in that land to grow in size and quality, so that believers will prepare the land to embrace Jesus as its King by a large majority. People in a land must receive Jesus for God's healing, and a big majority will receive Him if the Christians fulfill v. 13-14.

In fact, our four actions in 2Chron. 7:14 really are practical steps for God's people to take toward healing a land by its receiving Jesus. We shall see this as we see the whole picture.

Humbling Ourselves As a First Step Toward Healing a Land

To humble myself is to subject myself to God, and its opposite is to exalt myself over others due to a prideful heart. Phil. 2:3 aptly describes the humble attitude: *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with **humility of mind** regard one another as more important than yourselves."* Humbling myself helps me to get less focused on "what I get" and more focused on supplying what other people need to move ahead with God, so that others can get better equipped to become an effective part of God's solution for the land. Humbling ourselves sets up this progress because our holy God dwells with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive them (Isa. 57:15).

We can see a key way to humble ourselves by an example. If both you and I contribute to a problem by doing some things wrong, then I do not humble myself if I point my finger at you and emphasize your part in creating the problem. This puts you down and thereby puts me above you. Being humble causes me to confess my own part in the problem and to correct those things that I did wrong: I apply God's word to myself first and turn from my own wicked ways.

Let's apply this to "our land". It has stayed in bad shape because we believers have not done what is needed to bring the land to Jesus. His healing of a land with all of its sinners and problems is limited only

by our limited use of His power to fulfill 2Chron. 7:14. The U.S. will decisively reject God as a nation, become like a stranger or foreigner, accept pornography, practice abortion and injustice, betray Israel, oppress the poor, etc., only if Christians here continue to not do what we could do (before the end of the season for fulfilling v. 14).

Both believers and unbelievers have contributed to the national condition, and the believers' part is less obvious than what corrupters of the land (like pornographers) have done. But each humble believer will act on his part and repent first: turn from his own wicked ways.

A land's believers are the key to healing the land: God corrects its other problems as many believers do what He says and become what He calls us to be. By calling His Church in a land to "humble ourselves" in 2Chron. 7:14, He calls us to lead it into repentance and faith in Him.

This is not a false meekness. Sometimes believers must confront people. We should not passively let some people corrupt the land: we should hate evil deeds, be "salt", and block the efforts of sinners to further corrupt the land while we correct our own failures. We do this with God's power by first humbling ourselves before Him and praying, and then doing whatever other specific actions God directs us to do.

Praying As a Practical Second Step Toward Healing a Land

As we saw on p. 90-91, the Hebrew word for pray in v. 14 is to call on Him or to intercede until He answers in word or deed. We can pray when we recognize a specific need, and praying to God can produce much healing in a land and its people. Praying also better equips God's people to turn from their wicked ways and thereby show Him "as He is" to the land. But with great power available in this praying, believers who pray will face subtle but intense spiritual opposition, so that they will need to persevere.

Further Progress by Seeking the Lord's Face

Seeking God's face has a different focus and goal from praying. Instead of continuing to seek Him about a prayer request until He answers in word or deed, believers release our prayer burdens to Him for His provisions in order to fellowship with our holy Father. But in this fellowship He may show us how to intercede better than we knew how.

Successfully seeking the Lord's face takes us to His holy throne room on spiritual Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22-24, Micah 4:1-3 or Isaiah 2:2-4, and Ob. 21). Intercession there is crucial for healing the U.S. or any land and is discussed on p. 91-95. If He leads us to participate in His governing of the earth, then our seeking His face helps us to intercede with His creativity and without being limited by what we think is needed—our natural knowledge. To govern the earth well, we must go beyond needs that catch our attention. With His guidance, we can bring His power to heal individuals, situations, and the land as a whole unit—transforming both a huge number of people and our government. Our best intercession comes by firmly embracing God's love, wisdom, and justice that is revealed in Jesus, and worshipping Him helps us do this.

Steps to Healing a Land

Each action in 2Chron. 7:14 is a step by God's people toward enabling their land to receive His healing. When a believer humbles himself, he receives God's vital corrections and turns from his own wicked ways. Praying takes us beyond this, moving us toward God and helping us obtain His healing for specific problems in His people, many other people, and the whole land. Even further, in order to pray we often put on the righteousness and holiness of Jesus, which are needed for seeking our Lord's face. If we do intercede there, it is at a new level that lets us bring His power with His insight and creativity.

But bringing God's power to heal a land is not enough to ensure that the land will receive the healing that He provides for it. God's people must corporately fulfill the last requirement of 2Chron. 7:14 for the people of the land to receive His healing, instead of rejecting it or casually allowing it to be stolen from them.

Corporate Wicked Ways of True Christians in a Land

V. 14 tells the CHRISTians in a sick land to turn from our wicked ways. Individual believers do this for themselves in the first step toward healing their land. But more is needed: there are corporate wicked ways of true believers in a land that hinder many people and their land from receiving the healing God provides in Jesus. What is a corporate wicked way? I'll define it now and further discuss it later.

A way is a way of living, a path to walk on, a systematic practice instead of a single action. The one-time sins feed doubts, but are only a part of a distorted corporate expression of Christ to many people. A corporate wicked way of true Christians in a land is any widespread practice by them that hinders people from seeing God as He really is – His true nature and character. His nature is the nature of Christ Jesus. We can reveal it because He lives within each believer, and we can yield to Him: we can let His Spirit manifest His fruit in us and lead us into doing works with His power.

We'll see that God calls us to reveal His true nature in Chapter 14. Here, realize that believers provide the most powerful expression of God in Christ Jesus to people who don't know Him directly. Few unbelievers read the Bible, and spiritual deception is everywhere.

What are some corporate wicked ways – distortions of God's true nature that His people may corporately present to others in their land?

- * A self-seeking or selfish or "legalistic" Jesus or God;

- * A Jesus or God without power – easily ignored due to not making a big difference in the life of people;
- * A Jesus or God who manipulates people to get their money (God's nature is to provide);
- * A Jesus or God who shows partiality, favoring the rich or powerful or famous over the less esteemed or the despised;
- * A Jesus or God who emphasizes material prosperity and success as evidence that a person is "living by faith";
- * A Jesus who enjoys condemning some people or has a hypocritical "holier than thou" attitude;
- * A pseudo-loving Jesus who condones practices that the Bible clearly identifies as abominations to God;
- * A Jesus who does not reach out to people with love, or loves people of only one race or tribe or clique;
- * A Jesus whose members of His body war against one another, or whose members do not form a "body" in any meaningful way;
- * A Jesus bound to dead religious traditions, or a Christianity that is nothing but religious rules or beliefs – simply another religion instead of a reconciled relationship with our holy God through Jesus;
- * A Christianity consisting predominantly of "believing" or accepting good doctrine (where is Jesus here?)

These are only examples of corporate wicked ways: we can manifest many other major distortions of God's nature to the people of a land. In the U.S., too few people can see Jesus or God accurately when they interact with Christians and also look at the whole Church. Indeed, consider two possible wicked ways of believers a little further.

Jesus suffered and died for all, but if the Christians an unbeliever knows consistently look down on him, condemn him, or do not reach out to him with love, then surely he would feel rejected, condemned, and not loved by our holy God. Consider how hard it is for that unbeliever to see what God is really like. In the second way, if most believers in a culture conform to pagan practices in the culture instead

of living by God's word and His Spirit, then many other people won't be able to see that God is real, what He is like, how good He is, how important He should be in our lives, or what He wants us to do.

Indeed, severely distorting God's nature to the world is very wicked. This produces a false image of God and hinders many people from turning to our Lord Jesus for repentance and life. We must turn from our corporate wicked ways in order for most people in our land to see and recognize Him enough to fully want to turn to Him.

Turning from our corporate wicked ways is a fitting final step for healing a land. Believers must turn from their personal wicked ways in order to do the first three steps in v. 14, but this work by individual believers must also spread to bring very many people in the land to Jesus in order for a healing of the land to last. This final step is the hardest for believers to produce: it requires very many other believers to repent. This is beyond anyone's control, but God will produce this if His people fulfill the first three steps in v. 14 in the season of v. 13.

The Season for God's People to Heal Their Land by 2Chron. 7:14

2Chron. 7:13 shows the season of a land (which may last many years) when a land can be transformed by Christians' doing v. 14:

***IF** I shut up the heavens so that there is **no rain**, or if I command the **locust** to devour the land, or if I send **pestilence** among My people, **and My people who are called by My name** humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will...hear...forgive their sin...heal their land.*

Scriptures about God's work with lands that refuse to repent at His repeated callings reveal a key issue behind the drought, locusts, or pestilence (epidemic disease) that naturally capture our attention. The people are not responding to God's calls to repent and turn to Him. Joel 1, Amos 4:6-13, Deut. 28, and Haggai all apply to nations during

this lack of response, and all show afflictions like those in v. 13: they are shakings that provoke people to seek a solution, and God has the best or only solution. Multiple shakings like this identify a season of a land not responding to God's calls to turn to Him with real repentance.

For example, Amos 4:6-11 specifies afflictions of famine, droughts here and floods there, mildew and locusts, plague or pestilence, and bitter national defeats and calamities in which God rescued the rest of the nation from similar destruction. God concludes each shaking with ***“yet you have not returned to Me”*** (5 times in v. 6-11). Clearly God had been calling the nation to turn to Him with repentance, and the people continued to not turn to Him while having heard of His ability.

What are examples of these shakings in nations today? Many major floods or droughts; economic woes like inflation, widespread unemployment, or economic collapse; epidemics of heart attacks, AIDS, or cancer; serious family problems; 9/11; and rampant crime from greed or drug addiction that afflict both individuals and the land.

Such shakings can become so common in the land because so many people are rejecting Almighty God, who would love to help them as they seek Him for their complete healing. But most people want His full protection as they go their own ways. For decades or longer the nation had really chosen to shut out the true God, and its people had let this happen. This fallen world is rough when people want to live apart from Him with His protection. In this season, that nation gets to live without some of His protection from that land or nation.

Shakings look like judgments, but are really kind to most people in the land because they can help people and the whole land to repent and turn to God – IF His people do well. Indeed, this season of shakings is a time of great opportunity for God's people to bring the land into national repentance and discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ,

which would help many people for eternity. An inability of most people to see their need for Him as their Lord – with His solutions – shows a corporate failure of Christians to prepare the way for Him in the land.

Why does God talk so aggressively here (such as “**if I** shut up the heavens” or “**if I** send pestilence”)? These shakings make it clear that things are out of order – not being done as they are in heaven – and God is the one who can fix them. If anyone wants to get to the real issues and solution, then he can turn to God. God would fully agree that things need to be corrected, but could also show that there is far more involved than the person realized, and could show how he can be a part of the solution instead of (most likely) a part of the problem.

The U.S. (and many other nations) has been in this season for many decades. As we'll see soon, this season does come to an end.

God's Plan to Heal a Land Through His People

This season is a time of spiritual warfare for the heart of the nation, which is won by winning the hearts of its people to Jesus. This is not a war against people or governments. 2Chron. 7:13-14 shows His people what to do to win this war of life or death. Consider what would happen if the believers in a land fulfill the four actions of 2Chron. 7:14 in this season identified by v. 13.

Then there is good intercession for people, and believers normally are walking in Jesus' ways in this hard time of shakings. Therefore when people want answers, many can find others like themselves who demonstrate Jesus' better ways to live in their own living conditions.

These models of His clean, successful ways of living give a clear contrast to the failing lifestyles practiced in the land, inspire many people to walk in deeper levels of repentance and faith, and combine to provide an accurate corporate expression of Jesus to practically

everyone. As the Holy Spirit draws people to Jesus, most will easily recognize Him and gladly receive Him. Receiving Him heals the land's key problem – its separation from the true God – and He provides healing solutions for the shakings by His direct work and through people living by His better ways. His healings end this season.

God's people throughout the land must repent for His plan to work. Believers must reach enough people personally to enable them to receive Jesus, who will heal the land. Humbling oneself with its turning from personal wicked ways, praying, and seeking God's face can be done by individual believers and small groups of believers (like a few believers, congregations, or even whole cities or regions). But these good actions must produce a widespread turning from our corporate wicked ways, which distort beliefs about God's true nature.

If our turning is not widespread, then most people won't recognize our invisible God and will be unable or unwilling to truly turn to Him. We'll see (Chapter 14) that without their repentance, the land will keep corrupting itself and its people, and will be unable to keep a healing.

When our turning is widespread, many people will be equipped to turn to and receive Christ Jesus with repentance and faith, and He will change their hearts and lives. Very many people like this will transform the whole land and prepare it to receive God's full blessings. God's transformation of people's hearts breaks them out of their "slavery to corruption" (Rom. 8:21) and enables them to help others to break free.

Therefore a land must have a large Body of Christ. If it is not big enough to transform the entire land, then the four actions of v. 14 by the existing Church causes a high quality growth of the Church in this season of shakings and opportunity. In this way a good response to God by a small number of believers in a land can grow until the land as a whole repents and turns to Christ Jesus in faith – unless this season

ends before the needed Church repentance has spread far enough.

The Opportunity to Heal a Land Will End

If the Lord's people continue to not fulfill v. 14 during this season, then Joel 2 and other Scriptures show that this opportunity ends. After the season of shakings of 2Chron. 7:13 and Joel 1, Joel 2:1 shows an impending devastation that everyone can see and tremble at it. Joel 2:12-14 shows that, even if Christians do respond now, God no longer promises to save the land. This is the loss of time and opportunity for a good response by only God's people to reach and change other hearts. This loss of His promise is not a change in God's desire for our repentance. To confirm this picture, God reminds us of His gracious nature in Joel 2:13 as He shows this loss in v. 14.

Joel 2:12-17 shows that both God's people and the other people in the land must fervently respond to His call to repentance at this crucial point. There is no longer enough time for His healing to spread more gradually through His people into the whole land. Even in this crisis, the constructive work by Christians during the season of opportunity helps the people and the land to respond well at this last call to national repentance. (*God's Just Judgment of a Nation* shows this picture in Joel and its illustration in Amos and Jonah. A PDF download is free at www.lulu.com under "James Tarter").

I believe that the U.S. has started making the crucial decision in Obadiah that will take us out of this season where shaking can help produce repentance (as discussed on p. 77-78). God has ways to help arrogant people repent – He helped me when I was very arrogant – but firmly held arrogance rejects opportunities to repent. This season in the U.S. is not yet over, because the U.S. has not yet moved into its Joel 2 crisis. But that crisis could come very suddenly.

The Promise of 2Chron. 7:13-14 for the U.S.

We have seen that 2Chron. 7:13-14 reveals God's plan to heal a land by enabling its people to want Jesus in their own hearts and lives. The four actions by God's people in v. 14 are steps toward this goal. Individuals and small groups of believers can do the first three actions, but this good response must spread to produce a very widespread repentance by believers – a corporate turning from our wicked ways.

As we, God's people in the U.S., fulfill the four actions of 2Chron. 7:14 in the season of v. 13, God will heal our land through our actions. Doing them enables His people to become His instrument to heal the nation. Doing them enables the U.S. to repent and join itself to our Lord Jesus, instead of continuing on the road toward our destruction. And doing them prepares the way for the Lord in the United States: this is the "Elijah ministry" for our land, which God gives to the Church in each land during its season of shakings and opportunity.

If God's people don't respond well to Him during this time, then we lose His promise to heal the U.S. God may still heal it and save it from devastation by His grace, but there is not enough time for His healing to flow more naturally through His people into the whole nation.

God's Corporate Calling and Vision for the Church in Ephesians

We have seen how the Church's turning from corporate wicked ways – our widespread distortion of God's true nature and character – is a key part of the promise of 2Chron. 7:13-14. Failing to turn hinders people in a land from truly receiving Him, which is the way to get truly healed. In Chapter 14 we shall see God's corporate calling and vision for the Church in Ephesians. This will powerfully reinforce the meaning of "corporate wicked ways" and this picture of 2Chron. 7:14.

Chapter 14

GOD'S CORPORATE CALLING AND VISION

To God be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus....speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph. 3:21, 4:15-16).

God calls the Body of Christ to fulfill His calling for it in practice. I would be amazed if 1% of true believers in the U.S. can even identify this calling that is so crucial for us to fulfill corporately. And if we don't know what God is calling us to do and be and become, then we are unlikely to do all that we could do to move purposefully into fulfilling His calling for us. Unless we know His calling, we cannot fully appreciate what a corporate wicked way is (p. 101-103). In fact, our living without this vision of our corporate calling has helped the Church in the U.S. to be really unaware of what we must be doing to heal our sick land, so that Jesus' call to the church in Sardis (Rev. 3:2) fits us well: ***"Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God."***

God calls us to grow up corporately into Christ: we are to manifest His true nature and presence as Jesus did in His physical body to the people who interacted with Him. This calling and vision for the Body of Christ is the key theme of the whole book of Ephesians, but we tend to read over it because it looks so impossible. But by co-operating with God and His work in us and through us, we shall fulfill our corporate calling. We greatly need to fulfill it, and so let's understand it.

The Calling of the Corporate Church in Ephesians

Here we shall get an overview of our calling. This picture and its basis in John and all of Ephesians are discussed more fully in *Healing Nations* (a PDF download is free at www.lulu.com under james tarter).

Ephesians reveals God's astounding calling for the Body of Christ. The foundation starts in Eph. 1, but our calling is first revealed at the end of Paul's prayer in Eph. 3:19-21:

*...¹⁹to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that **you** may be filled up **to all the fullness of God**. ²⁰Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹**to Him** be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

Eph. 4:11-16 will soon show that "you" refers to the Body of Christ, the corporate Church. But here consider the Church's amazing calling in v. 19: to "be filled up **to all the fullness of God**"! V. 20 is a fitting exclamation for this revelation in v. 19, because this calling is so far beyond all that we ask or think or even imagine. We can fulfill it only because He lives within each member of His body, and we can yield to Him: we can let His Spirit manifest His fruit in us and lead us into doing works with His power. This provides a way for others to "experience God". And God's presence and power within believers will glorify Him in the Church – will manifest His character, nature, and presence in us.

It is God who receives the glory in the Christ-like Church (Eph. 3:21). Almighty God made Himself invisible to people in order to reveal His true nature by the two means He has chosen: Christ Jesus and the Church. Except for the Gospel accounts, today Christ Jesus is invisible like Father God. Then v. 21 shows that the corporate Church is the only one left to manifest God's nature fully. To the extent we fail to let God shine out of us, God is robbed of glory, because people

don't see His true nature as well as they should. The better we do, the better His nature is manifested and the more He is glorified. The full manifestation of His nature by the glorious Church prophesied in Ephesians will not create a rival to His glory, but will help people turn to Him and experience Him directly. They can see and experience God much better, which keeps His glory far above the Church's.

After making useful comments in Eph. 4:1-10 on unity among believers and God's gifts to the Church, Paul elaborates on this calling:

*¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the **equipping** of the **saints** for the work of service, to the **building up** of the **body of Christ**; ¹³**until we all attain** to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, **to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ**. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into** Him who is the Head, even **Christ**, ¹⁶**from whom the whole body**, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the **proper working of each individual part**, causes the **growth of the body** for the **building up of itself** in love. (Eph. 4:11-16)*

Notice first that this calling is for the Body of Christ, which involves individuals as parts of this body. The Church is to grow up corporately in all aspects into Christ (v. 15). What does this mean? Christ Jesus was exactly like His invisible Father and fully manifested His nature to people who interacted with Jesus (John 5:19, 14:9, Heb. 1:3). People greatly need this: our sinful hearts twist the truth. When Jesus came, people equipped with the Scriptures but with sinful hearts had such wrong views of God's true nature that they did not recognize Him or His nature when He came to them personally. Jesus glorified His invisible Father by showing what He is truly like to the people who interacted with Jesus at that time, and to His believers for all time.

God calls the Body of Christ to grow up to become like Christ in all ways (Eph. 4:15). One key way is to glorify God. Each believer can glorify God by partaking of His divine nature by His precious promises (2Peter 1:4), and by doing like Paul in Gal. 2:20: each believer lets Christ express Himself through him, because He lives within us. But each believer also keeps his own nature, so that – unlike Jesus – none of us always manifests God's nature, and each of us provides a good or a poor example of how His nature is expressed in a human body.

God's prophecy is not that individuals manifest His full nature, but that His believers combine to form a body that manifests His character – a corporate expression. We are mere earthen vessels of God the Treasure, who will shine out of hearts that were naturally dark in order to light up the rest of the dark world (2Cor. 4:6). As 2Cor. 4:7 says: ***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.”***

We individual parts of His body cannot always reveal God's perfectly balanced nature to the world, even as a finger doesn't reveal the full nature of a human body: there is more to me than my finger! The fully Christ-like Church features the proper working of each part of the body, which we can do because each of us will be receiving from Christ the Head (Eph. 4:15-16). Each of us can let His light shine into this dark world and can contribute to and not detract from the corporate expression of God's true nature to the people around us – even if none of us can handle the glory of always being like God.

To provide the perfect Example for individual believers (1Peter 2:20), Jesus emptied Himself: He did no works by His own power, but He let God do His works through Him (Phil. 2:7, John 5:19, 14:10). As we corporately grow to be like Jesus, we shall manifest His true nature to many people in our land, and they will get an opportunity to see and

to experience Him. By being with believers, each unbeliever can see, experience, and deeply appreciate God's unselfish love and other qualities of His nature and character: being patient, kind, good, faithful, truthful, gentle, just, righteous, strong, merciful, compassionate, etc. An unbeliever can also realize that he too can become an earthen vessel of this same great Treasure. As a result, most people will want to receive Him.

What is the corporate expression of God to an unbeliever? If he can closely examine a few believers who let Jesus be Himself in them – especially when Jesus is different from most people – then he can see each unique earthen vessel and also Jesus in all of them. This enables him to distinguish Jesus from the earthen vessels. The combined expression of Christ by these and other believers forms the corporate expression of Christ Jesus and God to an unbeliever, and the close interactive contact is the far greater part of the expression.

Finally, let's clarify God's corporate calling for us to fully manifest His nature. Jesus' perfect manifestation omitted some features. As He did not manifest God's infinite qualities in His human body (being all-powerful, everywhere, etc.), the finite Body of Christ also will not. Instead, we let God, who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23, 4:6, 4:10), freely manifest Himself through us, so that others can experience God and also become vessels that manifest His nature to still others.

Corporate Wicked Ways in 2Chron. 7:14

Equipped with a better vision of God's corporate calling for His people, we can better appreciate the meaning of corporate wicked ways and how we must turn from them for our land and its people to receive Jesus. He is God's way to heal it from many tough problems.

A corporate wicked way of Christians in a land is any widespread

practice by them that hinders people from seeing His true nature, what He is really like (p. 101-103). Why must our turning from our wicked ways be very widespread (p. 105-107) in order for most people in the land to be able to see, experience, and want to receive Jesus? They need to closely interact with some of His people in order to confirm the reality of Jesus and God out of all the deception and false appearance that is so common in a sick land. With this interaction being freely available in a season of shakings, God uses many ways to help people turn from their self-seeking ways to Jesus and His better ways of living. This can continue to cause high quality growth of the Church that can ultimately bring the land as a whole unit to receive Jesus.

What does a land need in order to receive Jesus as its true King? Its people need to see and experience what Jesus and His invisible Father are truly like, so that they want the true God in their own hearts and lives. God has created mankind in His own image, and this includes a strong will that makes choices. God respects our choices.

If God's people in a land turn from their corporate wicked ways, the people there will see His true nature. But when people look at the Church in the U.S. now, they see little of God's true nature, so that they go their own ways more easily and get trapped in their sinfulness and sins. This has occurred even while some believers and groups of them have intensely humbled themselves, prayed, sought God's face, and turned from wicked ways. The people in the U.S. are not innocent, because they have chosen to be distracted by this or that over seeking to find out what He is truly like. But the Church also has a specific guilt: our un-Godly ways have made it too easy for too many people to miss Him and not realize that He and His ways are good for us.

What can you, an individual believer, do to solve this problem?

Chapter 15

CAUSING THE CHRIST-LIKE BODY

*But speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even Christ,** ¹⁶from whom the **whole body**, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the **proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body** for the **building up of itself in love.** (Eph. 4:15-16).*

Producing a Christ-like Church is humanly impossible. Only God can make anything to be like Himself. Also, nearly all of us have much control over our own actions, some influence on a few other people, and no direct influence on almost all believers. But Eph. 4:16 shows that the whole Body of Christ CAUSES ITS OWN GROWTH, and each individual part of the Christ-like Body is working properly. This means that each one lets God work freely in him and through him.

Now Ephesians shows that the Church everywhere will turn from its corporate wicked ways. God will produce this amazing development of the Church in every land before Jesus returns, but will this come soon enough to rescue a specific nation from its just judgment?

Zech. 2:11 shows the answer of “yes” for many nations. 2Chron. 7:14 (Chapter 13) shows the steps that lead to a great corporate response to God and enable a land to receive His healing: believers humble themselves, pray, and seek God’s face. Ob. 21 (Chapter 12) shows that if believers fulfill the praying and seeking the Lord’s face on spiritual Mt. Zion, then the Edom will be the Lord’s under King Jesus. God calls for us individual believers and relatively small groups of believers in prosperous modern Edoms to do a hard thing: to put away our many distractions in order to seek His face, and to seek Him well

enough to truly intercede. If we do this hard thing, then God will do the humanly impossible thing of getting a fully Christ-like Body of Christ.

2Chron. 7:13-14 reveal God's plan to heal a nation by bringing it to Jesus as its King, and He requires His people to team up with Him. As His people do what He says, He personally works within other people. He uses both our intercession and our interactions with others to open them up to Him. God wants to work through us to lift our land out of its moral corruption into being a place to find real life in Jesus.

Chapters 11-14 have opened up this picture of healing sinful lands like the U.S. Here we look at this picture with a new perspective: what can you, an individual believer, do to make a real difference in causing or helping most Christians and your land repent?

An Individual's Perfect Contribution to the Christ-like Church

Eph. 4:16 shows that the full expression of Christ involves the proper working of each individual part. As a personal body does in a demanding situation, every member of the healthy mature body must contribute according to the ways that he or she is equipped. This allows for and suggests an enormous range of responsibilities and functions as each member does what God calls and equips him to do. For example, caring for the needy is an expression of Jesus, and a corporate failure to do that effectively would hinder God's healing of a land, even though the connection between the two might not be clear.

God causes this good personal response of an individual to Him to be the effective contributions which that person should make to the vital corporate response to God – even if the person's response is primarily directed within his family for a long season, instead of toward changes that are greatly needed in his government or elsewhere. Then again, other believers should be greatly involved in government,

and every believer should contribute to it with the wisdom, direction, and opportunities that God provides him.

The key point is that God calls for a great variety of specific functions and expressions, which enables people to see the unity in His Body much better. Each believer should be doing what he or she should do, and also thank God for his brothers and sisters who supplement his expression of Jesus in other ways.

What the U.S. Needs Most from Its Christians

We've already seen the humanly impossible need: God's promise to heal the U.S. requires His people here to turn from our corporate wicked ways. And there is a lethargy or stupor in most of the Church in the U.S. that is beyond the influence of any believer or group of us. But remember God's amazing prophecy in Ob. 21 for Christians in the U.S. and other modern Edoms: *"The **deliverers** will ascend Mt. Zion... and the kingdom will be the Lord's."*

Individual believers hold the key for their nation to become the Lord's. The real bottleneck for the salvation of the U.S. is a failure of some potential deliverers to put aside their distractions in order to seek God's face in His holiness on spiritual Mt. Zion. This lack causes the Church in the U.S. to fail to turn from our corporate wicked ways.

This brings what is most needed for our national salvation back to a thing that any of us can significantly help, because this intercession is not a matter of great numbers, and an effective individual believer can do wonders. Both individuals and small groups of believers can do the first three parts of 2Chron. 7:14 effectively. As we humble ourselves, pray, and seek God's face, our intercession can release His grace and power for repentance to specific other parts of the Body of Christ and anywhere else it is needed. This can spread until the

Church in the U.S. accurately represents Jesus, and this needed corporate action by the Church will produce our national salvation.

A Mighty Work for Mighty Results

Christians alone in the U.S. determine our national future. Anyone can be such a Christian. If we do what God calls us to do, then our land will repent and be healed. If we don't, it won't. Our national future is truly in our hands more than in the combined hands of our President and his Cabinet, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the military.

Now consider: the President can't quickly change the direction of our government by himself. He must have many allies, and even then major changes for good usually take a dedicated effort for a long time.

Likewise, the major results of our intercessions for the national government usually are not clear or quick. Therefore we must firmly know the authority that God gives us, because anyone who is not solidly anchored in his faith will get discouraged.

Remember (Chapter 9) that the U.S. is about to make a great decision for or against receiving Jesus as our King, which sets up specific other key decisions and major events that lead to our national judgment. All of this will drastically affect the quality of life on earth of hundreds of millions of people, and really even billions. And we can only guess about the eternal consequences, which can be far greater.

The enormous consequences of this national decision should humble all of us. We can realize that this national decision for Jesus will not be determined by some casual prayer or a light response to God by a few or even many individuals.

But a believer must not dismiss the potential effectiveness of his fervent response to God by the enormity of the problem or the number of people involved. A Spirit-inspired, fervent, persevering response by

one believer can ultimately set many on fire for Jesus. And what is a limit on a Spirit-inspired, persevering, fervent response by a group of unified believers in Jesus?

God gives many examples in His Word to let us see that the good action by faith of one or two individuals of His people can make a great difference in producing or mobilizing the good group response by God's people: consider Gideon in Judges 7:1-8:3, Ehud in Judges 3:15-31, Jonathan and his armor-bearer in 1Sam. 13:15-14:23, etc.

Practical Features about Praying for Our Nation

Let us consider a few practical features about praying and seeking God's face for a nation that we did not consider while we were learning the picture from 2Chron. 7:14 and Ob. 21.

All the forces of hell together don't have enough strength to stop any one believer from doing all that God wants him to do. One or a few believers may start the national healing process or make especially great contributions to it. But we have seen that a land won't be fully healed through the great work of only a few believers (or only a few million in larger nations): God wants to use His whole Church in a land to manifest His nature to the people. Changing the destiny of a nation with its many millions of important people is a great work, and doing it ultimately requires a good corporate work in and by His Church there.

Before the change, we don't put our hope in signs of a corporate response: real progress for a nation is often slow and hard to see, and believers rarely meet our hopeful expectations. Instead, we need to proceed by faith even if we don't see some needed major changes for years. Each believer should focus on doing his responsibilities while realizing that God puts together the needed corporate response, which includes our intercession and other humble help of our brethren.

Jer. 18:11-12 warns us against looking for the response of others by giving us an example. V. 7-10 (Chapter 1) show how to interpret a true prophecy from God about any nation: we needed this for applying Obadiah today. Then v. 11-12 apply the principle in v. 7-8 to Judah:

*⁷At one moment I might **speak concerning a nation** or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or **to destroy it**; ⁸**if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.***

*¹¹So now then, speak to the men of Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, "Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I am fashioning **calamity** against you and devising a plan against you. Oh turn back, each of you from his evil way, and reform your ways and your deeds.'" ¹²But they will say, "It's **hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.**"*

God called Judah to repent. Its people knew that a national (or corporate) response was needed, and so many people looked at their neighbors and believed that they would not repent for the needed turning to God and national healing. Therefore many people did not bother to respond and repent themselves: they gave up too soon and Judah was destroyed.

Christians must not look at our brethren and neighbors and reject our opportunity for national repentance from God. In a sick land we see much stubbornness, but God promises that He can correct it.

Even an encouraging vision of the real answer might take a surprisingly long time. Dan. 9:23 shows an unspecified amount of time (enough time to fast) between God's sending of the message and Daniel's receiving it. In Dan. 10, Daniel prayed and fasted three weeks to release God's answer that He gave at the start of the fast. Although the messenger could get past any human strength (v. 5-11), the prince of Persia kept him from delivering the message for the three weeks (v.

12-14), and he spoke about his upcoming battle with the prince of Greece (v. 20-21), which would take place centuries later. Clearly this messenger was a mighty angel, who was helped by Daniel's persistent praying and by Michael, the spiritual prince of Israel (Dan. 10:21, 12:1).

I conclude from Dan. 9-10 that even God-inspired, Scriptural prayers for a nation may require dedicated perseverance.

A Formidable Task with Smaller Strongholds

The forces of Satan have strongholds of spiritual darkness over all the earth. This includes strongholds over whole nations, like the prince of Persia, and more specific strongholds over regions in nations. These spiritual strongholds interfere as much as they can with work that truly advances the Kingdom of God. These strongholds will be crushed as a nation grows in its discipleship to Jesus. But some must be brought down in order for a nation to choose to join itself to Jesus.

Bringing down a regional stronghold is a giant task that will not be fully accomplished by a few believers – but one or a few may start its full destruction. The valley where I live with about 300,000 people provides an example. The strongholds here are especially effective in causing divisions and preventing God-ordained unity from developing. This is seen in the government and in many other ways since recorded history began here. But the greatest effect is disunity in the local Church: we have let it exist and create far too much damage. I have seen its work and ability to withstand spiritual assaults from relatively small groups of believers for 36 years. I personally believe that God will not empower the full destruction of this stronghold without a widespread coming together of the local Church to form the unity that God describes in Eph. 4:3-13 and John 17:21-23.

Challenges like this exist across the nation. The Church will

prevail after we start moving out with God. Truly good work by one or a few can produce truly good work by many believers and make regional breakthroughs. In my region there is progress, but much more is needed. And in the U.S. there is progress, but much more is needed.

Concluding Comments

Obadiah lets the U.S. and its Christians know that we are heading straight toward our bad national judgment, and lets us see that it is far worse than most of us imagine. And Obadiah lets us see that God calls the U.S. to a great national future in Jesus. Obadiah also shows His believers what our nation needs most in order to be delivered from its otherwise certain destruction into its blessed future: our governing our government and other intercession before God's face in His holy throne room, the Mt. Zion in heaven.

God shows other essentials that will enable the U.S. to receive the healing that He offers the U.S. (2Chron. 7:14). This includes believers' turning from our wicked ways to corporately manifest Jesus well, and this involves the proper working of each believer (Eph. 4:16).

Like the church in Laodicea in Rev. 3, the Church in the U.S. is now lukewarm and ripe for the refining of a harsh national judgment, in which God rescues individuals through a fire. Like the church in Sardis in Rev. 3, the Church in the U.S. needs to wake up, for our deeds are not yet complete in His sight. There is a spiritual war raging here: why are we sleeping? The Church in the U.S. (or other nations in our day) can become like the church in Philadelphia in Rev. 3 – delivered from an hour of judgment that was about to come on the whole world.

God has shown believers what to do as a people, and He will give more specific guidance to anyone who seeks Him. Will you do it?

A PRAYER FOR OUR NATION

As I was preparing my previous version of the book near 1990, I came across a prayer for our nation that was so relevant then. My source of this prayer did not give the original source, but when IFA (Intercessors for America) excerpted from my book in 1999, they also recognized the fit for that time and identified the original source: *If My People*, by Jimmy and Carol Owens in 1975. Clearly this prayer was fitting then, and it is probably even more fitting in 2014. It shows so much of what we have done and failed to do for decades.

The prayer is substantially quoted below (I now have several versions of it). If you agree with any part, then you can pray it with others and me. We can confess decades of corporate wicked ways, and can also ask God to help us corporately to turn from them.

A Prayer for the U.S.

Sovereign Lord, we thank you for our nation, and for its godly heritage. So long as we have walked in Your ways, You have faithfully poured out Your bounties on us. So long as we have acknowledged and served You, You have kept us a free people.

But in our prosperity we have forgotten that all we are and have we owe to Your love and grace. Many in our land have forgotten the God who made them. Many now deny even the basic concept of law. Selfishness and greed, distrust and thanklessness, hatred and indifference to suffering abound. Immorality and perversion, profanity and blasphemy are on every hand.

But we identify with this people, O Lord. You have placed us among them. It is partly because of our failures that our nation and society are as we see them now. Had our salt not lost its savor, corruption would have been restrained. Had we all continued to beget life in the Spirit, we would not be the minority we are in our society. Because our light has shone but dimly, darkness has encroached upon our nation. Because of our silence, the clamor of iniquity has grown loud in our land. Because of our weakness, violence has increased in our streets. Because of our division, the united forces of our enemy have met little resistance and have taken men captive at their will.

Pardon, O Lord, and heal our divisions, the grievous wounds that we have inflicted upon the Body of Christ. Jesus, You said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another." Forgive us where we have ignored or disfellowshipped each other because of doctrinal, social, racial, or cultural differences. We have presented an ugly, fragmented picture of Christ to the world by our jealousies and pettiness one to another. You said a house divided against itself cannot stand; unite Your Church in love, O Lord, that the world may believe!

We confess with shame our powerlessness. We have often trusted in our own programs and resources and been led by the traditions of men rather than by the Spirit of God.

Few of us have sought first the kingdom. Where we have confined religion to a few hours a week instead of making it the motivating force in our lives; where we have become idolators by putting other things before You, forgive us.

Forgive us, O Lord, where we have compromised our high and holy calling to be friends of the world. We have been silent in the face of encroaching corruption. We have tolerated evil. We have been

afraid of offending the world rather than keeping the world from offending our little ones. As a result, there is pornography in our houses and heresy in our classrooms. We have tolerated impurity in our churches, rather than disciplining and purging it out according to the command of Scripture.

It is time for judgment to begin at the House of God; but we would judge ourselves, so that we shall not be judged. Therefore, O Lord, hear our confession and pardon our iniquity. Restore to Your Church all that we have lost through our sin. Turn away Your wrath from our land, stem the tide of evil, and stay Your Hand of Judgment.

Wake believers to a new ministry of prayer and fasting for our nation, with authority and confidence and power. Create in us a hunger for Your Word, that we may all grow to maturity. May there come in the Church a putting away of all that offends You, and a mighty crying out for deliverance. We cry for righteousness to reign, for holiness to preserve our nation!

Save and guide the leaders of our government. Where corruption exists, bring it to light and purge it out. Wisdom and might are Yours, O Lord. You rule in the kingdom of men and give government to whom You will. Pull down the ungodly and raise up leaders who will be led by the Spirit of God.

Establish truth in our educational systems, integrity in our news media, righteous and merciful judgment in our courts, and equal justice and opportunity for all in our society. Heal our homes and cement family relationships.

Use us, O Lord, as instruments of healing and revival. Anoint the witness of Your people. Grant unto Your children boldness to proclaim Your life-giving Word, to minister life to the spiritually dead around us.

We lift up the name of Jesus! May it move in power throughout the land! Let Your face shine with peace and joy upon our land, for Your own glory, Lord!

Comfort and sustain our brothers and sisters in other countries, especially those who are persecuted.

Renew, O Lord, the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love, and power. Visit, O Lord, and let the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit flourish in all Your people and enrich the Body of Christ. Make the whole Church become a fit instrument in Your hands, that all the earth may hear Your voice.

Move the whole Church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world, that we might see in our time the final great harvest that will signal the return of our Lord Jesus, in power and great glory.

In His mighty name we pray. Amen!

Jimmy and Carol Owens, *If My People*, 1975.

Appendix 1

OBADIAH (from the NAS BIBLE)

Apx. 1 features the book of Obadiah from the New American Standard Bible, which I put into a paragraph format. To set this up, we first discuss how each alternative name for Edom in Obadiah applies to modern Edoms (Mt. Zion and the “mountain of Esau” are explained in Apx 3). This can help you see its applications to the U.S. as a modern Edom as you read Obadiah as a unit. After quoting Obadiah, I shall state the gist of what each verse can show the U.S. now.

Connotations of Esau and Teman for Modern Edoms in Obadiah

“Edom” refers to the modern nation as a whole unit. “Esau” means Edom, but this term should also draw our attention to the nation’s forefathers who laid its foundation (see p. 33).

In Ob. 6 “Esau” adds a reminder that the U.S. has special blessings through its relationship with God’s people of the promise in past generations, which the U.S. is now being tempted to abandon and eventually to repudiate in order to be like a stranger or foreigner.

“House” in “the house of Esau” in Ob. 18 means the modern Edom as a people (Germans, Americans, etc.). “Esau” in this term can remind us that the Edom had a good start that needed to be improved, and has an opportunity to turn to the God of the Edom’s Christian forefathers instead of being wiped out from being a people.

The “mountain of Esau” in v. 8, 9, and 21 means the government of the Edom, which had arisen primarily out of the Edom’s Judeo-

Christian foundation and really because of it. In v. 19 this term is like the other terms there and refers to a land area near the Dead Sea. In Deut. 2:5 God says: *"I have given Mt. Seir to Esau as a possession."* Ob. 19 shows Edom's loss of it. "Esau" in v. 19 lets a modern Edom see that if it arrogantly rejects God and His people, then its inheritance through His people would be taken from it and ultimately given to His people, even as v. 19 shows about the inheritance of ancient Edom.

Finally, "Teman" in v. 9 indicates that the land has a reputation for producing wise men and heroes, especially when they are needed.

Obadiah (from the Updated New American Standard Bible)

¹*The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom – We have heard a report from the Lord, and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, "Arise and let us go against her for battle" –* ²*"Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you are greatly despised. ³The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?' ⁴Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the Lord.*

⁵*"If thieves came to you, if robbers by night – O how you will be ruined! – would they not steal only until they had enough? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings? ⁶O how Esau will be ransacked, and his hidden treasures searched out! ⁷All the men allied with you will send you forth to the border, and the men at peace with you will deceive you and overpower you. They who eat your bread will set an ambush for you. (There is no understanding in him.) ⁸Will I not on that day," declares the Lord, "destroy wise men from Edom and understanding from the mountain of Esau? ⁹Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman, so that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.*

¹⁰*"Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever. ¹¹On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gate and cast lots for Jerusalem – you too were as one of them. ¹²Do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; yes, do not boast in the day of their distress. ¹³Do*

not enter the gate of My people in the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity in the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth in the day of their disaster. ¹⁴And do not stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives; and do not imprison their survivors in the day of their distress.

¹⁵*“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. ¹⁶Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and become as if they had never existed. ¹⁷But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. ¹⁸Then the house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau will be as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,” for the Lord has spoken.*

¹⁹*Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, and those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; also, they will possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. ²⁰And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the cities of the Negev.*

²¹*The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord’s.*

A Note on Some Other Translations of Obadiah

The King James Version translates Obadiah’s warnings in v. 2 and 12-14 as if the deeds had already occurred. The Hebrew future tense can be translated in this way, but this obscures the message of Obadiah to modern Edoms. The New American Standard and New International Version also give grammatically correct translations of these verses, and their messages to the U.S. and other modern Edoms don’t require an explanation like this.

The Gist of Each Verse for the U.S. Now

Every verse in Obadiah can apply to the U.S. now or in the near future in meaningful ways, and each verse has its specific insights. Some less vital insights discussed elsewhere are not included here,

but here we include the two verses omitted from this book (v. 2a and 20 were omitted to not dilute the main thrusts of Obadiah's message for us). The chapter (Ch.) that discusses the insight more thoroughly is put in parentheses at the end of each description.

Ob. 1 calls the nation "Edom". This describes the foundation of the U.S. and emphasizes its relationships to both Christians and Israel both today and in past generations. This nation also gives vital insights into the U.S. for our current situation involving Israel by the examples of Esau and ancient Edom (Ch. 2).

Ob. 2 (*"I will make you small among the nations..."*) shows a huge decrease in the U.S. importance and perhaps size among the nations in the "near future" if we stay arrogant.

Ob. 3 reveals the underlying iniquity that brings a devastating national judgment to the U.S.: arrogance of our heart, which deceives us. Ob. 3 also reveals how the U.S. had developed it so much (Ch. 3).

Ob. 4 is God's promise to judge our nation if we stay arrogant, even if we can accomplish our wildest dreams (Ch. 3).

Ob. 5-6 specifies the nature of our national judgment: it is just and very appropriate, a custom fit for an arrogant U.S. (Ch. 4).

While indicating major features of the U.S. global foreign policy since the 1940s, Ob. 7 reveals the means of our national judgment: being deceived and overpowered by those at peace with us and an ambush by those who eat our bread (Ch. 5).

The last part of Ob. 7 and Ob. 8-9 show the effect of arrogance on especially the U.S. government at our national judgment. This effect is characterized by a lack of wisdom and understanding (Ch. 5).

Ob. 10 reveals the sin that would permanently destroy an arrogant U.S.: violence to Israel. V. 10 and 18 together can help us see that any modern Edom's working relationship with God will ultimately be

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tested and revealed by its violence or else faithfulness to Israel (Ch. 6).

Ob. 11 specifies in remarkable detail the situation now involving Israel, each modern Edom, and Islamic nations near Israel. We can see that the U.S. and all modern Edoms are being effectively tempted and deceived in the specific issues of Ob. 11. This did not happen from 2600 years ago until 1948, and from Ob. 19 we can see that Ob. 11 should get even more pressing for the U.S. in the near future as God gives Israel lands to possess in the nation of Jordan (Ch. 6-9).

Ob. 11-14 begins with the war in modern Edoms now and shows the development of gross sin in the U.S. or any Edom if arrogance prevails. U.S. believers can already see Satan's schemes to produce Ob. 12 and 13 soon – even when we can prevent this if we respond to God with appropriate works of faith – and Ob. 14 shows how terribly wicked our nation will become if we don't respond well (Ch. 8-10).

Ob. 15-21 shows the just devastation of an arrogant Edom, but this Scripture also has a surprising message of a national salvation and discipleship to Jesus for any modern Edom that does repent and turn to Him. There are completely different meanings of Ob. 15-18 for a repentant U.S. and an unrepentant U.S. (Ch. 10-11, Apx. 5).

Ob. 15 shows that our national judgment will be just, whether that means our national devastation or deliverance in Jesus (Ch. 10-11).

Ob. 16 shows that the U.S. (and every other nation) will become **as if** it had never existed, whether that comes by a total transformation in Christ Jesus or by a total destruction from being a people (Ch. 11).

Ob. 17 shows three priorities of God in our day, so that the U.S. and its believers can co-operate with Him in every priority instead of being swept into destruction by opposing Him (Apx. 5).

Ob. 18 can show that God will use Israel as an objective test of the real righteousness and relationship with God of repentant and

unrepentant Edoms. Ob. 18 also shows the total destruction of every unrepentant Edom from being a people (Ch. 6, 10-11, Apx. 5).

Ob. 19 identifies specific possessions that God gives descendants of Jacob to possess in this time of bitter disputes about them. This enables a repentant U.S. to know God's decision on this issue, so that we won't join the unrepentant nations in fighting against His sovereign decision in one of His three priorities for now in Ob. 17 (Ch. 7, Apx. 5).

Zarephath in Ob. 20 is between Tyre and Sidon in Lebanon. Ob. 20a shows that after the (19-century) exile, some Israelites are among the neighboring Gentiles in southern Lebanon. V. 20a offers a helpful perspective of the Israel-Lebanon crisis in the 1980s, which may also become a future issue because Israel has pulled back from its solution, and the problem has re-started. As indicated on p. 60-61, terrorists fired missiles into schoolyards inside Israel, and Lebanon's government could not stop it. V. 20a can affirm Israel's work to protect its northern border, and a modern Edom might need to do better on this in the future than it did in the early 1980s.

The meaning of v. 20b depends on the meaning of Sepharad. Bible scholars have identified it to be in Spain, or in Iraq, or in Georgia of the former USSR, or elsewhere. I personally have acted on one of these interpretations, but lacking further confirmation, I don't believe that it is helpful to discuss any of them in this book.

Finally, Ob. 21 reveals the key for our national salvation: believers here are to govern the U.S. government before the Lord's face on "Mt. Zion". Ob. 21 also reveals the outcome of using this key: the U.S. will be the Lord's with Jesus functioning as its King in reality (Ch. 12).

These capsule summaries can help us to see that all of Obadiah is extremely meaningful for the United States and its believers now.

Appendix 2

OBADIAH PINPOINTING THE U.S. NOW

Here we consider many applications of Obadiah that identify the U.S. of our day out of all the nations of all time – probably even more than this prophecy identified ancient Edom. This can help us to see how specific Obadiah's prophecy is for the U.S. now.

Obadiah Describes “Now” Very Specifically

This prophecy applies to a nation at a time:

- * when the Day of the Lord draws near on all the nations (Ob. 15);
- * when each part of Ob. 7 describes important features of the U.S. global foreign policy (this did not begin to apply until about 1945);
- * when a nation of Jacob's descendants possesses the land containing Jerusalem (Ob. 10-11, and this alone eliminates the time from 70 AD until 1948);
- * when many nations that are aptly called “strangers and foreigners” are attempting to carry out each of the three kinds of aggressions in Ob. 11 against this nation from Jacob (never since 600 BC);
- * when every “modern Edom” is both standing aloof from Jacob and close to decisively choosing to be like a stranger or foreigner; and
- * when Ob. 19 is being precisely fulfilled – either already causing huge controversies and strong temptations for unfaithfulness by all modern Edoms, or else will surely cause these things when the other part of v. 19 occurs (it is already set up).

Ob. 19 shows: Israel's possession of the Negev and Shephelah at its beginning in 1948; its expansion to include specifically the very

controversial West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967; and its possession of lands in the present nation of Jordan in the “near future” (Chapter 7).

Consider how precisely these features in Obadiah are being fulfilled at this time, whereas they had not been fulfilled until the 1940s (some for the first time since 600 BC or 70 AD, and Ob. 19 has never been fulfilled before now). By taking all of these situations together, we can see how specifically “now” is singled out while all other times (except 600 BC) are repeatedly excluded.

The U.S. Is the Primary Example of an Edom in Our Day

This nation in Obadiah must be legitimately called “Edom” (Ob. 1).

Consider the close correspondence of ancient Edom to those modern nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations, which is very instructive for such nations now (Chapter 2). Then consider how the U.S. is the leading example of this type of nation after World War II, even as Britain was before our day.

Obadiah Specifically Describes the Key U.S. Problem

The basic problem of this “Edom” is the arrogance of its heart, which does not fear God or His word. Every modern Edom has a problem with this arrogance, but the rest of Ob. 3 refers to features that don't apply to most modern Edoms: this arrogance has developed through many years of being sheltered from a serious threat of being invaded; and this shelter was provided by a special natural defense for the U.S. that makes an invasion to be exceptionally difficult.

Ob. 3-4 Almost Uniquely Specifies the U.S. National Security

A manifestation of this arrogance of the nation's collective heart is the Edom's belief that it can decide on matters like abortion and Israel

without concerning itself with what God says about them, because its heart says, “*Who will bring me down to earth?*” (Ob. 3). This question identifies the U.S. Which Edom could ask it in view of their security and strength? Moreover, the U.S. was the first nation to place people on the moon, and our nation has boasted much about this and other achievements. The U.S. has also sent space probes to the planets as one of the top two nations in space exploration. But the Lord says that even if this arrogant Edom would “*set its nest among the stars, from there I will bring it down*” (Ob. 4).

Abundant U.S. Grain and Natural Resources in Ob. 5-7

This Edom normally has such abundant food that it supplies bread for others (Ob. 5, 7); but the unrepentant Edom would be left utterly desolate and starving. This Edom also has hidden treasures – an apt name for undeveloped natural resources hidden below its soil – that would be searched out by its conquerors (Ob. 6).

Consider: v. 5-7 specify the two characteristic material blessings that God has given the U.S. The U.S. pays farmers to not grow food and does not disturb much of our natural resources because – with our abundance – we can afford to do without them.

If secular humanism prevails in the U.S., then the U.S. will not even acknowledge that God has given us anything – much less thank Him for anything – and we will provoke a terrible just judgment in other ways. The judgment of Ob. 5-6 especially fits an arrogant U.S.

Our Foreign Policy Since 1945 Works by Alliances

This Edom would form alliances that would send it forth to the border (Ob. 7). Which nation at any time has established such an elaborate set of alliances as the U.S. since 1945? This is especially

remarkable: before the early 1940s the U.S. characteristically had avoided alliances, but after 1941 our basic policy around the world has been to defend ourselves and other nations by making alliances. They have sent our troops to the borders formed by the Bamboo and Iron Curtains chronically, in specific emergencies, and in two wars.

Treacherous Deception and the Ambush by Those Who Eat Our Bread

Ob. 7 again fits the U.S. now especially well: *"They who eat your bread will set an ambush for you."* Few nations of all time compare with the U.S. in providing bread to other nations, including to Europe after World War II, Communist China, the USSR, and many other nations. Ob. 7 reveals an ambush by those who eat our bread, and *"the men at peace with you will deceive you and overpower you"*. Many see reasons to suspect that some people in our own government are using tax money (our "bread") to set up such an ambush.

We cannot confirm an effective ambush before it is sprung, but the U.S. is especially well qualified for the fulfillment of Ob. 7 by its features that are brought out elsewhere in Obadiah. Why would we be ambushed? Our nation is potentially too strong to be overpowered by a direct attack, and we are greatly despised by many who seem to be at peace with us (Ob. 2, 7b). Some despising may come from jealousy and envy, some from our arrogant actions, and some from Satan's influence on nations: he wants to destroy the U.S. before we repent and bless the world according to the potential God has given us.

Heroes, Wisdom, and Ingenuity Vanish When Needed

God desires good for the U.S. instead of devastation, and so He laments over this Edom in v. 7d: *"There is no understanding of it."*

This is again quite appropriate for the U.S. We are not a nation

that has never done much, but we are a potentially competent nation whose potential for goodness is being destroyed by our arrogance. Consider that the U.S. has earned a reputation for Yankee ingenuity and bold heroes, which have provided what was needed when we really needed it. Consider also how much we are already being deceived by our arrogance. Ob. 8-9 shows that if the U.S. continues to not repent, then our blindness to the truth about God, His word, and our situation will only become worse, and the blessed characteristics that were almost a trademark of the U.S. will be significantly absent.

The U.S. as a Brother to Israel

Consider our Judeo-Christian foundation, and consider the active and influential role that the U.S. has exerted upon Israel: the U.S. has clearly been a brother to Israel as much as any other nation at any time has been. And while the U.S. usually has had good intentions and has sought just and peaceable solutions to Israel's problems, we have often demonstrated a crucial lack of insight into the vital truths about Israel now that Ob. 10, 11, 17, and 19 provide (Chapters 6-8).

Here are two examples of these vital truths: God demands that the U.S. not betray Israel when its enemies try to carry out the three basic kinds of aggressions against it (v. 11); and God has ordained that Israel possess the West Bank, Gaza, and certain lands in Jordan now.

Features of the U.S. Today

To see better the unique fit of Obadiah to the U.S. now, consider:

- * The U.S. has its foundation and heritage coming largely from God's people of the promise – a leading example of a modern Edom.
- * The U.S. has a severe problem with an arrogance of its collective heart, which causes it to be grossly deceived.

- * The U.S. has grown arrogant through many years of shelter from a tangible threat of being invaded and enslaved, which has developed through an unusual natural protection and national strength and achievements.
- * In boasting about great achievements by our own strength, people of the U.S. have often pointed to our space travel and our being the first nation to land people on the moon.
- * The U.S. has characteristically had abundant food and unexplored natural resources, but is increasingly unwilling to acknowledge them as gifts from God.
- * The U.S. has formed many alliances since 1941, which have sent our troops to well-known borders chronically and in many major crises.
- * The U.S. has given or sold grain for bread to many nations and is unusually qualified for the fulfillment of Ob. 7: to be ambushed by those who eat our bread, by those who seem to be at peace with us.
- * The U.S. has characteristically been known for its ingenuity, but is now operating with a blindness and a lack of real wisdom and understanding about our nation's actual situation and other truths.
- * The U.S. is probably the closest of kin among all nations now to the nation of descendants from Jacob.
- * The U.S. is now in the time in which the Day of the Lord is drawing near on all the nations, and at a time when the other situations in Obadiah are taking place again: all of this hasn't happened since 600 BC, and really never for Ob. 17 and 19-21.

Furthermore, as summarized in Apx. 1, everything else in Obadiah has a potentially relevant meaning for the U.S. now or in the near future: still other features of the U.S. today are indicated in the mere 21 verses of Obadiah, and nothing fails to fit. Isn't the U.S. today clearly pinpointed by all of these specific features?

Appendix 3

EXPLAINING MT. ZION AND MOUNTAIN

In this book I have claimed meanings of Mt. Zion and mountain of Esau that may be new to some readers. This appendix is intended to explain the Biblical basis for the meanings of these names in Obadiah. These explanations omit many supporting Scriptures in order to keep this appendix short. Apx. 3 is unnecessary if you already believe the meanings of these names given in the book.

Spiritual Mt. Zion Is the Lord's Holy Throne Room

Mt. Zion is a key term in the important Ob. 21, and is also in Ob. 17. I claimed (p. 87) that this is the Mt Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 and Micah 4:1-3a, which is the Lord's holy throne room in heaven.

Let's verify this meaning. Notice the key terms and the timing in Heb. 12:22-24, which was written to First Century believers:

²²But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

This Scripture describes a spiritual place by using many terms full of meanings. It is collectively called Mt. Zion in contrast to the Mt. Sinai of the Old Testament (v. 18-21). Clearly this is not physical Mt. Zion or Jerusalem, but is a spiritual place to which believers in the Lord Jesus had gone to while living on earth: people do not go there only after

death or in the millennium. Indeed, this is the spiritual place where believers in Jesus assemble before God: this meeting place for believers now includes the whole “*general assembly*” and the “*church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven*”. Both terms refer to the whole Church across the ages, from its start even unto now.

Twice Jesus confirms that this Mt. Zion or Jerusalem exists now: “...Jerusalem, for it **is** the city of the great **King**” (Matt. 5:35); and “...the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which **comes down out of heaven from My God...**” (Rev. 3:12). Jesus spoke v. 12 1900+ years ago to a church that is no longer on earth: this was true for that church, and so Jerusalem does not begin to come to earth only after the rapture of the Church in our future. This heavenly Jerusalem – this Mt. Zion – is a place that believers in Jesus could go during the last 2000 years, and at the same time is coming to earth (with much more to come – and specifically come in “our day”).

God is our key destination in Mt. Zion. So much can be said about Him. But when Heb. 12:23 describes God in this Mt. Zion, the only feature brought out explicitly about Him is that He is “*the Judge of all*”. This is a word for the leader of a government. This single appositive in v. 23 suggests that God's government is a key function carried out at this Mt. Zion. This “*is the city of the great King*”, the spiritual place to find His throne and His holy throne room. This also is the spiritual place to find His face. Believers in Jesus who seek God's face have assembled there ever since His atoning sacrifice for us (the sprinkled blood in Heb. 12:24), and our presence there is consistent with our participation in His government of the earth according to His will.

Both a survey and an examination of the whole book of Hebrews can show that this Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 is the same place as the Holy of Holies in heaven (Heb. 10:19-25): both are God's holy dwelling

place and holy throne room. A 90-page discussion of Hebrews and topics closely related to coming to God in His holy throne room is given in *MOUNT ZION How to Get There and What to Do* (its PDF is free at www.lulu.com, “james tarter”). In the rest of this section I excerpt from its appendix to help us see the meanings of “Mt. Zion” (Ob. 17, 21), “mountain of Esau” (Ob. 8, 9, 21), and “My holy mountain” (Ob. 16).

Many Scriptures connect Mt. Zion, the Holy of Holies in heaven, and the Lord’s holy throne room where He dwells. We can see this connection easily by realizing that the Holy of Holies on earth is “a *copy and shadow of the heavenly things*” (Heb. 8:5 in the context of Heb. 8-9). The Holy of Holies on earth features the cherubim, and many Scriptures show that they are in the immediate presence of His throne: the Lord is “*enthroned above the cherubim*” (2Sam. 6:2, Isa. 37:16, 1Chron. 13:6, 2Kings 19:15, Psalms 80:1, 99:1). The Hebrew word for “enthroned” in these verses is “*yashab*”.

When the Bible speaks about the Lord’s “*yashab*”ing, it is consistently in Zion and the Holy of Holies. *Yashab* is boldfaced in the following Scriptures:

*Sing praises to the Lord, who **dwells** in Zion* (Psalm 9:11a)

*His [God’s] **dwelling** place is in Zion* (Psalm 76:2b)

*For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is My resting place forever; here I will **dwelt**, for I have desired it.* (Psalm 132:13-14 – also, the Heb. root of “habitation” is *yashab*)

*You who are **enthroned** above the cherubim* (Psalm 80:1b)

Now consider Psalm 99:1-4a:

*The Lord reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is **enthroned above the cherubim**, let the earth shake! The **Lord** is great in Zion, and He is exalted above all the peoples. Let them praise Your great and awesome name; **holy** is He. The strength of the **King** loves justice.*

V. 1-4a show the holy Lord's reign over the earth as the King in Zion, dwelling above the cherubim, who are in the Holy of Holies in heaven. This Scripture explicitly unites the Lord's holy throne room, the spiritual Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24, and the Holy of Holies: this is a single location with different names.

Therefore we find the golden altar of incense in the Holy of Holies in heaven (Heb. 9:4-5, 8:5) and also before God's throne (Rev. 8:3):

*Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the **Holy of Holies**, having a **golden altar of incense** and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; and **above it** were the **cherubim of glory** overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. (Heb. 9:3-5)*

*Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much **incense** was given to him, so that he might **add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar** which was **before the throne**. (Rev. 8:3)*

Psalm 2:6 also shows the Lord's reigning in Zion and identifies it as His holy mountain: "*But as for Me, I have installed **My King** upon **Zion, My holy mountain**.*" Joel 3:17a confirms this meaning of Zion, "*Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in **Zion My holy mountain**.*" These Scriptures can introduce us to God's use of "mountain" to refer to the government of a kingdom in some Scriptures.

In Biblical times a "king" was the head ruler of the government of a nation or nations, and all other government obtained its authority from him. The government under him included princes, administrators, and other government officials. They are raised up above the other people by being connected to the king: they may be related to the king, or he may give them the authority to do some government business that raises them up over others in the kingdom.

The relationships of a king, his officials, and the people are shown in a simple picture of a mountain.



Micah 4:1-3a and Isaiah 2:2-4a use “mountain” in this way as they show God’s government of the earth from Mt. Zion:

¹And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. ²And many nations will come and say, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ³And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. (Micah 4:1-3a)

In Chapter 12 we emphasized v. 2b-3a: the Lord’s law, word, judgments (including mercies), and decisions will go forth from Zion and Jerusalem to whole nations as well as to individuals. V. 2b-3a clearly show His reign over the peoples and nations from Mt. Zion – the seat of God’s government of the earth. Here let’s see how the meaning of “mountain” as government in v. 1-3 helps us to see our participation in His government.

V. 1 shows that ***“the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains...”*** Heb. 3:6 shows that the “house of the Lord” can refer to faithful, persevering believers in Jesus: ***“But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”*** With mountain as “government” in v. 1, the government of God’s faithful believers will be established as the chief government of the earth. Many nations and peoples will come to this government or mountain to learn His ways and to walk in them. This can indicate the

discipling of nations to Jesus (fulfilling His Great Commission, Zech. 2:11, and Ob. 16), and nations coming to His people in Isa. 60:1-3.

Psalm 110 shows our voluntary participation in Jesus' reign over the earth from Zion. Consider v. 1-3:

*¹The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand **until** I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." ²The LORD will stretch forth Your strong **scepter from Zion**, saying, "**Rule** in the midst of Your enemies." ³**Your people will volunteer freely** in the day of Your power; in **holy** array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.*

A scepter is a rod carried by a king as a symbol of his authority. This Scripture shows King Jesus' ruling from Zion – at the LORD's right hand – before Jesus' enemies are made a footstool for His feet. His reign from Zion (v. 2) flows into the voluntary service of His people in holiness (v. 3) for this time of transition toward making His enemies a footstool for His feet (v. 1).

Mt. Zion and the Mountain of Esau in Obadiah

Let us now apply these meanings of Mt. Zion and mountain as government to Ob. 21: "*The **deliverers** will ascend **Mt. Zion to judge the mountain of Esau**, and the **kingdom will be the Lord's**.*" We can review the picture on p. 87-89 from our new perspective.

The deliverers are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are the only people qualified to come into His holy throne room. Judge means to govern: good examples for the meaning of the Hebrew word for judge are the Judges of ancient Israel, who were deliverers and government leaders instead of mere rulers in court cases. The mountain of Esau is the nation's government in Ob. 21 (and Ob. 8-9).

Using these meanings, believers ascend into the Lord's holy throne room on spiritual Mt. Zion, which is before His face. There they

govern the government of the modern nation by interceding, so that it will become the Lord's possession with Jesus being its King in reality. The nation will be a kingdom with any form of visible government, because Jesus would be its King.

We can see how this picture from Ob. 21 fits neatly with Micah 4:1-3a (or Isaiah 2:2-4a), Heb. 12:22-24, Psalms 2, 99, and 110, and 2Chron. 7:14. All of these Scriptures combine to show me that God invites His people to volunteer to participate in governing the earth according to His will by intercession on spiritual Mt. Zion, His holy throne room and the seat of His government of the earth.

This picture of the "mountain of Esau" can help us appreciate the discussion of Ob. 8-9 on p. 40. But like every term in Ob. 19, the "mountain of Esau" in v. 19 refers to a land area near Israel and the Dead Sea ("Esau" still is meaningful for modern Edoms – see p. 128).

The first two parts of Ob. 17 directly involve spiritual Mt. Zion: *"But on **Mount Zion** there will be those who escape, and it will be **holy**."* As we can see in Apx. 5, Ob. 17 shows God's priority to rescue individual believers while their nations are justly judged, and shows His priority to produce the needed corporate holiness of His people in every land – and specifically in every modern Edom.

This discussion in Apx. 3 allows us to go farther into Ob. 16 than we could go in Chapter 11 (p. 82-85): *"Because just as you drank on **My holy mountain**, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and become as if they had never existed."* Psalm 2:6 and Joel 3:17 (p. 142) both identify Mt. Zion as the Lord's holy mountain.

Nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage have established many laws based on the Law of God that goes forth

from Mt. Zion. An arrogantly unrepentant modern Edom rejects this good drink and will drink a just judgment in God's holiness: it will be destroyed from being a people. A repentant modern Edom receives Jesus as its King and thereby strengthens the weak Judeo-Christian part of its foundation and heritage. This transforms the nation so well and so much that the sinful nation of the past becomes as if it had never existed – a wonderful blessing, not a devastation.

The last part of Ob. 16 shows that the same results are extended to all the nations after each nation has had an opportunity to drink of good laws from the Lord's holy mountain – Mt. Zion. This can remove a misconception about Matt. 24:14: *"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."* This witness and preaching of the kingdom will be far more substantial than merely speaking the words of the Gospel message: *"For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power"* (1Cor. 4:20). Ob. 16 can show that every nation will get at least this much witness: an opportunity to taste having good laws that come from the Lord on Zion.

While I am convinced from Scripture that we are living in the time leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus – even "soon" – this is one of many indications in Scripture that His global return is not "maybe tonight". There is much to be done in the Church and through the Church to the nations. While major changes will surely continue to accelerate, much time surely remains for modern Edoms to experience the tests and blessings of the national discipleship to Jesus, or else the devastation of the permanent national judgment.

Appendix 4

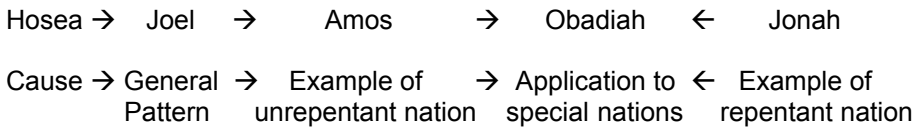
OBADIAH IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

Obadiah's word to modern Edoms is a special case of a more general word in the Minor Prophets, Obadiah's context in the Bible. Obadiah is an integral part of this more general word about all modern nations, which adds many rich insights and confirmations to this book. Here we consider the heart of the word from Hosea to Jonah for all nations in this time leading up to Jesus' return. (This can show how Obadiah fits into the more general word and can help a reader to gain valuable insights about modern nations in his own study of these Scriptures.)

Using figurative language without specifying either the land or the time of the prophecy, Joel gives the general pattern of God's work with nations now as whole units. A devastating invasion of locusts was already occurring at the beginning of Joel. Hosea comes before Joel and shows the real cause of this invasion: spiritual unfaithfulness by God's people and the resulting national sinfulness without repentance.

After Joel's general pattern, Amos provides an explicit historical example of how Joel is fulfilled for unrepentant nations, and Jonah does this for repentant nations. Obadiah is located between Amos and Jonah and is directed to those nations that have received a foundation in Christ Jesus in past generations. The grave warning in the first part of Obadiah is built on the example of ancient Israel in Amos, and the hope for repentance, deliverance, and life in the last part of Obadiah is confirmed by the example of Nineveh in Jonah.

The relationship of these books can be put in a simple diagram:



An example of the Joel-Amos-Obadiah connection is on p. 38.

These five Minor Prophet books fit into an even larger unified word about nations in our day in all 12 Minor Prophets. The basic picture with many Scriptural confirmations comes especially from Joel, Amos, Jonah, and Malachi, plus vital insights from Ephesians and 2Chron. 7:13-14 like those in Chapters 13-15. This picture from these 6 books is provided in *God's Just Judgment of a Nation*. Major themes from the other Minor Prophets (including Obadiah) and other closely related topics that could be omitted from the basic picture were put in a larger book called *God's Just Judgment of a Nation Supplement*. PDFs of both whole books can be seen (in the Preview) or downloaded for free at www.lulu.com: put "James Tarter" in its "search" box.

For those interested, I call attention to Apx. 4 in the *Supplement*, which discusses God's justice and mercy in judging nations for sins that were committed centuries earlier. This way that God works with whole nations is well established in Scripture, and we can see how His way is just and merciful to even the accountable generation.

I'll add that Apx. 5 of the *Supplement* gives a more thorough explanation of spiritual Mt. Zion than Apx. 3 in this book on Obadiah.

Zech. 2:11: Fulfilling the Great Commission in Our Day

Zech. 2:11a concisely identifies a time for national discipleship: **"Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people."** It is essential for us to realize that this refers to

our day – this time since about the 1940s until Jesus’ visible return to reign over all the earth – and not the millennium. Let’s confirm that each verse in the context of Zech. 2:11a describes this time before Jesus returns, so that we will move into fulfilling His Great Commission in the time that our Lord calls for it – before we can see it and while we can participate in making it happen according to His will.

*6“Ho there! **Flee** from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens,” declares the Lord. 7“Ho, **Zion! Escape**, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.” 8For 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. 9For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me. 10Sing for joy, and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” declares the Lord. 11“**Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day** and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. 12The Lord will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem. 13Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is aroused from His holy habitation.” (Zech. 2:6-13)*

In Zech. 2:6 God tells His people who have been dispersed in all directions: “**Flee from the land of the north.**” This means whenever His people can, as in Nazi Germany in the early 1930s and in a few opportune times in the USSR, especially since 1989. In v. 7 God tells His dispersed people, Zion: “**Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.**”

Zion can refer to dispersed Jews. Here God tells them to escape from the “*daughter of Babylon*”, their idolatrous land of exile. The Hebrew words for flee and escape both mean to get away from something dangerous, but flee emphasizes a rapid motion from it. This aptly describes how Jews in the lands north of Israel (Nazi Germany and Poland, nations of the USSR, etc.) have needed to jump

at the few opportunities that come in our day to get out of their land of captivity, while those in Babylon have more opportunities and freedom to escape from their land of exile. V. 6-7 do not fit into the picture of any future millennium that I have heard taught.

Zion can also refer to another group of His people: believers in the Lord Jesus who come before Him in His holy throne room (Heb. 12:22, Apx. 3). We also live as aliens in our lands (1Peter 2:11). If our land is idolatrous – a true daughter of Babylon – then believers need to escape from the idolatry of our land. Clearly there are many idolatrous lands today, but probably not after Jesus returns.

Zech. 2:8-9 (and other Scriptures) shows that any nation that tries to plunder Zion (believers and Jews) will itself be severely injured. The principle in v. 8 applies at any time, but has a special meaning in this time leading up to the very consummation of this age, when God's judgment will come on the unrepentant nations that are against His people: Israel, believers in Jesus, and the nations joined to Him. And the warning in v. 8 seems irrelevant after Jesus returns to reign.

V. 9a says: *"For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves."* A general feature of the Joel 2 judgment under communism in our day is that communists from an underclass and alienated members of other classes gain control of a land and plunder its inhabitants. When the people of a land ultimately reject God and His people in our day, they set themselves up for v. 9: the Joel 2 judgment of darkness, which produces a great upheaval on all in the land (the destructive judgment in Obadiah is an example).

In Zech. 2:10-11 the Lord declares twice that He will *"dwell in your midst"*: *"Sing for joy, and be glad, O **daughter of Zion**; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the Lord.* ¹¹*"Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become*

My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

The dwelling in v. 10 is in the midst of the daughter of Zion. This is the Church by both major meanings of Zion: God caused the Church to be born out of His Jewish people and Jewish foundation and also out of His holy throne room in heaven – the Mt. Zion in Heb. 12:22-24.

Consider the sequence in v. 10-11. The Lord comes first to His temple in a land, the Church there, to purify and refine believers, so that they can prepare the way for Him in the land. This is His dwelling in v. 10 and not v. 11: in v. 10 He is dwelling in the midst of His people, but not in the land – this “dwelling” is special. This is His Spirit being poured out on all mankind to empower repentance before the Day of the Lord comes to a land (Joel 2:28-31).

If His people in a land corporately receive Him and move into His calling before its Day of the Lord, then the land will be healed and joined to Him and will become a part of His people. V. 11a shows that many nations will do this in our day. Then v. 11b says again that He will “*dwell in your midst*”, but in v. 11b *your* includes the whole nations that become His people – the nations are new granddaughters of Zion!

V. 10-11 show that Jesus comes first to His people in a land to produce their repentance, and then works through them to bring the whole land to join itself to Jesus to become a part of His people. This precisely fits our day in a most meaningful way (Chapters 12-15).

The way that v. 10-11 provide the same picture as Mal. 3:1-4, Micah 1:1-5 (next page), Amos 5:16-20, and Joel 2:28-32 is discussed more fully in the Appendix to *God’s Just Judgment of a Nation* (see p. 179 for how to see or get it for free). So much more can be said about this consistent picture in Scripture and especially the Minor Prophets, but the point here is to confirm that the context of Zech. 2:11a fits our

day instead of being postponed to the millennium.

Zech. 2:12 says: *"The Lord will **possess Judah as His portion in the holy land**, and will again **choose Jerusalem**."* As we can see in Apx. 5 (p. 158-162), a few Scriptures show clearly that the Lord is giving the remnant of Jacob their promised land to possess in our time of great controversy. In Joel 3:1-2 the Lord characterizes this time of great conflict as the time when He *"restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem"*. This time in Joel 3:1-2 describes Zech. 2:12 and now.

Zech. 2:13 says: *"**Be silent**, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is **aroused from His holy habitation**."* The Lord is giving a key word in Zech. 2, and we need to hear Him. Micah 1:2-4a says: *"**Hear**, O peoples, all of you; **listen**, O earth and all it contains. And let the Lord God be a **witness against you**, the Lord **from His holy temple**. For behold, the **Lord is coming from His place**. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt..."*

Once again, this is being worked out in nation after nation in our day as He comes in the Spirit from His holy temple in heaven to the land – to join the nation to Jesus if it is prepared by His people there, and for its destructive Day of Lord judgment if unprepared.

To conclude, the context of Zech. 2:11 describes "today" very accurately and fits into other key Scriptures from the Minor Prophets that are being worked out before our own eyes. God does intend for whole nations to be joined to Christ Jesus and become His people in our day – an excellent description of national discipleship to Him and a fulfillment of the Great Commission. Jesus' Great Commission is to be fulfilled by His personal disciples before He returns, so that we can move toward fulfilling it in "our day" with expectation instead of getting discouraged by highly visible trends that we can see in any nation now.

Appendix 5

THREE PRIORITIES OF GOD TODAY

In Ob. 17 God mentions three of His uncompromising priorities for our day that leads up to the return of Jesus. But it is not obvious from Obadiah itself that v. 17 represents His priorities for this time when nations as whole units get delivered or destroyed in judgment. In this Appendix we consider a few Scriptures from outside of Obadiah that show how each comment in v. 17 does represent a priority of God for our crucial time.

God's Priority to Save Individual Believers

The first priority in Ob. 17 is His careful saving of His individual people, even if their nation is getting devastated. There is enough cruelty and killing in national judgments to make everything seem to be out of control: consider Nazi Germany, Stalin's USSR, or Mao's China. But Scriptures about national judgments consistently contain veiled comments to show that God is in control and carefully looks after each one of His people. For example, in the context of national judgments in Joel and Amos (see Apx. 4), God promises to deliver anyone who calls on Him (Joel 2:32a); and God promises that "*not a kernel will fall to the ground*" when He judges the house of Jacob (Amos 9:9).

Ob. 17a says: "*But on Mt. Zion there will be those who escape.*" (Joel 2:32b also says this). This is the Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24 (Apx. 3), to which believers in Jesus can go; and "those" are individuals who go to this Mt. Zion, who turn to Him no matter what their nation does.

He will rescue each believer as faithfully as He did Noah and Lot (2Pet. 2:5-9). V. 17a is God's expression in Obadiah of His just provision for each individual of His people when whole nations are changing drastically and judged accordingly (Ob. 15-18).

Unless we view things from God's eternal perspective, a national judgment looks like an indiscriminate "sledge hammer" solution for a problem, but we need to embrace God's assurances that it is not – that He carefully provides for each person in physical death or in a longer life on earth. In a well known example, consider the Corrie ten Boom family in Nazi Germany: at the right times Corrie escaped to live longer on earth and Betsy and the other family members escaped to heaven by dying (going into the next phase of their eternal life).

Zech. 12:1-10 is another Scripture in the Minor Prophets about the judgment of nations in our day. V. 1 is so relevant to God's priority for "individuals" that we should examine it here: *"...concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within **him**."*

The Lord proclaims three of His great works in one sentence. He *"stretches out the heavens"*. This can remind us that His works are immeasurably greater than the whole earth. He *"lays the foundation of the earth"*. This shows His special interest in the tiny earth as a part of His great creation and reminds us of His sovereign right to judge whole nations. He also *"forms the spirit of man within **him**"* – not "them". This shows His special interest in His vital eternal work in each individual of His people, because He mentions this work along beside His work of stretching out the whole spiritual and material universe.

By showing the extraordinary value God places on His work in an individual, Zech. 12:1 assures us that He truly provides each person in the "Israel of God" – whose spirit is made alive in Jesus – with what is

right, just, and good, even along with and through His global corporate decisions concerning whole nations. In deciding what is truly good for anyone, God looks foremost to eternal work, which will be around long after the pains of national judgment cease.

I'll make a statement about national judgments that does not make outward sense, but I believe is a principle that God has taught me in a variety of ways: His eternal work in one individual of His people is as important to Him as His work in that person's nation. In His prophecies about the deliverance or else devastation of nations as whole units, He consistently brings up His saving work of each individual of His people. Only God is able to make completely just decisions on both levels at the same time, as Peter illustrates with his examples of Noah and Lot in 2Pet. 2:5-9 (p. 154).

One application of this principle is that believers should focus on the individuals they interact with (their families, etc.), even while doing work for their nation. In a personal example, God showed me that I should give priority to my daughter Amber over writing this word about the U.S., which had the potential (by helping Christians to see our national problem and move into God's solution) to greatly help Amber's life on earth as well as the life of hundreds of millions of people like her. In this sense God's priority was puzzling, but my role in Amber's development in Jesus was irreplaceable and very important to Him, whereas God can save our land with or without our knowledge of Obadiah or any specific item other than Himself.

When Amber died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1987 at the age of ten, I understood God's priority for me. I needed to take advantage of my opportunity to provide God's love so that Amber could grow in Jesus, because He wanted His irreplaceable work in her to be done regardless of my other contributions to national repentance. And it is

this way for each of us who work for our national repentance. Our work for the U.S. includes working with individuals, each one being extremely important in God's eyes. Moreover, God's primary work for the nation comes out of such people.

Let's conclude this discussion of God's priority of saving individual people with two comments related to the dual meaning of each priority in Ob. 17 (Chapter 11). In a repentant modern Edom, God's people would be fulfilling the requirements of 2Chron. 7:14. Then many people would escape eternal destruction by receiving Jesus and thereby going to Mt. Zion, and this priority of God will be bountifully fulfilled (Chapters 12-13). But the Church in an unrepentant modern Edom lacks enough believers on Mt. Zion and hinders many people from coming to know Jesus personally (Chapter 14). Like the church of Laodicea (Chapter 3), God corrects a remnant of that Church through a fiery national judgment. For example, notice that many more people have been saved in a nation like China after its national judgment than before it.

Holy Mt. Zion Shows God's Priority to Perfect His Church

The second priority in Ob. 17 is that Mt. Zion *"will be holy"*. This again is the Mt. Zion of Heb. 12:22-24, to which believers can come.

How is Mt. Zion's holiness related to God's perfecting His Church? Remember from Ob. 21 (Chapters 12-15) that if believers of a modern Edom pray and seek God's face well on holy Mt. Zion, then His people in the Edom will meet the other requirements of 2Chron. 7:14. This means that the Church is accurately manifesting Jesus to the nation, so that the Church there is well on its way toward fulfilling its part in God's goal for the entire Body of Christ in this time before He visibly returns: to grow up in all aspects into holy Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:15).

This key to healing a modern Edom in Ob. 21 makes "Mt. Zion will

be holy” to be a fitting expression of this goal for His Church in a modern Edom. Intercession before His face on Mt. Zion requires holiness (Chapter 12, Apx. 3). Unrepentant modern Edoms do not receive the promise in Ob. 21 because believers do not adequately ascend holy Mt. Zion during an Edom’s season of opportunity (2Chron. 7:13, Chapter 13). Mt. Zion is not adequately treated as holy in every unrepentant modern Edom. Because believers corporately refuse to move into God’s holiness in prosperous conditions with their subtle temptations and distractions, God will help His surviving people to treat Mt. Zion as holy in the harsher but less subtle conditions of a national judgment – even while the Edom is getting destroyed forever.

Modern Edoms that become the Lord’s with Jesus as its King in reality will have many believers who ascend the Mt. Zion in heaven – His holy throne room and the Holy of Holies in heaven. Mt. Zion would necessarily be treated as “holy” in every repentant modern Edom in a very practical way, because this is how any modern Edom repents.

Eph. 3-4 (Chapter 14) shows that the Body of Christ will ultimately provide a full expression of Christ to its part of the world before Jesus returns. In every land God will perfect His Church – either by means of the obedience of faith in more prosperous conditions, or by a remnant developing the obedience of faith during a harsh persecution. Eph. 3:9-10 shows that God makes this a great priority. God declares that the Church is the expression of His wisdom to spiritual rulers, saying: *“... God, who created all things; in order that the manifold **wisdom of God might now be made known** through the Church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”*

God’s wisdom through the Church is such a great priority that Scripture associates it with His purpose for all creation. Consider: if the devil prevents the Church from fulfilling God’s prophecy for it in

Eph. 4:11-16, then he could boast about beating God's wisdom. This will not happen! God's manifold wisdom will be made known through the Church before Christ Jesus returns visibly. By the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and not loving their lives even to death, the Church will overcome the greatest efforts of the devil before he is fully cast down in shame and is bound (Rev. 12:10-12).

How is God's unwavering goal for the fully Christ-like Church in every Edom expressed in Ob. 17? Mt. Zion will be holy. But this holiness would come too late to save an unrepentant modern Edom.

God's Priority for Jacob to Possess Its Possessions

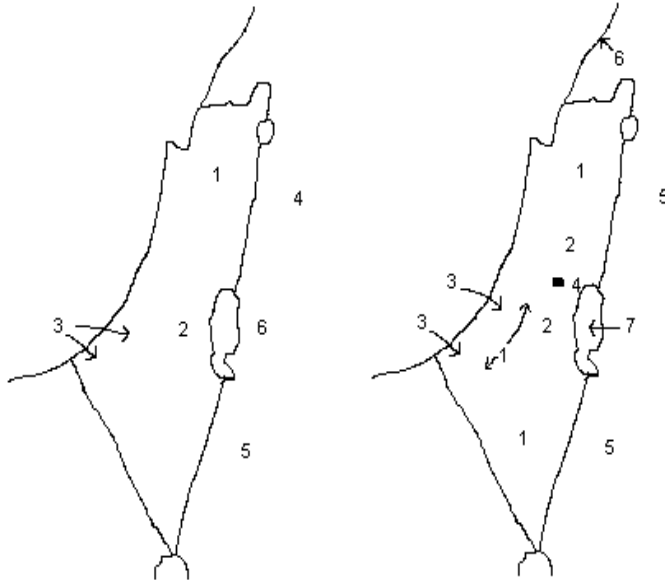
Most people would not regard Jacob's possessions as a priority of God for now unless they realize the real issue in it: whether or not God will be faithful to fulfill His promise to His chosen people at His chosen time. We saw Obadiah's emphasis on Jacob's possessions in v. 11, 13, 17, and 19 (Chapter 7), but there my comment about Ob. 17 was that Apx. 5 uses Scriptures from outside of Obadiah to show that *"the house of Jacob will possess their possessions"* is truly one of God's uncompromising priorities for our day.

Therefore let's examine six other Scriptures which confirm these conclusions from Obadiah: God is now fulfilling His highly emphasized promise in Scripture to give a specific land (roughly ancient Canaan, including the lands of Ob. 19) to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and this is a priority of God for our day.

God has spoken in His holiness: *"I will exult, I will portion out Shechem and measure out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter. Moab is My washbowl; over Edom I shall throw My shoe; shout aloud, O Philistia, because of Me!"* (Psalm 60:6-8).

Here God clearly declares His sovereign right to do with these

lands whatever He chooses, even if many of their inhabitants don't like His sovereign choices. This is essentially the same land area as Ob. 19 with the names of the lands changing through the centuries.



Names in Psalms 60 and 108

- 1. Manasseh, Shechem, Ephraim
- 2. Judah 3. Philistia
- 4. Gilead, Succoth 5. Edom 6. Moab

Names in Obadiah and Today
are shown in the maps on p. 55

In another Scripture, Psalm 108:7-9, God says almost exactly the same thing. He also begins this Scripture with *“God has spoken in His holiness”*. Why are these verses repeated in Scripture? What is God telling us by this introduction, in which He “speaks in His holiness”?

Heb. 6:13-18 answers both questions. God shows that when He merely told Abraham, *“I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you”*, He was swearing by Himself (v. 13). God’s mere statement was also His oath, which made it impossible for Him to compromise on His unchanging promise (v. 17-18). If God’s mere statement to Abraham

was swearing by the ultimate – Himself – and making an oath to show that His purpose would not change, how much more emphatically does God reveal His unwavering purpose by repeatedly declaring in His Scriptures that He has spoken in His holiness about these lands?

In other Scriptures God declares His possession of the whole earth and all it contains, but Psalm 60:6-8 and 108:7-9 together emphatically establish His absolute possession of specifically these lands for His sovereignly chosen purposes.

God's Giving This Land to Jacob Now: Not Earlier or Later

In Chapter 7 we concluded that God is now giving the lands of Canaan to various descendants of Jacob by considering only Ob. 19 and all Obadiah. Here let's see that "now" is specified again and again.

Luke 21:24 uniquely specifies our day as the time that God has chosen for Jacob to possess Jerusalem: "...*Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*" As we saw from v. 24 in Chapter 8, God gave Jerusalem to Gentiles for a limited time, and Jews would be unable to stop them during this time. But Jews have obtained and maintained control of Jerusalem for over 60 years. Can Jews do this without God releasing Jerusalem to them? I conclude that God has released this key part of Judah in our day, which began around 1948 and not at any time before then.

Isa. 11:11-14 with Acts 2:5-11 also uniquely specifies our day. In harmony with Ob. 19, Isa. 11:13-14 shows that the united tribes of the descendants of Jacob will seize both the Gaza Strip (Philistia) and lands in the nation of Jordan (Edom and Moab). Isa. 11:11-12 shows the timing for this:

*Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again **recover the second time** with His hand the **remnant of His people, who will***

remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush [Ethiopia], Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. [islands are coastlands or continents]. And He will...assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:11-12).

Notice: this recovery from the lands of exile is not the first or third time, but the second. Let us see that this second recovery is occurring now, not before now or after now.

In Acts 2:5-11 God shows explicitly that one recovery from these many lands was fulfilled at the time of Jesus. V. 5 says that "*there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven*". Even further, most of these lands of Isa. 11:11 were named explicitly in what could seem like a useless list of names in Acts 2:9-11: all the names in each list were those at the time of each Scripture, but the overlap of the lands on the two lists is unmistakable.

This recovery documented in Acts 2:5-11 was wiped out by 70 A.D. That recovery has passed. The recovery from all nations starting in the 1940s and continuing since then is not the first: this must be the second recovery from all over the earth prophesied in Isa. 11:11-12.

Therefore we can know that the time since the 1940s is clearly specified as the time when the remnant of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will receive lands that God has promised them. Isa. 11:14 specifies the same land area in Jordan and Gaza as Ob. 19 and Psalms 60 and 108; and Isa. 11:11-12, Luke 21:24, and all of Obadiah show that the time for this possession is now!

A Conclusion to the Scriptures on Jacob's Possessions Now

God promised the lands of Ob. 19 to the chosen descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob over 40 times in Scripture. The Scriptures in Apx. 5 confirm that Obadiah is indeed prophesying about fulfilling

this promise as a priority in our day – including these specific lands.

This is important for modern Edoms now: God's prophecy about this issue must not become a part of the prophecies for the Millennium – a belief that would make this prophecy useless for us, to whom God has directed it. He wants His people to hear His word on this issue during the raging controversies now, when it is to be fulfilled.

The heart of this issue of "Jacob's possessions" is not property, but whether God will be faithful to fulfill His clearly stated word at His intended time, and whether any specific nation will work against Him or with Him as He faithfully fulfills His promise to His people.

We've seen that the house of Jacob provides the crucial test that separates repentant modern Edoms from unrepentant ones (Chapter 6). Any repentant modern Edom desires to be a part of God's people as a nation and will receive His Spirit and His word, so that the Edom will co-operate with Him in His priority for our time. In contrast, any arrogant modern Edom will stumble on Jacob's possessions, because it won't seek God and won't have the faith or character to stay with Israel when tempted with Islamic oil, lies, and other pressures.

A Conclusion about the Three Priorities of God in Ob. 17

"*The house of Jacob will possess their possessions*" is the third priority of God in Ob. 17 that He certainly will fulfill in this time when whole nations are either devastated in a national judgment or delivered in Jesus. Every repentant modern Edom will handle each priority well, but every unrepentant modern Edom will stumble in each priority.

KEY INSIGHTS IN EACH CHAPTER

Chapter 1: Obadiah for the United States Now

- * A plausible interpretation of every verse (v. 1-21) in the book of Obadiah (Ob.) in the Bible can apply to the United States (the U.S.) since the 1960s or into a reasonably projected near future. I call this time period extending back to the 1940s “now”, “today”, or “our day”.
- * 1Cor. 14:3 shows that God gives prophetic words in order to help us respond better to Him and to build us up in Christ. Every application to the U.S. now fits into God’s purposes for prophetic words. Therefore I conclude that Obadiah is a prophetic word from God about the U.S. especially for its Christians.
- * Obadiah’s prophecy is about Edom: *“The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom...”* (Ob. 1a). Chapter 2 explains how “Edom” identifies highly relevant features of the U.S.

Chapter 2: The Nations in Obadiah Then and Now

- * Near 600 BC Judah (the nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and Edom (the nation descended from Jacob’s brother Esau) were the only nations with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from past generations of the nations: father Abraham, son Isaac, and grandsons Esau and Jacob. God worked with these people through His promises, which Esau did not value and sold for a single meal in order to satisfy his appetite.
- * Many nations today have a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage established mostly by believers (corresponding to Isaac) in past generations of the nation. For convenience, I call such a nation today a “modern Edom” and call Edom near 600 BC “ancient Edom”. The U.S. is the leading example of a modern Edom since the 1940s.
- * Ancient Edom’s role in the attack against Jerusalem and Judah near 600 BC provides a prototype or pattern of modern Edoms in the great controversy concerning Israel today. Ob. 10-11 identifies three types of nations in this controversy: Jacob, Edom or Esau, and nations that are called strangers and foreigners to these “brother” nations. Ob. 10-11 shows what very many nations are doing today – each one doing precisely what v. 11 says (Chapters 6-8), and every modern Edom being strongly tempted to do like Esau.

- * Ob. 11 also indicates the key struggle within each modern Edom to choose how it is related to God and to His people of promise in the nation today: Christians and Jews. This choice determines an Edom's judgment on its "Day of the Lord": its time when He makes it to be fully accountable to Him for its sins. The key issue is whether the nation wants to join itself to Jesus Christ and thereby strengthen its weak Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage, or else reject this opportunity in order to become like a stranger or foreigner nation.
- * This decision by each nation to join itself to the Lord Jesus Christ as a nation fits into His Great Commission to His people at the end of Matthew: to make disciples of all the nations. As with individuals, many nations reject this opportunity, but Zech. 2:11a shows that many nations will receive it: ***"Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people."*** The crucial difference in the national response depends on how well individual believers prepare other people in the land to receive Him.
- * Biblical examples of nations that were judged for refusing to repent include ancient Israel near 750-720 BC, Judah near 600 BC, and Judea near 30-70 AD. Each whole nation lost its possession of its land on its Day of the Lord. Other examples of national judgments in the Bible include Egypt at the time of Moses, every Canaanite nation at the time of Joshua, five nations around ancient Israel, Edom, and Judah near 600 BC in Amos and Jeremiah, Assyria or Nineveh, Babylon, and still more nations. The national devastation from a just judgment of the national sins in Ob. 2-18 is discussed in Chapters 3-10. The national repentance, salvation, and discipleship in Ob. 15-21, 2Chron. 7:13-14, and Ephesians are discussed in Chapters 11-15.

Chapter 3: Arrogance: the Key Iniquity of the U.S.

- * Ob. 3a says: *"The arrogance of your heart has deceived you."* The Hebrew word for this arrogance means pride, presumption, and lack of fear of God, which causes a self-exaltation that defies Him. In the Bible arrogance consistently caused further sins and ultimately led to a forceful judgment, even as this did in ancient Edom. This arrogance is the underlying iniquity in every modern Edom now, and it deceives the Edom in deadly ways.
- * The rest of Ob. 3-4 shows how this arrogance was able to blossom in ancient Edom: its unusual natural borders provided a freedom from the threat of being invaded by national enemies for a very long time.

Our security and exalted status among nations cause Ob. 3b-4 to fit the U.S. uniquely among all modern Edoms.

- * “Secular humanism” – the spiritual power behind a major political movement with the same name – has cultivated this arrogance.
- * The Church in the U.S. has the power available in Jesus to disarm this spiritual power and demolish its deadly work. But this spirit has infiltrated the U.S. Church and made it largely ineffective. Arrogant negligence by the Church has allowed this movement to grow into a huge enemy to God’s work of saving people and the nation.
- * The three churches in Rev. 3 show the failure of the Church in the U.S. and the great opportunity that God still offers it. Like the Church in Sardis, the U.S. Church needs to *“wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I [Jesus] have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God”* (Rev. 3:2). Like the arrogant church in Laodicea, the U.S. Church is materially rich, lukewarm in heart, and very negligent without even knowing it.
- * But the U.S. Church can still be like the Church in Philadelphia and use a little of the power available in Jesus to bring the U.S. into receiving Him. This would keep it from the devastating judgment that will come on all nations that refuse to receive Him before He returns.

Chapter 4: A Just Judgment of an Arrogant U.S.

- * Ob. 5-6 shows the utter ravaging of Edom in its national judgment.
- * This judgment is especially appropriate for the U.S. if we arrogantly refuse to repent. God has blessed the U.S. with unusually abundant food and natural resources, but with arrogance we are becoming increasingly ungrateful to Him. Ob. 5-6 can show that the conquering invaders of the U.S. would cruelly remove these two specific national blessings more than they need for themselves.
- * In Chapters 2 and 9 we see that if the U.S. stays arrogant, it chooses to reject its opportunity to join itself to Jesus in order to be like the “stranger / foreigner” nations. The removal of God’s special national blessings in Ob. 5-6 would be a just and fitting judgment on a U.S. that refuses to acknowledge that God has given us anything.

Chapter 5: The Ambush of an Arrogant U.S.

- * Ob. 7a provides a remarkable fit for the U.S. since the 1940s but not before then.
- * Ob. 7-9 shows the means of a just judgment on the U.S. if our nation stays arrogant: a devastating ambush that we don't see coming.
- * Ob. 7 shows a great deception before this invasive ambush by those who seem to be at peace with the U.S. and who eat our bread.
- * The last part of Ob. 7 and Ob. 8-9 show a great lack of understanding by the U.S. and its government. This lack includes not understanding the ambush and the spiritual issues that set up the whole disaster.
- * We see that Ob. 3b-9 is specific to the U.S. out of all modern Edoms.

Chapter 6: Testing the U.S.' Heart Toward God

- * Ob. 10-21 applies to all modern Edoms, which includes the U.S.
- * Ob. 10 shows that if an Edom gets violent with its brother nation from Jacob – Israel – then the Edom will be destroyed forever. This is not a loyalty test to a religion or a people in the near future. God is fully just, so that this basis for judgment will represent the true heart condition, repentance, faith, and righteousness of the U.S. Ob. 18 helps us see how violence to Israel by the U.S. or any other modern Edom would be a result of its arrogant rejection of God and His word.

Chapter 7: Taking Jacob's Possessions

- * Ob. 11 says that Edom stands aloof while “strangers and foreigners” carry out three specific kinds of aggressions against Israel, Edom's brother nation from Jacob. Ob.11 describes now – even the last 50+ years – in amazing detail.
- * Today Jacob is Israel, and Edom is each Gentile nation with a partly Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage from God's people of the promise (Christians) in the past generations of the nation. The strangers and foreigners are nations that are aggressors against Israel, do not know or recognize the God of the Bible, and have no part in the family of what God calls “brothers”. This aptly describes Islamic-Arabic nations that are aggressive against Jacob.

- * Ob. 11 is the first of four verses in Obadiah that involve Jacob's wealth and possessions. It is the "*strangers*" who carry off Jacob's wealth in v. 11; at this point modern Edoms merely "*stand aloof*" from Jacob. But an unrepentant Edom will change: in v. 13 God warns it to "*not loot the wealth of My people*" (this includes Jacob) in the day of their disaster. In v. 17 God declares that "*the house of Jacob will possess their possessions*". And Ob. 19 explicitly declares what Jacob's possessions include: the territory within Israel's 1948-67 boundaries, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and territories within the present nation of Jordan. Also, a large part of Jerusalem is in the West Bank territory.
- * Ob. 19 provides a picture that remarkably describes what has, is, and surely will take place in our day. Israel began with the land area given it in 1948. Then those within the 1948 borders would possess the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Both of them were obtained in the six-day war in 1967, although Israel has not yet taken full possession of them, and the demands of the stranger and foreigner nations have kept this issue quite active since then. Ob. 19 also goes beyond what is already fulfilled, because it shows that descendants of Jacob will possess Gilead and the mountain of Esau – lands in the present nation of Jordan. The aggressive nations will surely have an intense response to this last fulfillment.
- * The issue is not "possessions", but whether aggressive or arrogant nations will prevent God from fulfilling His promise to His people at His intended time. Of course, that will not happen!

Chapter 8: The Other Two Aggressions Today

- * The second aggression against Israel is that "*foreigners entered his gate*" (Ob. 11). The "gate" was the seat of government of an ancient sovereign people, the normal meeting place of the leaders for government business. When "*foreigners entered the gate*" of a sovereign people like Jerusalem of Judah, the foreigners exercised authority in issues (the choice of king, tribute or taxes, etc.) that the government normally decides – if it is free. 2Kings 23:31-35 and 24:10-17 both show this takeover of authority as they record how first Egypt and then Babylon fulfilled Ob. 11 on Judah near 600 BC.
- * God shows clearly (Ob. 19, Chapter 7) that He has given the West Bank to the descendants of Jacob to possess now. Hostile nations have used all kinds of pressure to prevent Jewish settlements in the

West Bank while demanding that land for a Palestinian state. What are these nations doing? Foreigners that have no part in God's promise of this land to Isaac and Jacob are trying to enter his gate!

- * To help people in the U.S. realize how aggressive this action is, consider that God is more explicit about Israel's possession of the West Bank than about the U.S.' possession of California, Arizona, and New Mexico, which were also taken by force. What if our allies supported strong demands and pressures by hostile nations that we not settle in the lightly settled regions of this territory, with a stated goal of giving it to a people who have repeatedly sworn to utterly wipe out our nation? What would be our attitude in the U.S.?
- * The third kind of aggression in Ob. 11 against Jacob today is that foreigners are trying to "*cast lots for Jerusalem*". This is a way to say that the foreigners are presumptuously trying to decide how to divide Jerusalem among themselves.
- * From considering Luke 21:24, Israel's ability to possess Jerusalem shows that God has removed a temporary right of various Gentiles to decide among themselves who can get parts of His chosen city. "Casting lots for Jerusalem" is a completely different kind of issue for Gentiles now than it was from 70 AD to 1948 or 1967.
- * V. 13 warns Edom against two of the three aggressions in v. 11: against looting the wealth and entering the gate of the Lord's people, but not against casting lots for Jerusalem. This shows that a modern Edom which rejects God's words will move from standing aloof into becoming an aggressor against Israel. But every unrepentant modern Edom really does not desire Jerusalem for itself, and this is not likely to change in such thoroughly secularized nations: they don't need to be warned against committing this third aggression. This fits our day!
- * The aggressions in v. 13 by unrepentant modern Edoms are against the Lord's people, which also include real believers in an Edom. These aggressions are likely to develop in each unrepentant modern Edom, and is another way that everything in Ob. 10-21 precisely fits modern Edoms – and in v. 2-9, usually only the U.S.
- * Chapter 8 shows further evidence that God inspired Obadiah to say precisely what pertains to modern Edoms. In Ob. 11 the custom fit is for all modern Edoms now – in contrast to the aggressive foreigner nations now (v. 11) and arrogant modern Edoms in the future (v. 13).

Chapter 9: The War Raging in the U.S. Now

- * “[Edom] *you too were as one of them* [strangers and foreigners]” (Ob. 11c). This tiny comment at the end of Ob. 11 gets to the heart of the war now raging in the U.S. between Biblical Christianity and Secular Humanism: the choice whether or not the U.S. will be like a stranger or foreigner. The war is spiritual with tangible expressions. The comment reveals a crucial choice that every modern Edom makes – for choosing destruction and death or else repentance and life in the Lord Jesus. If a modern Edom arrogantly chooses to be “*as one of them*”, then from that point onward it is being hardened against choosing life in Jesus.
- * When God says that an Edom was like one of the aggressive strangers and foreigners (Islamic-Arabic nations), He is saying that the Edom became like a nation: (1) that does not know or recognize the true God; (2) that does not know and has no part in God’s covenantal promises to His people of promise; and (3) that does not have a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage.
- * The Edom had a relationship with God’s people of the promise, knew about the true God, and is given a great opportunity to come to know Him, but the Edom arrogantly rejects it. As a result, such an Edom hardens itself against God, so that even its long exposure to Him is no longer producing its good fruit.
- * Secular Humanism has sought to remove from public life any calling on God and even any official mention of God. This movement also seeks to have the nation endorse various lifestyles (homosexuality, promiscuity, etc.), pseudo-family arrangements (unmarried couples as legal families, etc.), and other practices like abortion. The God of the Bible condemns all of these practices. Officially endorsing or approving these things that the true God calls abominations is arrogantly rejecting Him and His ways of living for us.
- * What would the U.S. be like if it embraced Secular Humanism? The U.S. would reject the true God, reject its opportunity to have a living relationship with Him as its Lord and King, reject the relevance and authority of His word in the Bible, reject a major portion of His ways of living for us, and reject our nation’s inheritance in His people of the promise. Then the U.S. would not know Him or demonstrate the positive effects of ever having had a relationship with Him or His people, and the U.S. would practice lifestyles as Godless as many

nations without a Judeo-Christian foundation and heritage. In short, we would be like a stranger and foreigner.

- * In another Biblical picture, an arrogant modern Edom is making its deadly choice like Israel made to have a king (1Sam. 8:4-7): to be like the nations that did not know God and had a king.
- * In contrast, Biblical Christianity seeks to disciple the U.S. to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the U.S. would join itself to Him and become a part of His people as a nation (Matt. 28:18-19, Zech. 2:11). This is receiving Jesus as the invisible King of the U.S., which is receiving the true God and His ways of living for us as a nation.
- * The national choice for or against the God of the Bible and His ways of living will depend on how well Christians in the U.S. do what He tells us. 2Chron. 7:14 (Chapter 13) is one brief summary in the Bible of what He shows us.
- * The U.S. is not alone in having a "war to the death" emerging for the culture of the nation. Secular Humanism has established a greater base in many Edoms than in the U.S., and an Edom becomes like a stranger and foreigner wherever Secular Humanism does prevail. All modern Edoms will make their choice for or against Jesus in our day.
- * As shown in Chapters 7-9, Ob. 11 describes many vitally important events to modern Edoms, all of which are taking place in our day – now! This is not a vague prophecy: it was not being fulfilled for 2500 years before 1948, and after 1948 it describes what is happening with very many nations, each of which is labeled clearly in Ob. 10-11.

Chapter 10: Gross Sin and Awful Judgment

- * Ob. 11-14 describes a steady growth of the crucial sin against Jacob in v. 10, and this sin leads an Edom to its justly devastating judgment in v. 15-18. In Ob. 11 an arrogant Edom is merely standing aloof or detached from Jacob. V. 12 shows Edom's development of an attitude against Jacob. V. 13 shows the Edom's development of aggressions against Jacob. V. 14 shows the ultimate development: an Edom's savagely pitiless violence against Jacob, which causes the Edom's just judgment in v. 15 to be so devastating.
- * This development from Ob. 11 to 14 is a progressive deterioration of the U.S. or other Edom and takes it further away from ever repenting

in practice for its salvation. This happens because the devil is strengthening his deceptions and strongholds in the nation. Some modern Edoms may have already entered into Ob. 12 as a nation, but I am convinced that it is still quite possible and practical with God's power for each modern Edom to repent as a nation.

- * An arrogant U.S. will be moved surprisingly rapidly down this road to gross sin and destruction by its decisive national choice to become like a stranger and foreigner nation. Nazi Germany gives us a recent frightening example of how rapidly and forcefully an Edom (before "now") can deteriorate grossly when it becomes like a stranger and falls into Satan's hands. Where does the ambush by those who eat our bread (Ob. 7) fit into our national deterioration? Any time after the U.S. decisively chooses Secular Humanism over the Lord Jesus. Satan gets a greater domination over the U.S. than we offer him by choosing Secular Humanism, so that victorious secular humanists in our government are slaughtered like Ob. 9 indicates.
- * Ob. 18 "finishes off" an unrepentant Edom from being a people. The devastation upon an unrepentant U.S. should be clear from v. 15-18, except that "*no survivor of the house of Esau*" does not imply a total annihilation of the U.S., even as ancient Edom was not wiped out like that. Probably not all die: v. 18 shows that our national heritage will be wiped out so thoroughly that no survivor would regard himself to be an American, even as no one now claims to be an Edomite.
- * God offers the U.S. and other modern Edoms a better future than the devastation described in Ob. 2-18 and Chapters 3-10. This is seen in Ob. 15-21 and Chapters 11-15.

Chapter 11: God Offers the U.S. a Better Future

- * Ob. 15-18 shows the just annihilation of any very sinful, unrepentant modern Edom. The great news in Obadiah is that this is merely a just judgment, and v. 15-18 can have completely different meanings for any Edom that joins itself to the Lord Jesus Christ as a nation (Zech. 2:11, Matt. 28:18-19, 1John 2:1-2). Indeed, Ob. 15-21 shows a blessed national future of a repentant modern Edom – showing some key features of what this means and what is especially needed to produce this national repentance in a modern Edom.
- * The positive meanings of Ob. 15-21 for a repentant modern Edom need to be explained, but they are clearly there and Biblical after you

see them. The explanations of Ob. 15 and 16 for repentant modern Edoms are in Chapter 11; Ob. 17 is explained in Apx. 5 and Ob. 18 in Chapter 6. Ob. 16 especially helps us to see how much God will change a repentant Edom, and Ob. 21 and other Scriptures in Chapters 12-15 help us to see key ways for His people to produce this wonderful change by His power.

Chapter 12: The Key to Saving the U.S.

- * *"The deliverers will ascend Mt Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's"* (Ob. 21). Using an appropriate Biblical meaning of each term (p. 87-88, Apx. 3), v. 21 can show how the U.S. (or other Edom) can be delivered from its iniquity and the consequent destructive judgment. Believers ascend into the Lord's holy throne room in the Mt. Zion in heaven – before His face – and "govern the government" of the U.S. In this way the U.S. will become the Lord's with Jesus functioning as its King in reality.
- * Ob. 21 reveals a key need of the U.S. in order to become the Lord's. Where in Obadiah is Edom's salvation without these deliverers? But with them, a modern Edom will be the Lord's.
- * Saving the U.S. from its impending sin and destruction by interceding before God in His holy throne room requires personal holiness in the deliverers' own lives. This intercession moves the U.S. into becoming a kingdom under King Jesus, even if our visible government remains in the form directed by the U.S. Constitution. The quality of life in the U.S. and the decisions by its government will be shaped more by these interceding deliverers than by government officials or even by highly visible Christians – unless they are helping this intercession.
- * How do these deliverers govern the government of the U.S.? These believers in Jesus have been saved by His perfect provision for them, so that they can approach God in His holiness as holy sons. They enter the Lord's holy throne room on the Mt. Zion in heaven (Heb. 12:22-24) through Jesus, where they govern and intercede in other ways as God leads. These deliverers release the will of King Jesus and His Father for the U.S. and its visible government: *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
- * This coming before God on spiritual Mt. Zion is called *"pray and seek My face"* in 2Chron. 7:14. They have contrasting goals and focus, but both require perseverance to overcome spiritual opposition. We

are to govern our government by praying and seeking the Lord's face on Mt. Zion. Praying is to intercede and to call on God as Judge for the needs that we perceive until He answers in word or in deed. There is great power in this praying. To seek His face seeks close, intimate fellowship with Him, which provides great power for governing our government in another way – if He leads us to do this.

- * In fellowship with God, we can learn more than we can see, and can intercede with His creativity if led by His Spirit. True praise and worship of God bring out features of His character that help us hear and discern His heart and soft words. We can hear His heart and His whispers and see His eyes and where He is looking – see what is important to Him. This takes us far beyond our own limited perception of what is needed, so that we intercede better than we could if we do not receive His gentle guidance. With this, He might invite us to participate in His government of the earth from spiritual Mt. Zion – to release His power to heal individuals, situations, and the whole land. This transforms both a huge number of people and our government.
- * Jesus' sacrifice alone qualifies a believer to come to Him, but Psalm 24:3-6 and Psalm 15 show God's special requirements for believers to abide and stand at this place of enormous authority and power, and Satan does all he can to prevent us. These requirements justly remove self-seeking and undiscerning people, including Christians in the flesh, from those who will govern righteously by intercession at the center of God's government of the earth.
- * The promise for the nation to become the Lord's in Ob. 21 describes national discipleship to the Lord Jesus (Zech. 2:11, Matt. 28:18-20). Therefore Ob. 21 shows a key need of the U.S. or other modern Edom for obtaining and maintaining a national discipleship to the Lord Jesus as well as for mere national survival.

Chapter 13: How to Heal Our Sick Land

- * ***"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"*** (2Chron. 7:13-14).
- * Many believers see that if God's people in the U.S. do the four little

things in v. 14, then God will heal the U.S., regardless of how sinful or unworthy our nation is. These four actions are steps to healing a land by enabling it to receive Jesus, but few Christians appreciate what God is telling us to do in order to heal our land.

- * If I humble myself as a believer, I apply God's word to myself first and turn from my own wicked ways. Both believers and unbelievers have contributed to the national sin, but our land has stayed in bad spiritual shape because we believers have not done the necessary things to bring the U.S. to Jesus. God's healing of the U.S. with all of its sins is limited only by our limited use of His power in Christ to fulfill v. 14.
- * Praying and seeking the Lord's face are discussed on p. 90-95 and 172-173.
- * The first three actions in v. 14 can release God's healing to a land, but not fully equip it to receive His healing. God's corporate people must fulfill the last action of 2Chron. 7:14 – turn from our wicked ways – for the people of the land to receive His healing, instead of rejecting it or casually allowing it to be stolen from them.
- * Often this is assumed to mean each believer's wicked ways, but he did this when he humbled himself in order to pray and seek God's face. The final action is beyond that: His people in a land turn from their corporate wicked ways. Then what is a corporate wicked way?
- * A corporate wicked way of true Christians in a land is any widespread practice by them that hinders people from seeing God as He really is – His true nature and character. His nature is the nature of Christ Jesus. We can reveal it because He lives within each believer, and we can yield to Him: we can let His Spirit manifest His fruit in us and lead us into doing works with His power.
- * Severely distorting God's nature to the world is truly wicked. This produces a false image of God and keeps many people from turning to Him for salvation and life: they don't see what God is really like, can't find Him to turn to Him, and don't know what He wants from us.
- * Turning from our corporate wicked ways is a fitting final step to heal a land. Believers must turn from their personal wicked ways to do the first three steps in v. 14, but this work by individual believers must also spread to bring the people of the land to Jesus – for a healing of the land that will last. This final step is the hardest for believers to

produce: it requires very many other believers to repent. This is beyond anyone's control, but God will produce this if His people fulfill the first three steps in v. 14 in the season of v. 13.

- * V. 13 identifies a season for healing a land. This is a time of shakings that stir people to seek solutions, so that it provides opportunities to help people in the land to repent. If God's people keep doing what He tells them in this season, then many people will get prepared to receive Him. At the end of this season, the terrible judgment appears if the nation has not yet repented, and God's people might not have enough time to help a big majority of the people in the land to repent.
- * Consider what happens when believers fulfill the 4 actions of 2Chron. 7:14 in the season identified by v. 13 – when people want solutions for their problems. Obedient, Spirit-led believers provide models of His clean, successful ways of living. They form a clear contrast to the failing lifestyles practiced in the land, inspire many people to walk in deeper levels of repentance and faith, and combine to provide an accurate corporate expression of Jesus to practically everyone. Believers also intercede for people, and when God draws them to Jesus, most will recognize Him and gladly receive Him. Receiving Him heals the land's key problem – its separation from God because its people don't know Him – and He heals the land's other problems by His direct work and through people living by His better ways.
- * To reach people in the ways they personally need, a land must have a large Body of Christ. If it is not big enough to transform the land, then the work of v. 14 by the existing Church causes a high quality growth of the Church in the season of shakings and opportunity. In this way a good response to God by even relatively few believers in a land can grow until the land as a whole repents and turns to the Lord Jesus in faith – unless this season ends before the needed Church repentance has spread far enough.
- * As we, God's people in the U.S., fulfill the 4 actions of 2Chron. 7:14 in the season of v. 13, God will heal our land through our actions. Doing them enables His people to become His instrument to heal the nation. Doing them enables the U.S. to repent and join itself to our Lord Jesus, instead of continuing on the road toward our destruction. And doing them prepares the way for the Lord in the U.S.: this is the "Elijah ministry" for our land, which God gives to the Church in each land during its season of shakings and opportunity.

Chapter 14: God's Corporate Calling and Vision

- * Eph. 4:11-16 shows that the Body of Christ is to grow up until we attain the fullness of Christ – to grow up in all aspects into Christ: *“but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even Christ,** ¹⁶**from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love**”* (v. 15-16).
- * What does it mean for the corporate Church to grow up in all aspects into Christ? One key feature is that Christ Jesus is exactly like God and fully manifested His nature to people who interacted with Him – who could not see God directly. God calls the Church to manifest His character and nature corporately. Individual believers don't naturally have God's true nature: how can we corporately manifest it? God is the Treasure who lives in us earthen vessels: *“But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves**”* (2Cor. 4:7). We containers combine to form a body that manifests God's true nature.
- * An individual believer will not consistently manifest God's full nature like Jesus did, even as my finger will not manifest my full nature. But if an unbeliever can interact with a few believers who let Jesus be Himself in them – especially when He is different from most people – then he can see each unique earthen vessel and also Jesus in all of them. Then he can identify Jesus without His earthen vessels, which is greatly facilitated by using God's word in the Bible. The combined expression of Christ by these and other believers forms the corporate expression of Christ Jesus and God to an unbeliever, and the close interactive contact is the far greater part of the expression.
- * By being with believers, each unbeliever can see, experience, and deeply appreciate God's unselfish love and other qualities of His nature and character: being patient, kind, good, faithful, truthful, gentle, just, righteous, strong, merciful, compassionate, etc. An unbeliever can also realize that he too can become an earthen vessel of this same great Treasure.
- * What does a land need in order to receive Jesus as its true King? Its people need to see and experience what Jesus and His invisible Father are truly like, so that they want the true God in their own hearts and lives. But when people look at the Church in the U.S.,

they see little of God's true nature, so that they go their own ways more easily and get trapped in their sinfulness and sins. If God's people turn from our corporate wicked ways, then God's true nature will be revealed to the people in our land.

Chapter 15: Causing the Christ-like Body

- * Only God can make something to be like Himself. However, Eph. 4:16 says that the whole Body of Christ causes its own growth and the Christ-like Body has the proper working of each individual part of it. This suggests an enormous range of responsibilities and functions as each member does what God calls and equips him to do. This great diversity enables people to see the unity in His Body much better. God will do a key part of His work to build the Body of Christ through His believers. Each believer should be doing what he or she should do, and also thank God for his brothers and sisters who supplement his expression of Jesus in other ways.
- * In a healed U.S. or any land, God's people throughout the land will reach others for Jesus in ways that are effective for them. He uses both our intercession and our interaction with others to open them up to Him. This requires a large Church that has turned from its corporate wicked ways. In the U.S. and other modern Edoms, the key to causing this blessing is for intercessors to pray and seek our Lord's face well enough to include effective intercession in His holy throne room, even to govern our government by the intercession that He leads.

About the Author (Jim Tarter)

I met God in 1972 when I was 27, a Ph.D. physicist and an agnostic. He quickly started showing me that Jesus authentically represents God, and that the Bible is His word. I had started reading the Bible thinking that it is full of contradictions, but it surprised me. The Bible's contents provided much evidence to show that the Lord had inspired and then protected these contents to say precisely what He wants them to say.

Having missed God so completely in my life and in the world, I read the Bible with a deep hunger to learn more about this One who knew my thoughts and who numbers the hairs on each person's head. I also joined a church in Pittsburgh, PA. The pastor was Joseph Garlington, who provided a rich spiritual foundation. This congregation had many other believers who had met Jesus and sought to put His word into practice. When I moved to Roanoke, VA, in 1978, I actively participated in another congregation that was "alive in Jesus". Such experiences helped me to learn more about God and His ways, and have provided many perspectives about His calling for the Church in the Bible, what we have done in reality, and what we need to do to fulfill His word concerning us.

I am an elder at Grace Covenant Church in Roanoke and taught in public schools since 1976. I wrote two books in the 1990s: *God's Word to the United States* (the first version from Obadiah) and *Why, God?* (from the book of Job). Updates of both books plus 16 other books about the Bible are available at www.lulu.com (see below).

In summers my wife Nita and I have taken extensive trips to southern Sudan, the Congo, and elsewhere. Her heart for Jesus and sensitivity to His leadings have blessed me mightily.

Years after I first met God through Jesus, He started opening up whole books of the Bible, which provide perspectives that the vast majority of the Church has not yet realized. This book from Obadiah is one of these perspectives that I believe many Christians in the U.S. should understand.

At the time I write this, my books are available at www.lulu.com as a printed book, a PDF download, or a digital book. Type "james tarter" in its "search" space at the top. Previewing or downloading a PDF of the whole book from Lulu is free. Your book duplicates *A PROPHECY for the UNITED STATES*, except that your book has an appendix of the key ideas of all chapters instead of key ideas at the end of long chapters – don't buy both books! P. 179 briefly describes my other books about healing nations.

Five Books from the Bible about Healing Nations

I have written five books about discipling whole nations to Jesus in this time leading up to His return. Specific Scriptures give each book its own points and emphasis, but the books overlap because they all come from the same big picture in the Bible. Lulu has a free Preview and PDF download of each whole book (to find it, see p. 178).

God's Word to the United States or its duplicate (*A Prophecy for the United States*, p. 4) is your 177-page book, so that I do not discuss it here. I shall briefly compare and contrast the other four books, so that a reader can choose the best for him and supplement it as helpful.

A Nation's Day of the Lord is a brief introduction to the big picture. This book emphasizes a nation's Day of the Lord as the time when the Lord holds a nation to be fully accountable for its sins, which includes Jesus' provision to justly save nations today. This book provides many Biblical examples and explanation of God's just judgment of a nation. Ephesians, 2Chron. 7, and Rom. 8 are briefly discussed in this introductory 55-page book.

GOD'S CURE for the Post-Christian Syndrome features the book of Malachi, starting with its description of the spiritual wilderness in the U.S. and certain other nations (generations of Christians there had created it by their negligence). Malachi shows the cause and cure for the indifference and disdain to the Gospel found in these nations now. The pictures from Ephesians, 2Chron. 7:13-14, Rom. 8, and the rest of the Minor Prophets are introduced as needed in this 79-page book.

God's Just Judgment of a Nation thoroughly introduces the picture from the Minor Prophets about whole nations being disciplined to Jesus or devastatingly judged in this time leading up to His return. This book focuses on the picture from the God-ordered sequence of Joel, Amos, and Jonah, and includes the strong conclusion from Malachi. This book keeps to the main picture about nations today, which includes the pictures from Ephesians and 2Chron. 7:13-14. Related topics (each of which may help some readers) are put into a *Supplement*. This 130-page book and its 210-page *Supplement* book are my most thorough treatment about nations now from the Minor Prophets.

Healing Nations starts with a vision of the glorious Body of Christ in Ephesians and provides the most thorough discussion of Ephesians and the spiritual warfare needed to move into God's corporate calling for His Church (*Destroying Spiritual Strongholds* goes deeper into personal spiritual warfare). This 100-page book also thoroughly explains 2Chron. 7:13-14 and our calling to be sons of God (Rom. 8). The book omits the Minor Prophets because its reader is assumed to realize the great need of his nation to repent (they expose the need).