

Those Whom God Hates He Is Often Pleased To Give Plenty Of Earthly Things To, Edwards

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Jonathan Edwards Messages

By Jonathan Edwards

Bible Text: Genesis 27:39; Hebrews 12:16

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4710-37A Avenue NW

Edmonton, Alberta

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Those Whom God Hates He Often Gives Plenty Of Earthly Things To
A sermon by Jonathan Edwards

This sermon is taken from Genesis 27:39,

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

Here is in a text a promise made by Isaac as spoken by the inspiration of the Spirit of God as if evident because the words are of the nature of a prophecy and is recorded in scripture together with its fulfillment, is one of those things that were uttered by inspiration of God and which was spoken by an holy man of old as moved by the Holy Ghost.

There was no written word of God or at least no instruction and direction of the church until Moses' time and in those days it was a much more common thing for a holy man to be inspired than afterwards, for that then was a way especially for those patriarchs that were a kind of heads of God's visible church.

Concerning the promise in the text, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and as the dew of heaven from above." I would observe two things.

I. Who this promise is made to, namely to Esau. The words are a part of Esau's blessing. Concerning this person it is to my present purpose to take notice of two things. First, that Esau had forfeited the blessings of the covenant of grace. He was not a child of promise. There was a covenant that God made with Abraham and that covenant was a covenant of grace, the promises of which covenant were entailed on some of his posterity but not all his posterity according to the flesh. Ishmael, though he was his son and his eldest son yet was not a child of promise and so not an heir of the covenant, at least not as to his posterity, but in Isaac was his seed called. And Isaac had two sons and it was expected that Esau, being the oldest son, would as Isaac's chief heir have inherited the blessing but

he forfeited it. He sold his birthright and his inheritance of the blessings of Abraham's covenant with it for a mess of pottage and is greatly stigmatized for it in holy writ, Genesis 25:34, "thus Esau despised his birthright." Hebrews 12:16, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." So God ordered in his providence that though Isaac contended to give Esau the blessing, he gave it to Jacob instead.

II. Or secondly, I would observe that Esau to whom the promise and the text was made was hated of God. Romans 9:13, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It is disputed whether this is to be understood of his person or to the nations that were his posterity. There is reason to think that both were hated of God. His person because nothing is recorded of him in scripture but what represent him in such colors, but if we understand it only of his posterity, it is equally to my present purpose. They were hated of God and he, the nation. This was the persons to whom the promise in the text was made.

2. I would observe what are the things promised, the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above which signifies two things, namely, first, a plenty of earthly good things. Fatness denotes plenty. They whose portion is fat have their meat plenteous. Habakkuk 1:16. A fat soil brings a plentiful crop when watered with the dew of heaven from above.

Secondly, the choicest of earthly blessings. The fatness of the earth signifies or we signify in our manner of speaking by the cream of the earth, is a best and choicest part.

Doctrine. Those that God hates he is not withstanding oftentimes willing to give them plenty of earthly things and the choicest of them.

Proposition I. There are some of the children of men that God hates. It is a dispute among divines whether we ever read of God's hating any in scripture, whereas hatred is to be understood any otherwise and is consequent on man's sins and including his wrath for sin. Indeed, we read concerning Jacob and Esau that God loved the one and hated the other before either of them had done either good or evil, but thus is it controverted whether anymore be intended than that it was before either of them had committed any actual sin, when as to sin both were considered in like circumstances as indeed some of the fallen race of mankind but before they had been guilty of any sin personally. However that be, it is manifested that for the most part when the scripture speaks of God's hatred, it has respect to that which is consequent on their guilt and wickedness. Hosea 9:15, "All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more." Jeremiah 12:8, "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it."

Therefore when God is said to hate any man, three things are implied.

1. His contempt of him. There are some of the children of men that God sets on high value but the rest he views with contempt.

2. His wrath. God by the purity of his nature has an infinite abhorrence of sins and as he holds them guilty of those sins, of their sins which he has such an abhorrence, he also abhors their persons for their sins. They are abominable in his sight and they are the object of his indignation and wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day," Psalm 7:11.

3. His purpose is never to show them mercy but to execute his wrath upon them forever. God is said to be very angry with some that yet he doesn't hate, so God is very angry with all wicked men. The wrath of God is said to abide upon them but yet there are some that are now in a state of sin that God loves and has loved with an everlasting love, and that Christ has loved with a dying love. He has a gracious design for them. But there are other wicked men that have not only the wrath of God now abiding on them but God never intends to show them any mercy, that on the contrary, he intends to execute his wrath upon them forever. He has no mercy in reserve for them. There are some that are vessels of wrath. There are some that are to be trodden down as a mire of the streets. There are some that are given up finally to their own heart's lusts, they are given up to a stupid senseless spirit to live negligent of their souls as long as they live, and they live to no other purpose but to fill up the measure of their sins and ripen for hell. Thus there are some of the children of men that God hates. He has no value for them. God is angry with them. His wrath and indignation burns against them and he has no designs of mercy to them but intends eternally to cast them away and make them perfectly and eternally miserable without any manner of regard to their welfare.

II. There are many that God thus hates to whom he is not withstanding willing to give aplenty of these earthly things and the choicest of them. Though Esau was one that God hated and had no interest in the blessings of the covenant that Jacob had, whom God loved, yet he had much more outward possessions than Jacob had while he lived. Jacob was a man whose life was remarkably filled up with affliction. Esau became great. His posterity for many ages seemed to have vastly greater possessions. His sons were great men, dukes, Genesis 36. And we read of a great number of kings that reigned over Edom before there reigned any king over Israel while the posterity of Jacob were in miserable bondage. Though the Edomites, a posterity of Esau, indeed were subdued by David and so David served his brother according to Isaac, his father, foretold, yet that continued but above 250 years, then they shook off the yoke and regained their liberty in the days of Jehoiada, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, so that for the most part they were a fat people in outward respects. If the children of Jacob put all their times of bondage together, they were in bondage much more longer than that.

So comely has it been those that God has hated have had more of the world than those that God has loved, this is agreeable to the observation of Job in Job 21:7, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" And so on. And so of that Psalmist, Psalm 73:5 and so on, they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men, but here more particularly, 1., God is often willing to give those that he hates a great plenty and fullness of the enjoyments of this world. They have much more of the world than God's children. God oftentimes gives them abundance of the wealth of the world. They abound in silver and gold and lands and in apparel and plenty

of provision for meat and drink. It is doubtless oftentimes been so that some one wicked man that God has hated has been possessed of more than all of God's saints in the world, yea, it may be so when there have been a great many thousands of saints. The same is true in respect to honors and pleasures.

2. God has been willing to give them the choices of the enjoyments of the world. Both these have doubtless been verified in many of the kings and potentates of the earth. They have the best that can be found in their dominions, or that can be gotten from any part of the earth, and God freely gives it, he doesn't begrudge it to them, though for the most part such have been those that God has hated, yea, though he has hated them with an exceeding great hatred. Some of the vilest of mankind, the greatest sinners God has had the greatest indignation towards them. They have been very great persecutors of God's children.

Application I. Hence we may learn how very worthless earthly enjoyments, even the best of them are. God is a great disposer of all things and none of either spiritual or temporal enjoyments but only they to whom God disposes, and it is a great evidence how very worthless the choicest of earthly enjoyments are in God's esteem, that he will so largely give them out to those that he has no love to, no value for but that on the contrary, he despises and hates with a perfect hatred. He never would distribute those things so plentifully amongst them while he commonly gives his own children but little of them were it not that he knew that they were in themselves very worthless, of very mean, worthless portion. What man in his wits would be willing to take up with that portion that God frequently allots to those that he hates most? If God did not see all those earthly things to be very worthless indeed, surely he would not be willing to give the very best of them to those that he hates, he would reserve some of the choicest of his favorites, but it is not so. He commonly gives the choicest of earthly things, the very cream of all that the earth can afford, to those that he hates, yea, to those that he hates with a peculiar hatred. He gives his children something of those things so much as is necessary to carry them through their journey towards heaven, but the best of them he commonly gives to them that he hates, the thrones and crowns and palaces of the world and its chiefest jewels, its greatest dainties, its most costly riches and its greatest honors, and the highest worldly power and dominions, those things he commonly throws out to some that he hates most which is a much greater argument of those things being very worthless in God's esteem than it is that the master of the house has a worthless esteem of anything, that is what he throws out to his dogs, his swine.

This doctrine shows how much God values spiritual blessings beyond temporal, for though God is willing to give those that he hates aplenty of earthly things, yea, is willing to give them the best of them, the choice of things that the earth can afford, yet he never bestows upon them any degree of spiritual blessings. No, these things are precious in God's sight and therefore too grand to be bestowed on those that he hates. They are reserved for his favorites. Though he is willing to give those that he hates the best jewels, crowns, yet he never gives them any degree of that pure divine light, holy love, that spiritual anointing, that divine seed, spiritual joy, peace, foretaste of heaven. By no means will they have the least degree of things of this nature, by no means shall any one of them

ever have the least gram of spiritual good bestowed. God knows these things are infinitely precious, they are too costly things to be bestowed on those he hates. They have been purchased not with corruptible things as silver, God is willing to bestow aplenty of earthly things and the very best of them on those that he hates, and that he has appointed as vessels of wrath and that he intends for nothing but misery because he knows that the best of earthly things can't make them happy. He knows that they can't make them no other miserable, not the less miserable for them. He knows that however taken some of them are with their portion, that yet they are miserable creatures, yea, that they are the more miserable.

2. This may well awaken such among us as yet remain out of Christ and have no other portion than the things of this world. There are some such amongst us still though God has so wonderfully appeared, yet I fear there are a number of persons that are given up to men's and women's estates and shall have no better portion than what God gives to those that he hates. Others have precious blessings bestowed upon them. Precious indeed, they have tasted these spiritual blessings, they know something of the sweetness of communion with God, but yet there are some of you that remain with noting but the husks, you never tasted anything better than those things that are thrown out to those that are without the gates of the spiritual Jerusalem, amongst dogs and whoremongers. How miserable is your condition with your worldly possessions, your land, your cattle, your outward ornaments, your pleasures, with your poor, pious, withering souls under the wrath of God and ready to perish? And how miserable will you be by-and-by when you must be stripped of all these things?

III. The third application may be of reproof to reprove the folly of those that place their happiness in the enjoyments of this life and for the sake of them neglect their souls, when persons that live under the gospel and are called upon to seek their salvation live in the neglect of it, it is commonly for the sake of the enjoyments of the world. It is because their hearts are upon earthly things they are otherwise taken up. They are overcharged with the cares and pleasures of this life. When men are called upon to come to the great supper and begin to make excuse, one excuses himself that he has bought a piece of ground, another that he has bought oxen, another that he has married a wife. It is to be feared that though it be such an extraordinary season in the land and so many are awakened, yet there are some in this congregation that even now live in a great neglect of their souls. If they don't wholly neglect them, yet they are far from thorough and engaged in earnest seeking.

Let every man now speak for himself and give account to his own conscience. Is it not thus with you that you were negligent of your soul so as not to be greatly engaged in your spirit for yourselves? And consider what it is for the sake of. There is something that takes up your thoughts and possesses your affections. The heart of man will be engaged after something. What is your mind and heart upon that you so much neglect that eternal salvation that people are everywhere now earnestly seeking after in all parts of the country? Is it not some earthly thing or other? The prophets of the world or some earthly pleasure? Or some temporal advantages or others that you have in view? There is no

doubt of it but there is something or other that has great possession of your heart. If it be not eternal salvation, it is something else, some worldly thing.

They that are secure in their sins, it is a world that lulls them asleep. They thus seek salvation in a slight unsteady manner. It is a world that is their hindrance. They that keep the lane in putting off till hereafter promising that they will make thorough work of it at such and such a time, it is from some earthly enjoyment that they thus delay. And they that have put their hand to the plow and begun to look back, it's because they hearken after worldly enjoyments as the children of Israel in the wilderness look back towards Egypt because they hearken after the fleshpots there, and as Lot's wife looked back towards Sodom because she hearkened after what she had left behind.

Therefore let all those in this congregation that at such a day as this have their hearts mainly possessed by the things of this world, consider how miserable they are and what fools they are while others are fed with children's bread. You, for your part, have these things for your portion that God throws out to his dogs and his swine, and though things you are taken with, though things you look upon yourself happy in, and for the sake of those things you neglect to seek after spiritual and heavenly things, the food of the king's table, if it had not been that you have always been so greedy upon the husks and the swill, in all probability you might long ago have been a child in the house of God, sitting there clothed in white robes and feasting at the king's table. But thus it is through your eagerness after these things, you have nothing for your portion better than God throws out to his worst enemies. Those things worthless as they be, it seems you make gods of and prefer them to the King of kings. For the sake of those things you neglect a crown of glory. You prefer those things before the loss of your own soul and when you have done all, when you have rejected a Redeemer and renounced God and sold your precious soul for the enjoyments of the world, it is but a little that you have obtained and are ever like to obtain even of them.

If it be for worldly profit that you neglect your souls and spend your time and strength in scraping together the dust of the earth, it is but a small matter that you have now got of that, and that with abundance of trouble and vexation. God has so little regard for the best and choicest of those things that he often gives them to them that he hates and a great plenty of them, but this doesn't fall to your shame. There is but a little manner that you obtain of this world's goods and that little which you have obtained has been attended with a great deal of trouble and vexation. What great manner of happiness have you had in it? Is the comfort that you have enjoyed in it so great that it is worth selling your soul for? Or is it worth of neglecting heaven and running yourself headlong into hell for? And there is great danger, then, that that must be the consequence and it is but a little that you are ever like to get of the world, either the profits or honors or pleasures of it.

Be as earthly-minded as you will, scrape as much as you will, you never will be able to scrape together much of the world if you allow no room in your heart for nothing else but only worldly affections and pleasures, if you allow no time at all to think of another world but spend all your time in caring for this world and pursuing after it, you'll get but a little. You'll have a great deal of trouble with it, the world will cheat your expectations

and sting and afflict you when you hope for a great deal of pleasure in it, and the small manner of the world with abundance of vexation is all the portion you are to have, and even this and a little time you must forsake and take an everlasting farewell of, and must have the flames of hell for your portion forever.

Oh, how miserable is a portion of such wicked men as you. They have a little of the world, a few of the profits and pleasures of it with a great deal of vexation, with a guilty conscience, without any true peace or rest while they live for a few days, and then they are stripped of all and sent naked to hell to bear the torments of that to all eternity. And how great is their folly who neglect their eternal salvation for no better good than this? Consider these things, you that are of vain empty minds that are at ease in Zion at such an extraordinary season as this. What poor miserable creatures you are. You would be so if you were to live here in this world to eternity with no better portion than you now have, but instead of that you were to live here but a few days, a great part of your life that may be as gone already and in a very little time you're to be stripped eternally of all your enjoyments, and then you will have nothing before you but endless ages of darkness and pain and terror and wrath.

It may be you are much taken with some of those earthly enjoyments that you have, but it may well astonish and make you tremble to think that you have no better portion than that which is given to those he perfectly hates. Though so many others have the peculiar blessings of his chosen bestowed upon them, you have set your heart upon worldly things and for them you have neglected your soul formally, and for them you neglect your soul now. You have had better things offered you but these worldly things you would have and God, it may be, has given you your desires in some measure but he sent leanness into your soul.

Application IV may be made of exhortation to Christ-less sinners to forsake the vanity of the world and earnestly seek an interest in Christ. Don't content yourself any longer with those mean things that can't satisfy. Don't go on still in that folly. Don't sell the blessings of the covenant for a morsel of meat as Esau did. What a foolish bargain did Esau make. How bitterly did he repent of it. Don't follow his example. Don't flatter yourself with the notion of happiness in the world anymore. Never expect to be any other than a miserable wretch while you have no more than those things that God gives to those that he hates. Seek that better part. Seek it now and prove the present opportunity for it. God is now letting open the fountain. Forsake all your lusts forever in all the pleasant dear objects and enjoyments of your lusts. Forsake the world in your heart and in your practice. So too, so far as at any time or in anywise stands in the way, forsake profit, honor, pleasure. Forsake all. Give it all up. This you must do. Luke 14:33 whosoever "forsaketh not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple."

Don't halt any longer between two opinions. Come to a conclusion in your own mind what you will do. You that have lived to this day out of Christ and have no good evidence to this day of your being converted, what will you do? Well, consider the matter thoroughly while God gives you time to consider. Doubtless now at this day when God is doing such great things and when probably the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the ax is in

a special manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

A sermon by Jonathan Edwards dated April, 1741.

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