

## Esau have I Hated – Malachi 1:2-5

### I. Introduction:

- A. This scripture, along with Paul's explanation and application in **Romans 9**, are among the **most hated** passages in the Bible.
1. They are also among the **most abused** of all scriptures.
  2. Then a result of that abuse, they have become some of the most **misunderstood** by Christians generally.
  3. I am going to tell you up front that I probably won't be able to correct any of these problems.
  4. If you hate, or if you are prone to twist these words to suit your heart or your theology, it is likely that only the Lord himself will be able to help you.
  5. I am not smart enough to argue you out of your rejection of what God has clearly said.
  6. There is so much within the Lord's eternal decrees which must be left to God alone.
  7. It is best in areas of extreme controversy to simply say, with **Malachi** and **Paul**, *"Thus saith the Lord,"* instead of *"Thus and thus, I think."*
- B. What is it that the Lord is telling in this scripture?
1. Despite God's declaration of love toward Israel, that nation had become so calloused they couldn't see it.
  2. So they said to the Lord, *"Wherein hast thou loved us?"*
  3. Jehovah replied, *"Look at the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah."*
  4. *"I chose to love Jacob, the younger of the twins, and Esau I hated."*
  5. So Edom, the country of Esau, essentially became an uninhabited wilderness and waste land.
  6. Even when the descendants of Esau tried to rebuild, God demonstrated His eternal hatred.
  7. *"They shall build, but I will throw down,"* saith the Lord.
  8. **Malachi** said, *"It may take some time, but eventually Israel will recognize the facts, and Jehovah will be magnified from the border of Edom throughout all Israel."*
  9. And I might add, eventually, all Christendom, all humanity, will have to admit that God is sovereign in His application of justice and grace.
- C. The people who hate what **Malachi** tells us, are usually so disturbed they don't bother worrying about the *"dragons of the wilderness."*
1. But it is different with you who are willing to say, *"thus saith the Lord."* **You** might stumble over *"dragons."*
  2. Don't let DreamWorks and Paramount Pictures define the word for you, as in *"How to Train your Dragon."*
  3. The Hebrew word is found only in this verse, and Tyndale had nothing to go on for his translation.
  4. Most commentators believe it to be some sort of **jackal**, but they have no real basis for that either.
  5. Let's not worry about the word, recognizing only that whatever it is, it didn't make Edom a good place to live
- D. For those who trust God's Word, it appears to me there are three points for us to consider from this text.
1. There is that extremely difficult and divisive idea of **God's hatred**, then linked to that is **God's justice**.
  2. But above them both is **God's grace**; the subject of our message last week – *"Jacob have I loved."*

### II. First, let's consider God's hatred of Esau and the descendants Esau – Edom.

- A. The Hebrew word translated *"hate"* as in *"I hated Esau"* is quite common and easy to understand.
1. It is usually written in the context of one person's enmity toward another person.
  2. But there are several scriptures which speak of the **Lord's** hatred, and those are often linked to other Hebrew words such as *"abhor."*
  3. It is sometimes argued that God's hatred of Esau means only that **He loved him less** than He did Jacob.
  4. That idea might hold water when we are talking about people, but not with the unchangeable God.
    - a. For example, the Lord Jesus said in **Luke 14:26** – *"If any man come to me, & HATE not his father, & mother, & wife, & children, & brethren, & sisters, yea, & his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."*
    - b. That obviously means we are to love the Lord more than we do our earthly relatives.
    - c. How can we abhor our children in the ultimate sense and still be good parents and Christians?
    - d. Must we treat our loved ones as enemies in order to serve God. Of course not.

5. But that kind of hatred – the hatred of **Luke 14:26** – does not apply to God Himself.
    - a. He doesn't love Paul more than He loves Peter or Matthew, and He doesn't love John Mark any less.
    - b. The Lord does nothing by halves; He doesn't grade on a curve; there is no dimmer switch in this heart.
    - c. He either loves or he doesn't. It is always 100%.
    - d. There is no middle ground between God's love and God's hatred. Everything is infinite with Jehovah.
- B. To set the background, I remind you that this is not the only scripture where God deals harshly with people.
1. **Nadab** and **Abihu**, sons of Aaron, the first High Priest, offered strange fire to God, & the Lord killed them.
    - a. For some reason, when they filled their incense burners, they didn't take their fire from God's altar.
    - b. It may have been outright rebellion on their part.
    - c. But on the other hand they may have meant well; they may have not given it any thought.
    - d. Nevertheless. they broke the rules and God killed them.
  2. In the days of David, **Uzzah** put his hand on the Ark of the Covenant to keep it from falling, and the Lord killed him.
    - a. He thought he was doing God a favor; he thought his hand was more righteous than the mud into which the Ark might have fallen.
    - b. He tried to steady the Ark, and God killed him.
  3. Earlier, God slaughtered **the children** and **babies** of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**, whom we assume were not guilty of any sort of immorality.
  4. There are dozens of examples of this in both testaments.
  5. Remember the **Tower of Siloam** which fell on eighteen ordinary citizens of Jerusalem.
  6. Why does God appear to be so unjust as to kill such "innocent" people?
    - a. He is **NOT unjust**, and if you think so, it's because you're wearing the wrong glasses.
    - b. God cannot act in an unjust way, because Jehovah cannot sin.
- C. During the first few days or hours of human existence, Adam, our first father, was put to the test.
1. *"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*
  2. As you know Adam **DID eat** the fruit from that forbidden tree.
  3. Immediately, **Adam's spirit died** within him, and in addition the slow process of **physical death began**.
  4. **Genesis** doesn't specifically say so, but based on other scriptures, I believe that God, at that moment, hated Adam for his wilful disobedience.
  5. Further more, God began in point of time to hate all Adam's children, because they all became sinners through Adam's transgression.
  6. **Romans 5** – *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon ALL men, for that ALL have sinned."*
    - a. *"For ... by one man's offence death reigned by one."*
    - b. *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..."*
- D. Now let's consider some of the scriptures which speak about **God's hatred** of those sinners.
1. In **Deuteronomy 16** we have a list of many things which God considered to be sins.
    - a. In **verse 22** we read, *"Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God HATETH."*
    - b. The word "hateth" is the same word **Malachi** uses in regard to Esau.
    - c. The Lord hates idols and idolatry, because they rob Him of His position and glory.
    - d. The Lord hates idolaters.
    - e. He hates it whenever we love anything above Him, even if it is our parents and children.
  2. **David** says in **Psalms 5** – *"Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou HATEST all workers of INIQUITY."*

3. In **Psalm 11**, David adds, *"The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*
    - a. *The LORD trieth the righteous: but **THE WICKED** & him **THAT LOVETH VIOLENCE** his soul **HATETH**.*
    - b. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*
    - c. *For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright."*
  4. **Psalm 45** says, *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and **HATEST WICKEDNESS**."*
  5. **Jeremiah 12:7-8** God says, *"I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.*
    - a. *Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have **I HATED IT**."*
    - b. The Lord hates empty, Jehovah-less religion.
    - c. And still speaking about the religion of Israel, God says through **Hosea**, *"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."*
  6. In **Jeremiah 44:3**, He says, *"Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers. I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing **that I HATE**."*
    - a. In **Amos 5** God says, I hate evil and I despise hypocritical religion.
    - b. **Zechariah 8:17**: *"And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that **I HATE**, saith the LORD."*
- E. And then there is the well-known statement from **Proverbs 6**: *"These six things doth the LORD **HATE**: yea, seven are an **ABOMINATION** unto him:*
1. *A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*
    - a. *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*
    - b. *A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."*
  2. Can you name one person who has never in his life told a lie?
    - a. Has there ever been anyone who hasn't for a moment been proud of himself.
    - b. Modern society loves wicked imaginations.
  3. Why does **Revelation 21:8** say, *"... all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*
    - a. It's not because God loves them. He doesn't love them.
    - b. Those liars shall have their part in the lake of fire, because God hates them.
  4. All of these and a thousand more sins draw God's anger and eventually His wrath.
  5. The Lord hates idolatry, iniquity, wickedness, violence, hypocrisy, self-centered religion.
  6. He abhors these sins, and He abhors the people who commit these sins, and every other type of sin.
- F. Now please return to **Romans 3**.
1. **Verse 10**: *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*
    - a. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
    - b. *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*
    - c. *Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways:*
    - d. *And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."*
  2. In this statement, Paul includes **all of the SINS** about which God said, *"I hate,"* as well as **all the PEOPLE** who commit these sins.
  3. He summarizes everything by saying, *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*

- G. Who has sinned and come short of the glory of God? Absolutely everyone.
1. Why are we, as an entire race, totally sinful, ungodly and infinitely short of the glory of God?
  2. Because we are children of Adam, and the sin nature of Adam is a part of our spiritual DNA.
  3. Why does **Malachi** say God hates Esau? Because he was **conceived** as a wretched sinner in God's sight.
- H. Paul says in **Romans 6**, "*the wages of sin is death.*"
1. Why do people die? Why do **ALL** people die? Why did the babies of Sodom die?
  2. Because God **hates** and judges sin, applying the judgment which He declared to Adam.
    - a. It's not simply because God **hates specific sins**.
    - b. He **hates the sin nature** which we all possess at conception. **He hates sinners**.
  3. **Romans 5** once again – "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"
    - a. "*For ... by one man's offence death reigned by one.*"
    - b. "*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners...*"
- I. On a side note: it is sometimes said "**God hates SIN, but He loves SINNERS.**"
1. Remember, what is important is: "*Thus saith the Lord,*" not "*Thus and thus, I think.*"
  2. I point you to **Malachi 1:2**: "*Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.*"
  3. Paul reiterates that in **Romans 9:13**: "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*"
  4. Of course, Paul uses a **Greek word** rather than **Hebrew**, but it means exactly the same thing.
  5. Strong defines the Greek word with: "*to hate, to pursue with hatred, to DETEST.*"
  6. Is there any stronger word than "*detest*"?

### III. Okay, assuming we agree that God really did hate Esau, was that hatred justified?

- A. Often, the hatred people have for others is with out reason and therefor unjustified.
1. But what about Jehovah? Was **God's hatred** and **judgment** on Esau just?
    - a. "*And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.*"
    - b. *Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down.*"
  2. You may think I've lost my mind, but in this verse **Malachi** actually describes God's grace upon the man and his children.
  3. God gave to Esau a heritage. He gave him many children. He made Esau a mighty nation for a time.
  4. God was gracious to Esau, but despite that grace, the man's sinful heart kept revealing its true nature.
    - a. **Genesis 27:41**: "*And Esau hated Jacob.*" That's a different Hebrew word, by the way.
    - b. Esau also rejected the God and the religion of his father Isaac.
    - c. He was a secular, worldly, power-seeking, prodigal, who never repented of his sin.
  5. But let me be clear, God didn't hate Esau because of his various sins; He hated him because he was a sinner.
- B. **What** was it that **God** said to **Adam** about the **fruit of the tree** of the knowledge of good and evil?
1. Didn't he say, "*thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?*"
  2. The principle behind God's judgment is found in **Ezekiel 18:4**: "*Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"
  3. **When** did **Esau first sin**?
    - a. Was it when he kicked at Jacob for grabbing his heel on the day of his birth?
    - b. Was it when he sold his God-given birthright, because he was hungry?
    - c. Was it when he first thought about murdering his brother?
  4. **When** did **Esau first sin**?

- C. Unbelievers might not like the answer, but the truth is Esau became a sinner **when Adam sinned**.
1. **Romans 5** for a third time: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*
  2. There is absolutely no question that Paul was saying that when Adam, as our father, first sinned, all his posterity joined him in that sin.
  3. To that, every competent Bible scholar agrees – literally hundreds of them.
  4. *“Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (in him).”*
  5. And undeniable proof of that is seen in the 65 babies in this country who were born dead yesterday.
    - a. They didn’t die during birth or in their mothers’ wombs because they lied or cheated or stole something.
    - b. 24,000 American babies are born dead every year, because all of those babies are sinners.
    - c. Death is the result of sin.
- D. Was God unjust when He killed **Nadab** and **Abihu** for putting strange fire into their censers, when they knew they shouldn’t?
1. Was God unjust when He killed **Uzzah** for putting his hand on the Ark of the Covenant, when he as a priest knew he shouldn’t?
  2. And more pointedly, was God unjust in **incinerating** those **babies** in **Sodom**?
  3. The truth is: each and every one of them were sinners; they had sinned in Adam.
  4. They were born with a death sentence upon them.
- E. **Justice** in the broadest sense is the principle that **people receive** what they **deserve**.
1. Justice in the Bible is what results when God’s rules are strictly applied. God plays by the rules.
  2. Jehovah lives according to the innermost principle of His being – holiness.
  3. What God does is always consistent with who God is.
  4. He is utterly incapable of an unholy or unjust act.
  5. Esau was worthy of God’s hatred because of his sinful nature, even before he was born.
  6. And **God** is to be **praised** for **His hatred of Esau**, because it is an **expression** of His **holy character**.
  7. You heard me correctly: **God** should be, and ultimately will be **praised** for **His hatred of Esau**.

#### IV. But what about the Lord’s display of grace and mercy toward Jacob?

- A. It is said that a woman once came to Charles Spurgeon, and said, as thousands of others would like to do:
1. *“I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.”*
  2. Spurgeon replied, *“That is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.”*
- B. In our message last week, we looked at the undeniable fact that God loved Jacob.
1. And before moving on, let me emphasize that word **“fact.”**
  2. It is a **fact** that God doesn’t treat everyone the same.
    - a. Some people are born beautiful, and others are not so much.
    - b. Some children are born into rich families, and some are not.
    - c. Some come into this world healthy, and some are never healthy.
  3. The fact is, Edom, no longer exists as a nation. It isn’t in the United Nations. It has been destroyed.
  4. A good Bible Atlas will show you that in the days of David and Solomon, Edom extended from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea – a vast area of land. But you cannot find it in any atlas today.
  5. In contrast to Esau and Edom, Jacob and Israel have enjoyed unnumbered undulations of God’s mercy.
  6. Those are the facts. People can change their doctrines, but they can’t change the facts.
- C. But how can **those blessings** upon **Jacob** be **explained**? In truth: not very well.
1. It’s not easy to explain God’s grace on Jacob, or upon any other sinner as far as that goes.
  2. Because once again, in order to find the answer, we have to dig into the unfathomable heart of Jehovah.

3. As Paul tells us, **God chose to love** and to **call Jacob** to Himself, **before he was born**.
4. **Romans 9:10:** *“When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;
 
  - a. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)
  - b. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.
  - c. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
  - d. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.
  - e. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”*

D. Jacob and Esau were fraternal twins.

1. The Sovereign God would have been perfectly just to let them both die in the womb, because they were equally sinners; they had equally sinned in Adam.
2. Or the Lord could have graciously permitted them to be born and to live long lives, only to die at the age one hundred and then to be cast into Hell.
3. But as it happened, God sovereignly chose to bless and to save one of those two boys – Jacob.
4. He was no more worthy of God’s blessing than his brother, but God chose to love Jacob.
5. The Lord was not unjust toward Esau in any way; in fact throughout his life God abundantly blessed him.
6. But in divine sovereignty, God chose to save Jacob, and to permit him to be a part of the Lord’s plan for the coming of the Saviour.

E. It may sound as though I am compromising my doctrine and this message, but...

1. God is always just; He is never unjust; He always exacts the proscribed judgment on sinners.
2. But sometimes He reaches above and beyond that justice by bestowing mercy on those whom He chooses.
3. *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”*
4. Still, in order for Jacob to be blessed, the judgment for his sins had to be carried out.
5. And the Lord did this in His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Christ died on the cross to bear the sins of Jacob and so many others.

## V. Conclusion

- A. Everyone in this room deserves not only to die, but to die the second death & to be cast into the Lake of Fire.
1. But the Triune God unilaterally chose to provide a substitute for that death, and the Son of God came into this world for that purpose.
  2. Along with God’s decree to provide salvation, He chose a multitude of Jacobs upon which to bestow that grace.
  3. By saving Jacob the Lord didn’t do Esau any harm.
  4. He didn’t pass a special decree, predestinating Esau to Hell.
  5. Like all other descendants of Adam, Hell and the Lake of Fire, were already in that man’s future.
  6. In saving Jacob and rescuing him from the judgment he deserved, the Lord has been magnificently glorified.
- B. How can someone know whether he is a Jacob or an Esau?
1. By humbly **repenting of sin** before God and **putting trust** in the **sacrifice of Christ** on the cross.
  2. How can **YOU** know whether you are a Jacob or an Esau?
  3. By leaving your self-will, your hatred of God, and the hatred of your brother.
  4. By casting yourself down, acknowledging all your sins, before the cross of Christ.
  5. You can know that you are a person like Jacob by completely surrendering yourself to Jehovah in repentance and faith.
  6. Will you do that this morning?