

The Doctrines of Grace

Ephesians 1:3-10

Malachi 1:1-3 (NASB)

¹“The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

²“**I have loved you,**” says the LORD. But you say, “**How have You loved us?**” “**Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?**” declares the LORD. “**Yet I have loved Jacob;**”

³**but I have hated Esau,** and I have made his mountains a desolation and *appointed* his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

Romans 9:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹“for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

¹²it was said to her, “**THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.**”

¹³**Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”**

Paul’s next statement, summarizing what he has just written, is quoted from [Malachi 1:2-3](#) and seems shocking and completely contrary to most people’s view of God’s impartiality: “**Just as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”** But just as God’s prediction that the elder Esau would serve the younger Jacob did not directly apply to those two individuals but rather to their descendants, so the Lord’s declaration here seems to apply in the same way. The book of Genesis mentions no divine hatred of Esau himself.

Obadiah’s declaration that God hated Esau was written over a thousand years after Esau lived, and the most reasonable interpretation of the prophet’s statement would seem to indicate that the Lord’s hatred is against Esau’s idolatrous descendants.

Obadiah 1:6 (NASB)

⁶“O how Esau will be ransacked, *And* his hidden treasures searched out!”

Obadiah 1:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“**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**”.

In the same way, the Lord’s love of Jacob would refer to Jacob’s descendants, who, although often rebellious and sometimes idolatrous, were His sovereignly elected people through whom the world’s Redeemer would come.

In an analogous way, through the illustrations of Isaac and Jacob, Paul shows that out of the loins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would come an elect remnant of redeemed Jews and that others would remain in unbelief and thereby forfeit the spiritual promises of God.

But Paul has already declared unambiguously that God's justification for choosing Jacob over Esau was not based on their personal characteristics or works but solely on the basis of His divine and infallible prerogative ([v. 13](#))

Romans 9:13 (NASB)

¹³ Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

—a mystery that our finite human minds cannot fathom.

Out of their loins came two nations, one of whom God chose for divine blessing and protection and the other whom He chose for divine judgment.