

WHY DID GOD LOVE JACOB AND HATE ESAU?

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1. Who were Jacob and Esau? (Genesis 25-36)

- a. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers in the Bible, sons of Isaac and Rebekah, grandsons of Abraham.
- b. Even before they were born, Rebekah was told by God that two nations were in her womb, and that the older would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23).
- c. Historically, Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" after he "wrestled with God" (which is what "Israel" means.) He became the father of the twelve tribes.
- d. Esau became the ancestor of the Edomites, a nation often in conflict with the nation of Israel.

2. What was going on in Malachi? (Malachi 1:2-4)

- a. Malachi was an Old Testament prophet who lived around 450 – 430 BC. He prophesied to the people of Judah after they had returned from Babylonian exile and had rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem.
- b. The religious enthusiasm had waned, and corruption had crept into the priesthood and the people. They had become cynical and disillusioned.
- c. God is telling His people that He is sovereignly watching over them, just as He has been from the very beginning of their history as a nation, from the moment he sovereignly chose Jacob over Esau.

3. What was going on in Romans? (Romans 9:6-21)

- a. In the beginning of Romans 9, Paul points out that Israel has a heritage like no other nation in the history of the world. (9:1-5)
- b. Paul points out that there is an "Israel within Israel." He points out that the physical, national Israel is not the whole story! (9:6-13)
- c. Paul points out that God is sovereign and reserves the right to do with Israel whatever He pleases. (9:14-29)
- d. However, Israel's struggles have nothing to do with some sovereign decree from God. Israel's struggles have everything to do with their own unbelief and disobedience (9:30 – 10:21)

- e. Despite rumors to the contrary, God has not cast Israel aside. God still has a “remnant”, a “true Israel within the national Israel” and Paul is an example! (11:1-6)
- f. National, physical Israel’s present “hardening” is not an act of God, it is a consequence of their attempt to work their way to God instead of pursue God by faith. This failure led them to stumble over the message of Jesus Christ. (11:7-10)
- g. The good news is that God can turn Israel’s struggles into ultimate good! (11:11-15)
- h. National Israel’s present lapse has no effect whatsoever on the ability of individual Jews or Gentiles to respond to the Gospel (11:12-24).
- i. In the future, there will be a returning to the Lord within Israel, as they are still loved by God. (11:25-29).
- j. God’s constant desire is to have mercy on everyone who believes: Jews and Gentiles! (11:30-32)
- k. God’s ways are incredible!!! (11:33-36)

4. What about poor Esau?!

- a. We need to understand the concept of “love and hate” as a Jewish idiom...
 - i. The main biblical Hebrew word for “hate” is sane. It can mean: “to hate, to experience hostility or animosity.” However, it had a wider range of meaning than that in the Jewish mind. It can also mean: “to reject, to not choose, to love less.”
 - ii. Genesis 29:30-31; Deuteronomy 21:15; Luke 14:26; Matthew 6:24; John 12:25;
- b. So then, when God says, “**Jacob I loved, Esau I hated**” it was not about a personal, emotional, bitter hostility toward an individual. Jacob and Esau represented two nations. It was a shorthanded way saying, “*I sovereignly chose Jacob’s descendants to be the nation I would use, as opposed to Esau’s descendants.*”
- c. The bottom line: this was a Jewish idiom, often used in a covenantal context, to communicate a sovereign preference, decision, or choice.