

# THE SOVEREIGN LOVE AND HATE OF GOD

## Malachi 1:2-5

### INTRODUCTION

**George Mallory** – One of the more famous mountaineers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is most famous for a short response he gave to a New York Times reporter in the 1920s. The reporter asked him why he felt inclined to climb Mount Everest. His response? “Because it is there.”

Certain element of this when we come to Malachi in our Bible reading ... why we read it .....because it is there ... it is in the Bible. But once we start ascending or, in this case, studying the book of Malachi, we find staggering vistas where it seems like we can see far and wide, we find deep canyons of riches and treasures.

→ It contains one of the most startling and staggering statements in all of Scripture - quoted in Romans 9:13

### READ Mal 1:2-5

**Proposition: 2 Attributes of God:**

- I. The Sovereign **Love** of God
- II. The Sovereign **Hate** of God

Communicable aspects and noncommunicable aspects  
Similar in some ways, but very, very important differences

**So That:** We would grow in our understanding and appreciation for the love of God we enjoy – our election and our sanctification

Point – Both attributes have a:

- A. **Statement**
- B. **Challenge**
- C. **Response**

**1<sup>st</sup> Attribute** of God, ...

**I.** The Sovereign **Love** of God

**Mal 1:2**

Point – God does not begin his message to His rebellious people with harsh words, but with loving overtures.

→ He prefaces His words of judgment with a reminder of hope.

**Malachi** begins with affirmation of God’s continuing love.

→ This is the introduction and foundation of the whole book

### **A. The Statement**

Point – **1 John 4:8, 16** – “God is love” → Love is not just an emotion of God, love is part of the very nature of God; His essence.

Proof – “<sup>2a</sup>**I have loved you,’ says the LORD.**”

Again, and again and again, God speaks a word of hope to a disobedient and stiff-necked people

For the Ancient Near East people of the time and their deities – to them, God loving is unique

- **that** we would have a **greater sense of thanksgiving** to God for His grace in rescuing us from the eternal destruction towards which we were hurtling headlong

### **B. The Challenge**

Point – **Illustration** – In Proverbs 30:15, the leech has two daughters – Give and Give. We can say that the Leech of Body Language has two daughters: rolling eyes and crossed arms. God has loved them from the beginning and they essentially roll their eyes, cross their arms, and ask...

Proof – “<sup>2b</sup>**But you say, ‘How have You loved us?’**”

One might ask, how can they ask this question?

Here it is around 420 B.C., almost 100 years after the completion of the Temple.

There was no glorious renewal, the promised kingdom was not present, not delivered and glorified, still under Persian dominion.

This is a reflection of human perspective. This is the problem.

Human perspective on the love of God is:

- situational
- myopic (shortsighted)
- complaining
- ungrateful

They can't see what they really have. All they know is they do not have what they want. They don't see that they already have what they ultimately and eternally need – God's favor, grace and mercy.

**Illustration – Descartes** – *“I think, therefore I am.”*

→ Today's version might be – “I want, therefore I am.”

We must realize the full magnitude of what the people are saying ...

They are accusing God – “You have violated Your covenant.”

### **C. God's Response**

Point – God does not strongly rebuke at first. He reassures with proof from the past.

Proof – “<sup>2c</sup>**Was not Esau Jacob's brother?**” declares the **LORD. ‘Yet I have loved Jacob;’**

Words ... that capture the central message of the entire Bible ... if we know our theology ... if we know our history.

God points to a birth that took place some 1600 years prior to the writing, almost 4000 years ago from us!

These are words that describe, in vivid color, the grace of God ... the unmerited outpouring of God's effectual favor on undeserving sinners

Yes, Esau was Jacob's brother ... and not just his brother ... his TWIN brother ... and his elder brother

**Gen 25:23** – “the LORD said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.’” (Gen 27:27-30)

Recall the right of Primogeniture in the nation of Israel at the time and in the Ancient Near East was very powerful → all of God's chosen sons in Genesis – none of them were the firstborn. **Firstborn Replacement**  
→ God's sovereign choice of **Jacob** over **Esau**

Do you ever lose the wonder and amazement at God's love??  
God's answer to depression is election!

**Illustration – Ezek 16:4-6, 22**

**Application** – In the same way, we make no contribution to the love of God.

Point – This is a totally undeserved love  
The love of God is sovereign, unconditional, and unmerited.

God loves His people: profoundly, purely, and particularly

Love among people is awakened by something in the one loved.  
God's love is free, spontaneous, non-evoked, and uncaused.

**Illustration – Deut 7:6-8** (There is NO “Because man ...”)

**Application** – Do we ever question the goodness of God?  
Do we ever ask “How have you loved us?” “How have you loved me?”

**Application – William Cowper** – *God Moves in a Mysterious Way* – “The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and will break with blessings.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Attribute** of God, ...

**II.** The Sovereign **Hate** of God **Mal 1:3-5**

**Point** – God’s sovereign **Love** is more clearly seen and understood when cast against God’s sovereign **Hate**

The blessing of God becomes sweeter when measured against the bitterness of God’s cursing

Mercy → Wrath

Grace → Judgment

Salvation → Condemnation

#### A. The **Statement**

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Point</u> – God is glorified in <u>love</u> . | God is glorified in <u>hate</u> . |
| God is glorified in <u>Heaven</u> .              | God is glorified in <u>Hell</u> . |

Let’s clear one thing up right away → **Hate** does not mean “love less.”

- This is not comparative.
- Lexical meaning of word – opposed, detested, and despised ... an intense aversion
- Hate means hate.

God does not hate with any negative and sinful connotations.  
His hatred is pure.

There is nothing arbitrary about God's hatred.

Proof – “<sup>3a</sup>**but I have hated Esau**”

Just like the stark landscape of Everest, there is a stark honesty and gravity in Malachi.

Literally in the original order of the original language:

“But Esau I have hated” → emphasis on “**Esau**”

- unusual in Hebrew because Esau is placed first

In this passage, Malachi records

#### **4 Dimensions of the Sovereign Hate of God**

- four results of the hate of God bearing down on the man Esau and his godless descendants of Edom::

The **1<sup>st</sup> Dimension** of God's Sovereign Hate...

##### **1. Total Destruction**

Proof – “<sup>3b</sup>**and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.**”

“**desolation**” – waste, ruin; astonishment, horror

“**jackals of the wilderness.**” found in scenes of divine judgment – Jer 9:11; 10:22; 49:33; 51:37; Ps 44:19

→ picture of total waste and desolation

**Illustration** – **Gen 15:16** – “in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

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| <p><b>Application</b> – So also the <u>restoration</u> of Israel is connected with the <u>destruction</u> of Edom – Isa 34, 63; Ezek 35-36</p> |
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## **B. The Challenge**

**“<sup>4a</sup>Though Edom says, ‘We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins;’”**

That is their bold claim.

**Jacob** and **Esau** – first as individuals, also as nations  
**Israel** and **Edom**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Remember - v. 1</b> → “ <b>to Israel</b> ” – entire remnant nation (North & South) after the exile → notice – “ <b>to Israel</b> ,” not “against Israel” |
|---|

Esau passed a godless heritage to his descendants

Esau’s descendants were called **Edom** (“red”) because:

- 1) His skin was red (Gen 25:25)
  - 2) said to Jacob, “let me have a swallow of that red” (Gen 25:30)
  - 3) Fitting because red sandstone cliffs characteristic of country
- A whole chapter in Genesis is dedicated to Esau – chapter 36 – one of ten Toledoths is dedicated to him.

**Esau** went to live in the land of Seir Gen 32:3; 36 to the south of the Dead Sea. His descendants, the **Edomites**, settled into the rugged territory that stretched from there to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Much of the suffering of the Israelites came at the hands of the Edomites and is marked through the Old Testament.

→ They were proud, strong, cruel, and idolatrous.

**King Saul** warred against them and **David** conquered them killing 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt (2 Sam 8:13f).

The Edomites participated with a furious and vindictive spirit against Israel in the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (Ps 137:7; Obad 11; Lam 4:21)

But Both **Edom** and **Judah** were taken by Babylon  
The Edomites were also vanquished by Babylon 20 years later.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension** of God’s Sovereign Hate ...

## 2. Divine Opposition against Edom

(1:4a)

### C. God's Response

<sup>4b</sup>“thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘They may build, but I will tear down; and *men* will call them the wicked territory’”

There is an emphatic contrast:

“**They, themselves ... , but I, Myself,**

Note the name of God used here:

“**Lord of Hosts**” – תאב'c. הו"ה > – **Military name** of God – God of War – sending out – army, war, warfare

This name appears 239 times in the Old Testament

- 97 of those time is in the 12 minor prophets
- 91 times in Haggai-Malachi (postexilic books )
- 24 times in the 55 verses of **Malachi!**

This is a reminder! Hope! Encouragement!

To the nation of Israel, the God of War is on their side!

**Edom** was eventually driven from her ancient home. Their capital city of Petra fell into the hands of the Nabatean Arabs in 300 B.C. The remaining Edomites migrated to the Negev southwest of Judea and they became known as the **Idumeans**.

Their chief city of Hebron was taken by Judas (the Hammer) Maccabeus in 165 B.C. In 126 B.C. the country was completely Conquered by John Hyrcanus.

About a century later, Julius Caesar made the governor of Idumea, Antipater, the procurator of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Antipater paved the way to the throne of the territory for his son, another Idumean, **Herod the Great**.

The Idumeans eventually became incorporated with Rome and swallowed up and lost among the Nabatean Arabs.

Their country is now barren.

And their cities are totally demolished and in ruins.

→ Edom and Idumea have disappeared from history except for in the Word of God in terms of their people.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Dimension** of the Sovereign Hate...

3. **Eternal Condemnation** of the people (1:4b)

“<sup>4c</sup>**and the people toward whom the LORD is indignant forever.**”

Translation of the original word– *olam* – “everlasting”

**Ezek 35:9** – “I will make you an everlasting desolation, and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

In contrast → **Jer 31:3** – “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.”

The sovereign love of Jacob is all because God – completely uncaused.

Turn to **Romans 9:10-13** – Paul takes the prophecy from Genesis 25 and statement from Malach and cranks it up a bit.

Uncaused: God hated Esau in the womb by choosing to pass over him and not choosing him unto election.

Caused: God hates Esau because of Esau’s wicked sins.

**Gen 25:23** – was spoken before the twins were born.

→ God chose **Jacob** for divine blessing and protection and He left **Esau** to divine judgment.

There is election unto salvation vs. foreordination unto damnation → Active vs. Passive

Men are born sinners headed for hell by virtue of their rebellion.

God sovereignly chooses to rescue some  
God sovereignly chooses to leave some to their own path.

God IS the Author of the calling, regeneration, faith,  
justification, and sanctification of the Elect.  
God IS NOT the Author of the Fall, unrighteousness,  
and sinful acts of the Reprobate.

**Application – Double Predestination** – The way I define it, and I would say the majority understanding of solid pastors and theologians is error or heresy.

If someone merely means God has foreordained whatsoever may come to pass in eternity past, including the eternal destination of all men, fine. But I would strongly suggest – do not use the phrase, “Double Predestination.”

The Westminster Confession CHAPTER III.

*“God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.”*

**There is a difference** between God’s sovereign love and His sovereign hate.

Both have causes at the Divine level.  
Only hate has a cause at the human level.

God’s sovereign love is all uncaused.  
God’s sovereign hate has both an uncaused (passing over) element and a caused (because) element.

**Jacob** was not worthy of God’s love.  
**Esau** was worthy of God’s hate.

This is masterfully brought out even in **word order** of the text.

1:2 – “**I have loved Jacob**”

1:3 – “**Esau I have hated**”

The Sovereign Love of God:    The Sovereign Hate of God:

Undeserved

Deserved

Unmerited

Merited

Unconditional

Conditional

Unearned

Earned

Uncaused

Caused

We love because God first loved us.

We hate (sinfully) because we are born sinners.

**Psa 5:5-6** – “the boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.”

The Bible says, “God is love.”

The Bible does NOT say, “God is hate.”

**Illustration** – “**because**” in **Ezek 25:12-13** → major difference between God’s sovereign hate and God’s sovereign love – compare to **Deut 7:6-8**

The **4<sup>th</sup> Dimension** of God’s Sovereign Hate...

4. **Universal Glorification** of God    (1:5)

“**5 And your eyes will see this and you will say, ‘The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel!’”**

Remember, the theme of verses 2-5 is not God’s hate for Esau, but **God’s love for Israel**.

This is the initial statement, the pervasive presupposition, and the culmination of the entire discourse.

Here in this last verse, Malachi brings us back not just to the focus of God’s love of Jacob, but he turns our attention even higher and fixes our gaze on the Giver of Love, God.

“**your eyes will see**” – their eyes have already seen and their eyes are going to see again ... multiple times!!! Your eyes will see again!

“**beyond the border of Israel**” → God is concerned with all the nations – cf. **1:11, 14**. Beginning in Gen 12 and ending in Malachi – the blessings of God extend beyond Israel.

**Application** – Great is the Lord in San Tan Bible Church ... in all Bible believing churches in Gilbert ... in all Bible believing churches in the East Valley ... and outside!

## CONCLUSION

**Illustration** – The story is told of a preacher and an astronomer sitting next to each other on the plane. The astronomer asked the preacher what he did. The preacher began to tell him and as he began to share the gospel, the astronomer stopped him and said, *“too complex for me. I like to keep things simple – like ‘The Golden Rule – ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’”*

The preacher said he understood and asked the astronomer what he did. As the astronomer began to share, the preacher stopped him and said, *“Yeah. I feel the same way about astronomy ... ‘Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are.’”*

**Application** – ☺ The point is astronomy is there and is to be known. Even more so, God is there and to be known.

Now some people say you don’t preach or evangelize with this doctrine. That this kind of text and teaching is for the mature, to strengthen the mature. Think of the original audience – immature, complacent, covertly idolatrous, adulterous, etc.

This passage has something for everyone. For the mature to prepare them for times of difficulty and tragedy and for times

of prosperity! It is also for the immature, to dump them off of their spiritual lazy boys of lethargy. It is also for the unsaved, to stop them in their tracks in their presumption