

## Esau, God's Vessel of Wrath

Comments on Malachi 1:2-3

by Wilson L. Thompson

God's hatred of Esau and his evil seed is implicit throughout Scripture. But, in Malachi the Lord explicitly contrasts His love for Jacob with His hatred for Esau. **"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste . . ." (Malachi 1:2-3).** Paul reveals God's reprobative purpose for Esau as determined before his birth (Romans 9:11). Indeed, we know that he struggled with our father Jacob in the womb and was born with his heel firmly in the grip of Jacob, God's elect supplanter (Gen 25:26). Paul answered objection to God's divine decree for Esau and Pharaoh, saying, **"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called . . ." (Romans 9: 22-24).**

Without exception, Scripture reveals Esau (Edom) to be such a vessel of wrath. First, Esau and his followers appear threatening God's righteous elect (Gen 27:41; 32:6-7). Next, Edom refused Israel's request for peaceful passage during their exodus from bondage in Egypt (Numbers 20:14-21). It was Doeg the Edomite who carried out Saul's evil command to massacre God's priests at Nob when his Israelite officers refused (I Samuel 22:17-19). Later, at the fall of Jerusalem, Edomite jackals joined in the looting of Jerusalem (Obadiah 13) and urged the Babylonians to **"Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Psalm 137:7).** Finally, the wicked, Idumean (Edomite) King Herod, **"sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under . . ." (Matthew 2:16).** But, like all Edomite undertakings against God's people, this bloody campaign to murder Jesus utterly failed in its effort to frustrate God's purpose. God's decree of blessing for His people continued inexorably on track and on time (Galatians 4:4-5).

The comment of Scripture upon Esau leaves no room for any just complaint by Esau when he was supplanted by Jacob. Rather, of the birthright fiasco, it is tersely noted that Esau **"did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus did Esau despise his birthright" (Gen 25:34).** Further, Hebrew Christians are warned **"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:17).** Similarly, Esau's display of goodwill after Jacob's twenty year absence (Gen 33) should be seen as the God blessed result of Jacob's sequential gift of livestock which Esau accepted (33:11). Our shrewd father Jacob was wary of Esau's kisses as Solomon later advised (Proverbs 27:6). So, he diplomatically insisted that all Edomite soldiers depart from Israel along with Esau (Gen 33:12-15).