

46. Enmity and Evangel (2007)

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] of the congregation. So ladies, you might like to come along just to see that. Sounds so good they want to come as well. We're going to turn now to our Bibles and to our reading for this morning. You'll find it in the book of Genesis, right at the very beginning of our Bibles, page 30 or so, if you have one of our church visitors' Bibles, Genesis chapter 36.

Let's continue our studies in Genesis, and I'm going to read from Genesis 35 at verse 27. And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath Arba, that is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years, and Isaac breathed his last, and he died, and was gathered to his people old and full of days. And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

These are the generations, or this is the account of Esau, that is, Edom. Esau took his wives from the Canaanites, Ada, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, Ola-Bamah, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zibion, the Hivite, and Basimath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. And Ada bore Esau, Eliphaz, Basimath bore Reul, and Ola-Bamah bore Jewish, Jalem and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, and all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. Esau is Edom.

These are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites, in the hill country of Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons. Eliphaz, the son of Ada, the wife of Esau. Reul, the son of Basimath, the wife of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz were Timan, Omar, Zephul, Gatham, and Kenaz.

[2 : 22] Timnah was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son. She bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Ada, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Reul, Nahath, Sarah, Shema, and Mizah.

These are the sons of Basimath, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Olibamah, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zibion, Esau's wife. She bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. Sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau. The chiefs of Timan, Omar, Zephul, Kenaz, Korah, Gatham, and Amalek. These are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. These are the sons of Ada.

These are the sons of Raul, Esau's son. The chiefs Nabhath, Zerah, Shema, and Mizah. These are the chiefs of Raul in the land of Edom. These are the sons of Basimath, Esau's wife.

These are the sons of Olibamah, Esau's wife. The chiefs Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the chiefs born of Olibamah, the daughter of Anna, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau, that is, Edom. And these are their chiefs. These are the sons of Seah, the Horite, the inhabitants of the land. Lotan, Shoshal, Zibion, Anna, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the lands of Edom. The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam.

And Lotan's sister was Timna. These are the sons of Shobal, Alvan, Manatha, Ebal, Shephu, and Onam. These are the sons of Zibion, Aya, and Anna. He is the Anna who found the hot springs in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of Zibion, his father. There's something for the Michelin guide. These are the children of Anna, Dishon and Olibamah, the daughter of Anna. These are the sons of Dishon, Hemdan, Eshban, Isran, and Cheran. These are the sons of Ezer, Bilhan, Zavan, and Achan. These are the sons of Dishan, Uz, and Aran. These are the chiefs of the Horites, the chiefs of Lotan, Shobal, Zibion, Anna, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the chiefs of the Horites, chief by chief in the land of Seir. These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites. Bela, the son of Baor, reigned in Edom, the name of his city, Bingdenhabah. Bela died, and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his place.

Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Badad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, reigned in his place, the name of his city being Avith. Hadad died, and Samlah of Mazraka reigned in his place.

[5 : 12] Samlah died, and Shol of Rehoboth on the Euphrates reigned in his place. Shol died, and Balhanan, the son of Achbor, reigned in his place. Balhanan, the son of Achbor, died, and Hadar reigned in his place, the name of his city being Pow. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Metred, daughter of Mehezab. These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their dwelling places by their names. The chiefs of Timnah, Alva, Jeheth, Olabama, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Timan, Mizbah, Magdal, and Eram. These are the chiefs of Edom, that is Esau, the father of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession.

But Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

Amen. May God bless to us this reading of his word, and I'm very thankful to have got through that list, I can tell you. We'll do turn up, if you would, the passage we read together there in Genesis chapter 36, chapter really that teaches us about enmity and about the evangel, the gospel.

There is great enmity against God and his covenant, there is an even greater evangel, a great gospel that overcomes.

Now, it has to be said that great lists of names don't really make for very inspiring reading. For example, when the papers publish the New Year's Honors List, and you have all that great pages of CBEs and OBEs and Knights of the Order of the Bath and all these other rather strange names, you just glaze over and turn over the page, don't you?

[7 : 18] I guess I'm sure it's a very different matter if your name happens to be on the list. That's a very different thing. You'd look at that list in a very new way. At least I imagine so. I don't suppose many of us will ever find that out ourselves.

But rather like the lists of medal-winning Olympians. What a great honor to see your name on that list. For posterity, the list of champions.

By the same token, I suppose, what a great dishonor and shame to have had your name on that list and then for it to be removed. Rather like poor Lance Armstrong this week.

His seven Tour de France titles taken away from him under a cloud, erased from that great list of names. So actually, lists of names can be quite important, can't they?

And the Bible, of course, has many lists of names. We had one last Sunday evening, didn't we, with a list of David's mighty men. And it has many genealogies. The book of Chronicles begins with ten whole chapters of genealogical names.

[8 : 24] And chapter one of the New Testament, Matthew's Gospel, begins with a genealogy.

Genealogy. So clearly, these things are very important for the Bible. And of course, one major reason for that is that our God is a personal God.

He's not the distant, abstract God of the God of Islam or pagan religions. No, he is the covenant God, who is the personal God of his people.

And so the whole Bible is the story of God and his people. People whose names are known to him and who are dear to him. The whole story of the Bible ends, doesn't it, with a book of names.

The Lamb's Book of Life. And the only thing that matters for all eternity is that your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life. Read Revelation chapter 20 and see. Well, as we've seen, the book of Genesis has many genealogies.

Because the chief focus of the book is on the unfolding of God's promise, right? Through the generations of the seed of promise. Now, we've traced that through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

[9 : 30] And soon, the last 14 chapters of the book of Genesis will be about the next generation, about Jacob's 12 sons. But not every genealogy tells the same story.

And today's chapter, Genesis 36, is a much darker one. It tells us of how Esau and his descendants were written out of the unfolding story of God's blessing.

Like the little book 7 of Genesis back in chapter 25 that told of Ishmael, who took himself away to settle over against all his kinsmen.

Well, here we have book 9. Begins the generations of Esau. The account of Esau's family and his line. And their chosen departure from the picture of God's great salvation.

Having begun within the orbit of covenant blessing, Esau writes himself out. And his whole heritage is forfeit.

[10:32] Like Lance Armstrong, whose seven illustrious victories are going to be erased from the record of glory and posterity. So, Esau's name is marked by shame and by disqualification.

That's a very sad and salutary tale. We can't deny it. Scripture is very clear that God, in his sovereign power, passed over Esau, excluding him from his covenant blessing.

And yet, it's equally clear here that Esau freely chose his own path of perdition. These things are not incompatible. The Bible is very clear.

God is not unjust. God gives people, indeed, in the end, what they ask of him and what they want. He gives them over, says Romans chapter 1, to pursue the rebellion that they want to pursue.

And so that those that he ordains to wrath and to dishonor are justly judged for their own sin. And so, because the Bible doesn't hide reality from us, we have this sad and this sorry chapter before us in Scripture today.

[11:44] It's a chapter full of warnings. And especially so for those who, like Esau, were born into and blessed by the privileges of the covenant community of faith, the Christian church.

And yet, even the darkness of this chapter does also bear witness to the unswerving purposes of God's covenant grace and his mercy. There is enmity, which is personal and perpetual against God and his people.

But there is also an evangel. There is good news that is more powerful and more persistent and that will overcome, even to bring blessing to those from among the greatest enemies of the people of God in history.

Remember Genesis 3, I will put enmity between you and the woman, said the Lord to the serpent, and between your seed, your offspring, and her offspring. And that is the story of Genesis.

It's the story of hostility. But a day would come, said the Lord, when he, that is the seed of the woman, shall bruise, shall crush your head utterly forever.

[13:00] And we must remember that even a chapter like this, with all its solemn warnings and sobering warnings, even a chapter like this is still a part of the unfolding story of God's great grace and mercy to humankind.

So let's, with that by way of introduction, give a little attention to the text in more detail. We'll use three headings. First of all, I want to think about Esau's personal rejection. Verses 1 to 8 here tell us of a very personal enmity.

They tell us how Esau himself profanes God's covenant promises. The closing verses that we read of chapter 35 record a moment of great significance, the death of Isaac, the patriarch.

Mamre is a place associated especially with Abraham and with Isaac. It's where he settled in the land and where his chosen seed, Isaac, lived.

And after his death, we see Isaac's two sons are united again, burying him. But verses 1 to 8 of chapter 36 underline that they are not, these brothers, really, in the same place at all.

[14:16] Not geographically and not spiritually. They tell of a permanent separation, a parting of the ways that confirms the parting that we already read of a few chapters ago in chapter 33.

These verses point to a great contrast in so many facets of their lives between Jacob and Esau. The whole direction of these men's lives were divergent.

And therefore, their whole destinies were respectively radically different. Now it seems likely that originally the account written by Moses here was probably just verses 1 to 8.

Probably verses 1 to 8 went then straight on to chapter 37, verse 1. It's almost certain that verses 9 to the end were a later addition. I'll say more about that later. But for now, I just want to look at verse 8 of chapter 36 and then read straight on to verse 1 of chapter 37.

Verse 8, So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. Esau is Edom. But Jacob lived in the land of his father's journeyings in Canaan.

[15:26] You see, that is the contrast. Jacob followed his father's footsteps and in his faith. But Esau departed. He went away from the place of promise and away from the people of promise.

And you see in verses 1 to 8, we have Esau's epitaph. Like the words on a tombstone that sum up his whole life. Well, here, Esau's epitaph sums him up by reference to two things.

His marriages outside the covenant people and his migration away from the covenant place of blessing. Verses 1 to 5 focus on his marriages and their fruit.

Esau, verse 1, took wives from the Canaanites. Now, if you go back and read chapter 26, verse 34, and chapter 28, verse 9, you'll see that there seems a little confusion in the names of Esau's wives.

It may be that the original text has suffered in its translations. It may be that they had various names or various nicknames. We don't really know. But the clear point here is not their names, but their nature.

[16:40] Esau deliberately and perversely chose wives from a condemned people that the Lord had forbidden his people to have any dealings with. Remember Abraham's determination to his servant on oath?

You will not take for my son a wife from among the Canaanites. And Isaac and Rebekah wanted the same, didn't they, for Jacob? And they were deeply grieved at Esau's choices.

We saw that back in chapter 26 and 27. But so Esau did. Multiple wives too, not just one. And, we're told, fruitful unions.

All these sons born. Notice verse 5, born in the land of Canaan. That's very ironic, isn't it? Here are Esau's sons born in the promised land, whereas Jacob's sons, as we saw last time in chapter 35, verse 26, were all born out of the promised land in Paddan Aram.

But look at verses 6 to 8. They tell us of Esau's migration out of the land of promise. All the way through the story of the patriarchs, we've seen, haven't we, that their whole direction of life is traveling towards the promised land.

[17:56] Jacob's family here, too, is born in exile, but here en masse they've traveled home to the land of Canaan. And yet Esau took his whole family and all his property acquired, notice verse 6, in the land, and he went to a land away from his brother Jacob.

Notice about his property, by the way, in what verse 7 says about the need to move for reasons of wealth preservation. Rather rings a bell, doesn't it, if you think back to Abraham's time, right here at Mamre.

What happened with his nephew Lot? Lot thought that the best prospects for him, in terms of prosperity, was to move away from Abraham. And he went and lived on the margins of the promised land, very near the city of Sodom.

Very good for business, but my goodness, what a disaster that was. Now here's the same attitude we're being told in Esau.

Blessing to him was not some promise from God about the future. Don't give me that pie in the sky when you die nonsense. Give me profit in my pocket that I can see right now.

[19:10] It wasn't necessary for Esau to go and live outside the land of promise. We saw that in chapter 34. Read back, verse 21. It's very clear the land was plenty big enough for Jacob and his whole family to move in amongst everybody else, all the other peoples who were there.

Now the real reason was spiritual. Just as we saw back in chapter 25, Esau despised his birthright. Esau's appetite was chiefly for earthly treasure, not a heavenly inheritance. A pot of stew right now trumped the promises of God for the future that he couldn't see and that he couldn't touch.

And a prosperous life obtained now trumped life as a nomad waiting for glory to come. Well, doesn't Esau have many, many brothers today?

He had contempt for his whole heritage. And he therefore chose to make himself a foreigner to the covenant people and to the covenant place.

[20:17] And so we're told, verse 8, Esau settled in Seir in Edom, but Jacob, verse 1 of chapter 37, lived in the land of his father's sojournings in Canaan.

The older brother refuses to share his father's destiny. The younger brother, once disgraced, comes home to inherit everything.

You can't help, can you, but think of Luke chapter 15 and Jesus' story of the two brothers, can you? The older brother living in the father's estate with all that he has, but never, never really sharing his father's heart love.

Just working only for himself. No, for excluding himself from the real joy of the household. But the prodigal younger son, for all his faults, returning to wonderful blessing.

And here's Jacob, returned from the far country, bruised, yes, chastened, yes, but penitent. Despite all his past, receiving a wonderful blessing and a future from God.

[21:24] What a demonstration of the grace of God. And yet, Esau rejects that grace from God. He profanes the covenant promises.

It's a story of personal rejection. Esau's personal rejection of God, and therefore, God's personal rejection of Esau.

He despised his birthright. He showed an unholy profanity, as Hebrews chapter 12 puts it. So, the God that he rejected, rejected him.

It all began because these personal worldly appetites crowded out and suffocated the permanent kingdom appetites for God and for his promises.

It's so easy to let that happen, isn't it? Because, naturally, our sinful natures are at war with our souls, the Apostle Peter tells us. Of course, it seems at first, no big deal, just a relationship with somebody outside the kingdom, a boy or a girl at school, or at university, or somebody at work.

[22 : 35] But that unequal yoking, in the end, says the Apostle Paul, leads to disaster. That was Esau, several times over. Or, your pursuit of success in life, in your professional life, or your business, or your properties, or whatever it is, but just leads you to be distanced from the place of God's blessing, among God's people of blessing, the life of the church.

It's very easy to happen, isn't it? And it's easy to have excuses. No doubt, Esau could have listed Jacob's many faults, and his personal characteristics, that were so off-putting, in a way.

It's easy, isn't it, to point to many faults, among Christians, and in the church, for your distancing yourself. You have to be careful, to blame your own spiritual cooling, your own backsliding, on other people's sin, and not in your own sin.

And of course, you can fool yourself, can't you, for a long time, that in fact, all is well, that there's no sign, really, that your drift away, from Christ and his kingdom, is having any bad effects, on your life. Esau certainly looked very prosperous, didn't he?

All these sons, all this wealth, all this property. I'm sure, to the world around, it looked as though Esau, was the blessed one, not Jacob, living in his tents, as a nomad, with all these tears, with all the sadness, in his life, that we saw last time.

[24 : 04] And sometimes Christians, do just feel, don't they? I've had enough, of all this struggle, of all this strife, of all this contending, for the faith, against falsehood, of all this struggling, against my sin.

I just want a break, for a while, from all that. I just want a bit of me time, a bit of time, to give to my, own prosperity, my own success, my own profit.

What does Jesus say? What does it profit, a man, if he gains, the whole wide world, and loses his soul?

Remember, he also says, everyone, everyone, who has left, houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, all the powerful gains, in this world.

They'll receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But Esau didn't believe that. He rejected that. And as James says, friendship with the world, is enmity with God.

[25 : 14] Whoever wishes, to be friends with the world, makes himself, an enemy of God. And that was Esau. Don't let it be you. That's why this chapter's in the Bible, isn't it?

Moses was warning his people, when he wrote it, not to be tempted, to become friends, with the world, with the enemies of God. The New Testament tells us, this is written for us, too.

Hebrews chapter 12, is absolutely explicit, isn't it? Don't be unholy, like Esau. Don't be profane, like Esau. Don't reject God's promise, and be rejected yourself, like he was.

In fact, if you read the letter to the Hebrews, the whole letter, is full of warnings like that. And they're especially pertinent, aren't they? Especially, for those who, like Esau, have been brought up, with all the privileges, of God's covenant place, and all the privileges, of God's covenant people, the blessing of being part, of the family, of the Christian church.

Especially thinking, of you young folk, in the Bible class. Many of you young people, who come, from Christian homes. All the privileges, of a Christian family, all the provision, of a Christian church, your Bible classes, your activate, your tron youth, your release the word, all of these things.

[26 : 35] The apostle, says in Hebrews chapter 2, pay close attention, to everything, that you've been taught. Don't drift. How shall we escape, he says, if they didn't escape, these ancient people, how will we escape, such a great salvation, in all the fullness, that we have, in Jesus Christ, in his gospel.

Hebrews chapter 4, tells us, be careful, that you don't harbor, an unbelieving heart, leading you, to fall away, from the living God. See, you can't hide, can you, from God.

You can hide, from your parents. You can hide, a lot of things, from your friends. You can't hide, from God, says the apostle, in Hebrews 4, no creature, is hidden, from his sight, but all are naked, and exposed, to the eyes of him, to whom we must, give, account.

Don't be like Esau. It's a real warning, to us all, isn't it? Young and old. Indeed, it's especially, also a warning, to parents, because Esau, led his whole household, away, from the people of God, and away, from the promises of God, to him, and to them also.

It began so easily, and yet ended, so, so bitterly. The consequences, long outlived Esau, and long outlived, his own immediate family, cascading, down the generations, with an entail, of hostility, and hatred, for God, and for his people.

[28 : 08] And that's what, the rest of this chapter, catalogs for us. Do you see? Esau's personal rejection, leads to Edom's, perpetual revulsion. Verses 9 to 39, here list, a story of perpetual enmity.

They tell of, of Edom, that persecuted, the covenant people of God, persistently. I said that this section, was clearly added, later on, in the history of Israel, perhaps in the days, of the chronicler, who wrote so many, of these genealogies.

There's nothing deceptive, about that. There's nothing hidden, indeed here. It's quite obvious to us. For example, verse 31, speaks about Edomite kings, ruling before, Israelite kings ruled. So obviously, that was written after, Israelite kings, did rule in Israel.

And some of the names, of these kings, stretch right beyond, the days of David, and Solomon. So, Hadad, for example, in verses 35 and 36, he is somebody, who appears in 1 Kings 11, fighting against Solomon.

But all of this history, is added here, to tell us, that what was personal, for Esau, became a persistent, culture, in Esau's progeny, and his people.

[29 : 21] Like Esau, like Edom. And five times, we're told that, in this chapter. Look at the brackets, verses 1 and verse 8. Esau, that is Edom.

And then again, in bracketing the next section, verse 9, and verse 43, Esau, the father of Edom.

And then right in the middle, verse 19, in case we forget, Esau, that is Edom.

You see, Esau's unbelief, led to a succession, of the same unbelief, and the same enmity, therefore, against God, and against his people. You see, when people disbelieve God, they're not neutral.

They're not indifferent. They have in their hearts, a bitter enmity, towards God. And that shows itself, in a bitter, persistent opposition, to God's people.

Take a Richard Dawkins, for example. This is not an impartial, difference of view, with Christians. This is a furious, and a fanatical, opposition to Christians, in any way, that he possibly can.

[30 : 31] That's a secular version. Really no different, although it's a little bit more, polite perhaps, than the visceral hatred, that you find today, in the world, among many, radical Islamists, for both Jews, and Christians.

And for all those, that they perceive, to be Jewish, or Christian nations, of the West. However confused, that whole notion, of Christian nations, might be. That's what they perceive. And it's that, persistent, revulsion, of God's people, that perpetual enmity, with anything to do, with God's covenant purposes, that is the story, of Esau, and the Edomite people.

Verse 9, these are the generations. This is the account, of Esau, the father, of the Edomites. The history, is compressed, into this little chapter, is in fact, one that plays, its story, right through, the whole history, of the Bible.

Right through, the people of Israel, right up until, the time of, the Lord Jesus Christ. Read through, the Old Testament, the law, and the prophets, and you'll discover, that whenever, Edom and the Edomites, are mentioned, it is in the context, of them reviling, and opposing, the Israelites, on everything, that they stand for, in the story, of salvation.

I'll just highlight, a few things, for you. The Edomites, opposed, the Israelites, under Moses, on their journey, out of Egypt, refusing them, to pass through, their territory, refusing even, to sell them, food and water.

[32 : 01] The Edomites, fought against David, and against Solomon, joining with all, the other enemies, against the Israelite people. In 1 Samuel 27, it was one Doeg, the Edomite, who betrayed David, into the hands of Saul, and who slaughtered, all the priests of God, who had helped David.

In 1 Kings 11, you find Hadad, who's mentioned here, in verse 35. He was somebody, who fled to Egypt, during David's time, but he came back, in Solomon's time, to seek revenge, along with the king of Syria, who like him, loathed Israel, we're told.

You look at verse 12, of our chapter, you read of, Esau's bastard grandson, Amalek. And Amalek, and his seed, were a particularly, virulent scourge, all through Israel's history.

The Amalekites, attacked Israel, at their weakest point, while they were, coming away from Egypt, and they slaughtered, the weak and the wounded, they incurred, the peculiar anger of God.

The Lord will have war, with Amalek, from generation, to generation, he says. And it was Agag, the Amalekite king, who fought against King Saul. Read about it, in 1 Samuel 15.

[33 : 16] Saul, remember, refused, to put him to death, as the Lord had commanded, and Samuel himself, has to come and do that. But Agag's seed, well, Agag's seed, crops up again, in the book of Esther, where the arch enemy, of God's people, intent on total genocide, of every Jewish person, in the empire, was none other than, Haman, the Agagite.

Then during the terrible, low point of Israel's history, when Babylon attacked, Judah were led into captivity, in exile. The Edomites, joined with the Babylonians, to capture, and to kill, the fleeing Israelites, to turn them over, to their captives, and to gloat, at their misery.

The Lord said, through the prophet Ezekiel, you cherished, perpetual enmity, and gave over, the people of Israel, to the sword, at the time, of their punishment. That's why, when you read Psalm 137, of the weeping lament, of the Israelite captives, by the rivers of Babylon, they say, remember, O Lord, against the Edomites, in the day of Jerusalem, how they said, lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations.

Perpetual, enmity. And so, when, we come to the New Testament, and to Matthew's gospel, and the birth of the Messiah, at last, in Bethlehem of Judea, the seed of the woman, who will be the savior, of the world, what do we find?

Well, we find, the seed of the serpent, against, and opposing, this time, in the form of Herod the Great, the Edomian, Edomite, king, seeking, to slaughter, the babes in Bethlehem.

[35 : 00] Such is the persistent revulsion, the perpetual, enmity, of the offspring of Esau, to the offspring, of God's promise. That's why, when you read through the prophets, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Amos, and Malachi, all of them, you read oracles of judgment, against Edom, and their perpetual enmity, against the Lord, and his people.

In fact, Obadiah's, very short little prophecy, is all about, God's judgment on Edom, whose pride, in hating God's people, will be laid low. Though you soar aloft, like the eagle, says the Lord, though your nest, is set among the stars, from there, I will bring you down.

That's the sad, and the bitter story, that's told, by this chapter, in its list of names. Edom, its men, its chiefs, its kings, and their perpetual enmity, against God, and his covenant, and his Christ.

And it all came, from the seed of one, who was the brother, of Jacob. One who was born, inside the household of faith, inside, the promised land.

Very salutary, isn't it? And it's very real. Because so often, the bitterest opposition, to the gospel, has arisen, from those near, and those inside, the camp of God.

[36 : 29] Read Psalm 55, and other Psalms. David's lament, that it was those, who once shared their bread, with him as a brother, who now turned against him, and want to destroy him. See that magnified, in the life, of great David's, greater son, the Lord Jesus himself, who came to his own, and his own, received him not, and put him on the cross.

Betrayed, by one of his nearest, and dearest, who shared bread with him. That's the story, of the church, throughout all the ages, in the New Testament also.

Read the epistles. It was all, former insiders, who bitterly opposed, the apostles, on and on. It's been so ever since. Some of the most, bitter opponents, of the Christian gospel today, are those who once, stood alongside, evangelical believers, as brothers in arms.

Whenever I hear a church, from beginning, what he's saying, by saying, oh, I owe a great debt, to my evangelical background, I owe a great debt, to such and such, a preacher, and so on. I know exactly, what is coming next. Bitter invective, against, the evangelical gospel, today.

That man has done an Esau. He's moved away, far away, from those, who were his brothers. And the legacy of that, can last generations, and can affect generations.

[37 : 52] There are Christian congregations, today. There are even towns, and villages today, whose hardness, and perpetual enmity, against the gospel of God, has become ingrained.

Such that it seems, that the spirit of God, has removed himself, in judgment, because of the bitterness, and the revulsion of God, that has become entrenched, in that place. This is Jesus, removed himself, and departed, from those, times of Galilee, that had refused, his ministry, despite all his mighty words, and his works.

And prophesied, woe upon their future. To be more, more, tolerable, on the day of judgment, he said, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for you.

Because having had, such privilege, you've turned your face, away from the grace, and the mercy of God. It all begins here, with Esau. Personal, rejection, among those, who have been blessed, with all the privileges, of God's covenant, of grace.

A father, who had all this, but led his entire, family away, from being part, of the story, of the kingdom of Christ.

[39 : 10] It's a terrible thing, isn't it? It's a warning, also, isn't it, to the household, of faith today, the church of Jesus Christ, and to each household, of faith, within the church.

See to it, says the apostle, in Hebrews chapter 12, that no one fails, to obtain the grace of God, that no root, of bitterness, springs up, and by it, many, are defiled.

It's a word, to all of us, especially, to parents. Our children learn, don't they, from our reactions, they see it, and they hear it. They sense, they sense, very quickly, if we're growing cold, about Christ, and his church.

They sense, immediately, if we are harboring bitterness, or grumbling, about our faith, or about God, or about the church, or its leaders, or whatever their shortcomings are, about its youth work, about its this group, or that group, we can't expect, as Christian people, or as Christian parents, we can't expect, that root of bitterness, not to bear fruit, in our own family's life, if that's the case with us.

It's a warning. Remember Esau. Remember Esau, whose own attitude of heart, led to an entail, of bitter opposition, to God, and to his people, for generations.

[40 : 34] That is the sobering message, of this, very somber chapter. It's not the only message. And it's not, it's not where this story ends, is it?

In fact, this chapter, puts Esau's sad story, to the side, as it were, into a siding, so that the main story, of God's grace, can go on unfolding, the story of the promise, through Jacob, which is the story, of God's, triumphant salvation, which no Esau, no Edom, can ever, possibly derail.

So as we close, let me just remind you, of that big story, not of, Edom's, persistent revulsion, but of, Edom's, powerful redeemer. The great, ongoing story, of the promised evangel, the good news, even, even, for persistent, enemies, of God.

Because here's the truth, even, Edom, is part, of the covenant purposes, of God. You see, these last, couple of verses, of the chapter, verses 40, and verse 43, in particular, that speaks, of Edom's tribes, you see, by their clans, and their places, and their names, and their lands, of possession. It's a reminder, isn't it, back to Genesis chapter 10, way back before, the whole story of God, narrows down, to just this family, of Abraham. God lays out, doesn't he, all the nations, of the world, by their clans, and their languages, and their lands, and their nations, as if to say, these are all, in my sight.

[42 : 09] Whatever I'm doing, through my chosen, line of promise, will be one day, for all of these, peoples of the world. That was the promise, to Abraham, wasn't it? In your seed, all the families, of the earth, will be blessed.

And these last verses, here, are just a reminder, of that. Even, this litany, of enemy peoples, are not, cut off, utterly, from the story, of God's grace, and mercy.

Indeed, their very enmity, and their opposition, is a part, of his wonderful plan, and it serves his plan. In David's time, we read that Edom, was conquered, by God's, anointed king.

All of Edom, came under, his gracious rule, foreshadowing, of course, the rule one day, of great David's, greater son. He will have, dominion from sea to sea, to the very ends, of the earth.

All kings, will fall down, before him, all nations, will serve him. And the enormity, of God's great salvation, when his, Messiah comes to reign, will reach, even, to the foreigners, way beyond Israel, and even, to those, who have been, the bitterest enemies, of God's people, throughout history.

[43 : 29] So you see, the very same prophets, that I spoke of, who pronounce judgment, on Edom, for her perpetual, revulsion, of God's people. They also point, to mercy, even, even for the likes, of Edomites, through Christ, the powerful, redeemer of God.

Read, the little book of Obadiah, when you get home. It's one tiny chapter. But the last verse, of that book, says this, speaking of the coming, day of salvation. Saviors, saviors, shall go up, to Mount Zion, to rule, Mount Esau.

And the kingdom, shall be the Lord's. That just chimes, with the words of Amos, the prophet, in the book, immediately before, Obadiah.

In that day, says Amos, when he restores, the greatness, of the house, of David, that is, in the day, of the Messiah, they will possess, the remnant of Edom, and all the nations, who are called, by my name.

You see, even from Edom, there will be those, who belong, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who are called, by his great name. Isn't that, an extraordinary thing?

[44 : 42] When you think about, this chapter, and all that it represents, its perpetual, enmity against God, and his word, and his ways, and his plan, and his purpose. Yet, as one writer puts it, in the coming of the Messiah, is the hope, for a restored cosmos, that will include, even the likes, of a person like Esau, and a nation like Edom.

Because, Esau's story, and Edom's story, is ultimately, just Adam's story, isn't it? It's man's story. Perpetual enmity, against God, choosing friendship, with this world, and being enemies of God. But don't forget, the bigger story, of the persistent evangel, of the gospel of God, of the Christ, who came to reconcile enemies, by his death on the cross, so that, even Edomites, enemies, bitter enemies, might yet be called, by his covenant name.

I think that's a wonderful, encouragement for us, amid the darkness, of a chapter like this, that there, shall be, among the people, of every tribe, and language, and nation, surrounding the throne, there shall be, even those, from the clans, and dwelling places, and names, of Esau, that is Edom. Not even, the most sworn enemies, are beyond the reach, of God's saving grace, in his Messiah. That means, friends, that we have hope, don't we?

[46 : 21] Hope today, amidst all the real, hardness, and hostility, that we see, facing the gospel, all over the world, even in solid, enemy territory, he is, gathering his remnant, from every nation, from the hard, and hostile, Islamic worlds, of the east, from the bitterly, secular, and atheistic, world of the west, where we live, from hostile families, even, with long histories, of enmity, to the gospel, and from hostile individuals, who themselves, have been bent, for much of their lives, on crusading, against Christ, and his church.

If God, can turn the heart, of a soul of Tarsus, the arch persecutor, of God's people, and make him, a chief propagator, of the gospel of grace, to the ends of the earth, then he can turn, anyone, one. So don't forget, the bigger story. We will see, and we will experience, perpetual enemies, and perpetual enmity, to the gospel of Christ.

It is not new, but we also have, a powerful evangel, a gospel that can, and that does, bring sworn enemies, to name the name, above all names.

The name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. And let's never forget that. Amen.