

Great Enmity, and a Greater Evangel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 November 2024

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] Very good. We're going to turn now to our Bible reading for this morning. We have plenty of visitor Bibles at the side, so do grab a Bible if you don't have one with you. And we're picking up our studies in Genesis.

So Genesis and chapter 36. You'll find that on page 30 if you are using one of the visitor Bibles. Genesis 36, and this is one of the genealogies in Genesis.

I was hoping Willie would let me abbreviate by reading the whole chapter, so I'm going to be tested with reading some of these names. But Genesis 36, verse 1.

These are the generations of Esau, that is, Edom. Esau took his wives from the Canaanites, Ada, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, Aholibamah, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zibion, the Hittite, and Basmah, Ismael's daughter, the sister of Neboeth.

And Ada bore to Esau Eliphaz. Basamath bore Ruel, and Aholibamah bore Jeesh, Jalem, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

[1 : 24] Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, 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. Ruel, the son of Basmath, the wife of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz were Timan, Omar, Zepho, Gatham, and Canaz. Timnah was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son. She bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Adar, Esau's wife.

[2 : 29] These are the sons of Ruel, Nathan, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizah. These are the sons of Basmath, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zibion, Esau's wife.

She bore to him Jeish, Jelam, and Korah. These are the chiefs of the son of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau.

The chiefs, Teman, Omar, Zepho, Canaz, Korah, Gatham, and Amalek. These are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom.

These are the sons of Adar. These are the sons of Ruel, Esau's son. The chiefs, Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizah. These are the chiefs of Ruel in the land of Edom.

These are the sons of Basmah, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife. The chiefs, Jeish, Jelam, and Korah.

[3 : 38] These are the chiefs born of Aholibamah, 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 Seir, the Horite, the inhabitants of the land. Lotan, Shobal, Zibion, Anna, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

These are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. The sons of Lotan were Horai and Heman. And Lotan's sister was Timnah.

These are the sons of Shobal, Alvin, Manahath, Ebel, Shepho, and Onam. These are the sons of Zibion, Ai, and Anna.

He is the Anna who found the hot springs in the wilderness as he pastored the donkeys of Zibion, his father. These are the children of Anna. Dishon and Aholibamah, the daughter of Anna.

[4 : 41] These are the sons of Dishon, Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Sheran. 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 Laitan, 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 Beor, reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Dinbahar.

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 Harad, the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, reigned in his place, the name of his city being Aveth. Harad died, and Samla of Mashkra reigned in his place.

[5 : 49] Samla died, and Shul, of Rehoboth, of the Euphrates, reigned in his place. Shul died, and Baal-Hanan, the son of Akbor, reigned in his place.

Baal-Hanan, the son of Akbor, died, and Hedar reigned in his place, the name of his city being Pow. His wife's name was Methabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their dwelling places, by their names. The chiefs, Timnah, Alva, Jeheth, Aholabama, Ela, Pinnon, Kenaz, Teman, Mizbah, Magdiel, and Iram.

These are the chiefs of Edom, that is, Esau, the father of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession.

Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. Well, amen. May God bless his word to us this morning.

[7 : 00] Well, do turn with me, if you would, to the passage that we looked at earlier, Genesis chapter 36, and not forgetting the first verse of chapter 37.

Now, last Sunday evening in Ezra chapter 2, of course, we had a long list of names, and here we are with another one. And, of course, one of the reasons that the Bible has so many lists of names is that our God is a personal God.

He's not the distant, absent God of pagan religions. The living God is the covenant Lord of his people. And his names are known to him.

His people's names are known to him and are dear to him. And the Bible story comes to an end, of course, as Paul said last week, with a great list of names, the list of names in the Lamb's Book of Life.

And the only thing that will matter for all eternity is that your name is written in that book. And Genesis has a lot of genealogies because the chief focus of the book is to trace the unfolding promise of God's seed of salvation down through the generations.

[8 : 14] We've seen it through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And the final 14 chapters of Genesis are going to focus on the next generation, on Israel's 12 sons.

But not every genealogy tells the same story. And the genealogy in chapter 36 tells a very dark story.

It's a bit like the seventh book of Genesis, beginning in chapter 25, about Ishmael. Remember, he took himself away to live against his kinsmen.

And what we read here is about Esau and his family and their departure from God's blessing.

Having begun life within the orbit of covenant blessing, Esau writes himself out of the story and his heritage is forfeit.

It's a little bit like Lance Armstrong, his seven Tour de France titles. Now, erase, written out of that list of champions.

[9 : 28] So, Esau's name is marked out by the same kind of disqualification. And it's a sad tale. It's a salutary tale. And Scripture tells us very clearly that God, in His sovereign purpose, passed over Esau, excluded him from covenant blessing.

Read that in Genesis 25. Read it in Romans chapter 9. But it's just as clear at the same time that Esau himself chose his own path of perdition.

He despised his birthright. God gives people over to the rebellion that they themselves want to pursue. And so, as our confession of faith says, those he ordains to dishonor and wrath are justly judged for their own sins.

For their own sins. So, this is a chapter full of warnings. And especially warnings for those who, like Esau, were born into and blessed by the great privileges of covenant faith, the Christian church.

It's a dark chapter, but one we need to take very seriously. It shows us great enmity, both personal and perpetual, against God, against God's people. But it also does highlight to us an even greater

evangel, which is more powerful and more persistent, and which will overcome, which will, at last, crush the serpent's head.

[11:01] And in that day, the blessings of God's saving seed will flow even to enemies, even to the greatest enemies in all history. So, even a chapter like this, with all its solemn lessons for us, is part of the great story of God's grace.

And that grace, which is, to all the world. So, let's give a bit of attention then to the text before us. We're going to do it under three main headings. First of all, Esau's personal rejection.

Verses 1 to 8 tell a story of personal enmity. And they tell us that Esau profanes the covenant promises of God.

If you look at the closing verses of chapter 35, they record a moment of huge significance, the death of Isaac, the patriarch. And Mamre, where he died, is the place associated with Abraham, where he settled in the land, and where after him his chosen seed, Isaac, settled.

And now in his death, you'll see his two sons are united together to bury him. But you see, verses 1 to 8 of chapter 36 underline that they are not in the same place.

[12:10] Not at all. These brothers, neither physically or indeed, even more importantly, spiritually. These verses tell about a permanent separation.

A parting of the ways that just confirms the parting of the ways that we read about in chapter 33. And these verses point to the contrast in so many facets of their lives between Jacob and Esau. The whole direction of their lives is divergent. And therefore, their respective destinies are very, very different.

Seems likely that originally the account consisted only of verses 1 to 8 when Moses first wrote Genesis. Verses 9 to 43 were a later addition.

I'll say more about that later. But for now, just 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.

[13:11] Esau is Edom. But Jacob, verse 1 of 37, settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

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

And so verses 1 to 8 here, you see our Esau's epitaph. It's like the final words on a tombstone summing up someone's life. And Esau's epitaph sums him up by reference to two things, his marriages outside the covenant people and his migration outside the covenant place of blessing. Do you see? Verses 1 to 5 focus on Esau's marriages and their fruit. Esau took wives, verse 1, from the Canaanites. Now if you take the time to look back later to chapter 26 verse 34 and chapter 28 verse 9, you'll see there's some sort of confusion over these names.

It may be that the original text suffered some problems in transmission or it may be that these wives had different names or these were nicknames or whatever it is. But the clear point here is not so much with their names but with their nature.

[14:38] Esau deliberately and perversely chose wives from the condemned people that the Lord had forbidden his people to have any dealings with at all.

Do you remember Abraham, his determination, you will not take a wife for my son from among these Canaanites? Isaac and Rebecca said exactly the same didn't they for Jacob and they were deeply grieved at Esau's choices here.

We read that back in chapter 26 and 27. But so Esau did and not just one wife but multiple wives and they were very fruitful unions.

Verse 5 tells of all these sons who were born in the land of Canaan. It's ironic isn't it? Esau's sons were born in the promised land unlike Jacob's who were all born outside the promised land.

But look at verses 6-8 they tell us of Esau's migration out of the land of promise away from his brother Jacob. And all the way through the stories of the patriarchs we've seen haven't we their direction of life.

[15:47] it's been towards the promised land and further up and further in to settle in the promised land. Jacob's family is born in exile but en masse they've travelled home to Canaan the promised land.

And yet here's Esau taking all his family and all his property verse 6 also acquired in the land and he takes it out away. They went to a land away from his brother Jacob.

And notice about his property verse 7 says they needed to move for the reason of wealth preservation. And that rings a bell doesn't it? Remember? In Abraham's time right here by the way at Mamre Lot thought the best move for his property was to go away from Abraham and settle on the margins of the promised land near Sodom.

Much better for business. But what a catastrophe that was. And he has the same attitude you see 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. I want profit in my pocket that I can see and spend. But it wasn't necessary for Esau to abandon the land of promise.

[17:02] Back in chapter 34 verse 21 we were told plenty the land was plenty big enough. Big enough for Jacob's whole family and entourage to move in and live alongside absolutely everybody else.

But no the real reason here for Esau's move was a spiritual one. Because his appetite was for earthly treasure and not for the promise of heavenly inheritance.

A pot of stew now remember trumped the promise of God that he couldn't see and couldn't touch. A prosperous life obtained now trumped life as a nomad waiting for glory to come.

And in that regard Esau has many brothers today doesn't he? He had contempt you see for his whole heritage and he chose therefore to make himself a foreigner to the covenant place and to the covenant people.

And so verse 8 says Esau settled in Seir in Edom but Jacob chapter 37 verse 1 but Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings in the land of Canaan.

[18:19] The older brother refuses to share in his father's destiny and the younger brother was once disgraced and far away comes home and inherits it all.

You can't help thinking can you about Luke 15 and Jesus' story about the two brothers. The older brother living in the father's estate with everything that he has and yet never sharing his heart love and just working only for himself and excludes himself ultimately from the real joy of the father's household and yet the prodigal younger son once disgraced penitently returns home and shares in that wonderful blessing.

And here's Jacob returned from the far country bruised yes chastened penitent and despite all his past receiving God's wonderful blessing.

What a demonstration of God's covenant grace. And yet Esau rejects that grace. 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.

[19:38] He despised his birthright. He showed unholy profanity as Hebrews chapter 12 puts it. And so the God that he rejected rejected him.

God and it all began you see with his present worldly appetites that crowded out and suffocated permanent kingdom appetites for God and his promises.

It's easy to let that happen. We all do that naturally because our sinful nature is at war with our soul as Peter reminds us. And at first it seems no big deal.

Maybe a relationship with someone outside the kingdom. But eventually an unequal yoking like that leads to disaster. And that's what Paul warns the churches of, isn't it?

That was Esau. Or it can be your pursuit of success in life, in professional life, perhaps in business, in property, whatever it might be.

[20:42] But it leads you to be more distanced from God's place of blessing and from his people, from the life of the church. Or it could be something else.

There's so many things, aren't there? And it's so easy to happen. And we have so many excuses. No doubt Esau could easily have blamed Jacob. Couldn't he pointed out Jacob's many faults?

And it's easy, isn't it, to point out the many faults in the church today, in any church fellowship. But you need to be careful, don't you?

You need to be very careful not to blame your own backsliding, your own spiritual cooling on other people's sin, not your own sin. And you can fool yourself for a long time that all's well, that there's no sign that your drift away from kingdom life is really having any bad effects.

In fact, Esau seemed to be very, very prosperous, didn't he? All these sons, all this wealth, to the world for sure. No doubt Esau looked like the really blessed one, not Jacob, living in his tents with all the tears, all the sadnesses, all the calamities in his life.

[21 : 54] And sometimes Christians do just feel, don't they, that I've had enough of this, I've had enough of this struggle, this strife, this contending, this always being opposed by the world. I just want to break from all that.

A bit of me time. A bit of time to give to my property, my success, my profit, not just all this work of the church and the gospel. But what does Jesus say?

What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? But he also says, doesn't he, everyone who has left houses and brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake, all the powerful gain in this world, anyone who's done that will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

But Esau didn't believe that, you see. He rejected that. And as James says, friendship with the world is enmity with God. Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

And that was Esau. And the Bible is saying, don't let that happen to you. that's why this chapter is here in our Bibles. Moses was warning his people not to be tempted to be friends with God's enemies in Canaan and not to become enemies of God themselves by doing so.

[23 : 26] And the New Testament tells us that this is written for us too. Hebrews chapter 12 is explicit. Don't be unholy, profane like Esau. Don't reject God's promise and be rejected yourself.

But the whole letter to the Hebrews is full of very stark warnings just like that. And they're especially pertinent for those who like Esau have been brought up within all the privileges of God's covenant place and God's covenant people who have had the nurture, the blessings of the Christian church. It's a real warning to young folk in our church who have been brought up with all the privilege of Christian family, all the provision of junior church and activate and tron youth and release the word and so on.

The apostle says in Hebrews chapter 2, doesn't he, pay close attention to all that you have been taught. Don't drift. If God held these ancient people to account, how much more and how much less will we escape, he says, if we neglect such a great salvation, which is now declared in all its fullness to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be careful, says Hebrews chapter 3, that you don't harbor an unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. We can't hide that from God, can we?

[24 : 50] We hide it from ourselves, from our parents, from our Christian friends, even from our spouse perhaps, but not from God. No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account, says Hebrews 4.

Don't be like Esau. That's a real warning, isn't it, to young and to old, and especially I think to parents, because Esau here led his whole family, his whole household away from the people of God, away from the promises of God, promises for himself and for them also.

Began so very easily, but it ended so very bitterly. And the consequences, you see, outlived Esau, outlived even his family, cascaded all down the generations in an entail of hostility and hatred of God and of the people of God.

And that is what the rest of the chapter shows us here. You see, Esau's personal rejection led to Edom's perpetual rancor. Verses 9-39 tell a story here of perpetual enmity.

They tell of Esau persecuting through Edom his people, persecuting the covenant people of God. I said this section was almost certainly added later on in the history of Israel, perhaps in the days of the chronicler, who wrote so many genealogies.

[26 : 28] And there's nothing deceptive in that. There's nothing hidden. It's quite obvious when we read it. For example, verse 31 here speaks of Edomite kings before Israelite kings were reigning.

So obviously it's written to people who understand that Israelite kings were reigning much later on. And some of the names of these kings stretch right into and even beyond the days of David and Solomon.

Verse 36 speaks of Hadad, for example. We read about him in 1 Kings 11 when he fought against Solomon. But you see all of this history is added to tell us that what was personal for Esau became a persistent culture in his progeny and his people.

Like Esau, like Edom. And five times you'll see we're told that. The brackets in verse 1 and verse 8. Esau, that is Edom. And the next section is bracketed the same way in verse 9 and verse 43.

Esau, the father of Edom. And it's right there in the middle as well in verse 19. Unless we forget Esau, that is Edom. Do you see? Esau's unbelief led to a succession of the same unbelief.

[27 : 40] And therefore enmity perpetually between God and his people. See, when people disbelieve God, it's not neutral. They're not indifferent at heart.

It tells us that there is bitter enmity towards God and it shows itself in bitter opposition to God's people. You take a Richard Dawkins for example or someone like that.

It's not just a rational and an impartial difference of view with Christians. It's a furious, it's a fanatical almost opposition to Christians wherever the opportunity arises.

That's a secular version but it's no different really, maybe a more polite version than the visceral hatred that there is among radical Islamists today for Christians and Jews, people that they perceive somehow to be in Jewish or Christian nations in the West, however confused that whole notion of Christian nations may be.

and it's that persistent revulsion of God's people, that perpetual enmity with anything at all to do with God's covenant purpose, that is the story of Esau and the Edomite peoples right through history.

[28 : 59] Verse 9, these are the generations, that is, this is the account of Esau, the father of the Edomites and the history that's compressed into this brief chapter is one that's played out right through the story of Israel, right up and including the coming of Jesus himself in the New Testament.

Read through the Old Testament and you'll discover that wherever Edom and the Edomites are mentioned, it's in the context of them reviling and opposing the Israelites and everything that they stood for in the story of God's salvation.

Let me summarize just a few highlights or lowlights, you might say. The Edomites stood in opposition to the Israelites under Moses in their journey from Egypt. They refused to allow them to pass through their territory, they refused even to sell them food and water.

They fought against David and made joint cause with other enemies against God's anointed king. 1 Samuel 22, famously it was Doeg the Edomite who betrayed David to Saul and who massacred the priests of the Lord who were helping him.

1 Kings 11, as I said, Hadad mentioned here in verse 36, the Edomite king. He had fled to Egypt in David's time but he came back to seek revenge because like the king of Syria we're told in that chapter he loathed Israel.

[30 : 25] And if you look at verse 12 here, you read about Esau's bastard grandson Amalek and his seed were a virulent scourge on Israel.

The Amalekites attacked Israel at their weakest point after the Exodus. We're told they're slaughtered the weak and the wounded. And thus they incurred the peculiar anger of God.

The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation, we're told. And so it was. Agag, the Amalekite king, fought against Saul.

Read about it in 1 Samuel 15. God commanded Saul to kill him but Saul held back and so Samuel had to rebuke him and kill himself but Agag's seed survived.

And when you come to the book of Esther, who is the arch enemy of God's people, intent on utter genocide of all the Jews in the empire? Haman, the Agagite.

[31 : 23] And during the terrible low point of Israel's history when Babylon attacked Jerusalem and destroyed them and took Judah into captivity and exile, it was the Edomites who joined with the Babylonians and killed the fleeing Israelites, turning them over to the captives, gloating on them in their misery.

You cherished perpetual enmity, says Ezekiel, and gave over the people of Israel to the sword at the time of their punishment. And that's why Psalm 137, as you know, the lament over the captive Israelites in Babylon, that's why it cries out, 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 Matthew's gospel, the opening of the New Testament and the birth of Messiah, at last in Bethlehem in Judah, the seed of the woman, the savior of the world, what do we find?

Well, we find the seed of the serpent in the form of Herod the Great, of Idemi and Edomite blood, seeking to slaughter every child in Bethlehem.

That is the persistent rancor, the perpetual enmity of the offspring of Esau against the people of promise, of the promise of God's savior.

[32 : 53] And that's why when you read the prophets, when you read Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel or Amos or Malachi, all of them, you constantly read oracles of judgment against Edom for the perpetual enmity that they harbored against the Lord and his people.

In fact, Obadiah's short prophecy is all about God's promised judgment on Edom, nothing else. Because their pride in hating God's people will be laid low forever. Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord. That's the sad and bitter story you see told by this chapter with all its list of names. Edom, its men, its chiefs, its kings, all those of perpetual enmity against God and his Christ.

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

It's very salutary, isn't it? It's very real because so often the bitterest opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ has risen from those who are very near, indeed who are inside the camp of God.

[34 : 28] Read Psalm 55, David's lament for those who once shared his bread and yet now are turned against them as enemies. And we see that magnified, don't we, in great David's greatest son.

He came to his own and his own received him not. And one of his nearest, innermost, beloved disciples betrayed him personally for the cross.

And that's the story of the church throughout the ages. Read the New Testament, read the epistles. It was former insiders who persecuted the apostles of Christ, turned against them. And it's been so ever since.

Some of the most bitter, opponents of the true gospel today are those who once stood alongside evangelicals as brothers in arms. But now have done what Esau did, moved away, far away from their brothers and for what they stood for.

And the legacy of that can last for generations. It can affect generations. There are congregations today, there are towns and villages today in our own land where hardness, where perpetual enmity for the gospel of God has become inbred, it seems.

[35 : 51] And the Spirit of God in judgment has removed himself because of such bitterness, such revulsion of God that has become entrenched. I was speaking to a pastor just this week about a place where that seems to be absolutely the case.

Just as the Lord Jesus himself departed, departed from the Galilean towns that so rejected his ministry and his mighty works. And he pronounced woe, he pronounced calamity on their future because of their rejection of him.

It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you, said the Lord Jesus, to summon his own synagogues. grace. Because having had such privilege to turn your face away from the grace and the mercy of God is a terrible thing.

And it all begins as here with Esau, you see, with personal rejection among those who are blessed with all the privileges of covenant grace. A father who had all of this and he led his entire family away from being part of the story of God's covenant.

The story of the kingdom of Christ. And instead he sealed them in perpetual enmity. It's a terrible warning, isn't it? A warning to the household of faith. A warning to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today.

[37 : 24] A warning to every household within the church. See to it, says the apostle in Hebrews 12, see to it 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 us all, isn't it? It's a word especially to parents.

Because our children will learn, won't they, from our reactions. They see us, they hear us, they sense that we are growing cold about Christ and his church. They sense that we are harboring bitterness, that we are grumbling about the faith, about the church, about its activities, about its leaders, about all its shortcomings, about the youth work, whatever it is.

If they sense that, we can't expect that that root of bitterness won't bear fruit in our family's life. And in their family's life. And so on, and so on.

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

[38 : 40] And that is, I'm afraid, friends, the sad and very sobering message of this chapter. But it's not the only message because it's not where the story ends, is it?

In fact, this chapter puts Esau's story deliberately to the side, into a siding, as it were, so that the main story from chapter 37, verse 1, can go on unfolding.

The story of the seed of promise through Jacob, which is God's triumphant salvation, which no Esau and no Edom can ever derail. So as we close, let me remind you of that big story.

Not the story of Edom's persistent rancor, but the story of Edom's powerful redeemer. The great ongoing story of the promised evangel and the good news, even, even ultimately for persistent enemies of God.

Because even Edom is part of the ultimate covenant purpose of God. See these last few verses of the chapter, chapter 36. Look at verse 40, look at verse 43, which speaks about Edom and their tribes by their clans, by their places, by their names, by the lands of their possession.

[39 : 59] Do you see? It's familiar, isn't it? It's a reminder of Genesis chapter 10, way back. Do you remember before the story narrows right down onto the story of Abraham's family and God lays out all the nations, all the nations, according to clans and languages and lands and places, as if to say, you're all in my sight, all in my sight.

And what I'm doing now through this one line of promise, it will be one day for all the peoples of this earth. And that was the promise to Abraham. Do you remember? Through your seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

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

In fact, they're very enmity and their opposition only serves God's wonderful plan. In David's time, you can read of how Edom was conquered by God's anointed king.

It came under his gracious rule, foreshadowing the rule one day of great David's greater son. He will have dominion, as Psalm 72 says, from sea to sea to the ends of the earth.

[41 : 18] All kings will fall down before him. All nations will serve him. the enormity of God's salvation when his Messiah comes to reign.

It will reach even foreigners way beyond Israel, even to those among the most bitter enemies of God's people. And you know, the very same prophets who pronounce endlessly judgment on Edom for their persistent rancor towards God, they also point ultimately even even to mercy for Edomites, through the Christ, through the powerful Redeemer of God.

You're going to read Obadiah's prophecy, all about judgment on Edom. The very last verse says this, speaking of the coming day of salvation, saviors shall go up on Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

The Lord's. And that chimes with the words of Amos. In the prophetic book that comes right before Obadiah, in that day, he says, when the Lord raises up the greatness of the house of David in the day of the Messiah, in that day, they will possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name.

You see? Even from Edom will be those who belong to the Lord, who are called by his great name.

[42 : 49] Isn't that an extraordinary thing? When you think about what this chapter represents with its story of perpetual enmity against the Lord, against his word, against his ways, his whole plan and purpose.

And 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 you see, Esau's story, Edom's story, it's ultimately really just Adam's story, isn't it? It's man's story.

It's our story. Perpetual enmity against God, choosing friendship with the world, choosing to be enemies of God. But don't forget the bigger story of the persistent evangel, of the gospel of God, who came to reconcile enemies, enemies through the death of his son.

So that even Edomites might be called by his covenant name. And isn't that the wonderful encouragement even of a dark chapter like this?

[44 : 10] That there shall be among the people of every clan and language and nation surrounding the throne, praising the Lamb, there shall be even those from clans and dwelling places and names of Esau, Edom, enemies.

Not even the most sworn enemies of God are beyond the reach of his saving grace and mercy in Christ. And so we have hope.

We have hope today. Despite all sorts of real and present hardness and hostility all over the world, even in solemn enemy territory, God is gathering in from every nation, his people. From the hostile, hard Islamic world of the East, and from the bitterly secular and atheistic world of the West, and from hostile families that have long histories of enmity to the gospel, and from among every hostile individual, people who have been bent on cursing Christ, cursing his church. If God can turn a Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the church, and make the arch persecutor of the gospel into the arch propagator of the gospel to the world of Gentiles, then he can turn anyone, anyone to be his.

[45 : 50] God is going to be the big story. We're going to see and we will experience perpetual enmity.

That is not new, but we have a powerful evangel. We have a gospel that can and does bring even sworn enemies to name the name above all names, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. We have a powerful evangel, a gospel to proclaim. Amen.

Well, let's pray together. Lord our God, the God of infinite grace, of abundant mercy, who showed your love to us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, and that while we were enemies, we were reconciled to you by the death of your Son.

How we rejoice that in these last days that gospel has gone out from Jerusalem to lighten every land. And our great King and Savior Jesus Christ is now gathering people from every tribe and tongue to worship him and to make his holy beauty shine in them and in us forever and ever.

[47 : 13] So fill us, Lord, with that great hope we pray and grant us our place in that great purpose for the sake of your great name.

Amen. Amen.