

Title: How Could God Love Jacob?

Text: Romans 9: 13

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Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

Romans 9:13: As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

TITLE: HOW COULD GOD LOVE JACOB?

Speaking through the prophet Malachi, the Lord put the question into the mouths of the ungrateful Israelites.

Malachi 1: 1: The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 2: I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3: And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

HOW COULD GOD LOVE JACOB? Nothing manifests the love of God like the answer to that question. Nothing causes a redeemed sinner to fall on his face, ashamed and sorrowful for our ingratitude toward God, like the answer to that question.

Proposal: Believer, if God is pleased to reveal to you and I, how he has loved us, then we will begin to understand something of the riches of God's grace.

It caused king David to sing in thankful amazement: **Psalm 144:3: LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Psalm 8: 3: When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?**

I pray that the Lord be pleased to answer this question in our hearts this very hour. If he is pleased to do so the result will be a heart overflowing with joy and thankfulness in each of us.

I. THINGS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GOD'S LOVE TOWARD JACOB.

A. Did the Lord love Jacob because Abraham was his grandfather? After all, Jacob's father was Isaac and Isaac's father was Jacob.

1. The Apostle Paul begins by stating his desire for his kinsmen--the Israelites. Israel is the nation born from Jacob. Paul states the many privileges that the nation Israel had been given by God. Sadly, most of Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. This might cause some to question whether or not the Lord's word is effectual to save. So, Paul declares in

Romans 9: 6: Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are

they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8: That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9: For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

2. All the people who make up the nation called Israel are not the Israel of God.
3. The Jews are all natural descendents of Abraham. But only those children of God's promise, who are born of God in Christ, are counted as the true children of Abraham.
4. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.
5. Yet, in God's sight Abraham only had one son.

Genesis 22:2: And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac...

V8: That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9: For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

The LORD's word of promise declares how chosen sinners are born of God. Sinners are born according to God's gracious promise. By the effectual power of God. God made this promise to Abraham through Sara who was past the age of child bearing. Isaac would be born by the miracle of God's power and grace.

Ishmael was born, not of God, but out of the ordinary course of nature. Ishmael's mother was Hagar, Abraham's servant. Ishmael typifies sinners born after the flesh who are but carnal men. God rejects all the works of men's hands. Isaac typifies those loved from eternity by God, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, born of the Holy Spirit, the true children of God.

Did God love Jacob because he was the son of Abraham? The answer is no. Both Esau and Jacob were the sons of Isaac, just as Ishmael and Isaac were both the sons of Abraham. Yet, only Isaac and Jacob were counted by God as his own children.

Romans 9:13: As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

B. Did the Lord's choice of Jacob have something to do with who his mother was?

1. Isaac was born of Sara while Ishmael was born of Hagar, Abraham's hand-maid. So Paul closes the door on this possibility with a loud, No in verse 10:

Romans 9: 10: And not only *this...*but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac;

It was not based on who Jacob's mother was. They both had the same father and the same mother. So the Lord's love for Jacob not only had nothing to do with him being the grandson of Abraham, it also had nothing to do with who his parents were.

C. Could it be that God loved Jacob because of some merit that God saw in Jacob?

Romans 9:11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,

1. God's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau existed before either was born.
2. They had done neither good or evil.

3. After they were born we find that Jacob was a liar as his name means.
- Jacob wouldn't give Esau a bowl of stew until Esau sold Jacob his birthright.
 - When Jacob's father, Isaac was dying and unable to see, Jacob deceived his own father into thinking he was Esau so that his father would bless him.

God's love and choice of Jacob was not based on anything in Jacob, he was just like his brother. We are sinners by representation, by conception and by choice and that is all we will ever be apart from God's grace. So let us be ever so thankful that God's love is not based on any merit in us for we have none.

D. Could it be that God loved Jacob because he was born first?

Romans 9: 12: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

1. Esau was born first. According to the natural order of things, the birthright went to Esau.
2. Yet God said to Rebecca before they were born, **Esau shall serve Jacob.**

So it was not because of the natural order in which they were born that cause God to love Jacob and hate Esau.

The Point Is: God's love is not based on genealogy, on natural ancestry, who our father or mother is. You and I may come from a long-line of believers, but that has no bearing on God's love for us. Neither is God's love based on any good or evil in us, not by works of righteousness which we have done. God's love is not based on the order in which we were born. **SO YOU SEE, GOD'S LOVE IS NOT BASED ON ANYTHING IN US. HOW THEN COULD GOD LOVE JACOB?**

II. NOW, LET'S LOOK AT HOW THE LORD LOVED JACOB.

Romans 9: 11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

A. GOD LOVED JACOB AND PASSED BY ESAU SIMPLY ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, ACCORDING TO ELECTION. GOD CHOSE JACOB SIMPLY BECAUSE HE CHOSE TO DO SO.

Ephesians 1:11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

I Timothy 2:9: Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

B. Jacob believed God because, God loved him, chose him and ordained him to eternal life, and regenerated him.

1. The word "foreknow" means "he loved intimately as a husband his wife", it means he ordained Jacob to eternal life. Not because he foresaw Jacob would believe. He ordained Jacob to eternal life from before the foundation of the world and that is why Jacob believed."

Illustration: Acts 13: 48:...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Did God promise Isaac because God foresaw Isaac would conceive himself and give birth to himself? That would be absurd! No, God promise Isaac because Isaac would be the workmanship of God from beginning to end?

2. Jacob would have never have believed on the Lord had the Lord not called him, had the Holy Spirit not washed him in regeneration...(the end of verse 11 declares that: **not of works, but of him that calleth...**(that is effectually draweth))

Galatians 4:28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Romans 8:29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30:** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; **6:** Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; **7:** That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Jeremiah 31: 3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

2 Thessalonians 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: **14:** Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: **9:** Not of works, lest any man should boast. **10:** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- The good works are those that God creates our new nature unto in Christ when he turns us from our own dead works of unbelief, of carnality, of loving our sin and hating God, of trying to earn righteousness for ourselves by our own hand.
- The good works we walk in are the gifts of God given to us through the blood of Christ--we walk by faith in Christ, we walk in the holiness wherein Christ has made us holy and unblameable before God, we walk in the redemption accomplished when he bought us with his own blood, we walk in the wisdom which Christ has been made unto us by God--these are the good works.
- The good works are those accomplished by Christ which are ours by faith in him--he established God's law and so do we by faith in him, he satisfied God and so do we by faith in him, God accepts his Son into his very presence and God accepts us by faith in him.
- But all, all, all of this is because WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP!

Everything God does in saving sinners he does on purpose, by his divine right to choose whom he will, by his almighty power in calling them by his grace, in recreating them in his own image...**THAT HE, THE SON OF GOD--CHRIST JESUS THE LORD--MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN!**

III. NOW, LET'S CONSIDER SINFUL MEN'S OBJECTIONS AND SEE HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT ANSWERS.

A. The first objection is that God is unfair to choose some and pass by others.

Romans 9: 14: What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God?*

1. Is God unrighteous for saving as he is pleased to save?
2. Is God unrighteous for ordering salvation and making it sure in his Son?
3. Is God unrighteous for everlastingly loving a multitude which no man can number?
4. Is God unrighteous for saving a multitude--Jew and Gentile--in spite of our natural hatred for God?
5. If you know what you are by nature and yet by his grace he gave you faith in Christ, was God unrighteous for showing you mercy and passing by others? **God forbid!**

Proverbs 16:4: The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

IT IS THE VERY GLORY OF THE TRIUNE GOD TO SAVE BY HIS OWN PURPOSE, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN CHOOSING!

Romans 9: 15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

B. Some argue that God's sovereign election is spoken of here as only his election of nations.

1. Esau was a person, and indeed from him came a nation, but both Esau, the person, and Edom, the nation, were hated of God and left in their sin.
2. Jacob, was a person, and both Jacob, the person, and every true spiritual child born of God make up that holy, spiritual nation called the Israel of God.

V16:...Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth speaks to individual sinners.

3. Paul spoke to chosen individuals when he said: **1Thessalonians 1:4: Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.**
4. Peter spoke to chosen individuals when he said: **2Peter 1:10: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:**
5. The illustration given next in Romans 9: 17 of one whom God hardened is not of the nation Egypt, but of the individual person, Pharaoh:

Romans 9: 17: For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18: Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have* mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

- Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God hardened his heart by showing him no mercy.
- The LORD did it to make his POWER known.
- This is THE POWER which the Lord said, men would deny in our generation.
- Every chosen child of God is born into this world a sinner just like Pharaoh. Every believer opposed God with all his might until God IN POWER caused us to approach him.

The question is not how could God hate Esau, or how God could harden Pharaoh's heart, the question is how could Holy God, who demands perfect righteousness love individual Jacobs like you and me? The answer is not because of our will, not because of our running and doing and trying to impress God. The only answer is by his grace in Christ Jesus the Lord.

1Corinthians 2:12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Romans 3:24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

- God loves those he chose in his Son. He has always viewed his elect in his holy Son. When we sinned against him, his love never changed.

Hosea 14:4: I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

This doctrine is a cause for rejoicing. Election does not shut the gates of heaven. It opens them! Were it not for God's electing mercy, love and grace in Christ, we would all perish, both Jew and Gentile. We would all be destroyed, like Sodom and Gomorrah. **And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.** (Romans 9:29)

Illustration: This doctrine of God's sovereign election and predestination is hated by the unregenerate sinner. Yet, we "choose" in our lives on a daily basis.

- In a moment we will enjoy a meal together.
- You will go down the line and receive one dish while rejecting another.
- The difference between us and God is that we choose things whether good or bad, but God chooses in accordance with his perfect righteousness.

Those with a high opinion of themselves might say, "Well you can't compare a human life to a dish of food." That's true. That is putting far too much dignity on what we really are. The Lord compares us to mud in the hands of the potter.

C. Here is another objection:

V19: Some might say, "Why does God find fault? If God chooses some and passed by others, haven't sinner's simply done what he made them do?"

Here are 3 answers God gives to all who dispute the truth of his sovereign electing love and grace:

1. First, V20: Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

- Satan questioned God and was cast out.
- A host of angels replied against God and were cast out.
- Who are you and I--THOU WORM JACOB--to reply against God?
- God almighty does not do something because it is right. What God does is right because he does it!

2. Secondly, v21: Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

- God has the POWER--the right, privilege and authority to do whatever pleases him.
- It is his holy character to do that which serves his glory--"**the purpose of God according to election**" gives him all the glory and is perfectly consistent with his righteousness and glory.

3. Thirdly, v22: 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: 23: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24: Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

All mankind will be made to acknowledge these two things before God:

- God will make known his wrath against sin and those fitted to be destroyed.
- God will make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.

APPLICATION: WHAT WILL THIS MESSAGE CAUSE SINNER'S TO DO?

1. For many, the truth of God is nothing but a savor of death unto death. They will go on disputing with God, trying to make the scriptures say something other than what they say, because natural man wants to obtain acceptance with God based on personal merit. To them the Lord promises to manifest his hatred of sin in judgment upon all who come to God in this manner. That is why Paul was in such heaviness and sorrow over his kindred. Therefore, he preached the truth because this is how God causes those whom he has chosen to approach him. (V30-33; 10: 2-4.)

2. But when the Lord discovers to his chosen vessels of mercy that he indeed is holy and just and saves through his Son alone, they will submit to him through faith. This doctrine teaches us that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We must see ourselves totally unfit to be loved by God, before God will make us to see that he has everlastingly loved us. Unless our stony hearts be broken then our hope is presumptuous pride and our god is the god of our imagination.

When the Lord discovers to us that his love to us is free, sovereign, and distinguishing then we cease from all our burdensome works and enter into His rest, into...**the love of Christ,**

which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Ephesians 3:19.)

For the believer, who knows he is still a sinner, peace with God is knowing that God's holy, electing love in Christ shall never change, **therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. (Malachi 3: 6.)**

When the Lord reveals to you that you are indeed chosen and precious unto him, you shall do as the Lord told his disciples, saying "**rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**" **(Luke 10: 20.)**

Psalm 65:4 Blessed is *the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.