



Malachi: Navigating a Breakdown

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“Do you really love us?”

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Key Verses: Malachi 1:1-5

Key Thought: Like the Jews whom God was addressing, we too can be tempted to let difficult circumstances shape our perspective to the extent that we doubt God's love for us.

Points to Consider:

- 1:1: “Malachi” means “my messenger” and likely refers to a role rather than a name.
- The Jews were experiencing difficult circumstances:
 - i. There was political oppression (cf. 1:8).
 - ii. There seems to have been famine (cf. 3:10-12).
 - iii. Dishonor of the LORD was rampant (cf. 1:6a).
- 1:2: The pronouncement begins with the LORD's affirmation of His love for Jacob, which is questioned. → We, too, can focus on difficult circumstances to the extent that we quickly lose sight of God's faithfulness toward us.
- The LORD demonstrates His love for “Jacob” by reminding them of Edom's circumstances— what their lives could look like. (The LORD had judged Esau/Edom for their mistreatment of the Jews. See Obadiah for the backstory.)
- As God was faithful to bless the descendants of Jacob— even as they struggled in their faithfulness to Him, so God is faithful to bless those who are in Christ— even as we, too, struggle in our faithfulness to God.

Discussion Prompts:

- Have difficult circumstances ever led you to doubt God's love for you? How so?
- Is it fair to doubt God's love due to our difficult circumstances? Why or why not? Who or what else might be responsible?
- Share some of the ways that you have experienced God's faithfulness over the years.
- What are some of the blessings that we have in Christ— which those outside of a covenant relationship with God do not have?
- How can we avoid letting difficult circumstances damage our walk with God?