



MALACHI

**“God’s Covenant Love”
Malachi 1:1-5**

¹The oracle of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of Malachi.²“I have loved you,” says Yahweh. But you say, “How have You loved us?” “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares Yahweh. “Yet I have loved Jacob;³but I have hated Esau, and I have set his mountains to be a desolation and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

⁴Though Edom says, “We have been demolished, but we will return and build up the waste places”; thus says Yahweh of hosts,

Malachi 1:1-5

“They may build, but I will pull down; and men will call them a territory of wickedness, and the people toward whom Yahweh is indignant forever.” ⁵And your eyes will see this, and you will say, “Yahweh be magnified beyond the territory of Israel!”

Malachi 1:1-5

Introduction

A. Malachi is the sixth shortest book in the Old Testament (55 verses).

B. Malachi was written after the Babylonian exile during the time of Persian control of Judah.

Introduction

C. God punished His people's rebellion in 586 BC. The Babylonians destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem. Thousands were killed and many more were relocated throughout Babylon.

D. King Cyrus of the Medo-Persians allowed the Jews to return to their land beginning in 538 BC. Only 50,000 Jews had returned to Judah from Babylon (538-536 BC).

Introduction

E. The temple had been rebuilt under Zerubbabel (516 BC) and the sacrificial system resumed. Ezra had returned in 458 BC, followed by Nehemiah in 445 BC.

F. Malachi returned to Judah from Persia around 432 BC and wrote this prophetic book.

Introduction

G. He prophesied approximately 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah, the two prophets who immediately precede him in our English Bibles.

H. After being back in the land of Israel for a century, the Jews' religious routine and their perception of God having stopped blessing them led to hard-heartedness toward God and a departure from God's Law by both priest and people.

Introduction

I. Malachi rebuked and condemned these sins, forcefully indicting the priests and the people and calling them to repentance.

J. Malachi (“My Messenger”) wrote an oracle (burden). An oracle was prophetic speech that often contained a warning of judgment.

Introduction

K. This burden was “the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of Malachi” (1:1). It was divine revelation, not personal divination for all of the Jewish remnant who had returned.

L. This would be God’s last inspired word to His people for 450 years. We never know which sermon will be our last sermon.

Introduction

M. Israel was going through the motions of religious activity. God sent them a warning: Stop playing around with Me. You're not taking Me seriously.

N. Israel's faithfulness to God had wavered because of their circumstances. But God's faithfulness to Israel did not waver because of their circumstances.

Introduction

O. Big Idea: God's love for you hasn't changed even though your circumstances have changed.

P. Keeping it real: How can I trust God loves me when my circumstances don't indicate that?

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

²“I have loved you,” says Yahweh. But you say, “How have You loved us?” “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares Yahweh. “Yet I have loved Jacob; ³but I have hated Esau, and I have set his mountains to be a desolation and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

Malachi 1:2-3

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

A. God’s first word was not a rebuke but a reminder. He told them He loved them.

B. God declared His love (1:2). He has declared His love for us in His Word. Notice this: Israel’s relationship with God began with His love for them, and not the other way around.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

C. This is how God loves us in Christ. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

D. God doesn’t love you because you’re lovable. You’re lovable because God loves you.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

E. The words “love” and “hate” are best understood as covenant language. “When Yahweh says, ‘I have loved Jacob,’ he means, ‘I chose Jacob,’ and when he says ‘I hated Esau,’ he means, ‘I did not choose Esau’” (Ralph Smith).

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F. Love is about covenantal faithfulness, not sentimental feelings. God loves you because God has promised to love you and God always keeps His promises.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

G. God says “I have loved you” and the intent is that He still loves you. (Jeremiah 31:3)

H. But the people of Israel asked God: “How have You loved us?” Israel asked God “how” seven times in Malachi. This question reveals their spiritual rebellion.

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H. But the people of Israel asked God: “How have You loved us?” Israel asked God “how” seven times in Malachi. This question reveals their spiritual rebellion.

I. God had promised to bless Israel with health, wealth, and success, but they weren’t experiencing those promises.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

J. And they never considered they weren’t experiencing these blessings because they were sinning. They thought God wasn’t acting right.

**K. God responded to their question with a question: “Was Esau not Jacob’s brother?”
[Genesis 25:21-26]**

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

L. God said: “Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau.”

In other words, God had a covenant relationship with Jacob but not with Esau.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

M. God chose Jacob. The divine choice was made before they were born. (Genesis 25:23)

N. God’s decision was not based on their character. Both of these men were sinners and deserved God’s wrath. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. But Jacob (heel grabber, supplanter, hustler) lied and stole and conned people throughout his life.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

O. God loved Jacob even though he didn't deserve it. You will either get grace or justice.

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P. Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:10-16; Acts 17:11

Q. What's Malachi doing here? He is reminding the people of Israel that God displayed His love for them by choosing to love Jacob. Their faith was wavering because they didn't understand what God was doing in their midst.

I. Remember What God Has Done (1:2-3a)

R. Your faith can begin to waver when what you see in the Word doesn't line up with what you see in the world around you.

**S. How can you trust God loves you when your circumstances don't indicate that?
Remember what God HAS done.**

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

³but I have hated Esau, and I have set his mountains to be a desolation and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

⁴Though Edom says, “We have been demolished, but we will return and build up the waste places”; thus says Yahweh of hosts, “They may build, but I will pull down; and men will call them a territory of wickedness, and the people toward whom Yahweh is indignant forever.”

Malachi 1:3-4

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

A. God's unchanging love is proven (1:3b).

1. God says He destroyed the nation of Edom. We know from history that the Nabatean Arabs destroyed Edom in the fifth century BC, making this illustration contemporary and relevant to Malachi's audience.

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

2. Both Jacob's and Esau's lands were overthrown. Esau's land remains devastated while Jacob's land was restored to his descendants.

3. What God did to the Edomites proves His love for the Israelites.

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

B. God's unending love is proclaimed (1:4).

- 1. "God's faithfulness in the past is God's resumé for the future" (H. B. Charles).**
- 2. Edom did not consider their demolished land to be a call to repentance. It was time for them to rebuild.**

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

- 3. They said we built it before; we'll build it again. But "Yahweh of hosts" (24 times in Malachi and nearly 300 times in the Old Testament) said He will pull it down.**
- 4. "Yahweh of hosts" is the commander-in-chief of God's armies. He wages war against His enemies and He never loses.**

II. Remember What God Is Doing (1:3b-4)

5. God is saying that the fact that I won't change My mind about Edom is proof that I won't change My mind about Israel. (Malachi 3:6; Romans 8:28)

**C. How can you trust God loves you when your circumstances don't indicate that?
Remember what God IS doing.**

III. Remember What God Will Do (1:5)

**⁵And your eyes will see this, and you will say,
"Yahweh be magnified beyond the territory of
Israel!"**

Malachi 1:5

III. Remember What God Will Do (1:5)

A. God was saying to His people: “Do not question My love because of how things look in your life right now. I’m not finished showing you how much I love you.”

B. That’s God’s word to us in Christ today!

C. “He who indeed did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

III. Remember What God Will Do (1:5)

D. “Yahweh will be magnified beyond the territory of Israel.” Our God is great! His greatness is unsearchable! God is no local deity. His name will be “feared among the nations” (1:14c).

E. In the Great Commission Jesus commanded His people to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). His name will be magnified to the ends of the earth.

III. Remember What God Will Do (1:5)

F. How can you trust God loves you when your circumstances don't indicate that? Remember what God WILL do.

Conclusion

A. Unbelieving Jews are stuck in Malachi. But Malachi isn't the end of the story.

B. We have the New Testament! The one to whom the Old Testament points came the first time to save sinners and He will come again to execute justice and then reign on the new earth with His people.

Conclusion

C. Repent and believe in the gospel. Look to Christ and be saved.

D. The Gospel Definition

The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20