

Malachi 1:1-5 – I Have Loved You

Huntingdon Missionary Baptist Church – Sunday, January 7, 2024 AM

Malachi 1:1-5 – Introduction & First Discourse

Context: Last book of the OT: standing upon the Law & Prophets and peering over into the NT

Malachi 1:1 *THE burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.*

Malachi – My messenger, perhaps a shortened form of Malachiah, messenger of the Lord

Israel – No longer divided into Judah and Israel after the captivity, they were simply “Israel”, God’s people.

Burden – Some translate as “oracle” meaning a public declaration.

I lean towards the concept of burden because these words are weighty and hard.

The Lord’s Word to Israel through Malachi includes some HARD things to hear.

Format: Malachi is a series of six discourses that follow a consistent pattern:

1. Assertion (God);
2. Question (Israel);
3. Response (God);
4. Implication

Assertion: I Love You

Mal 1:2a *I have loved you, saith the LORD.*

As Malachi stands on the pinnacle of OT revelation & history, he looks at Israel and makes this claim: I have loved you.

How many stories flood our minds as we think back on Israel’s far and near history at this point?

- God brings the motive of His past actions into clear focus: LOVE.
- God reveals the motive of His present words: LOVE.

This is essential to remember as we go forward in this book. These words are rooted in love.

Question: In What Way Have You Loved Us?

Mal 1:2b *Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?*

Right here, with this one question, we begin to see the root of Israel’s problem.

Context:

- Distant Past: Patriarchs, Deliverance from Egypt, Judges, David, Solomon, dynasty
- About 180 years prior, Judah was taken into captivity in Babylon for 70 years and then allowed to return.
- The Jews initiated the rebuilding of the temple, but it stalled.
- The Lord used Haggai and Zechariah to prophesy and move the Israelites forward:
 - **Zech 8:7-8** *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, And from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, In truth and in righteousness. **The Jews would return in mass to inhabit Jerusalem.***
 - **Hag 2:6-9** *- For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: And I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts. **The best is yet to come!***
 - **Zech 8:22-23** *- Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’ ” (ESV)
The Jewish people would be the envy of all nations.*
- They finished the temple; Nehemiah later led them to rebuild the walls. Ezra came to teach the law.
Both Nehemiah and Ezra found unfaithfulness among the people and worked to bring repentance & revival.

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- Time passed and the promises were not being realized...
 - Zeal & faithfulness of the people withered.
 - The mood of this people is disappointment, discontent, and growing disbelief.
They had questions of God and complaints against God.
 - They fashioned their own expectations based on God's promises and their expectations were not being met.
 - They questioned God's love: **Mal 1:2b** *Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?*
 - They presumed He was indifferent (didn't care). **There is no distinction between indifference & injustice.**
- It is into this climate that the Lord speaks through Malachi. This would be His last prophetic word for 400 years.**

Response: Consider Esau

Mal 1:2c-4 *Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: Yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, And laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; And they shall call them, The border of wickedness, And, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.*

To see their situation with clarity, He had them look outside themselves, to those without His love or promises.

- The Jewish people were descended from Jacob (Israel), born of Isaac & Rebecca.
- Esau was his twin brother, even born first. His descendants are the Edomites.
 - Jacob & Esau wrestled in the womb.
 - Esau initially sought to kill Jacob after he stole his firstborn blessing.
 - The Edomites would not allow Israel to pass through their country on the way to the Promised Land.
 - They were often a thorn in Israel's side over the years.
 - They cheered and jeered as the Jews were taken captive by the Babylonians.
- The Edomites were later driven from their land by the Nabateans. (long prophesied by **Joel, Amos & Obadiah**)
No intention or effort to rebuild their homeland will succeed. God would stand against Edom forever.
That could have been you, but it is not you. God loved them and had blessed them.

Implication: My Love Knows No Borders

Mal 1:5 *And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

You will see that I neutralized this long-standing enemy, and you will say, "Great is the Lord beyond our borders."

- God didn't rehearse the history of Israel to prove His love.
- God revealed evidence right in front of them.

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APPLICATION

Everything God asks of Israel in Malachi must start with this knowledge: He truly loves us.

- **Knowledge of God’s personal love for us is the root of a truly Christian life.**

Rom 5:5 *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Eph 3:14-19 *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Illus: Johnny McClure likes to use the word “obligation”

A sense of obligation comes from knowing the Law, but obedience comes from knowing His Love.

1. Assertion: I Love You

2. Question: In What Ways Have you Loved Us?

- We can falter and find ourselves under chastisement like David.

Psalm 32:3-4 *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old Through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

- We can experience trials like Job and wonder whether God sees us and our affliction.

- We can shape our own expectations based on God’s Word and find Him falling short.

- We can have days, weeks, months, and years of praying for a thing... and waiting.

This can be exacerbated by seeing others receive what you wait for.

Christians can find ourselves with the same question lingering on our heart even if we don’t verbalize it.

3. Response: Consider _____

Child of God, whatever you are feeling right now, there is a blinking neon Heart if you would just lift your eyes.

I believe you can look in your past to see it, but I also believe it is present right now.

- Perhaps it is a blessing you aren’t counting.

- Perhaps it is seeing what would have been if had not been for Jesus Christ.

Illus: Mary’s patient presence in a dark night of my life. A Taste of the Garden

4. Implication: God’s love for you is demonstrated beyond the borders of your life.

He has worked before you were born and beyond the edges of your life to demonstrate His love for you.

We are unworthy of such love, but we need to know this love and be aware of this love so that we can love.

1 John 4:19 *We love because He first loved us.*

Without Him