



Esteeming His Name

The Love of God

Esteeming His Name

- **Hebrews 12:28** Therefore, since we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom, let us continually have gratitude, through which we may worship God in a manner well pleasing with reverence and fear;²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire
- ^{NAS} **Malachi 3:16** Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.¹⁷ "And they will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

Overview of Malachi

Introduction and Context

Authorship

- ^{NAS} **Malachi 1:1** The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.
- Author: Malachi
 - *Malachi or my messenger*
 - Malachiyahweh: “messenger of Yahweh”
 - Malachiah: “messenger of Yah”

Date

- Range: Any time between the completion of the temple (515 BC) and the end of the Persian Empire (c.332 BC).
 - Post exilic and under Persian rule.
- 460-450 BC seems the best fit.
 - Contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah.

1. Mixed Marriages	Mal.2:11-15	Neh.13:23-27
2. Failure to Tithe	Mal.3:8-10	Neh.13:10-14
3. No Concern for Sabbath	Mal.2:8-9; 4:4	Neh.13:15-22
4. Corrupt Priests	Mal.1:6-2:9	Neh.13:7-9
5. Social Problems	Mal.3:5	Neh.5:1-13

Context

- Agriculture had not adequately rebounded after the exile.
- Drought, pests, and blight had long hampered economic recovery.
- Poverty was widespread.
- Judah was a minor province among the 120 provinces of the Persian Empire, subjugated to a foreign power with no end in sight.
- Earlier Edomite invasions had left Judah impoverished and vulnerable to the neighboring states.
- Persian taxes, tolls, and annual tributes drained the resources that might have allowed a return to economic prosperity.

Problems

- The Messiah had not yet come, and the people had pretty much quit trusting God to do anything.
 - The priesthood had become corrupt, failing to fulfill their duties.
 - The people no longer respected the priests.
 - The people's offerings were inadequate.
 - The worship was not heartfelt or sincere.
- *The earlier era of hope had yielded to a widespread attitude of disaffection with faith in Yahweh. The people to whom Malachi preached were saying, in effect, "God doesn't seem to care anymore. And if he doesn't care, why should we?"*
- *Douglas Stuart*

Fitting Message

- The conditions against which Malachi wrote are strikingly similar to those in the church of our day. The Messianic age had been long anticipated but had not begun and some wept (2:13) while others were cynical (1:2; 2:17). Unethical behaviour was common (3:5), and organized religion was held in contempt because of the actions of those who called themselves the people of God (1:14; 3:7-12). For the most part, these were the people of God only in name but their lives showed their hearts were far from Him.

The Structure

1. God's Love 1:2-5
 2. Denunciation of the Clergy 1:6-2:9
 3. Idolatry and Intermarriage 2:10-16
 4. The God of Justice 2:17-3:5
 5. Withholding Tithes 3:6-12
 6. The Righteous and the Wicked 3:13-18
 7. Day of the Lord 4:1-6
- The first, fourth and sixth are God's response to the complaints of his people against him.
 - The second, third and fifth are accusations directed by God against the people for their sins.

The Love of God

Malachi 1:2-5

The Disputation Speech

- A disputation speech form has four elements: assertion, questioning, response, and implication.
 1. Assertion (by God) → "I have loved you" (1:2a)
 2. Questioning (by Israel) → "How have you loved us?" (1:2b)
 3. Response → "Is not Esau ... the people with whom the LORD is angry forever?" (1:2c-4)
 4. Implication → "Your own eyes shall see it ... beyond the borders of Israel!" (1:5)

The Assertion

- ^{NAS} **Malachi 1:2** "I have loved you," says the LORD.
 - Tense indicates love both in the past and the present.
 - Word for 'love' here is the basis for God's choice of Israel.
 - ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 4:37** Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power

- *"God's love for his people is fundamental to the relationship, a relationship that is to be understood in covenantal terms. Importantly, a covenant is not simply a political arrangement, but a familial experience of belonging."*
 - Anthony R. Petterson

Tough Love

- ^{NAS} **Isaiah 1:18** "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.
- ^{ESV} **Micah 7:18** Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.
- ^{NAS} **Hebrews 12:6** For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

The Questioning

- ^{NAS} **Malachi 1:2** ... But you say, "How have You loved us?"
 - Lit. 'In what way have you loved us?'
- An insolent question expressing doubt?
- A painful cry from the midst of suffering, similar to Job or the laments of the psalms?
 - Probably a combination of both.

The Response

- ^{NAS} **Malachi 1:2** ... "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob; ³ but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness." ⁴ Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says the LORD of hosts, "They may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the LORD is indignant forever."
 - Focus is not on the men (Esau and Jacob) but on their descendent nations (Edom and Israel).
 - The demonstration of God's love is His initial election of Israel and His subsequent deliverance of them from Edom.
 - Electing love
 - Delivering love

Love and Hate

- *They are not words of assurance to a psychologically insecure Israel who needs to know that God still cares. These words are about national election and alliance within the history of redemption. In the diplomacy of the ancient Near East, the language of "love" and "hate" was employed not to indicate personal emotion or affection, but routinely to convey the concepts of alliance or enmity among nations. Kings spoke about "loving" one another as a way of describing their networks of alliances and coalitions. A king's claim to "hate" another had no reference to personal attraction or lack thereof, but described instead a state of hostility between their respective lands.*

➤ Douglas Stuart

The Implication

- ^{NAS} **Malachi 1:5** And your eyes will see this and you will say, "The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 3:21** "And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross.
- ^{NAS} **Zephaniah 3:14** Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. ¹⁶ In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. ¹⁷ "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

Applications

God's Electing Love

- ^{NIV} **Romans 9:10** Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-- in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
- ^{NIV} **Ephesians 1:4** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will
- ^{NIV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you

God's Delivering Love

- ^{ESV} **Romans 8:31** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Conclusions

Adversity Confirms God's Love

- **Malachi 1:2** "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "In what way have you loved us?"
 - ^{NAS} **Hebrews 12:6** For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives."
 - ^{NIV} **John 11:1** Now a man named Lazarus was sick... ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."
- *Adverse circumstances don't indicate the absence of God's love, they are the signature of it.*

God's Love Demands Our Faith

- ^{NAS} **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ... ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- ^{NAS} **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- **Hebrews 11:1** faith is the foundation of continuous hoping, conviction of deeds not seen ... ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please Him