

## Malachi Chapter 1

### **Malachi 1:1 "The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi."**

Malachi means my messenger.

“Burden” means oracle or prophecy. This term refers to the sentence pronounced by the prophet.

### **Malachi 1:2 "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,"**

The great privilege of Israel as God’s beloved people is forcefully presented by comparing the nation with Edom. In response to the affirmation of the Lord’s love for them, the people, looking only at what they had lost since the captivity and how feeble their nation was, incredulously expressed doubt about God’s love and insolently challenged it. Nevertheless, God reaffirmed His love to them, recalling His covenant choice of Jacob over Esau, father of the Edomites.

It is as if they are criticizing God for choosing Jacob over Esau. They forgot that Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. God was angry with Esau, because he had no regard for his birthright. God does not have to explain why He chooses one over another. He is God.

Romans 9:10-13 “And not only [this]; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac;" "(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;)" "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." God loved Israel by His own election.

In this closing book of the Old Testament, God’s electing love toward Israel, sovereign, undeserved, and persistent, is boldly and explicitly reiterated by the Lord Himself and illustrated by His choice of Jacob and his offspring. Unconditionally and completely apart from any consideration of human merit, God elected Jacob and his descendants to become His heirs of promise.

No one should conclude that God does not love His people because He afflicted them, but rather He loves them because He elected them.

### **Malachi 1:3 "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."**

This is an explanation from God of why He did not destroy Judah and Jerusalem, as He had Edom. They both had sinned. They both fell into the hands of an angry God. They both deserved to be done completely away with. Edom was destroyed, and not remembered. God chose to forgive Jacob's family, and restore them.

While Genesis mentions no divine hatred toward Esau, Obadiah’s prophecy over 1,000 years later, Oba. 1:21 indicated that the Lord’s hatred was against Esau’s idolatrous descendants. In the

same way, the Lord's love for Jacob refers to his descendants who were His sovereignly elected people through whom the world's Redeemer would come.

Nor does the love/hate language signify a comparative love in which He loved Jacob more and Esau less. Rather, the context here speaks of love as "choosing for intimate fellowship" and hate as "not choosing for intimate fellowship" in the realm of redemption.

"Laid his mountains and his heritage ... wilderness": This is a reference to Edom's (later called Idumea), destruction. First by Nebuchadnezzar and later by neighboring people, e.g., Egypt, Ammon and Moab as well as at the hands of the Nabateans.

**Malachi 1:4 "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."**

Though the Edomites would attempt to rebuild their ruins, God would negate their efforts.

They will never be known as Edom again, they had done so many things against the wishes of God. One thing they did was refuse passage across their land to the Israelites. They were enemies of the Israelites from the very beginning. God would not bless them, because they were enemies of His chosen people.

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

Israel on the other hand, is restored and though complete restoration has been delayed, it will come and the nations will bear witness to God's gracious ruler ship. Both within and as well as beyond her borders.

Jacob's family should have realized the special favor God had shown them. God gave His law to these sons of Jacob. They were to be the example for the whole world. God will be magnified in this land He has claimed for His own, even if He has to clean it up Himself. He will be magnified in Jerusalem.

Verses 1:6 – 2:9: Affirming the unconditional love of the Lord did not absolve guilt, thus Malachi delivered an opening indictment against the priests and the nation's spiritual leaders. Pointing out how they were showing contempt for God's sacrifices, His glory and His Law.

**Malachi 1:6 "A son honoreth [his] father, and a servant his master: if then I [be] a father, where [is] mine honor? and if I [be] a master, where [is] my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?"**

These chosen people of God had shown no thankfulness for all of the blessings He had bestowed upon them. They had not honored Him as their Father. They had been unfaithful in worshipping false gods. They had not even thought of Him as the One to serve. They had no "fear" (reverence), of Him.

Malachi addressed the priests first because they should be leaders in righteous devotion to God. But was foremost in despising His name, though their question was tantamount to a denial of their wicked attitude toward God.

Even the priests, who were the spiritual leaders, did not show Him respect. The priests should have instructed the people in righteousness and holiness. Instead of instructing others, they fell into idolatry themselves.

Ezekiel 22:26 "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed [difference] between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

We can take a lesson from this now. (In 2 Timothy chapter 3), it speaks of our generation loving pleasure more than we love God.

3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy," "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good," "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

**Malachi 1:7 "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] contemptible."**

The polluted bread could be many things.

That the reference here is to animal sacrifices is evident from (verse 8). The priests were offering ceremonially unclean or blemished sacrifices, strictly forbidden by the Lord, and again hypocritically questioning such an indictment.

They had only contempt for the Lord as indicated by the offerings brought to the Lord of "blind," "lame", and "sick" animals (verse 8).

The animals they used to sacrifice must not be blemished in any way. The sacrifices had fallen short of the Levitical requirements. They were using imperfect animals to sacrifice. They were not careful of the leaven of the bread either. "Leaven" symbolized sin. This is degrading to God.

**Malachi 1:8 "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."**

The priests had the audacity to offer God what their governor, as a form of taxation, would never have accepted from them. They were more fearful of the governor's rejection than of God's. This would have been during the time that Nehemiah was back in Persia when he would have relinquished the office for some time.

The animals for sacrifice were a type and shadow of the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. They were to be without spot of any kind. They were to be perfect in their body, as Jesus was perfect in His body. They offered these lame and blind, because they were cheaper than an animal without blemish.

God would not accept this type of offering. They would not dare offer something like this to an earthly ruler. How sad they would offer this to God.

**Malachi 1:9 "And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts."**

The invitation to repent is best taken as irony. How could they expect God to extend His grace when they were insulting Him with unacceptable sacrifices?

They must repent and seek God's face. The priests should have refused this type of offering. They were the guardian of spiritual things, and they had failed. God will not overlook so great a sin, just because they hold down a position in the church.

**Malachi 1:10 "Who [is there] even among you that would shut the doors [for nought]? neither do ye kindle [fire] on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."**

God, speaking in the first person, desired for someone to shut the temple doors, thereby preventing the useless, insincere presentation of sacrifices. It would be better to stop all sacrifices than to offer insincere offerings.

God is not pleased with priests, who do not guard the sanctity of the offerings. The priests had gained financially from the sale of these injured animals. They were in the priesthood for the monetary gain. They were not willing to do anything, because it was the right thing to do. They wanted to gain financially for themselves.

God would not accept an offering from such unclean hands. Preachers, it is not wrong to take a salary from the church to live on. It is wrong to be a preacher for the money you can make. The reason is wrong.

**Malachi 1:11 "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name [shall be] great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts."**

This is saying, that the Jews are God's people, but if they will not recognize Him for who He is, the Gentiles will. He will go to the Gentiles, and make believers out of them. The "incense" is symbolic of the prayers of the saints which rise to heaven. The name of Jesus is great among the Gentile believers.

The phrase "rising of the sun ... setting" is a way of referring to the whole earth as the subsequent phrase "in every place" indicates. Although no indication is given as to the time when such worship of God will fill the earth, this cannot be a reference to any historic Jewish worship outside the borders of Israel.

Malachi's zeal for Israel's sacrifices, coupled with his negative attitude toward foreigners and their gods, point to the millennial era when they will worship in the rebuilt temple, and incense plus offerings will be present. At that time, and not until that time, the Lord will receive pure worship throughout the world and his name will be honored everywhere.

In verses 12 and 13, the reproof of verses 7 and 8 are repeated. The exacting requirements of the sacrifices wearied the priest. They did not literally say the Lord's Table (the place of offerings) is contemptible, but they virtually said so by refusing to lead the people to reverence and to offer the Lord their best, thus their attitude and actions were profaning the altar and insulting to the Lord, so He rejected their offerings.

**Malachi 1:12 "But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] polluted; and the fruit thereof, [even] his meat, [is] contemptible."**

The priests have rejected the salvation God offered, now God will turn to the Gentiles. It is interesting, to me, that the Gentiles accepted Jesus more readily than the Jews did. The priesthood had fallen to the point, that the priests had polluted the altar and the offerings on the altar.

**Malachi 1:13 "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness [is it]! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought [that which was] torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD."**

They were not offering to God because of their faith in Him, or their love for Him. They were doing the offerings, because of obligation. They were just going through the motion of worshipping Him. They offered animals and bread that was not fit for human consumption. They gave Him the scraps.

God would not accept this type of offering. The answer to the question above, is no. The God of all glory should not have to accept such. This was very degrading.

**Malachi 1:14 "But cursed [be] the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I [am] a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name [is] dreadful among the heathen."**

We see from this, that they did have animals that were not damaged, that they could have offered. They gave the cast-aways to God. These were some they would have thrown away anyway. They thought so little of God, they would do this. God spoke curses to those who did not keep His commandments. They have brought the curse upon themselves.

Instead of the unblemished male animal, which was considered more valuable and which he had vowed to voluntarily give, the offeror suddenly substituted a blemished female.

They have chosen not to obey God. They have chosen to sin greatly before God. They have become so casual about their worship, they have forgotten His ordinances. The heathen are in awe of such a God. They have more fear and respect for God, than His own people do. God will not allow His people to defame Him. He is Holy. He is Righteous. He is Almighty. He is our All in All.

### **Malachi 1 Questions**

1. Malachi gives hope for the future in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He prophesied about the time of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What were they accusing God of?
4. Esau sold his birthright for a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What is verse 3 an explanation of?
6. What happened to Edom?
7. What was one specific thing Edom had done against God's people?
8. What should Jacob's family have realized?
9. A son honoreth his \_\_\_\_\_.
10. A servant honoreth his \_\_\_\_\_.
11. How had they been unfaithful to God?
12. What is "fear" speaking of?
13. What lesson can we take from this?
14. What does 2 Timothy say about our generation?
15. What were some of the things the polluted bread was speaking of?

16. "Leaven" symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.
17. The animals sacrificed were a type and shadow of what?
18. Why did they offer lame and blind animals for sacrifice?
19. Who, on this earth, would they not offer these sick animals to?
20. They must repent and seek \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
21. What were the priests' guardians of?
22. Why were the priests willing to accept these lame and blind animals?
23. What warning is in this to preachers?
24. If the Jews will not accept God, who will?
25. What is the "burning of the incense" symbolic of?
26. The name of \_\_\_\_\_ is great among Gentile believers.
27. Why would God not accept their offerings?
28. Cursed be the \_\_\_\_\_.