

Malachi 1:1-5
Oracle 1 – God’s Love Denied
December 13th, 2020

1. The **oracle** of the Lord (1:1)
 - a. Oracle – burden, announcement
 - b. Of the word of the Lord – coming from God’s heart – a warning, call to repentance, declaration of love
 - c. To Israel – audience
 - i. The original audience was the restored remnant of Israel who returned to Judea after the 70 years of exile in Babylon. Roughly 150,000 Jews resided in Judah after being freed from captivity. The Persians permitted worship of the Lord but the Jews faced relentless opposition from their unbelieving neighbors. After Israel returned to the land, they largely resisted idolatry, but allowed their worship to devolve into empty ritualism.
 - d. Through Malachi –
 - i. The book was authored by the prophet Malachi, whose name means my messenger. Malachi lived in Jerusalem late in the restoration period.
 - ii. ***What is significant about the preposition “through” used to describe Malachi’s role?***
 1. Lit – “by the hand” of Malachi – It’s the Lord’s Word, Malachi is just the messenger
2. The **claim** of God’s love for Israel (1:2a)
 - a. Not a general statement about God’s love for humanity – a specific love for Israel, His chosen people. This is the God of Israel speaking.
 - i. BKC – He is the one who called her into existence and who ruled over her and raised her for more than 1,000 years on the basis of His covenant with her.
 - b. God’s love predated the creation of Israel as a nation
 - i. **Deut. 4:37-38** ³⁷ "Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in *and* to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.
 - ii. **Who are the “fathers” mentioned in this verse?**
 1. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob – patriarchs
 - c. God’s love was not based on their power, numbers, or personal righteousness.
 - i. **Deut. 7:6-8** "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples

who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

ii. **Deut. 9:6** "Know, then, *it is* not because of your righteousness *that* the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.

d. God's love persisted even in their rebellion.

i. See also Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8-9

3. Israel's **question** about God's claim (1:2b)

a. **Why might they ask that question? Why might they doubt God's love for them?**

i. Exile, back in the land but slaves/servants, still awaiting the Messiah

b. **Why do believers sometimes doubt God's personal love for them today?**

i. God seems too distant

ii. They think they are too bad/unfaithful

iii. They don't know how to notice and interpret God's love

1. What makes us feel loved by another person? How is that different than God?

iv. In Nehemiah 9 the people recounted God's faithfulness and loyal love and confessed their failings. This was probably within a decade or two of the message of Malachi, yet the people are struggling with recognizing God's love for them.

4. The **vindication** of God's claim (1:2c-5)

God's answer is maybe surprising to us. He appeals to His sovereign choice in their national history.

a. The **election** of Israel over Edom (1:2c-3a)

i. **What do you remember about Jacob and Esau?**

1. Genesis 25

a. twin children of Isaac and Rebekah

b. the children struggled within her and the Lord explained the future represented by these children.

i. **Gen. 25:22-23** ²² But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I *this way*?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one

people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

- c. Esau sold Jacob his birthright for a bowl of stew (gen 25)
 2. Jacob secures Isaac's blessing through deceit (Gen 27)
 3. Jacob fled Esau for safety (gen 27)
 4. Jacob went to Laban, marries Rachel and Leah, lives there for two decades, returns and is at peace with Esau.
 - ii. From Esau comes the Edomites, living in Edom, south and east of the Dead Sea.
 - iii. God's love/hatred here has more to do with electing and choosing not to emotion.
 1. BKC – Hebrew words for loved and hated refer not to God's emotions but to His choice of one over the other for a covenant relationship (cf gen 29:31-35; deut 21;15, 17; Luke 14:26). The verbs refer to God's acts in history toward both of the two nations which descended from the two brothers.
 2. ESV Study Bible - In this context **loved** refers to choice rather than affection, and **hated** refers to rejection rather than animosity (which was explicitly prohibited against Edomites, Esau's descendants, in [Deut. 23:7](#)).
 3. MacArthur - 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.
 4. Romans 9:6-16 appeals to this as an illustration of God's mercy.
 - iv. Obadiah shows that God's anger towards Edom was for their wicked idolatry.
 - b. The **judgment** of Edom (1:3b-5)
 - i. They have been judged – both Israel and Edom received judgment from God at the hands of the Babylonians (Jer. 27:2-8)
 - ii. Edom vowed to return and rebuild but the Lord said, "No. I will tear down what they build."
 - iii. They didn't have the same promises of deliverance, return, perseverance that Israel did.
5. How do Jacob and Esau prove God's love to a questioning Israel?
- a. God's love is seen in His gracious **choice** to save.
 - i. His love is sovereign, undeserved, and persistent.
 - ii. It was not earned and so cannot be lost.
 - b. God's love is not proved or disproved by immediate **circumstances**.