

How Have You Loved Us?

Malachi 1:1-5

INTRO:

In a book of essays, written by C.S. Lewis, and published after his death, included an essay which gives an incredible insight into human arrogance. The title of the essay became the title of the book of essays. The title is, *God in the Dock*. In this essay Lewis wrote about the human tendency to think they can call the Eternal God to account, to charge Him in a court of Law with malfeasance and make Him justify His actions to us.

The Jews of Malachi's day had a similar idea. The book of **Malachi** was written as a dialogue between the covenant people of God and God, Himself. The first challenge is to the statement of God's love.

I. The Word of God through Malachi (v. 1)

II. The Challenge and Answer (v.2-5)

I. The Word of God through Malachi (v. 1)

Malachi 1:1 ***“The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.”***

A. The language of ***“burden”*** meant this was no small matter to Yahweh, the LORD of glory, and the covenant creating and keeping God of Israel. In fact, the LORD would address several heart problems with Israel.

B. We know little about the man Malachi. His book is clearly post exile (written after Israel came back from the Babylonian captivity. It is an important book. The Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul quoted from this book.

II. The Challenge and Answer (v.2-5)

Malachi 1:2-5 ***“‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD. Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ Says the LORD. ‘Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.’ Even though Edom has said, ‘We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places,’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, ‘The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’”***

A. This book was written in the form of a dialogue between the LORD and Israel.

The first thing we hear is music to a believer's ears. ***“‘I have loved you,’ says the***

LORD. "This brings to mind something Yahweh had Moses write in **Deuteronomy 7:6-9.**

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

Our loving Him is tied to our knowing He loves us. The Apostle John wrote in **1 John 4:19**, ***"We love because He first loved us."***

B. The problem was, Israel did not believe God loved them.

"Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' Says the LORD. 'Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated.'"

The LORD gives voice to Israel's heart. They reply to the LORD and demand proof. There were the words of a hardened heart. They did not believe God loved them. They had the audacity to call the LORD to account. This sounds like today doesn't it? What have you done for me lately?

C. God could cite proof everywhere from Israel's history. Do you remember Paul's list in **Romans 9:4-5?**

"Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

While this is a long list it does not exhaust all the ways God showed His love for Israel.

D. Instead, Yahweh pointed to one proof they had to realize in their place in Israel's history. He divinely loved Jacob and He hated Esau. Two points need to be understood. First, the LORD made this choice before either brother was born.

Genesis 25:23 ***"And the LORD said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.'"***

Esau was born first and should have been his father's heir. However, Yahweh determined that Jacob would carry the line and blessing. Esau would be set aside.

E. Second, this hatred was decidedly not that God loved Jacob and loved Esau a little less. Look at how God hated Esau.

“Esau have I hated and laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness.’ Even though Edom has said, “We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places,’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.”

The LORD’s love for Israel is shone in two ways.

1. First He loved them in the LORD’s initial choice of their father Jacob as the father of the Israelites and not Esau. Because of this initial choice, the LORD did not abandoned Israel in her captivity but brought them back to the land of promise.

2. Second, when Babylon conquered Jerusalem and took Judah into captivity, Esau was only too willing to help destroy Israel. For that act, the destruction God describe came upon Esau and Edom.

F. Finally, God gives a promise to His doubtful people.

(v.5) “Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, ‘The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel”

They will look of the proofs of His love and ultimately give glory to Him.

How About Us?

1. We would never charge God with not loving us, would we? I have seen this in the people of God who forget all the wonderful things the Lord did for us.

2. How did the Lord show His love for us? We could list many proofs. Let us let one proof be enough. **Romans 5:7–8** ***“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”***

He not only loves us in our salvation, He also has watched over us providentially every day of our lives. Do you review often the different things God did for you?

3. The question is: Do we love Him in return?

Hymn #374 O Love That Will Not Let Me Go