



Malachi 1:1-5
God's Electing Love

NKJ Malachi 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

2 " 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;

3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."

4 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.

5 Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'

Proverbs 3:11-12 teach a lesson that men are slow to learn, and which requires a good deal of spiritual wisdom and maturity to realize: *11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction;*

12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Children, it may seem odd to you now, but a sign of your parents love is that they spank you when you go wrong, if they did not do so, it would be a sign they do not really care about you. In fact, although you don't believe it at the time, it is often very difficult for them to discipline you. No child believes it of course, but once you have had children, you understand that when they said *"this is going to hurt me more more than it hurts you"* they were telling the truth.

What makes discipline especially onerous is the fact that it is seldom appreciated by the person being disciplined. The sad thing is that was is true of children who don't know better, is just as true of the church in every age. It has been my experience that seldom does someone undergoing church discipline see it as a benefit, they lack the vision to see that to be corrected when one is walking down a path that leads to destruction is far better than to be allowed to continue walking unimpeded down that path.

That refusal to see love manifested in the corrective discipline of the Lord forms the background for Malachi's message to the people of Israel. The name Malachi mean's "my messenger" and it indicates that the prophet is in fact the ambassador of God, he is giving the people of God, his message to them. Interestingly the O.T. Hebrew word for Angel is *Malak* and it shows us yet another reason why Angels are not to be worshipped themselves – they are merely the messengers of God.

The time in which this was written was almost a century after the people of Israel had returned from exile in Babylon. In that time, the Temple has been rebuilt, and the walls of Jerusalem restored under Nehemiah. But all, as we shall see in the message, is not well in Israel.

True, the outright idolatry and worship of other gods that had led to Babylon being used by God to punish his disobedient children has not returned, yet there are other equally terrible sins. Formalism, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy are becoming rampant in Israel and by the time Christ is born about 400 years later, some of these sins will have become so common that they even have religious parties with names like Pharisees and Saducees that teach men to practice them.

Because of these sins, God uses his messenger Malachi to deliver a rebuke to Israel. This rebuke is described as a *burden* by the prophet. It is a heavy message not easy to deliver and I can immediately sympathize with Malachi in that. It is no easy thing to deliver a message of correction designed to convict people of their sin and turn them from their path. How few people there are who really receive such a message well!

Usually once the person gets the upshot of what you are telling them, the face darkens darkens, the lower lip begins to protrude, the arms cross and they can barely wait to tell you were to get off. "Who do you think you are Mr. High-and-mighty coming here and telling me these things!" Who really wants to be the bearer of those tidings??? And yet for the true ambassador of God. It is not an option, Paul himself testified that despite tears and trials he "***kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house***" As a parent must correct their children though it is hard and burdensome, a faithful ambassador of God, must deliver even these burdensome messages to God's flock.

Now what is the state of the heart of God's congregation when this message is delivered? They are like the child who on receiving correction, spitefully protests "***YOU DON'T LOVE ME!***" This is the accusation that they hold in their hearts towards the Lord. If God loved us he would never have sent us into exile, and certainly he wouldn't have allowed heathen nations like Persia to grow and prosper while we remain small and poor.

God's grace is seen in that he doesn't fire back, "Why you ungrateful bunch of brats! Didn't I deliver you out of bondage in Egypt by my mighty right hand, and bring you into the promised land, didn't I make you into a mighty people and drive all the Canaanites before you? Didn't I give you my oracles, and the Temple? Didn't I dwell in your midst and deliver you despite your unfaithfulness? And how have ***you*** repaid me???"

Rather God says to them again *I have loved you!* And then even goes on to answer their petulant question "Oh Yeah? How?!"

He answers that by showing them his electing love. Esau and Jacob were brothers, and in fact, Esau was the first born and the stronger of the two. And yet God chose to lay his covenant love on Jacob and reject Esau. Esau of course went on to become the founder of the pagan nation of Edom, in the mountains south of Israel, while Jacob became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Yahweh loved Jacob more than Esau. His love is not based on Israel's righteousness (Deut. 9:4) or greatness (Deut. 7:7), but on his promise of blessing (Deut. 7:8) guaranteed by oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Esau was bypassed. No human reasoning can fully explain God's choice. His love for Jacob was an act of love, election, and sovereignty (Rom. 9:1-29).

He has chosen Israel, He has laid his love sovereignly upon his people. HE also shows them how his action in destroying Jerusalem sending them into exile was the loving act of discipline by a father, by

contrasting it with the final judgment that fell on Edom. The discipline that fell upon Israel was designed to *prevent* their final destruction. The destruction of Edom was a preview of the final judgment that would fall upon them. Israel was laid waste, and then delivered and raised up again by the loving hand of Yahweh. Edom was cast down and will never be allowed to rise again.

The Edomites may plot, but their destruction is *final and complete*.

The contrast, the fruit tree, tended, and pruned – which looks longly at the forest tree, and yet the forest tree which is allowed to grow wild is destined to be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Application 1: Christians do the same thing, we look at the unbelievers and envy them! -

How have you loved us – look the unbelievers have all these blessings

Psalm 73:6 When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me --

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end.

18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.

20 As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.

Heb. 12:5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,

13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Secondly let us see in this not just the judgment of Yahweh but the mercy : Verse 5 like so much of Malachi is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, *5 Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'*

John 10:16 16 "And **other sheep** I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

God's electing Love will extend beyond the borders

The translation should be: "May Yahweh be exalted beyond the borders of Israel." The phrase beyond the borders has occasioned difficulty. The preposition may be translated as "over" or "beyond." In view of his universal interest (1:11, 14) and his concern that evil be removed, the reading beyond is preferable. Yahweh, the God of Israel, is not limited to Judah. His kingship will extend to the ends of the earth!

Is. 52:10 The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.

Zec. 2:10 " Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.

11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

Our salvation through Christ was not a result of **our** works or **our** choice but simply of God's electing love.