

Malachi 1 - Myth of "10 Lost Tribes"; The Remnant

I. God corrects Judah's doubt of His love (Mal 1:1-5)

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II. God corrects Judah's priests (Mal 1:6—2:9)

- (1) God accuses the priests of not giving God proper honor (1:6)
 - (A) God's accusations (1:6a)
 - (B) Priests' denial (1:6b)
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Malachi 1

I. God corrects Judah's doubt of His love (Mal 1:1-5)

- (1) God pronounces His love (1:1-2a)

1 The **pronouncement** of the word of the LORD to **Israel** through Malachi:

1 The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

1 A declaration: a message from the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

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

- "...pronouncement" - a message of rebuke rather than comfort or encouragement.

Ominous term, suggesting pending judgment.

- "...Israel" - all 12 tribes

(2) Israel questions God's love (1:2b)

(3) God proves His love (1:2c-5)

(A) Rejection of Esau (1:2c)

(B) Selection of Jacob (1:2d)

2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was Esau not Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob;

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2 "I've loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD, "yet I loved Jacob,

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,

Malachi's Three Answers

(1) Present hardships brought on by frigid formalism and disloyalty to their Lord, and their resultant sins, which, in turn, resulted from deeper sickness of their hearts: which were external evidences of the lack of inward reality and fear of God.

(2) Emerge from their self-pity long enough to observe their blood brothers the Edomites. The Nabatean Arabs were the instrument of God to visit final destruction on their nation (1:2-5). There is a law of righteousness and morality that operated inexorably in history (Jer 18:7-10), for on more than one occasion Edom refused to help or had urged the enemy on and joined in looting Israel when she was under attack (Ps 137:7; Obadiah 10-14; Amos 1:11-12; Jer 49:7-22). Israel, too, would have been subjected to removal but for God's unmerited election-love on her (Mal 1:2; 3:6).

(3) The Day of the Lord was coming when all accounts would be reconciled (3:16—4:6). The prophecy of Malachi reveals God in several relationships: Father, Lord, God, and Judge. Their response? Sarcastic, oblivious, supercilious. The root of all Israel's sins was her unawareness of God's love and her own sin.

(C) Punishment of Esau (1:3-4)

3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and *given* his inheritance to the jackals of the wilderness."

3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and *appointed* his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

3 rejected Esau, turned his mountains into a wasteland, and gave his inheritance to desert jackals.

3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

- The problem with this verse isn't why God hated Esau...but *why He loved Jacob!* [Griffith Thomas]

However, Paul quotes this (Rom 9:13), and compares it with what the oracle said to Rebecca concerning her twins (Gen 25:23)—*The elder shall serve the younger*, to illustrate the doctrine of God's sovereignty in dispensing his favors. Jacob was chosen *before* he was born (Cf. Gen 25:23 vs Rom 9:11). The statement in Rom 9:13 is quoted from *this* prophecy and not from Genesis. Although born as twins, the hatred of Esau had been well deserved *after* the continued opposition to God through the centuries. He had no heart for God nor God's people. This is pointing to God's election-love. *But there is also God's justice-love.*

4 Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; this is what the LORD of armies says: "They may build, but I will tear down; and *people* will call them the territory of wickedness, and the people with whom the LORD is indignant forever."

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."

4 Even though Edom may claim, 'We were crushed, but we will return and rebuild the ruins,' this is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "They may rebuild, but I'll demolish. People will call them, 'The Wicked Land,' and, 'The People With Whom the LORD is Forever Angry.'

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.

- Edom's wasting of his heritage made it a place for the jackals of the wilderness. Every attempt to rebuild will meet with defeat.

Jacob's cities are laid waste, but they are rebuilt; Edom's are laid waste, and never rebuilt. The sufferings of the righteous will have an end and will end well. All their grievances will be redressed, and their sorrow turned into joy, but the sufferings of the wicked will be endless and remediless, as Edom's desolations.

Observe here,

(1) The vain hopes of the Edomites, that they shall have their ruins repaired as well as Israel, though they had no promise to build their hope upon. They say, "It is true, we are *impoverished*; it is the common chance, and there is no remedy; but we *will return*

*and build the desolate places; we are resolved we will" (not so much as asking God leave). "we will whether he will or no; nay, we will do it in defiance of God's curse, and that sentence pronounced upon Edom (Is 34:10), *From generation to generation it shall lie waste.*" They build presumptuously, as Hiel built Jericho in direct contradiction to the word of God (1 Kings 16:34), and it shall speed accordingly. Note, It is common for those whose hearts are unhumbled under humbling providences to think to make their part good against God himself, and to build, and plant, and flourish again as much as ever, though God has said that they shall be impoverished. But see, (2) The dashing of these hopes and the disappointment of them: They say, *We will build; but what says the Lord of hosts?* For we are sure his word shall stand, and not theirs; and he says,*

First, Their attempts shall be baffled: *They shall build, but I will throw down.* Note, Those that walk contrary to God will find that He will walk contrary to them; for *who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered?* [When the Jews had rejected Christ and His gospel they became as Edomites, and this word was fulfilled in them; for when, in the time of the emperor Adrian, they attempted to rebuild Jerusalem, God by earthquakes and eruptions of fire threw down what they built, so that they were forced to quit the enterprise.]

Secondly, They shall be looked upon by all as abandoned to utter ruin. All that see them shall call them *the border of wickedness*, a sinful nation, incurably so, and therefore *the people against whom the Lord has indignation for ever.* Since their wickedness is such as will never be reformed, their desolations shall be such as are never to be repaired.

The Nabatean Arabs (550-400 BC) ransacked Edom leaving only pockets of refuges in the Negeb desert (1 Macc 5:25). It was these same Nabateans who set up the country of Idumea (4:29; Mark 3:8) with its capital in Hebron and one of its great cities, built into the cliffs, named Petra. [When was the last time you saw an Edomite?]

The judgment of God against Edom should also warn not only skeptical Jacob but also the present day church in America. Edom was known as "the wicked country" (Mal 1:4). America is called "the Great Satan." Cf. Dan 11:41.

(D) Blessing upon Jacob (1:5)

5 And your eyes will see *this*, and you will say, "The LORD be exalted beyond the border of Israel!"

5 Your eyes will see this and you will say, "The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"

5 Your own eyes will see this, and you will say, 'Great is the LORD even beyond the borders of Israel!"'

5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from (beyond) the border of Israel.

Traditional View

- God is to be magnified beyond Israel alone (Cf. Psalm 35:27; 40:16-17)
- God's love—in its graciousness and in its judgments—exceeds traditional national, political, geographic, or cultural boundaries. It would go beyond them, even as God had promised Abraham when he was first called (Gen 12:1-3). [This "blessing" was called "gospel" by Paul in Gal 3:8].
- All mankind has been offered salvation through Jacob. We must be careful not to doubt that love just because we may be in some affliction like the struggling remnant in Malachi's day.

Eschatological View: Prophetic Significance

Modern Jordan appears to escape the rule of the Coming World Leader (Dan 11:41). Many scholars believe Petra will be a refuge for the remnant in the final siege of Jerusalem.

II. God corrects Judah's priests (Mal 1:6—2:9)

- (1) God accuses the priests of not giving God proper honor (1:6)
 - (A) God's accusations (1:6a)
 - (B) Priests' denial (1:6b)

6 "A son honors *his* father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of armies to you, the priests who despise My name! But you say, '**How have we despised Your name?**'

6 "A son honors *his* father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?'

6 "A son honors his father and a servant his master. So if I'm a father, where is my honor? And if I'm a master, where is my respect?" says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies to you priests who are despising my name. "But you ask, 'How have we despised your name?'

6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where *is* mine honour? 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?

- Quotes a proverbial saying: Sons (generally) honor their father; servants (generally) fear their master.
- Since you openly profess that God is your "Father" and "Lord," where is your honor and fear?
- Fear: >100x. Deut 10:12; How could their words and the deeds be so far separated?
- Their lack of dedication was an outright despising:

- of His very being and person (Ex 23:20-21; Deut 28:58)
- of His doctrine (Ps 22:22; John 17:6)
- of His authority (Matt 7:22; Mark 9:39; Acts 4:7)
- of His attributes

- "...How have we despised Your name?" - "Who? us? Where's the proof?" They will resort to this protest of innocence 7x in this book.

(2) God accuses the priests of offering imperfect sacrifices (1:7-14)

- (A) God's accusation (1:7a)
- (B) Priests' denial (1:7b)
- (C) Priests' sins enumerated (1:7c-14)

(a) Despising God's altar (1:7c)

7 *You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?'*
In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.'

7 *You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?'*
In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.'

7 *By presenting defiled food on my altar. And you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'* By
saying, 'The Table of the LORD is contemptible.'

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.*

Pollution was in Two Ways

(1) Offeror: Polluted men and women cannot offer pure sacrifices to God while they simultaneously reject His lordship and fail to glorify and enjoy Him. He looks at the heart first.

- "Put yourself in the offering plate first and then deposit your offering for God."
- Cain and Abel in Gen 4:3-4: the Hebrew strongly emphasizes the giver rather than the offering: "Cain, he, he also, he brought" and "Abel, he, he also, he brought."
- Four Elements: Proper name, personal pronoun, an adverb, and the verb with the personal pronominal ending on it.
- There is a type of profanity that goes beyond cursing and swearing. (The common language is little more than a lack of vocabulary!)
- The nation is also described as profaning His Name in Ezek 36:19ff.

(2) Gifts also can be polluted in that they were blemished and not the choicest that could be given.

- "Bread" is a metonym for "food," etc. (Lev 21:6,8,17,22; 22:25; Num 28:2)
- Here refers to animal sacrifices (as in Lev 21:6,8,17); Note "blind," "lame," "sick," in v8

- Note they acknowledge: "Wherein have we polluted thee?" They knew what they did was ultimately directed against God Himself.
- The sin of ingratitude.
- "The Table of the Lord" (Altar: Ps 23:5; Ezek 44:16) "is contemptible." Same word is used of Antiochus Epiphanes, desecrating the altar in 165 BC (Dan 11:21)

(b) Offering blemished sacrifices (1:8-10)

8 And when you present a blind *animal* for sacrifice, is it not evil? Or when you present a lame or sick *animal*, is it not evil? So offer it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you, or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of armies.

8 But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the Lord of hosts.

8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? And when you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Offer that to your governor—would he be pleased with you or receive you favorably?" asks the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

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.

- They gave—but they gave leftovers
- Blemished offerings forbidden (Ex 12:5; 29:1; Lev 1:3,10; 22:18-25; Num 6:14; 19:2; Deut 15:21; 17:1; Ezek 45:23)
- They were willing to modify God's requirements and laws by their own "circumstances"
- Every atoning sacrifice in the OT was designed to anticipate and depict the ultimate sacrifice of the Lord Jesus
- A blemished substitute was direct insult to the gift of redemption it pointed to
- It was an act of sacrilege and blasphemy
- How was this allowed? By a discount religion, fostered by those who were responding to their analysis of the popular marketplace...focus groups, etc.
- Malachi's reference to a Persian governor (the Aramaic word for "governor" was a Persian title, also used in Ezra 5:3,6,14; 6:6-7,13; Dan 3:2-3,27; 6:7)
- This shows that the book was written *after* 538 BC
- Most scholars agree that the Book of Malachi was written around 450-430 BC, for these reasons:
 - (1) Malachi's rebuke of the priests' malpractice in the temple shows that the temple had been rebuilt and the priesthood reestablished.
 - (2) The moral and spiritual conditions Malachi addressed were similar to those encountered by Ezra, who returned in 458 BC, and Nehemiah, who returned in 444

BC.

These included:

- Intermarriages with Gentiles (Mal 2:10-11; Cf. Ezra 9:1-2; Neh 13:1-3,23-28)
- Neglect in paying the tithes (Mal 3:8-10, vs Neh 13:10-14)
- Disregard for the Sabbath (Mal 2:8-9; 4:4 vs Neh 13:15-22)
- Corruption of the priesthood (Mal 1:6-9 vs Neh 13:7-9)
- Oppression of the poor (Mal 3:5; Cf. Neh 5:1-13)

— Either Malachi was addressing the same generation that Ezra and Nehemiah spoke to, or Malachi spoke to a later generation some time after Ezra's and Nehemiah's corrections.

9 "But now, do indeed plead for God's favor, so that He will be gracious to us. With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of armies.

9 "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.

9 "And now, go ahead and implore God by saying, 'Be gracious to us.' Will he receive you favorably and accept offerings like that from your hand?" asks the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

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.

- There is no reason for us, either, to persist in doubts of God's love (Cf. v1-5); which hinder His ability to demonstrate His love fully.

— It is our indifference, carelessness, and half-heartedness that blocks our privileged position, too.

— Our Lord judges a gift by what the gift costs the offeror who placed it on the altar, not by its intrinsic worth (Cf. Widow's mite, Mark 12:42-43; Luke 21:1-4)

Useless Offerings and Useless Altar Fires

10 "If only there were one among you who would shut the gates, so that you would not kindle *fire on* My altar for nothing! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of armies, "nor will I accept an offering from your hand.

10 "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle *fire on* My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you.

10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the Temple doors and not light useless fires on the altar! I'm not pleased with you," says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "and I'll accept no offerings from you.

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.

- ASV: "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle (fire on) mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."

- NIV: "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am no pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."

So distasteful were the profane sacrifices permitted by the priests that Malachi now makes the outrageous suggestion: lock the double doors of the Temple Court and block all access to the altar of God! No worship at all is better than the perpetuation of cold, negligent, worthless worship.

(c) Profaning God's altar (1:11-12)

11 For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *shall* be great among the nations, and in every place frankincense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *shall* be great among the nations," says the LORD of armies.

11 For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will* be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *will* be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.

11 Even so, from where the sun rises to where it sets my name will be great among the Gentiles. Incense will be brought to me everywhere, along with pure offerings, because my name will be great among the Gentiles," says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

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.

12 "But you are profaning it by your saying, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.'

12 "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the LORD is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.'

12 "But you are profaning my name by saying that the Table of the LORD is defiled and that its fruit and its food are contemptible.

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.

- "But ye..." Reproof of v7 repeated. The error of the priests was to tolerate sub-standard items on behalf of God. Do you demand high standards when God's work is involved?

(d) Offering stolen and blemished sacrifices (1:13-14)

13 You also say, 'See, how tiresome it is!' And you view it as trivial," says the LORD of armies, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and *what is* lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I accept it from your hand?" says the LORD.

13 You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and *what is* lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the Lord.

13 "And you say, 'What a burden!' and sniff contemptuously at it," says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "when you present maimed, crippled, and diseased animals, and when you bring the offering. Should I accept this from your hand?" asks the LORD.

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.

- Wearisome and burdensome, since their hearts were not in it. They snorted and sniffed at it: treated it with utmost contempt.

- Their blemished offerings were not because of poverty but because of greed. It was the offeror, not just the offering, that was polluted.

Are you a steward of God's resources? Do you demand a high standard? Or do you accept sub-standard performance on behalf of *your* King? How about our private life? What is your "table grace" like? How do you begin your day? Or end it? Are you authentic?

14 "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows *it*, but sacrifices a blemished *animal* to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of armies, "and My name is feared among the nations."

14 "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the LORD, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

14 "Cursed is the deceiver who has an acceptable male in his flock, and vows to give it, but sacrifices a mutilated one to the LORD. Indeed, I am a great king," says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "and my name is feared among the Gentiles."

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.

- The curse is pronounced upon the deceiver who thinks he can vow—in such cases the best was promised to God—a proper sacrifice, and then fulfill the vow with an unsuitable animal.

— Such were an insult to the majesty of God. They were actually attempting to *swindle* God! Do you?

— God means what He says and says what He means. He expects us to do the same. God does not want us telling Him something unless we mean it. (God never calls a real believer a hypocrite).

[If the standards of Ananias and Sapphira were applied to us, many of us would still be here! - Acts 5:1-5]

Someone asked Mahatma Ghandi, the famed leader of India, "What is the biggest obstacle to Christianity in India?" "Christians," was his considered reply. Do our lives reflect the name, reputation, characteristics, and majesty our King? Read Ps 129 and Is 40, and then see if our lives *authentically* reflect Him!

Here is the model of excellence, reality, and authenticity to which men and women are being challenged. To the degree to which we grasp the greatness of the person, character, and attributes of God—*His Name*—to that degree will our own inadequacies, falseness, and diluted worship take on credibility, substance, acceptance and posture. We, too, need to take up Malachi's call to *be authentic*.

We can sit through a three-hour entertainment, and yet get restless in a one-hour sermon? We get uncomfortable in a quarter hour overrun in a Bible study, and yet rejoice when a sporting event goes into extra innings or periods?

Do our sacrifices reflect our estimation of His Majesty? Are we being authentic? Can we continue to claim our status as His Sons? Do we render to Him the honor that is due?

It is not God, but we who need to be credible. We must become more real and authentic in our profession, our gifts, and our service.