

**MALACHI 1:1-6**  
**God's Declaration of Love**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Malachi is the last of the great prophets to the nation of Israel. Malachi means "my messenger" and after that we know nothing about this prophet of God.
- B. His ministry was after the Babylonian Captivity in a time when the remnant of Jews who went back into the land was in a state of spiritual decline. Perhaps he ministered at a time when Nehemiah was out of the land in Persia (1:8) and spiritual laxity and moral abuses crept into the remnant. The date of writing is somewhere between 460 and 397 B.C.
- C. The Book of Malachi is a stern rebuke to the priests and the people who were in moral and spiritual apostasy. They were insensitive to the love of God, to their own sin, to the ways of God and to their spiritual responsibilities. NOTE: Israel's spiritual condition was akin to the present state of professing Christendom.
- D. The key to this book is the often repeated questions. The method is that the Lord gives a statement or makes an indictment; the people ask a question, the Lord gives an explanation and then there is a statement of Judgment.

1:2	God says:	"I have loved you"	Israel says:	Wherein?
1:6	"	"Ye despise my name"	"	Wherein?
1:7	"	"Ye offer polluted bread"	"	Wherein?
2:11, 14	"	"Married daughter of strange god"	"	Wherefore?
2:17	"	"Wearied Jehovah with your words"	"	Wherein?
3:7	"	"Return unto me"	"	Wherein?
3:8	"	"Ye have robbed me"	"	Wherein?
3:13	"	"Your words have been stout against me"	"	What?

NOTE: In each instance when they are accused of sin, they contradict the Lord and ask for evidences of these charges.

**II. GOD DECLARES HIS LOVE FOR ISRAEL (1:1-2a)**

- A. **"The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi"** Malachi has a deep and heavy burden on his heart as he contemplates Israel's sins against God. This is the "word of the Lord" indicating that Malachi was speaking under the divine inspiration of God. He was but a vehicle for God's message. This is Jehovah (the Lord), the covenant-God, who speaks through Malachi. NOTE: The very words are divine revelation for it is God who speaks in them and not man. NOTE: A God who speaks is meant to be contrasted with the heathen idols that could not speak. The Hebrew word for "idol" means silent-nothing. Malachi's God could speak and His words will come true. False prophets can predict but only the true message from God will come to pass. (Hab. 2:10-19; Isa. 41:22-26)
- B. **"I have loved you, saith the Lord."** The prophet begins his message by a bold declaration or statement of God's love for Israel. The unchanging, covenant-keeping God who calls Himself "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14) repeats His love for Israel. All that Israel has spiritually and physically was because of God's love. God's love for Israel is eternal (Jer. 31:3) and is based on God's sovereign choice (Deut. 7:7-0; 10:15) and it is a permanent love (Deut. 33:3). NOTE: God's love is freely given to whom He pleases to give it and no man deserves to be loved by God. But it is God's love that motivates the Christian to love his God (I John 4:19).

### III. ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE FOR GOD'S LOVE (1:2b)

- A. **"Wherein"** Israel asks with ungodly boldness, "How did you love us? Give us some material evidence that you really love us." Israel was suffering somewhat the effects of the Babylonian captivity and they could not see the love of God to them. This question reveals their shameful ingratitude, their absolute failure to realize and appreciate what the love and grace of God had done for them. The root of all their sin was the indifference and unawareness of God's love for them.
- B. **"Hast thou loved us?"** God created the nation of Israel through Abraham, delivered her out of Egypt, opened the Red Sea, and gave her the Law and the Covenants. God, in His infinite love, had brought a remnant back to the promised land after the Babylonian Captivity and the temple was rebuilt. But Israel was selfish and wanted God to do more. NOTE: Before the Babylonian Captivity, Israel was most guilty of idolatry, but after the captivity Israel took on a new form of idolatry. Israel substituted the worship of self for the worship of idols. Neglecting her personal responsibilities to God, she became satisfied with mere outward religious performance. NOTE: God in love has chosen the Christian for salvation and protects him with His everlasting love, yet often the true child of God will forget about God's love, which is all about him, because he gets his eyes on self rather than on God. God's children must be constantly reminded of God's unchanging love for them.

### IV. GOD'S DIVINE CHOICE OF ISRAEL (1:2c~3a)

- A. **"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord"** God illustrates His divine choice of Jacob by taking the historical incident of Jacob and Esau. God chose to bless Jacob and withhold blessing from Esau, for He is a sovereign God who does as He pleases in heaven and in earth. NOTE: God's love for Israel is shown in His sovereign choice of Jacob.
- B. **"Yet I loved Jacob"** God's blessing does not depend on physical descent for both Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. By right, Esau deserved God's blessing for he was the first born, but God, in His sovereignty, changed the natural law and made the promised line come through Jacob. NOTE: The primary emphasis of this section is God's sovereign election of the nation of Israel but He does deal with individuals. The Apostle Paul picks this argument up to show that God's blessing was with Jacob because he was sovereignly chosen by God to salvation (cf. Rom. 9:6-24). Jacob was unworthy of God's love for he was a deceiver and a cheater, but God showed him love and mercy. God's love followed the seed of Jacob, especially those who believed in the true and living God and the promise of Messiah.
- C. **"And I hated Esau"** Over against the love of God for Jacob is set His hatred of Esau. God's hatred followed Esau and his kin because they were sinners and rejecters of the true God. God is not speaking about reprobation which is the choosing of some to damnation, for God simply withheld His grace and left Esau in a state of rejection. The hatred of Esau had been well-deserved after the continued opposition to God through the centuries. God sovereignly, as an act of His will, bestowed His love on one man and withheld it from another and God has this right. Esau was justly hated, but Jacob freely loved. "Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy eyes, and it is not for us to ask why or wherefore."

### V. GOD'S DIVINE PRESERVATION OF ISRAEL (1:3b-5)

- A. **"And laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons (jackals) of the wilderness."** The nation that came from Esau was Edom and God pronounces judgment on it. God pronounced perpetual desolation on Edom. Edom had fallen to the Babylonians five years after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Since that time Edom had never been restored to its former prosperity and power.
- B. **"Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places"** Edomites, in pride

and vanity, will attempt to build the waste places; it will not happen.

- C. **“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down”** Every attempt to rebuild their land will meet with defeat. Edom today is a lost name and a dead culture and race.
- D. **“And they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.”** Men will come to realize that the desolate condition of Edom is to do their own wickedness and [to have] God's judgment on them.
- E. **“And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.”** Edom was not restored but God in His sovereignty brought a remnant back to Israel and she was restored. God will be magnified by the Jews in the restoration. NOTE: The fact that God brought the Jews back and permitted them to rebuild demonstrated His love. Israel today is a thriving race and culture. Israel's name is still great in the modern world.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole  
Though stretched from sky to sky.  
~F. M. Lehman, 1917