

Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament. It is written to Judah at a time somewhere between the completion of the temple (515 BC) and that of Nehemiah (444-432 BC). While many returned to Judah after living in exile for years, their faithfulness to God was wavering and shallow. Malachi delivers six specific rebukes to the Israelites in this short prophecy, the first in the following verses.

# Malachi 1:1-5

The Lord's

Love for

Israel

## I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

In any relationship, love is central and of utmost importance. Without a clear and full understanding of love, hardships, difficulties, and even disagreements or discipline, if you're a parent, can be misunderstood (at best) or resented (at worst). Knowing for certain that we're loved changes how we experience our relationships.

***MY EXPERIENCE...***

***YOUR EXPERIENCE...***

## II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

***HOW*** does it change the way you hear a strong word of correction from someone if you know they love you?

***DESCRIBE*** one way God showed his love and faithfulness to his people through the Bible?

**WHAT** are some ways God has shown his love in your life?

**IN** what ways does understanding God's love for you cause you to respond differently to difficult situations in life?

# Malachi 1:1-5 The Lord's Love for Israel

## INTERPRETATION

What is an oracle?

What does it mean that God "loved" Jacob but "hated" Esau? Consider the meaning of these words as they are used in other places of scripture (see Luke 14:26).

How does the comparison between Jacob and Esau illustrate God's sovereignty and love? See Genesis 25:19-34).

What is the connection between Esau and Edom (vs. 4)? How does God's wrath toward Edom serve as an other explanation for how He loves Israel?

What did Jacob do to deserve God's love? Historically, what has Israel done to deserve God's love? How about you?

How do you *know* that God loves you? What scriptural truths give you confidence in His love? Consider Romans 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 for starters.

## Malachi 1:1-5

### OBSERVATION

According to vs. 1, who is this message intended for?

Who is the messenger?

What is the first claim God makes in this message to His people in vs. 2?

How do the people respond to the claim (vs. 2)?

What do you observe about the Lord's response to the people's claim (vs. 2-4)?

As God's people recognize His work on their behalf (v.5), how will they respond?

**APPLICATION**

What issues have you wrestled with causing you to question whether or not God loves you?

When your circumstances or experiences conflict with the idea of God's love for you, how do you deal with it?