

MALACHI

Conversational Version

1:1An Oracle from the LORD to Israel Through Malachi

Jacob Loved More Than Esau

2The LORD says, “*I’ve loved you.*”

But you ask, “*What do you mean ‘loved us’?*”

“*Wasn’t Esau Jacob’s brother? Yet I’ve loved Jacob ³and set Esau aside, made his hill country desolate, and left his inheritance for desert jackals.*”

4Esau’s descendants claim, “*We’ve been beaten down, but we’ll come back and rebuild the ruins.*”

But the LORD of Hosts says, “*They may rebuild, but I’ll tear it down again. People will call them The Evil Country, The Nation the LORD Is Angry with Forever.*”

5You’ll see this and say, “*May the LORD be honored beyond Israel’s boundaries!*”

Blemished Sacrifices

6The LORD says to priests that despise him, “*A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. Then if I’m a father, where’s my honor? If I’m a master, where’s my respect?*”

“*But you ask, ‘Dishonored you? How?’*

7“*You present defiled sacrifices on my altar.*”

“*But you ask, ‘Defiled sacrifices, how?’*”

“*By disrespecting my altar. ⁸When you offer the blind, lame, and sick, isn’t that disrespect? Why not offer something like that to your governor? Would he be happy with you? Would he accept you?*”

Mal 1:1-8

9“*Will you ask me to bless you and be gracious to you? With offerings like that, why would I be gracious to anybody? ¹⁰If only there’d be one among you that would shut the Temple doors so you wouldn’t light fire on my altar for nothing! I’m not happy with you, and I won’t accept your offerings. ¹¹From sunrise to sunset, I intend to be honored as great the world over, wherever there’s incense and pure grain offerings.*

12“*But you profane me by saying, ‘It won’t hurt anything to defile the LORD’s table; the sacrifices for it are no big deal. ¹³They’re so tiresome!’*

“*You blow it off and bring what you stole, something lame or sick, so you can say you brought an offering! ¹⁴A curse on the cheat that vows a male from his*

flock but sacrifices a blemished one. What is this?! I'm a great King to be respected the world over!"

Mal 1:9-14

Warning to Priests

2:1 "Priests, I'm talking to you. **2** If you don't get serious about honoring me, I'll put a curse on you and even curse the blessings you receive. Actually, I already have, because you're not taking me seriously. **3** I'll bring misfortune on your descendants and spatter your faces with the offal from your feasts. I'll throw you out with it. **4** You'll find out that I'm the One that sent this commandment so my covenant with Levi can continue. **5** My covenant with him gives life and peace. I gave it to him so he'd show me reverence, and he did **6** and gave true instruction. He followed me in peace and goodness, and turned people back from sin. **7** A priest should preserve knowledge, and people should look to him for instruction because he's a messenger from the LORD of Hosts. **8** But you've gone off-road and made people stumble with your instruction; you've corrupted my covenant with Levi. **9** So people despise you because you show favoritism in how you execute the Law."

Mal 2:1-9

Judah Profaned the Covenant

10 "Don't we all have the same Father? Hasn't the same God created us? Why are we unfaithful to one another and violate our ancestors' covenant? **11** Judah has been unfaithful and created an abomination in Israel and Jerusalem. He's profaned the sanctuary the LORD loves and married the daughter of a foreign god. **12** May the LORD cut off from Jacob anyone who does that and then tries to present him an offering.

13 "Another thing you do is cover the LORD's altar with tears, weeping, and groaning because he doesn't accept your offerings anymore."

14 "You ask, 'Why?'

"Because he's seen how unfaithful you've been to the wife you've had from your youth though she's your partner, your wife by covenant. **15** Nobody does that who has even an ounce of the spirit and wants godly offspring; so pay attention to your spirit so you won't be unfaithful to her. **16** I despise divorce and the one that tries to cover up his adultery with cruelty by divorcing his wife."

A Day of Judgment

17 "You've worn the LORD out with your talk.

"How?"

"By saying, 'People that sin are as good in his sight as anybody else; he delights in them'; or 'Where's there a just God?'"

Mal 2:10-17

3:1 “I’m going to send my messenger to fix the road ahead of me. Then the LORD you’re looking for will suddenly come to his Temple, the messenger of the covenant you delight in. **2** But who can endure it when he comes? Who can withstand his appearing? He’ll be like a refiner’s fire and a fuller’s soap. **3** He’ll sit like a refiner that smelts and purifies dross from silver. He’ll purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver so they can present acceptable offerings. **4** Then the offerings in Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to me like before.

5 “Then I’ll put you on trial and eagerly testify against sorcerers, adulterers, people that swear falsely, cheat wage earners, abuse widows and orphans; are prejudiced against foreigners, and don’t respect me. **Mal 3:1-5**

Robbing God

6 “I don’t change. That’s why I haven’t consumed you yet, Jacob. **7** From the time of your ancestors, you’ve repeatedly turned away from my statutes. Come back to me, and I’ll come back to you.”

“What do you mean ‘come back’?”

8 “Will a mortal steal from God? Yet you’re stealing from me!

“Stealing from you?”

“Tithes and offerings. **9** You’re accursed because the whole nation is stealing from me! **10** Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse so there’ll be enough food for my Temple staff. Test me in that and see if I don’t open the sky and pour out blessing on you till there’s no more need. **11** I’ll drive away diseases and locust plagues for you so they won’t ruin your produce and your grapevines won’t drop their grapes before they’re ripe. **12** Other nations will say you’re fortunate to have such a delightful land.” **Mal 3:6-12**

13 “You say arrogant things about me,” the LORD says.

“Like what?”

14 “Like, ‘There’s no point in serving God. What good’s it do to keep his charges or mourn in front of him when we fail to do so?’ **15** We may as well consider proud people fortunate: not only do they prosper; but when they make trial of God, they get away with it!”

16 Then the LORD heard people talking to one another who did respect and honor him. He recorded their names **17** and said, “They’ll be mine when I render judgment on who is my special possession. I’ll have mercy on them like a man has on a reliable son. **18** I’ll distinguish the good ones that serve me and from the bad ones that won’t. **Mal 3:13-18**

The Day of the LORD

4:1 “The time’s coming when the arrogant people you admire will be like stubble that burns up in a furnace—root, stem, and all. 2 But for you that respect me, goodness will rise up like the sun with healing in its wings. You’ll break out, jump around for joy, and run all over like calves let out of a stall. 3 At the time I’m planning for, you’ll stomp on sinners like ashes under your feet.

4 “Remember the Law of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb/Sinai for you. 5 I’ll send you Elijah the prophet before that awesome day comes. 6 He’ll turn fathers’ hearts back to their children and children’s hearts back to their fathers, so I won’t put a curse on the land.”

Mal 4:1-6

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