

MALACHI 1:1 - 1:4

Connexional Team

1. This is the message that the Lord gave to Israel through the prophet Malachi.

2. "I have always loved you" says the Lord.

But you rebuke; "Really? How have you loved us?"

And the Lord replies, "This is how I showed my love for you: I loved your ancestor Jacob, but I rejected his brother, Esau, and devastated his hill country. I turned Esau's inheritance into a desert for jackals.

4. Esau's descendants in Edom may say, "we have been shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins".

But the Lord of Heavens Armies replies, "They may try to rebuild, but I will demolish them again. Their country will be known as 'The Land of wickedness'; and their people

will be called 'The People with whom the Lord is forever Angry'. 5. When you see the destruction for yourselves, you will say, 'Truly, the Lord's greatness reaches far beyond Israel's borders!'

The Lord of Heaven's Armies says to the priests: "A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt by my name!"

"But you ask, 'How have we ever shown contempt for your name?'

"You have shown contempt by offering detested sacrifices on my altar."

"Then you ask, 'How have we defiled the sacrifices?'

"You defile them by saying the altar of the Lord deserves no respect. When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it

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wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

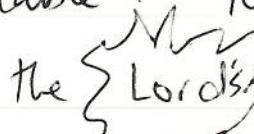
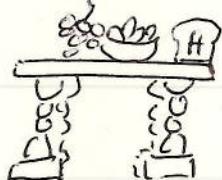
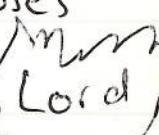
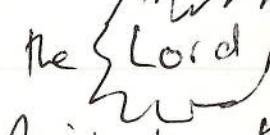
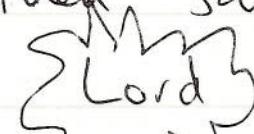
"Go ahead, beg God to be Merciful to you! but when you bring that kind of offering, Why Should he show you any favour at all?" asks the Lord of "heaven's" armies.

10. How I wish one of you would Shut the temple doors  So That these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you." Says the Lord of "heavens". Armies, "and I will not accept your offering.

But my Name is, honored by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world  they offer sweet incense and pure offerings in honour of their name.

for my Name is great among the nations
"Says the Lord of *Heaven's* Armies.

12 But you dishonor my Name with your

actions by bringing contemptible food , you are saying it's alright to desile the Lord's table. You say it is too hard to serve  the  table.  You ~~say~~ turn. ~~we~~ your noses  at my commands  "says the  of *Heavens* Armies. Think of it Animals that are stolen  and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these? asks the  Cursed is the cheat who promises to give a fine ram  from his flock  but then sacrifices a defective one to the  of *Heavens* Armies and my name  feared among the nations.

2 "Listen, you priest - this command is for you! Listen to me and make up your minds to honour my name," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "or I will bring a terrible curse against you. I will

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curse over the blessings you receive. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you have not taken my warning to heart. 3 I will punish your descendants and splatter your faces with the manure from your festival sacrifices, and I will throw you on the manure pile. 4 Then at last you will know it was I who sent you this warning so that my covenant with the Levites can continue," says the Lord of Heavens Armies.

5 "The purpose of my covenant with the Levites was to bring life and peace, and that is what I gave them. This required reverence from them, and they greatly revered me and stood in awe of my name. 6 They passed on to the people the truth of the instructions they received from me. They did not lie or cheat; they walked with me, living good and righteous lives, and they turned many from lives of sin.

7 "The words of a priest's lips should preserve knowledge of God, and people should go to him

for instruction, for the priest is the messenger
of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.⁸ But you
priests have left God's paths. Your instructions
have caused many to stumble into sin. You have
corrupted the covenant I made with the
Levites," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

"So I have made you despised and humiliated
in the eyes of all the people. for you have
not obeyed me but have shown favoritism in
the way you carry out my instructions."⁹

Are we not all children of the same
father? Are we not all created by the
same God? Why then are we faithless to one another,
profaning the covenant of our ancestors?" Judah has
been faithless, and abomination has been committed
in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned
the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has
married the daughter of a foreign god.¹² May the
Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob anyone who

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does this — any to witness or answer, or to bring an offering to the Lord of hosts.

¹³ And this you do as well: You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favour at your hand. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why does he not?"

Because the Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Did not one God make her? Both flesh and spirit are his.

And what does the one God desire? Godly offspring.

So look to yourselves, and do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. ¹⁶ For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.

¹⁷ You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "All who do evil are good in the sight of the Lord, and he

actions he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

3. See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight - indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and the fuller's soap;

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