

CRY

2026

OUT

POSTEXILIC PROPHETS

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

COVENANT^{EFC}

2026

OUT

STUDY 7

DO WE DOUBT GOD'S LOVE?

(Malachi 1:1-5 with Introduction to book of Malachi)

COVENANT^{EFC}

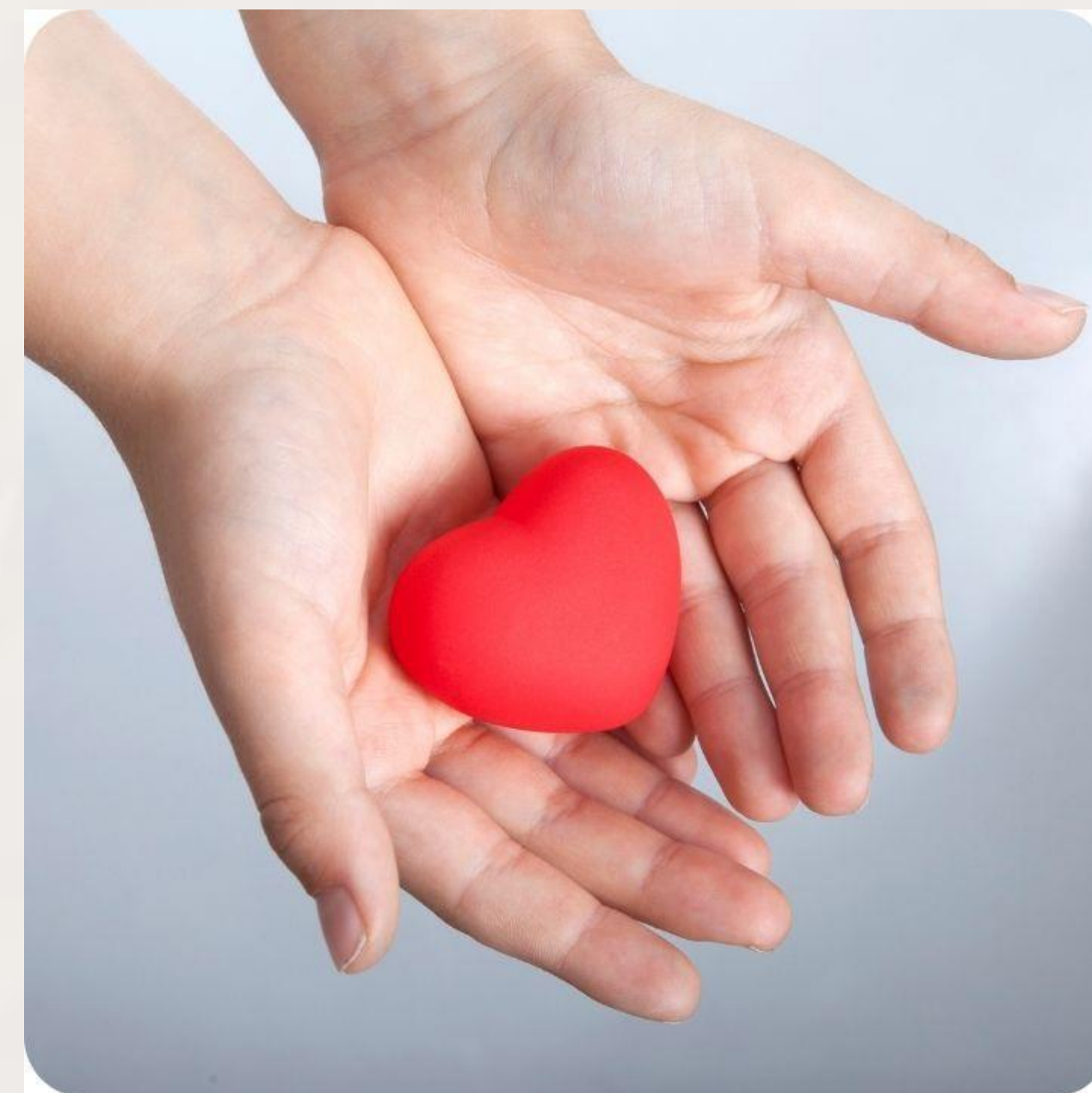
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WELCOME

Ice-breaker Activity: "I love you..."

Each person shares (in 1 minute) the last time they expressed or showed love to someone, and how the hearer responded to it.





WORSHIP

Worship our God who is love. May He help us rest in the goodness of Jesus.

- The Love of God (Reawaken Hymn)
- Love of God (Phil Wickham & Brandon Lake)
- How Deep the Father's Love for Us (LOVKN, Isaiah Pekary)
- The Goodness of Jesus (CityAlight)





WORD

STRUCTURE OF MALACHI

6 PROPHETIC DISPUTATIONS

1

The LORD's
love

(1:1-5)



2

Faithless
priests

(1:6-2:9)



3

Faithless
people

(2:10-16)



4

The LORD's
messenger

(2:17-3:5)



5

Robbing the
LORD

(3:6-12)



6

The Day of
the LORD

(3:13-4:3)

Final charge:
Remember
the law!

(4:4-6)

Activity 1: Watch a Video

This [short Bible Project video](#) summarises the context, structure and message of the book of Malachi. After you view it, discuss the following question:

1. Based on what is depicted in the book, do you think that God's people deserved his love? Why or why not?

The Context of Malachi

- Malachi is situated some time after the rebuilding of the temple (Haggai and Zechariah), close to when Ezra and Nehemiah carried out their ministries.
- Since the completion of the temple around 515 BC, God's people living in Judah had been in a long period of waiting (around 70-80 years) with what seemed like little sign of God's active presence:
 - God's Messiah had not yet come to deliver Israel and establish the glorious kingdom.
 - God's people were still experiencing poverty and foreign domination under Persian rule.
 - The poor and oppressed of the city were being taken advantage of, and evildoers seemed to be getting off scot-free.*

* Adapted from Baldwin, Joyce G. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 28. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972.

Activity 2: Read and Discuss

Read Malachi 1:1-5 and answer Question 2

2. Given the context of God's people in the time of Malachi, why do you think that they asked God, "How have you loved us" (v.2)?

Note: Consider how *"I love you, and I have always loved you"* is one way to render the sense of God's statement in verse 2, where Hebrew perfect verb ("have loved") implies a continuous action (of loving) that began in the past and continues into the present.

Activity 3: Read & Discuss

Based on Malachi 1:2-3, answer Question 3:

3. What do you think the mention of the brotherhood between Jacob and Esau (read the context below) was meant to communicate to God's people?

Background context: Genesis tells us how God entered into a covenant with Abraham. God's covenant promises continued with Isaac. Of Isaac's two sons, he chooses Jacob (whom he later renames "Israel") and his descendants to be his people. Esau, Jacob's older twin brother, was excluded from this promise, and his descendants became the people of Edom.

Exegetical Insight 1: Does God really “hate” Esau?

- We may have problems with the word “hate”. We wonder, how is it fair for God to decide He hates Esau? And isn’t He a God of love?
- Joyce Baldwin explains: “The verb ‘hate’ is to be understood in the light of God’s electing love. The very fact that Jacob was chosen, ‘loved’, meant that Esau was rejected, ‘hated’, rejection being implicit in the exercise of choice.”*
- In other words, hated just means that God did not choose Esau. There was no personal animosity to Esau.

*Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 240.

🔍 Exegetical Insight 2: Who were the Edomites and what became of them?

- Scripture depicts a bitter history between Judah and Edom (cf. Num 20:14–21; 1 Kgs 11:14–16).
- During the Babylonian invasion of Judah in 587 BC, Edom participated in the destruction and looting of the city (e.g. Ezek. 25:12; Obad. 10–16), cutting off the escape of its inhabitants, and delivering Judean captives to Babylon (Obad. 14).*
- The entire book of **Obadiah** is about how Edom was judged for sinning against God and God's people

*Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, 203; Taylor, Richard A., and E. Ray Clendenen. *Haggai, Malachi. Vol. 21A. The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004, 209.

🔍 Exegetical Insight 2: Who were the Edomites and what became of them?

- But later in the 5th century, the city of Edom was overrun and its inhabitants gradually pushed out from their country by the Nabatean Arabs. This likely happened before the time of Malachi.*
- Even after the time of Malachi, the Edomites were also defeated by the Maccabees and their cities destroyed.**
- **Why this matters:** *We must remember that God was fair in His judgment against Edom – it wasn't arbitrary. God is a just judge! He cannot be mocked. We sow what we reap.*

*Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 240.

**Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, 203.

Activity 4: Read & Discuss

Read Malachi 1:2-5 and answer Questions 4 and 5

4. How do God's declarations against Edom in Mal 1:2-4 relate to what had happened to them in historical reality? How do they compare with what had happened with Israel's own situation during and after exile?
5. How does God's final declaration in Mal 1:5 address the reservations that Israel might have had at first?



Prayerfully reflect on your own

1. Is there pain or suffering or some other obstacles in your life that makes you doubt God's love for you?
2. What is one thing you have experienced in your life which you see as concrete evidence that God loves you?
3. What is one way you could show others the greatness of God's love to those "beyond the border" of the church today?



Share and pray for one another

- Share your reflections on the three questions with others in your small group. Be as authentic as you can be.
- Remember to keep confidence and maintain a safe space for one another.
- Pray for one another, committing what is shared to the LORD in prayer.



Additional Resources for Further Study

- Baldwin, Joyce G. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 28. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972.
- Verhoef, Pieter A. *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.
- Taylor, Richard A., and E. Ray Clendenen. *Haggai, Malachi*. Vol. 21A. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004.