

SERIES: "LAST...BUT NOT LEAST":

An In-Depth Study of MALACHI - the Final Prophet of the Old Testament Era-
PART XII - Malachi Chapter 1:1-5

"ISRAEL: A Nation Divinely Loved"

WEDNESDAY, March 18th, 2009

- I. Malachi was the LAST Old Testament book to be written. It was penned approximately 100 years after King CYRUS of Persia decreed that Judah could return to her land (in 538 B. C.).
- II. Though the Jewish faith had been reformed by the ministries of both EZRA and NEHEMIAH, by this relatively SHORT period of time both priest AND people had become alarmingly APATHETIC, INDIFFERENT and morally CORRUPT! Malachi's "role" before God was to REVEAL Judah's sins and to proclaim that Judgment would be forthcoming UNLESS the people returned to God.
- III. Though Malachi was about to unfold God's great LOVE towards Israel, he introduced his prophecy with the phrase, "The BURDEN of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi."
- IV. The significant word translated "BURDEN" is the word "MASSA" in the Hebrew which literally means: "A weighty word full of meanings."
- V. The word LORD is the name "YAHWEH" which is significant here because it represents God's COVENANT relationship with the nation - to which she was proving UNFAITHFUL!
- VI. LOVE DECLARED:
 1. God wasted no time declaring His love for Israel (v 2)
 2. The word "LOVE" is in the perfect tense in the Hebrew which means that not only HAD God loved them at some point in the PAST BUT that He continues to love them in the Present as well!
 3. 5 Aspects to God's love for Israel:
 - 1) His love is Unconditional (Deut. 7:7-8; 10:15 ; 23:5);
 - 2) His love was Sovereignly bestowed;
 - 3) His love was Everlasting (Jeremiah 31: 3 ; Is. 49:14-16);
 - 4) His love for Israel was like that of a HUSBAND to a WIFE (2:11);
 - 5) His love for Israel is like a FATHER'S love for his SON. (1:6; 3: 17) <NOTE: On 2 occasions in the Scripture God calls Israel His "SON"; Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1>
 4. The Bible pictures Israel as the "APPLE" of God's EYE (Deut. 32: 10) <Literally: the "PUPIL" of His eye>

VII. LOVE DEBATED :

1. Israel responded to God's declaration by QUESTIONING His love for them! (v 2)
2. SEVERAL POSSIBLE REASONS FOR SUCH AN ALARMING RESPONSE:
 - 1) A Misunderstanding Of The PLAN of God;
 - 2) A Lack of "PROSPERITY"
3. Though there are discernable reasons for Israel's QUESTIONING, there are no GOOD reasons! For God had already abundantly blessed them:
 - 1) With PROTECTION
 - 2) With RESTORATION of their land
 - 3) With allowing them to restore their Temple AND it's Worship
 - 4) With a great revival under Ezra and Nehemiah, and...
 - 5) With REST from their enemies.
4. OFTEN an Ungrateful Heart blinds a person (or a "people") to what God HAS bestowed upon them!

VIII. LOVE DEMONSTRATED :

1. The example of JACOB and ESAU
(NOTE: The word "HATED" is a Comparative term that is used for the purpose of demonstrating the level and quality of LOVE that God had for Israel / compare examples in Genesis 29:30 - 33; Luke 14:26; and Matthew 10:37)
(NOTE 2: Remember that "election" is according to God's "Foreknowledge")
2. The example of God's love for Israel
(NOTE: Esau represented the "Edomites" who became a fierce and arrogant people and though the Israelites were bitter at how these people had been allowed to add to their sorrows while in bondage (Psalm 137:7), God here reminds them that in His Sovereignty, He had chosen Israel - and Edom would utterly fall.)

IX. LOVE DIFFUSED :

*** In verse 5, the word "from" can also be interpreted "Beyond" - and reveals that GOD'S LOVE TRANSCENDS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND IS EXTENDED Beyond ISRAEL TO ALL NATIONS.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: