



This guide will help you facilitate a study of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. Look at the Big Idea and Takeaway for our CGs sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused. For a deeper dive into the passage, refer to the [text notes](#) on the passage.

Overview

Context of Malachi

There was a sense of expectation amongst God's people that the return from exile and rebuilding of the temple would lead to national glory, with prosperity for all and the imminent return of Messiah. In reality they were a small and subjugated nation who faced persistent opposition from their neighbours. In addition to this external pressure they also faced internal spiritual destitution. The problem of their sinful hearts persisted and the exile had done little to change them: there was rampant unfaithfulness, with severe and gross injustice.

The book of Malachi is structured around a total of six disputes between God and His people, according to their failure to remain faithful to God, their sense of disillusionment with God as they deemed Him unfaithful, unjust and not delivering them what they expected.

Yet God remains faithful towards His covenant and promises that He will one day bring about final deliverance for those that trust in Him. Malachi also looks forward to an Elijah-like figure that would return the hearts of sinful people back to God, and the ultimate fulfilment of "The day of the Lord," where there will be final judgment that would be terrible for the wicked, unfaithful Israel and non-Israelite nations, and hopeful deliverance for both faithful Israelite remnants and God-fearing Gentiles.

Big Idea

God loves His people eternally by extending forgiveness and preserving them in spite of their sin.

CG Takeaway

For our CGs to identify both explicit and subtle ways in which we measure God's love in sinful ways, and meditate on how we may abide in God's covenantal love in 2021.

Fallen Condition Focus

- Paying scant attention to what God says, to what He does in history and how He has rescued us (i.e. having a low view of what he's done in our conversion)
- Using our circumstances as a measure of God's love for us, even in the midst of painful restoration from the consequences of sin

Mal 1:2-5

The Lord's Love for Israel

2 "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob **3** but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." **4** If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the Lord of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called 'the wicked country,' and 'the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.'" **5** Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!"

Study Guide Suggested Answers

Q1. What is the past and present spiritual condition of both Israel and Edom?

- a) Israel: Refer to Malachi 1:7-14, 2:10-11, 2:17, 3:16-18
- b) Edom: Refer to Numbers 20:21, Obadiah 1:10-14

Q2. What is God's behaviour and attitude toward Edom? What are his promises regarding their future?

Q3. How is this contrasted with His treatment of Israel?

Q4a) Read about Jacob & Esau in Genesis 25:23 and Romans 9:6-18. What does God mean by the words "love" and "hate?" Why is Jacob chosen over Esau?

b) How does this apply in the nations of Israel and Edom? How is God's love for Israel vindicated in His treatment of them?

Q5. Although God declares his love for Israel, Israel doubts that God has in fact loved them (v2) based on the circumstances they were in. What are some subtle ways that we base God's love for us off our circumstances:

- a) What do we find ourselves complaining or grumbling about in our daily lives? How might that reveal how we measure God's love for us?
- b) What are we envious of, or what do we covet most that we do not have? How might that reveal how we measure God's love for us?

Q6. What is an area of suffering or struggle where we are tempted to lose sight of God's love for us? How does the passage today encourage us?

Q7a) In Q2, we identified aspects of God's punishment on Edom. How have we as Christians received the opposite of what Edom has received?

- i) I have hated (Ref to: 1 John 4:7-21, John 16:27)
- ii) "Laid waste his hill country" (Ref to 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, Hebrews 12:18-29)
- iii) "Left his heritage to jackals" (Ref to Revelation 21:5-7, 1 Peter 5:4)
- iv) "I will tear down" (Ref to John 14:1-7, Revelation 21:1-4)

- v) “Called ‘the wicked country’” (Ref to Romans 9:24-26, 1 Peter 2:4-5)
- vi) “The people with whom the Lord is angry forever” (Ref to Psalm 103:6-14, Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Q7b) How do we receive the above blessings?

Q8. What is one way that “our eyes have seen” (v5) God’s love for us in 2020? How can we continue to abide in His covenantal love for us in 2021?