

REMEMBER THIS

WEEK 1

"I Have Loved You"

WARM-UP

- Name someone you've been friends with for a long time. What's your friendship like?
- Was there a time when you had to make peace with a friend after an argument? What happened?
- Tell us about a time you were chosen for something you really wanted to do. How did it make you feel?

WORD

¹The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. 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 . . ."

MALACHI 1:1,2

(Read also **MALACHI 1:3-5**.)

The first and second groups of exiles returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and city walls. That's why, when the third group of exiles returned, they thought that life would go back to the way things were before the Exile. However, 100 years after their return, because they were still a province under the Persian Empire and not prospering, they were questioning the nature of God—His love and faithfulness to them. The Israelites began to offer flawed sacrifices, marry foreign wives and worship their gods, and withhold tithes and contributions from the Temple. Through the prophet Malachi, God reminded them that His nature had never changed. He had loved them from the beginning, and He would choose to love them until the end.

1**God has loved His chosen people from the beginning.**

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 ³but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."

MALACHI 1:2,3

The first words of the Lord in the book of Malachi are, *"I have loved you."* After the Lord chose the people of Israel, 1500 years before Malachi, He faithfully took care of them. In spite of their sin, disobedience, and stubbornness, He saved them from famine, slavery, and exile, bringing them into the the Promised Land. There can be no doubt that God chose and loved Israel from the very beginning. According to Ephesians 1:4,5, we are also God's chosen people through salvation in Jesus Christ. How has God loved you (Romans 5:8)? Share a story about this.

2 God will continue to love His chosen people.

“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!”* **MALACHI 1:4,5**

When Israel was attacked and its people sent into exile, Edom watched them fall and then gloated over them, looting the city and even turning survivors over to Babylon (Obadiah 10-14). Nevertheless, the Lord promised that Israel would still see His greatness *beyond the border of Israel*. The Lord was telling them that God loved His chosen people, Israel, and He would choose to continue loving them until the end. Through Jesus Christ, all of us who follow Him have become His chosen people. How does the Apostle Paul describe God’s love in Ephesians 3:14-19?

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APPLICATION

- Do you believe that God has chosen you from the beginning, and has chosen to love you until the end? How can you grow in your relationship with Him this week?
- Do you believe God has chosen to love and care for you in any and every situation? What is one thing you can do to remember to hear His voice and know His will more starting today?
- How can you share the story of God’s love and care to a family member or friend this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for choosing you since the very beginning, and choosing to love you until the end. Pray that you will continually remember this.
- Ask God to reveal more of Himself and His promises to you. Pray for the faith to believe that all these promises will be fulfilled.
- Pray for your family members and friends who need to know about God's faithfulness in their lives. Pray for opportunities to share God's love and care with them this week.

NOTES



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