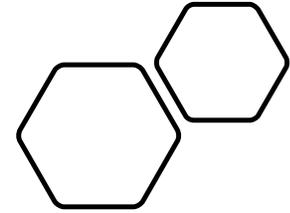
An open book is shown in a dark, slightly blurred setting. The text 'GOD IS TRUE TO HIS WORD' is overlaid on the book in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The text is contained within a white rectangular border.

**GOD IS**  
**TRUE TO HIS WORD**



*Malachi 1:1-7*

**Psalms 43:5 NIV** Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

- Downcast = Most frequently describes a person's mood: downhearted, down in the mouth, down in the dumps, just plain old down
- Have you ever been stuck in the land of downcast where you have lost your hope in God or it seems fleeting?

**Psalms 43:5 NIV** Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

- The Nation of Israel seemed to live there consistently
- This is where the Book of Malachi finds them
- Questions –
  - Does God really love me?
  - Does God really keep His promises?

## **Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO**

- Several months ago, a former executive at our company made a commitment to a third-party via email. It is obvious that he didn't research the cost of his promise, nor did he get anyone else's approval. I was not aware of the obligation until the other party brought it to our attention. When I learned that the commitment was north of six figures, I gasped.

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- Several rationalizations immediately popped into my head:
  - The executive is no longer at the company
  - He obviously didn't count the cost
  - He wasn't authorized to make this commitment
  - This project is already under water
  - This amount is not in our budget
  - I wasn't even aware of the commitment
  - Our CFO wasn't aware of the commitment

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- However, after a few moments, I remembered that our first core value at Thomas Nelson is “*Honoring God.*” We amplify this by saying that “*We honor God in everything we do.*” We then go on to describe the behaviors that express this value.
  - The fourth item on the list is this: “*We honor our commitments, even when it is difficult, expensive, or inconvenient.*”

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- That brought everything into clear focus. This was initially motivated by **Psalm 15:1,4 NIV**: Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?... who keeps an oath (*promise*) even when it hurts and does not change their mind.
  - Simply put, this means that our word is sacred.

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- Why was keeping their word important to “*Honoring God*”?
  - **Numbers 23:19 NIV**, “God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- Why was this important to “*Honoring God*”?
- **Isaiah 55:11 AMP** - So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

## Thomas Nelson Publishing - Michael Hyatt, CEO

- Why was this important to “*Honoring God*”?
  - **2nd Timothy 2:13 AMP** - If we are faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.
- What does that all mean?
  - God keeps His Word, God keeps His covenants

## What does that all mean?

- **Genesis 9:8-11 NIV**, “8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

## What does that all mean?

- **Genesis 12:1-3 NIV**, “1 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

## What does that all mean?

- This covenant was passed to Isaac, Jacob or Israel then his 12 sons (*Nation of Israel*) going forward (**Genesis 26:3, Genesis 35:1–20**)
- **Luke 22:20 NIV**, “20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’”

## What does that all mean?

- Mankind failed from Noah forward, but God has kept his Word
- Abraham failed at times, but God kept His Word to him
- Israel failed numerous times, but God kept His word to them
- And yes, we have failed and will fail God, but God keeps His Word to us

## **What does that all mean?**

- The problem is our expectations on how He will keep it and how long before we see His promises come true in our lives
- God is teaching us to have a long view of life and we as frail humans keep having a short view of life

## **What does that all mean?**

- We see this clearly in scripture as God keeps His covenant with the nation of Israel
- Israel is going to question God's love and God leads them to remember how He has already shown them His love

## Scriptures

- **Malachi 1:1-5 NIV**, “1 A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi. 2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord. “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”

## Scriptures

- **Malachi 1:1-5 NIV**, “4 Edom may say, “Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.” But this is what the Lord Almighty says: “They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. 5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, ‘Great is the Lord—even beyond the borders of Israel!’”

## Malachi

- Last of the writing prophets in Old Testament with no other until John the Baptist 400 years later
- It has been about 100 years since the first remnant arrived back in Jerusalem to rebuild temple
- They are still under domination from another nation
- The economic conditions are tough

# Malachi

- Israel has become disillusioned with God
- They are just going through the motions of doing covenant things, but their heart was far from Him
- Malachi anticipates the questions in their hearts but would never speak out loud and then He gives God's answers

## God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel

- **Verse 1**, “A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.”
  - The word prophecy is the Hebrew word for burden
- Malachi is called to perform a difficult and dangerous task to rebuke the Nation
- God had given him insight into the hearts of the people of Israel and the problems in society

## **God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel**

- It was not easy for Malachi to strip off the piety of the priest and expose their hypocrisy
- Eugene Peterson, “The task of a prophet is not to smooth things over but to make things right.”
- God does not begin with their sins but with His love

## God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel

- **Verse 2**, “I have loved you,” says the Lord.
  - The Hebrew here is to be understood as, “I have loved you (*past*). I love you (*present*) and I will continue to love you (*future*).”
- Even though their hearts were far from Him, God continued to respond to them in love

## **God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel**

- Everything from God to them flows through His love
- Even in the harsh circumstances and unmet expectations, God is responding to them through His love
- God understands the only way of blessing is obedience to the truth of His covenant, His Word
- If you want Covenant blessings there must be Covenant obedience

## **God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel**

- So often we want God to take care of a circumstance or relieve some pressure on us, when He desires to do a work that will keep you from returning to it in the future
- Does God continue to love His children even if they walk away from Him?

## God begins by stating His love for the people of Israel

- Remember the father of the prodigal son in **(Luke 15:11-31)**
- The father did not follow the son to bail him out but let him wallow in his decisions until the time of repentance
- But the father kept looking for his son on the road back and rejoiced when he saw him, when he was just a dot on the road home

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- **Verse 2b**, “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’”
- The people would never say this out loud, that would be disrespectful to God and show something in us we didn’t want revealed

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- The first sin mentioned by Malachi was the nation had lost their love for God
- It is also the first sin mentioned to the churches in Revelation
  - **Revelation 2:4 AMP**, “4 But I have this [charge] against you, that you have left your first love [you have lost the depth of love that you first had for Me].

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- God does not love me, so why should I love and respect Him
- This is the source of all other sins in their lives
- They are accusing God of not keeping His side of the covenant and their proof is their current circumstances
- Thus, in their minds, they are justified to respond to God as they were doing

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- God through Isaiah promised their nation restored and that has not happened
- God through Isaiah promised prosperity and they still struggle economically
- God has promised His protection against drought, pestilence, and disease, but that seems to be the norm now

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- God is keeping His side of the covenant; it is His covenant people not keeping theirs
- They are still trying to manipulate God and get His blessing while living as they want

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- There’s a scene in Monty Python’s “The Life of Brian” where the rebel group of Jews called the People’s Front of Judea complain about the presence of the Romans, saying, “They’ve taken everything we have and what have they ever done for us?!”
  - Then one of the rebels mentions the aqueduct that the Romans built, and they all reluctantly agree that the Romans did build them an aqueduct.

**The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- “The Life of Brian”
  - Another mentions sanitation, and again they agree.
  - After several more things are mentioned, their leader says, “All right, apart from the aqueduct, sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?!” What have you done for me lately?

## **The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”**

- We always want more, we’re always complaining in our heart
- We forget to thank God for the prayer He did answer, and continue to worry about the prayer He hasn’t yet answered
- We want God to be a cosmic genie in a bottle who grants our every wish

## The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”

- Jesus said in **John 6**, you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled
  - What have you done for me lately?
- We forget God uses life’s difficulties draw us closer to Him and that’s right where we need to be
- Ultimately, we want to be closer to Him not for what He can give to us, but because of who He is

## The people would have responded, “What have you done for us lately?”

- Let’s love and worship God for who He is and not what He’s done for us lately
- John Piper has said, “God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him.”
- So, what is the answer?
  - **Revelation 2:5 NIV**, “Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”

## God instructs them is to remember and observe

- Malachi instructs them to remember God's love by looking at what God has already blessed them with
- God's response was a question, "Was not Esau Jacob's (*twin*) brother?"
  - Was not Esau the firstborn?
- God reminds them of the origin of their nation

## **God instructs them is to remember and observe**

- God chose Jacob to continue the covenant with Abraham
- It has been more than 1,500 years, observe the difference in the two paths of the brothers
- Esau and his descendants became Edom, but they did not continue to follow God through His covenant with Abraham and became a wicked nation just like all the others

## **God instructs them is to remember and observe**

- Hear God say to them, “I demonstrated my love you by choosing you out of all the other nations to be my people.”

## God instructs them is to remember and observe

- **Deuteronomy 7:7-8 NIV**, “7 The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

## **God instructs them is to remember and observe**

- You would not be here now, if not for my love for you and dedication to my Word given you
- You would not have the promises found in the Covenant
- You would not have an eternal hope for a future
- You would not know me as Lord
- You would not have my Word, my protection, and my promises

## God instructs them is to remember and observe

- You would have gone the way of Esau and been destroyed
- If not for My grace, there would be you
- But because I love you, you are here
- **Psalms 103:2 NIV**, “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—“
- Ronald Reagan, “It's hard, when you're up to your armpits in alligators, to remember you came here to drain the swamp.”

## **God instructs them is to remember and observe**

- Remember what God has done in your life
- He gave us the opportunity to be brought back into a loving relationship with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus and all that goes with that
- He made a new covenant with us through the work of Jesus

## **God instructs them is to remember and observe**

- He gives us hope and a sure future
- If God did nothing else for us good from our perspective, we would still have to shout, “We are blessed and loved by God Almighty!”

## **God told the nation of Israel I love you and I have demonstrated it over the decades**

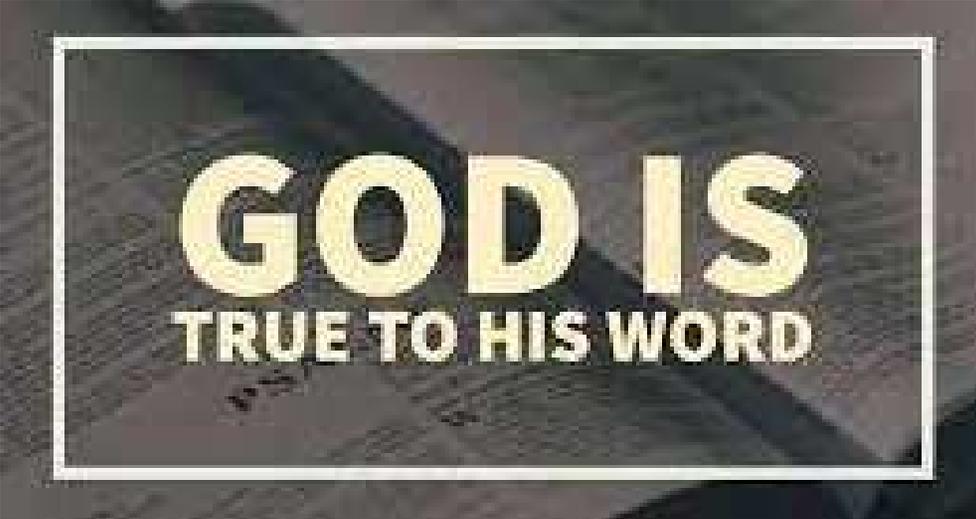
- God was a long time in telling humanity that He loved them, but He demonstrated it long before He said it
- Saying it makes little difference if there is no action behind it demonstrating the statement is true
- God demonstrated it through His Son Jesus and the sin substitute He became for us

## God told the nation of Israel I love you and I have demonstrated it over the decades

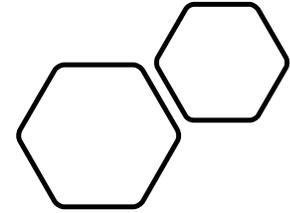
- **John 3:16-18 NIV**, “16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only (*unique*) Son, that whoever believes in him shall not (*eternally*) perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

**God told the nation of Israel I love you and I have demonstrated it over the decades**

- **1<sup>st</sup> John 3:1 AMP**, “See what an incredible quality of love the Father has shown to us, that we would [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! **And that is what we are!** “

An open book is shown in a dark, slightly blurred setting. The text 'GOD IS TRUE TO HIS WORD' is overlaid in a bright yellow, bold, sans-serif font. The book's pages are visible, showing some text but it is not legible.

**GOD IS**  
**TRUE TO HIS WORD**



*Malachi 1:1-7*