

Malachi Chapter 1

Introduction:

Authorship: Malachi (Messenger) We know almost nothing about him apart from what he actually wrote. No information about his call, heritage or history, his family, upbringing - not a thing. Anything we could say about him would be pure speculation.

- With regard to the various prophets, it's not important who they are, what is important is the Word from God that they are to relate to us. The message is more important than the messenger.

Background: Malachi is the last "messenger" of the Old Testament. In our English Bibles, Malachi is the last book of the OT, but in the Jewish Bible 2 Chronicles is considered the last book of the Bible. This is because all the prophets prophesied during the time span of 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles.

- Malachi prophesied when the children of Israel had returned from their Babylonian captivity and were rebuilding the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was leading the people, Malachi was speaking for & representing God to the people. They hadn't fallen back into idolatry, but they made other compromises, which led to others. They began to put away their wives and marry foreign women. The priesthood had been defiled, they had begun to oppress the poor, they slacked off in their support of the Temple, meaning their tithes and offerings, and offered God substandard sacrifices. Their passion and zeal for the Lord was fading, cooling.
- After Malachi's prophecy there were about 400 years of silence from God. Malachi prophecy's about the coming of Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD. The next prophetic word after Malachi is of John the Baptist coming in the spirit and the power of Elijah who would be the last prophet of the OT speaking for God after this long period of silence.

Type: Prophetic, last of the "minor" prophets. This book, divided up into 4 chapters has 55 verses total, in 47 of those verses God is the One speaking, this is a higher percentage than any other book of the Bible.

Time Written: 450-400 BC.

- It is generally thought that Malachi lived about 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah; and that he was associated with Ezra and Nehemiah in their reforms.
- The first group / remnant had returned from captivity at about 536 BC under the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah, they had re-built the Temple from 520-516

BC. Then 60 years later in 457 BC, Ezra came to help reestablish the nation. Then 13 years later in 444 BC, Nehemiah came, and rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem.

- By Malachi's time the Jews had been home from Babylon for about 100 years, seemingly cured of their idolatry but prone to neglect the house of God. The priests had become lax and degenerate, the sacrifices had become inferior, the tithes were neglected, and the people and priests had compromised and began marrying the pagan Gentile women from the Canaanites, Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites around them.
- So, the Jews, favored of God above all nations, discouraged by their weakness, and now married to their sins, had settled down, in a spiritually lethargic state of mind, to await the coming of the Promised Messiah. Malachi assured them that the Messiah would indeed come, but that it would mean judgment for their sins.

Theme: While Malachi's prominent message was the **rebuke** of the remnant and the announcement of future purging and blessing, the keynote of his prophesy appears to be the unchangeableness of God, and His unceasing love.

Key Verses:

Malachi 1:2 "I have loved you, says the LORD..."

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change;..."

Written to: Israel, the nation as a whole, to Judah & the Northern kingdom.

- All the other prophetic books of the Bible end with an encouragement of what the future brings. Malachi stands alone in that it is the only prophetic book of the Bible that ends with a warning of the judgment to come.
- Malachi's message regarding the sins of the saints is particularly applicable for the saints of our age.

V: 1 The "burden" or the "oracle" of the Word:

- Malachi was given a Word to speak to Israel, God laid it on Malachi's heart:

Paul:

1 Corinthians 9:16 "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"

- The message is to "Israel" - The name given to Jacob & the nation after he "struggled with God and prevailed" - meaning to those who are intended to be governed by God.

- This message is not to the pagan world but to God's children, Israel.

V: 2 The first Word spoken to the nation through the prophet is *"I have loved you, says the LORD."* First thing He wants them to know is that "I love you!"

Jeremiah 31:3 "The LORD has appeared of old to me saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

- Through the many generations God has been so faithful, kind, and loving to His children. He is a loving God, because He is love.

1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

- They initially thought that when they got back to the land, they would establish themselves, they'd become a great nation again, and they'd just wait for the Messiah to come.
- But since arriving back in Jerusalem the remnant had faced many difficult challenges, it was a hard life. They had begun to question God's love, so He affirms His love for them.

V: 2b-3 Some people have a problem with God hating Esau. They should have more of a problem with God loving Jacob!

- God goes on to describe His love for Jacob in comparison to His love for Esau, which even though they were brothers, His love for Jacob far exceeded His love for Esau which looked like hatred in comparison.

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

- Our love for God must be so great that in comparison to our love for family would appear to be hatred in comparison.
- God's love for Israel was so very great. He blessed them, He prospered them - but Esau was never blessed quite that way.

Obadiah 18 "The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau, for the LORD has spoken."

- The mountains of Esau will be laid waste, and his descendants left in the open field for the jackals.

V: 4 The Edomites may declare that they're going to come back and re-build, but God will not allow that. God will see to it that they are thrown down, their's will be called the territory of wickedness.

Psalm 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

Proverbs 21:30 "There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the LORD."

Romans 9:11-13 "11For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls, 12it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger," 13As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

- God points out, here were these twin brothers, but their destinies were to be so different. The Edomites who are the descendants of Esau are to be wiped out their land is to be desolate. They may try to rebuild it but it won't work it's going to remain a wilderness. And to the present day the area of Edom, is just barren wilderness as God declared. So it has been. And you go over there today and you see a silent testimony to the faithfulness of the Word of God.
- Jacob / Israel on the other hand will be blessed, they will receive the Messiah and they have a glorious future being blessed of God.
- God affirms His love through His election. I chose you, I chose Jacob. And so it stands not by the works of man but by God's choice, by God's election. And so the race of Edomites were ultimately exterminated they no longer exist, they have been thrown down by God.
- God has said that He has loved Israel with an everlasting love; contrasting that the descendants of Esau are on the other end of that scale, that He will have indignation against them forever.

V: 5 As all of this comes to pass, "*Your eyes shall see...*" (we have seen it!)

"The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel" - Here in Susanville, CA!

Psalm 58:10-11 "10The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, 11so that men will say, surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely He is God who judges in the earth."

- Certainly make you want to be one of the "elect!" (It's our choice as well!)

V: 6 This is the beginning of the rebuke to the remnant:

- The first sin that Malachi points out is their lack of love, He loves them, but they don't love Him.

Revelation 2:4 “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

Shema:

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

- They had been reciting this for centuries; but now the words rang hollow from their lips, they no longer meant it.
- It is normal for a son to honor his father, (^{5th} Commandment) or for a servant to honor his master - why haven't you honored Me? Says the Lord.
- Why should the God of all creation even have to say this!?

Proverbs 28:14 “Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.”

- The people and the priests haven't honored God or given Him true reverence, they have despised His name.

Proverbs 3:5-10 “⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. ⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. ⁸It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. ⁹Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits all your increase; ¹⁰So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”

V:7-8 “Defiled food” - referencing the meal / grain offering. Shortcuts in the process, not the firstfruits, the left overs.

- The priests were to offer the best of the flocks, the first fruits, without blemish yet they've brought the sick, the lame, and blind - essentially the castoffs.

Deuteronomy 15:21 “But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God.”

- Had they offered the same to the king or the governor he would have dealt with them.
- It was their attitude as much as the inferior substance of what they offered that defiled their offering. (We need to watch our own attitude! Why are we doing what we do?)

Genesis 4:3-5 “³And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and His offering, ⁵But He did not respect Cain and his offering...”

1 Samuel 15:22-23 “²²... Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He also has rejected you...”

Hosea 8:13 “For the sacrifices of My offerings they sacrifice flesh and eat it, but the LORD does not accept them, now He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins, they shall return to Egypt.” (Bondage)

V: 9 Entreat, seek the Lord - and His forgiveness! Repent!

James 4:6 “... God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Do you really think you can act this way and that God will accept what you're doing?

Romans 8:8 “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Psalms 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these O God, You will not despise.”

V: 10 You may as well close the doors to this Temple on not kindle a fire upon the altar in vain - I have no pleasure in it, nor will I accept your offerings. (Unless they repent!)

- They are kind of back to square 1:

Isaiah 1:10-20 (Turn to / read)

- He will not accept an offering from their hands...

Isaiah 59:1-2 “¹Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

- Observation: One generation built the Temple, but it was another generation down the road that had now compromised and lost their fervor for the LORD. We must train and influence the next generation.

V: 11 If you won't glorify My name, if you won't bring an acceptable sacrifice - the Gentiles will.

Luke 19:40 "... I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

- Pure offering? Jesus! No more sacrifices.

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth."

"My name shall be great among the Gentiles;" - "For My name shall be great among the nations."

Psalms 113:3 "From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD's name is to be praised."

Isaiah 60:3, 5 "The Gentiles shall come to your light, (Jesus) and kings to the brightness of your rising." - "Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you."

- God has indeed poured out His Spirit upon the nations, upon the church and here we are tonight in partial fulfillment of this prophecy - worshipping Him!

V: 12-13 On the contrary, you profane My name. They say "we are God's people" but they don't act like it.

Ephesians 5:8 "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."

1 John 1:4-5 "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."

"Oh, what a weariness..."

1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

- When you love the one you're serving it no longer work.
- What are they sneering at? God's Word!

Proverbs 13:13 "He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded."

- We either have a high view of God's Word, or we have a low view of God's Word - which will determine everything else we believe and do in life.

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "16All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

- Because of your low view of My Word you've been bringing stolen offerings, the lame, sick, blind - like God would accept that from them! They may as well have brought road kill and offered that to the Lord!

V: 14 Now under the law, they were to offer only the male animals as sacrifices. They weren't to offer a female unless they had no male at all and then they could offer a female.

Burnt offering:

Leviticus 1:3 "If his offering is a burnt offering sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD."

- **Burnt offering:** (Olah) An offering of consecration, and offering of dedication of my life to God. "Lord I consecrate my life to you" – a person would do that with a burnt offering.

Leviticus 3:6 "If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD is of the flock, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish."

- **Peace Offering:** (Zebach Shelamin) The offering of communion or fellowship. With the peace offering, the meat was roasted, and you got a portion of it and God got a portion of it.
- Now here they were seeking to deceive saying that they didn't have any males in their flock when they actually did. So besides lying they were vowing and sacrificing unto the Lord a corrupt thing. Hypocrisy at it's highest!

"For I am a great King!"

- Again, why should the God of all creation even have to say this!?

Psalm 95:3 “For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods.”

Psalm 68:35 “O God, You are ore awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be God!”

Isaiah 44:6 “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and His redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.”

Revelation 19:16 “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Proverbs 9:10 “For the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”