

# “Journey through the Bible”

## “*Malachi: Hope in the END*”

We have now come to the last book of the Old Testament, the twelfth and last book of the Minor Prophets. Its placement in the Bible represents the correct chronological order. The prophet Malachi delivers God’s last words recorded in the Old Testament to Israel; forming a bridge between the Old and New Testaments.

Haggai and Zechariah rebuked the Israelites for their failure to rebuild the Temple. Malachi confronts them for their spiritual neglect of the Temple, false and profane worship. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and Ezra the Temple was reconstructed and Temple worship was restored. The Jews believed with the reconstruction of the Temple would also come the restoration of God’s glory, as in the days of Solomon. They renewed the covenant and vowed to keep the covenant laws of God (Neh. 10). They anticipated the Messianic age would be ushered in and Jerusalem would again become the world’s political center, as in the days of David. Roughly one-hundred years after the Temple had been rebuilt, what they were expecting had yet to happen. As a result, they started to become apathetic, complacent, and indifferent in their commitment to God.

### Who was Malachi:

Malachi shares no family information or significant dates, nor does he share any political (who is the King?), or spiritual names (other prophets), that help the reader. It seems best from his oracles to think of him as a contemporary of Nehemiah. They share similar concerns on the spiritual condition of the returnees.

- Mixed Marriages: Mal. 2:11 cf. Neh. 13:23-31
- Failure to bring offerings to the Temple: Mal. 3:8-10 cf. Neh. 13:10-14

Nehemiah was called to return to the Persian court, then later he returned back to Jerusalem (Neh. 13:6). It is likely that a new Persian king ordered Nehemiah back to Persia, before letting him again return. There is reason to believe that Malachi was written after Nehemiah’s second return to the Holy City. The temple and wall around Jerusalem have clearly already been rebuilt, and Temple worship resumed. Malachi is sometimes referred to as the “Socrates” of the prophets. This stems from his rhetorical “question” dialect. This became a very common teaching style later in Judaism, a style Jesus also commonly used.

The name “Malachi” means “*My Messenger*” or “*messenger of the Lord.*” From his writing, it is believed that Malachi was also a “priest.” Anonymous to the reader, but chosen by God!

### Outline:

- I. Introduction to the prophecy 1:1
- II. God's first dispute with the people 1:2–5
- III. God's dispute with the priests 1:6–2:9
  - A. His causes against the priests 1:6–14
  - B. His commandment to the priests 2:1–9
- IV. God's second dispute with the people 2:10–17
  - A. The prophet's question 2:10
  - B. The prophet's accusation 2:11–17
    - 1. Judah has dealt treacherously with their brothers 2:11, 12
    - 2. Judah has dealt treacherously with their wives 2:13–16
    - 3. Judah has dealt treacherously with the Lord 2:17
- V. God's dispatch of the purifying messenger 3:1–6
  - A. The effects of his coming on Levi (the priesthood) 3:2, 3
  - B. The effects of his coming on Judah and Jerusalem 3:4
  - C. The effects of his coming on God 3:5, 6
- VI. God's third dispute with the people 3:7–15
  - A. Concerning keeping the statutes of the Lord 3:7–12
  - B. Concerning their arrogance against God 3:13–15
- VII. The remnant's repentance 3:16–18
  - A. Their repentance expressed 3:16a
  - B. Their repentance accepted 3:16b–18
- VIII. The coming judgment 4:1–6
  - A. The arrogant and evildoer destroyed 4:1
  - B. The righteous delivered 4:2, 3
  - C. The exhortation to remember Moses 4:4
  - D. The promise to send Elijah 4:5, 6<sup>1</sup>

Malachi is a collection of six prophecies, six charges God brings against His people. They are identified by “questions.” A question is asked, and then an answer is given.

**EXAMPLE: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.”**

### **Lessons from Malachi:**

#### **1. God's LOVE never changes: 1:1-5**

Notice BEFORE God began to deal with Jacob's sinfulness, He reaffirmed His LOVE for Jacob! It was God's love for Jacob that caused Him to raise up a prophet to tell them of their sin, disobedience, iniquity, and immorality.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*King James Version study Bible\*](#). (1997). (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God's LOVE for us does not depend upon our performance or upon circumstances, it is totally unconditional. This is shown through the prophet **Hosea**. Here God is pictured through the faithful love of a husband (Hosea), for an unfaithful, idolatrous wife (Gomer). Despite our sinfulness, God's love is unchanging, unconditional, undeserved, and unwavering.

- The Hebrew term for "love" here means "ardent love"; enthusiastic / passionate / strong attachment too...

Israel asks, "...In what way have You loved us?" – vs. 2

<b>The GRACE of God's LOVE:</b>	Deuteronomy 7:7-8 / Jeremiah 31:3
<b>The GOODNESS of God's LOVE:</b>	<i>Ignorance / Ingratitude / Indifference</i>
<b>The GREATNESS of God's LOVE:</b>	God promises that His people would "see" His love (vs. 5). To "see with understanding..."

God chose "Jacob" as an act of His sovereign will, grace, and mercy. God does not "hate" Esau; this was hyperbole, an exaggerated statement in communicating a point. God chose "Jacob", and through his progeny God would form His people (12 Tribes of Israel).

➤ *Like Israel, as we look back over our lives we too can SEE God's LOVE!*

## 2. Our Response to God's LOVE is WORSHIP:

Three lessons on WORSHIP:

A. God is worthy of HONOR: 1:6

\*The term "honor" speaks of something that is *heavy or weighty*. A son that **honors** his father means, he understands how much weight his father carries, how important he is, he recognizes his authority.

- **We HONOR God by recognizing His authority and importance in our lives.**

B. God will NOT be HAPPY with less than our best: 1:8-9, 12-14

\*The priests were presenting offerings in violation of the law. They were offering sacrifices that were stolen, crippled, diseased, and injured. The LAW said they were only to offer animals without defect or blemish (Ex. 12:5, 29:1; Lev. 1:3, 22:20-21, 25).

\*Malachi calls for them to offer such sacrifices to the "governor." **If these sacrifices failed to meet the standards of an earthly governor, how could they meet the standards of a Holy God?**

- ❖ **God is not fooled by our second best!**

C. God will refuse HALF-HEARTED Worship: 1:10-11

Worship that fails to acknowledge God is worse than no worship at all!

### 3. Spiritual Leaders Lead in Worship: 2:1-9

God will CURSE spiritual leaders who refuse to honor and obey Him (2:1-3). God will HONOR those who walk in spiritual integrity (2:4-7).

5 Marks of True Spiritual Leadership:

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|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Reverence:                  | vs. 5 |
| 2. Reliable:                   | vs. 6 |
| 3. Integrity:                  | vs. 6 |
| 4. Communion with God:         | vs. 6 |
| 5. Evangelistic Effectiveness: | vs. 6 |
| 6. Scriptural Knowledge:       | vs. 7 |
| 7. Respect:                    | vs. 7 |

The “priests” departed from God’s way (vs. 8). They destroyed the faith of others (vs. 8). They deviated from God’s standards for material gain (vs. 9). As a result, the BLESSING of the Lord was not upon Israel.

### 4. Our Marriage Relationship is a Form of Worship: 2:10-16

Malachi reveals one of the most elevated views of marriage in the entire Old Testament. He identifies “marriage” as a covenant. He recalls God’s word to them concerning marrying unbelievers (Ezra 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Some were divorcing their wives and marrying pagan women. As a result, their prayers and worship was nullified (2:13-14).

### 5. Our GIVING is a form of Worship: 3:6-11

How we manage our money is a form of worship unto God. When we withhold what is rightfully God’s, we walk out from underneath His protective covering.

\*The Hebrew term for “rob” means *“premeditated thievery by force*. It seems unthinkable that someone would ROB God, a benevolent and generous heavenly Father. However, the people’s disobedience caused the blessings of the Lord to be shut off.

### 6. Worship brings us to His Healing Wings: 4:2-3

- He is Jehovah-Tsidkenu – Jesus our Righteousness
- He is Jehovah-Jireh – Jesus our Provider
- He is Jehovah-Nissi – Jesus our Victory

### 7. Worship connects the Family: 4:5-6

“Elijah” here foretold of the coming of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14).

Malachi was God’s “messenger”, he prophesied of a messenger to come (John the Baptist), who prophesied of the Messiah to come- JESUS! **HOPE in the END!**