

Malachi Notes

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Introduction:

Malachi means “my messenger.” We have no more information about this man.

- The similarity between Malachi and Nehemiah indicate a similar time period, coming about 400 BC. This is a time when the walls have been built, the temple worship has resumed, and the people are settling into a spiritual lukewarm-ness.

Of the 55 verses in Malachi, 47 are voiced directly from God in the first person. (This is the highest percentage of the OT prophets.)

Chapter 1:

1:2 – “I have loved you” – The beginning of God’s final statement to Israel in the OT.

- “In what way have You loved us?” – They want proof of God’s love.
 - They are in apostasy and yet at the same time still consistently contradicting God’s words in this book.

1:2-3 – “Jacob I have loved...Esau I have hated” – God’s sovereign election. (Rom. 9:13)

- The question is not “why would God hate Esau,” but “why would God love Jacob?”

1:3 – “hated” – The translation for this word is difficult because the Hebrew speaks of comparison. The idea is something like, “loved to a lesser degree than the other.”

1:4 – “Edom” – Descendants of Esau. They were perennial enemies of Israel.

- Edom was deported by Babylon at the same time when Nebuchadnezzar took Judah.
- “we will return and build” – This seems to be self-will and self-strength.
 - Israel is rebuilding too, but “not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.” (Zech. 4:6).
- “They may build” – “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Ps. 127:1)
- “I will throw down” – God will not allow Edom to be reestablished in their land.

1:5 – “beyond the borders of Israel” – One of the best ways to see God’s blessing on us is to compare our lives with those who are reaping the consequences of a disobedient life.

1:6 – “father...master” – God is both of these to the nation of Israel.

- “despise My name” – God is feeling despised and they don’t even know it.
- “In what way” – They are spiritually blind as a result of their hypocrisy.

1:7 – “contemptible” – They are serving out of obligation and not out of love.

- Does our service make a mockery of God’s sacrifice?

1:8 – “blind...lame” – The Law required the sacrifices to be without spot or blemish. (Lev. 22:18-23; Deut. 15:21) The people are giving leftovers.

- David’s heart was not to sacrifice to the Lord that which cost him nothing. (2 Sam. 24:24) Here the people are doing just that.
- “Offer it then to your governor” – We wouldn’t treat most people with as much disrespect as we do God.

1:10 – “shut the doors” – God would rather the Temple not be used at all, rather than to be used this way.

1:11 – “even to its going down” – God is concluding the OT in His faithfulness.

- “great among the Gentiles” – God will get glory from Gentiles.
- “incense” – Rev. 5:8 speaks of the prayers of the saints rising before the Lord as incense.

1:12 – “the table of the Lord” – They are making a mockery of sacrifice, which was to be the purest form of worship, pointing to the innocent substitute offered on our behalf.

- God is looking for us to reflect the heart of His Son who died for us.

1:13 – “what a weariness” – At this point, the worship and service of the Lord has become a burden to God’s people. It may be that the religious leaders have made it a burden.

- “you sneer at it” – As they did in 1 Sam. 2:15-17.

1:14 – “the deceiver” – The hypocrite.

- “For I am a great King” – No one else was speaking this message or acting like God is a great king, so He has to declare it of Himself.
 - It is sad that God has to say that about Himself.
- “to be feared” – He is awesome!

Chapter 2:

Ch. 2 – The priests and the people are unfaithful to their covenants.

2:3 – “refuse” – The offal and entrails of the sacrifice.

2:4 – “Levi” – The line of the priests. (Exod. 32)

2:5 – “covenant...of life and peace” – This goes beyond the mere blood of bulls and goats.

2:7 – “messenger of the Lord” – The attitude and activity of a minister is to deliver to the people a message from the Lord of His Word.

2:8 – “stumble at the law” – Ungodly priests are driving people from the Lord.

- “corrupted the covenant of Levi” – They are not fulfilling their promises.

2:9 – “shown partiality” – By only teaching and living certain parts of God’s Word.

2:10 – “one Father” – The reason for unity among the people of God.

2:11 – “Lord’s holy institution” – Marriage.

- God’s holiness should be reflected in all the relationships and activities of our lives.
- “married the daughter of a foreign god” – Being unequally yoked. (2 Cor. 6:14)
 - As Judah is rebuilding Jerusalem, the men start to take Moabite wives. (Neh. 13:23-27)

2:12 – “being awake and aware” – Their marriages are falling apart, yet they say their religious life is just fine.

- 2:13 – “weeping and crying” – Ostentatious shows of religion, but in hypocrisy. (Heb. 10:4)
- This is like the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.
- 2:14 – “companion” – The friendship deepens as the years go by.
- “your wife by covenant” – Marriage is not based on emotion, but on the vow made between husband and wife.
- 2:15 – “godly offspring” – The children are most affected by the divorce of their parents.
- “take heed to your spirit” – “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it flow the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23)
 - “deal treacherously” – God sees divorce as an act of treachery.
- 2:16 – “God hates divorce” – He sees it as an act of violence.
- God is affected by divorce, but so is the Body of Christ.
- 2:17 – “wearied the Lord with your words” – It is amazing to see the one in rebellion against the Lord continually blame-shifting the responsibility.
- “Where is the God of justice?” – People misinterpret the longsuffering of God for His approval, but the judgment will come in His time. (2 Pet. 3:9)

Chapter 3:

- 3:1 – “my messenger...he will prepare the way before Me” – Speaking of John the Baptist. (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27; see also Isa. 40:3)
- In Matt. 17:11, Jesus said that Elijah shall come and that he has come already. In the same way that Jesus has 2 comings, Elijah also has 2 comings.
 - “His temple” – This infers the deity of Christ.
 - “the Messenger of the covenant” – The Messiah.
 - This verse mixes the first and second coming of the Messiah.
- 3:2 – “the day of His coming” – Speaking of the second coming of Christ.
- 3:3 – “purge them” – John the Baptist offered a baptism unto repentance.
- 3:5 – “sorcerers” – In the New Testament, sorcery is associated with mind-altering drugs.
- “wage earners” – The less fortunate.
 - “they do not fear Me” – The root of all these problems. (Jer. 2:19)
- 3:6 – “not consumed” – His people will be chastened, but not destroyed.
- 3:7 – “from the days of your fathers” – They have been rebellious for a long time.
- “Return to Me” – He extends this offer despite their failures.
- 3:8-12 – This message about tithing is in the context of returning to God.

3:8 – “rob God” – They are stealing from God.

- If someone steals from a Church, we think those people are pretty low. But people steal from God every week by not giving Him what He deserves.
- “tithes” – Plural. For Israel this meant more than 10%.
 - The root of tithing was established before the nation of Israel with Abraham and Melchizedek and Jacob at the stairway to heaven.
 - In the NT, the word “tithe” is used 3 times (twice in the gospels, once in Hebrews). Each time it is reference to legalism and the OT. “Giving” is the principle for the NT church. (2 Cor. 9:6-8)
 - God asks us to give, not to raise money but to raise children.
- “offerings” – Plural. For Israel, these were sacrifices.

3:10 – “Bring all the tithes” – The worship of the Temple is being neglected because their priest are working to support themselves rather than working full-time at the Temple. (Neh. 13:10-13)

- “storehouse” – Speaking of the Temple.
- “food in My house” – The meat from the sacrifices.
- “try Me” – This is one way God proves Himself to His people.
- “blessing” – Giving is an issue of Lord-ship, not just an issue of money. And if we yield to His Lord-ship, He can bless us as He desires.

3:11 – “the devourer” – In the context, this is referring to the locusts and drought keeping the people from enjoying a harvest.

- Many turn this around to be referring to Satan. They say if we tithe, God will protect us from Satan. (It is kind of like paying off the mafia.)

3:13 – “Yet you say” – They are constantly challenging the righteousness of God’s judgment.

- “What have we spoken” – The 7th question in Malachi.

3:14 – “It is useless to serve God” – They are telling the people that the motivation for giving is to get from God. This promotes spiritual selfishness from the people.

- “What profit” – The treasure in heaven is our profit.

3:15 – “those who do wickedness are raised up” – This is the problem of the prosperity of the wicked.

3:16 – “spoke” – The language implies “often.”

- “listened” – Lit. “to stand up, to perk up.”
- “heard” – Lit. “to bend down to listen.”
- “a book of remembrance” – In the middle of a group of apathetic and insincere religious people of Israel, God takes note of those who look to Him. (Heb. 10:24)
- “meditate” – Lit. “regard, esteem.”
 - God notes are thinking as well as our speaking.

Chapter 4:

4:1 – “burn them up” – Referring to those who rejecting the coming Messiah.

4:3 – “trample the wicked” – Trampling out the vintage of the grapes of His wrath. (Rev. 14:17-20)

4:4 – “Remember the Law” – As God concludes the OT.

4:5 – “Elijah” – John the Baptist ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah. (Luke 1:17)

- Elijah will also return to testify during the Tribulation period. (Rev. 11:3)

4:6 – “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children” – The work of God in our lives is most clearly seen in the context of our family.

- “For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5)
- “Lest” – The word of God’s grace.
- “curse” – Lit. “to obliterate completely.”