

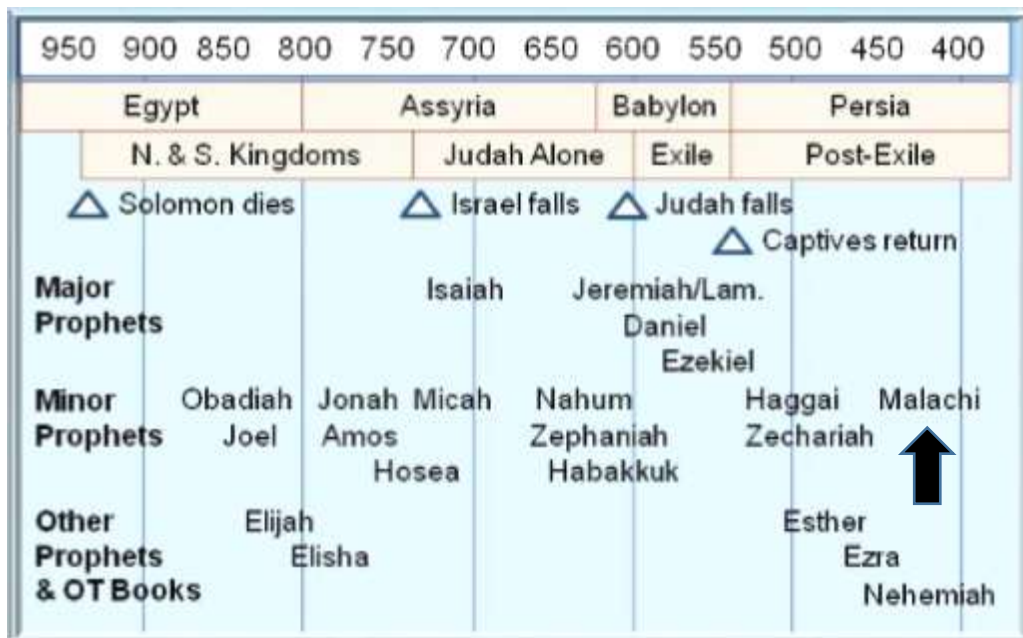
Malachi

God has been faithful to Israel, but they continue to live apart from him, today you might say they were going through the motions. So God sends Malachi to challenge them. Prophecies the calling and inclusion of the gentiles, and the soon coming of Christ.

Author: Malachi, Jewish tradition strongly claims he was member of “the Great Synagogue”, along with Haggai and Zechariah. The Great Synagogue was a group of scribes, prophets and leaders who organized religious life and culture after the Babylonian exile. Collecting and adding the Minor Prophets into the rest of the Old Testament Canon. *The TaNaKh. (Talmud, Nevi'im, Ketuvim)*

In Malachi – Jesus is the Son of Righteousness who brings healing in His Wings

Malachi 4:2 "But for you who reverence My name, the sun of righteousness will rise
with healing in its wings."



TEACHER: 4 CHAPTERS

Israel (Judah) was in exile for 70 years. 2 Generations have matured and a 3rd generation was beginning. (According to Jeremiah 29). The 10 tribes of the northern kingdom were taken captive from their inheritance around 200 years earlier. They never returned, but maintained their cultural distinctions as descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the lands where they were scattered. Josephus commented on a large population of these tribes beyond the Euphrates 50 years after Christ. These people would eventually become much of the early church, for they too had a messianic belief system and also were waiting for the “Great Day of The Lord.”

After the Babylonians who had taken Judah captive were overthrown by Cyrus the Great (Persian Empire) in 539 B.C. the Judeans were permitted to return to their homeland. They rebuilt the temple and walls around Jerusalem, and re-started animal sacrifice, along with Levitical law being enforced. Now a few decades later, Israel is starting to backslide and God speaks to a prophet named Malachi.

CH. 1

STUDENT:

This is a prophecy. It is the LORD's message to Israel through Malachi.

² "Israel, I have loved you," says the LORD. (NIRV)

TEACHER:

God loves us. God loves Israel. He loved them then, He loves them today. But God has standards. He starts cleaning house, with "His house", the Temple in Jerusalem.

Read this next passage very carefully, it hits very hard.

STUDENT:

⁶ The LORD Almighty says to the priests, "Children honor their parents, and servants honor their masters. I am your father—why don't you honor me? I am your master—why don't you respect me? You despise me, and yet you ask, 'How have we despised you?' ⁷ This is how—by offering worthless food on my altar. Then you ask, 'How have we failed to respect you?' I will tell you—by showing contempt for my altar. ⁸ When you bring a blind or sick or lame animal to sacrifice to me, do you think there's nothing wrong with that? Try giving an animal like that to the governor! Would he be pleased with you or grant you any favors?" (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁹ Now, you priests, try asking God to be good to us. He will not answer your prayer, and it will be your fault. ¹⁰ The LORD Almighty says, "I wish one of you would close the Temple doors so as to prevent you from lighting useless fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you; I will not accept the offerings you bring me. (GNT)

TEACHER:

What do we give to God? The best or what's left? God say's He would rather have the doors closed to His house than suffer this patronizing worship. Where else have we heard this?

The Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14-22. "I wish you were either hot or cold, but because you are lukewarm I will spit you out of my mouth."

We must self-assess. We must search our hearts and motives and actions. Psalm 139:23,
"Search me o God, and know my heart; try me....."

"If we don't govern ourselves, we will be governed. If we don't control ourselves, we will be controlled by someone or something else." DH

STUDENT:

As your offering to me you bring a stolen animal or one that is lame or sick. Do you think I will accept that from you? ¹⁴ A curse on the cheater who sacrifices a worthless animal to me, when he has in his flock a good animal that he promised to give me! For I am a great king, and people of all nations fear me." (GNT)

TEACHER:

Does this apply to us? New Testament Christians? New Covenant? Yes. Acts 5:1-11. Ananias and Sapphira. They purposed and testified to give 100%, but held back 10%. It was in their power to keep it all. Keep your word. Keep your word. Keep your word. If you don't care what you say, why should God or anybody else. If your word doesn't matter to you, why should it matter to me, or your husband, or your wife, or your kids? The 1st sin committed in the Bible is a lie, and the last sin mentioned in the Bible is a lie.

This last book in the Old Testament is not hard by accident. It is hard on purpose. It is the last word for some 400 years. The next word to Israel as a whole would be John the Baptist. Chapter 2 pronounces a curse on the Priesthood, "I will curse your children and rub your faces in the dung of the animals you sacrifice to me.

Then God moves on to the people.

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"If your word doesn't matter to you, why should it matter to anyone else?" DH

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STUDENT:

¹⁰ Don't we all have the same father? Didn't the same God create us all? Then why do we break our promises to one another, and why do we despise the covenant that God made with our ancestors? ¹¹ The people of Judah have broken their promise to God and done a horrible thing in Jerusalem and all over the country. They have defiled the Temple which the LORD loves. Men have married women who worship foreign gods. ¹² May the LORD remove from the community of Israel those who did this, and never again let them participate in the offerings our nation brings to the LORD Almighty. (GNT)

TEACHER:

This last passage, is explained by the next passage.

STUDENT:

You drown the LORD's altar with tears, weeping and wailing because he no longer accepts the offerings you bring him. ¹⁴ You ask why he no longer accepts them. It is because he knows you have broken your promise to the wife you married when you were young. She was your partner, and you have broken your promise to her, although you promised before God that you would be faithful to her. ¹⁵ Didn't God make you one body and spirit with her? What was his purpose in this? It was that you should have children who are truly God's people. So make sure that none of you breaks his promise to his wife. ¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. "I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife." (GNT)

TEACHER:

The next passage will not be popular with many people. It flies in the face of what many teach.

STUDENT:

¹⁷ You have tired the LORD out with your talk. But you ask, "How have we tired him?" By saying, "The LORD Almighty thinks all evildoers are good; in fact he likes them." Or by asking, "Where is the God who is supposed to be just?" (GNT)

TEACHER:

I want to repeat that one sentence in several translations to make sure we get it.

1st He asks the question. "How have we wearied him?"

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STUDENT:

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" (NIV)

By saying that all who do evil are good in the LORD's sight, and he is pleased with them. (NLT)

By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." (ESV)

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the sight of the LORD, and in them He delights," (BSB)

"The LORD Almighty thinks all evildoers are good; in fact he likes them." (GNT)

"Everyone who does evil is good in the Lord's opinion, and he delights in them," (NETB)

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TEACHER:

Does God love everybody?

(Psalm 5:5) The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you (GOD) hate all evildoers.

Hosea 9:15) All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them: because of the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of my house; I will love them no more

(Psalm 11:5) The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

(Gal 5:19-21) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What then is the recourse of the sinner?

(1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

When we sin, we confess, we pick up our cross, and we follow Christ. We don't look back, and we don't quit. Our faith is that He will cleanse us, and finish what He started in our hearts.

And let me add this if may be so bold, help a brother or sister who struggles. 2 are better than 1, and a 3 fold cord is not easy to break.

That was a lot to digest for 1 sentence, but hey, it's a short book.

Chapter 3 starts with the famous John the Baptist prophesy.

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CH. 3

STUDENT

The LORD Almighty answers, "I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant."

² But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal. ³ He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metalworker refines silver and gold, so the LORD's messenger will purify the priests, so that they will bring to the LORD the right kind of offerings. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁴Then the offerings which the people of Judah and Jerusalem bring to the LORD will be pleasing to him, as they used to be in the past.

⁵The LORD Almighty says, "I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practice magic, against adulterers, against those who give false testimony, those who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners—against all who do not respect me.

(GNT)

TEACHER:

Starting in verse 6 we have the famous discourse on tithes. It starts, "I am the Lord, and I do not change."

(I think the Lord starts the passage that way for those who think tithes are for the Old Testament only.

STUDENT:

⁶"I am the LORD, and I do not change. And so you, the descendants of Jacob, are not yet completely lost. ⁷You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, 'What must we do to turn back to you?' ⁸I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet you are cheating me. 'How?' you ask. In the matter of tithes and offerings. ⁹A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. ¹⁰Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. ¹¹I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes. ¹²Then the people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be a good place to live. (GNT)

TEACHER:

The next paragraph shows a human tendency that still applies 2500 years later.

STUDENT:

"You have said terrible things about me," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'What have we said about you?' ¹⁴You have said, 'It's useless to serve God. What's the use of doing what he says or of trying to show the LORD Almighty that we are sorry for what we have done?' ¹⁵As we see it, proud people are the ones who are happy. Evil people not only prosper, but they test God's patience with their evil deeds and get away with it."

¹⁶Then the people who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard what they said. In his presence, there was written down in a book a record of those who feared the LORD and respected him. ¹⁷"They will be my people," says the LORD Almighty. "On the day when I act, they will be my very own. I will be merciful to them as parents are merciful to the children who serve them. ¹⁸Once again my people will see the difference between what happens to the righteous and to the wicked, to the person who serves me and the one who does not." (GNT)

TEACHER:

The response to those statements are in the last chapter of Malachi. Have patience, God is on the throne.

CH. 4

STUDENT:

The LORD Almighty says, "The day is coming when all proud and evil people will burn like straw. On that day they will burn up, and there will be nothing left of them. ² But for you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall. ³ On the day when I act, you will overcome the wicked, and they will be like dust under your feet.

⁴ "Remember the teachings of my servant Moses, the laws and commands which I gave him at Mount Sinai for all the people of Israel to obey.

⁵ "But before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah. ⁶ He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country." (GNT)

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NEXT LESSON: THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD, *But not until the Final Exam!*

Then WE START THE NT WITH MATTHEW.

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*"I am the Lord,
I change not."*

Malachi 3:6

