



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C  
Sunday School

Lesson 14 August 31, 2025  
RETURN TO A JUST GOD

# SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

**School/Class:** But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

**School/Class:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

**School/Class:** He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Therefore he says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." **Ephesians 4:8**

**School/Class:** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

**School/Class:** For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

**School/Class:** For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**ALL:**

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

### RETURN TO A JUST GOD



- Bible Basis: Malachi 3:1-10
- Bible Truth: God requires justice and faithfulness and will bestow bountiful blessings in many ways.
- Memory Verse: VERSE: "Even from days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said Wherein shall we return?" (Malachi 3:7).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: REVIEW Malachi's prophecy about possessions, wealth, and hospitality in light of our faithfulness and justice, CONFESS personal unfaithfulness to God and PRAY for forgiveness; and institute a personal plan for charitable living.
- Background Scriptures: Malachi 3:1-10; Matthew 7:12, Psalm 24:4-11 - Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.



## **Malachi 3:1-10, KJV**

- 1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.
- 2** But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:
- 3** And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.



**Malachi 3:1-10, KJV**

**4** Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

**5** And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

**6** For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

**Malachi 3:1-10, KJV**

**7** Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

**8** Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

**9** Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

**10** Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

In order to separate the dross or impurities from the pure metal, a refiner would heat it until the dross burned off and the metal was purified or refined. The refiner's tools were a crucible or furnace and some bellows or ablow pipe. He would usually sit and carefully watch for the right time to let the melted metal run off (Malachi 3:3).

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

A fuller was someone who cleaned clothes. It literally means "to trample." This referred to how fullers laundered clothes by beating or stepping on them. There were many cleaning agents in biblical times, including white clay, urine, and alkali powder from indigenous plants. Malachi 3:2 refers to alkali powder. The fuller would take soda powder from the iceplant, found in Mesopotamia, and wash clothes. Afterward he would stomp on them or beat them with sticks. This process would not only clean the clothes but also make them dazzling white (Mark 9:3).

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

A hireling was a hired servant. This servant was different than a slave in that he was paid wages. As a hireling had no land rights of their own, they were vulnerable to exploitation and the Lord provided protection in the Law of Moses for them (Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14).

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

A tithe was a tenth of someone's possessions that was offered to God.

Tithing was practiced in patriarchal times and existed before the Law was given on Mount Sinai. Once the Law was established in Israel, tithes were required annually and every third year. These offerings would help provide for the Levites, poor, fatherless, widows, and foreigners in the land.

Offerings were the obligatory sacrifices to God that were taken from the flock or herd.

## LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: Students will know that fairness and philanthropy are most apparent during times of great tragedy and loss.



# INTRODUCTION

## The Prophets Speak

Malachi was written during the post-exilic period. This was the time after the Jews returned from exile in Babylonia to rebuild their nation and the temple of God. Malachi was a contemporary of Zechariah and Haggai. All three prophets were concerned with the people's neglect and complacency concerning the worship of God and the people's repetition of the sins and injustice that caused them to be scattered in the first place. Malachi spoke out against a corrupt priesthood. He also indicted the people of Judah for their lack of faith, which was shown in the neglect of worship particularly in withholding tithes and sacrificial offerings.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Prophets Speak

This meant that the priests who officiated worship were not adequately provided for. It also meant that worship was not continuous and therefore not a priority among the majority of the people. Malachi condemns this attitude and announces that God's messenger will come to refine His people so that they worship Him in righteousness.

# BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will know that God expects His people  
to be just, faithful, and show mercy.

## I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

Malachi begins this oracle with an announcement concerning God's messenger, who will prepare the way before Him. It is a prophecy concerning the time of the Messiah. The people needed to change their ways in order to receive the Messiah, so a messenger would be sent to prepare them for His coming. Although they longed for a Messiah who would bring justice, they were not in a moral state to be ready for Him. Malachi's announcement lets them know that a Messiah is coming, and they need to be ready for Him when He comes.

# I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

## The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

The name "Malachi" (Heb. mal'aki, mal-ahKEE) means "my messenger." However, scholars generally agree that the prophet who goes by that name is not being referred to here. The message that Malachi the prophet was to deliver to the people seems to be in response to their question in Malachi 2:17 when they inquire, "Where is the God of Judgment?" Malachi responds that the Lord they were "seeking" (Heb. baqash, bah-KASH, to seek, demand, or find) and in whom they found "delight" (Heb. chapets, khah-FAHTS, having pleasure in) would come "suddenly" (Heb. pitom, pith-OME, any moment now or unexpectedly) to His temple.

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# I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

The question of those who were seeking to live and do right is rhetorical. The priests of the temple were corrupt and many of the people had stopped taking issues of right or wrong seriously. Malachi was warning that the Sovereign Ruler would come unannounced and would bring judgment with Him.

# I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

Because the Lord would bring judgment with Him, Malachi asks the people, who will be able to "abide" (Heb. kul, KOOL, to survive or endure) the day "of his coming" (Heb. bow', BO, to fall or light upon)? Further, he inquires who will be able to "stand" (Heb. 'amad, ahMAHD, to stand up) when he "appeareth" (Heb. raah, rah-AH, to present oneself or to be visible). The suggestion is that no one will be able to continue as before, because the Lord will come like a "refiner's" (Heb. tsarap, tsahRAF, to purge away or to smelt) fire or even like the "fuller's" (Heb. kabas, kah-VAHS, to launder or wash by treading) "soap" (Heb. borit, bo-REETH, lye or potash).



# I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

## The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Such a "purge" (Heb. zaqaaq, zah-KAHK, to distill or strain) would be harsh on all who were found to be lacking moral or ethical standards. The Lord's purpose, once He appeared, would be to "purify" (Heb. taher, tah-HAR, to pronounce clean) His temple, and its leadership, the Levites. Malachi tells the people that the Lord would begin His work of purification with the priests. He would "sit" (Heb. yashab, yah-SHAV, to dwell or remain) as one who refines silver, because it is more difficult than refining gold. The refining of silver requires hotter fires and takes more time and patience.

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# I. THE MESSENGER OF GOD

## The Sovereign Ruler Returns

Malachi 3:1-4

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Once the temple and its leadership have been cleansed, the expectation is that the priests would once again return to the offering of sacrifices as spelled out in the laws of the Old Testament, and the people would follow their leadership. The end result of all of these actions would be a restoration of the relationship between God and His chosen people (see Philippians 1:8-11).

# LIGHT ON THE WORD

## The Refinement Process

The Messiah or "messenger of the covenant" would come to the temple and would refine and purify His people. Malachi shows them that their cries for justice are hypocritical (Malachi 2:17) because they themselves would not be able to stand the refining fire of this coming Messiah. He would purify the sons of Levi so that their offerings to God would be pleasant to Him. The Lord wanted to purify them like silver and gold, or the whitening soap of a launderer. He desires pure worship from a righteous people.

## II. THE MESSAGE OF GOD

Judgment, Repentance, and Mercy  
Malachi 3:5-7

Malachi then takes the people into the heavenly law courts. The Lord is the chief wit-ness testifying against them. He will not be hesitant but swift in His judgment of their unrighteousness. He has seen their adultery, oppression, sorcery, lying, and idolatry. They have no excuse for their behavior, and the Lord will see to it that they are judged accordingly. He then states, "I am the LORD, I change not." He is not a wishy-washy God. His character is steadfast and faithful, therefore they "are not consumed."

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

### RETURN TO A JUST GOD



## II. THE MESSAGE OF GOD

Judgment, Repentance, and Mercy

Malachi 3:5-7

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. 6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Malachi continues to respond to the people's question (2:17). He informs them that God will appear, and in addition to being a refining fire on some, will be the God of "judgment" (Heb. mishpat, mish-PAHT, justice, legal decision before a judge) they asked for. The continual presence of so many within the community of returned exiles practicing acts condemned by the Law served as an indication that they did not fear God and His punishment would be their reward. When God does appear to judge, there will be no need for others to be witnesses against the wrongdoers; God has declared that He Himself will be the witness. However, because God is unchanging and always remains true to His word, His people will not be "consumed" (Heb. kalah, kah-LAH, to come to an end) even in their faithlessness and rebellion.

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

### RETURN TO A JUST GOD



## II. THE MESSAGE OF GOD

Judgment, Repentance, and Mercy

Malachi 3:5-7

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Where inshall we return?

The rebellion in the Jewish nation had been going on for a very long time. Like their "fathers" (Heb. ab, AHV, the head or founder of a household, group, family or clan) before them, the people had turned away from the ordinances of God and embraced the evil ways of men (see Matthew 15:3), which resulted in the ruin of the nation. Malachi, speaking for God, implores them to return to the "ordinances" (Heb. choq, KHOKE, rules or commands) of the Law so that the Lord of hosts would reward them by returning to them. The people have shown themselves deserving of God's wrath, and as the righteous judge, He had every right to consume them, but God demonstrates His patience and graciousness to His chosen people by speaking gently to them and offering for them to return.

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

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## II. THE MESSAGE OF GOD

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The people only needed to repent. This was the message of John the Baptist too (see Matthew 3:2 and 4:17). However, rather than repentance, the Lord's plea is met with continued denial and rebellion. The self-righteous Pharisees did not feel the need for repentance because they believed that they had kept the whole Law and were blameless before God. In asking "wherein they needed to return" (Heb. shub, SHOOV, to turn back) to God, they were justifying themselves and their behavior in their own eyes.



### III. THE MAINTENANCE OF GOD'S HOUSE

A Lack of Gratitude  
Malachi 3:8-10

Malachi points out that they are the ones in the wrong. He pronounces them as cursed by the Lord. Although they demanded justice, they have robbed God by not giving the tithes of their crops and herds and by not giving the proper worship sacrifices or offerings (Malachi 1:6-14). They were giving blind, diseased, and sometimes even stolen animals to the temple. This was shameful and disrespectful in God's eyes. They also had not given the tithe, which was designed to support the priests and others who had no land rights (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12).

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

### RETURN TO A JUST GOD



### III. THE MAINTENANCE OF GOD'S HOUSE

A Lack of Gratitude  
Malachi 3:8-10

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Through the prophet, God answers their inquiry. The people had become guilty of "robbing" (Heb. qaba', kah-VAH, to defraud) God because they had stopped bringing their tithes and offerings for sacrifice to the temple. The nation was to take care of the needs of the priests and the Levites; however, by not giving their tithes and not offering sacrifices, or by doing either grudgingly, they were guilty of robbing God. The people's lack of giving with a cheerful spirit was viewed by God as a lack of gratitude for how He favored them or lack of acknowledgement of Him as Lord. The "curse" (Heb. 'arar, ah-RAR, to condemn or call judgment down on) God inflicted on them was the withholding of rain so their crops would not grow (see 3:11).

## Lesson 14 August 31, 2025

### RETURN TO A JUST GOD



### III. THE MAINTENANCE OF GOD'S HOUSE

A Lack of Gratitude  
Malachi 3:8-10

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Finally, God challenges the people to put Him to the test. They are to once again bring their tithes to the "storehouse" (Heb. 'otsar, oh-TSAR, treasure-house or armory), a repository which was attached to the temple and over which the priest exercised control, and "prove" (Heb. bachan, bah-KHAN, to examine or try) if God would in fact open then windows of heaven so that an overabundance of "blessing" (Heb. berakah, beh-rah-KAH, gift, prosperity) might flow down. Malachi suggests that the people who did bring tithes to the storehouse were guilty of withholding a portion of those tithes, thereby robbing God further. He implores the populace to bring all their tithes so that they might receive God's favor.

# LIGHT ON THE WORD

## God's Challenge

The Lord then issues the people a challenge: He calls them to put Him to the test by giving their full tithe. By giving pure whole animals from their flocks and herds and tithing the best of their crops, they would be placing their trust in the Lord. Their tithe would be placed in the storehouse for the priests, and God's house would be properly maintained. The Lord says if they do this, then He would bless them beyond what they would ever need. Instead of being cursed, they would be blessed so much they would not have room for the abundance that He would give them. This is the reward for their returning to Him.

## BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will give as a grateful expression of their commitment to God's grace and justice.

## BIBLE APPLICATION

Many people today cry out hypocritically for justice. The same people who demand justice are quick to dish out injustice. We fight with others and look down on those who are disadvantaged. We cheat and steal from others in order to claw our way to success. Then we complain to God when someone cheats and steals from us. We are quick to point the finger and pray to God to make things right. We only pray when we need something and neglect God in our everyday life. The lesson for us today is that making things right has to start with us. We cannot think that God will take care of our house when we do not take care of His house.

# STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: Students will know believers confess their lack of forgiveness and seek human and divine forgiveness.



## STUDENT RESPONSES

Oftentimes we want God to be there for us in our time of need, yet we don't ask how we can serve Him. This week in your prayer times, instead of asking the Lord for things that benefit you, ask Him how you can serve Him and be a blessing to those around you. If you are not being faithful in your financial giving to your local church, make a commitment to give. If you have been faithful, consider what charities or non-profits could be blessed by your financial giving. Ask your pastor or church leader whether there is a missionary you can help support through your financial contribution.

# Prayer

Dear Lord,

Forgive us for not giving You the best that we have in our tithes, offerings, and our compassion for one another. Bless us to have the mind, heart, and spirit that is aligned with Your commandments.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday  
September 7, 2025  
Lesson 1  
Praying For One Another  
Acts 4:23-31