

## **Malachi – The LORD sits us down for a talk! Minor Prophets Feb. 18 and 25, 2024**

### **Main point:**

When we are facing a time of disillusionment and discouragement, we tend to request God to perform a ‘quick fix’ of our circumstances with an expectation that His love will be shown this way. Instead, we need to find our encouragement about His love by looking at God’s character and His purposes in our suffering!

### **Summary of the Book of Malachi:**

Malachi, our twelfth minor prophet presentation in our ‘God-theater,’ is consistent with the theme of all 12 minor prophets – ‘judgment unto restoration.’ Malachi is last because chronologically he was the last one to prophesy. The heart of the book is about sinners breaking covenant, and God’s covenant-keeping love. The Book concludes - therefore the Old Testament concludes - by looking forward to the coming of the new Elijah (Mal. 4:5). When the New Testament opens, one of the earliest voices (in Mt. ch.3) was John the Baptist. Later, Jesus said John the Baptist was the new Elijah (Mt. 11:14), which meant Jesus fulfilled the hopes of the Book of Malachi for the coming Lord. Elijah was a messenger who prepared the way for the Lord, just as John was a messenger who prepared the way for Jesus. (Mal. 3:1, Is. 40:3, Mark 1:2)

### **Keys to understanding the Book of Malachi:**

When? 1) after Persia had established local governors (Mal. 1:8).  
2) after the temple was rebuilt.

Audience? 1) “*to Israel*”(1:1). Since the N. kingdom Israel had been wiped out by Assyria by this time, Malachi’s generalized nickname “Israel” actually addressed the S. Kingdom Judah-returned-from-Babylon!  
2) ‘Israel’ pre-figures the Christian church, so the audience of Malachi is us!  
3) the original audience of Malachi was suffering in declining times, and so are we.

### Who was the man Malachi and what was his message?

- 1) the messenger who brought the message. The name Malachi = My messenger!
- 2) the importance of the message – oracle/burden.
- 3) the format of the message – talks or dialogues.
- 4) the topics of the message – worship, holy living, and the end of the OT!
- 5) the relevancy of the message – applies to us as NT people of God.
- 6) the surprise of the message - God’s love! Discouraged people tend to forget/doubt it!

**A unique feature of Malachi:** Like Zech. wrote a set of ‘night visions,’ Mal. wrote a set of ‘talks with God.’

<b>Talk # / passages</b>	<b>God accused the people of sin</b>	<b>People object</b>	<b>God proved it</b>
#1 (Mal. 1:2-5)	they doubted God’s covenant love	how?	I defended you against Edom
#2 (Mal. 1:6-2:9)	dishonored God	how?	placed defiled food on My altar
#3 (Mal. 2:10-16)	broke covenant with God	how?	divorce, then marry unbelievers
#4 (Mal. 2:17-3:5)	doubted God’s justice	how?	accused God of ignoring evil
#5 (Mal. 3:6-12)	would not repent, turn to God	how to return?	stop robbing God of tithe \$
#6 (Mal. 3:13-4:3)	spoke harsh words against God	what words?	‘serving God is pointless!’ ~ you

### **Overall structure/outline of Malachi:**

Heading: The Word of The LORD to Israel. (1:1).

A compare the humble with the proud: God’s love/justice vindicated (1:2-5)

B halfhearted worship condemned: honor The LORD’s name (1:6 – 2:9)

*C The Lord spoke against unfaithfulness in marriages (2:10-16)*

*C’ The Lord spoke against adultery and other sins (2:17 – 3:5)*

B’ halfhearted worship condemned: bring Him the whole tithe. (3:6-12)

A’ compare the humble with the proud: God’s love/justice vindicated (3:13-4:3)

Conclusion: Moses, Elijah, and the coming Lord on the coming Day of The LORD. (4:4-6)