



# **The Book of MALACHI**

## **Chapters 1 & 2**

### **“A Call to Repentance!”**

> **Prophet:** Malachi - “*My Messenger*”

> **Date:** 432 B.C. – 425 B.C.- Malachi was a prophet in the days of Nehemiah.

> **Place:** Jerusalem

> **Understanding Malachi:** Malachi marks the close of Old Testament prophecy, and the beginning of four hundred years of silence between the Old and New Testaments.

Malachi was addressed to the nation of Israel about 100 years after its return from captivity in Babylon. At first the people had been enthusiastic about rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple and restoring their system of worship. But their zeal soon began to wane. They wondered about God's love for them as His Chosen People. They began to offer defective animals as sacrifices and to withhold their tithes and offerings. Having learned little from their captivity, the people soon lapse into many of the same sins that resulted in their exile in the first place: covetousness, idolatry, mixed marriages with pagan people, abuse of the poor, and calloused hearts.

Portions of Malachi are written in the format of a debate, unlike any other book of the Bible. God first makes a statement of truth that is then denied by the people. God then refutes their argument in great detail, restating and proving the truth of His original statement (1:2-7; 2:10-17; 3:7-10). Malachi also uses questions and answers freely to focus his accusations toward the priesthood as well as the people. These features make Malachi one of the most argumentative books of the Bible.

The prophecy of Malachi is noted for its vivid portrayal of the love of God as well as His might and power. Israel needed to be reminded of these truths at a time when widespread doubt had dashed its expectations of the Messiah. Malachi was written to call the people back to authentic worship of their Redeemer God.

It will remain for John the Baptist—the promised forerunner who would come in the power and spirit of Elijah—to bring a hope-filled message, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,*

*"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).*

> Theme: *A Call to Repentance*

> Key Verses: Malachi 2:17-3:1- *You have wearied the LORD with your words; yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them," Or, "Where is the God of justice?" "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.*

Malachi 4:5-6- *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."*

> Key Phrase: The "*Lord of hosts*" ("*Lord Almighty*" in the NIV), that is, "*the Lord of the armies,*" a name used 24 times in Malachi and nearly 300 times in the Old Testament. This is the "military" name of God, for "*hosts*" comes from a Hebrew word which means "*to wage war.*"

> Chapter Outline:

*Chapter 1 - "Shallow People—Despicable Priests"*

*Chapter 2 - "Contemptible Priests & Fractured Families"*

*Chapter 3 - "The Messenger & The Message"*

*Chapter 4 - "The Day of the LORD—The Coming of Christ"*

> Chapter 1 - "Shallow People—Despicable Priests"

(v1-5) The people question God's love; God responds with the story Jacob and Esau.

- Why was Esau hated? Esau a son of Isaac and Rebekah and the twin brother of Jacob. Also known as Edom, Esau was the ancestor of the Edomites (Gen 25:24-28; Deut 2:4-8). Most of the biblical narratives about Esau draw a great contrast between him and his brother, Jacob. Esau was a hunter and outdoorsman who was favored by his father, while Jacob was not an outdoors type and was favored by Rebekah (Gen 25:27-28). Even though he was a twin, Esau was considered the eldest son because he was born first. By Old Testament custom, he would have inherited most of his father's property and the right to succeed him as family patriarch. But in a foolish, impulsive moment, he sold his BIRTHRIGHT to Jacob in exchange for a meal (Gen 25:29-34).

This determined that Jacob would carry on the family name in a direct line of descent from Abraham and Isaac, his grandfather and father. The loss of Esau's rights as first-born is further revealed in Gen 27. In this account, Jacob deceived his blind father by disguising himself as Esau in order to receive his father's blessing. Esau was so enraged by his brother's actions that he determined to kill him once his father died. But Jacob fled to his uncle Laban in Haran and remained there for 20 years. Upon Jacob's return to Canaan, Esau forgave him and set aside their old feuds (Gen 32:1-33:17). Years later, the two brothers together buried their father in the cave at Machpelah without a trace of their old hostilities (Gen 35:29). Esau in many ways was more honest and dependable than his scheming brother Jacob. But he sinned greatly by treating his birthright so casually and selling it for a meal. To the ancient Hebrews, one's birthright actually represented a high spiritual value. The oldest son was responsible to serve as a priest to the rest of his family by encouraging worship of the one true God. But Esau did not have the faith and farsightedness to accept this privilege and responsibility. Thus, the right passed by default to his younger brother. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

- EDOMITES “Territory of Wickedness” explanation - During the time of the Divided Kingdom, a number of hostile encounters occurred between the nations of Judah or Israel and Edom. During Jehoshaphat's reign, Edomites raided Judah but were turned back (2 Chron 20:1,8). An attempt to reopen the port at Ezion Geber failed (1 Kings 22:48); and the Edomites joined forces with those of Judah in Jehoshaphat's move to put down the rebellion of Mesha of Moab (2 Kings 3:4-5). During the reign of Joram, Edom freed herself of Judah's control (2 Kings 8:20-22), but again came under Judah's control when Amaziah assaulted and captured Sela, their capital city. Edom became a vassal state of Assyria, beginning about 736 B.C.

Edom the Place of the Nabateans. After the downfall of Judah in 586 B.C., Edom rejoiced (Ps 137:7). Edomites settled in southern Judah as far north as Hebron. Nabateans occupied old Edom beginning in the third century B.C., continuing their civilization well into the first century A.D. During the period from about 400 B.C. - 100 B.C., Judas Maccabeus subdued the Edomites and John Hyrcanus forced them to be circumcised and then made them a part of the Jewish people. The Herod family of New Testament times was of Edomite stock. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

- Jesus warns the church to stay in love with Him in Revelation Ch. 2:1-7.

(v6-14) The priests have no honor or reverence for God, we see the same in the times of Jesus:

- Beginning of Jesus ministry- John 2:13-17- *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

- Ending of Jesus ministry- Luke 19:45-48- *Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.*

- Warren writes the following exhortation regarding this passage in Malachi 1:6-14, "To begin with, they (the priests) were offering defiled sacrifices on the altar (vv. 6-14). The word "food" refers to the sacrifices provided in the Law of Moses (Lev 1-7). These animals had to be perfect; nothing imperfect could be brought to the altar of God and accepted (Deut 15:19-23; Lev 22:17-33). After all, these sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God who would one day die for the sins of the world (John 1:29; Heb 10:1-14), and if they were imperfect, how could they typify the Perfect Sacrifice, the Son of God?

In short, the priests were permitting the people to bring God less than their best. If they had offered these defective beasts to their governor, he would have rejected them, but the animals were good enough for the Lord. These priests had forgotten what was written in their own Law: "Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf" (Lev 22:20, NIV). What does this say to professed Christians who spend hundreds of dollars annually, perhaps thousands, on gifts for themselves, their family, and their friends, but give God a dollar a week when the offering plate is passed?

Our offerings to God are an indication of what's in our hearts, for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:21). People who claim to love the Lord and His work can easily prove it with their check-books! Giving is a grace (2 Cor 8:1,6-9), and if we've experienced the grace of God, we'll have no problem giving generously to the Lord

who has given so much to us. How can we ask God to be gracious to us and answer prayer (Mal 1:9) if we've not practiced "grace giving" ourselves?

- **Food for thought in verses 9-11:** Who shut the doors of the temple? Jesus sacrifice rent the veil in two from top to bottom (Mt. 27:51), the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. just as Jesus prophesied (Mt. 24:2). *"God's name will be great amongst the Gentiles"* -- preaching of the gospel (Acts 1:8).

> **Chapter 2- "Contemptible Priests & Fractured Families"**

(v1-2) Priest's blessings turn to a curse, why? Because they would not take it to heart. **Let us look at Revelation 3:14-22.**

(v3-9) Comparing Levi of old to the modern Priest (Law of truth vs. Law of corruption). What should pastors be doing today? **The blueprint for the church is found in The Book of Acts chapter 2:37-47.**

(v10-12) **The people's abomination: Marriage to daughters of a foreign God.**

- Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers - 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1.

(v13-16) God hates divorce (Mt. 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16)

(v17) The people would say, *"Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD"* Preachers and people who contradict the Word of God, such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

> **Let us conclude with this from John the beloved in 1 John 1:5-2:3 - This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*