

# Seeing Jesus in the Minor Prophets

Malachi

## Historical Background

- Contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah
  - Condemned marriage to foreign wives
  - Addressed the neglect of the tithe
  - Spoke against the corrupt priesthood
  - Reference to a governor
- Most likely written in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (458 - 433)
- Malachi's prophecies given almost 100 years after the Jews were allowed to return to the land (538 BC)
  - The people were disillusioned and discouraged. Their experience was different from what they expected based on the earlier prophets.
  - They were expecting a great messianic age. What they got was drought and poverty.

## Outline

- Introduction (1:1)
- Disputation 1 – God Loves Israel (1:2-5)
- Israel's Unfaithfulness
  - Disputation 2 – Israel's Priests Despise the Lord (1:6-2:9)
  - Disputation 3 – Israel is Unfaithful (2:10-16)
- God's Just Judgment
  - Disputation 4 – God Promises Judgment (2:17-3:5)
  - Disputation 5 – God Offers Blessing (3:6-12)
  - Disputation 6 – God Separates the Wicked from the Righteous (3:13-4:3)
- Conclusion (4:4-6)

## Introduction (1:1)

- Oracle – Hebrew word is mostly translated “burden”.  
*The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.* (Malachi 1:1, NKJV)
- Malachi means “my messenger”. Title or name?  
*Malachi 3:1 - 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; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.*
  - Title - no information concerning his birth father or birth place
  - Name - every other Old Testament prophetic book has a personal name

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## Disputation 1 – God Loves Israel (1:2-5)

- The Lord proclaims his love for Israel (Jacob)
- Israel responds that the Lord does not love them
- God’s love toward us is determined by his choice
  - There was no difference between Jacob and Esau
    - Twins
    - Sinful
  - Israel experienced temporary judgment in the exile but Edom experienced complete judgment
- In Romans 9 Paul uses this to defend unconditional election (Romans 9:6-12)
- The Lord rules all the earth
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus fulfills God’s promise to his chosen ones (Ephesians 1:3-14)

## Disputation 2 – Israel’s Priests Despise the Lord (1:6-2:9)

- The Lord says Israel’s priests are not honoring him
  - The priests ask for proof (How have we despised your name?)
    - Not offering pure sacrifices
    - Animals brought for sacrifice were to be without blemish (mentioned over 40 times in Exodus through Deuteronomy)
    - Pagan world leaders would not accept their polluted sacrifices
    - Defames the name of the Lord among the nations
  - God will be glorified among the nations (1:11, 14)
- God condemns the priests by appealing to the covenant with Levi (Numbers 3:5-10)
  - Priests are cursed and taken away like dung (Exodus 29:14)
  - Because the priests are a messenger of the Lord, they should fear and be in awe of the Lord, speak the truth, walk in peace and righteousness, and lead the people in the ways of the Lord
  - The priests have led the people in sin and show partiality so the Lord will despise them (Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34; Galatians 2:6)
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus is our perfect high priest that brought the spotless sacrifice of himself into the heavenly temple (Hebrews 9:11-14).
  - Jesus creates a new priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) that has full access to the Father (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19)
  - Jesus brings salvation to all nations (John 3:16; Acts 10:9-48; Ephesians 2:11-13)

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## Disputation 3 – Israel is Unfaithful (2:10-16)

- Faithfulness in marriage is required because the Israelites have the same Father and the same Creator (one family)
- Unfaithfulness in marriage is demonstrated in two ways
  - Marriage to idolatrous wives (Ezra 9:2; Nehemiah 13:23-29; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14)
  - Divorce based on incompatibility (verse 16)
- God’s faithfulness to his people is to be reflected in marriage (Proverbs 2:16-17; Ephesians 5:22-33)
  - Faithless – mentioned five times in this section
  - Profaned the sanctuary – could refer to the temple or the people (Isaiah 6:13 – holy seed; Ezra 9:2 – holy race)
- Marriage is a covenant
  - The Lord is a witness to a marriage (verse 14)
  - Marriage is called a covenant (verse 14)
  - The Holy Spirit makes the man and the woman one (verse 15, Genesis 2:24)
  - The purpose is godly offspring
    - Literally “a seed of God”
    - Compare with “daughter of a foreign god” in verse 11
    - God wants a family that reflects the love he has towards his people.
- Divorce is serious business
  - Verse 16 can also be translated

*“For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce for it covers one’s garment with violence,” says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously.” (Malachi 2:16 NKJV)*
  - Covers his garment with violence – Ruth 3:9; Ezekiel 16:8
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus is the faithful husband to his bride (Hosea 1-3; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-9; 21:1-27)

## Disputation 4 – God Promises Judgment (2:17-3:5)

- The people wearied the Lord by passing judgment on him. They ask two questions
  - Why does God not judge between good and evil?
  - Where is the God of justice?

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- There is no judgment against the evil nations and no blessing for us (Haggai 2; Zechariah 1:16-21; 2:1-13; 8:1-9:17)
- God has not returned to the temple (Exodus 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:10-66; Ezekiel 43:1-12)
- God is coming to the temple but he is coming to purify and to judge
  - He sends his messenger first (Matthew 11:7-10)
  - The Lord comes to the temple to create a pure priesthood, which answers the first question (verses 2-4)
  - The Lord then judges those of his people who do not fear him, which answers the second question (verse 5)
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus experienced the refiner's fire and fuller's soap on our behalf. We are now clothed in his righteousness (Isaiah 1:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 3:5; 7:9-14; 19:7-8)
  - Jesus is the judge (John 5:22, 27; Matthew 25:31-46)
  - Jesus is the true temple (John 2:19-22)

## Disputation 5 – God Offers Blessing (3:6-12)

- God reminds them of his faithfulness (unchanging character) and reminds them of Jacob (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 13:8; Genesis 28:18-22; 35:1-7)
- God pleads with Israel to return to him by bringing their tithes and offerings (James 4:8)
  - The Israelites do not think they ever left God but God says the Israelites left him when they stopped bringing their tithes and offerings
  - This has resulted in a curse. The current conditions were not the cause of the people's disobedience but the result of their disobedience.
  - The people were thinking they would give when conditions improved but God says conditions will improve when you give
- God says to test him by bringing the **full** tithe
  - Tithe means a tenth
    - Abraham (Genesis 14:20)
    - Jacob (Genesis 28:22)
    - Law of Moses (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:22-29)
  - God promises to provide all that they need (Matthew 6:25-34)
  - Sidebar – this is a rare instance when God commands his people to test him
    - God is the one who tests us (Psalm 11:5; 26:2; 66:10; Proverbs 17:3; Jeremiah 11:20; 12:3; 17:9-10)

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- Deuteronomy 6:16a says, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.” (See Exodus 17:1-7.) This was quoted by Jesus during his temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:7). Testing God is a form of disobedience because it shows a lack of trust in God.
- In Isaiah 7 God commanded Ahaz to ask for a sign that God would defeat Syria but because Ahaz is trusting in Assyria to rescue Judah Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign. God gives a sign anyway (virgin shall conceive and shall call his name Immanuel, verse 14).
- In 1 Kings 18 Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal to demonstrate that the Lord is the true God.
  - All nations will recognize that they are blessed (promise to Abraham).
- Our handling of money is an indication of the attitude of our heart (Matthew 6:19-24; 2 Corinthians 8; 9:6-15; 1 Corinthians 4:7)
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus is the ultimate giver (2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:1-11)
  - Because Jesus is the firstfruits we are the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4)

## Disputation 6 – God Separates the Wicked from the Righteous (3:13-4:3)

- The Lord responds to two groups in Israel
  - Those who do not fear the Lord (verses 13-15)
  - Those who do fear the Lord (verses 16-18)
- The people find no benefit in serving the Lord (what’s in it for me attitude).
  - These speak against the Lord (verse 13)
  - Keeping his charge = walking as in mourning (Zechariah 7:1-6)
  - The people claim those who do evil face no judgment
- Those who fear the Lord speak with one another, not against the Lord as the first group
  - Recorded in God’s book (Exodus 32:32)
  - God’s treasured possession (Exodus 19:5; 1 Peter 2:9)
- Separation by fire between the wicked and righteous is coming
  - The wicked burn like an oven leaving nothing (Matthew 3:12, Revelation 14:9-11; 19:1-3)
  - The righteous are healed by the sun of righteousness (Psalm 84:11; Isaiah 60:1-3; John 8:12; Luke 1:78)
- Seeing Jesus
  - Jesus separates the righteous and the wicked (Matthew 25:31-46)
  - Jesus is our righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30)



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## Conclusion (4:4-6)

- Remember the law (Disputations 2 and 3)
- Listen to the prophet before the day of the Lord comes (Disputations 4-6)
  - Elijah = John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11-14; 17:10-13)
  - Preach repentance (Luke 1:13-17)
- Seeing Jesus
  - As Malachi called for repentance Jesus called for repentance (Mark 1:14-15)
  - As Malachi predicted the worship of God would spread to all nations Jesus saves from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9)
  - Jesus is the “messenger of the covenant” (3:1-2) that cleanses the temple and purifies his people (John 2:14-17; Revelation 21:22-27)