

BIBLE SURVEY - MALACHI

"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. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire..."

Malachi 3:1-2

God's Messenger

Malachi is the last Book of the Old Testament. Malachi is the last of the twelve minor prophets. Malachi is *God's messenger*, who presents God's last Word to the people of the Old Covenant. For the next 400 years, there would be no further Word from God, until the coming of John the Baptist, who was a voice crying in the wilderness "Prepare the way for the Lord." Malachi is the bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

God's Last Word

There is more of God's speech in Malachi than in any other of the prophetic books. Of its 55 verses, 47 (that is 85%) are direct Words of God. The Book of Malachi is unusual because of its dialogue style, responding to cynical heckling with counter charges. Malachi is given in prose, not poetry, indicating that the Lord's love for His people was wearing thin, exhausted by their faithlessness and backslidings. This was to be God's last Word to the people of Judah and the last Word in the last Book of the Old Testament is: curse.

Who Was Malachi?

The name Malachi means: *God's Messenger*. No additional information is given concerning this prophet. We are given no details of his parents, place of birth or occupation. It is clear that Malachi was contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah. In fact there are many who believe that Ezra may have been the author of the Book of Malachi.

Dating Malachi

Malachi was written in the 5th century BC, probably around 433BC. The reference to the governor (1:8), confirms that the Book was written during Persian rule. Studying the message of Malachi, it becomes clear that this message was presented in the time period between Nehemiah's two visits to Jerusalem. Ezra came to Jerusalem in 458BC and Nehemiah in 445BC. In 433BC, Nehemiah returned to Persia and it was at this time that the prophecy of Malachi was delivered to the people of Judah.

Historic Background

A remnant had returned from Babylonian captivity in 536BC. Under the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah, they rebuilt the Temple (520-516BC). Then 60 years later (458BC), Ezra came to help re-establish the nation. In 445BC, Nehemiah arrived and mobilised the nation to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. By the time of the prophecy of Malachi, it was 170 years since the destruction of Jerusalem, 100 years since the first return from Exile. The great Reforms and Revivals under Ezra and Nehemiah had subsided. The priests had become lax and degenerate. The sacrifices were flawed, inferior and often worthless. Tithes were neglected and the people of Judah had degenerated to inter-marrying with the nations around them.

Similarities with Ezra and Nehemiah

Malachi confronts the same sins that Ezra and Nehemiah deal with. Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi all condemned the marrying of foreigners, neglecting the tithe, corruption in the priesthood and

desecration of the Sabbath. When Nehemiah returned to Israel 424BC, he condemned the same sins Malachi had described.

Neglecting the House of God and Failure to Tithe

*"But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king. and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the House of God. And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the House of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense. I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. So I contended with the rulers, and said, **'Why is the House of God forsaken?'** And I gathered them together and set them in their place. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse." Nehemiah 13:6-12*

Desecration of the Sabbath

*"Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, what evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? **Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.** So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day." Nehemiah 13:17-19*

Intermarriage Condemned

*"In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. **Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"** Nehemiah 13:23-27*

The Priesthood Defiled

*"And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have **defiled the priesthood** and the Covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. **Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan...**" Nehemiah 13:28-30*

Ezra Rebukes the Jews

"When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass. So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the Words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and

*having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. And I said: O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day. And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the House of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? **For we have forsaken Your commandments**, which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, *The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.* And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor?" Ezra 9:1-14*

The Guilt of Israel

"Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, 'You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel.'" Ezra 10:10. The Book of Ezra concludes with a long list of the names of priests who had foreign wives and lists the names of their sons. "All these had taken pagan wives, and some of them had wives by whom they had children." Ezra 10:44. The purpose of Ezra listing those who had transgressed in mixed marriages, was plainly to not only name and shame them, but to make clear that they were no longer part of the Covenant people of God and to exclude their descendants from the priesthood.

Degeneracy Leads to Disaster

The Temple had been rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The sacrificial system had been renewed. But now after many years a generation had arisen who had become hard-hearted and they sank to depths of sin that would have catastrophic consequences.

The Dialogue in Malachi

Malachi is set forth in a form of a dispute with a question and answer dialogue. The Lord's solemn charges against His people were frequently met by cynical questions. As the prophecy of Malachi was presented it would appear that there were hecklers in the crowd who argued with the prophecy. The prophecy of Malachi is presented in a form of a law suit, by God's advocate, posing questions to the people based upon their defiant and rebellious complaints and criticisms.

Indictment

Malachi indicts the priests and the people of Judah on, at least, 6 counts of grievous sin:

1. Repudiating and rejecting God's love (1:2-5);
2. Refusing God the honour due our Heavenly Father and Lord and Master (1:6 - 2:9);
3. Rejecting God's faithfulness (2:10-16);
4. Redefining God's righteousness (2:17 – 3:5);
5. Robbing God's riches (3:6-12);
6. Reviling God's grace (3:13-15).

Judgment Delivered

There are three interludes in which Malachi renders God's judgment:

1. To the **priests** (2:1-9);
2. To the **nation** (3:1-6);
3. To the **remnant** (3:16 - 4:6).

Religion Without Relationship

It was a time of spiritual decline when religious observance had become empty formality and heartless ritual. The people of Judah were plainly disappointed, disillusioned and depressed. They despairingly asked whether all their efforts had been worthwhile. They were attending some Temple activities, but it was rituals without reality. There was no relationship with Almighty God.

You Cannot Expect Maximum Blessings from Minimum Commitment

Now they were wanting to know what was the minimum amount of money they could get away with in their offerings and what was the minimum amount of time they needed to spend on religious observances. The priests were casual and careless, shallow and superficial. There was a blasphemous attitude that anything was good enough for God.

The Downward Descent of Backsliding

When one generation begins to ask *why bother about God?*, the next generation asks *why be good at all?* Those who question whether they needed to be *faithful to God* would soon be questioning whether they needed to be *faithful to their wife*. As the family is the basic building block of society this led to a breakdown of social cohesion. Along with divorces came marrying outside of their own people.

The Last Prophecy of the Old Testament

During this time of backsliding and apostasy, Malachi comes as the last Old Testament prophet and presents the capstone prophecy of the Old Testament. *"I have loved you, says the Lord. Yet you say, in what way have You loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? says the Lord. Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness. Even though Edom has said, We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places, Thus says the Lord of Hosts: They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, **The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.**"* Malachi 1:1-5

Creator, King and Judge

God is the **Creator** in our past, the **King** in our present and the **Judge** of our future.

God Hates Esau

In this egalitarian age, many have claimed that God loves everybody equally. However, here we have this: *"Jacob, I have loved, but Esau I have hated..."* (1:2-3). It is this very passage that is quoted in Romans 9:13. The Scripture is clear that there are people that God hates, including Esau, who despised his heritage so much that he married Hittite women and an Ishlamite, and sold his birthright for a mere plate of food. His descendants, the Edomites, became the most intractable enemies of the people of God. After the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC, the Edomites moved into the land and took a major part in the looting of Jerusalem. The Edomites continued to maintain a stranglehold on the land after the return of the Exiles, so much so, that it was an Edomite king Herod, who was ruling the land when our Saviour was born. It was Herod who ordered his soldiers to butcher all the babies in Bethlehem, to snuff out the Messiah at His birth.

Those Whom God Hates

We read in Proverbs 6:16-19: *"These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren."*

God Will Destroy the Works of the Wicked

The Lord says to those who hate him: *"Thus says the Lord of Hosts: **They may build, but I will throw down...**"* (1:4)

Let the Earth Hear His Voice

For those who believed that God was obligated to protect His people, His Temple, and His land, the Word came: *"**The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.**"* (1:5)

Every Promise Has a Condition

To emphasise that one cannot claim Covenant blessings without fulfilling Covenant obligations, every prophet warned the people of God of the dire consequences of violating their terms of the Covenant. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586BC was a devastating confirmation of that. It is a constant emphasis throughout the Bible that we must let the earth hear His voice. We are to proclaim God's Word to the nations. To the ends of the earth.

Despising God

"A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honour? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? says the Lord of Hosts to you priests who despise My Name. Yet you say, In what way have we despised?" Malachi 1:6. Malachi charges the priests with bringing His Name into disrepute and dishonour. Instead of offering the best sacrifices as required by the Law of God, they were choosing the worst. The priests were offering blemished, blind and crippled *"sacrifices"*. They were not giving God their best, they were giving God their left overs. *"You offer defiled food on My altar..."*, *"The table of the Lord is contemptible..."*, *"When you offer the lame and sick, **is it not evil?**"* Malachi challenges them: *"...Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favourably? says the Lord of Hosts."* Malachi 1:8

You Worship in Vain

Malachi rebukes the priests with *"the burden of the Lord"*, asking them to rather shut the doors to the Temple *"So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain. I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of Hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands."* Malachi 1:10

Deception and Defilement

*"But you profane it, in that you say, the table of the Lord is defiled; and its fruit, its food, is contemptible. You also say, Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it, says the Lord of Hosts. And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand? says the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished - for I am a great King, says the Lord of Hosts, and **My Name is to be feared among the nations.**"* Malachi 1:12-14. The Lord states that the Gentiles have more reverence for God than these Jews do (1:11-14).

Cowardly Compromise for Popularity and Profit

Malachi then condemns the priests for being people-pleasers, tickling the people's ears with what they are itching to hear, instead of faithfully proclaiming the Law of God. Servants of God are meant to fear God, not please men. Because they did not fear God they had become craven cowards, compromising and perverting the Word of God for popularity and profit.

Lawless Levites Condemned

*"And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My Name, says the Lord of Hosts, I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it. Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My Covenant with Levi may continue, says the Lord of Hosts. My Covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; so he feared Me and was reverent before My Name. The Law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. **For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the Law from his mouth;** for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the Law. You have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, says the Lord of Hosts. Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept My ways but have shown partiality in the Law."* Malachi 2:1-9

People Pleasing Priests Rebuked

Those who will not take God's Word to heart and give glory to His Name will be cursed. *"I will send a curse upon you. And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold I will rebuke your descendants..."* A minister of God should keep knowledge and the people of God must seek knowledge. *"But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the Law, you have corrupted the Covenant..."* (2:8). The Lord describes these unfaithful people-pleasing cowardly priests as *"contemptible and base."*

The Priesthood Will Come to an End

Malachi reminds the priests that, from the time of Moses, the priests were commanded to teach the people to fear the Lord and obey His Commandments. If they did so then they would not have to work outside of the fulltime service of the Lord, but they would be supported by the tithes and offerings of the people. But now they were failing in their duties, and the people did not fear the Lord. So they were being forced to go and work in the fields to provide for themselves. They were already under a curse, and worse was to come. Many of their children would die and the priesthood would come to an end.

God Hates Heartless Treachery

*"Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? **Why do we deal treacherously with one another** by profaning the Covenant of the fathers? **Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the Lord's holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.** May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware, yet who brings an offering to the Lord of Hosts! And this is the second thing you do: **You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill** from your hands. Yet you say, For what reason? Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by Covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? **He seeks godly offspring.** Therefore take heed to your spirit, and **let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.** 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 2:10-16

Adulterating Marriage

Judah is condemned for having dealt treacherously, profaned the Lord's Holy institution of marriage, by marrying the daughters of foreigners. This is described by God as an abomination. The Lord condemns the people for divorcing the wife of their youth and marrying foreign women.

Demographics is Destiny

Even after 400 years in Egypt, the Israelites never became Egyptians. Nor were the people who lived in the land that was to become Israel ever to be considered Israelites. A nation is an ethnolinguistic people-group of a shared faith. The prophet Amos asked: *"Can two walk together unless they be agreed?"* Yet the people of Judah were breaking up legitimate marriages and engaging in illegitimate ones. Many were practising serial polygamy. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught that consecutive polygamy amounts to adultery. God categorically states that He hates divorce (2:16).

Doubtful Questions

"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?" Malachi 2:17. The people of Judah were so backslidden that they were questioning the justice of God. They were accusing God of being unfair and indifferent to whether people were good or evil.

Judgment Begins with the People of God

The Word of the Lord comes to these arrogant skeptics that the Day will come when the Lord will put all things right. He will start by cleansing His own Temple. Yes, God is a God of Justice and He will Judge wickedness, but He will begin with the priests that serve Him and then with the people who claim to be His.

The Lord Will Come Suddenly to His Temple

"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. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years. And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien - Because they do not fear Me, says the Lord of Hosts. For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Hosts..." Malachi 3:1-7

The Lord Will Judge the Wicked

God identifies those that He will Judge: sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, profiteers who exploit wage earners, widows and orphans, those who defraud labourers of their wages, use unjust weights and measures to exploit the poor, those who deprive the foreigner of justice. The Lord will send His messenger who will prepare the way for Him and the Lord Himself will come suddenly, unexpectedly, into His Temple and He will come like a refiners fire. Who will be able to stand when He appears? ***"For I am the Lord, I do not change... Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Hosts."*** (3:6-7)

You Have Stolen from God

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, in what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My House, and try Me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8-10

Give Your First Fruits, Your Best to God

Malachi charges that the people are stealing from God. God is our Creator and our Sovereign Lord. Everything belongs to Him. He requires the first fruits, as an offering to acknowledge that He is the source of all good things that we have. Practically this tithe and offering system provided for the full time workers of the Lord and for the advance of His Kingdom. People who rob God and cheat on their commitments should not expect blessings, but rather curses. Here the Lord challenges the people to test Him.

Droughts Can Be Caused By Our Failure to Honour and Obey God

This prophecy was given during a time of poor harvest and drought. *"And try Me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."* (3:10). The immediate context of this promise was rain that would break the drought and enable such a large harvest that their storehouses would not be able to contain the agriculture blessings.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

The Scriptures make clear that the Lord love a cheerful giver and we are to **give out of gratitude**. If you do not want to cheerfully give then the Lord is not interested in your gift.

Slandering God

"Your words have been harsh against Me, says the Lord, yet you say, what have we spoken against You? You have said, it is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of Hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free." Malachi 3:13-15. The people of Judah were so backslidden that they were even slandering God, claiming that there is no point in serving God because even evil-doers prospered. In effect they were claiming that God is not just and He does not care for those who serve Him.

God is Not Unjust

*"For **God is not unjust** to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His Name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* Hebrews 6:10-12

Your Labour is Not In Vain

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58

Those Who Fear God Will be Remembered

The Lord states that He has a book of remembrance where those who fear Him and meditate on His Name are written. *"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His Name."* (3:16).

A Day of Division is Coming

"They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him." (3:17-18). There is a time coming when the Lord will divide all into **two categories**.

There will be the **righteous** and the **wicked**,
those who serve God and **those who do not serve Him**.

In His Sermon on the Mount, the Lord made clear that there are **two kinds of people**,
the wise and **the foolish**,

there are **two kinds of foundation**,
the **rock** solid certainty of the Word of God, or the **sand** of human effort.
There are **two types of trees**,
a **good tree** and a **bad tree**,
you can tell which kind of tree by what the fruit is,
whether it is **good fruit**, the fruit of the spirit, or **bad fruit**, fruit of the flesh.
There are **two ways**, the **broad way** the leads to **destruction**
and the **narrow way** that leads to **life**.

The Wicked Will Burn

*"For behold, the Day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, **all who do wickedly will be stubble**. And the Day which is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, that will leave them neither root nor branch.*

The Righteous Will Rejoice

*"But to you who fear My Name the **Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings**; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this, says the Lord of Hosts.*

Remember the Law

*"Remember the **Law of Moses**, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.*

Elijah Will Turn the Hearts

"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." Malachi 4:1-6

A Word of Warning and Promise

Those who are proud and wicked will be burned up on the Day of Judgment and become like stubble. They shall be ashes under the soles of your feet. However for those who fear the Lord, the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings and you shall go out with joy and trample the wicked under your feet.

Moses and Elijah

In the last chapter of the last Book of the Old Testament the two greatest men in the Old Testament, **Moses** and **Elijah**, are referred to. God calls His people to remember Moses, who gave them the **Law of God** and Elijah, the first major prophet who **challenged the idolatry and immorality** of Israel.

One Last Chance

If the people of Judah do not listen to the message of Elijah then the land will be struck with a curse. They would receive one last chance before the Day of the Lord. One more prophet would come to prepare the way for the Lord.

A Time of Waiting

For over 400 years the people waited. During this time the land of Judah was occupied by Persians, Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks, and then the Romans.

The Messenger

Finally the day of grace dawned. A man dressed like Elijah, eating locusts and wild honey, like Elijah, came and preached a similar message to Elijah. He called people back to wisdom and back to loving their children and their parents. He made clear that he was not the Messiah, he was only

a voice crying in the wilderness: **Prepare the way for the Lord, make paths straight, fill every valley, level every mountain, make a straight path for the Lord.**

John Was the Voice but Jesus is the Word

John the Baptist made clear that he was not worthy to untie the sandals of the One who was coming. He, John, baptised with water, but the Messiah would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. It was a great debate about whether John the Baptist was Elijah. In Matthew 11:7-14 and Matthew 17:9-13, Jesus identified his cousin John with Elijah. So Malachi and Matthew go side by side. Matthew tells us how the message of Elijah came through John the Baptist.

On the Mount of Transfiguration

At a critical point in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, He took His disciples to the foot of Mount Hermon and asked them: *"Who do people say that I am?"* So they said: *some say John the Baptist, some Elijah and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.* Then Jesus asked them: **"But who do you say I am?"** Simon Peter responded: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"** Jesus answered and said to him, *"Blessed are you Simon bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in Heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:13-18). Then Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain where he was transfigured and behold Moses and Elijah appeared to talk with Him (Matthew 17:1-12). While they were on the Mount of Transfiguration a bright cloud overshadowed them and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying: **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"**

John Fulfilled the Prophecy of Elijah

"And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist." Matthew 17:10-13

Christ in All the Scriptures

In 1 Corinthians 10, we read that all these things were written for our instruction. Judgment begins at the House of God. God sent His messenger, John. The Lord Himself came into His Temple and cleansed it. All the prophets point to Christ. Moses and Elijah pointed to Christ. Christ has come. He is the Son of Righteousness who has arisen with healing in His wings. Christ is the fountain who brings blessings to all the nations of the earth. Those who bless Christ will be blessed. Those who curse Christ will be cursed. He is the only hope for mankind. **"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds' as of many, but as of One, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ."** Galatians 3:16. **"Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by Faith."** Galatians 3:24

Turn Your Heart

God knows all things. He sees all things. He hears our prayers. He examines our attitudes and the motive of our heart. We must fear the Lord, love Him and serve Him wholeheartedly. Back to God's House! Back to God's Word! Back to God's Work! Back to God's grace!

Choose You This Day

The Old Testament ends with a warning of a **curse** as the New Testament ends with a promise of God's **blessings** on those who will trust and obey Him. **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."** Galatians 5:1. **"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."** Galatians 6:7

The End of an Era

Malachi's prophecy represents the end of an era. The end of the Old Covenant. God's last Word for 400 years between the Old and New Testament. Malachi has a message of **love**, a message of **admonition** and a message of **judgment** and **hope**. We are commanded to **remember God's love**, to **return to Him** and to **put God to the test**. Hear we see **Divine love**, **Divine displeasure**, **Divine promises** and **Divine victory**.

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of Faith." Galatians 6:9-10

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The full message on *Malachi*, as delivered at Livingstone Fellowship is available on audio CD.

Lectures notes on all the Books of the Old Testament are available in Old Testament Survey. The audio sermons by Dr. Peter Hammond on every Book in the Old Testament are available on **The Old Testament Survey MP3** from: Christian Liberty Books, PO Box 358, Howard Place 7450, Cape Town, South Africa, Tel: 021-689-7478, Email: admin@christianlibertybooks.co.za and Website: www.christianlibertybooks.co.za.