

Malachi 1.1-14

Is He Worthy of Your Worship?

450 BC Politically Insignificant Province of Persian Empire > Judah

Malachi > name DOES NOT occur anywhere else in OT > Little Known

Malachi follows Haggai and Zechariah – Prophets AFTER Exile

After this Message Israel would enter 400 silent years > No Revelation

3 Words of Intro to Malachi:

1. Israel had DRAMATIC History but DULL PRESENT

a) Temple REBUILT by Gov. Zerababel; Puny Shadow of Solomon's

b) Jews under CIVIL Ruler > No King over Israel > Glory Departed Malachi preached at Time
Nehemiah was Governor of Judah

Over 1000 years passed > Mt. Sinai SHOOK and Thunder Roared
as MOSES RECEIVED LAW OF GOD ON TABLETS OF STONE

Been 500 years since DAVID and Mighty Men > Slayed 10,000's

Several hundred years since ELIJAH was TAKEN UP to Heaven

100 years earlier EZEKIEL had Prophesied about God's Temple –

43.4 “The glory of the LORD entered the temple”

BUT to Malachi's hearers – it was ICHABOD > “glory had departed”

Don McLean “Father, Son, & Holy Ghost took the last train to the coast”

1. Israel had DRAMATIC History but DULL PRESENT

2. Yesterday's PROMISES demands Today's OBEDIENCE

HARD TO ACCEPT IN A THROW AWAY SOCIETY

- Finish Plastic Bottle of Coca-Cola THROW IT AWAY!
- Stop Loving your Old Spouse THROW THEM AWAY!
- God does not seem Near, Fair, Exciting THROW HIM AWAY!

Basis Malachi's Oracle > Binding Promise Israel had made with God >

GOD HIMSELF > Central Figure and Chief Spokesman of this Oracle

Of the 55 verses > 47 of them are a Direct Address from God

COVENANT > Bond in Blood Sovereignly Administered

3. GOD is the SAME yesterday, today, and forever

Malachi's Portrait of God is Magnificent -

God loves His People – 1.2 / God the Father and Master of Israel – 1.6

God our Creator – 2.10 / The God of Justice – 2.17

God does not Change – 3.6 / God is Honest – 3.13

1. God Love's Us

a. Surprise of God's Love > Old Malachi has MODERN THEME

Many Then & Now think We can bring God DOWN > We JUDGE God

Who are You? / Who said so? / Why should I? / Who's gonna make me?

RECURRING WORD in this Message > How?" > 7 Examples

1.2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

1.6 "O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'

1.7 "But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the Lord's table may be despised.

2.17 You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?"

3.7 Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

3.8 "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'

3.13 "Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, How have we spoken against you?"

RELIGIOUS People > Not Outright Rejection > but Obnoxious Rebellion

"having a form of godliness but denying its power" 2 Timothy 3.5

BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE > GOD OWES US AN ANSWER!

SURPRISING Response > Only God Could Respond this Way > LOVE!

GRACE > Undeserved Loved > Unwanted Love > Unstoppable Love

God SAYS "I love you" Revelation /God SHOWS "I love you" in Redem

v. 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD > Mercy of His Covenant

b. Selectivity of God's Love

7 HOW Questions > IMPLY WE Determine what is Fair, Right, Just!

VERSE THAT MOST THINK PARTICULARLY UNFAIR -

v. 2,3 "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated"

Genesis 25.23 LORD to Rebekah, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Romans 9 > Apostle Paul's Divine Commentary - "Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 9.10-16

WAS JACOB LOVED FOR HIS VIRTUE? did he deserve God's Love?

Bargained for Birthright and Betrayed his Blind father for the Blessing

Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" Gen 27.36

Prophet Obadiah preached agnst descendents of Esau > Nation of Edom

Edom had NO BROTHERLY LOVE for Israel

BY THE TIME OF MALACHI'S ORACLE > Prophecy is Fulfilled

vs. 3,4 "I have laid waste his hill country & left his heritage to jackals of the desert." If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the Lord of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down & they will be called 'the wicked country' & 'the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.'"

SELECTIVE > "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." Amos 3.2

James BOICE "This striking comparison – between Jacob and Esau, Judah and Edom – is to remind the self-righteous, critical citizens of Jerusalem of the unmerited & electing love of God. They have had the audacity to question how He has loved them, utterly disregarding their unique status as His elect people. This is what God now brings to their willfully negligent attention. By birth Esau was as much a privileged child as Jacob... Yet God loved Jacob with a gracious love."

c. Sign of God's Love Jews powerless captives in Massive Persian Emp

This God who made a Covenant of Love with this Puny Tribe CLAIMS -

v. 5 "Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!"

1500 years earlier to Father of these Jews: "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
Genesis 12.3

Future HOPE OF MALACHI > Hope of God's Coming Kingdom

> Finds FULFILLMENT in the pages of the NT GOSPELS

Blessing given to Abraham is Received through Jesus Christ

2. Do I Love God?

General Principle: LOVE HAS REQUIRED BEHAVIOR

ISRAEL's Love for GOD had REQUIRED BEHAVIOR > COVENANT

Old Covenant Love expressed thru Sacrifices: Forgiveness & Fellowship

v. 1 The BURDEN of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi

Lord given Malachi message that is burdensome

Brought sentence of death > like Dr. telling Fatal Diagnosis

1st v. 6 "O priests, who despise my name" – message to leaders of people

God calls Malachi > does not belong to Priestly cast

Called to deliver solemn message his leaders, his priests

challenge them about their ministry > call out Hypocrisy

Burden > feeling he is the only one who sees this

Exposes sinfulness & spiritual decline people claim to belong to God

v. 6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor?

And if I am a master, where is my fear?

He is seeking to take hold of their consciences.

Bring their consciences into Blazing light of God's Holy Word

Seeing creates awful, awesome sense of Burden upon him

Major Error > Nation Forgotten their God > Malachi His Messenger

I am your master / I am your father. / I am the great king

They'd forgotten who they were > living like ordinary men/women
 Had great/glorious Privileges of knowing God > only people on earth
 HIGH Pt of Spiritual Decline > bring God down to their level: Argue

2nd Accusation v. 14 Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished

Some most solemn words in all Scripture to these people

Malachi puts Finger on Heart of Problem > Relationship with God

v. 6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?

v. 12 But you profane it when you say that the Lord’s table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food, may be despised.

Malachi summarizes problem: Contempt. They have contempt

Table of the Lord and the service of the Lord > Contemptible

Character & Quality of my Worship > litmus test of Relation w God

Symptoms of their Spiritual Sickness

v. 7 By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised.

v. 8 'When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. '

Would you give this to Gov.? Your Boss? Headmaster? President?

You can't think straight! You tremble before mere puny tiny mortal.

2nd Best will do for God. But not for the Governor

How can I please almighty God and enjoy my worship?

How can we arrange our worship so that will please us?

So that we enjoy it. So that it suits us. Self-pleasing spirit

Not Question of what Brings People Back Again! Feels good!

Great issue of worship is the pleasure & glory of Almighty God

v. 13 you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord

> their devotion had disintegrated into boredom: a Burden!

When you Young & Healthy > Hardly notice you've got a body.
 Walk up Stairs > Stand Up Quickly > Run for the Bus! No Problem!
 Carrying our 125 or 225 or 325 lbs up Stairs > we don't Notice
 Get Sick, Infirmed, Aged > Feel every bone our body, every joint
 Every limb aches, overwhelming burden, really sick, hurts to move

Same in Worship > We Focus on Motions not our Maker
 Concentrate on Instruments, Liturgy, Program: Not One we Worship
 Over Focus on Details of Worship > Q. What do I Enjoy in Worship?
 instrument - music - hymns - sounds > order of our service
 Lost pleasure of Worship of Almighty God > Bored with Him
 Evident sign of sickness? They were fed up with God himself.
 Fatal spiritually speaking > When we ask, is this pleasing me?
 Sign that the one we're worshipping is me.
 NOT offering ourselves as Living Sacrifice to him.

He's mouthpiece & voice of God in v. 10 'Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. '

The door of God's Temple will be closed to us by God himself
 70 AD God used Roman Armies of Titus to Shut Temple Doors forever!
 ONLY Path to Salvation in OLD COVENANT > Symbol...but REAL
 Israel's hearts grew Harder/Harder until Door of Temple was Closed

v. 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.

v. 14 For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.
 Glorious Destiny was God called them to be a light to Gentiles
 God called them in Jerusalem to be Spiritual center of Universe
 Peoples will come from every part of World > Advance of Gospel
 Nations brought to Faith in Jehovah, God's glorious Salvation

Who stays outside? Gates closed on? Those Reject the Messiah

Quality & Character of Worship we bring to God in Jesus Christ will be single most determining element in impact we make on World

When Quality & Character of our Worship is Impoverished

Quality & Character of our impact on World will Diminish

Jesus Christ opened up New and Living Way into presence of God

Implore him to be gracious > we see more clearly than Malachi

If strayed, hard heart, despise worship > Need to call on the Lord

He will be gracious > if we come in Humble Faith to Lord Jesus

God's graciousness will Energize our Worship, Response to Truth

Glorious purposes of our Lord Jesus Christ > Nations will come!

Psalm 85 // Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. // **You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin.** // You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. // **Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!** // Will you be angry with us forever? // **Will you prolong your anger to all generations?** // Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? // **Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.** // Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, // **for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.** // Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. // **Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.** // Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. // **Yes, the Lord will give what is good,** // and our land will yield its increase. // **Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way. Amen and Amen.**