

# EXILIC & POST-EXILIC PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Senior Adults & Friends Bible Study — Summit View Church of Christ  
Spring 2024

## PART 10: MALACHI'S PROPHECY

Date: mid-400s BC — No date for Malachi's prophecies is given in the text, but a few hints point toward a date in the mid-400s: (a) the temple is standing (Malachi 1:10, 3:1), suggesting that Malachi dates to sometime after the temple's rebuilding (516 BC or later); (b) the word translated "governor" in 1:8 is the term used for regional officials under the Persian empire, setting the date to between 539 and 332 BC; (c) most importantly, Malachi addresses the same types of sins as Ezra and Nehemiah address (corruption in the priesthood, marriage to idolaters, abuse of the disadvantaged, and failure to pay tithes). Ezra and Nehemiah were active in Jerusalem in the 450s-430s BC, and Malachi is usually thought to date from around the same time. *\*adapted from ESV Study Bible, "Introduction to Malachi," page 1903*

### **CHARGE #1: GOD'S LOVE UNDERAPPRECIATED — Malachi 1:1-5**

1:1 — The name *Malachi* means "my \_\_\_\_\_" or "my \_\_\_\_\_."

1:2 — In this verse, how are the Jews offending God?

1:3 — In what way did the Lord "hate" Edom, the land of people descended from Esau?

- Why did God do this to Edom? (Recall the prophesy of Obadiah 10-18.)

1:4-5 — In what way does God's punishment of the wicked lead people to say, "Great is the Lord"?

### **CHARGE #2: GOD DISHONORED AT HIS TEMPLE — Malachi 1:6 to 2:12**

- In this section, how are the Jews offending God?

- 1:7-14 —
- 2:8-9 —
- 2:11 —

1:6-7 — Judging by the (anticipated) responses of the Jews, what is their attitude about the sacrifices they bring to God?

1:7-8, 1:12-14 — Read **Leviticus 22:17-25**. What level of quality did God require in the animals brought to him as sacrifices? (*This is frequently mentioned in Leviticus 1-6, as well. The only exception to this requirement is mentioned in Leviticus 22:23.*)

- How were the Jews violating this requirement in Malachi's time?

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1:10-14 — What effect did the people's unworthy sacrifices have on their relationship with God?

- What is one way a person might bring an unacceptable "sacrifice" to God today?

2:4 — In earlier times, God had established a covenant with the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_ so that Israel's priests would always come from that tribe. (All the priests came from the family of Aaron, the brother of Moses, who was a descendant of that tribe.)

2:5-7 — In what ways was a Jewish priest supposed to bring honor to God?

- 1 Peter 2:5 and 2:9 teach that all Christians are God's priests. What is one lesson Christian "priests" today should learn from this teaching from Malachi?
- Read **Deuteronomy 7:1-6**. Why did God forbid the Israelites to intermarry with the people who lived in the promised land before them?
- Read **1 Kings 11:1-10**. What did King Solomon (500 years before Malachi) do wrong?
- Read **Ezra 9:1-6** and **Nehemiah 13:23-27**, which come from around the same time as Malachi.
  - When Ezra heard that the Jews and even the priests and Levites had been marrying foreign women from among the peoples God had forbidden them to marry, he tore his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and pulled hair from his \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Nehemiah rebuked the Jews for marrying women from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_—nearby nations that worshiped other gods.

2:12 — What penalty did Malachi pronounce for any man who marries a woman who worships a foreign god?

- Compare **1 Corinthians 7:39**. Should Christians take seriously the principle of "Don't marry anyone who does not follow Jesus" today? Why or why not?

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## **CHARGE #3: MEN'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO THEIR WIVES — Malachi 2:13-16**

*NOTE: Verses 15-16 are notoriously hard to translate. Your translation probably has footnotes indicating at least one alternate translation possible in these verses. Don't let that distract you from the overall meaning of this section, which is sufficiently clear in our translations.*

- In this section, how are Jewish men offending God?

2:13 — What penalty has God been imposing on Jews who were unfaithful to their wives?

2:15-16 — From these verses, what principle(s) do you see for God's people who are married?

- How does this teaching about divorce compare with Jesus' words about divorce in **Matthew 19:1-12** and Paul's teaching about divorce in **1 Corinthians 7:10-16**?

## **CHARGE #4: QUESTIONING GOD'S JUSTICE — Malachi 2:17 to 3:5**

2:17 — In this verse, how are the Jews offending God?

### ***for group discussion...***

*Theodicy is the question of how there can be a loving and just God when there is so much suffering and evil in the world. Job struggled with this question, and God was not offended. Many of the psalms grapple with it, too (especially the psalms of lament), but they do not offend God, either. Yet here the people's questions about God's justice offend him. Why?*

3:1 — The separate comings of two people are prophesied in 3:1...

- First, God will send a \_\_\_\_\_, who will prepare the way before him.
- Second, the \_\_\_\_\_ you are seeking will come to his \_\_\_\_\_.

—> Who was the "messenger" who fulfilled the first part of this prophecy? (*Hint: Matthew 11:2-10 / Mark 1:1-4 / Luke 7:20-27.*) \_\_\_\_\_

—> Who do you think fulfilled the second part of this prophecy? \_\_\_\_\_

3:2-3 — What will be the work of "the Lord," the "messenger of the covenant," when he comes?

3:3-4 — How will the people's relationship with God change when this person comes?

## **CHARGE #5: ROBBING GOD — Malachi 3:6-12**

3:6 — What hope does God's unchanging nature offer to people who need to repent?

3:7 — What does God call the people to do?

3:8-10 — In these verses, how are the Jews offending God?

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- Read **Nehemiah 10:32-39**. Notice how this issue appears here in Nehemiah's time in a prayer of rededication to God. Also notice **Nehemiah 13:10-12**. Nehemiah and Malachi were likely active around the same time and dealt with similar issues.

3:10-12 — What did God promise to do if the Jews brought their whole tithe to his house?

- What promise might this imply if we put God first in our giving today? (See **2 Corinthians 9:6-11**.)

## *for group discussion...*

Moses had commanded Israel, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test..." (Deuteronomy 6:16). Jesus reminded the devil of this command when the devil tempted Jesus to test God (Matthew 4:5-7). Why, then, does God now say, "Test me in this..." (Malachi 3:10)? Is it okay for us to test God, or is it not?

## **CHARGE #6: ARROGANT SPEECH AGAINST GOD — Malachi 3:13-15**

3:13-15 — In these verses, how are the Jews offending God?

- Read **Psalms 73:1-14**. Reflecting on this psalm and on these verses from Malachi, how do you personally resolve the tension of trying to do what is right, but seeing people who do evil prosper?

## **SECTION 7: RESPONSE, REWARD, AND WARNING — Malachi 3:16 to 4:6**

3:16 — How did those who feared the Lord respond to Malachi's message?

3:17-18 — What reward did God promise to those who feared him?

4:1-3 — When "the day" comes, what will happen...

...to the arrogant and evildoers?

...to those who revere God's name?

4:4 — What does God call his people to remember?

4:5 — Who is God going to send before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord"?

4:6 — What will this person do?

4:7 — Who fulfilled this prophecy of the coming of "Elijah"? (Hint: **Matthew 17:1-13**.)