

## *From the Garden to Glory*

# Malachi

**Author:** Malachi

**Timeline:** c. 430 B.C.

**Location:** Jerusalem

**Category:** Prophetical, Minor Prophet

**Theme:** God's Loving Call to the Backslider

### **Overview:**

God's people had grown comfortable with a life of willful disobedience. Malachi was called to confront God's people and the leaders with their sins. These same sins are mentioned in Nehemiah - hypocrisy, mixed marriages, divorce, spiritual apathy and withholding of tithes from God's house. Malachi pleaded for a return to holiness, but the people had become so sinful that God's Word no longer had any impact on them. As Malachi delivered God's Word, the people responded with arguments.

God remained silent for four hundred years after Malachi's ministry. This silence was eventually broken through the ministry of John the Baptist.

### **Introduction:**

As we begin our study of the book of Malachi, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. How do you usually feel about endings? When a lengthy project or "season" of your life is over do you usually experience relief, disappointment, excitement, fear, or something else? How do you feel now that we are ending our

study of the Old Testament? In what way(s) are you a different woman today than you were when we began our study?

2. G. Campbell Morgan said, "I think that none of the messages of these minor prophets fits the present age as exactly as does this of Malachi." If you were to write a message of warning to people today, list the three most important concerns that you would address. What could be some of the consequences if your warnings go unheeded?
  
3. By the time the book of Malachi was written, a remnant of Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple, and were living in relative peace. After the conclusion of this book, there is no record that the Lord spoke to His people for four hundred years. Have you ever experienced a time in your walk with the Lord when He seemed to be silent? What encouraged you during this time? What important lessons did you learn? What are some potential dangers during a time of silence? How did you avoid these?

### **Reminder of God's Love**

Read Malachi 1:1-5

1. Look at verse 1. The word *burden* refers to the heaviness or seriousness of Malachi's message. What is a heavy or serious message that the Lord is calling you to deliver?
  
2. Look at verse 2. Commenting on this verse, John Mac Arthur describes God's love toward Israel as, "sovereign, undeserved, and persistent." Make a list of the ways the Lord has shown you His love this week.
  
3. Look at verse 5. What does it mean that *the Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel*? How have you seen the Lord magnified in your own life?

## **Sins of the Priests and the People**

Read Malachi 1:6-2:17

1. Look at 1:6. How do *you* honor the Lord as a Father and reverence Him as a Master? Be specific.
2. Look at 2:2. The Lord rebuked the priests because they did not *give glory* to His name. How can you give glory to the Lord's name on a daily basis? Share three examples.
3. Look at 2:17 (also 1:6-7 and 2:14). The people seemed oblivious to their sin. Look at Jeremiah 17:9-10. How do you remain open to the Lord's conviction in your life? How do you keep from being deceived concerning your own sin?

## **A Coming Messenger and a Call to Repent**

Read Malachi 3:1-15

1. Look at verse 1 and Matthew 11:7-10. Who was this messenger who the Lord said He would send to prepare the way before Him? (Note: the *Messenger of the covenant* which is referred to in this verse is most likely the Lord Himself).
2. Look at verse 7. Is there an area of your life where you have moved away from the Lord? Ask Him to search your heart. Confess anything He reveals to you, repent and return to Him.
3. Look at verse 14. What was the people's accusation against the Lord? Walvoord and Zuck mentioned two reasons that the Lord was not responding to His people in the form of blessing:
  - (1) The people's hearts were not right with God; they were disobedient, and
  - (2) Some of the people who made the complaint were guilty of... legalism...performing certain rigorous activities,

and not doing other things, as the means of vindicating themselves before God.

How do *you* avoid these two extremes in your own life?

## **A Book of Remembrance**

Read Malachi 3:16-4:6

1. Look at 3:16a. This verse says *those who feared the Lord spoke to one another*. Who is someone in your life who fears the Lord? How is this person an encouragement in your life? Write out Proverbs 27:17.
2. Look at verse 3:16b. If *you* were to write a book of remembrance, what are five verses you would want to include so you could meditate on them? Why?
3. Look at verse 3:17. What does it mean to you to know that you are the Lord's special treasure?

## **Summary**

As you conclude your study of the book of Malachi consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

- 3.** List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: