

Minor Prophets...

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Book of Malachi
Mal. 1:6-14

...Major Message

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Mal. 1:6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And **ye say**, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and **ye say**, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that **ye say**, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.

8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.

10 Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought*? neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

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11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same **my name shall be great** among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for **my name shall be great among the heathen**, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 But ye have profaned it, in that **ye say**, The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.

13 **Ye said** also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

14 But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for **I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts**, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

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TITLE AND WRITER

The name of the writer is the title of this book. "Malachi" means "my messenger." We know nothing of the prophet's parentage, ancestral or tribal roots, geographical origin, or other vocation.

DATE

434-374 B.C

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Malachi was one of the three postexilic writing prophets along with Haggai and Zechariah, and he was quite certainly the last one chronologically, even though we cannot be dogmatic about an exact date for his writing.

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- 537-536 B.C. The first group of almost 50,000 Jewish exiles returned from Babylonian captivity under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel's leadership. Ezra 1—6 records their experiences.
- 520 B.C. Haggai and Zechariah ministered to these returnees in 520 B.C. and urged them to rebuild the temple. Zechariah's ministry may have continued beyond that year.
- 516 B.C. The rebuilding of the Temple was finished.
- 482 and 473 B.C. The events recorded in the Book of Esther took place in Persia between
- 458 B.C. A second group of about 5,000 Jews returned in 458 B.C. under Ezra's leadership. Ezra sought to beautify the temple and institute reforms that would purify Israel's worship (Ezra 7—10).
- 445 B.C. Nehemiah led a third group of about 42,000 back to Jerusalem, and the events recorded in his book describe what happened between 445 and 420 B.C., including the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall.
- 433 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Babylon to report to the king.
- 420 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to attack the religious and moral sins that had become prevalent among the Jews.
- 434-374 B.C. Malachi probably ministered in Jerusalem during that period.

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PLACE OF COMPOSITION

Malachi evidently ministered in Jerusalem, as seems clear from his numerous references to practices that were current in that city and throughout Judah.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

The prophet addressed the restoration community of Israelites that had returned to the land from Babylonian captivity. His purpose was to confront them with their sins and to encourage them to pursue holiness.

THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES

Like all the writing prophets, Malachi's chief revelation was the person and work of Jehovah. He presented Israel's God as sovereign over Israel, and the whole world, and as very patient with His wayward people.

This final book of the Old Testament is about the error of forgetting the love of God.

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LITERARY FORM AND CHARACTERISTICS

Malachi's style is quite different from that of any other writing prophet. He employed a very confrontational style of address. After each charge, he proceeded to back it up with evidence. Malachi's rhetorical disputation speech form contains four components:

- assertion
- questioning
- response
- implication

UNITY, CANONICITY, AND TEXT

Most scholars view the book as the product of one writer, and there is no textual support for viewing some verses as later additions. The general structure and dialogue pattern that appear throughout the book argue for its unity. Malachi's canonicity has never been challenged.

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MESSAGE

Malachi prophesied during the times of Nehemiah.

I. THE LORD'S COMPLAINTS, 1:1-2:17

A. The Nation's Spiritual Sins, 1:1-2:9

1. Denying God's Love, 1:1-5

a. The Burden Described, 1:1-2a

(1) How It Was Laid on the Prophet, 1:1

(2) How It Was Leveled at the People, 1:2a "I have loved you, saith the LORD..."

b. The Brothers Depicted, 1:2b-4

(1) The One Loved, 1:2b

(2) The One Loathed, 1:3-4

(a) Esau Detested, 1:3

(b) Esau Desolated, 1:4

c. The Blindness Dispelled, 1:5

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2. Despising God's Name, 1:6

a. The People, 1:6a

Mal. 1:6 "A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour..."

Isa. 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, **I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.**

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* **Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.**

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: **they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.**

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Ex. 4:22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, **Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son**, *even* my firstborn:

Isa. 63:16 Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: **thou, O LORD, art our father**, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting.

Isa 64:8 But now, **O LORD, thou art our father**; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand.

b. The Priests, 1:6b

Mal. 1:6 "...and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And **ye say**, Wherein have we despised thy name?"

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Prov. 30:8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:
9 Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and **take the name of my God *in vain***.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

3. Defiling God's Altar, 1:7-14

a. The Contemptuous Attitude of the Hebrews, 1:7-10

(1) Revealed in What They Said, 1:7

Mal. 1:7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and **ye say**,
Wherein have we polluted thee? In that **ye say**, The table of the
LORD *is* contemptible.

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Lu. 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That **man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.**

Parallel Verses

New International Version

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

New Living Translation

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'"

English Standard Version

And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

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New American Standard Bible

And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Holman Christian Standard Bible

But Jesus answered him, "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone."

King James Bible

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word of God.**

<http://biblehub.com/luke/4-4.htm>

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Do we offer God our best in worship today, or do we just go through the motions?

- One's relationship with God is manifested by actions, not words.

Isa. 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with **their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me**, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people **honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.**

Mt. 12:36 But I say unto you, That **every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.**

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(2) Revealed in What They Sacrificed, 1:8-10

(a) The Charge, 1:8a

Mal. 1:8a “And if **ye offer the blind** for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if **ye offer the lame and sick**, *is it* not evil...”

- God reviews and rejects offerings done improperly.

Lev. 22:18 Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever *he be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and **for all his freewill offerings**, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering;

19 **Ye shall offer at your own will** a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats.

20 **But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer:** for it **shall not be acceptable for you.**

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21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish *his* vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, **it shall be perfect to be accepted**; there shall be no blemish therein.

22 **Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD**, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer *for* a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

24 **Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut**; neither shall ye make *any offering thereof* in your land.

25 Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption *is* in them, *and* blemishes *be* in them: **they shall not be accepted for you.**

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Deut. 15:21 And if there be *any* blemish therein, *as if it be* lame, or blind, *or have* any ill blemish, **thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.**

(b) The Challenge, 1:8b-10

i. The Governor of the Land, 1:8b

Mal. 1:8b "...offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."

ii. The Grace of the Lord, 1:9-10

a. Needed, 1:9

Mal. 1:9 And now, I pray you, **beseech God that he will be gracious unto** us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.

Psa. 66:18 If I regard **iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:**

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b. Neglected, 1:10

Mal. 1:10 Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought*? neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. **I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.**

Prov. 15:8 **The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD:** but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.

b. The Contrasting Attitude of the Heathen, 1:11-14

(1) God's Name Famed among the Gentiles,
1:11-14a

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(a) The Exaltation of Jesus by the Pagans, 1:11

Mal. 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same **my name shall be great among the Gentiles**; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for **my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.**

(b) The Execration of Judah by the Prophet, 1:12-14a

i. Their Disdainful Words, 1:12-13a

Mal. 1:12 “But ye have profaned it, in that **ye say**, The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.

13a **Ye said** also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts...”

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Col. 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace **in your hearts to the Lord**.

17 And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed**, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

ii. Their Deliberate Wickedness,
1:13b

Mal. 1:13b "...and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

2 Sam. 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: **neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing**. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

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"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him."
John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, p. 26.

iii. Their Deceitful Ways, 1:14a

Mal. 1:14 "But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing..."

(2) God's Name Feared by the Gentiles, 1:14b

Mal. 1:14b "...for I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen."

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"All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white-hot worship of God and his Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest human activity in the world." John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, p. 26.

"The primary qualification for a missionary is not love for souls, but love for Jesus Christ."

Vance Havner

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Conclusion

Mal. 3:6 “For **I am the LORD, I change not...**”

The Lord has not changed.

- The Lord rebukes the Israelites for dishonoring Him and His name.
- The Israelites have opportunity to correct the dishonor and again, “make His name great!”
- Present day Christians have similar opportunities whether to honor, or dishonor the name of the Lord.
- The Israelites exhibited an attitude of apathy and disdain.
- The Israelites had the proper resources, but gave without conviction.

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2 Cor. 9:7 **Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**

- Judgment Day is coming, 2 Cor. 5:10.
- Every one shall give an account to the Lord, Rom. 14:12.
- Our works, including mission's giving, will be tested, 1 Cor. 3:11-15

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