

## A Survey of Malachi

### Timing and Background

Tonight, we are going to do a survey of the last book of the Old Testament. If you'd like to turn their its easy to find, you just find Mathew 1 and go back a few pages. This book has a special place in the Old Testament cannon. It has the privilege of being last. Last words are important words. This book comes at the end of 1000 years of Scripture being authored representing around 3600 years of history. A lot has happened. God has created the world, He has judged it with a flood, preserved Noah and his family, created the nations, picked a man named Abraham, made promises to Abraham including his Decendant returning the earth to a blessed state, picked Isaac and Jacob, grown their family into a large nation in Egypt, used Moses to rescue them out of the slavery, given the people of Israel the law through Moses, given them the land promised to Abraham under Joshua, delivered the people from the results of sin via judges, allowed them to have a king, picked David to rule the people, promised David's house the thrown forever, sent prophet after prophet to warn the people as succeeding kings and the people went through cycles of idolatry and revival, removed the people from the land to Assyria and Babylon in judgement, and then brought the back according to His promise.

God had been busy. Now at the very end of the Old Testament he would speak to the people one more time before going silent for four hundred years.

This brings us to our study of that famous Italian prophet – Malachi. And what would an Italian prophet have to say? “Love Pasta”. Yes what will cover tonight can be summarized by the words “Love Pasta.” I know what you are thinking... but it's not as bad as you think.

We are of course going studying Malachi and the outline of the major points in the book can be remembered with the words “Love Pasta”:

- **L**ove of God for Israel does not change.
- **P** - Priests rebuked for evil offerings and misleading teaching.
- **A** - Adultery against God and Jewish wives condemned.
- **S** - Sending a messenger to introduce the Sovereign Savior.

- **T** - Turn back to God in repentance.
- **A** - Assurance given to the God-fearing remnant.

So our goal here tonight is to come away with a good understanding of God's message to the people through the prophet Malachi and how we can learn from the example being set forth. We will be moving quickly through the book, so you might want to just keep your Bible's turned to Malachi and I will read a number of cross-reference scriptures as we work our way through the text.

Let's talk about the timing of the book. As I said, God was about to go silent. Malachi wrote sometime around 440 BC. This would have been during the time of Nehemiah, but probably during a time period when Nehemiah was away from the land of Israel serving in his duties to the King in Persia. The Persians has conquered the Babylonians and were ruling all the known world at that time, yet under their rule God had worked in marvelous ways to give his people tremendous favor in the sight of the Persian Kings.

The people had been allowed to return to the land under the leadership of Zerrubbel in 536 BC, and resume their worship of God at His alter in Jerusalem. In 515 BC they completed the building of the second temple. In 479 a Jewish woman named Esther had become queen of Persia. And in in 458 one of the brightest bible teachers, and biblical historians to ever live, Ezra, the priest returned to the land with full authority from the Persian King to teach and promote the obedience of the Mosaic law in Israel. He had also been given full protection from and authority over any neighboring peoples. In 445 Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and oversaw the rebuilding of its walls.

For the God-fearing Jews this was an exiting time to see God's sovereign hand at work, and his mercy towards His people. Daniel had already told them they would be under the thumb of the gentiles until Messiah came and setup his Kingdom. They also knew this was at least 400 years yet future. Yet, God had worked to allow them autonomy in their own land. As Ezra wrote.

(Ezra 9:8-9 ESV) 8 But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and

grant us a little reviving in our slavery. 9 For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem.

To the God fearing, this was a precious opportunity to live the life that God had promised His people in His word, even though they were still under the authority of the gentile rule of Persia. But sadly, many were not God fearing. At the time Malachi writes, it is only about 75 years after the temple had been rebuilt, but the priests have become corrupt, and the leaders have become involved in idolatry, and the people have become unfaithful to God.

So God sends one more messenger.

### **(Malachi 1:1-4 ESV) - 1 The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.**

Who was Malachi? We do not know. The name Malachi means “My messenger.” This is very appropriate because the theme of God’s messenger is a major theme in the book. Regarding Malachi himself, John MacArthur writes:

Some have suggested that the book was written anonymously, noting that the name, meaning “my messenger” or “the Lord’s messenger.” Could be a title rather than a proper name, However, since all other prophetic books have historically identified their author in the introductory heading, this suggests that Malachi was indeed the name of the last OT writing prophet in Israel. Jewish tradition identifies him as a member of the Great Synagogue that collected and preserved the Scriptures. (Mac 1077.2)

### **The Message**

The rest of the book will be the messenger’s message. The message comes in the form of an argument. Malachi writes as if he were God’s attorney and the people of Israel are the defiant defendant, contending every point. There is a stubbornness and a stiff-neckedness about their responses to the evidence and charges laid forth by God’s messenger. They question God at every point. Their

response to him is so crooked that God goes so far to say he is “wearied with their words” in 2:17. But as is His prerogative God will make the opening remarks as well as the closing argument. Lets look’s at His message to the people.

This is the first point in our outline: “Love pasta”. God’s unchanging love is a huge theme in the book so it gets its own word.

**The Love of God for Israel does not change.**

**(Malachi 1:2-3 ESV) - 2 "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 3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."**

God starts with pointing out His faithful love for Israel. His love was basic and fundamental to their very existance.

(Deuteronomy 7:6-8 KJV) 6 For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye [were] the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

All through their History, even amidst them provoking God to anger and judgement, God had continually reminded them of His love and that restoration and peace in the coming kingdom is always in their future.

(Jeremiah 31:3-4a ESV) 3 the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. 4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel!

The Lord loved them above all other peoples.

(Deuteronomy 10:15 KJV) 15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, [even] you above all people, as [it is] this day.

Like a Husband God has chosen Israel, and in a very real sense forsaken all other nations.

(Isaiah 43:3-4 KJV) 3 For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

It is this faithfulness to Israel and forsaking of other nations God will hone in on. In order to drive home the point he mentions Jacob's older twin brother, Esau the father of the Edomites.

"Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob 3 but Esau I have hated."

The nation of Israel is descendant from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But Jacob, had a twin brother, Esau. There were two sons in Rebekah's womb. One would become the inheritor of God's promises to Abraham, involving a nation and a seed that would eventually be the Messiah. The other would not.

God chose Jacob. God said the younger would rule the older even before they were born. So strong are the implications of this love God had for Jacob that Paul uses it in Romans chapter 9 as the key argument that the future of Israel ultimately doesn't depend on Israel, but rather on God's compassion for them, His mercy for them, His love for them, because He chose them.

The people Malachi writes to were fully aware of how God's love and been manifested towards them in recent history. Israel had been ripped out of the land by Assyria in judgement several hundred years prior, Judah had been carried off by Babylon 170 or so years before Malachi's writing. This was a direct result of their unrepentant turning away from God into idolatry.

But God had brought them back to the land, just as He had promised he would through the words of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Jews were there, they were

rebuilding, they had authorization and protection from the highest authority on the earth, the King of Persia. Their ability to worship God was restored and He had been a wall of protection to them. God had brought them back to their land and cared and provided for them in the process.

What about Edom – the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau?

**(Malachi 1:4-5 ESV) 4 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, and they will be called 'the wicked country,' and 'the people with whom the LORD is angry forever.'" 5 Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the LORD beyond the border of Israel!"**

God has faithfully loved His people Israel. They only need look beyond their border to see the contrast between themselves and a nation God had not chosen – even though they were once twins in the same womb.

After declaring His love for them, God now moves to condemning the wrong worship and the wrong teaching of Israel's Priests. This brings us to the "P" in our outline. "P" is for Priests.

**Priests rebuked for evil offerings and misleading teaching.**

**(Malachi 1:6 ESV) 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? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'**

If someone calls you father, you would expect respect, if someone calls you master you would expect respect, but the Priests who were purportedly to be in the position of representing God to the people and the people to God, and leading the people in the worship of God and teaching them the law of God, in reality were despising God's very name and giving Him no respect.

The temple they were serving in was only about 75 years old. It had been built by the hands of courageous men led by Zerubbabel and Jeshua the priest, Haggai and Zechariah God's Prophets. It had been funded, supported, and protected by the king of Persia at God's sovereign command. Yet here the Priests were,

already drifting into the aimless motions of ritualistic compliance. They had become masters at meeting minimal standard to just kindof appear to be doing their duties before the Lord.

They were grossly in the wrong on at least two accounts. The first was in their worship of God.

**(Malachi 1:7-8 ESV) 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. 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.**

God asks, would you take what you give to me and offer it to your Persian governor? Failing to follow God's instructions for worship revealed a heart attitude that was evil.

**(Malachi 1:9 ESV) 9 And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts.**

Their offerings were evil, showing contempt for God, yet they prayed to God expecting an answer from him. However just like God rejected Cain's offering, He rejected theirs and their prayers.

**(Malachi 1:10 ESV) 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 Lord wishes at least one of them would have enough care, enough thought, enough regard for God, to just shut the whole operation down. It was shoddy, it was unpleasant and it was unacceptable.

**(Malachi 1:11-12 ESV) 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.**

God had promised Abraham that in his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed. Yes, God chose Israel and forsook all other nations, to make them a holy

people for his own possession, but the ultimate goal in working through Israel is to bring about a restoration of people from all nations on the earth. God comes back to this reality. This will happen. This reality stands in stark contrast to the shoddy worship the priests were offering to the Living God.

The second indictment of the priests was regarding their teaching ministry. Drop down to chapter 2 verse 7.

**(Malachi 2:7 ESV) 7 For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.**

A Priest is supposed to be God's messenger. He is supposed to represent God to the people. A good example of what a priest is supposed to be, would be Ezra, who was evidently off the scene at this point. We are told that Ezra was skilled in the law of Moses and that the "Good hand of his God was upon him...

(Ezra 7:10 ESV) 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Ezra had a heart to obey God and wanted to be God's messenger to teach others to do the same.

**(Malachi 2:8-9 ESV) 8 But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, 9 and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction."**

These priests were causing men to sin with their perverse instruction born out of selfish motives. Because of this, the Lord would ruin their reputation to be one of shame.

After rebuking the priests for their evil offerings with which they despised God's altar and their crooked teaching, God addresses covenant unfaithfulness which has become rampant. This is our "A" in our outline. "A" is for adultery.

**Adultery against God and Jewish wives is condemned.**

**(Malachi 2:10 ESV) 10 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?**

There should be a unity and a continuity within the people of God. They are all descendants of the same patriarchs, all share in the same promises, all belong to the same God, but instead there was adulterous treachery going on. It was sin against each other, sin against God, and sin against the patriarchs --the fathers who had received the covenants from God.

**(Malachi 2:11 ESV) 11 Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

Both the books of Ezra and Nehemiah record how the people after only being back in the land a few generations, had turned back to the same practices that had caused God to judge the nation and send them into exile in the first place. Specifically they were intermarrying with the peoples of the lands and thus making covenants with idolatry. It was especially bad because the priests and the leaders were leading the people into this sin by committing it themselves.

**(Malachi 2:13 ESV) 13 And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.**

God doesn't hear their prayers. Their prayers seem sincere at least emotionally earnest, but God isn't listening. God didn't hear the prayers of the priests because they despised His prescribed offerings, and He doesn't hear these prayers because they have despised the covenant they made before God to the wife of their youth.

**(Malachi 2:14 ESV) 14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.**

Apparently there those who had divorced their Jewish wife to go marry a foreign woman! Amazing the hardness that can happen in the human heart that it could break the vow made before God to a faithful wife, marry into a idol-worshipping family, and then expect God to answer prayer.

It is not possible to act in rebellion to Father God and then expect Him to answer prayers.

By the way a very similar idea is conveyed to the Church by Peter.

(1 Peter 3:7 ESV) 7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

We are all joint heirs with God and supposed to line up under His authority. Wives submitting to husbands, husbands caring for their wives. If a husband isn't providing proper care to his wife, how can he expect help from God?

**(Malachi 2:16 ESV) 16 "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."**

NASB translates that first line as "For I hate Divorce". The warning here is clear, God calls this behavior violent and bloody. It is murderous in nature and must be guarded against.

**(Malachi 2:17 ESV) 17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"**

The people's response is blame God for the evil they see around them. They accuse God of approving of evil. It is so bad that God says they have wearied Him. They have asked "where is God"?

Isn't this just like lost humanity, it is just like what Vince shared this morning. The ungodly find someone they think is committing worse sin than themselves and then blame God for not solving it.

But praise God, He intervenes. Let's look at the "S" in our outline.

**S - God is Sending a messenger to introduce the Sovereign Savior.**

**(Malachi 3:1 ESV) 1 "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; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.**

God will send his messenger. The Priests should have been his messengers. The entire nation was supposed to be God's witness nation, but they were so corrupted by the filth of sin, that what they needed was a cleaning team. They needed God's messenger to re-introduce them to their God so they could recognize Him.

We have the benefit of knowing who this messenger is. Jesus tells us that this is John the Baptist (Matt 11:10) and his major job was to call the nation to repent that they would be ready for the Lord Himself.

The people were asking: "Where is God?" God says: "I am going to show up".

**And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.**

But this would not be a mission of deliverance out of the rule of the gentiles, or deliverance from poverty, this is about dealing with the filth of the nations sin.

**(Malachi 3:2 ESV) 2 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 fullers' soap.**

God is coming like the fire in a forge to burn away all the grit and grime of the nations sin, He is coming like a pressure washer with bleaches and powerful soaps to scour away their sin!

**(Malachi 3:3 ESV) 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.**

He is going to take His time, he is going to polish the priests till they can actually produce something presentable to God. All their corruption and pollution will be burned off, and scoured off and buffed off by the Lord Himself.

Of course we know this is the Lord Jesus who will accomplish this. We recall how much the Jewish leaders hated Him, because He always went straight to addressing their sin.

In His first coming He was rejected as part of God's plan that He would be the righteous offering, able to cleanse away sin with His own blood. All who look to Him for salvation find it and will get to be in His Kingdom when the cleansing of the nation of Israel is complete.

God will make this happen and here He gives the reason why.

**(Malachi 3:6 ESV) 6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.**

Here in the middle of the book we have a tremendous statement on the character of God. His changelessness, His Justice, His wrath, His Mercy, and His faithfulness are all reflected here. The bottom line is, God keeps His word. God doesn't break promises. God in His wisdom and sovereign power will accomplish all He has promised for Israel, and His faithfulness is the only reason it will happen.

The reason the children of Jacob are not consumed is because God chose Jacob. The nation of Israel has dishonored God, despised God, wearied God with their words, and been unfaithful to God. But God has not changed. He still loves them.

Ever since God made the coverings of animal hide for Adam and Eve, He is been faithfully working to provide a way for sinful man to still receive His love and care. Every since the garden, mankind has despised God, wearied God, and been unfaithful to God, but God has not changed. He is always faithful to the promises He has made.

Here are some favorite scriptures on this topic:

(Numbers 23:19 ESV) 19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

(1 Samuel 15:29 ESV) 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."

(Hebrews 13:8 ESV) 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

(James 1:17 ESV) 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

The nation of Israel's future is secure, because it is guaranteed by the changeless living God. This reality is precious to us as Christians as well. We know our salvation is completely of God.

(Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV) 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God expects that this truth of His faithful love and mercy and preservation of the nation should cause the wicked to repent.

**T - Turn back to God in repentance.**

**(Malachi 3:7 ESV) 7 From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'**

Ever since the time Moses went up the mountain and the people quickly turned to making a golden calf and worshiping it, the nation had had a bent towards abandoning God. Yet God stands in the same place, faithful, ever ready to care for them according to all the good promises He has made. Malachi repeats the words Zechariah spoke 75 years before when the people were wavering in their dedication to rebuild the temple: "Return to me and I will return to you" as this becomes the last alter call from God in the Old Testament.

**(Malachi 3:10 ESV) 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.**

The people had not been regarding the commands of the Lord even in the most basic instruction of giving tithes to the temple. God now challenges them to put Him to the test. They have tried doing it their way and the result has been unmet needs. Why not try His way?

By the way, many people who feel compelled to raise money dip back to verses like these to try to get Christians to give money. This really is not appropriate. The tithe in the Old Testament was a basic requirement of the law, its not a gift at all. And the nation of Israel lived under the clear promise that if they obeyed God, they would have physical prosperity. The New Testament instructions to Christians put a larger emphasis on a heart that wants to give, and on seeing physical resources as something to manage in a prudent way for God according to individual circumstances. See 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

Let's look at our final point.

**A – God gives Assurance given to the God-fearing remnant.**

**(Malachi 3:16 ESV) 16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name.**

This message caused the remnant who feared the Lord to begin talking to each other. We are not told what they talked about, but the Lord responds to it by giving them His assurance that they are not overlooked, are not forgotten, and will be spared from the judgment to be incurred by the nation.

John MacArthur writes:

To encourage the godly remnant Malachi noted how the Lord had not forgotten those “who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.” The book may be a reference to the “Book of Life” in which the names of God’s children are recorded (e.g., Ex 32:32-34; Neh. 13:14; Ps 69:28; Dan. 12:1). The Persians had a custom of recording in a book all acts of a person that should be rewarded in the future (e.g., Esth. 6:1, 2). (MacArthur 1086.8)

The reference MacArthur gives is the example of Mordicai's act of saving the king's life recorded in the book of Esther and read by the King on a sleepless night.

**(Malachi 3:17-18 ESV) 17 "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. 18 Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.**

In the day of the Lord, when God intervenes in Judgement, then the truth of who was faithful to Him will be plainly revealed. Those who feared God in their hearts will be preserved as if they were God's own Son.

**(Malachi 4:1-3 ESV) 1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.**

In the day of the Lord, the wicked will be burned away in the Judgement of Christ Jesus who will be the refiners fire to remove wickedness from the earth. But the righteous will find it a new day, and new beginning. They will be like a young calf that has to run and leap and kick just because it can! They will feel the need to celebrate just for the joy of being alive! The wicked will be gone, consigned to the dust of the earth. With the wicked gone, the new good growth of Messiah's Kingdom will begin.

With this in Mind, God gives the righteous some instructions.

**(Malachi 4:4 ESV) 4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.**

Number 1: Keep the law that I gave you. This was always the key to Israel having good success, and God's desire and command that they keep it was still the same.

Number 2: Know that God will turn the nation's hearts back again to the Lord.

**(Malachi 4:5-6 ESV) 5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."**

Elijah will come before the great day of judgment. Empowered by God He will turn the peoples hearts back to the Lord. No longer will they dishonor God, despise God, weary God, and be unfaithful to God. No longer will they treat His children wrongly as they had in being unfaithful to their wives. Then, just as a son should honor a father, the nation will honor their God. In so doing they will also honor their fathers – the patriarchs- who had obeyed God. All relationships from God down to children, will be right and in perfect harmony. God will accomplish this through one of His messengers, Elijah. Because of His faithful changeless love, He will deliver them just in time, from the curse of His wrath, demanded by His holiness.

So that is Malachi.

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- **P** - Priests rebuked for evil offerings and misleading teaching.
- **A** - Adultery against God and Jewish wives condemned.
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- **A** – Assurance (and instruction) given to the God-fearing remnant.

Since these things are written for our example, I will make a brief application.

We live in the last days. They are days of apostasy. All around us there are people who claim to be God's church, but really give the Lord no honor and do not obey His word. What are we to do?

Its really very similar to the instructions Malachi gave to Israel. We are to remember the teaching Christ gave us through the apostles, and look forward to our deliverance when we are united with Christ at the rapture, waiting

confidently, knowing that our God loves us and that that He never changes. I will close with the words of Paul in his instructions to the church.

(1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 ESV) 12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.