

The Book of Malachi

**God's Final
Message to His
People**

(Malachi 3:6)

Background

- Malachi means “my messenger.”
- Date is **445—432 B.C.**
- God spoke His final word to His ancient people.
- Malachi introduced a new teaching method—**question-and-answer.**
- Malachi puts out a question in the mouths of the people and then supplies God’s answer.

Background

- It had been **100 years** since the people returned from captivity.
- They had completed the temple, and Nehemiah came from Persia to serve as governor.
- Nehemiah and Malachi were contemporary in seeking the rebuilding of the “**walls.**”
- Malachi sought to restore the **spiritual walls** of their character.
- Persian Empire was reaching the height of its glory.

Background

- Rulers were more cruel and ironhanded than Cyrus and Darius had been.
- Trying times for the Jews.
- Jews were not following God as faithfully as they should have been.
- The worship ritual was in a state of decay.
- People who were indifferent to the law were offering blind and lame animals!

Background

- They weren't bringing tithes as God had commanded.
- The men were putting away their Jewish wives and marrying heathen women.
- Malachi rebuked the people for these sins and pointed them back to God.
- They had set up idols and gone into idolatry.
- The people were indifferent to God and the righteousness He demanded!

Keys to Malachi

- **Key words**
 - Love and rebuke
- **Key phrase**
 - “Ye say...” (12)
- **Key chapter**
 - Chapter 3
- **Key verses**
 - 1:2

“I have loved you,” says the LORD. Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? Says the LORD. Yet Jacob I have loved.”

Three Divine Messages

- A message about God's love.
– **1:1-5**
- A message of rebuke for their sins.
– **1:6 — 2:17**
- A message of hope in the renewed promise of Christ's second coming.
– **3:1 — 4:6**

Seven Debates in Israel's Controversy with God

- *“In what way have you loved us?” (1:2,3)*
- *“In what way have we despised your name?” (1:6)*
- *“In what way have we defiled you?” (1:7; 2:10-16)*
- *“In what way have we wearied Him?” (2:17)*

Seven Debates in Israel's Controversy with God

- *“In what way shall we return?” (3:7)*
- *“In what way have we robbed You?” (3:8)*
- *“What have we spoken against You?”
(3:13)*
- *“...Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts...”
(4:6,7)*

The Book's Message

- **Condemnation of the priests' faithfulness (1:2-2:9).**
 - **Each person responsible for himself.**
 - **Allowed them to offer unworthy sacrifices.**
 - **God demands the best (1:6-8).**
 - **Curse on those who would seek to deceive God with such sacrifices.**
 - **Curse on the priests (2:1-5).**
 - **Showing respect for people in their work (2:6-9).**

The Book's Message

- Against divorce and remarriage **(2:10-16)**.
 - God seeking to keep the Hebrew lineage pure.
 - Men were putting away their Jewish wives and marrying heathen women.
 - God hates divorce **(2:16)**.
 - God designed marriage to be a lifetime covenant.
 - Man and woman must take their marriage vows seriously!

The Book's Message

- The principle of tithing **(3:7-12)**
 - They had been robbing God.
 - Lack of tithes and offerings **(3:8)**.
 - By law, one-tenth of everything belonged to the Lord.
 - He could open heaven's windows and pour out more blessings than they would have room to receive **(3:10)**.
 - They could, due to God's blessings, be the envy of other nations **(3:11,12)**.

The Book's Message

- **The final promise (4:5,6)**
 - **God's book closes with the promise of the coming of Elijah—John the Baptist.**
 - **He would introduce and prepare the way for the Lord!**

Lessons for Us Today

- Worship must be deeply spiritual and from the heart.
- Cheap religion avails nothing, and sacrifices grudgingly given are displeasing to God.
- Carelessness and indifference in worship may be the first step of spiritual decline.
- We must observe all of God's laws—those pertaining to marriage and the home, as well as those that relate to worship.