

Malachi

Letter to a Doubter

“We being born in atheism, and bairns (children) of the house we are come of, it is no new thing, my dear brother, for us to be under jealousies (suspicions) and mistakes about the love of God.”

Samuel Rutherford

Context

- Malachi → “My messenger”
- Malachiah → “Messenger of the Lord”
- Likely after the people have returned from exile and after the Temple had been re-built
- During the Persian period
- Around time of Ezra and Nehemiah
- possibly 80 years after Haggai and Zechariah
- Approximately 400 years before John the Baptist

Review the Situation

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Ex 19:2-6 (ESV)

Purpose (Vision Statement)

Represent the living God to the world

Bring the world before God

Role of the Priest



represent the people



represent God

...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Pe 2:9-10

Malachi's Message

“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 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” 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.’” Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, “Great is the LORD beyond the border of Israel!”

MI 1:2-5 (ESV)

“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?’ 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. 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. 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

MI 1:6-9 (ESV)

“Not Guilty”

- God says, *“I have loved you”*
- God says, *“O priests, [you] despise my name”*
- God’s case (shortcomings)
 - Contempt for the purpose of the altar
 - Contempt for God’s glory
 - Contempt for God’s Word

Problem: Treating worship and responsibilities as an occupation
- theirs was a holy calling

Like Priests, Like People

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? 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. May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob, any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts! 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.

MI 2:10-13 (ESV)

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. ¹⁵Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

MI 2:14-15 (ESV)

“For the man who hates and divorces, 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.” 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?”

MI 2:16-17 (ESV)

Charges Against the Common People

- Faithlessness toward each other (especially in marriage)
- Intermarriage with those of other religions
- Overturning the definitions of “right” and “wrong” (justice was perverted)

The people had forgotten the Lord

A Glimmer of Hope

“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. 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. 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.

MI 3:1-3 (ESV)

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

MI 3:4-6 (ESV)

The Lord is coming!

Prophecy Fulfilled

What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.

Mt 11:9-11 (ESV)

The Lord is Patient

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, (MI 3:3)

I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (MI 3:6)

Robbing God?

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes 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.

MI 3:8-10 (ESV)

I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

MI 3:11-12 (ESV)

Old Covenant Math

“tithe” → 1/10

1/10 + 25-30 % of annual harvest + freewill offerings + festival animals + money for sin and trespass offerings + 1/7 for Sabbath year + 1/49 for Jubilee + corners of fields + charity + care of widow, orphan, poor, and stranger

cost likely > 40 % a year

New Covenant Math

- everything belongs to God
 - we give as a token of our acknowledgement
- ✘ How much we should give
 - ✔ How much we keep and what we do with it

**Our time, possessions, abilities, finances
are gifts from God.**

Live in the light of the spirit of the law

Where do You Stand?

“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. 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. 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.

MI 4:1-3 (ESV)

Cause for Rejoicing

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 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.”

MI 4:4-6 (ESV)

Promises: Elijah and Jesus

**Elijah to come
before the
Messiah**



**Elijah did come
(John the Baptist)**

**Jesus will come
a second time**



**Not for salvation
this time**



But for judgement

**everyone will receive what has been promised
– whether eternal life or eternal death**

- Do we truly believe that God loves us as we are, but way too much to allow us to remain as we are?
- Are we committed to living for the glory of our God and Redeemer, living as best we know according to the Scriptures?
- Do we recognize God's ownership of everything we are and everything we have, and His right to direct the use of those resources?
- Are we ready for the return of the Lord Jesus? Are we looking forward to that earth-shattering trumpet call and the Lord's shout of command?