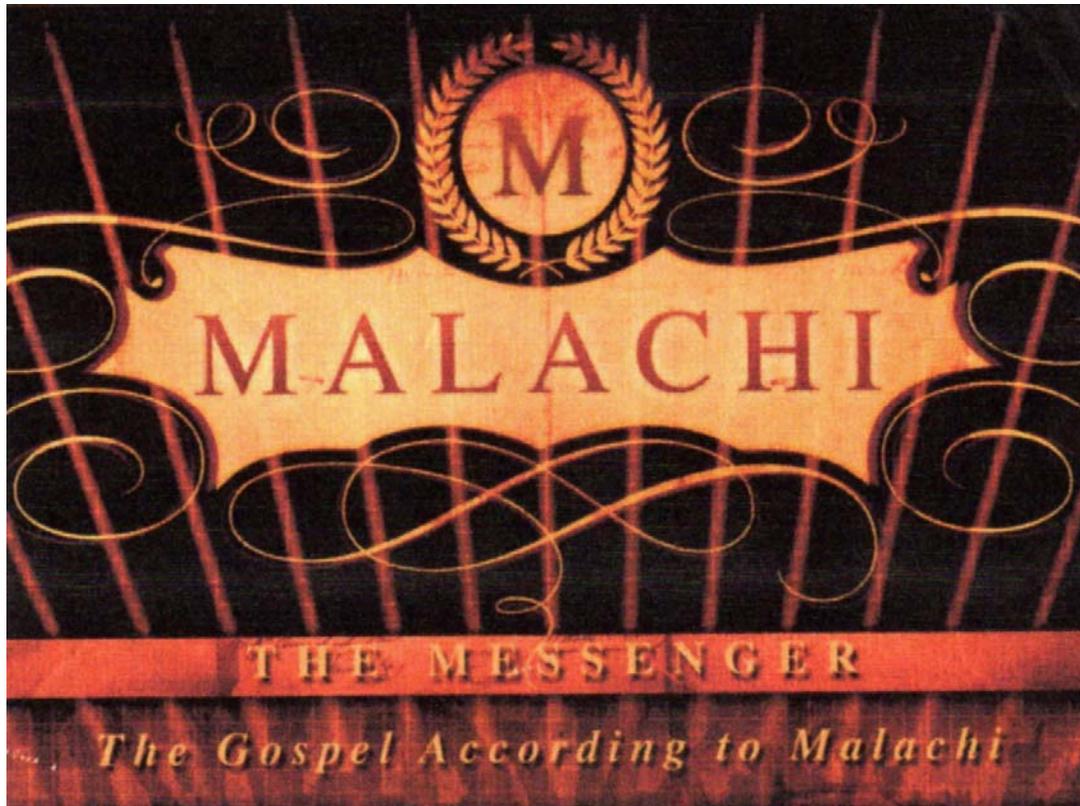


# **The Messenger**

## **The Gospel According to Malachi**



*"From the rising of the sun, even to its going down,  
My name shall be great among the Gentiles..."*  
— Malachi 1:11

## **Reverence Bible Church**

### **Bible Study**

**Written by Pastor Don Smith**

# The Messenger

## The Gospel According to Malachi

### A Study of the Book of Malachi

Lesson	Date	Title	Text
Part One	September 19	“God’s Messenger”	Malachi 1:1
Break	September 26	Prayer Night	
Part Two	October 3	“God’s Sovereign Love”	Malachi 1:2-6
Part Three	October 10	“God’s Great Name”	Malachi 1:6-14
Part Four	October 17	“God’s Incomparable Glory”	Malachi 2:1-9
Special	October 24	Special Study	
Break	October 31	Hallelujah Harvest Festival	
Special	November 7	Special Study	
Part Five	November 14	“God’s Holy Institutions”	Malachi 2:10-16
Break	November 21	Thanksgiving Eve (no study)	
Part Six	November 28	“God’s Promised Messenger”	Malachi 2:17-3:6
Part Seven	December 5	“God’s Inexhaustible Storehouse”	Malachi 3:7-15
Part Eight	December 12	“God’s Priceless Treasure”	Malachi 3:16-4:6

# The Messenger

## The Gospel According to Malachi

Part Two  
“God’s Sovereign Love”  
Malachi 1:2-5

**The Lord’s affirmation to Israel:** *“I have loved you,” says the LORD.”*

1. How amazing that God’s last words before sending Christ into the world would be the affirmation of His eternal love for His chosen people!
  - God’s love is an expression of His sovereign grace...determined & declared by His wisdom to accomplish His great purposes.
  - God’s love is unconditional....self-motivated & initiated in loving-kindness
  - God’s love is an expression of His sovereign grace...unmerited & undeserved
  - God’s love is personal & intimate...setting His love & affection on undeserving sinners, especially His elect from the ends of the earth.
  
2. The story of God’s love is the Gospel
  - God chose His people before the foundation of the world according to His good pleasure
    - *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph 1:4-6)*
  
  - God first loved us
    - *“We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)*
  
  - God’s love is supremely manifested towards His elect by sending Christ
    - *“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9-11).*
  
    - *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”. (John 3:16)*
  
  - God’s love in Christ for His people is eternally secure
    - *“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:37-39)*
  
  - God’s people are holy in His eyes
    - *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” (Deut 14:2)*
  
  - God’s love for His people makes them all saints
    - *“Yes, He loves the people; All His saints are in Your hand;” (Deut 33:3)*
  
  - God’s love is like that of an infinitely perfect father
    - *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:1-2)*

- God's love motivates Him to chasten His sons & daughters to produce good fruit
    - *"And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."(Heb.12:5-11)*
  - God's love is like that of a man in love for his bridegroom
    - *"And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."*
  - God's love is everlasting
    - *"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. (Jer. 31:3)*
3. God set His affection upon the seed of Seth, Abraham, Isaac & Jacob
- God set uniquely set His covenant love upon the fathers of Israel
    - *"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day." (Deut 10:14-15)*
  - God's people are specially treasured above all the peoples on the face of the earth;
    - *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. (Deut.7:6-10)*
4. God faithfully affirmed His loving-kindness to Israel even when they turned from Him.

**Israel's consternation:** *"Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?"*

1. The Lord anticipated Israel's reaction to His affirmation of love.
  - He knew their desensitized hearts.... calloused by years of spiritual and national decline.
  - In their adversity they were in danger of forgetting the history of God's goodness to them.
  - The "Golden Years" of Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon were gone.
  - The rebuilt temple was but a shadow of its former self.
  - Self-consumed with doubt and disenchantment their faith in God's love wavered.
  - They were asking, "What has God done for us lately?" while living under harsh realities of Chaldean governors.
  - Spiritual and national darkness obscured their view of God's covenant love.

2. Israel's spiritual condition was exposed by its insensitive question.
  - Confidence in God's love fights off despair and disenchantment.
    - *"Is it true that God is love to me as a Christian? And does the love of God mean all that has been said? If so, certain questions arise. Why do I ever grumble and show discontent and resentment at the circumstances in which God has placed me? Why am I ever distrustful, fearful, or depressed? Why do I ever allow myself to grow cold, formal, and half-hearted in the service of God who loves me? Who do I ever allow my loyalties to be divided, so that God has not all my heart?" -J.I. Packer (Knowing God)*

**The Lord's explanation to Israel:** *"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness." Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,"*

1. The Lord answered Israel's accusation by asking another question.
    - Had they forgotten God's sovereign love in making them a people?
    - He reminded them it was He who chose Jacob above Esau. (See Deut. 7:6-10)
    - Even though Esau was the 1<sup>st</sup> born, the Lord chose Jacob to be the blessed seed. (Gen.36)
    - He did this even before either son was born and before they could have done either good or evil.
      - *"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." (Rom.9:10-13)*
  - God's preferential love for Jacob was purely an act of sovereign grace. (Gen. 25:21-34)
  - The Lord promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their seed He would propagate, preserve & provide for the seed.
  - From Jacob's seed the promised deliverer, the Messiah & the Christ would come.
  - God preferred Jacob's seed not because he was more worthy than his brother Esau.
  - Jacob was loved for Christ's sake.
  - The Lord, always faithful to His own covenant promises, was determined to send His only begotten son into the world to redeem a lost.... yet chosen people.
  - He loved Jacob according to His will and good pleasure.
  - This was Israel's identity and destiny.
  - So when Israel questioned God's love, sovereign grace was the only answer to Jacob's continued existence.
  - Was Jacob loved and continually loved? Yes!
2. The Lord's hatred like his love is always consistent with His holiness
    - Because God is holy He has a just repulsion against all sin.
    - He hates the evil that threatens His holy purpose and chosen people.
    - His hatred is a settled determined reaction of His holiness against sin.
    - But here the Lord's hatred is not absolute but a lesser love than bestowed upon Esau.
    - Otherwise, He wouldn't have granted Esau the choice of blessing as he received nor made his so powerful and prosperous a nation (Laetsch)
    - His anger is but for a moment and His favor for life
      - *"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning." (Ps 30:5)*

3. The Lord's covenant love binds Him to His people even when they have forsaken Him
  - *"For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, "Says the LORD, your Redeemer." "But My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed, "Says the LORD, who has mercy on you." (Isa 54:7-8,10)*
4. The Lord calls His people to share His hatred for evil and prefer Him above all others
  - *"Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies." (Ps 139:21-22)*
  - *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate (preferring to love Christ above) his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:26*
5. The Lord's hatred of sin caused the destruction of both Edom & Jerusalem
  - The Lord sent prophets to Edom as well as Israel to warn of His judgment. (Obadiah, Jeremiah)
  - By His outstretched arm He used the Babylonians to judge both great cities (Jer.27:1-6)
  - Jerusalem, however, was the promised city of God in which the Christ would be revealed.

**The Lord's clarification to Israel:** *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever."*

- Edom's continual efforts to rebuild would be frustrated and thwarted by the Lord even as the Lord prevented Jericho from being rebuilt.
- The ruins of Petra in present day Jordan stand as evidence of God's hatred of Esau
  - *"Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished? Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Dedan! For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will punish him. If grape-gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, Would they not destroy until they have enough? But I have made Esau bare; I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself. His descendants are plundered, His brethren and his neighbors, and he is no more. Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let your widows trust in Me." (Jer. 49:7-11)*

**The Lord's promise to Israel:** *"Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'"*

1. Israel questioned God's love when they saw the prosperity of Esau.
  - They envied the wicked and neglected to see their end.
    - *"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off." (Prov. 23:17-18)*
    - *"Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking." (Prov. 24:1-2)*
  - They failed to recognize the covenant blessings of God's chosen covenant people
    - *"Do not envy the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD, but His secret counsel is with the upright. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just." (Prov. 23:17-18)*
- But when Israel saw Esau's destruction it should have been a reminder of God's faithfulness

2. Israel would see someday the Lord how the Lord would be magnified beyond the border of Israel by Gentiles.
- The Lord's covenant blessing of Abraham also included the blessing of all the families on the earth in Christ.
  - *"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen.12:3)*
- The greatness of the Lord was revealed not only when Christ came to Jerusalem but also when the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost.
  - *"Throughout his book, Malachi, the spokesman of God, presents a remarkable picture of God's holiness and man's unholiness. We see here the Lord's unmerited, free grace and man's self-righteous demand of reward. We see the divine patience in the face of human stubbornness; the Master's condescension and the servant's imprudence. We behold the Creator's solicitude for the eternal welfare of His handiwork, and the creature's sullen dissatisfaction with his Maker's will and way. We observe the Judge's solemn warning of impending judgment and the blind, self-righteous sinner arrogantly demanding the coming of judgment. We see our God's perfect holiness and our own imperfections and guilt. In the same measure that we recognize our own sinfulness and wickedness, the mystery of divine love and the depths of Jehovah's grace become the more unfathomable, and the greater ought our gratitude grow toward Jehovah, our Covenant God through Jesus Christ, His Messenger, the Angel of the Covenant". (Theo. Laetsch on Malachi)*