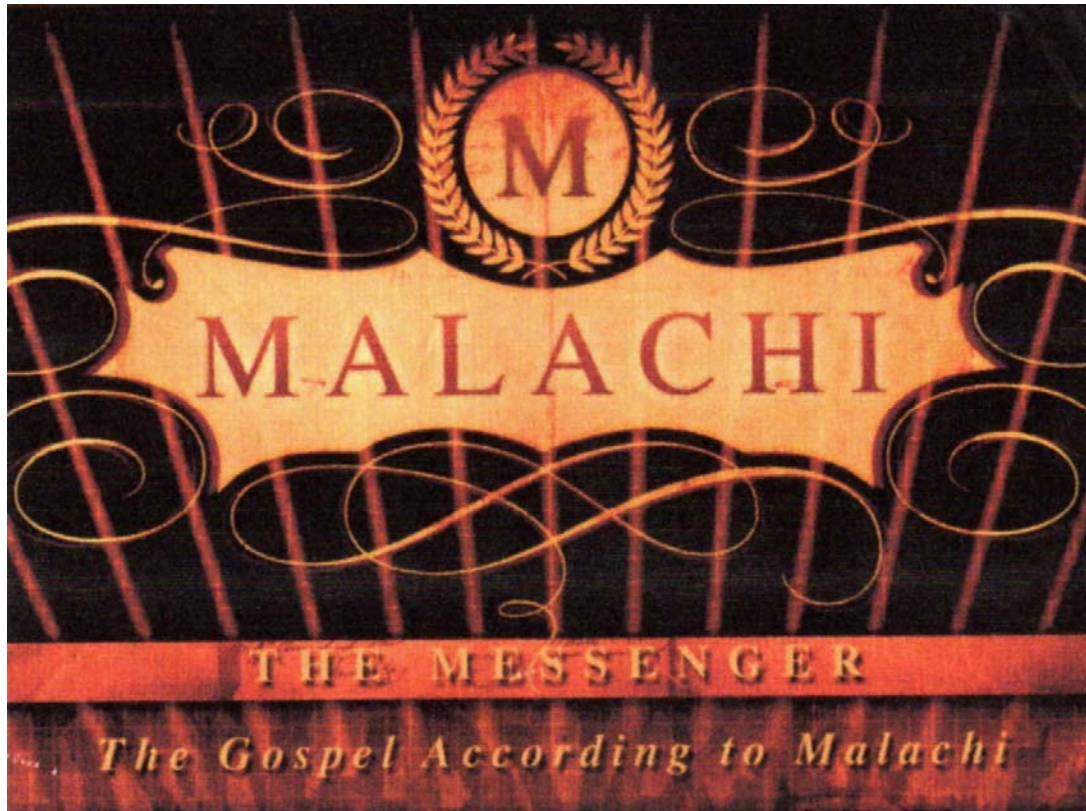


The Messenger

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

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Part Three
“God’s Great Name”
Malachi 1:6-14

“The Lord does not ask, ‘Where is the love you own Me?’ He knows that He cannot look for love where honor and fear are lacking.” “He is the Lord of Hosts, the Ruler of the universe, whose power is infinite. Him they neither honor nor fear!” (Laetsch)

The Lord’s accusation against Israel’s priests: *“A son honors his father, And a servant his master.”*

1. The Lord’s 1st Question: *“If then I am the Father, Where is My honor (glory)?”*

- God will not share His glory with another:
 - God will not give His glory to another: *“I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.” (Isa 42:8)*
 - God’s glory is inclined to “incurvation” by man (turning glory due God back to themselves)
 - *“How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” (Ps. 4:2)*
 - *“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man -- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” (Rom. 1:22-23)*
 - God curses those who rob Him of His glory
 - *“If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,” Says the LORD of hosts, “I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings.” (Mal. 2:2)*
 - God is to be glorified in worship consistent with His infinite holiness
 - *“Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!” (Ps 24:7-10)*
 - *“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” (I Cor.1:31)*
 - God is to be glorified as our eternal loving Father as we honor our fathers & mothers
 - *“Thus says the LORD: “Israel is My son, My firstborn”. (Ex.4:22)*
 - *“For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.” (Jer.31:9)*
 - *“Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name.” (Isa 63:16)*
 - *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.” (Hos 11:1)*
 - *“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” (Deut. 5:16)*
2. The Lord’s 2nd Question: *“And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence?”*
- The Lord called Jacob His chosen servant
 - *“Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you:.....For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring,” (Isa 44:1,3)*

- The Lord calls servant's to honor their masters as they would their Heavenly Master
 - *"Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."* (Col 4:1)
 - If Israel honored their earthly fathers and revered their masters why will they not honor God as their Father and reverence Him as their heavenly Master?
3. The Lord authenticates His love by His name: *"Says the LORD of hosts..."* ("Lord of Sabaoth")
- This name is mentioned eight times in fifty five verses.
 - It is connected with the personal and covenant name of God, "Yahweh"
 - It is used in different contexts as the "Lord of heavenly constellations" (Gen.2:1); "Lord of Israel's armies" (2 Sam.8:16); "Lord of angelic beings".
 - *"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me. I have made the earth, and created man on it. I -- My hands -- stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded."* (Isa 45:11-12)
 - *"Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! (Ps 148:2-4)*
 - The Lord of Hosts is the pre-incarnate Christ.
 - He ruled His creation to accomplish His Father's eternal purposes.
 - Jesus identified himself as the coming king with His angelic host
 - *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."* (Matt. 16:27)
 - *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* (Matt 24:30-31)
4. The Lord's Audience: *"....to you priests who despise My name."*
- The priesthood was appointed by Ezra to offer sacrifices pleasing to the Lord (Ezra 6:16-18)
 - The decline of the priesthood brought about the decline of the nation
 - They followed in the train of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1) and the sons of Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17).
 - The priesthood had become proud self-deceived spiritual counterfeits, calloused insincere professionals, half-hearted regretful leaders and deceivers eager for dishonest gain.
 - *"Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away".* (1 Peter 5:2-4)
 - As the messengers changed so did the message.
 - As the priesthood went so went the nation.
 - As the church goes so goes the nation
 - We are God's chosen people with the rights of a royal priesthood
 - *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."* (1 Peter 2:9-10)

5. Not everyone who calls the Lord, “Lord” are necessarily God’s people
 - *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46-47)*
 - *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matt. 7:21-23)*

The consternation of Israel’s priests:

1. **Israel’s question:** *“Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’*
 - Once again the priesthood, convinced it was “pulling off” its duties, reveals its self-deception by questioning God’s evaluation of their lives.
 - Out of touch with their hypocrisy these spiritual counterfeits were feigning piety but going through the altar ritual without heed either to the letter or to the spirit of the Law!
 - They were out of touch with their spiritual condition.
2. **The Lord’s response:** *“You offer defiled food on My altar,”*
 - He accused them of offering defiled unacceptable sacrifices on the Altar of burnt offering.
 - The word “food” or “bread” likely refers to animal sacrifices or anything offered to the Lord
3. **Israel’s question:** *“But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’*
 - The priests were still insensitive not only to their sin but even to the Lord’s accusations.
 - The impenitent heart rejects correction & tends to rationalize away personal sin.
 - They were profaning the Lord by their defiled worshipping hearts but were either unwilling to admit it, or even worse, were too calloused to be aware of their sin.
4. **The Lord’s response:** *“By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil?”*
 - The Lord knew they were knowingly offering unacceptable sacrifices.
 - They had contempt for the “table (Altar) of the Lord” in that they disregarded or minimized God’s holy demands.
 - *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.” (Ps 23:5)*
 - Worship acceptable to the Lord must not only be driven by biblical truth but also by a joyful grateful heart
 - *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)*
 - They were offering the Lord blemished lambs as a way of gaining the applause of greedy religious consumers clamoring for an easy inexpensive way of worshipping their great God.
 - This was explicitly forbidden by the Lord.
 - *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering -- you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.” (Lev 22:17-23)*

- *“But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God.” (Deut. 15:21)*
- Remember the sacrifice was made in anticipation of Christ’s perfect sacrifice.
 - *“you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” (1 Peter 1:18-21)*
- The Lord is a purpose-driven God...driven by His holiness to guarantee His holy reputation as well as save a sinful people prone to wander.
- To show contempt to the Lord’s prescriptive sacrifice was to show contempt for Christ as the Perfect Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world.
- To disdain God’s holy command for an unblemished lamb was a “slam” on the perfect Lamb of God.
- The Lord challenges their honor and reverence to him by asking his priests would they or their people be allowed to offer their Persian governors what they offer Him.
 - *“Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts.”*
- Their wicked rulers expected and demanded the best.
- Would not their holy Father and gracious Master be deserving of at least their best?
- What an insult to the Lord of Hosts to offer blemished gifts with contempt and resentment..

The Lord’s exasperation with Israel’s priests:

1. The Lord’s ironic challenge: *“But now entreat God’s favor, that He may be gracious to us.”*
 - The Lord knew their hypocrisy offering forbidden sacrifices in hopes of buying off the Lord while praying for Him to shower His favor on them.
 - They hoped their prayers would “smooth over” their disobedience.
2. Malachi questions, *“While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts”.*
 - The answer would be a definite “NO WAY! Keep doing this but don’t expect to find My favor!”
 - *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.” (Ps.66:18)*
 - *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart -- These, O God, You will not despise.” (Ps 51:17)*
 - *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom 12:1)*
 - *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”(Heb.13:15)*
3. The Lord implores his priests, *“Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?”*
 - He is saying, “Isn’t there anyone who would shut the doors of the temple to keep out the likes of those who vainly light the sacrificial fire on the altar trying to gain my favor?”

The Lord's renunciation of Israel's priests:

1. The Lord of hosts declared, *"I have no pleasure in you"*
 - The Lord found no pleasure in Israel's sacrifices even as He rejected Cain's sacrifice.
 - Israel had gone the way of Cain.
 - *"And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell."* (Gen. 4:3-5)
 - *"And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."* (Luke 21:1-4)
2. If the priests think they can appease God with self-righteous disobedient sacrifices they had better reconsider their way.... *"Nor will I accept an offering from your hands"*.

The Lord's declaration to Israel's priests:

1. The Lord's sovereign purposes will never be thwarted nor his name diminished by humanity
 - *"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering"*
 - To think Gentiles would offer pure sacrifices acceptable to the Lord had to be shocking to Israel.
2. The Lord reaffirms, *"For My name shall be great among the nations, "Says the LORD of hosts."*
 - A bright new future lay ahead when Gentiles would exalt the Lord's name from east to west.
 - *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."* (Ps 103:12-14)
 - *"The Mighty One, God the LORD, Has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;"* (Ps. 50:1-3)
 - *"So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him".* (Is. 59:19-20)

The Lord's observation: *"But you profane it, In that you say,"*

1. The priesthood acted as if the Lord's Table was contemptible: *'The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.'*
2. The priesthood further said serving the Lord was a tiring boring work that didn't get paid enough, *'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer (turned their noses up) at it, "*
3. The people were deceived to think they could pass off their blemished sacrifices even though they vowed to give the Lord their best.
 - *"Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD.*
4. The Lord would not be mocked: *"But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished –"*

The Lord's world wide exaltation: *"For I am a great King, "Says the LORD of hosts,": And My name is to be feared among the nations."*

- *"Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him". (Ps 33:8)*
- *Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. (Ps 34:9-10)*
- *"For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods." (Ps. 95:3)*
- *"For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us" (Isa 33:22)*
- *But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation." (Jer.10:10)*
- *"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil.2:9-11).*