



MALACHI

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WEEK 1 | OVERVIEW

Purpose

When I was in the UK, my brother and I overheard one girl say to another: “I’ve been to Glastonbury 3x2” We laughed and thought: “Why not just say she’d been 6 times?” From then one, whenever anyone said anything a bit dense we’d say: “I’ve been to Glastonbury 3x2” in our best mean girls accents.

Years later, our sister pointed out that the girl was probably saying that she’d been to Glastonbury three times as well! Three times too! It turned out we were the idiots all along!

That’s the book of Malachi. Malachi exposes the folly of God’s people and calls them to repent in preparation for the coming day of the Lord. He says: “You’ve got it all wrong. Get over yourselves, stop sulking, trust me, and do what’s right!”

Structure

In terms of structure, there seems to be six disputations between God and the people followed by a summary statement about what God requires of them, and the coming messianic messenger. The bible project summary video is pretty useful when it comes to overall structure.

Context

Malachi preached a generation or two after Zechariah, around 460-430BC). At this point, the Temple is built and Nehemiah has just put the finishing touches on the walls of Jerusalem.



Just like Zechariah's hearers, the people are discouraged and drifting from God. They were promised a post-exilic golden age but are experiencing a drought due to their disobedience to the covenant.

The presenting issues may seem distant—neglect of the temple, contempt for the sacrifices, unfaithfulness in marriage, injustice in the land—but they are not far from any of us. It's all about spiritual dryness leading to ungodliness—a timeless struggle that presents itself in different ways. It's a confronting book but in the end holds out a message of hope and comfort because God chooses to love them and us despite ourselves.

I'm confident that God's word to them then, will speak to us now, with the freshness and immediacy of God's Spirit.

Read Malachi 1-4

How would you sum up the big idea of the book?

What do you want to look into further?

Pray for spiritual growth this year



FURTHER RESOURCES

REFLECTIONS ‘ON CHURCH’

This term, I’m going to release a weekly 5 minute reflection on an aspect of church life. I’ll drop them on Facebook and the church YouTube channel. If you’re not subscribed, please do that.

COFFEE CATCH UPS

If you’d like help to think through an issue you’re facing, or would like to help me think through an issue at church, please get in touch. I’d love catch up, read the bible, pray with you and talk about whatever you’d like.

READING THE BIBLE

On the final day, you will be held responsible for your own growth, but I’ll give an account before God too. For that reason, I’m eager to help you establish healthy habits and hold you accountable to them. Nothing beats catching up to read to the bible together but here are a few good resources that might help you:

Bible Project Reading Plans

<https://bibleproject.com/reading-plans/>

Download the one year reading plan, ask a handful of friends to do it with you, hold each other accountable. It's as simple as that.



Listen as you drive

Spotify - 'Dwell's Bible in a Year'. Listen as you drive. Let someone know you're doing it and talk about what you're reading. There's an app too.



Time with God

<https://www.hunterbiblechurch.org/member-resources>

Check out the 'Time with God' bible reading archive. Work through them in your own time or with a mate.



Bible App (YouVersion)

I assume you know all about this. Why not use it some time?

USING THIS BOOKLET

As with all things, you get out what you put in.

As you read Malachi, you may want to establish smaller support groups in which you can read the bible and pray about specific issues you're facing. Whether it's keeping each accountable in marriage, in your finances or in your relationship with God. For matters that are particularly sensitive, please speak with me or mike.

Malachi Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we study the book of Malachi together, please transform our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit. Increase our confidence in your love, and enable us to love you and our neighbours out of reverence for Christ.

Amen.



M A L A C H I

DISPUTATION 1 | LOVE

Malachi 1:1-5

A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.

2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord.

“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’

“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”

4 Edom may say, “Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.”

But this is what the Lord Almighty says: “They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. 5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, ‘Great is the Lord—even beyond the borders of Israel!’

Further Resources

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/malachi/#overview>

GROWTH GROUP

Malachi 1:1-5

Read Malachi 1:1-5

Fill in the following:

God's claim:

The peoples counter:

God's surprising proof:

Offer your 7 word (or 10 that rhyme) summary:

Essential Background

What do we learn about Edom and Israel from these texts:

Gen 25:19-34

Numbers 20:14-21

Obadiah 10-14

Romans 9:6-15

A Christian couple has recently lost their two year old daughter in a car accident. How does this passage assure them of God's love? (See also Eph 1:4-5)

Practically speaking, how could you deepen your knowledge and appreciation of God's electing love?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about God's election of Israel and rejection of Edom, that demonstrates His love. What has God put on your heart? Pray in response to the passage.

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help?
Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness



M A L A C H I

DISPUTATION 2 | CONTEMPT

Read Malachi 1:6-2:9

6 “A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the Lord Almighty.

“It is you priests who show contempt for my name. “But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’ 7 “By offering defiled food on my altar. “But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’ “By saying that the Lord’s table is contemptible. 8 When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the Lord Almighty.

9 “Plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?”—says the Lord Almighty.

10 “Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,” says the Lord Almighty, “and I will accept no offering from your hands. 11 My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.

12 “But you profane it by saying, ‘The Lord’s table is defiled,’ and, ‘Its food is contemptible.’ 13 And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously,” says the Lord Almighty.

“When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the Lord.

14 “Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.

2:1 “And now, you priests, this warning is for you. 2 If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me.

3 “Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. 4 And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue,” says the Lord Almighty. 5 “My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. 6 True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

7 “For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8 But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the Lord Almighty. 9 “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

GROWTH GROUP

Malachi 1:6-2:9

Watch the Bishop of Worcester's, Oxford Union Address.

What makes these arguments persuasive or attractive? How would you respond?

Comprehension

Why is God worthy of honour?

What charges does God make against the priests?

What changes does God want from the priests?

What will happen/has happened to the priests if/since they don't repent?

Application

Do you feel like being a Christian is burdensome? Why?

This attitude stifles service and shows contempt. What is sacrifice supposed to be like? (See Matthew 11:28; Heb 13:15-16, Rom 11:33-36; Rom 12:1-3)

Practically speaking, how will you cultivate whole-hearted, joyful, service of God?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about the contempt. What has God put on your heart from this passage?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help? Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness

Bonus question for keen beans: What were the requirements of the OT sacrifices? And what is the Levi covenant?



M A L A C H I

DISPUTATION 3—UNFAITHFULNESS

Personal time in Malachi 2:10-16

¹⁰ Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

¹¹ Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. ¹² As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD remove him from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings an offering to the LORD Almighty.

¹³ Another thing you do: You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

¹⁵ Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ “The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

GROWTH GROUP (Malachi 2:10-16)

What does this passage teach about the foundations and purposes of marriage? Of parenting?

What is the connection between sacrifices and marriage in this passage? (See also: 1 Sam 15:22, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8)

What's the problem with marrying outside of the covenant people? (Read Exo 34:11-16, Deut 7:3-4, Ezra 9:1-2 and Neh 13:23-29)

"My body belongs to me" Do you agree or disagree?(See also Psalm 139:14 , 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Cor 7:1-5, 1 Thess 4:4, Proverbs 5:19, 2 Cor 11:25-29)

Consider the relevance of this teaching in the abortion debate. the transgender debate, and in your marriage.

Practically speaking, how can you develop greater faithfulness in your relationships?

Practically speaking, how might this group support one another's marriages?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about God's response to Judah's unfaithful marriages.
What has God put on your heart from this passage?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help?
Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness



M A L A C H I

DISPUTATION 4 | WEARISOME

Personal time in Malachi 2:17-3:5

¹⁷You have wearied the LORD with your words.

“How have we wearied him?” you ask.

By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

3 “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

⁵ “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

GROWTH GROUP

Malachi 2:17-3:5

What is the people's basic complaint against God?

What is God's basic response ?

When were these things fulfilled?

John the Baptist

Jesus

The Holy Spirit

What hope do we have that the OT people of God didn't have?

Do you fear the LORD? Why? (v.5)

Why not?

Bonus Question: How would you answer someone who can't believe in God because they experienced some sort of injustice in their past and the perpetrator lives on unpunished?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about what God will do to bring justice. What has God put on your heart from this passage? How will you make the necessary change?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help? Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness



MALACHI

DISPUTATION 5 | MONEY

Personal time in Malachi 3:6-12

6 “I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says

the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.

GROWTH GROUP

Bible

What is the foundation of their/our hope? If God was changeable, what would that do to gospel confidence?

Where have you heard “return to me and I will return to you” before? What does this teach us about the OT people of God?

What do you make of the close relationship between tithing and blessing? Does this mean that the prosperity gospel is in fact true!? If not, why not?

Reflection

Without sustained thought and repentance we and our children will be (and are being) carried along by a Christian culture for whom robbing God is the norm. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Change

The overall situation: <https://shop.ncls.org.au/products/church-finances-and-giving?token=EC-04N61483VC851854D>

Your situation: What percentage of your income do you give to God’s work? Are you satisfied with that level of generosity?

Obedience: This is not an individual problem—we are being carried along in a cultural river that leads to destruction. The solution is likewise a joint effort so tell someone about your giving plans and ask them to hold you accountable. Practically speaking, how might that accountability work?

Sustained thought: Not many of us are readers but I’d strongly recommend but this guy is a great conversation partner moving forward https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_rW0lPGTes

Jesus said: “You can not love both God and money”

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about repentance from robbing God. What has God put on your heart from this passage?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help?
Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness



M A L A C H I

DISPUTATION 6 | ARROGANCE

Personal time in Malachi 3:13-4:3

13 “You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the Lord.

“Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’

14 “You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? 15 But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.’”

16 Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name.

17 “On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

4 “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. 3 Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty.

NOTES //

GROWTH GROUP

Complaint

What is the complaint the arrogant have against God?

Have you ever felt that way?

Repentance

We can't know if this group is a separate group or if some of the arrogant people have repented at this point, but either way it's encouraging! (See also 1:6, 14, 2:2, 5, 3:5)

What is the book of remembrance referring to?

God's Answer

How would you summarise God's answer to the complaint?

When are these things fulfilled?

What encouragement is there for those who feel as though serving God is futile?

Music

"But for you who fear my name" by The Welcome Wagon

Is it possible to have too much banjo?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about the justice of God. What has God put on your heart from this passage?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help? Pray for courage

Is there anything you need to confess? Pray for forgiveness



M A L A C H I

GOD'S CLOSING STATEMENT

Personal time in Malachi 4:4-6

4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

GROWTH GROUP

Opener

What is your first memory?

Big Picture

I think the “scroll of remembrance” is Malachi 3:17-4:6.

What are the people to remember?

What will God remember?

The Law

Watch: Brian Rosner Law St Judes (6 mins)

How would you summarize what he said for a friend. Do we need to keep the law? In what senses is the law profitable for us?

How could you help each other get God’s wisdom from the law?

Fulfilment

Look up these verses: Matthew 11:14, 16:14, 17:10-13, Mark 1:2, 9:11-13, Luke 1:17, John 1:21. Who was the Elijah to come?

When was the great and dreadful day of the Lord? (See Joel 2:31 and Acts 2:14-21)

Series end

What has impacted you most from the book?

PRAYER + NEXT STEPS

This passage is about what God wants from his people and what he will do in the future. What has God put on your heart from this passage?

How has God been at work in your life this week? Thank God

Any issues at work, church or family life? Pray for help

How is your gospel witness going? How can the church community help?
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