

Pathfinders School of Ministry
Class: The Book of Malachi and Today
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Lesson 1

Introduction

I am going to try to make this class as light as possible. When we get into the prophets, we see right away that it was a heavy burden that these men carried.

The book of Malachi opens with this:

(Mal 1:1) The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.
Burden = several things, but doom is one of the definitions to this word.

We live in a day when the prophet will not be heard. False prophets yes, pillow prophets (Ezekiel 13:18-20) yes but not one who comes and says “Thus sayeth the Lord” and tells people they what they are doing wrong, how it will harm them, and how to fix it.

Before 2019 you couldn't find a prophet, who was prophesying at a national level who was accurate, not since David Wilkerson. Now after the last election, people are searching for a prophetic voice but I have not found one accurate yet. Elijah went up against Jezebel and her 850 false prophets.

It is clear to me we are living in a nation and a church that has been judged and people don't want to believe it. They want a new hope like Trump or some other man who will stand up to the wickedness surrounding us.

We can also have prophets so dead set on judgment, death and destruction that they themselves may not even see any hope. How can one minister hope if they have none. I see a continued calling in the prophets of the bible. A calling out and the hope that is in God if they come out.

We live in a day where ministries like, xxx, not only discourage the word of the prophet, they cast them out. The word says

(Tit 2:15) These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

(2Ti 4:2) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Today exhorting and reproofing is ok, but no, not even a small rebuke is allowed. People are too sensitive to hear a correction, sometimes a harsh one.

Xxx says all teaching, preaching has to be uplifting. Anything offensive or perceived as harsh is not allowed. And I'm talking about speaking it verbatim out of the bible.

I would argue that a good rebuke for a godly righteous minded man would be encouraging to him. But not to one playing games or has set themselves on continuing in their sin.

How about this?

(1Ti 5:19) Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

(1Ti 5:20) Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

I'm not proposing this necessarily, but how fast would churches empty out if next Sunday the pastor rebuked an elder in front of the whole congregation? Or would the congregation get their act together? Maybe the best of both worlds... Most would leave, the rest would straiten out and what you would have left would be serious Christians seriously following and serving Him.

The word of the prophet is as important during Malachi's time as it is today. The prophet calls people back to God, what is right, what is biblical. He brings correction into individual's lives and correction to the Church as a whole. He is vital. I've heard it said, the Evangelist catches the fish, the prophet cleans the fish. Without the prophet, a little uncleaned leaven eventually leavens the whole lump, until the whole lump is so bad, so bad that they will not hear the prophet any more.

Jesus declared the importance of the prophet when he said:

(Mat 7:12) Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Jesus lumped the commandments of God and the direction of the Prophet together. Both together will bring us into righteousness and holiness with God, very important.

The prophet is concerned with Repentance and people being right with God and then right with each other, before all else...

“Malachi” means my messenger, ambassador, angel, king.

**CHART
1**

OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY	
Call of Abram (Abraham)	2092
Joseph Sold Into Egypt	1898
Descent Into Egypt	1877
Exodus	1447
Wilderness Wandering	1447-1407
Conquest of Canaan	1407-1380
Judges (See Chart 2 below)	1380-1050
United Kingdom	1050-931
Saul	1050-1010
David	1010-970
Solomon	970-931
Divided Kingdom (See Chart 4, p. 12)	931-722
Judah Alone	722-587
Captivity	604-538
Daniel & other hostages taken to Babylon	604
Deportation of 10,000 Jews to Babylon	597
Fall of Jerusalem; Nation of Judah deported to Babylon	587
Rebellion in Jerusalem fails; more Jews deported to Babylon	582
Restoration	538
Temple rebuilt	580-515
Esther becomes queen	478
Ezra returns	458
Nehemiah returns; wall rebuilt	445

**CHART
2**

Judge	Years as Judge	Major Enemy
Othniel	40	Mesopotamia
Ehud	80	Moab
Shamgar	?	Philistines
Deborah	40	Jabin of Canaan
Gideon	40	Midian
Abimelech	3	(period of civil war)
Tola	23	
Jair	22	
Jephthah	6	Ammon
Ibzan	7	
Elon	10	
Abdon	8	
Samson	40	Philistines
Eli	?	Philistines
Samuel	?	Philistines

**THE
JUDGES
OF
ISRAEL**

Malachi was written between 430 and 400 BC. He was the last of the prophets.

Northern Kingdom/Southern Kingdom

Now before we get started, I am going to be referring to Israel as all 12 tribes including Judah. Remember Jacob's name was changed to Israel so all of his children are Israelites. When the kingdom splits under the time of Saul and then later again after David, it split into the north and the south, the Northern Kingdom is referred to as Israel and the South as Judah. This is all confusing at least for me. Who sided with who changed from time to time, most of the time Judah was the south and the rest were the north, but sometimes Benjamin joined Judah and so on? That is not important to what I am teaching in this class so when I refer to Israel, I am talking about all of them. The whole group. One could say nation but technically they weren't a nation in president day terms until 1948. So, keep it in mind, I will be calling the whole bunch of them Israel for the point of this class.

Now in studying some background to this class, the thing that is so perplexing, fearful, and sad to me is the timing of this book, specifically how quickly the Israelites fell away from God after they returned from Babylon. Let's look at the timeline.

Timeline: (Taken from Second Edition Standard Bible Atlas and Charts)

- Taken into captivity in Babylon in 604 – 582
 - They were taken over a 22-year period
- Restoration took place in 538
 - That's roughly 70 years after the initial taking into captivity
- Temple rebuilt between 580 and 515
- Ezra returns in 485 to finish the temple and begin temple duties and sacrifices
- Nehemiah returns in 445 to rebuild the wall
- Malachi writes book, in 430 to 400. So, Malachi prophesized within only a few decades of Nehemiah.
- God calls them out on 7 different things, foretells of John the Baptist and coming of Christ, the church going to the gentiles, and the returning of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. By the end of this book, we see that God's indwelling presence leaves them. They are still his people but he no longer speaks to them. For 400 years until the time of Christ, they hear nothing from him. Christ comes, they reject him, and go right back to the same situation until today. God goes then to the Gentiles (Gentile means the heathen, so all other people except the Israelites)

Israel's Veil

(Exo 34:33) And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

(Exo 34:34) But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel *that* which he was commanded.

(Exo 34:35) And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

(2Co 3:13) And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

(2Co 3:14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

(2Co 3:15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

(2Co 3:16) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Now I am not saying God's presence isn't with Israel at all today, it is to a degree I guess, I don't know what degree, but it's not like it was. And they cannot see Christ in the Word. They are blind to him. Remember on the way to Emmaus, Christ expounded all the scriptures to the two disciples about himself. Well, this is the situation with Israel, they cannot see scriptures about Christ. God has not yet opened their minds to Him. That will change in the future by hasn't yet. Romans Ch. 11.

That is the overall storyline for the book of Malachi.

Disarray Before and After Captivity

Now when Nehemiah returned, he found Israel in complete disarray. They had no leadership, outside people were terrorizing them with attacks, they had not read nor returned to the law, and Nehemiah

brought about some change to that. He organized the people, rebuilt the wall, read the Law, which began their return to God. To this point, the Israelites had returned to Jerusalem, but they had not returned to God. But what then, Malachi shows up on the scene to the same type of disarray that it was, only a short time ago.

It doesn't seem they could have possibly regained nearly any of what they had, if they had fallen so fast. How can it be that a remnant returned to the Lord and only 30 or 40 or 50 years later be so far gone that the Lord abandoned them as a nation? We'll see in the book of Malachi that God is done with them. Malachi tells of the coming of John the Baptist and Christ but then God does not speak to them for 400 and some years, not a word. He was done with them, fed up.

The book of Malachi is showing us that God's presence can leave a people group. We also see that he can and will do this individually. We see it first in Samson and then later with Saul. We have seen this with our own eyes in the church today.

In reading this book, it is obviously, God had given Israel/Judah their last chance when he sent them into and took them out of captivity. It was their final time to get it right.

A little more history here. There are 4 major prophets. Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. Isaiah prophesied before the captivity and prophesied about it to the Israelites. The other 3 prophesied before and during captivity. Isaiah was looking to the future.

Let's see how Isaiah opens his book. Let's see the state of Israel before captivity so that we can compare it later to the state of Israel during Malachi's day.

(Isa 1:2) Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

(Isa 1:3) The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

(Isa 1:4) Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

(Isa 1:5) Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

(Isa 1:6) From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

(Isa 1:7) Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

(Isa 1:8) And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

(Isa 1:9) Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

(Isa 1:10) Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

(Isa 1:11) To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

(Isa 1:12) When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

(Isa 1:13) Bring no more vain (useless, empty, lying, false) oblations (offering, gift, sacrifice); incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting (festival, holiday).

(Isa 1:14) Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

(Isa 1:15) And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

(Isa 1:16) Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

(Isa 1:17) Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

(Isa 1:18) Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

(Isa 1:19) If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

(Isa 1:20) But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

(Isa 1:21) How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

(Isa 1:22) Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

(Isa 1:23) Thy princes (leaders) *are* rebellious (stubborn, backslidden) and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

(Isa 1:24) Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

(Isa 1:25) And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

(Isa 1:26) And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors (those who give advice, guide) as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

(Isa 1:27) Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

(Isa 1:28) And the destruction of the transgressors (break away, rebel, revolt) and of the sinners (criminals, offender, guilty), *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

(Isa 1:29) For they shall be ashamed of the oaks (mightiness, strength) which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded (brought to confusion) for the gardens that ye have chosen.

(Isa 1:30) For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

(Isa 1:31) And the strong shall be as tow (shaken out, refused), and the maker (worker of it) of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*.

Turned over for the destruction of the flesh

I liken God sending the Israelites into captivity as giving them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

(1Co 5:1) It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

(1Co 5:2) And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

(1Co 5:3) For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,

(1Co 5:4) In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(1Co 5:5) To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(1Co 5:6) Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

(1Co 5:7) Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

(1Co 5:8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

(1Co 5:9) I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

(1Co 5:10) Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

(1Co 5:11) But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

(1Co 5:12) For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

(1Co 5:13) But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

In a sense God gave Israel over to the enemy, Nebuchadnezzar, for the destruction of the flesh. Sadly, 80 to 90% of them never returned when they could. They apparently fell in love with the world, their nice Babylonian house, the tasty Babylonian food, the kid's secondary education, the job, whatever it was. Or maybe they thought it too much trouble to return, they had to sell the house, pack everything up, go on a long journey to who knows what they'll find there. Those who stayed behind had their eyes set on the wrong thing. Their lives and their circumstances. God wasn't primary, they were. They were not about to forsake all that they had and follow God. They counted the cost and it was too much. To return is to give everything up for God. Many are like this today. They count the cost too much to follow Christ. They're not willing to give up what they have, where they desire to live, work, etc. Nor will they embrace the hardship of organizing their life to follow Christ. They simply resign to the status quo. Live in Babylon (here) and go to church, worshiping God by going to church services, singing songs to God and joining in church activities. The Lord said:

(Joh 4:21) Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

(Joh 4:22) Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

(Joh 4:23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

(Joh 4:24) God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Worshiping God in Spirit is walking in the Spirit, functioning in the Spirit. Being obedient to the Holy Spirit's direction in our life. Serving God whole heartedly.

In truth: means a couple different things in the bible but here it means that it is real. That you are worshiping him the way He wants to be worshiped. You are following Him, his ways, his commands and you are serving him in the same ways. Most of what people do in the church is vain religiosity. They do what they do because of traditions of men. They do what they've been taught by others, parents, relatives, friends, pastors, etc. It is not by relationship; it is not by the leading of the Holy Spirit. In fact, much of the church today doesn't even believe in the Holy Spirit's involvement in our lives. Yes, he is in us but for many believers, it ends there. I call what most people are involved in today "Chrchianity" as opposed to Christianity. They are involved in the activities and business of church instead of the activities and business of Christ. They've come out of the world and into church instead of Christ. Going through the motions of church.

I ask this, what does getting up in the morning, fighting with the wife and kids to be ready on time, getting on some nice clothes, going to a building called church as opposed to us being the church, visiting about football or politics or whatever else in the foyer, standing and singing songs while some/most are just waiting for it to be over, listening to a message that you forget, sometimes by that evening, rushing home for the football game, or rushing to your favorite restaurant, going to work and doing the same things as the ungodly, talking about the same things with the ungodly, all week long, then having fun and entertaining oneself on Saturday with, again, mainly the same things with the ungodly. How does all this compare to the life of Christ, the life of his disciples, the life of Paul? Is that what the new testament is about. This is Chrchianity and is not biblical almost in its entirety. There are some aspects that are. Going to a meeting on the Lord's day is biblical (but not at a church building) in the bible they were in homes. A pastor preaching, expounding on the word is biblical, praising god is biblical if you are doing it out of faith as opposed to because that is what we do (traditions of men) or (I can't wait for this to be over). For the most part, none of Chrchianity is worshiping God in Spirit and in truth.

To make a note, there are always exceptions. You could probably walk into any church building on a Sunday and find some true worshipers of God. Those sold out to Him, loving and serving him with their whole heart by Faith. But sadly, that is not the norm.

We are in homes because it is biblical. We try, emphasis try, to have our meetings in spirit and in truth but that is dependent upon each individual. Some are here for the right reason, spirit and truth, but just like in the Church building, some (many) are not. They unknowingly are still in vain religiosity, Chrchianity. What is the solution if you are in vain religiosity? Repent, forsake all that you have, give your whole life to God, serve him with all the strength you have and you are headed in the right direction.

Many walk today as the Israelites did in the days of Malachi

Sadly, today many walk in the same way today as they did in the days of Malachi. Attempting to follow God, falling back into sin, attempting again, falling again, over and over and over. The cycle has got to break. When I look at the cyclic pattern of Israel, and my experience in ministry, I see that for the most part, people only return to God in part. That is the real problem! They return in part. Their motives are wrong.

Mainly they return because their circumstances are bad.

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However:

(2Co 7:10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

They have worldly sorrow. They do not come to a deep repentance seeing how they have offended God. They see God and the Church as a crutch for them. I hurt my foot; I'll use this crutch until I get better. Then I'll go one with my life, and store my crutch in the basement for next time. Many people have a self-entitlement mentality with God and the church, no doubt inspired by our schools, colleges, and government. Over 50 % of people living in America are on some type of Government payment or subsidy.

Many believers think the church is a free hospital, free thrift store, free hotel, and free grocery store. When I'm in trouble, I go there they help me back on my feet, I deserve it and after all they're obligated to do it.

(2Th 3:6) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

(2Th 3:7) For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

(2Th 3:8) Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

(2Th 3:9) Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

(2Th 3:10) For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

(2Th 3:11) For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

(2Th 3:12) Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

(2Th 3:13) But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

(2Th 3:14) And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

(2Th 3:15) Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

(1Ti 5:8) But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

It imperative that we work, provide for ourselves, and provide for our own. If not, the Word, God himself says we are worse than an infidel.

Infidel = disbelieving, without Christian faith, heathen... untrustworthy, faithless, unbeliever

Now the church should take care of the poor and it actually has a responsibility to, especially to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. The Church (remember we are the church) should come to people in their most desperate hour but with the Cross, and with Christ, bearing the hope of the Gospel, leading in the way of repentance, as well as with a loaf of bread. God many times allows a person to get to a low point so that they will cry out for Him, come to Him. And more than that, we all need help from time to time, but this ever so popular American self-entitlement mentality is of the Devil. A believer should/must be opposite minded. They should in faith believe that they/we are more than conquerors, able not only to take care of ourselves but others as well. Realizing that God wants to bless us so much that we can be a blessing to others. Where's that with so many today? And I don't mean being blessed by having others give things to you. I mean work hard and have God bless you through the work of your own hands.

In the book of Malachi, we will look at a people with a really bad attitude and full of sin. They didn't seem to care at all of offending God and even more than that they had contempt for Him. We will look specifically at:

1. They didn't think God loved them
2. They despised God's name
3. They believed the table of the Lord was polluted
4. They divorced their wives and remarried. With this they married unbelievers
5. They called good evil and evil good.
6. They were called to return by tithing but refused
7. They said it is vain to serve God.
8. The last thing, the ushering in of John the Baptist and Christ, the Sun of righteousness...

These are 8 things that God chooses to speak to them about, and call them out of before he literally abandon's them. What if they had responded well and repented? Knowing God's pattern by what we see in the Word, God would have returned to them, been their God and led them in victory. But the story didn't go that way. They continued in their bad countenance, bad attitude, and sin. It's sad, very sad.

Because of God's foreknowledge, he knew the outcome and planned something better, Christ.

Assignment: Read the Book of Malachi