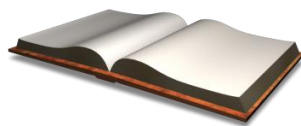


MALACHI

A HEART FOR GOD



Notes From The Textbook



Clifton H Carpenter
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BIBLE EXTENSION COURSE PROGRAM

The Covenant of God

Lesson No.1

Required Reading

Malachi 1:1-5

A Heart for God – AHFG Series

by Clifton H Carpenter

[Audio Bible](#)

The Love of God

- His Sovereign Love
- His Electing Love
- His Unconditional Love

Key Verse: Malachi 1:1 The BURDEN of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

INTRODUCTION – Malachi whose name means “*my messenger*” is the last Minor Prophet and last voice to speak to Israel in the Old Testament.

Historically, the heavens became silent when no voice spoke for God. No prophet came to Israel and no scriptures being written. Thus, a silent period of “*400 years*” separated the Old Testament from the New Testament.

The Future Messenger. There are no personal experiences to which the prophet referred, yet his style is straightforward, easy to understand and beautifully designed.

It is most suggestive that this last book of our Old Testament centers around the theme of two future messengers of God “*John the Baptist*” and “*The Lord Jesus Christ*” (his official title) Malachi 3 and Matthew 3.

The Purpose. The word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi was written to confront the people with their sins and to encourage them to pursue a life of holiness.

Malachi’s style is quite different from that of any other writing prophet. Instead of delivering messages to his audience, he charged them with various sins, at least four times. Malachi used the question and answer method as a teaching device.

The Format. After each charge, Malachi proceeded to back it up with evidence.

First, there is God’s charge against Israel, then follows the objection that questions the truth of God’s statement.

Seven Rhetorical Questions

- How have you loved us? (1:2)
- How have we despised your name? (1:6)
- For what reason? (2:14)
- How have we wearied Him? (2:17)
- How shall we return (3:7)
- How have we robbed thee? (3:8)
- What have we spoken against Him? (3:13)

The Themes. The book consists of several short paragraphs on various themes:

- Sacrificial Worship
- Priestly Ministry
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Tithes
- The Coming Messengers

Last Three Books. The books of “*Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachi*” are the last books of the Old Testament, and were written after the return of Israel from Babylon.

[The First Temple](#) before its destruction.

The Covenant of God – Lesson No.1

The Return from Babylon. The people did not come back from Babylon in one great group, but in two or three groups. While they were in Israel before the captivity, they had been “*sheep keepers*” for the most part. But in Babylon they learned to be “*shop keepers*” and they have been merchants and shop keepers ever since. Jeremiah 29:14-16

The First Group – 50,000 people. In about 535 B.C. a handful of Jews fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah. They came back to find Jerusalem “*desolate*” and “*stricken*”

The Temple Rebuilt. The temple foundations were laid, and it was Haggai’s ministry fifteen years later that stirred them up to continue that work and carry it through.

The Second Group – 5,000 people. Ezra the priest then led another group back from Babylon. The book of Ezra recorded the difficulties that faced the nation. The temple was completed during Zechariah’s ministry.

The Third Group – 42,000 people. Finally, the last return was accomplished under Nehemiah who in 445 B.C. led a group back to begin the laying of the walls of Jerusalem.

Therefore, Nehemiah is the conclusion of the historical section of the Old Testament.

Spiritual Attitude. After returning from captivity in Babylon, the spiritual attitude of the people had become “*skeptical, careless, indifferent, disobedient, adulterous, stingy*”

Burden of the Word. It is to this people that Malachi preaches the “*sovereign*” “*electing*” “*unconditional*” love of God.

The term BURDEN is descriptive of “*that which is heavy or weighty*” The Word of God is always serious and substantial.

Personal Attitude. A person’s attitude and relationship with God will determine the “*spiritual health*” and “*wholeness*” of the child of God.

Therefore, the theological issue of “*attitude and relationship*” is at the heart of the message from Malachi. The BURDEN has a two-fold implication. Malachi 1:1

- **The Message.** A burden as to the “*heaviness of the judgments being pronounced*”
- **The Messenger.** A burden as to the “*greatness of responsibility upon the prophet*” Jeremiah 23:26 let him speak my word faithfully.

The Love of God. The Lord’s first words to His people were short and sweet – **I have loved you.** These words are a “*positive motivation*” for devotion and service.

How have you loved us? Yet, because of their “*spiritual rebellion*” Israel was now questioning His love, implying that there was no evidence of it in their present situation. Malachi 1:2

Charge One. They **DOUBTED** His Love. Their response was a skeptical challenge, revealing a distrust, and lack of love and appreciation for God.

A Heart for God. The “*burden of proof*” as it relates to love does not rest with God, but with the people of God. God’s “*faithful love*” for his people should inspire greater devotion and service.

1. **His Sovereign Love.** God was under no constraint to love Israel. His love was free and flowed from his “*infinite grace*” Malachi now proceeds by using “*covenant language*” to explain this great truth.

The Covenant of God – Lesson No.1

The Sovereignty of God. An expression that once was generally understood. It was a phrase commonly used in religious literature. It was truth which brought comfort and gave stability to the believers.

- He is the Almighty, the possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat “*His counsels*” thwart “*His purpose*” or resist “*His will*”
Psalms 22:28; 115:3

But, today, to make mention of God’s sovereignty is in many circles, to speak in an unknown language.

God’s Sovereignty Defined. Sovereignty characterizes the whole Being of God. He is sovereign in all His attributes, “*absolute*” “*irresistible*” and “*infinite*” When we say that God is sovereign:

We affirm His right to govern the universe, which He has made for His own glory, just as He pleases – As the right of the Potter over the clay. Jeremiah 18:1-6

- That He may mould that clay into whatsoever form He chooses, fashioning out of “*the same lump*” one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor.
Romans 9:20-22

We affirm that He is under no rule or law outside of His own will and nature; and that He is under no obligation to give an account of His matters to anyone. 1 Samuel 2:8

- God is sovereign in the exercise of **His power**. 1 Chronicles 29:11
- God is sovereign in the exercise of **His mercy**. Exodus 33:19
- God is sovereign in the exercise of **His grace**. Titus 2:11
- God is sovereign in the exercise of **His love**. 1 John 4:8-10

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2. His Electing Love. Malachi now reminds them of God’s “*electing love*” as it relates to their status as the “*chosen people*” of God.

The Story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob and Esau were “*the first twins*” mentioned in the Bible. They were the sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Malachi 1:2-5; Genesis 25:19-34

The First. Esau the first to be born was a “*cunning hunter*” a man of the fields and favored by his father. (a father’s boy)

The Second. Jacob was “*a plain man*” dwelling in tents and favored by his mother. (a mother’s boy)

Sovereignty of God. The Lord said unto Rebekah “*two nations*” are in thy womb, and “*two manner of people*” shall be separated from thy bowels.

Two Nations. Both Jacob and Esau were fathers of nations. The one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

- **The Israelites** – Jacob whose name was changed to Israel, the father of the Hebrews. Genesis 32:28
- **The Edomites** – Esau’s became the father of Edom. (Genesis 36:1)

A Morsel of Meat. Esau’s choice to sell his birthright for “*a morsel of meat*” is used as an example of “*a profane person*” when a person puts physical desires above spiritual blessings. Hebrews 12:15-17

A Negative Example. Esau teaches us “*to hold fast*” to what is truly important, even if it means denying the appetites of the flesh. The story of Jacob and Esau illustrates the importance of giving diligence “*to make our calling and election sure*” 2 Peter 1:10

A HEART FOR GOD

The Covenant of God – Lesson No.1

The Language of Covenant. A covenant is a sovereign pronouncement of God by which he establishes a relationship of responsibility between Himself and

- An individual.
- A Human family.
- Mankind in general.
- A Nation in particular.

Human Responsibility. Human response to the divinely announced purpose is always important, leading to blessing for “*obedience*” and discipline for “*disobedience*” Malachi 1:4

Mainline Covenants. The Covenants are normally “*unconditional*” in the sense that God obligates Himself “*in grace*” by the unrestricted declaration, “*I will*” to accomplish certain announced purposes.

- The **Edenic** Covenant.
Genesis 1:28-30
- The **Adamic** Covenant.
Genesis 3
- The **Noahic** Covenant.
Genesis 8:21-9:17
- The **Abrahamic** Covenant.
Genesis 12:1-7
- The **Mosaic** Covenant.
Exodus 19:3-6 **Conditional**

3. **His Unconditional Love.** Often in Scripture to love someone means “*to choose to bless that person*” not to love someone means “*not to bless him or her*”

Jacob – I have loved. God loved Jacob in that He elected him and his descendants for a “*covenant relationship*” with himself.

Esau – I have hated. God did not choose to bestow His favor on Esau to the extent that He did on Jacob. God’s “*divine election*” was made before the twins were even born.

A Great Mystery. It is remarkable that God loved Jacob in view of the person Jacob was. It is equally remarkable that God hated Esau, because in many ways he was a more likeable individual than his brother.

A Positive Motivation. The point of this section was to get the Jews to think again, and reconsider what her lot would have been if she, like Edom, had not been elected to a “*covenant relationship*” with God.

- Observing God’s dealing with Edom, the Israelites would learn of His love for her and His greatness that extended beyond their boundaries. They would eventually call on other people to appreciate Him too. Malachi 1:5

Praise and Worship of God. Malachi’s BURDEN in this book is to unfold the love of God for us, in a way that makes us tremble before the majesty of God.

- To humble you.
- To take away your presumption.
- To remove your ground of boasting in yourself.
- To make you tremble with tears of joy that you belong to God.

Furthermore, in a similar way the Church can look back over human history to see how the love of God has been demonstrated to us.

- God **loved** us. John 3:16
- God **chose** us. John 15:16; Ephesians 1:11
- God **protects** us. Luke 21:13-15
- God **preserves** us. Matthew 16:18

When you begin to doubt the love of God, simply take stock of who you are and how you came to be – **It is the love of God.**

BIBLE EXTENSION COURSE PROGRAM

The Priestly Ministry

Lesson No.2

Required Reading

Malachi 1:6-11

A Heart for God – AHFG Series

by Clifton H Carpenter

[Audio Bible](#)

When We Dishonor God

- **Tribe of Levi**
- **The Worship of God**
- **To Despise His Name**

Key Verse: Malachi 1:6 A son honors his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? And If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

INTRODUCTION – This second section opens with a question about why Israel’s priests did not honor God. Where is my honor? Malachi 1:6

Wherein have we polluted thee?

Malachi gave their response. They denied having despised His name.

Rather than saying, “*We have not despised your name*” the priests were claiming ignorance as to how they were doing this.

However their question also carried a challenge; they resented the suggestion that they had despised the name of God.

Charge Two. They **DESPISED** His Name. The priests were responsible

- To **teach** the other Israelites the Law.
- To **mediate** between God and His people.
- To **judge** the people.

Violation of the Covenant. They did not offer God the same respect they offered their fathers and masters. Intimate familiarity with holy matters conduces to treating them with indifference.

1. **Tribe of Levi.** A “*covenant family*” chosen by God to be guardians of “*things pertaining to God*” They were committed to the care of the tabernacle and the treasures. [Priestly Ministry](#) Numbers 3:5-13

The Tabernacle. The tabernacle built by Moses is the first of several dwellings that God blessed with His glorious presence. [Bible 3D Model](#) The Tabernacle Illustrated.

Offerings for the Tabernacle. The people gave a “*one time offering*” of materials, including precious stones, gold and various colors of yarn. The various pieces of furniture were constructed so that they could be carried by the Levities. verses 1-9

The Ark of the Covenant. The most important piece of furniture placed in the tent proper. The [Ark of the Covenant](#) was “*the throne of God*” where His glory rested. Within the ark were three special items

- The tables of the Law.
- Aaron’s rod that budded.
- A pot of manna.

The Mercy Seat. The place where the blood of the sacrificial lamb was sprinkled each annual day of [Yom Kippur](#). Leviticus 16

The Priestly Ministry – Lesson No.2

While in the Camp. The Levites were always ready to attend to the tabernacle and to guard it. This was considered their “*warfare*” and for this reason they were not called upon to fight any other battles.

While in their March. When they moved the tabernacle, the Levites were the ones permitted to touch it, take it down, carry it and set it up at the appointed place.

The High Priest. Why did God ordain the office of priesthood? Why was it necessary?

The High Priest was taken from “*among men*” that he might offer both “*gifts and sacrifices for sins*” Hebrews 5:1-4

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Isaiah 59:2

Garment of the High Priest. In the person of the High Priest, through his representing of them before God, Israel could approach within the sacred enclosure – Holy of Holies

The twelve tribes of Israel were represented in the tabernacle by the High Priest in three ways. High Priest Garment Exodus 28:6-14

- By their names on the two engraved stones on the high priest’s shoulders.
Sardonyx Stones
- By their names on the twelve stones on the high priest’s breastplate.
Remembrance Stones
- By the twelve loaves of bread on the Table of Showbread in the Holy Place.

2. The Worship of God. Worship is a celebration of fellowship with God, and a time “*to offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High*” Psalm 50

Harvest Celebrations. God arranged the worship of Israel in a way that “*praise and thanksgiving*” would be most natural for the people. Because the harvests were a gift from God, the people were “*duty bound*” to bring tokens of their thanksgiving to God.

Feasts and Harvest Festivals. The harvest celebrations were natural times for the farmers to rejoice – the work was over for the season. 3 Sets of Events – Leviticus 23

- **Feast of Passover** – Barley in the Spring.
- **Feast of Pentecost** – Wheat in the Summer
- **Feast of Tabernacles** – Fruits in the Fall.

A Token Offering. God did not require a great deal of them in the way of offering, only a token of their herds and their crops “*a handful of grain*” and “*an animal for the family*”

Acceptable Worship. What they brought had to pass two important tests. The offerings had to be “*the first*” and “*the best*” It had to be the first born animal and the first-fruit of their crops and orchards.

To bring God an “*inferior gift*” would say that one did not think much of God. For the “*quality of the gift*” indicates the value the giver places on the one receiving the gift.

This is true even in human relationships, and it is also true in the spiritual relationship we have with the Lord.

Second Best. It is wrong to offer God that which is second best in worship, ministries, study or in any area of life. To give less than our best to God is to **Despise Him**.

The Priestly Ministry – Lesson No.2

3. **To Despise His Name.** It is possible to be in attendance in a worship service, go through all the ritual and sing all the hymns, and yet despise the Lord. The word despise means “*to look down on something as if it is worthless*” Leviticus 22:18-25

Five Major Offerings. There were Five Major Offerings in the Old Testament, divided into two separate categories.

▪ Sweet Savor Offerings

The Burnt Offering – Also called “*the ascending offering*” The animal was slain, divided into sections and then completely consumed on the altar. The offering had to be perfect inside and out.

The Meal Offering – Also called “*the grain offering*” The ingredients included fine flour, oil, frankincense, salt. This is the recipe for bread. The two things forbidden to be included were “*leaven*” and “*honey*”

The Peace Offering – Also called “*the communion sacrifice*” It consisted of a sacrificed animal, some burned to the Lord, some eaten by the priests, and some returned to the worshipers to eat. It was considered a social occasion.

▪ Sacrifices for Sin

The Sin Offering – It symbolized “*the nature of sin*” The sin offering was God’s way to dispose of the people’s sinful nature.

The Trespass Offering – It symbolized “*the act of sin*” The trespass offering was applied to the people’s sins and it removed condemnation and guilt through forgiveness.

The priest was to make atonement for the sins of the people then “*pronounce forgiveness*” Leviticus 5:5-6

Polluted Sacrifices. The priests were offering God unacceptable sacrifices. The grain and animals being offered were “*polluted sacrifices*” To offer God less than the Law required was to sin against Him. Malachi 1:7

- When you offer the blind for a sacrifice, is that not evil?
- When you offer the lame and the sick, is this not evil?

Corrupt Worship. Malachi’s message deals with “*the priests*” and “*the worshipers*” making a mockery out of their worship by bringing inferior offerings.

- Worship was being corrupted by “*indifference and selfishness*”

Double Standard. Malachi challenges them to think about the consequence if they gave the governor “*worthless things*” in payment for their taxes. Malachi 1:8

Worthless Worship. It would be better to lock the doors of the temple and keep the people out, if their worship was not done out of genuine love and devotion to God. God takes no pleasure in “*worthless worship*” he rejects it. Malachi 1:10

Prophecy of Gentile Worship. What would be the outcome of shutting down the temple and keeping false worship out? The Turning to the Gentiles. Malachi 1:11 and Acts 13:46

In time this is what happened, God turned to the Gentiles. “*he has opened the door of faith to us*” Acts 14:27

A Heart for God. Genuine worship must be “*honest and spiritual*” Each believer must put their heart into it, and offer God the best that we have and the best that we can be.

BIBLE EXTENSION COURSE PROGRAM

The Covenant of Marriage

Lesson No.3

Required Reading

Malachi 2:1-17

A Heart for God – AHFG Series

by Clifton H Carpenter

[Audio Bible](#)

Failure in Moral Standards

- Life and Peace
- Intermarriage and Divorce

Key Verse: Malachi 2:8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of host.

INTRODUCTION – Malachi continues this emphasis on the sins of the priests.

In the preceding section, the Lord charged them with offering “*polluted sacrifices*” but in this one His charge is against “*their teaching ministry*” verses 1-2

Charge Three. They **DEFILED** His Covenant. Their love for God had died.

Marks of Indifference. The priests were being professional about their worship.

But “*weariness in well-doing*” and a lack of “*true heart*” for the Lord and His service marked these leaders of God’s people. Malachi 1:13 and Galatians 6:9

Heart Defined. The word “*heart*” in the text of Malachi means that which is:

- The command center of a person’s life
- Where knowledge is collected and considered
- Where decisions and plans are made that will determine the direction the person will take in life

The warning of Malachi should also challenge Christian leaders to examine our heart as it relates to Christian ministry.

Ordination Examination. Over the years, I have participated in Pastor Ordination Examinations, and four characteristics I looked for in each candidate. 1Timothy 3

- A personal experience of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ
- A sense of calling from the Lord
- A love for and knowledge of the Word of God
- A high respect for the work of the ministry

A Heart for God. Whether as a pastor, missionary, teacher, choir member, or usher, being “*a servant of God*” is a serious thing. It deserves the very best that we can give.

Covenant Unfaithfulness. The priests of Malachi’s day had deviated from “*the straight path of truth*” and had caused many people who followed them to stumble through their instructions.

The unfaithful priests had corrupted the Lord’s covenant with Levi, in the sense that they had put its continuance in jeopardy by their evil conduct.

Malachi announced an admonition to the priests from the Lord. If they did not pay attention to His rebuke, the Lord would curse them by “*cutting off their blessings*”

The Covenant of Marriage – Lesson No.3

1. Life and Peace. The covenant that God made with Levi and his descendants resulted in life and peace. verse 5

- As the life of a community depends upon the keeper of its water supply, to guard that supply from loss or contamination
- So the life of Israel depended upon its priest to preserve God's written word and effectively dispense it to others.

Covenant Details. It was a serious matter to be a priest, because it was a gracious gift of God. The priests were to speak "*true knowledge*" and be "*a reliable source*" of instruction, thus encouraging the people.

Their daily responsibilities included serving in the sanctuary, speaking the truth and sacrificing acceptable offerings.

The ideal priest would....

- Receive the Word and teach it
- Live what he teaches
- Speak to turn others from sin

Breaking Faith. However, the priests were "*acting unfaithfully*" with respect to the Covenant of Levi. They had corrupted the truth....

- They no longer showed reverence and respect to God as did their ancestors. verse 6-7
- They were being hypocritical and their hypocrisy was ultimately malignant. They caused others to stumble. verse 8

Stumble Defined. The priests had created obstacles to the people's access to the Word of God. They caused them to stumble as to mislead them in its meaning that they failed to understand and keep its requirements.

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Hypocritical Worship. To worship God in this manner did not insulate "*covenant violators*" from divine punishment. The priests had despised the Lord, and they will be despised in the eyes of the people. verse 9

Moral Confusion. These conditions were profaning "*to make common*" the temple and the Mosaic Covenant. The Lord's command was for the people to stop their treachery toward one another. verse 10

The Curse. Malachi tells what this curse on the priests will be. God will rebuke them. The curse would affect the "*power and strength*" in the arms of the priests. verse 3

The implications....

- They would not be able to offer sacrifices Numbers 6:24-27
- They would not be able to lift their arms to give the Priestly Blessing
- They would become physically incapacitated, no longer qualified to serve as priests Leviticus 21:16-21

Mosaic Covenant. The inevitable result of "*covenant unfaithfulness*" was the cutting off of blessings, and troubles would plague their lives. The curses would affect the people's "*physical, mental and material welfare*" Deuteronomy 27:15-26

For What Reason? The people evidently did not understand why God was withholding blessing from them, so Malachi gave them the reasons. verse 14

Social Evils. The Mosaic covenant by the time of Malachi was understood as a quaint, archaic document, too restrictive to be taken seriously and inapplicable to a "*modern age*"

- Virtually the same way that many people in America view the Bible.

A HEART FOR GOD

The Covenant of Marriage – Lesson No.3

Covenant Loyalty. When the Word of God is not rightly proclaimed and holiness of life takes a backseat in emphasis, then the moral slide gets steeper and costlier. The effects are always devastating. verses 15-17

The downward spiral caused by the abusive and negligent practices of priests left the nation insensitive to sin.

Community Effect. The sins in this account affected the whole community. The nation felt the weight of divine guilt. **Why?**

- Because the atmosphere was permissive
- Because the nation persisted in their disregard for God

When God's people fail in their devotion to Him, and spiritual leaders neglect to shepherd the people in "*rich truth*" of His Word, then the stage is set for "*eroding relationships*"

Vital Relationships. The vitality of relationships begins with "*our relationship to God*" It is contradictory and hypocritical to say we are in right relationship to God without also being "*in right relationship with one another*"

2. **Intermarriage and Divorce.** The priests and worshipers continued to maintain an "*external respectability*" and active religious life.

But the attitudes of their hearts had changed and with it "*their unity in relationships*"

- The lower one's view of God, and the more exaggerated one's view of self, the more relationships suffer.

Both "*church disunity*" and "*marital disharmony*" can be traced to this point.

Covenant of Marriage. The marriage relationship is a "*covenant relationship*"

It is a figure of that covenant God made with Israel. The marriage covenant calls for integrity, truthfulness and honesty in the relationship. It is also a type of the New Testament Church. Ephesians 5:32

However, Israelite men were divorcing their Jewish wives to marry pagan women; and the tears of the Jewish wives were "*figuratively*" falling upon the altar.

Malachi described the breaking up of marriage and the increase of unfaithfulness to the "*marriage covenant*" as an alarming symptom of declining spiritual life.

Honoring the Marriage Vows. A marriage ceremony requires witnesses. Witness to...

- Pledging of lives
- Loyalty and love,
- A commitment to fidelity and faithfulness.

It shames the witnesses and disregards them when vows are broken. God is the greatest witness and He makes it even more binding than just a legal transaction. Marriage Vows

God Hates Divorce. To break a covenant is to do something that God Himself does not do. There are times however, that God does permit divorce under certain circumstances created by sin. Matthew 19:8

Misplaced Affections. If the Israelites continued to divorce their wives and intermarrying with foreigners continued "*it would affect God's plan for the nation*"

Take Heed to Your Spirit. The promised Messiah was to be of the seed of Abraham. **Abrahamic Covenant** Genesis 12:1-3

BIBLE EXTENSION COURSE PROGRAM

When We Rob God

Lesson No.4

Required Reading

Malachi 3:1-18

A Heart for God – AHFG Series

by Clifton H Carpenter

[Audio Bible](#)

Will a Man Rob God?

- **The Refiner**
- **The Robbers**
- **The Remedy**
- **The Remnant**

Key Verse: Malachi 3:1 **BEHOLD** I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek; shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come saith the LORD of host.

I**NTRODUCTION** – The earlier history of Israel was a time when the priests and the people pleased God. However, Malachi said that those early days were short-lived. In contrast to God’s faithfulness, the nation had been unfaithful to Him.

Charge Four. They **DISOBEYED** His Word. The “*attitude of disrespect*” led to profaning of the offerings – the Quality of sacrifices. Here the Quantity is the issue.

Faithfulness. It goes deeper than externals. A person can appear faithful by attending religious services and performing outward duties, yet be unfaithful “*inwardly*” and “*in private matters*” i.e. deceive James 1:22

- Faithfulness to the Lord should mirror the faithfulness of the Lord

1. **The Refiner.** This opening section is the Lord’s response to the “*unfaithful nation*” He points them to the future. verses 1-7

Messenger of the Covenant. The Jews delighted in this Messenger – refers to the **Messiah** Lit. – “*anointed one*” because His coming had been a subject of Messianic Prophecy and an object of eager anticipation from early in Israel’s history. Genesis 3:15

Justice in the World. The Jews had been expressing disbelief that God would intervene and establish justice in the world (2:17) but God promised He would.

The Messengers. Malachi describes the identity and actions of the messengers to come – foretold 400 years in advance.

There is no question about their identity. Isaiah 40:3 and John 1:1-42

- **John the Baptist** – Forerunner
- **Jesus Christ** – The Divine Messiah

The prophets foretold that the Messiah’s coming would be “*a day of judgment*” on the whole world marked by “*disaster and death*” Malachi 4:1

Malachi said no one would be able to endure His coming because He would purify the priesthood.

- **As a Refiner’s Fire** – He would burn up the impurities of the priests
- **As Fuller’s Soap** – He would wash them clean

Jesus Our Great High Priest. More information will be provided in Lesson Five.

When We Rob God – Lesson No.4

Attitude and Relationship. The theological issue of “*attitude and relationship*” is at the heart of the message from Malachi. Israel had disobeyed “*covenant stipulations*”

- The Lord called His people to return to Him with the promise that if they did He would return to them.

How Shall We Return? The response of the people was that they did not know how to return. The **Mosaic Covenant** specified how they were to return “*by trusting and obeying the Lord*” Deuteronomy 4:30-31; 30:1-10

Malachi had given the people examples of where they needed to repent...

- **Divine Responsibility** – the people’s relationship to God. Chapter One
- **Social Responsibility** – their relationship to one another. Chapter Two

2. **The Robbers.** Malachi provides more evidence to justify the charge. **Yet, ye have robbed me.** verses 8-15

How Have We Robbed Thee? The word rob can imply “*defrauding*” which means they gave something but made their offering to appear other than it was.

Ananias and Sapphira. They were guilty of “*defrauding God*” and their punishment was “*physical death*” Acts 5:1-11

When We Rob God. Malachi addresses the people’s relationship to their “*tangible resources*” and their responsibility to “*temple maintenance*”

- **Economic Responsibility** – the people’s relationship to their possessions.

Tithes and Offerings. The people needed to bring all the tithes – means “*the whole tithe*” into the temple “*storehouse*” verse 10

- They were not paying their tithes and the land was under a curse “*a dry spell*” where nothing was growing.
- The tithes were given to support the Levites and their ministry and maintenance on the temple “*the Lord’s house*”

The Whole Tithe. All the tithes given by each family could exceed 40% a year.

- **Basic Tithe** – for temple maintenance 10%
- **Priest Dues** – for needs of the Levites 2%
- **Jerusalem Needs** – i.e. budget for three annual pilgrimages 10%
- **Benevolent Needs** – the widow, orphan, poor and strangers 10%
- **Animals** – for the three festivals
- **Cash** – payments instead of animal or meal offerings
- **Specials** – every seventh year kept in store for Jubilee Year (50th year)

Storehouse. The temple was a “*depository for gifts*” that the Israelites brought to sustain the servants and work of the Lord. God had made the nation “*stewards*” over their possession. Nehemiah 10:32-39

The failure to pay all the tithes meant that the whole of their “*spiritual leadership*” and “*temple worship*” was affected

Callous Heart. The “*spiritual condition*” of their hearts was idolatrous – in placing themselves before God. The evidence of their “*callous hearts*” left the Levites – and the landless poor to fend for themselves.

When We Rob God – Lesson No.4

3. **The Remedy.** The Lord had promised to bless the Israelites for obedience. Their obedience in bringing the full amount of tithes would test His Faithfulness and His Promise. verse 11

Full Obedience. God's storehouse of blessings for them was full. He promised to reward their "full obedience" with rain and harvest enough to satisfy their needs.

- The blessings would spread so that the rest of the world recognized the uniqueness of God's hand on His faithful people. verse 12

Storehouse Giving. It has often been used to urge Christians to tithe. However, the New Covenant does not specify the amount or percentage that we should give back to God of what He has given to us.

- Many Christians regard giving 10% as their minimal responsibility. However, tithing is not a New Testament "principle of practice"

We have moved from Law to Grace and from "the tenth to the whole" God has made us "stewards" over all our possessions.

How Much Belongs to God? All belong to God "the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts" Haggai 2:8

- The church requires money for support and its outreach ministries, and should encourage its local members to provide accordingly.
- When we give money to God or to the work of God, we have to determine why we are doing it.

The concerns are those involving the method used to collect the money.

Grace Giving. The New Testament teaches that we should give regularly, sacrificially and joyfully "as the Lord has prospered us"

Principle of Practice. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

- You will reap what you sow – Give little, reap little. Give big, reap big
- Give what you have decide in your heart to give
- Do not give reluctantly, as some do, begrudgingly
- Do not give under compulsion, not forced by some legalism
- Give from a cheerful heart, God loves a "cheerful giver"

Giving is an Act of Worship. The practice of "giving in grace" as opposed to "law tithing" is to be done freely, liberally, and without human standards attached. Grace giving allows the believer to "give freely" and with spontaneity. Philippians 4:18-19

4. **The Remnant.** In Malachi 3 the theme of not tithing was coupled with the "act of apostasy" Israel was abandoning God.

Genuine Repentance. Some of Malachi's hearers who genuinely feared the Lord got together, and wrote down their commitment on a scroll. Covenant Renewal Document

Covenant Renewal Document. Tips on how you and I can remain faithfulness "in the day of apostasy" verses 16-18

- **Vow** to be faithful to God, even if those around you are not. Write your own "scroll of remembrance"
- **Surround** yourself with a group of likeminded individuals for encouragement. Hebrews 10:25
- **Remember** that God's day of reckoning will come. Keep a long range perspective. 2 Corinthians 5

BIBLE EXTENSION COURSE PROGRAM

Jesus Our Great High Priest

Lesson No.5

Required Reading

Malachi 4:1-6

A Heart for God – AHFG Series

by Clifton H Carpenter

[Audio Bible](#)

The Day of the Lord

- Old Covenant
- New Covenant

Key Verse: Hebrews 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

CONCLUSION – Malachi began his message to Israel with the Lord's first words to His people – **I have loved you.**

The book of Malachi was given as a reminder to the priests and people of the need to keep the Mosaic Law. This concluding section ends by pointing to the future. Therefore, the book of Malachi is the basis of two important Bible Doctrines...

- Doctrine of Redemption **Soteriology**
- Doctrine of Last Things **Eschatology**

1. **Old Covenant.** The Israelites were attached to their priesthood, it was the center of their religious life and it was their means of contact with God.

When God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and across the "Red Sea" He made a covenant "*an agreement*" with them.

Mosaic Law. He gave them the Law through Moses to instruct them on how to live. Obedience would bring "*blessings*" Disobedience would bring "*discipline*"

Priesthood. He gave them the Priesthood and rules on how their representative should approach Him.

The Tabernacle. They built the Tabernacle as a place where they would minister to God, and where His presence would dwell.

Holy of Holies. The inner part of the Tabernacle – the Holy of Holies symbolized the very throne room of God. It was the "*one place*" where God came down and revealed Himself. High Priest Ministry

- It was regarded as so holy that only "*one person*" at a time in the entire nation of Israel could enter it. He was the High Priest. Leviticus 16

Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement brought a threefold cleansing...

- To the High Priest and his family
- To the people of Israel
- To the tabernacle

On this day the people of Israel were "*to get serious*" about sin. They were to "*deny themselves*" which carried the meaning of their affliction while slaves in Egypt. Exodus 1:11-12

High Priest Instructions. Yom Kippur
All the instructions for the priests, and more importantly, the High Priest were provided on how he was to minister to the Lord on behalf of – himself, his family, the people.

Jesus Our High Priest – Lesson No.5

Proper Sacrifices. The first thing the High Priest was required to do was to make sure that the proper sacrifices were available “*a bull and a ram*” for himself and his family and “*two goats and a ram*” for the people.

Chamber of Lambs. These sacrifices would have been inspected to make sure they were without defect according to the ordinances of the laws of the sacrifice. Leviticus 4

Linen Robe. In an act to humble himself, the High Priest would enter the Holy Place and remove his High Priest Garment then put on the linen robe of “*a simple priest*”

- This is a picture of Jesus emptying himself by “*humbling himself*” and taking the form of a bondservant. Philippians 2:5-8

Sanctify Himself. The High Priest would sanctify himself at the laver by washing. He set “*himself*” aside in order to serve the Lord, his family and the people.

Inside the Holy of Holies. After sacrificing the bull (killing the animal by cutting its throat) the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies.

- **In his left hand** “*a tray of incense*”
- **In his right hand** “*a censer of live coals*”

Once inside, he would set the coals down, pour the incense into his right hand, and then place the incense on the coals.

- The cloud of incense symbolically represents “*the glory of God*”

This reminds us of Jesus Christ and his High Priestly Prayer “*glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee*” John 17:1

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Sprinkling of Blood. The High Priest would exit the Holy of Holies and then return, bringing back the blood of the bull to sprinkle it on the “*mercy seat*”

- He first sprinkled it one time eastward, which was towards the people and upon the mercy seat.
- Then seven times “*the number picturing perfection*” in front of him onto the Ark of the Covenant

He sprinkled this with his finger. He would then exit the Holy of Holies again and sacrifice the goat, catching the blood in “*a gold vessel*”

Then he would bring the blood of the goat into the Holy of Holies and repeat what he had done with the blood of the bull before the mercy seat.

A Goat for the Lord. The goat that was sacrificed for the Lord was chosen in this way. There were “*two pieces of gold*” in the form of coins with words written on them.

- One coin the words – **For the Lord**
- Other coin the words – **To go away**

The two coins were placed in an urn, the urn was shaken, and the High Priest would reach in and take one coin in one hand and one coin in the other. The two goats....

- A goat placed to **his left-side**
- A goat placed to **his right-side**

The High Priest would open his hand on the goat’s head and place the coin there.

Immediately a red thread was tied around the horns of the “*scapegoat*” which had the coin with the words to go away. The other died at the knife and hand of the High Priest.

A HEART FOR GOD

Jesus Our High Priest – Lesson No.5

Sin Offering. These two symbols: the bull and the goat were offered as a “*sin offering*”

- **Death of the bull** “*the strong dying for the weak*”
- **Death of the goat** “*the innocent dying for the guilty*”

The people were anxious to see the High Priest dispatch the “*scapegoat*” into the wilderness. It meant that God had “*accepted their substitute*”

Exit the Temple. The High Priest would then enter the Holy Place, put on his High Priest Garment and exit the Temple.

Ending of the Old. However, God had shown in the Old Testament that this “*pattern of things*” was only for a season and it would eventually be replaced. Jeremiah 31:31-34

Old Covenant. The agreement between God and Israel was filled with rights, rituals and responsibilities. Israel had to do what it was called to do in order to gain the benefits and blessings promised. But they did not keep the whole law, but broke it again and again.

- The history of Israel has been such “*a trail of disasters*”

2. **New Covenant.** It is an agreement that God makes with Himself. It allows every believer to share in the benefits and blessings, with no provision made for us breaking the agreement “*as we weren’t parties to it*” This is a **better covenant** with much **better promises**. **That’s Good News!**

The Book of Hebrews. It is a New Testament book written to encourage Hebrew Christians who had once followed Judaism. Take a Good Look at Jesus Christ is a Bible related tract. [click to read tract](#)

The Anointed One. The theological focus of the book of Hebrews is **Christology**, the Doctrine of Christ

- Christ “*anointed one*” is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah.

Superiority of Christ. The word “*better*” or “*superior*” is found more in Hebrews than in any other New Testament book. The New Covenant is seen as superior to the Old Covenant for three reasons....

- It provides a **better priesthood**
- It provides a **better sacrifice**
- It provides a **better foundation**

Day of Atonement. It did not meet the deepest need of God’s people “*a personal relationship with God*” The Israelites never enjoyed the extent of freedom from sin’s guilt. The sin offering only made an Atonement (a verb = to cover) for their sins.

Take Away Sin. BEHOLD the lamb of God which takes away “*taking off*” the sin of the world. John 1:29 (i.e. removal of reproach in Luke 1:25 and cutting off in Luke 22:5)

- To take away sin signifies the complete removal of sin so that it is no longer a factor in the situation.

Therefore, the death of Jesus Christ “*as our substitute*” accomplished three things for us.

- It has cleansed our consciences from guilt. Hebrews 9:14
- It has fitted us to approach God as true worshippers. Hebrews 7:25
- It has fulfilled what the Old Testament promised. Psalms 40

God is Satisfied. Redemption is provided by the **Lamb of God** who died in my place. **Jesus Our Great High Priest.** John 3:16