

Malachi Introduction (Part 3)

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[0:00] Introduction to the book of Malachi.

! To the nation of Israel, the covenant nation of Israel.

The peoples that God entered into a covenant with made them His own, chose them out to be His covenant nation. That, of course, to be the nation through which Messiah would eventually come. Tonight, now, we're going to look more about that because there are some tremendous things that just kind of, on the surface, can puzzle the mind as to why Israel did some of the things that they did.

Until we realize they're humans. All right? And, of course, remember prior to Pentecost, prior to the coming of Jesus, these individuals did not have the Spirit of God dwelling within them to direct them.

[1:15] So, they're just continuing on in their own human rationale and human thinking. So, we want to see that because when we recognize some of the things that take place, we begin to see more of what the prophecy of Malachi really is dealing with here.

And so, go with me to begin with to 1 Samuel chapter 8. We're going to pick up there. 1 Samuel chapter 8. Realize that when God began the nation, delivered her out of Egypt, and did all of those things in directing it through the wilderness, that the nation was a theocracy.

God was their guide. He was their king, if you will. He ruled over them. He directed them. And he was sovereign over them. And they answered to him.

And in our thinking, we would think, well, you can't get any better than that, right? But realize with me, as we look at chapter 8 of 1 Samuel, that's not the case with the people of Israel.

And there's a reason for that. And it's a purely human reason. And humanly speaking, it was probably a viable reason, per se. Prior to chapter 8, we come to chapter 7 and chapter 6, which is a brilliant thought, isn't it?

[2:47] In those chapters, we find that the Philistines, the arch enemies of Israel, had stolen away the Ark of the Covenant.

Realize that that was the place of God's dwelling with his people, if you will. And the Philistines knew that. They were able to capture the Ark of the Covenant.

And they thought, we've got Israel right where we want them now. But lo and behold, every place they put the Ark of the Covenant, it was a curse to them.

The first place they took it, they took it into the temple of Dagon, their god. And the next morning, they woke up. And what happened? I mean, they put it right beside that image to Dagon.

And when they came in there the next morning, Dagon was flat on his face. Hands cut off, neck severed, head severed from the neck. And they thought, whoa, we don't need this anymore.

[3:47] And then the men were struck with hemorrhoids. And so they said, let's take that thing someplace else. From city to city of the Philistines that they went, same thing happened. All right?

The men were struck with hemorrhoids and other pestilences, mice and so forth. So they decided, let's do something to get rid of this. So they said, you know, they called in the priest of Dagon and said, here's what we're to do.

And so they said, you know, we've got to make some kind of a peace offering here with the God of Israel. So just make, of all things, make images of your hemorrhoids and images of mice and put them inside the Ark of the Covenant.

And see what happened. Well, that didn't work. So the best thing they decided to do was, let's just make a cart for it, put it on a cart. And then put some bulls or calves or something in front of it to just pull it.

And this is the way we'll determine whether all these curses are from the God of Israel or not. If that thing goes to the particular city we think it ought to go, then we'll know it was their God that caused the curses.

[5:14] And so sure enough, that's what happened. All right? So after that, Israel once again has possession. They take it to the household of Abinadab. Abinadab is greatly blessed by having that there.

But in the meanwhile, while it's there back with the nation of Israel, the armies of Israel go and fight the Philistines.

And King James Version said God disconfitted the Philistines. I love that word. He disconfitted the Philistines. And so they were defeated. And the Ark of the Covenant is back with the people of Israel.

And so Samuel in chapter 7, verse 10, offers up burnt offerings. The Philistines grew nearer to battle. And then they were disconfitted, if you will.

Now, in verse number 15, Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel in all those places.

[6:21] And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house. And there he judged Israel, and there he built an altar unto the Lord. So Samuel, of course, the man of God.

Now look at chapter 8. Samuel gets old. Isn't it terrible to have to get old? Amen? Life just changes everything. And when people just get older and older, and they're just not the same as they used to be.

Tom's that way. And Ted's that way. And some of the rest of you. Sounds like it, doesn't it?

And so it was with Samuel. So in verse 1 of chapter 8, It came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. In other words, to take up the slack.

Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of the second, Abia, and they were judges in Beersheba. Now here's the problem. Verse 3. Whoa.

[7:21] Isn't it amazing?

We want to be like all the other nations. After all that God had done for them in their midst that they saw, wasn't good enough.

I was going to say basically because of the ungodliness of Samuel's sons, which was a big part of that.

But I can't believe that's the only reason why they wanted a king. They just wanted to be like other nations. They didn't like being different anymore. So, yeah, the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us.

Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people and all that they say unto thee. For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them, according to all the works which they have done since the day I brought them out of Egypt, even unto this day wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

[9:02] So, so hearken to their voice, howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them. Show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. So Samuel does that.

So he's going to be a guy that's going to take your sons, make them at his bidding. Your daughters the same way. They're going to be his cooks, his maids, if you will, and bakers and all of those things.

He's going to take everything else you have for himself. That's the kind of king you're going to have. You want a king, that's what it's going to be. That's what it's going to be like.

Now, verse 19, Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

Wow. After all God had done, especially with the Philistines. Yeah, but we want a king.

[10:11] So God gives them a king, and of course we know that that was, the first one was to be Saul, the man that was the tallest guy in the kingdom, best-looking guy, ball-headed, you know.

Somebody told me years ago, bald is beautiful. Yeah, yeah, yeah. They don't put marble tops on cheap furniture. Yeah, yeah.

So, Saul becomes the king, all right? Then, of course, later on, as we see, we know well that the kingdom was taken away from Saul and given to David over in 1 Kings chapter 11.

Go there just a moment. If you're at 1 Kings chapter 11, remember what happens here. What was the downfall of King Solomon in reality?

What was his downfall? Go ahead and say it, Tom, sitting right beside your wife. Go ahead and say it. Too many women. Too many women, yeah.

[11:19] As was customary in his day, the king, in order to make an alliance with other kings in other countries, he would take unto himself one of the daughters of that king to be his wife.

And that's what happened to Solomon here. You realize that Solomon's kingdom was tremendous. All right? Solomon's kingdom was tremendous.

David's was good. But Solomon built that thing tremendously. But his problem was that he had these wives, and notice what happens, if you will, in verse 1 of chapter 11.

But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites, of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, you shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you. For surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines.

[12:35] And his wife turned away his heart. For it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Which, by the way, had no idolatry, though he had sin. All right? Now, verse 9. The Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.

Now, this is interesting. Again, look at how, you can call it the depravity of man's heart, or whatever you want to, but look how ruthless the natural man within is.

Not only had God demonstrated himself to the nation of Israel, even in the day of Saul, and even in the day of Solomon, but notice here the statement that's made, that, again, verse 9, the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice.

God appeared to Samuel, I mean, to Solomon, instead of going through the prophets to speak to him. A few times. Spoke to him specifically himself.

[13:54] Don't have a record of that. Usually God spoke through the prophets. So you see something unique here about Solomon in his previous relationship with God.

And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods, but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wow. It's as if, of course, God knew the propensity of Solomon's heart and where all this marriage of foreign wives would lead him.

So God personally comes to him. I mean, just think of it. He sits just right down with him. Okay. Solomon? Yeah. Probably puts his hand on his shoulder.

Yeah. I just need to warn you. He looks you straight now. Can you imagine looking God straight now? Not coming away with the answer of your own.

Yeah. Stay away from the foreign women. Don't be drawn to their gods and cause you to depart from me. Yeah.

[15:00] God, they're pretty. I'm having a problem. Let's get to me, sir. And that caused Siri to come on. Lord speaks mysterious ways sometimes.

Did Solomon learn about women from his dad? Yeah, well. David? Yeah, he should have. Yeah, with something with Bacchipsa. Yeah, he should have. Yeah. So, in verse 11.

Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, For as much as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and will give it to thy servant.

And God does that. The kingdom is taken from Solomon. Now, notice what happens. Rehoboam is then made king.

And Rehoboam becomes a harsh taskmaster. And as a result of that, then, the kingdom is divided into two kingdoms.

[16:11] The northern kingdom consisting of ten tribes. And the southern kingdom, which remained in Jerusalem, consisting of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

Now, that is the southern kingdom. All right. The northern kingdom and the southern kingdom.

And then, notice if you will, Rehoboam ruled over the northern, Rehoboam over the southern. The northern kingdom then is captured by Assyria. And it's at that time, you'll notice in your chart on chart 89.

At that time, when the northern kingdom is taken captive by Assyria, Jeremiah and other prophets, you notice, listed there, warn Judah of their sin.

Not the northern kingdom, but the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom being captured because of their sin was to serve us as an example and a warning to the southern kingdom of Judah.

[17 : 17] And that's what the prophets, Jeremiah and the others, were doing in Judah. Remember what the real sin of the northern kingdom was?

Adology. Adology. In what form? In the form of high places in two different locations. Okay, but there's something else they did.

By going north, establishing places of worship, two places of worship for Jehovah, that weren't Jerusalem.

You see, God said, here's the place. Jerusalem is the place. Jerusalem is the place where I make my name. That was the place of worship of Israel.

But when they divided and went north and built those two places of worship, erected those images that were supposed to be representative of Jehovah, which is idolatry, then that was the major sin that they had that God judged them.

[18 : 30] So as a result of their sin, they were taken captive by Assyria. Now, in 586 B.C., the king of Judah was taken captive by Babylon.

In Jeremiah 25, verses 8-11, here's what it said. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, because you have not heard my words.

Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof and against all these nations round about.

And I will utterly destroy them, make them an astonishment and in hissing and perpetual desolation. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the candles.

And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years.

[19 : 39] No place of identity. No place of worship of Jehovah while in Babylon.

That's desolation. All right? Not just desolation of the land, but it's desolation of the people because they'll be totally away from any influence toward God or from God.

They were completely then under control in influence of pagans for 70 long years. But that pales in comparison, you realize, to the 400 years of silence at the closing of Malachi's prophecy to the coming of Messiah.

Now, so it's becoming even more drastic, dark time for the nation of Israel as we come to the study of Malachi.

Now, chart number 98, you see there after 70 years of captivity, God then begins to deliver his people. And that's pictured in chart 19 as well when the return of the first remnant takes place under Ezra, found in the book of Ezra.

[21 : 02] The story there goes for us. Now, God stirs the heart of Cyrus, the king, to allow Israel to return back to the land.

In verse number 1, we have an interesting picture here in Ezra 1, verse 1. Take note with me.

If I can get to it there. In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, excuse me, that the word of the Lord by Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord, that's Jehovah, God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who among you? All of, who is among, who is there among you, all of his people? His God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel. He is the God, which is in Jerusalem. So, notice, it's not Cyrus himself that took the initiative here. It's God at work, beginning to deliver his people.

[22:35] The spirit of God stirred the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, is what the scripture says. So, God's at work here now, delivering, getting ready to deliver his people out of that bondage, bringing back into the land, and do a work that inevitably would lead to the reconstruction of the temple and the city walls.

So, God's at work here in doing that. Now, we see also then, as a result of that, Zerubbabel then will return to Jerusalem with 50,000 Jews, as well as the instruments of gold and silver that had been taken from the temple.

The altar then eventually is set up. Worship then is reestablished in Israel. Now, go to Ezra chapter 3, because I think this is interesting.

I think we've addressed this at one point. I'm trying to remember this afternoon where in the world, or when in the world, we mentioned, I've talked to this stuff in so many places, I can't remember where I did what. But I always think we had mentioned this here before.

When that foundation of that temple was built, tremendous thing happened. All right? Verse 10 of Ezra 3. When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets and Levites, the son of Asaph, with the symbols to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David, king of Israel.

[24:06] Now, remember, over 70 years now has transpired since they were taken out of Jerusalem. So, the foundation is laid, and they come to celebrate.

Verse 11. They sang together by courts in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever toward Israel.

And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers who were ancient men that had seen the first house when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of weeping of the people.

For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. Weeping and shouting for joy.

We can realize what the shouting of joy is about. The foundation's been laid. The temple's going to be rebuilt. But what was the weeping about?

[25:33] What was the weeping about? It was smaller, wasn't it? Yeah. What's smaller? All their hopes and dreams, and I don't remember if it's, surely it had come before this point, that was it Ezekiel, that prophesied that the new temple, when it's rebuilt and the nation restored, would be much more glorious than that of Solomon's.

But here it's smaller. And so many of those old folks that remembered what it was like at Solomon's temple began to weep.

Weep loudly. Because it's just not the same. We'll look at more of that a little bit later on and see what the difference is and what the significance of that difference is.

All right. Now, so, that's the beginning then of the signs of discouragement among the people, even though the foundation of a new temple is laid.

because it's just not like it was before. Now, some adversity rises up in this, remember. The Samaritans request permission to assist in building the temple.

[26:59] And I think your notes say there were mixed people composed of heathen colonists as well as, as well as some of those from the ten tribes that had been left in Jerusalem, all right, at the conquest.

Now, they requested permission to be part of this building of the temple. But, Zerubbabel rejected that request.

So, as a result of that, then they began to hinder the work of rebuilding the temple. If I can't play with my marbles, I'm going to go home and spit on yours.

All right. Now, so, the work that had already begun was then hindered.

And it was eventually prevented from continuing on. Ezra, chapter 4, verses 4 and 5 said, Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building and hired counselors against them.

[28:03] Now, the counselors against them were corrupt officials that just did what they could do legally under the statutes to hinder the continuation of the work.

Now, to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, until, even until the reign of Darius, king of Persia.

Interesting thing. You know, I've talked with, talked with, uh, uh, Robert Wadsworth, uh, director of Hope Clinic, you know, through the construction and getting permits and everything, and every once in a while he'd come to me, he'd be just shaking his head, he'd talk about the delay because of this rule, this regulation, we couldn't meet this, uh, Kevin Baker down at First Church in Ramona when they were building their new fellowship hall.

We're adding to all kinds of things with their little city fathers down there, uh, that would hinder them from being able to use that new facility. So the same thing happened here.

But, there's a reason why that was allowed to happen. Anybody got an idea what, it didn't have anything to do with city officials.

[29:20] Why, why was that really, why did that really cause, were able to cause, uh, all of this from continuing on? Ted!

Hi. Ted's in the process of turning his little canopy shed into a real shed. Not a she shed, but a real shed.

Have you got any shared with State Farm? Uh, and so, and so, uh, he's just really, I mean, he just really wanted to get that done. He already got a good start on it.

And, got the roof on it from what I understand. Yep. and, and, and, and, and, and, just really almost ready to start moving stuff into it. And he's been out there as much as he possibly could working on that thing.

Why? Why have you been working so hard on that? Trying to get where I can get stuff in it, and my wife can put her car in the garage. Okay. You really just wanted to get it done, right?

[30:28] Yes, sure. You still do, because you're not done yet. He had a great desire for that to happen, for that shed to be, because ever since he moved into that house, he had his eyeball on that. And when I first met him, I went over there and looked at the place and he said, here's what I'm going to do with this.

You know, I mean, that's, he says, I mean, that was the number one thing, man. I'm going to turn that into a shed. Had a desire to do that. Had the people of Israel really had a great yearning and desire to build that temple, to see it rebuilt, even though it was smaller.

They would not have delayed in doing that, in spite of the opposition. So it shows you the heart of the people just wasn't fully in it.

All right? They let discouragement come and stop them because they weren't that interested, didn't have the great pleasure in continuing the work.

Plus, as a result, they had lost their confidence in God to be able to protect them and to strengthen them to be able to get the work done.

[31:54] So, that, along with the discouragement of the foundation being laid not like it used to be, it brought it all to a standstill. Now, so, it just wasn't the same as it was before, nor did it rise to the expectation that had been cherished of what that house of God would be like when it was restored.

Now, then a doubt arose whether the time for carrying on this work had really come. Now, so a letter from Artaxerxes then effected a decree for the work to be stopped.

Now, Haggai and Zechariah then come on the scene and encourage the people in Ezra chapter 4. The work had now been stopped, people had begun to provide for their own necessities.

All right, we're not going to work on the temple, then let's just build our own places. Let's build our own houses so we can live comfortably and so that's what they began to do.

Provide for their own necessities. Establish themselves comfortably back in the land. Realize that, you know, in our mind, if we're not careful, we think, all right, all this 50,000 people that came back with Zerubbabel all had a real desire for one thing and that is to build the temple and worship God.

[33:25] No, you wouldn't get 50,000 people together that want to do that. Some of those wanted to come back into the land with the prospect of building their own places, starting their own businesses, and prospering in that back in the land.

Because realize all of God's blessings were precipitated by them being in the land. If they weren't in the land, they could not really expect God's blessing.

God's blessing comes with them in the land. So if we go back into the land and live there and crank up our own business and do whatever we do for a living, then we'll prosper.

Things will be good. So you have that element among these people that came back with Zerubbabel. So it's no wonder that the work of the temple was so easily stopped, especially when the means of it not being like it used to be went around and became well-known by everybody. Well, I'll tell you what, I'm going to let you out early for two reasons because this is a good stopping place and, well, no, let's go on.

[34 : 51] I've got company coming in at home, that's why I'm, okay. Well, we'll go on, right? They'll wait. It's just a past week thing. All right.

Now, Haggai's prophecies. His first prophecy was the first day of the sixth month, which is September. he condemned the indifference of the people concerning the building of the temple. That was attributed to the failure of the, he attributed the failure of their crops to a curse that was brought on by God because of their neglect of continuing the work on the temple. So when he, when he told them that that was the reason why their crops weren't growing, the result of that was they picked up the work again. They continued the work. Now, his second prophecy on the 21st day of the seventh month, which is October, he consoles those who are despondent on account of the new building, not being like it used to be, promising that the Lord will keep his covenant promise that he made to his people when they came out of Egypt and will give the temple even greater glory than that of Solomon's.

That's what he promised to do. And so Haggai reminds him of that and says, God will see to it that he fulfills that promise. Now, the third prophecy and the fourth prophecy together.

[36 : 17] The 24th day of the ninth month, which is December. The prediction of the ceasing of the previous curse and return of the blessings of nature promised to the nation, which remain faithful to the covenant, came to pass.

The preservation of the throne of Israel among the tempest, which will burst upon the kingdom of the world and destroy their might will, again, as it said, be preserved.

So keep in mind that through Ezekiel, God promised that he would restore the glory to the nation upon their repentance. All right?

He would restore the relationship. He would restore the glory in the temple. Now, that's his promise. And Haggai reminds him, God's going to do that.

So, Haggai served as an assurance to the returned remnant that although things were not as they should be, God will carry out his covenant promises.

[37 : 18] Now, that brings us to the significance of Haggai's prophecy, and that's where we'll stop. Okay? So you've got two weeks to mull that over.

Yeah. Go through Haggai's prophecy. And read it the next couple of weeks and see what you find there because he lays the foundation for something here for us that's tremendous.

Yeah, it really is. And it kind of sets the stage for everything here that takes place. So, and why, and it even gives us a picture, come to think of it, gives us a picture of why there's a 400-year wait between Malachi's prophecy and the coming, or the work beginning, and the announcement of the coming of Messiah.

Yeah. See if you can figure that one out. There's your homework, Larry. Yeah. Why? 400 years of waiting between the two.

Thank you.