

Malachi - Introduction

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[0 : 00] Malachi. Realize that the word Malachi is the word that means messenger and it's come to be known as the messenger of God and that's of course what we see in the person of the prophet Malachi.

! That he indeed was the messenger of God. He was the messenger of God to the covenant nation of Israel. In fact he penned down God's last message to that covenant nation prior to the coming of Messiah.

The Messiah that was promised. So it's an important book for us to see. And in that we're going to see after a bit the attitude of the nation of Israel toward God.

And thus being the reason for the prophecy. So we've got to keep in mind as we go through it that God is writing basically to the covenant nation of Israel.

Now naturally there's principles that will draw out of it for ourselves. But to the covenant nation of Israel and it's important we understand what that means because of the severity of what takes place in all of this.

[1 : 25] That was the covenant nation of Israel and that was the covenant nation of Israel and that was the covenant nation that was established by God and then chosen by God. And that came through the covenant that God and that came through the covenant that he had established with the nation.

And that of course really had its beginning in Genesis chapter 12 where God gives to Abraham an idea somewhat of what God's going to do through him.

Made promise to him and I think really kind of sets the groundwork for the covenant that will come after a while. In Genesis chapter 12 the first three verses the Lord had said unto Abraham get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee.

And I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee and make thy name great. Thou shalt be a blessing and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

So here we get the idea that Abram knows then that he's going to have a great posterity here. That he's going to have a number of children and then probably grandchildren because God's going to make of him mighty nation.

[2 : 45] And so he begins to see that and that is a promise from God to this Chaldean. Now running over to Genesis 15 if you will and this of course comes after God's revelation to Abram that he is El Shaddai the most high God or El Elyon rather the most high God the God of heaven and of earth.

And of course he meets with Melchizedek or is confronted by him and so forth. Now in chapter 15 in the beginning of the chapter in verse 1.

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying fear not Abram I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. Abram said Lord God what will thou give me seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.

And Abram said behold to me thou hast given no seed and lo one born in my house is mine heir. And behold the word of the Lord came unto him saying this shall not be thine heir but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

And so he brought him forth abroad and said look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him so shall thy seed be.

[4 : 14] And here's that monumental passage. And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness. Then of course in the rest of that chapter he goes on and talks about the fact you know makes that in essence makes a compact if you will with Abram.

And he tells Abram to take a heifer and a she goat and a ram, turtle dove and young pigeon divide those in parts and then place them on the ground with a space in between the two sides.

And he put a deep sleep remember on Abram and God in essence passed through the pieces and then the pieces were devoured by the birds and that was a sign of what's going to happen to the seed of Israel or the seed of Abram which will become the nation of Israel.

And the affliction that they will undergo for 400 years. So what a promise huh? You're going to become a great multitude, a great nation.

But here's what's going to happen to them. Like these pieces that are devoured by the birds.

They're going to go into a land of affliction for 400 years. But they'll come out with great substance.

[5 : 42] So that was good. Now look at verse 18. In that same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram. So here we see the actual entrance into that covenant relationship between God and Abram.

Same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, The Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites and the Canaanites.

Boy, that's a bunch of people, isn't it? Great territory that God's promised here under this new covenant relationship. Now, over in chapter 17, take note with me.

Chapter 17, verse 1. When Abram was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect or upright, sincere. And I will make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face and God talked with him saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee.

[7 : 04] Thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham. For a father of many, many nations have I made thee.

The important thing that takes place here that I think we ought to really consider. It's not just the idea of God changing his name. And there was a purpose in that. It's really a confirmation, if you will, of the covenant promise that he's now made with Abram.

Abram was his name, literally means high father, now changed to Abraham. And it's interesting, and in the Hebrew, there's just one letter's difference in that Hebrew word.

But the word Abraham is a father of the multitude. All right. From high father to the father of the multitude.

So just a pledge of fulfillment, if you will, of that covenant relationship. What's thinking about that this afternoon and thought came to my mind. You know, with Abram, now his name turned to Abraham, on the basis of the covenant relationship that God gave him, says to me that from that point forward, Abram has to keep a close eye out on what transpires in his life.

[8 : 33] In essence, to see what it is God is doing in my life to bring all of that to fulfillment. That's his requirement now, if you will.

That is to be his focus. Because God has said, this is what I'm going to do for you. So I'm changing your name to Abraham, father of the multitudes.

So then, everything that transpires in the life of Abraham now has to have something to do with that covenant relationship, with that covenant promise that God made him.

So everything that Abraham sees in his life has to be seen from the backdrop of that covenant relationship to see what it is and how that fits.

How does this episode fit in what God has said to me and what he's promised to me that made him change my name in lieu of the fulfillment that promise and that covenant.

[9 : 42] Now, likewise, you know, of course, Abraham here is a unique fellow. You know, we've got to be careful that we don't try to emulate, to the nth degree, the life of biblical characters, because God does with every one of us exactly what he wants to do.

We're all unique people. And the will of God is unique for all of us. But I still believe that whatever God has either shown us about our life, shown us whatever about what he has in store, what he wants to use us for, any of that, even if it's just taking a look back to see what it is, God has done in my life in the past so that I can take that and build upon that and kind of get some idea of what direction we're going on here or going in so that everything then that transpires in our lives, we view from the backdrop of what God has been doing in that picture of putting the puzzle together so we

can see the picture that he's got in the middle of that and what he's doing with our life. Again, you know, in reality, there's nothing, there's nothing, there's no real mere circumstance that comes in the life of the believer.

Amen? Yeah. You know, we say, God, take my life and do with it what you will. Do we really mean that? You know, do we really sense that that's what he does?

He takes our life and is using it however he wants to. So the circumstances that come, the things that he encourages and urges us to do in his name, all those paint a picture of what he's purposed through our life.

[11 : 44] So we need to see all of that and view all of that from that backdrop. Now, that takes us, then go quickly.

Ah, well, you know, after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we find Moses coming on the scene and God's particular purpose for Moses.

In chapter 6, in verse number 4, God has been dealing with Pharaoh and now God's about to do that last bit of work that will cause Pharaoh to indeed let the people of Israel go.

And so in chapter 6, he begins in verse 1, Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand he shall let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord. You know, how many times has God said that? And he's going to say it in Malachi too, and we'll see that in a little bit.

[12 : 54] I am the Lord, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty. But by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan and the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

So notice, I have established my covenant with them is the picture that we see there. Now, rush over to chapter 19 of Exodus. God has delivered his people from the bondage of Egypt, miraculously delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh's army, and now they're on their journey to that land of Canaan, the land of their inheritance.

That land that God has purposed to give to them as his promise to them is to be fulfilled. Now, in chapter 19, now in the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

For they were departed from Rephidim and were come to the desert of Sinai and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before them out. To me, this is one of the most tremendous passages of Scripture there is.

Because here God, God has worked on behalf, in behalf of his people, the seed of Abraham, Abraham, but now God is going to speak with them.

[14 : 35] They're going to be confronted by God at Sinai. Tremendous thing that takes place here. Now, Moses, in verse 3, went up to God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountains, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself.

Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people, for all the earth is mine.

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded them.

Now, look at verse 8. Interesting here. All the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.

And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. Wow. If only. Huh? Yeah. We'll do anything God says.

[15 : 53] And you've got to think that one of the reasons, I mean, they really couldn't say anything else. Look what's happening here. Sinai's becoming, for a moment, the dwelling place of God.

And they see that. And there's a sense of fear and trembling here. So, yeah, we'll do whatever God says for us to do. Now, verse 9.

The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee and believe thee forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.

So, so God's going to give Moses some credibility here in the eyes of the people of Israel, which he had to fight for earlier. The Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow and let them wash their clothes.

Be ready against the third day. For the third day, the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. Same thing happened with Joshua here.

[16:58] this idea of sanctification in preparation to see, to meet with God here and to see what he does. All right?

Even to the point of cleaning, washing their clothes and taking three days to do that. Then verse 12, you shall set, you shall set bounds unto the people round about saying, Take heed to yourselves that you go not up into the mount or touch the border of it.

Whosoever touches the mount shall surely be put to death. There shall not in hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through. Whether it be beast or man, it shall not live.

When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people and they washed their clothes and he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day.

Come not at your wives. And it came to pass on the third morning, third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

[18:12] Oh, what a picture that God paints in man's, in Israel's humanity here of the awesomeness and magnificence and even the terror of the presence of the Lord.

Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God and they stood at the nether part of the mount and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Now, when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice and the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mount and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount and Moses went up.

The Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze. Many of them perish and let the priests also which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves lest the Lord break forth upon them.

I like this. Moses said unto the Lord, Now the people cannot come up to Mount Sinai for thou chargest us saying set bounds about the mount and sanctify it. And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down and thou shalt come up thou and Aaron with thee but let not the priest and the people break through to come upon up unto the Lord lest he break forth upon them.

[19:43] So Moses went down to the people and spake to them. And then of course he gives them the law. And then I like over in chapter 20 I believe it is in verse 18 as Moses still talking with the Lord getting the commands.

Verse 18 All the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountains smoking and when the people saw it they were moved and stood far off and they said unto Moses speak thou with us and we will hear but let not God speak with us lest we die.

And Moses said unto the people fear not for God has come to prove you that his fear may be before your faces that you sin not. Wow. Wow.

Such fear of what they experience of the presence of God upon Mount Sinai. They've come to the point Moses you can talk to us that we'll listen to you but don't let God speak to us anymore because we're fearful because we feel we'll die again.

And then Moses gives the explanation here I like this God wants them to fear him a reverential fear that will cause holiness and righteousness within their heart and life.

[21:05] They need to see the difference between God and themselves here. The holiness of God his righteousness all those things he possesses and what we as sinful man are and there's a picture here that that's working because they no longer want to hear the voice of God they're sinful men and they realize that they understand that and they see that.

Now they know that they're God's covenant people that God has been in the midst of them and of course takes them through a pillar of cloud by a pillar of fire through the wilderness and so they become accustomed to that.

Now we come to Malachi's prophecy and it being the last word of God to the people of Israel that covenant nation of Israel 400 years it's that last word of God before the new covenant comes in the person of Messiah Jesus.

Now as we begin later on to look throughout the book of Malachi we'll begin to see the spiritual condition of the people and people even even you know they're used to hearing from God through his men through his prophets even if it's a word of judgment it's going to be 400 years of silence nothing nothing at all from God after this last prophecy now this message of Malachi is his message to a people that have fallen away from him and so we notice what he says throughout part of the part of the prophecy that reflects their attitude toward him in chapter one of verse two he makes a statement you say people of

Israel you say wherein hast thou loved us how have you loved us it's an accusation in chapter in verse six of chapter one oh priest that despise my name chapter two verse 17 you have wearied the Lord with your words in chapter three verse eight you've robbed me that's what that's what Malachi is known for all right for most people all right now to me the most the most damning of all is in chapter three verse 14 you have said it is vain to serve God and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance wow they've said it's not been any benefit to us to serve God and we'll see that when we get there so it's a reflection of the heart of the people that's departed from their God now what's the reason for that departure simple the

[24 : 29] Babylonian captivity was something that had a tremendous influence upon their lives even though even though they tried to maintain the reality that they were the covenant nation of God a separate people from Babylon they could not have helped but be influenced by the ungodliness and wickedness the hydrology and everything else that took place among the people of Babylon as they were there captive so that spirit that prevailed there in Babylon developed itself among the people of Israel even after the captivity now those that returned back to the land after the captivity were those that did not participate and were not were you know found it wickedness those things that the Babylonians did but even at that the spirit that that prevailed in the midst of that created within them if you will a different type of idolatry and that idolatry to them was simply dead works self righteousness in the form of trying to do everything to obey every aspect of the law of

God that he had given to Moses so with that there was no confession of sin no remorse for their sin no repentance and of course God demands that from his people so that was absent so that there's a picture of the danger that lies in every generation for the believer when we're exposed to the things of the world and the sin that is prevalent is there anybody here that's ever been able to keep yourself from being exposed in any fashion or form from the ungodliness of the world if you have let me know how you did it we'll make a mint yeah yeah you know the apostle Paul over in the book of Ephesians you might want to turn there just a moment in

Ephesians chapter 2 Paul says in verse 1 you hath he quickened who were dead in the realm of trespasses and sin now the verse 2 wherein in time past that's before you got saved you walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience that word course is an interesting word the course of this world someone has given a definition of that that I for years thought was tremendous and here's what he says the word course really really pictures for us it's all that floating mass of thoughts opinions maxims speculations hopes impulses aims aspirations at any time current in the world which may be impossible to seize and accurately define but which constitutes a more real and effective power being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale and again inevitably to exhale all this is included in the course of the world which is the subtle informing spirit of the cosmos or world world of men who are living alienated apart from God yeah yeah now just think about that just a moment I don't know about you guys but I'm just so sick and tired of this impeachment stuff you know it's everywhere have you ever caught yourself going through the day thinking about what you've read or heard or seen about the impeachment but it affects us I mean we can't help but be we inhale that stuff through our eyes through our ears whatever form else we can inhale it with and inhaling it means that we have the propensity to exhale that same stuff so we've got to be careful about letting the world and the things in the world affect us and affect our thoughts even our thoughts about God so notice what God has said I think I put some of these scriptures in there for you notice what God says about the idea of us protecting our heart in Proverbs 4 4 he taught me also and said unto me let thine heart retain my

words keep my commandments and live so there's a beginning basis of that let your heart maintain the word of God let that be your focus Proverbs 4 23 keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life the word diligence there is the word that gives us the idea that before all that one has to guard guard it that's the heart as the most precious of possessions committed to thy trust guard it because out of it flow the issues of life and the picture here has been explained as you think of your own heart physical heart with the arteries and the blood vessels what happens a lot of times when a person has a heart attack what's usually the cause pardon well yeah

[31 : 02] I mean yeah but it's because an artery has clogged yeah an artery is clogged I know there's other things blood clots and stuff but for the most part it's arteries clogging blocking blood flow creating a heart attack now that's the picture that he gives us here you know the doctor does a bypass or balloons it or whatever to make it open again so the blood can flow like it's supposed to flow to all the extremities of the body so the body can function the way it's supposed to be functioning now spiritually out of the heart are the issues of life that's where they flow from if spiritually speaking we allow anything to hinder that flow it's detrimental to us yeah and so that's why he said guard your heart most of above anything else guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life then

Hebrews 13 9 be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein now as we think about Malachi God puts it in perspective for us and that is found in the verse that I think really serves as the theme of the book and that is Malachi chapter 3 in verse number 6 Malachi verse 3 for I am the Lord I mean plain and simple I am the Lord I change not therefore your sons of Jacob are not consumed I like that I am I am the Lord nothing's going to change that that's something settled forever now notice the testimonies of scripture that speak of the reality of

God being God in Psalm 86 verses 8 through 10 among the gods there is none like unto thee O Lord neither are there any works like unto thy works all nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee O Lord and shall glorify thy name for thou art great and does wondrous things thou art God alone I'm going to throw something in here no charge okay it's becoming a pet peeve of mine and I don't want to get on pet peeves but while we're here think about this just a moment how many times have we heard people and I know what they're meaning I know what they're saying whether it be in a song whether it be in the message whether it just be a statement that's made that says oh God you are a great God now God is great but he's not a God he's the God and we need to get that right every time I hear that that comes to mind what are saying here you are a great God no he's God God you are great he's the one and only true living God and that's what the scripture is portraying for us here thank you for letting me get that off my chest I didn't have I had no other pulpit to express that to psalm psalm 90 verse 1 and 2 lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou had formed the earth and the world even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God and when Peter and John wasn't it Peter and John Peter and James 1 that were were captured and questioned and threatened and then turned loose because they preached the word of

God when they were come in Acts 4 24 when they had heard that they came back to the group and rehearsed what went on when they heard that they lifted! up their voice to God with one!

[35 : 41] and said Lord thou art God which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is yeah now who is he he's God but notice he said I am the Lord I am Yahweh I'm Jehovah the eternal self existent one thus he's sovereign always has been always will be he's the almighty omnipotent all powerful God and that's the only God that there is that's not a false God he's the great I am of Exodus chapter 3 verses 14 through 15 remember when when God commissioned Moses to go and I'm going to use you to let my people go to speak to Pharaoh Lord when I go back to the people of Israel what should I say to them whom should I say sent me remember he said tell him that I am has sent you and we don't have time to look at that we'll get into that next week and see what that's all about all right all right so it should be a good study once we actually get into

Malachi we'll have a couple of times of more introduction here but to set the stage for what's going to happen with Malachi's prophecy all right any thoughts questions comments yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah it's hard for us to really put that in perspective isn't it yeah why wandering around without anything from God except the last except the last prophet that spoke or wrote to them and most of that was judgment except for the last part which was promise that they

could look forward to the last one and most of that was to to!