

Malachi Introduction (Part 2)

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Date: 11 December 2019

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[0:00] We're in Malachi.

Started the introduction last week. Remind you that Malachi, the messenger, literally the messenger of God!

God is writing to the covenant nation of Israel. God's last message, in fact, to that nation prior to the coming of the promised Messiah.

Again, the problem with that is, though it's the last message, there's a 400-year gap between the end of that message and the coming of Messiah. So there was a dark period for the nation of Israel, almost as if they were on their own.

And, of course, we'll see the reason for that as we begin studying more and more through the chapters of the book of Malachi. The nation of Israel, begun by God, started by Him, called by Him to be the covenant nation through that covenant that He made beginning with Abram in Genesis chapter 12, and then we see more so in Genesis chapter 15.

[1:20] Remind you that in Genesis chapter 15, God says to Abram, I am making a covenant with you, and as a result, He changes the name of Abram to Abraham.

The word Abram, high father, He changes to the word Abraham, meaning father of the multitude.

So that just speaks of God's pledge of the fulfillment of the covenant that He's then initiating with Abraham that will bring to pass what we know as the covenant nation of Israel.

Remember that from that point forward, we said, it was Abram's awesome responsibility to watch, to see what God is doing and does do in his life, because everything that transpires from that point forward in Abram's life pertains to the covenant relationship that he's entered into with him and the promises that were held in that covenant that he made with him.

So Abraham had to look out for and watch to see the activity of God in his life and then, of course, to join in with what God is doing in his life to enable that covenant to be brought to pass.

Tremendous, tremendous picture there. And, of course, that's the same responsibility that you and I have. As we began to close last week, we looked at what we called really the theme, the theme verse, if you will, of Malachi, and that is Malachi chapter 3, excuse me, verse number 16, if you want to turn there.

[3:05] Malachi chapter 3, verse 16. And there God through the prophet says, For I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

I am the Lord. I am Yahweh. I am Jehovah. I am the eternal self-existent one, and thus he is the sovereign one.

Always has been, always will be. Then also he's the almighty. He's the omnipotent, the all-powerful God, the one and only true God that is in existence.

Then as we close, we open the door to the fact that he is also the great I am, as found in Exodus chapter 3, verses 14 and 15.

If you want to turn there, we'll look there for just a moment. But recall that this is the time when God is calling Moses and telling him that he's going to use him to deliver his people out of Egyptian bondage.

[4:12] The question, of course, came to mind to Moses. If I go and tell the people that God has sent me, who do I say sent me?

What's your name? What name shall I give to them in response to who sent me as their deliverer? And so in those verses, God said unto Moses, I am that I am.

And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you. God said, Moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.

This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Now, I am that I am. I am, and that is literally to be.

I will be what I will be is the idea there. And that, of course, pictures a great deal about the sovereignty of God. But in the context of this, the asking of the question, What is your name?

[5:28] And the response to that question, in the context of that revelation there that God gives to Moses, seems to emphasize the fact that the God who made the covenant is the God that will see to it that the covenant is fulfilled, that he will indeed, on his part, keep that covenant.

So the question, What is your name? God, what is your name? Expresses the idea there of the nature of God. Always remember that names in the scriptures were not frivolous.

All right? They had meaning to them. In particular, the characteristic of the one that possesses the name. So, in essence, Moses is asking God, What, who are you?

What is your characteristic? What characteristics do you possess, if you will? And as that, what's the manner in which you operate?

Always remember, keep in mind here, that Moses, Moses is a man. He's earthy. And so, he's thinking with earthy, with an earthy mind here.

[6:39] What characteristics do you possess, and how are you going to, how are you going to work? What's the manner in which you are going to work here to your people? Now, Moses expected that God would respond through the characteristics that he possesses, and manifest through what he does, those characteristics that he possesses, in particular, in that idea that he is who he is, and he will be who he will be.

Now, so God tells him that name. Moreover, he explains, if you will, the name of Jehovah. Aren't you glad God does that?

It's not the only place that he's done that. Remember later on, when he takes Moses up on the mountain, the second time, he's going to reveal to him the name of Jehovah.

Takes him up on the mount, puts him in the cleft of the rock, passes by him. As he passes by, removes the hand from him, and reveals the, what I call the non-consuming aspects of the glory of God.

Love, mercy, grace. Now, so here, he's going to express that, explain to them, by what he does, the name of Jehovah.

[8:04] By the name I am that I am, he designates himself as, as he said, the God of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But he's the God that acts with unfettered liberty and total self-dependence.

He's sovereign. He's God. That's who he is. So, he declares the fact that he is in control of everything that there is.

And that, in particular, in relationship to the nation of Israel. So, I am the Lord. I am Jehovah. But look at this next phrase.

I always thought this interesting. Because I am Jehovah, I change not. Therefore, your sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Two-fold thinking here. I am Jehovah, always will be. Always have been, always will be. Nothing will change who I am. There's not one single characteristic that God possessed back in the day of Moses that he doesn't still possess.

[9:21] He is who he is and he always will be. As if he's saying, I will always be all that I am all of the time.

Now, therefore, as a result, your sons of Jacob are not consumed.

And I always wondered about that. Because of Jehovah, why are they not consumed? They're ungodly people. They're the covenant nation. But as we look in Malachi, as we study through it, we'll see the separated position that we spoke of last week.

that they're in with their God. But in spite of that, because he's Jehovah, they will not be consumed. And the idea there is, it's because of his unchanging faithfulness to the covenant promises.

All right? If there's one thing that God's always faithful to, it's himself. Yeah. Think about that just a moment.

[10:32] Everything that he does, even for us, he does in lieu of his faithfulness to himself. Because he's made promise.

And he's going to keep that promise because he has been the one that made that promise. Where is it in the book of Hebrews that the writer speaks of that? Let me see if I can find that real quick.

If you recall, my mind is thinking here and that's hard. Talking about the unchangeableness of God. And he said, he swore by himself. He could swear by no greater. I can't find it, but it's there. He swore by no greater than himself.

There's nothing greater to swear by than by himself. So he made an oath. He made a covenant. He made an oath. And in that oath, he swore by himself that that covenant would be fulfilled.

[11:39] All right? Because there wasn't anything greater. Wasn't anybody greater to swear by than by himself. So everything God does, he does in fulfillment of his promises, whether it be to Israel under the old covenant or whether it be to his people today under the new covenant.

Because he has promised. And that's why we can go to the bank with that. And that's what the Hebrew writer was saying. We can take it to the bank because of God's faithfulness to who he himself is.

Now, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Jehovah is the revealer of himself to man. And what he does, in what he does, he reveals himself as a faithful, loving, redeeming father to his people.

And all of it, it says, as if God says, I love you and I always have. But because I love you, I've got to deal with your sins.

And that's because I am holy and righteous. And that's who I am. But he says, I have a motive in doing that. And my motive in dealing with your sins is because I love you.

[12:59] And whatever I do, I do in that love for you because I'm wanting to draw your heart to me. God's always wanted to do that to Israel.

He always wants to do that today. To draw men's heart, not the intellect per se that's included, but more so to draw the heart of his people to himself.

for twofold reason. One, so that we can see him in his love. But also, more importantly, I think, that we may be able to experience his love and that in his fullness.

You know, one of the things that we need to think about is the fact that, you know, I think of the projects that we go out on.

What do we call them when we wear the red shirts? Yeah, thank you. I couldn't think of the word.

The engaged programs that we have or that we get involved in, the things that we do.

[14:11] We go and we say to ourselves, we want to help these people see the love of Jesus through our lives. And we do that and that's good and well. But that's not all they need.

They not only need to see the love of God, they need to be able to be in a place in their life where they can experience the love of God and experience that in his fullness.

And that's what God is attempting to do in the life of his people. Now, God expects or God desires the same thing for everybody today.

To acknowledge that he's God, to recognize his love through his son, to appropriate the salvation he offers, and to experience the joyous relationship that he provides.

And that is provided through that relationship with God. He is God. He's the sovereign one. He accounts to nobody. But, though he accounts to nobody himself, he demands accountability from everybody.

[15:21] Yeah, think about that. God is God. Answers to no one. But he demands an accountability from everybody.

And that accountability will come. So, he desires for men to acknowledge then that he is God. Then to recognize the love that he has and that he's demonstrated through the death, burial, and resurrection of his son, Christ Jesus.

And then with that, he desires for men to appropriate that salvation that he offers. And then so that he can experience the joyous relationship that it provides with God.

Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6, remember, says, but without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Again, without faith it's impossible to please him. Literally, that is, to please him at all. There's no way to please him without faith.

[16:38] Now, remember, we've given before a working definition of faith. faith. It's simply a positive response to anything God has said, done, or promised, or in reality, in lieu of who he is.

A positive response to all of that. When God speaks to our hearts, we respond in obedience. And in that obedience, then, we're trusting him for who he is.

We're trusting in what he said. We're trusting in what he's promised. That's what we call faith. That all starts with a response to what he has said, done, or promised.

It's not just blind, empty faith. It's faith in something or someone. And that is a result of him being active in our heart, life, and mind.

God. All right? So that's where obedience comes from, is the fact that we've heard from him in some way, form, or fashion.

[17:52] Now, without faith it's impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Those are the two things that those that come to God must believe. first of all is, of course, that he exists. And he exists as God in all that he is.

But then also, secondly, that he is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him. Not merely the fact that God exists as a rewarder, but that he will prove himself to be a rewarder of that person that diligently seeks him.

Now, we've got to be careful with that word reward there. So many times, since we're earthy, we think of reward as something material, but that's not necessarily what it is.

The idea of God's reward to us has some multiplicity of factions here that we could consider. It could just be some spiritual work that he does within our lives, whatever it may be.

[19:03] but the fact that we see then, we can see him make, make, give proof that he can give proof then through what he does that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

The idea of diligently here is literally to seek him out. All right? Seek him out. how many how many are mathematicians anybody how many flunk math I had a smart girl next to me yeah I think I've probably told you the story before but when I was in was it in high school or junior high wherever we started geometry or algebra 2 maybe it was algebra 2 you know you'd have all these problems you had to solve and you had to go through the process of solving them to get the answer I mean you had all that on the paper not just the answer

I'll never forget the day boy I had done it and I had it right I knew I did teacher asked for someone to come up to the board the blackboard and solve the problem boy I couldn't wait boy I raised that hand he called me up hand me the chalk I walked up there and I did all of this you know down here and down here and down here and I was explaining all this as I went and this does this and this does this because of this and it comes up with this and this you know here's the bottom line I took my seat teacher said well done took my seat then he asked the question how many of you think he's right poor hands went up how many think he's wrong

I don't remember if anybody raised their hand or not but the sad thing was I was wrong I didn't come up with the right conclusion but I diligently sought it out see didn't just come up with some speculation I sought it out but I missed one step and that's what happened but I diligently sought the conclusion to the problem and that's the idea about us in our trusting God without faith it's impossible to please him but when we have that tribe of faith then he is the rewarder of those that really seek him out and I mean that and to me that means getting in the word of God and not just looking to find out how you're supposed to live today and apply some biblical principle to your life but searching out what the scriptures say about him because the more we come to know about him the more we come to love him isn't that what the apostle Paul said over in yeah in Philippians 3 notice what it says again you know talking about anybody has the right to brag about the flesh it's me but he said in verse 7 what things were gained to me those I counted loss for Christ yea doubtless and I count all things but loss concluded that once for all everything at one time loss why for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my

Lord that's the idea of gaining that knowledge through an intimate companionship and communion with him for whom I have suffered the loss of all things do count them but done that I may win Christ actually acquire the graces and perfections of Christ to my life and be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith that I may know him that's experiential knowledge the type of knowledge to come to know him by that experiential knowledge the most and the best that a man can know Christ is the idea thus to know the power of his resurrection fellowship of his suffering to be made conformable unto his death and so forth to know him to seek him out through the scripture is what he's saying here those that diligently seek him out so now the idea of him being the rewarder of those that diligently seek him realize don't always see those rewards if you will all the time all the time right away sometimes there's a delay in what God does sometimes there's fiery faith tried faith

1st Peter chapter 1 turn there just a moment 1st Peter chapter 1 blessed be the God of our [25:06] God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that's not it I'm thinking of another passage that's 1st Peter chapter 1 blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ verse 3 which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that that that word according to used a number of times it's used by Paul in the book of Ephesians as well it gives us the idea that you know we talked a minute ago about the the all the aspects of God that he possesses all of those characteristics that he possesses have to have some means of expression it's like me wanting to solve that problem on the blackboard and I just

I have to do it if I don't get to do that I'm going to be miserable the rest of the day you know such a longing to express and that's what that word means there that those characteristics and attributes of God have to have a means of expression so he says page got turned he says blessed be the God and Father which according to his abundant mercy so his abundant mercy has to have a means of expression and that expression is beginning us again or be having begot us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance undefiled incorruptible that fades not away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last day verse 6 wherein you greatly rejoice that is the last times you greatly rejoice though now for a season if need be you are in heaviness through manifold temptation or testings here's the reason for the testings that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ a lot of times we think that it's that faith that's tried through the fire that's going to be found to be to the praise and honor and glory of the Lord Jesus but that's not it notice what he says it's the trial of your faith that's much more precious than of gold that perishes not the faith it's the trial the testing of that faith good examples been given a mining company got his eye on a piece of property I think the possibility is if they buy that property and go to work to mine that property there may be enough gold in there to turn a good profit but a wise businessman doesn't go just sink that money into a piece of ground and start the process without doing some testing so he hires the assessor to go out and dig some samples soil samples take them back and test them to see whether or not it would be profitable and whether that's real gold that's in there so the assessor goes to his lab takes that ore with him runs it through the test and of course the testing of the gold is the refiner's fire okay you know the process slowly heating that ore let the impurities come up to the top skim them off repeat that process until no other impurities come up then you've got pure gold that's the testing of the refiner's fire and so he comes up and he runs his test and finds that it's pure gold and it appears as if it's rich enough vain that they could make some good money off of it so it would be worth buying and going through the process of mining that land so they send he sends the report with that sample of ore or the result of the sample of the ore that he sent with it sends it back to the prospective buyer and the buyer looks at it looks at the report and says alright let's buy it and let's do it because the report says it's a good deal now interesting that the prospective buyer did not look at the sample of gold first he looked at the report you see the report was more valuable than that gold sample was because that was going to be the basis upon what they made their decision on whether to buy it and mine it and reap the benefits what

Peter is saying here is this it's not the faith it's the testing of that faith and the idea with that is if we go through the refiner's fire in our life all the trials the difficulties everything we face because we're the children of God and come out through that trusting God in it all not complaining but just trusting him with what he's doing and with the results then that testing will be found to be to the praise and honor and glory of God yeah I think somewhere maybe in the message or something

I told you about the example that I heard of by a man in a preacher's meeting in Arkansas years ago years ago there's a guy that was an NFL football player I don't remember what team but they were in the playoffs and he was a lineman he was an offensive lineman and the game was so close they were just two points behind three points behind maybe four probably four because they wouldn't would have kicked a field goal four points behind fourth quarter time for one more play they get in the huddle and they're all just beat to death they're frazzled energy's gone so the quarterback calls the play and the play was that the halfback or the running back would get the ball and he would run through the hole that this lineman was to make what a responsibility huh so they get down in the stance he calls the signal snaps the ball clock starts running and the halfback gets the

ball and runs toward him with all the power that he could muster he makes his block and the quarterback or the running back runs through the gap and scores they win the ball game of course the crowd just goes wild you know applauding that running back that made that touchdown this lineman gets himself up he picks himself up and just beat to death head hanging low walks over toward the sideline and he happens to look up and what does he see he sees the coach the head coach and he's looking right at him looking at him in the eyes and smiles shaking his head yeah nobody else realized it but the coach did that he's the one that made the hole for him to score and win the game you see the trial of faith is those times when we just feel exhausted drained mentally spiritually emotionally because of what we've been doing in the work of

[34:46] God but we've remained faithful even though we may not have seen any real results from what's going on what we're doing we stay faithful we trust God believe that he knows what he's doing and how he's using us though we might not know and so that trial passes the test and that's genuine faith that's genuine faith and when we get to stand before him it's not going to matter how much faith we've got what's going to matter is the testing of the faith the testing that brought about whatever degree of faith we've got whatever quality of faith we've got and that's what's going to happen now so as a result that our trust of our faith or the trial of our faith might be found in praise and honor and glory and at the appearing of

Jesus Christ whom having not seen he'll love in whom though now you see him not yet believing believing what do you do in the midst of trials and difficulties hardships you rejoice not just rejoice but you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory yeah that's what God rewards so his invitation to us first chronicles 28 9 for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts if thou seek him he will be found of thee but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever psalm 119 verses 2 and 3 blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart they also do no iniquity and they walk in his ways proverbs 8 17 i love them that love me and those that seek me early shall find me and jeremiah 29 13 and you shall seek me and find me when you shall search for me with all your heart that's diligence all right isaiah 55 verses 6 and 7 seek ye the lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our god for he will abundantly pardon oh may our hearts echo that of the psalmist so we can claim what he claims in psalm 63 1 oh god thou art my god he personalizes it there see god you are my god early will i seek thee my soul thirsteth for thee my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is amen boy it's dry out there isn't it yeah it's a dry thirsty land that we live in and in reality the only thing that brings joy peace contentment is god and those things he's provided for us in life to accompany that joy and enhance it yeah so let's cling to him amen through everything all right now next week we will continue with introduction and then that'll be the last week before christmas right and then we'll have a couple week breaks so that'll give you a chance to catch your breath all right let's pray father again thank you for your goodness and grace thank you father for the time that you've given us tonight but most of all we thank you for your love for us that love that you've expressed to us so clearly through your son on calvary's cross father we thank you that you have not only sent your son but you've given us the privilege to know you and to have a process through which we can know you more and more as we go through life to find you to

be the one that brings that peace and joy and satisfaction and fulfillment in the life that we have here we look forward as well to the life that we will share in your presence when the time comes that your son comes to receive us to yourself so we thank you for that so just ask your blessings now upon what you've shown us this evening may that continue to dwell upon our hearts throughout the week and we'll thank you for what you do in it all in Jesus name we pray amen Thank you.