

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament, and is actually the last book written of the Old Testament. This is the final prophecy given from God before 400 years with no prophets, and then the coming of Jesus.

- The final words God had to say to those that were to be watching for Jesus' coming.

The prophecy of Malachi is built around seven questions the people asked God.

- Malachi's ministry took place nearly a hundred years after the decree of Cyrus, which ended the Babylonian captivity and allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple. This was some 80 years after Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the rebuilding of the temple. Those two earlier prophets had said that the rebuilding of the temple would result in peace, prosperity, the conversion of people from other nations, and the return of God's own glorious presence. To the discouraged people of Malachi's day, these predictions must have seemed a cruel mockery. In contrast to the glowing promises, they faced economic difficulties due to drought and crop failure. They remained an insignificant territory, no longer an independent nation and no longer ruled by a Davidic king. Worst of all, despite the promise of God's presence, they experienced only spiritual decline.

Question 1

Malachi 1:2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, '**In what way have You loved us?**' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;

- God opens with Him saying "I have loved you." He is about to bring a significant correction to Israel, but begins with His love for them.
- Israel questions if that is true. Life is hard. Their enemies are prospering and they are not.
 - Have we ever done that? Have you ever wanted to ask God How have you loved me? It's hard to see it!
- God's love was shown in His election of Israel

- God's choosing us also shows His love for us.
 - Understanding our election gives assurance of love but the greatest demonstration of His love is found in the finished work of Jesus:
 - **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Questions 2&3

Malachi 1:6-7 "A son honors *his* father, And a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, Where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, Where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, '**In what way have we despised Your name?**'⁷ "You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, "**In what way have we defiled You?**" By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'

- God actually asks a couple of questions of His own. Where is My honor? Where is My reverence?
 - I almost feel like God is asking why the people are feeling unloved because of lack of blessing all the while they are rejecting God.
 - God, I don't think you love me because I am not blessed enough – all while living in sin and not living out of His Spirit.
- The priests offered defiled food on the altar.
 - Since they had to ask how they defiled His name, that means they were not even aware they were doing it.
 - Many of our modern day pastors have done the same thing. By preferring the culture of the world to the Kingdom of God, they are defiling His name.
- But we are all priests now, according to Peter.
 - **1 Peter 2:9** But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- When we do godly work in the flesh – that is a defiled sacrifice.
 - **Colossians 3:17** And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- Worship that is shallow, selfish, or false is defilement.
 - **Malachi 1:12-13** “But you profane it, In that you say, ‘The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.’¹³ You also say, “Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it,” Says the LORD of hosts. “And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?” Says the LORD.
 - How are we coming to God in worship? What is our attitude?
 - **John 4:23-24** But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
- We despise His name when we choose to work in the flesh rather than rest in His Spirit.
- We defile His name by worshiping falsely.

Question 4

Malachi 2:17 You have wearied the LORD with your words; yet you say, “**In what way have we wearied Him?**” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them,” Or, “Where *is* the God of justice?”

- **Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD:** The people of God in Malachi’s day were depressed and discouraged because it seemed like the wicked prospered and had it better than the godly. This filled them with doubt and unbelief, and they grumbled that **everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD.**
- **Where is the God of justice?** When they compared themselves with others, they thought it was unjust of God to bless others and not them. Nevertheless, their question shows that they didn’t understand what **the God of justice** would give to them.
- **God’s response - Malachi 3:1-2** “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you

delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts.² “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap.

- God reiterates the prophecy of the coming of the forerunner (Elijah/John the Baptist and the Messiah, Jesus)
- The people feel like God is delaying in this promise. And if the Messiah never comes, what is the point.
 - **2 Peter 3:3-4** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.”
 - **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- It is easy to have that same view now. And people do weird things because of it. Preterism. Believing that Jesus has already come.

Question 5

Malachi 3:7 Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” Says the LORD of hosts. “**But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’**

- In its most basic sense, repentance is turning away from sin and turning to God. It isn’t so much *required* if we want to return to God; repentance describes what the very act of returning is.
- **Matthew 3:1-2** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”
 - What did Israel need to repent of? Repent means to change your mind and agree with God. Or stop living this way, live like you are part of the Kingdom of God. Because you are.
- This was a simple call to repentance. Those who have once walked with God and been committed to His covenant must **return** to Him. When they do, they will find that He has been with them the entire time.

Question 6

Malachi 3:8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘**In what way have we robbed You?**’ In tithes and offerings.

- It seems strange to think that a man could rob God. What could someone possibly steal from God? The LORD explained how it could happen – they **robbed** God by withholding their **tithes and offerings**.
- **Malachi 3:10** Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you *such* blessing that *there will not be room enough to receive it*.
 - One of the very complaints of Israel was that they were not being blessed financially. Yet they were withholding the very thing that would bring them financial blessing.
- Tithes and offerings show what we believe about God. Is God our provider? Do we trust Him with our money, our livelihood, our security?
 - Trust is about faith. And faith is what unlocks the Kingdom in our lives.
 - **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - **Luke 16:11** Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?
 - Money is a spiritual matter

Question 7

Malachi 3:13 “Your words have been harsh against Me,” says the LORD, “Yet you say, ‘**What have we spoken against You?**’

- **Malachi 3:14-15** You have said, “It is useless to serve God; what profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?¹⁵ So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.’ ”

- **It is useless to serve God:** These were the harsh words spoken by God's people against God. They saw the prosperity of the **proud** and those who did **wickedness**, and they felt that it was **useless to serve God** as long as those who didn't serve Him seemed to live comfortably.
- Is the only reason to serve God because of what He can do for us? Or is His worthiness enough for us?

The response from the people

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So, a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

The Response from God

Malachi 4:1-6 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch.² But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.³ You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do *this*," Says the LORD of hosts.⁴ "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, *With the* statutes and judgments.⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.⁶ And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Question 7 – Serving God is useless because the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer.

Answer – all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up

Question 6 – They stopped giving to God because they did not trust Him to bless them

Answer - And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.

Question 5 – How should we return?

Answer - Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, *With the* statutes and judgments.

Question 4 – Where is justice and why do the wicked prosper?

Answer - You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do *this,*” Says the LORD of hosts

Question 3&2 – How have we despised and defiled God? Through false worship and serving out of the flesh.

Answer - But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings;

Question 1 – Does God truly love me?

Answer - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”