

Malachi
For Lovelsrael.org
Chapter 1
Part 1: Malachi 1:1-8

Most scholars believe that Malachi returned to the land of Israel after the exile had been completed. Malachi was a prophet. He prophesied the Word of the Lord to those who had resettled in the Promised Land. At the time of Malachi, the temple had been rebuilt and it was functional. However, the people were not submissive. They were rebellious. They did not want to recognise the authority that Malachi had been given.

The people also doubted God. God was not pleased with His people (the children of Israel). They were not interested in honouring Him. They did not have reverence for Him (they had no fear of the Lord). This meant that they did not want to acknowledge His authority over their lives. They were disagreeable. They rejected God's standards, His rules, His ways and His commandments. In essence, they were simply going about things in their own ways. When we are separated from God, we are not going to experience anything that is good. We need to be wise and humble enough to invite God into our lives (through believing in and confessing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour) so that He can send us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. It is only with the help of the Holy Spirit that the necessary changes and adjustments in our lives, changes that are pleasing to God, can be brought about.

Verse 1: *“The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel in the hand of Malachi.”*

Burden: God had a difficult message, a burden, that He was going to load up onto the people. This burden was connected to prophetic truth.

Israel: Those who had returned to the Promised Land after the exile. The remnant of the Israelites (those who had returned from the Babylonian exile, as well as those who had remained in Judah) were once again a temporarily united people. After King Solomon's reign the empire had been divided – the Northern Kingdom was called “Israel’ or ‘Ephraim’ (1 Kings 11:30-31, 1 Kings 12:19, Hosea 11:12) and the Southern Kingdom was called ‘Judah’ (1 Kings 14:21). According to Ezekiel, true unity between the tribes of Israel is going to be established in the last days (Ezekiel 37:21 - 22).

In the hand: Malachi went with God's authority.

Malachi: Literally: ‘My messenger’. This is a word that can mean a messenger or an angel. The context informs us that this is referring to a messenger, a prophet, who had been sent by God.

Verse 2: *“‘I have loved you,’ said the Lord. ‘Yet you say, ‘With what have You loved us?’ Is there not a brother Esau to Jacob?’” declares the Lord. ‘I love Jacob.’”*

Said the Lord: Written in the past tense. God had said this to them in the past, but He is reaffirming it to them now. God loved these people. He had demonstrated His love for them by redeeming them from Egypt, sustaining them in the wilderness, causing them to take

possession of the Promised Land, giving them victory over their numerous enemies, and, by establishing His temple in Jerusalem, causing His Name (Presence) to dwell among them.
Yet you say: God is still speaking.

With what have You loved us?: God is quoting back to the people what their response is in regard to Him telling them that He loves them. They are a doubting people. They are disagreeable to the Word of God, and therefore things are not going to go well for them. The people do not remember all the good things that God has done for them – the fact that they are back in the land, that they have a functioning temple, etc.

Is there not a brother Esau to Jacob?: The answer to this question is ‘yes’.

Jacob: God had chosen that the older twin (Esau) was going to serve the younger (Jacob) - Genesis 25:23. God is Sovereign and He can do as He wills, but (as the doctrine of election wrongly concludes) He did not simply choose Jacob and reject Esau in a vacuum because it was His prerogative to do so. Instead, as we shall see, there was a reason why He chose Jacob and rejected Esau.

I love Jacob: This is written in the present tense. The present tense was used infrequently in the Old Testament. Whenever it is used it is used for the purpose of emphasizing. This is important – God loved Jacob in the past, He loved Him now and He would continue to love Him into the future.

Verse 3: *“But Esau I have hated. And I have set his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”*

Esau I have hated: This is written in the past tense. This speaks about hating in a general sense as well as in a continuing sense.

Verse 4: *“For Edom will say, ‘We are impoverished, but we will return, and we will rebuild the desolate places.’ Thus said the Lord of hosts: ‘They will rebuild, but I will tear down. They shall be called the Border of Wickedness, and the people against whom the wrath of the Lord is unto forever.’”*

Note: This verse gives us a glimpse into the Edomite spirit.

Edom: This is a word that relates to ‘red’. It is a name by which Esau is also known because he was born red and hairy (Genesis 25:25). Esau also loved red stew. For a plate of red stew, he was willing to forfeit his birth right (Genesis 25:29-34).

Impoverished: Trodden on or beaten down. Made poor.

We will return, and we will rebuild: Esau had a defiant spirit and he disagreed with God and God’s order. He desired to rebuild what God had destroyed.

Desolate places: The ruins.

Lord of hosts: There is a change in the way God is revealed. Here He is being referred to as the Mighty God – the Lord of the armies.

They will rebuild, but I will tear down: This is the way God responds. He is going to destroy the things that Esau, in his defiance, tries to rebuild.

They: Referring to Esau and his descendants (the Edomites).

Border: An area.

The people against whom the wrath of the Lord is unto forever: They are forever disobedient. They are committed to wickedness. They choose to live within the border, or boundaries, of wickedness.

Verse 5: *“Your eyes shall see, and you shall say: ‘The Lord will be magnified beyond the border of Israel.’”*

Your...you: Referring to the children of Israel.

You shall say: Based upon God's punishment of Esau.

The Lord will be magnified beyond the border of Israel: The same Hebrew word (גְּבוּל) is used to refer to the border – the **border** of Esau being a border of wickedness, but God being magnified and proclaimed as great beyond the **border** of Israel. Prophetically the territory or border of Israel is going to get larger and not smaller as we near the end of this age. Currently, according to the wisdom of men, men want Israel to give up land. They think that if she gives up land it will bring peace. However, this would not be the case [and historically this has been proven true – Israel has given back land (The Sinai, Gaza etc) and there is still no lasting peace]. If Israel concedes any land, it will encourage her enemies, even more, to want to stamp out and destroy the Jewish people. God's will is for Israel to increase her borders (Exodus 34:24, Isaiah 54:2-3. Joshua 1:4 still needs to be fulfilled in its entirety). For Israel to fulfil what God has called her to be, and to do what God has called her to do, she is going to need to increase, to enlarge geographically. This is going to happen in its entirety when the wrath of God is poured out upon Esau at the end of this age (Isaiah 63:1-6).

Verse 6: *“A son will honour his father, and a servant his master. ‘If I am a Father, where is My honour? And if I am a Master where is My respect?’ said the Lord of hosts. ‘To you, O priests, the ones who despise My Name: but you say: ‘With what have we shown contempt towards Your Name?’”*

If I am a Father, where is My honour: The problem: not only were the people disagreeable, but they also did not want to give honour to God – neither in their words nor in their actions.

Master: Lord. This word is written in the plural. This means the abundant master – the master over everything.

Respect: Fear, reverence.

Priests: In this prophecy of Malachi there is an emphasis on the priests. The priests, who were supposed to be the servants of God and who carried out His will, were no better than the people. They were individuals who participated in the same evil thinking that the people had in not wanting to honour, respect or serve God.

Despise My Name: They have contempt for the name of God.

Name: Name is synonymous with character. The priests gave no value or respect to the character of God.

Verse 7: *“You offer up upon My altar bread that has been defiled. But you say: ‘With what have we defiled You?’ When you say that the table of the Lord is contemptible.”*

Bread that has been defiled: The bread was old, mouldy and not fit to be eaten. These priests were giving God garbage – things they no longer had any use for. They would not want to eat this bread, so they were not treating God in the way that they would have wanted to be treated. This showed that they had no respect for God. This is why a burden of the Lord was being placed upon them.

You say...the table of the Lord is contemptible: God is quoting back to the people what they, in defiance, said. Their behaviour and thoughts showed contempt. They despised making sacrifices to God or giving to God what He wanted to receive. Biblically there is a relationship between giving and worship. We need to give to God what He has required, not what we want to give Him.

Table: Probably a reference to the altar.

Verse 8: *“For you have offered up the blind (animal) to sacrifice. Is this not evil? For you offer up the lame and the sick. Is this not evil? Would you offer it up unto your governor? Would he receive you? Would he lift up your face?” Says the Lord of hosts.”*

You have offered up the blind: It was the intention of the people to do this, but the priests allowed it to happen.

Evil: When we do not do what God wants us to do, when we do not agree with God, then we are doing evil. Evilness will bring upon one the judgment of God. An example of this, that we can learn from, is Esau. Esau had contempt for his birth right. Esau was not interested in serving God. He was not interested in God's program, God's covenant or what God was interested in. Because of this, Esau is an eternal recipient of the wrath of God.

Would you offer it up unto your governor: The people would never give a gift of a blind, lame or sick animal to their political or secular leader.

Would he lift up your face: Would he look favourable or kindly upon it? If this man, a secular leader, would not look kindly upon this 'gift' how much less so would the holy, righteous Lord of hosts not look kindly on it? The people had no respect, sensitivity, or thoughts about what was (is) pleasing to God. We are not going to experience good things from God, in our lives, (His blessings or being recipients of His promises) until we are able to think about what is pleasing to God, what He requires of us, what would be that which would please Him.

Lord of hosts: In this passage, God is revealing Himself as the Lord of hosts. The word 'hosts' (armies) is written in the plural which means it is referring to a mighty and abundant army. God is revealing Himself as One who has strength, power, and authority. Until we have the right perspective of God we are not going to be individuals who are able to respond to Him correctly. A proper response to God begins with knowing God. When we know God then we can submit properly to Him and recognize His authority over our lives.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Malachi 1:9-14

Many people are spiritually frustrated. They do not have contentment or an inner peace. They are not experiencing joy in their lives, and they are simply defeated. On our own this is not something that we can remedy. We need to agree with God and see ourselves as He sees us so that we can turn to Him for assistance. The children of Israel were disobedient but, in this section, we see God inviting them to change. In the same way, God is inviting change in the lives of people today.

Verse 9: *“And now entreat, please, the face of God. And He will be gracious unto us. Since from your hand, He will lift up your countenance,” said the Lord of hosts.”*

Now: This word in Hebrew carries with it a sense of urgency. Spiritually frustrated people are in a very dire situation. They need to urgently make the right decision. If those decisions aren't made 'now' then they are unlikely to be made in a week, month or years' time. Right 'now', today, is a special opportunity from God to make God honouring changes in our lives. We are not guaranteed tomorrow.

Entreat: A word of invitation. When we entreat someone we are inviting them, beseeching them, supplicating them to respond to us. God wants us to respond to Him.

The face of God: This is an idiom that speaks of the presence of God.

He will be gracious: It is through God's grace that we find salvation (our sins are forgiven). It is also through God's grace that our lives can be transformed (Titus 2:11-12). We need to rejoice that we have a gracious God!

From your hand: From your being. From our own initiative and will, our own authority, we need to invite God into our lives.

He will lift up your countenance: When we invite Him into our lives He gives us a sense of true joy. 'Lifting up our face' means He is going to encourage us, He is going to move in our lives and we will begin to see things differently.

The Lord of hosts: An idiom that speaks about the God who is absolutely able. He is mighty, strong and powerful and we can rely upon Him.

Verse 10: *“Who also among you that he will close the doors, and not kindle my altar for nothing? There is not to Me any desirable thing among you,” said the Lord of hosts. ‘The offering I will not accept from your hands.’”*

Who...will close the doors: After God's wonderful invitation to the people He goes back to examining them. He is so dissatisfied and displeased with their worship and their hypocritical behaviour that He wishes someone would just close the doors to the temple.

Kindle: Light.

For nothing: What was going on in the temple was not serving God. God wished that they would rather not offer their diseased, lame and blind offerings to Him as they served no purpose...they were for naught. Our lives, like these offerings, could be lived without purpose. It is only God that gives true purpose and meaning to our existence. If we reject Him, or if we do not serve Him, then we are living empty, meaningless lives.

There is not to Me any desirable (delightful) thing among you: When we are going in our own ways then there is nothing that God desires from us.

Offering: Sacrifice.

I will not accept from your hands: In their current condition, God didn't want their worship or service. There was a separation between Israel and the God of Israel. God was available to make a change (Malachi 1:9) but Israel had to be willing to respond to this prophetic revelation by sincerely repenting and submitting to God's authority.

Verse 11: *“For from the rising of the sun until its setting, great is My Name among the nations. In every place that the incense is offered to My Name, and a pure offering, for great is My Name among the nations,” said the Lord of hosts.”*

Great is My Name among the nations: God’s call on Israel was that they would be a blessing to the nations, the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3). His desire was to use Israel to reveal to the nations how great His Name is. He wanted the nations to know Him, to know His character, as He is the only One that gives purpose and meaning to our lives. It is only through the work that God did through His Son, Jesus Christ, that we can be forgiven of our sins. It is only in this state of purity, when the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us, that we are able to dwell in the presence of the Holy God.

In every place that the incense is offered to My Name ... great is My Name among the nations: Many scholars believe that this speaks of God’s desire. God wants incense to be offered up to Him because of the greatness of His name.

Incense: Incense is related to the prayers of the people (Revelation 8:4).

Note: Twice in this verse God emphasises that He wants His Name to be great in the nations. God doesn’t just want to be known in Israel. He wants to be known in all the nations in the world. God’s desire has always been redemption for all humanity (John 3:16). All can receive His grace, mercy and kindness.

Verse 12: *“But you are profaning it when you say that the table of the Lord is defiled and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.”*

You: God is speaking to Israel.

You are profaning it: The issue here is that God wants His Name to be great among the nations, but this isn't happening. The people are treating His Name irreverently or with disrespect.

You say that the table (altar) of the Lord is defiled: The people were unable to understand the greatness of God. From a human perspective, the perspective of spiritual blindness, they looked at the things of God and saw them as insignificant. They saw the sacrifices as not working in their lives to bring about any real results or outcomes.

Its food is contemptible: The people had no respect for the sacrifices. Just like Esau (Genesis 25:34, Hebrews 12:16-17), they had contempt for the things that God had set in place. They had contempt for the things that God had provided for them.

Verse 13: *“But you say, ‘Behold, wearisome!’ and you sneer at it, ‘said the Lord of hosts. ‘You bring an offering that is stolen, crippled or sick and you think that I will be pleased with it from your hand?’ said the Lord.”*

Wearisome: Worn out. They are tired of all the spiritual things that God has commanded them to do.

Sneer: Literally: puff at. Someone says this is a wonderful thing and they disagreed with them and didn’t accept it as wonderful. They didn’t see any value in it.

Crippled: Paralyzed

I will be pleased...?: The answer is ‘no’. God will not be pleased with this. If our worship is not pleasing to God, and therefore is not received by Him, there will be no activity in our lives from Him. There's an important connection between worship and God's activity in our

lives. If we do not worship Him properly (John 4:23- 24), if we do not esteem the things of God, if what we are doing for God is tiresome or bothersome to us and if we don't place any significance on it then God is not going to receive it from us.

Verse 14: *“Cursed is this one who is a conniver. There is in his herd a male and he vows to do it. But he sacrifices to the Lord one that is corruptible – for a Great King am I,” said the Lord of hosts. ‘And My Name is awesome among the nations.’”*

Note: This verse is not a verse of encouragement. God's Word is not always encouraging. It's not always something that's uplifting. It's not always something that we want to hear. God is speaking here to people who do not value worship. They are people who are not committed to worshipping God on a daily basis. They are people who are not committed to meeting corporately to worship God (Hebrews 10:25) – coming together regularly to testify.

Conniver: Deceiver. A con artist. Someone who wants to take advantage of others.

Male: God usually wanted a male offering. This is referring to a male sheep or goat.

He vows to do it: He promises to offer up this healthy, well pleasing male goat or sheep.

He sacrifices to the Lord one that is corruptible – for a Great King am I: This man deceives others into thinking he is offering up his best but in fact it is not. He does not realise that God is an all knowing God and a Great King who deserves our best. This man had within his means (he had an acceptable male in his flock) the ability to worship God in the proper way - but he choose not to.

Corruptible: Unacceptable to the Lord.

My Name is awesome among the nations: God is reminding Israel of their call. Israel was called to be a light to the nations so that God's Name could be glorified among the Gentiles. Because Israel was disobedient, because they were choosing unwisely and were disagreeing with God's call, there was no ministry and change happening to those in the nations.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Malachi 2:1-9

Do we fear God? Over and over in the Scripture God's people are called to fear Him (Psalm 34:9, Revelation 14:7). Although the fear of God does mean respecting or reverencing God, it also means that we need to give Him priority over every aspect of our lives. This means that we need to be subjected to Him, in submission to Him. When we make God the priority of every aspect of our lives, He will begin to instruct us, through His Holy Spirit, and He will give us wisdom, understanding and knowledge in order that we will know His will (Proverbs 9:10). The fear of the Lord positions us (in our perspective as well as in placing us in the correct location/position) whereby we are able to do the will of God. It is only when we are in the will of God that God can move in our lives to bring us joy, satisfaction, peace and contentment. The fear of God causes a change to occur in our lives. It helps us to become more sensitive to the instructions/commandments of God.

Verse 1: *“And now unto you is this commandment, O priests.”*

Now: A word that carries with it a sense of urgency (Malachi 1:9)

Priests: The priests were casual and careless, doing nothing to stop the worthless sacrifices that were being offered up. They were not committed to the Holiness of God. They were not behaving in the way that Godly leaders should behave.

This commandment: This is the commandment that relates to them being called as priests. One of the primary things a priest was called to do was to teach the Word of God to the people and to oversee the sacrificial service (Deuteronomy 33:10). In the days of Malachi, the priests were not fulfilling these commandments because they did not revere God – He was not the priority in their lives.

Verse 2: *“You do not hear, nor do you place upon your heart to give glory to My Name,” says the Lord of hosts. And I will send among you the curse, and I have cursed your blessings. Also I will curse it, for you are not placing these things upon your heart.”*

Do not hear: They are not listening.

Place upon your heart (in your thoughts): This is a Hebrew idiom that means to pay attention to. The problem is that the priests were not paying attention, they were not thinking properly. They were not sensitive to the commandments of God. When we are insensitive to the commandments of God it is an indication that we are not interested in glorifying Him. The priests were not demonstrating love toward God (1 John 5:3), but instead they were behaving according to the desires of their flesh. This is unacceptable to God.

Name: Name is synonymous with character. God is Holy. He is righteous. He is the Almighty Judge and Lord overall. As such, we need to come before Him humbly, with fear and trembling (Psalm 2:11, Psalm 119:120, Philippians 2:12).

Send among you the curse: There are two ways that God works in the lives of those who are in a covenantal relationship with Him. He either works mightily to bless us – if we are walking in faith and demonstrating His priority - or, if, He is not working to bless us, He is working to curse. That curse acts as a message to the one who is not receiving God's

blessing (joy, peace, etc) that something is wrong. God is not pleased with them. That curse is a call to repentance and to change (Hebrews 12:6-11).

I have cursed your blessings: This is not written in the future tense. These priests have already suffered loss. They have already experience judgment because for a period of time they have not been faithful, they been insensitive to the Word of God and have not shown Him glory or respect. They have not honoured Him. They have not walked before Him in love. They have not revered His Name, His character. They did not demonstrate that God was the priority in their lives and because of this they had suffered loss.

I will curse it: He was going to curse the priesthood and the calling that they had. This means that He was not going to bless their call because they were not paying attention. Their service to God was inadequate.

Not placing these things upon your heart: Not paying attention. Not thinking about what they were doing. We need to position our hearts, our minds, so that we can consider the things that are important to God. We need to think about, and do, the things that are pleasing to God (Philippians 4:8-9)

Verse 3: *“Behold, I am rebuking you and the seed. I am going to scatter dung upon your faces, the dung of your festivals; and it will take you away unto it.”*

Seed: Offspring. Descendants. Because of their insensitivity to the commandments of God, and their indifference to His call on their lives, God is going to move against them. This will not only have implications for them but was also going to impact their offspring, future generations.

Dung: Excrement

The dung of your festivals: They went to Jerusalem for the festivals that God had commanded them to celebrate but they celebrated these festivals in a carnal way. They celebrated to please themselves and gave no thought to how God truly required these festivals to be celebrated. They were indifferent to true worship. True worship is not there to please us. We need to worship in a way that pleases God.

It will take you away unto it: Like dung is swept up and taken away so too were they going to be swept up like dung and removed from the priesthood.

Verse 4: *“And you shall know that I have sent unto you this commandment. For My covenant is with Levi,” says the Lord of hosts.”*

You shall know that I have sent: God is not going to be idle. These are indeed His covenant people, therefore God was going to move in a way so that they would know that He was displeased or dissatisfied with their leadership.

Levi: The tribe of Levi – those who had the calling to be priests (Numbers 3:5-13)

Verse 5: *“My Covenant was with him, it was of the life and the peace, and I will give them fear, and he will fear Me and My Name he feared.”*

The life: The definite article ‘the’ makes this life very specific. It is a specific quality of life – abundant life (John 10:10)

Peace: Peace is related to the fulfilment of God's will. God desires to bless His children and give them good gifts (James 1:17). However, we may be in a position whereby God is

unwilling to bless us because we are living indifferently to Him, and because we may lack a reverence or a fear of the Lord. He desires, however, to bless His children with life and peace.

Fear: Fearing God means serving and honouring Him properly, demonstrating love for Him. When we fear God the outcome of that is life and peace. When we recognize what God wants to do in our lives, the plans that He has for it, then we are going to give Him priority (another way of saying that we are going to fear Him).

He will fear Me and My Name he feared: When we fear God and demonstrate His character then we will have a proper testimony.

Verse 6: *“The law of Truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. In peace and in uprightness he walked with Me, and many he returned from iniquity.”*

The law of Truth was in his mouth: The priesthood used to teach truth and they needed to start teaching it once again.

Injustice: Wickedness, unrighteousness.

In peace: Meaning in the fulfilment of God's will. We are going to be recipients of what God wants us to have. When we submit to the enemy we are going to suffer loss – losing the things that bring us joy. We will not experience peace in our lives when God is not the priority in it.

In peace and in uprightness he walked with Me: If we are following where God is leading us, if we are walking with Him, then we are going to experience peace and uprightness.

Uprightness reflects the character of God.

Many he returned from iniquity: As disciples of Jesus and as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) this is one of our purposes in life – to turn people away from iniquity.

Verse 7: *“For the lips of the priests they should keep knowledge, and the law they will seek from him. For a messenger of the Lord of hosts is he.”*

The law they (the people) will seek from him: One of the primary jobs of the priests is to speak according to the knowledge and according to the truth of God. When we speak in this way then others are going to seek that truth from us. They are going to enquire about it.

A messenger of the Lord of hosts: This is what a priest is (or should be).

Verse 8: *“But you have turned aside from the way, and you have caused many to stumble in the law. You have corrupted my covenant with the Levites,” says the Lord of hosts.”*

You have turned aside from the way: The priests at the time of Malachi were not functioning as messengers of the Lord.

Caused many to stumble: Caused many to become offended.

Corrupted my covenant: They had an improper testimony. They had a testimony of not demonstrating the fear of the Lord. This was having an adverse effect on the lives of others. Priests are supposed to live and act, behave, in a way that brings blessing upon the people. Here we see that they are doing the exact opposite. The reason for this is that they have moved away from a foundational truth - to respect God, to revere God and to give Him all the priority of their lives.

Verse 9: “Also I am making you despised and humiliated ones to all the people on account that you did not guard My ways, but have shown partiality in the law.”

Despised: When we do not revere God, when we are careless and casual with His Word, when we do not take our call from Him seriously then we are inviting disrespect, dishonour, and insignificance into our lives. This is what the priests had become in the days of Malachi.

Humiliated: No longer relevant to the people. Today, more and more, spiritual leaders are having less significance in society. They are not respected because they lack respect for God. The measure that we use will be measured back to us (Matthew 7:2). If we do not respect God we will not be respected. If we do not give God priority then we are going to be seen as irrelevant in society.

You did not guard My ways: Are we guarding the things of God? This is what we have been called to do. This is what God expects us to do – to guard His ways.

Have shown partiality in the law: This statement reflects the corruption that was in the priesthood in the days of Malachi. The law has been given so that right judgements could be made and so that things could be set into their proper order. These priests were meant to be representatives of the law of God, basing their judgments upon the standards of the Word of God. Instead of giving judgment based upon the righteous standards of the Word of God they were showing partiality (they were accepting bribes, they were judging according to what would be in their best financial interests - instead of being committed to Kingdom/spiritual things, they were exploiting others).

Chapter 2

Part 2: Malachi 2:10-17

Marriage is very important to God. If we are not faithful to our marriage covenant, it affects our personal relationship with God, but it also has a destructive influence in society as the family units get broken down.

Verse 10: “Surely one Father is to all of us. Surely one God has created us. Why does a man betray his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?”

Note: Malachi initially speaks about Israel's condition in a general sense- looking at all of society and showing that there is a spiritual decay within the people of God. This spiritual decay manifests itself through idolatrous practices. The message is simple. If we are not faithful, if we are not conducting our marriages with fidelity, then we are not going to be able to walk with God in fidelity.

One Father is to all of us: As the people of God, we are family. There should be unity among believers, just as there should have been unity among the people of Israel. When we do not behave in fidelity to the Word of God, we are not going to be faithful to one another.

One God has created us: We all have one Father, and one Creator.

Betray: Living in a way that is disloyal, dealing in a treacherous manner towards someone else. In the same way that a man would enter into a relationship with another woman (other than his wife) so were the people of Israel entering into a relationship with foreign gods (practicing idolatry).

Profaning the covenant: The outcome of this betrayal is serious.

Fathers: Probably a reference to the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). God had given His promise to the Patriarchs. When we do not conduct ourselves in fidelity toward God it is going to affect the promises that God has for the people – they will suffer loss. We need to realize that enduring difficult things is worth it. Remaining faithful to God in the midst of persecution, remaining in a marriage that may be difficult at times, is ultimately going to be worth it and bring about good results. If we forgo these covenantal relationships, then we are going to suffer loss.

Verse 2: *“Judah has acted treacherously, and abomination has been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the holy (place), which He loves: he has married the daughter of a foreign god.”*

Judah: The area around Jerusalem.

In Israel and in Jerusalem: Malachi is referring to all of the people of God collectively – those from the Northern Kingdom called Israel, as well as from the Southern Kingdom called Judah.

Abomination: That which is exceedingly offensive to God.

Judah has profaned the holy (place): They were insensitive to holiness and to purity. In the temple they had become casual, careless and indifferent to those things that are vital for a right relationship with God.

Married the daughter of a foreign god: They were involved in idolatrous practices. When we are not faithful in our marital responsibilities to our spouse it is going to have an adverse effect upon our worship – our covenantal relationship with God.

Verse 12: *“The Lord He will cut off a man from the tents of Jacob who has done this, who is awake and who answers and this one still offers up a gift to the Lord of hosts.”*

Cut off a man from the tents of Jacob: God would cut off a man from the family of God or from fellowship if he was involved in idolatry (idolatry and adultery go hand in hand).

Awake: He is conscious. This man is in sin, he knows that he is in sin (he is awake, he is aware of it) but he will not repent of it. This describes Israel in the past, but is also applicable to so many in the church today. We have lowered the standards of God. We have differing expectations of what is spiritually right and what is wrong. Although we walk around with Bibles in our hands, although we have a form of worship, we are far removed from embracing the standards that God demands. For this a man will be cut off, separated, from God (1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

Answers: He is being challenged by saying this is wrong, that he ought not to do it. He understands it's wrong but this one does not care.

This one still offers up a gift: This one still has the outward show of serving God. He thinks that it's fine to carry on in an act of treachery against his spouse or against God. He doesn't stop going to the house of worship and acts like everything is ok. The people of Israel were not insensitive to what was right or wrong (they were awake, they had answers) but they were insensitive to being able to understand their relationship, their position, with the Lord at this time.

Verse 13: *“And this a second thing that they have done: covering up with tears the altar of the Lord, weeping and groaning; So He no longer turns to the offering and He does not receive delight from your hands.”*

A second thing: This is now more related to the people and the implications of their infidelity. When there is a decline (a lessening of standards and expectations) in the family it affects every aspect of society – bringing about distress, sorrow and difficulty. A spiritually sound marriage is vitally important for bringing God’s order into a home.

Covering up with tears the altar: People are grieved, they are full of sorrow and sadness because of this dysfunctional aspect that is plaguing society.

He: Referring to God.

He no longer turns to: God is no longer paying attention to their offerings. This dysfunctionality is affecting their worship.

He does not receive delight from your hands: God has no satisfaction in the worship that the people are giving.

Verse 14: *“But you say: ‘Concerning what?’ Concerning that the Lord has testified between you and between the wife of your youth, whom you have dealt with treacherously; while she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”*

But you say: The people never agree with God. God says one thing and the people disagree.

Concerning what: They are indifferent to what is displeasing to God.

Testified: God was displeased with the men in regard to how they interacted with their wives.

The wife of your youth: After the passing of the years, his love and commitment to his wife has changed. He now interacts very differently with her than he did when they were first in love.

Dealt with treacherously: He has betrayed her.

Wife by covenant: Biblically, marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman.

Covenants need to be taken seriously.

Verse 15: *“Has not one He has made them? And with a remnant of His Spirit He has put us together. And why one? Because He seeks Godly offspring. Therefore, your spirit you need to keep right. And against the wife of your youth do not behave in a treacherous manner against her.”*

One He has made them: Genesis 2:23-24

Put us together: Speaking of intimacy and union.

He seeks Godly offspring: God is concerned about the next generation. He is concerned about the children. Many people do not take into regard their children when they walk away from their marriages. As believers we have been called to be overcomers (Revelation 2 and 3). This is true even for marriages that may be difficult. Jesus loved His bride to the point that He went to the cross and suffered and died for her. In marriage we are called to endure and demonstrate this same kind of love for our spouse.

Your spirit: The real you, that inner person.

Your spirit you need to keep right: We need to live correctly. If we do not pay heed to how we live (the decisions we make etc) it will affect the next generation, our children.

Do not: This is a command that needs to be taken seriously.

Behave in a treacherous manner: Do not betray her. Do not forsake your marital relationship.

Verse 16: *“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce. It covers with violence his garments,” says the Lord of hosts. “Keep your spirit, do not act treacherously.”*

The Lord God of Israel: It is very important for us to pay attention to the name of God that is given to us within a context. Here God is called ‘the Lord God of Israel’. The use of this specific name of God, within this context, relates to us that divorce adversely affects the people of God (the people who are in a covenantal relationship with God). ‘Israel’ is a Kingdom word. It has implications for the Kingdom of God. Marriage is foundational for a family, and it is foundational for a society.

Hates: The tense indicates to us that God hates it now and that every aspect of it He has always hated.

Divorce: When a man sent his wife away (in the Old Testament) he gave her a certificate of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1). In the New Testament, Jesus used the word ‘apostasy’ in regard to this certificate of divorce (Matthew 5:31-32. The only grounds, Biblically, for divorce is adultery). Biblically, ‘apostasy’ means a turning away from what is good and right in order to embrace something erroneous.

Violence: The key aspect of this word ‘violence’ is suffering. Divorce brings suffering into society.

Covers ... his garments: It affects his testimony or reputation. It affects how people will see him.

Keep your spirit: Pay attention to God’s instructions regarding marriage. Do not make wrong decisions in regard to marriage.

Act treacherously: Betray.

Verse 17: *“You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, ‘With what have we wearied Him?’ With what you have said with your words: ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the eyes of the Lord and in them He delights.’ Or ‘Where is the God of justice?’”*

You say: The problem is that the people never agree with God. They reject His standards of morality.

Everyone who does evil is good: They have it wrong. They are calling what is evil good.

Evil is good in the eyes of the Lord: This shows us how far they have removed themselves from the standards and from the perspective of the Lord.

Them: Those who are doing evil.

He delights: This is a lie. God does not delight or take pleasure in those who do evil.

Where is the God of justice?: The people are also refuting this. They are saying that God doesn’t care so much about justice these days as He is a God of grace. They have perverted Biblical grace, because Biblical grace leads us to obey God. Grace leads us into the character of God – upholding, embracing and affirming God’s standards or commandments (what He says is right and what He says is wrong). These people are saying that if this is offensive to God then where is the God of justice....why is He not judging it? They do not realise that Judgment Day is coming.

Chapter 3

Part 1: Malachi 3:1-6

We believe in a God who does not lie. He is always faithful to His covenant and His promises. We need to be like Him. Our words should always be true, and our actions should always reflect His character. In this chapter we encounter a Messianic prophecy. Messiah (Jesus Christ) is coming to establish His Kingdom. As He establishes His Kingdom He is also going to establish His Kingdom people – He is going to bring them into that Kingdom with Him.

Verse 1: *“Behold, I am sending My Messenger, and He will clear the way before Me. And the Lord (whom you are seeking) will come into His Sanctuary, the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He comes,” says the Lord of hosts.”*

Behold: This is a word that indicates that we need to pay attention. God is going to reveal something very significant here.

My messenger: This word in Hebrew means ‘messenger’ but it can also mean ‘angel’. Angels, however, are created being. In this context, this verse is not speaking about an angel – a created being. It is a word that is referring to the Messiah – Jesus Christ – the Eternal, uncreated, Son of God. There was never a time when Jesus did not exist. Jesus is God’s messenger to mankind.

Clear: This is not the word for prepare. It is a word that means to clear away, to get rid of. Jesus is going to get rid of anything that hinders God’s Kingdom or His will.

He will clear the way: He does the work.

Sanctuary: A reference to the most Holy Place – the Holy of Holies.

The Lord ... will come into His Sanctuary: During the Millennial Kingdom (the Thousand-Year rule of Christ – Revelation 20:4-4, Zechariah 14, Isaiah 2:2-4) there will be a functioning temple in Jerusalem. Christ will rule and reign from out of this place.

The Messenger of the covenant: Referring to Messiah – Jesus (Genesis 48:15-16 speaks of this Messenger as a Redeemer. Redemption comes to us through a covenant – the New Covenant which, like the Abrahamic covenant, can only be entered into through faith) .

Delight: Can also be translated ‘desire’.

He comes: Messiah is coming to set up a Kingdom of righteousness of which we, as believers, are going to be a part.

Verse 2: *“Who will endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is as fire going to refine and like a launderer’s soap cleanse.”*

Who will endure the day of His coming: He is coming for the purpose of judgment. The answer to this question is: only those who are in covenant with Him, redeemed by Him (Hebrews 9:22 -remission is a redemptive word), will be able to endure it.

Who can stand when He appears: Only those who have had their sins forgiven will be able to stand at the day of His coming.

Fire ...a fuller’s soap: Christ’s blood refines and purifies (cleanses) us. His blood has the power to bring about a righteous change in our lives. Redemption prepares us for His Kingdom. His righteousness is imputed to us the moment we believe (Romans 4:6-8).

Fire: Speaks of judgment. It is going to be displayed and poured out on this world for those who have no covenantal relationship with God through Christ. Those who have rejected God or who have not had faith like Abraham will be consumed in that day. They will not be able to stand. But for those who believe, that fire is not going to consume them but it is going to refine them (bring them into a glorious state).

Cleanse: Messiah is going to wash and purify His covenant people (see Zechariah 12 and 13)

Verse 3: *“For He will sit as a refiner, as a purifier of silver, as One who purifies the children of Levi. He will refine them as gold and silver and they shall become those who offer an offering in righteousness.”*

Purifies the children of Levi: We have seen how displeased God had been with the children of Levi, the priests. However, He is going to refine, restore and purify the priesthood once more. The priesthood is related to worship. God is going to move so that the Kingdom will be a Kingdom of acceptable worship, worship that is well pleasing to God.

Refine: Purge. A word that is also related to purifying or cleansing.

Offer an offering: Present a gift.

Righteousness: This word, too, is a Kingdom word. They are going to be offering up to God that which God sees and receives as righteous. This is a wonderful transition or change that God's going to bring about among His people. In the last days He is going to cause His Old Covenant people to embrace a New Covenant reality whereby through that New Covenant they become part of the Kingdom and begin to worship God in spirit and in truth - in a way that God is glorified.

Verse 4: *“It will be pleasant to the Lord the offering of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old, as in former years.”*

Offering: Gift. This verse is telling us that worship acceptable to God is going to be restored. The catalyst of this change is going to be the coming of Messiah. When He comes there is going to be a pleasant change to the house of Israel and Judah.

As in the days of old, as in former years: There were times in Israel's history when God was pleased with them. There were times that He rejoiced over His people. God is going to restore this in the last days.

Verse 5: *“I will draw near unto you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, those who are oppressing the wages of a labourer, the widows and the orphans, and those who are turning away the foreigner – because they do not fear Me,’ says the Lord of hosts.”*

Draw near: When God draws near it means that He is observing the people.

You: God is speaking to Israel, through the prophet Malachi, about their current condition. God can only deal with us in a beneficial way if we realize the actual spiritual state that we are in – how He sees us. In the days of Malachi, God was not pleased with His people.

Perjurers: Those who deal in lies and falsehood.

Oppressing the wages of a labourer: Exploiting or taking advantage of others.

They do not fear Me: God was not their priority. Everything in our lives needs to be submitted to God. It is only when God's priorities become our priorities and when we begin

to submit to and obey Him that we will begin to reflect His glory and begin to live in the way that we were created to live.

Verse 6: *“For I am the Lord. I do not change. Therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”*

Lord: The name used for the Lord here is the transcendent name of God. He is the God who is over all things. He was, He is and forevermore He will be.

I do not change: There is no such thing as an Old Covenant God and a New Covenant God. It is One and the same God. God does not change (Hebrews 13:8). He has always been perfect and forever more He will remain perfect. In perfection there is no need to change, no need to improve. Because God does not change we can have confidence. He does not change His mind. He does not go back on His promises.

The sons of Jacob: God has made a promise to the sons of Jacob (the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) that they will not be consumed but they will be redeemed. This redemption (being recipients of God’s mercy) is going to bring about a great change. No longer will adultery, sorcery, perjury etc characterise them anymore.

Chapter 3

Part 2: Malachi 3:7-18

Israel (just like many in the church today) had a chronic problem: They doubted God and did not trust Him. They questioned His faithfulness and turned away from His instructions, in order to take things into their own hands.

Verse 7: *“From the days of your forefathers you have removed yourselves from My statutes and have not guarded them. Return unto Me and I will return unto you,” says the Lord of hosts. ‘But you said, ‘With what shall we return?’”*

Forefathers: Within this context this is not referring to the Patriarchs but to what many generations (ancestors) did throughout Israel’s history.

Removed: Turned away from.

Statutes: God’s law, his commandments. They had a tendency not to agree with, nor to obey, God’s instructions.

Guarded: Kept. The children of Israel did not value or treasure God’s commands. If they had treasured them, they would have guarded them.

Return unto Me and I will return unto you: God is gracious and merciful. He is willing to receive repentant individuals.

The Lord: Referring to the Mighty God who is able to do and able to overcome all things.

Of Hosts: Of the armies. God is willing to go to war in order for His purposes to be realised, experienced and enjoyed in the lives of those who believe in Him. God wants us to rejoice, but in order to rejoice we have to value the things that God values.

But you said: Once again, the people are questioning God. The people make poor decisions in that they don’t agree with God.

With what shall we return: The people don't see a need to return. They think that they are right with God. They do not see themselves from God's perspective. They need to respond to God based on what God has spoken to them, but they disagree with what God is saying.

Verse 8: *"Will a man rob God? But you have robbed Me! But you say: 'With what have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings."*

Will a man rob God: They were unwilling to be faithful to God in their finances.

Rob: A person who is robbed does not like to be defrauded.

God: The term used for God here relates to the Judging God. One of the foremost characteristics and understandings of God that we should have is that God is Judge.

You: Written in the plural.

But you say: Once again they don't see it from God's perspective. They don't agree with God.

Tithes: Giving to God ten percent of our income (Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 7:2 – Like Abraham, tithing predated the giving of the law).

Offerings: Donating, giving of our finances (over and above the 10% minimum), for the things of God. There are great benefits when we acknowledge God and submit to Him in the area of our finances. When we are good managers of those resources and we demonstrate our faith, trust and submissiveness to God with our money there is going to be a mighty response from God.

Verse 9: *"With a curse you are cursed. Me you have robbed – the entire nation."*

With a curse you are cursed: This is the consequence of not being faithful with our finances.

Nation: Here God is using this term for nation in a very negative way. He is saying that the people are behaving in such a way that they are not acknowledging the covenantal relationship that they have with Him. They are behaving like the Gentiles, like the heathens. This leads us to a foundational truth: If we are not demonstrating a covenantal relationship with God (specifically, a New Covenant relationship through the blood of Jesus Christ) then we are going to be eternally cursed.

Verse 10: *"Bring all the tithe to My treasury house, that there should be a portion in my house. Try Me, please, in this,' says the Lord of hosts. 'Will I not open the chimney from heaven to you, and I will empty out for you blessing, it is going to be poured out until there will not be sufficiency to hold it."*

Bring all the tithe to My treasury house: This is the solution. We need to be faithful, and we need to acknowledge God.

All: Not just a portion. Not just what is left over.

My treasury house: This was a part of the temple where the tithes and offerings were stored.

A portion: This portion relates to food. The people of God were to use these offerings in order to bless others – to feed them and to minister to them. It is when people's physical needs are met that they are then able to bless the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:10). The faithfulness of the people, in giving their tithes and their offerings, meant that there was

food available to give to the needy. Once the needy were satisfied they would acknowledge God by worshipping Him. This was the influence Israel was supposed to have upon their own people as well as on the nations – leading others to worship God.

Try Me please: God is inviting the people to do this. We need to be faithful with our finances and obey God's instructions concerning our money (we cannot serve two masters: We serve either God or we serve money – Matthew 6:24).

Chimney: A means to go from one place to another (a pipeline or a direct route to go from one place into another).

Empty out: This is not the word for pour out. This is significant. If something is poured out it doesn't necessarily mean that it is emptied out – there may be some left over in the 'bottle'. When something is emptied out it means that God will give everything, all that He wants us to receive. God wants us to obey Him so that He can do good things for us.

There will not be sufficiency to hold it: This is a reference to God pouring out so much blessing or goodness on us that our cups overflow (Psalm 23:5) – we experience abundance. This abundance is a primary characteristic of the Kingdom of God. When we are faithful with our finances and we acknowledge our faith in God with our money we are going to begin to experience God's Kingdom reality in our lives. This is what God is promising us.

Verse 11: *“I will rebuke for you the devourer and he will not destroy the fruit of your land and the vine of your field will not be grieved,” says the Lord of hosts.”*

I will rebuke for you the devourer: Not only does God bless us with abundance but He also goes to work against our enemy.

Devourer: One that eats up. We might be saved but if we are not living obedient lives we are cheating or robbing ourselves of the blessings that could be ours – God's ministry and activity in our lives. The enemy wants to devour the good things that God has in store for us (1 Corinthians 2:9). If we are disobedient, then the enemy is successful and we experience loss (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

Grieved: Suffer loss. The vine is going to be fruitful - it is going to produce the fruit that sustains life. It is not going to be a vine of bereavement (meaning that which causes sorrow because of a lack of unfruitfulness). If we are obedient to God He is going to make our lives fruitful.

Says the Lord: This is His promise.

Verse 12: *“And all the nations are going to certify that you are blessed. For you shall be a land of delight,” says the Lord of hosts.”*

Certify: They are going to document or to acknowledge with their words

Blessed: Can also be translated 'happy'. The people of God, those in a covenantal relationship with Him, belong to Him. As such, they are blessed or happy.

Land of delight: Land is related to blessing. God's blessing goes back to the Covenant he made in Genesis 12:1-3 with Abraham - that blessing is connected to the land (which is so important Scripturally). Those who say that God is no longer interested in real estate or who see no significance to the land of Israel are false teachers. They do not acknowledge God's Word and what He says prophetically about this land in regard to the last days.

Verse 13: *“Strong words against Me you have spoken,’ says the Lord. ‘Yet you say, ‘What have we said against You?’”*

Strong words: Harsh words.

Yet you say: Again the people don't agree with what God is telling them.

Verse 14: *“You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What profit is it that we have kept His ordinances, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts?’”*

It is vain (futile) to serve God: The people are far from the truth of God. This is what they're teaching.

Walked as mourners: To them, so far removed from the truth, serving God was a gloomy experience instead of a joyful one. They were in darkness and did not recognise the joy of the Lord because they were consumed with the things of this world. Today, if we are emphasizing worldly things rather than the Kingdom things we are not going to see how profitable, how good, it is to esteem and place priority in our lives on the things of God.

Verse 15: *“And now we are certifying that those who wilfully rebel against God are blessed. Also, the doers of wickedness are being built up, and those who test God go free.”*

Certifying: Testifying, documenting.

Wilfully rebel: They freely acknowledge their choice to defy God. In a cognitive way they disagree with God and they purposefully pursue the things that are against the instructions of God. The people are calling these people happy and blessed.

Test God: This is a foolish thing to do. Testing God is an act of doubting God.

Go free: They get away with it. All of this is falsehood. These individuals are walking in deception. They have been misled and are false in their approach to life.

Verse 16: *“Then those who fear the Lord will speak Amen to his neighbour and the Lord will listen and He will hear; He has written in the book of remembrance before Him for those who fear Him, for those who think according to His Name.”*

Then: This is a word that speaks about a change that's coming- in the future specifically.

Speak Amen: They are going to speak truth to one another.

Think according to His Name: They think according to the character of God. God is writing it down (Hebrews 6:10).

Verse 17: *“They shall be to Me,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘On that day I am making them a treasured possession; and I will be compassionate upon them, just as a father will be compassionate upon his son that is serving him.”*

They: Those people who agree with God.

Treasured possession: The same word is used in Exodus 19:5

Compassionate upon them: God will show them mercy.

His son that is serving him: This is wisdom: to serve God.

Verse 18: *“You will return and again you will discern between the righteous one and the evil one, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”*

You will return: There will be a renewal.

Discern: To see and to understand. When we submit to God He is going to give us discernment whereby we can see things from a proper perspective. There is a great benefit, a great reward, when we agree with God and we walk in the fear of the Lord. We need to treasure the things that God treasures and apply His commandments to our lives. When we do this we can expect God to move mightily to bless us and to work against our enemy.

Chapter 4

When we understand God's judgment from a Biblical perspective (how the prophets reveal it) we are going to understand that good things come about because of it. Through God's judgment we are going to experience victory! One of the outcomes of God's judgment is that He sets things into His order. Another outcome is that He is going to completely remove evil from this world through His perfect judgment. And yet another outcome of God's judgment is that it brings God's family into unity. If we understand that this is the purpose of God's judgment, then we are going to be encouraged by it. When the angels, who have a heavenly perspective, see God's judgement being poured out in the book of Revelation it leads them to praise and worship God. It leads them to give thanks to God for His righteous judgment. This should also be our response to it, as this is the right response.

Verse 1: *“For behold, the day comes, burning like a furnace. And there shall be that all wicked ones, all those who are doing wickedness, will be straw. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” says the Lord of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch.”*

Note: This verse is Malachi 3:19 in the original text.

Behold: A word that reminds us to pay attention to what is being said, as what is to follow is very significant.

The day: Biblically this is also a very important phrase. It is speaking about a very specific day, a very specific period of time, that ushers in the wrath of God.

Burning like a furnace: Just like fire consumes so too is God's wrath going to consume. Through His judgment the enemy, and everything related to the enemy's work, is going to be burnt up or consumed - it's going to be done away with.

Wicked ones: A word speaking of wilful rebelliousness. This person does not sin accidentally. He knows that what he is doing is wrong and against God's will, but he chooses to do it anyway.

Straw: 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

Burn them up: When straw or hay is added to a fire it is consumed immediately. God is saying that through that day that's coming these wicked ones are going to be consumed like straw in a fire.

Says the Lord of hosts: This is a phrase that tells us that this is a promise from God. What God has said will happen will happen.

Leave them neither root nor branch: There will be no hope of any recovery – there will be nothing to salvage. No remnant. They are going to be totally and utterly consumed.

Verse 2: *“For the ones who fear My Name the sun of righteousness is going to shine upon them, with healing in His wings; and they shall go out like fattened stall-fed calves.”*

The ones who fear My Name: Referring to those who give priority to the character of God. These people realise that God's character is good, right, Holy and perfect and therefore they bow in His presence – submitting to and obeying Him.

The sun of righteousness is going to shine upon them: God's righteousness is going to shine brightly upon them. They are going to be revealed, highlighted, as though who have given God priority in their lives.

Wings: This word for 'wing' is the same word that is used to refer to one of the corners found on the four-cornered garment in Numbers 15:38. This garment (specifically the threads found on these corners – or wings, as it is translated here) was a reminder to the children of Israel about the commandments of the Lord. Righteousness is related to the commandments. The commandments don't make us righteous, but they teach us what righteousness is. A violation of these commandments teaches us what unrighteousness is.

Healing in His wings: Healing comes through an agreement with the purposes of God, the righteousness of God. We are going to be healed for the purpose of obedience - that we are going to reflect the righteousness of God as we obey His Word.

Fattened: This is a word that means multiplying or that which is increasing.

Stall-fed: They are going to be in a prize location, a good location. A stall is a place where the animals are safe and well fed. It is in this place that the animals do not have to be concerned about anything as they are completely provided for. This is one of the outcomes of the judgment of God for those who are His.

Verse 3: *“And you shall trample the wicked, for they will be ash under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,” said the Lord of hosts.”*

They will be ash: The wicked are going to be utterly defeated. They are not only going to be trampled upon, but they are going to be completely humiliated because of their wickedness and rebellion toward God. They did not give God priority in their lives.

Said the Lord: The use of the past tense reflects a promise. God is speaking as though this has already happened, because in His mind it is as good as already achieved. It is a certain or sure thing that is going to happen.

Verse 4: *“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb concerning all of Israel – statutes and judgments.”*

Remember: This is another very important word Biblically and it is a word related to covenant.

Remember the Law of Moses: This is set within a last day's context so should be viewed in light of the same.

Horeb: Mount Sinai. This is not only the same place where the law was given, but it is also the same place where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:1,12 and Exodus 33:6, Deuteronomy 5). Although the bush was burning it was not consumed. Likewise, in the midst of God's judgement He can preserve those whom He wants to preserve (The children of Israel, those who have not believed in Jesus, will be on the earth at the time of the wrath of God but a remnant of them will be sealed so that no harm will

come to them through that time called 'Jacob's trouble' - see Revelation 7:1-8, Romans 9:27-28, Romans 11:26-27 etc). 1 Thessalonians 5:9 tells us that believers have not been appointed for wrath. When the wrath of God falls on this world those of us who believe are not going to be part of it as we will be removed (raptured) before it falls. Tribulation and the wrath of God are not the same thing (the source of tribulation is satan, the source of the wrath of God is God Himself). Believers WILL go through tribulation before they are raptured, and it is through this tribulation that we have been called to overcome (Revelation 2 and 3)

Statutes: These are God's law.

Judgments: This is the putting into practice (the doing) of God's law. Spiritual maturity is agreeing with God, and responding through that agreement, in order to carry out the will of God (establishing God's righteous order). When we execute true justice (Micah 6:8) it means that we have a righteous influence in this world.

Verse 5: *"Behold, I am sending to you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."*

Behold: A word of significance that calls for us to pay attention.

Terrible: This word can also mean 'awesome'. For those who are in covenant with God it is going to be an awesome, a glorious, day. God is going to bring about a wonderful change in this world as He comes to establish His Kingdom prior to the 1000 year reign of Christ. For those who have rejected God and who have not experienced redemption it will be a terrible and dreadful day – as it will mark the beginning of their eternal torment.

Verse 6: *"And he is going to restore the hearts of the fathers concerning the children, and the hearts of the sons are going to be concerning their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."*

He: Elijah. Elijah has an important ministry or role to play in the end times. Before the final outpouring of God's wrath on the world, God, through Elijah's ministry, is going to do a work of reconciliation (God's order, unity) within the families in Israel. This means that the parents and the children will have the same perspective or way (based on Scriptural truth) of looking at things. Two generations will be brought into agreement with God. It is only when we agree with God that we can be brought into agreement with others.

Note: It is also around this time that reconciliation between God and the 1/3rd remnant of Israel will be brought about - Zechariah 13:8-9 (For those of us who have accepted Christ this work of reconciliation between us and God has already been done).

Hearts: Related to our thoughts (Proverbs 23:7).

Restore the hearts of the fathers concerning the children: The fathers are not going to think based upon their one's desires (what's good for them) but they're going to begin to think sacrificially – they are going to be more concerned about their sons and daughters than about themselves. When we are submissive and committed to obeying God's law, not only can we expect reconciliation and restoration between God and man, through the gospel of Christ, but we can also expect reconciliation and restoration between one generation and another.

Sons: Sons and daughters

Fathers: Inclusive term referring to fathers and mothers.

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse: Reconciliation through the Word of God and through agreeing with God is going to shield people from God's wrath.

Curse: Total devastation.