



CARE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

MY MESSENGER MALACHI



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My Messenger: MALACHI is designed and written for the Kingston Community Church family and its associated care group ministry.

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Developed by

KINGSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

TO LOVE AND HONOUR GOD IN BEING
DISCIPLES
and helping make disciples of our
LORD JESUS CHRIST MATTHEW 28:18-20

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16 November

Malachi 1:1-5 (Intro)

23 November

Malachi 1:6-2:9

30 November

Malachi 2:10-16

7 December

Malachi 3:6-12

14 December

Malachi 2:17-3:5

21 December

Malachi 3:13-18

28 December

Malachi 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION

MALACHI

Malachi is the last of the twelve Minor Prophets, closing the collection of the “Prophets” and the Old Testament. Malachi is unique in the Old Testament because of its form. It reads as a conversation between God and those of his people who have become apathetic or even antagonistic to him. Conversing with both people and priests, God shows a particular concern for their unfaithfulness. The book closes with a look forward to the Day of the Lord, a time of judgment for those who misbehave.

MALACHI THE PERSON

In Hebrew, the name *mal'ākî* is translated either as “my messenger/angel,” or as “messenger/angel of Yahweh,”. From the book’s content, one can observe that he is a steadfast follower of God, who is able to stand up against at least verbal opposition even from his own people.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The two named characters in the prophecies are Jacob and Esau. While referring to two historical brothers (Gen. 25:21–28), the names also designate two nations that descended from them: Israel and Edom.

CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING

Evidence is not sufficient to provide a definitive date for the prophecy. Its position in the Old Testament, at the end of the collection of prophets, places it in the post Babylonian exilic, Persian period, so Malachi could well be a contemporary of Nehemiah.

CONTEXT OF THE PROPHECY

Israel is despondent. Their expectations following return from exile have not been realized. There is indifference towards God, an apathy. Any sacrifice will do. There is no heart to honour God’s name. Religiosity, but no heart toward God.

There is a faithlessness to the covenant they have with God. Faithlessness as a nation, as priests, and as husbands. Idolatry, divorce, and unacceptable worship are common place. They need to return to God.

There is a split audience. As well as the faithless, we see a remnant who seek to serve God.

God is revealed as creator, master, Father, and judge. He is unchanging and remains faithful and merciful. God is God of all nations, the creator of marriage, who is ready to reconcile and bless. God is the LORD of hosts who brings hope, healing, and rejuvenation.

In this prophetic book, the people are pointing to Jesus, as a contrast to Israel. Jesus is the true Israel, the true son of God. Jesus is the better high priest, the new and better covenant. Jesus truly serves God, fears God, is faithful to God, and esteems His name.

There is a clear flow across the book...

God loved them, chose them, entered into covenant with them as Great King, Master, Father, Creator, and Just God.

↓

The Priests and the Nation did not honour, or fear God’s name. There was no covenantal faithfulness.

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The LORD will come as a refiners fire.

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The call to return to the LORD as Priests, as a Nation, to be reformed. A new/renewed Israel, serving God.

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Then flows blessing and healing. A covenant blessing fulfilled.

MALACHI 1:1-5

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Malachi, whose name means “My messenger,” has a word from God to the Jewish community in Judea. Yet when God announces His love, His people scornfully respond, “How have You loved us?” (MALACHI 1:1–5)

Open in prayer

Opening question

How do you like love shown to you?

Read scripture

MALACHI 1:1-5

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- Who is God talking to in this conversation?
- Why do they dispute God’s love?
- What was the relationship between Jacob, Esau, and God?
Cf: Genesis 25:19-26
- What does this passage reveal about God’s nature?
- What is revealed in this passage about God’s covenantal love?
- What is the relationship between the Church and God today?
- What are some ways God expresses his love to His people, the church, today?

Prayer

MALACHI 1:6-2:9

SMALL GROUP STUDY

When the Lord complains that He is not being honoured by His people, they bluntly deny His charge despite clear evidence that the priests are indifferent and worse than careless in performing their ministry (MALACHI 1:6-14). God sternly rebukes His priests, whose apathy and distorted teaching have corrupted the nation (MALACHI 2:1-9).

Open in prayer

Opening question

How do you show indifference?

Read scripture

MALACHI 1:6-2:9

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What are God's expectations when it comes to acceptable sacrifices?
Cf: Leviticus 22:17-30
- Why did God set these expectations?
- How would you summarize God's arguments in these verses?
- How would you describe God's tone in these verses?
- What are some specific things God expected from his priests?
- How do you respond to God's toughness in dealing with the priests of Malachi's day?
- When do you feel tempted to go through the motions of serving and worshiping God?

Prayer

MALACHI 2:10-16

SMALL GROUP STUDY

God has an issue with the people, as well as the Priests. Their marriages to foreign wives and their quickie divorces, motivated by passion, reflect their disloyal character (MALACHI 2:10-16). It's because they are a people who break faith, with one another and with God, that the Lord no longer hears or answers their prayers.

Open in prayer

Opening question

How has someone shown faithfulness to you in life?

Read scripture

MALACHI 2:10-16

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- How is faithfulness described in this passage?
MALACHI 2:10a; 15a)
- How do these verses contribute to a biblical understanding of marriage and divorce?
Cf: MATTHEW 5:31-32; 19:3-9
- What explanation is given for unanswered prayers in this passage?
MALACHI 2:13-14
- What does it mean to be spiritually faithful to God?
- What are symptoms of spiritual unfaithfulness in the church, and our lives, today?

Prayer

MALACHI 3:6-12

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Malachi returns to those things in Judea's lifestyle that God must condemn, including departure from God's Law and robbing God by withholding tithes (MALACHI 3:6-12).

Open in prayer

Opening question

Who has taught you the most about managing money?

Read scripture

MALACHI 3:6-12

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What does this passage teach about giving offerings and tithes to God?
- Why is God asking the people to 'test Him'? MALACHI 3:10
- What does this reveal about the nature of their covenant relationship with God?
Cf: LEVITICUS 26
- What is the relationship between giving and blessing/reward for us as followers of Jesus?
- What are some ways we can "rob" God today?
- Our offerings are a form of worship to God. How can we worship God with giving?

Prayer

MALACHI 2:17 – 3:5

SMALL GROUP STUDY

God warns Israel that He intends to send a messenger to prepare His way. The ministry of preparation involves confrontation and warning, for when Messiah comes, He will judge sinners and impose righteousness (MALACHI 3:1–5).

Open in prayer

Opening question

What is your preferred method of communication?

Read scripture

MALACHI 2:17-3:5

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What are the key images in these verses?
- What do those images communicate?
- Who is the “messenger” described here?
- What does God reveal as worthy of judgement?
- What makes an offering acceptable?
- What is our response to be, to the Lord’s coming?

Prayer

MALACHI 3:13-18

SMALL GROUP STUDY

The people have “spoken against” God by claiming there is no value in serving Him because they see no immediate financial profit in it! (MALACHI 3:13-15) Yet within the straying nation there are still individuals who love the Lord and talk about Him. God takes note of them and will treat them as His special treasure (MALACHI 3:16-18).

Open in prayer

Opening question

What motivates you to help people?

Read scripture

MALACHI 3:13-18

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What did the people’s response reveal about the value they put in serving God?
- Why do evildoers prosper in this world?
- What does it mean to ‘fear God’ in the way described in this passage?
- What does it mean to be a treasured possession?
- What is a “next step” you can take in serving God and his kingdom?

Prayer

MALACHI 4:1-6

SMALL GROUP STUDY

The book ends with a warning. God will yet judge the nations. So, the community must be careful to keep His Law. God will send the Prophet Elijah to His people before that Day of the Lord—lest God strike the land with a curse (MALACHI 4:1-6).

Open in prayer

Opening question

When was the last time you felt overwhelming joy?

Read scripture

MALACHI 4:1-6

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What emotions do you experience when you read these verses?
- What is this “day” Malachi is referring to?
- What is the church called to ‘remember’?
- The word ‘turn’ and ‘return’ appear a number of times in Malachi. What is God turning, or returning, His people to?
- How does this “great and terrible day of the LORD” affect your life and your future?
- Why is it significant that these are the final verses of the Old Testament?

Prayer