



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Malachi

Day 277 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 277	Malachi 1-4	☐

Welcome to the Book of Haggai!

The problem that Malachi addresses is the poor state of the Jewish religion after resettling the land, rebuilding the Temple, and seeing revival under men like Nehemiah and Ezra. They had settled into a state of apathy, conducting religious exercises with their hands but not from their hearts. The most prominent characteristic of this book is the structure of the prophet making a statement, the people responding with a question, then the prophet expounding on the subject.

A few quick facts about Malachi:

- The author is Malachi (“my messenger”)
- This book was written around 441 B.C.
- It is the final book of the Old Testament to be written.
- The key verse is 3:1 – “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”
- A brief outline:
 - Fundamental Affirmation (1:1-5)
 - Formal Accusations (1:6 to 2:17)
 - Final Annunciations (3:1 to 4:6)

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter God's love for Israel is revealed and not reciprocated.

vs. 1-5 – The first dialogue concerns love vs. hate. Romans 9:13 quotes vs. 2-3. This section may appear difficult on the surface, but it is readily understandable if you take the time. The Jews were questioning God's care towards them. God reinforces His love for them by pointing out the current situations of the descendants of Jacob and Esau.

Jacob/Israel was back in their own land and beginning to prosper. Esau/Edom had been driven from their homes and lost practically everything (see the book of Obadiah). Israel turned back to God after He reproved them in judgment, Edom turned further from Him.

vs. 6 – The second dialogue concerns dishonoring God's name. It is a natural progression from the previous dialogue: if God loves us then we ought to honor Him!

vs. 7-14 – The third dialogue concerns polluted offerings. God deserves the best we have. See Deuteronomy 15:21 and Leviticus 22:21-22 for regulations against offerings that are blind, lame, etc. This question pressed in vs. 9 is: why should God listen to you if you do not give Him what He deserves? In vs. 11 we see the *purpose* of Israel (to be a beacon to the world) and also a *prophecy* of God's universal adoration during the Millennial Kingdom.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter the sins of the priests and rulers are exposed.

vs. 1-9 – This continues the discussion of polluted offerings from Malachi 1:7-14. Here the priests are addressed. God speaks so harshly to them because they had a responsibility to know, do, and be what God had commanded. He would reject their sacrifices and bring them to shame. The covenant of service between God and the tribe of Levi is summarized in Deuteronomy 33:8-11. They had no portion of the Promised Land but were scattered throughout to be teachers of God's commandments and servants of those commandments. God says that until this time their performance was acceptable. The priests had failed in their duty and in doing so let Israel drift away from God. God cannot and will not allow His Name and His Truth to be continually dragged through the mud. He will be glorified even through judgment.

vs. 10-12 – The target changes from the priests to the ruling tribe of Judah. Not only had the religion been corrupted but all of society. A common problem in the Old Testament (dare I say today also?) was intermarriage between God's people and the heathen. See Judges 3:6 and I Kings 11:1-8 (especially vs. 4) for the natural results. To add to this sin, we will see in the following verses that they were divorcing their Jewish wives to marry these heathen wives. Why are they doing this? Likely to build power and wealth through marriage alliances.

vs. 13-14 – The fourth dialogue concerns rejection and unfaithfulness. How could God reject a sacrifice? Because of unrepentant sin (which was on top of the corrupted sacrifice!)

vs. 15-16 – Divorce was allowed in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 24:1-5) as a concession to the hardness of men's hearts (Matthew 19:8). There are cases where sin is so great that divorce is allowed (Matthew 19:9), but that is not what is happening here. This is as frivolous as it can get when it comes to divorce. It was motivated by lust for power.

vs. 17 – The fifth dialogue concerns evil prospering. It is addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter the temporary prosperity of the wicked is contrasted with the future blessing of the righteous.

vs. 1-6 – The response to the question of evil prospering is that Christ will come and make things right. The first messenger in vs. 1 is John the Baptist (Matthew 11:9-10, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:27, John 1:23) and the second messenger “of the covenant” is Christ, the fulfillment of all promises made to Israel. In vs. 2-4 we jump to His second coming, when He will purify Israel of her sins.

vs. 7 – The sixth dialogue concerns returning from backsliding. Israel had backslid in the past and was backsliding right then but did not recognize it.

vs. 8-12 – The seventh dialogue concerns offerings and robbery. The tithes and offerings that God would have received in the Old Testament included the firstfruits offering (Leviticus 23:9-14), the annual half-shekel (Exodus 30:13-15), ordinary offerings or gifts (such as found in Exodus 35:5 or Ezra 8:25), the tithe of the tithes for the priests (Numbers 18:26-29), the portions of offerings set aside for priest (Leviticus 7:14-15), and various other tithes (Leviticus 27:30-33, Deuteronomy 12:18, 14:18-29). The people had failed in this duty, thinking that 100% without God’s blessing would go further than 90% with God’s blessing.

vs. 13-15 – The eighth dialogue concerns the benefits of serving God. This is similar to the question in Malachi 2:17, but now looking primarily on the supposedly un-blessed righteous instead of the prosperous wicked.

vs. 16-18 – The state of the Godly remnant. God was taking note of their faithfulness. It may seem like they are on the losing end of things now, but the game is not over yet!

Chapter 4 Notes

In this chapter we look ahead to Christ making all things right.

vs. 1-3 – The future destruction of the wicked in judgment is contrasted with the future exaltation of the righteous.

vs. 4-6 - As the revelation and message of the Old Testament closes, Heaven will be silent for 400 years until the coming of Christ. What are the standing orders for Israel during those silent years? Continue to serve God as He had instructed them through Moses. There appears to be a double fulfillment to vs. 5. First, in John the Baptist who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matthew 17:10-13). Second, the actual Elijah as one of the two witnesses of (Revelation 11:3-12). The effect of either is to bring repentance to the Jews and cause them to turn back to the faith of the fathers. If these warnings go unheeded, they will be cursed or lost.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 277

It is practically cliché now to link Malachi to tithing. That is but one of its subjects, but it seems to be the one most preachers speak on from it. I believe it is not tithing as a mechanical act that God desires from us today. What He wants to cultivate in us is a generous heart. Besides, the promise of Scripture and the testimony of countless saints prove that God's blessing is far more valuable than any offering we may give to Him.

Hymn for Day 277

Our hymn today is "Christ, Whose Glory Fills The Skies", written in 1740 by Charles Wesley.

*Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true and only Light,
Sun of righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shade of night;
Day-spring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.*

*Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by Thee;
joyless is the day's return,
till Thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.*

*Visit then this soul of mine,
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiance divine,
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more Thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.*