

Tapes For Growing Christians

Study Guide for  
**MALACHI**

Growing Christians Ministries  
Box 5757, River Forest, IL 60305  
[growingchristians.org](http://growingchristians.org)

lesson 1

**God's Declaration of Love for His People Israel  
(Even Though They Are Backslidden and Doubting God's Love at This Point in Their History)  
Malachi 1:1-5**

**background notes**

- 1.
  
- 2.
  
- 3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. God's love was proved by His election of Jacob.
  
2. God's love was proved by His destruction of Edom.

**practical application**

1. Do we ever question God's love?

**questions**

1. Malachi is a post-exilic prophet. What does that mean?  
Malachi is a minor prophet. What does that mean?
  
2. Which is the last book in the Old Testament in our English Bible?  
Which is the last book in the Hebrew Bible?
  
3. What is the reason for the difference in Question #2?
  
4. What is the Septuagint?
  
5. When is the book of Malachi dated?
  
6. What is the theme of Malachi?

**answers**

1. He is called a minor prophet because his book is small in size, not because he is less spiritual than the major prophets, who wrote the larger books. He is a post-exilic prophet because he wrote after the Jews came back from their seventy-year captivity.
2. Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament in our English Bible. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible.
3. Our English Bible follows the order of the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
4. It is named after the seventy scholars that supposedly translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the third century B.C. The English Bible follows this order.
5. Right at the end of the Old Testament period.
6. "Backsliding Reviewed." There had been a period of revival at the time of Nehemiah after the wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. but the revival was short-lived, and the people were now in a backslidden state.

**discuss / consider**

1. God's word to His backslidden people through the prophet Malachi was, "I have loved you." But the people questioned God's love by saying, "In what way have You loved us?" God in His grace, patiently reasoned with them, giving proof of His love for them by His election of Jacob. Consider how God's election of Jacob proved His love for His people.
2. A second proof of God's love was by His destruction of Edom. God had spared His people and in His love and grace brought them back from captivity. The prophet Obadiah had pronounced judgment on Edom, the descendants of Esau. but there was no promise of return or rebuilding.

**challenge**

1. Do you ever question God's love? Do you think that God doesn't love you because He disciplines you? Read Hebrews 12:6. Count the ways that God has shown His great love for you.

**memorize**

*"I have love you," says the Lord. Yet you say, "In what way have you loved us?" Malachi 1:2*

*"Jacob have I loved; ;but Esau I have hated." Malachi 1:2-3*

lesson 2

**Two More Areas Where Backslidden Israel had to be Rebuked  
(they were offering defective sacrifices  
and showing disdainful attitudes toward the worship of the Lord)  
Malachi 1:6-14**

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. Defective sacrifices dishonor God.
2. Disdainful attitudes dishonor God.

**practical application**

1. Let's close the door of the church if we are just going through the motions.

**questions**

1. What is the meaning of the name Malachi?
2. Who was the last prophet of the Old Testament?
3. Malachi was a contemporary of Nehemiah. What is Nehemiah noted for?
4. When did Malachi write his book and what was his message?
5. Down through the years, God reminded Israel of His covenanted love and His loving kindness toward them. What was the response to this love by the people of Malachi's day?
6. Why were the priests rebuked?
7. Explain, *"From the rising of the sun, My name shall be great among the Gentiles." (Malachi 1:11)*

**answers**

1. Malachi means “my messenger.”
2. Malachi
3. Rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.
4. He wrote about 430 B.C. to rebuke the people for their backslidden ways. This was likely during the time after the rebuilding of the wall.
5. They questioned God’s love and they challenged Him to prove it.
6. For offering defective sacrifices and for despising God’s way of worship.
7. It is a prediction of the future when believing Gentiles would worship the Lord.

**discuss / consider**

1. God said that the people and priests were dishonoring Him by offering defective sacrifices on the altar. What about your offerings to the Lord? Do you give the Lord the left-overs of your time, for example? How about your talents? Do you use them to serve the Lord or to serve yourself? Is your praise on Sunday morning defiled and defective because of what your mind was occupied with the night before? Are you offering defective sacrifices and dishonoring God?
2. It was not only the actions of the people and the priests in offering defective sacrifices, but it was their attitudes as well. Re-read Malachi 1:6, 7, 12-13. Would you possibly have such an attitude? Does your mind wander during a time of worship?

**challenge**

1. Are you worshipping with a right heart? Don’t just put in time or go because it’s a habit. God would rather have the doors of the temple (church) closed than have the people just go through the motions.

**memorize**

*“Where is My honor? Where is My reverence?” Malachi 1:6*

*“In what way have we despised Your name? In what way have we defiled You?” Malachi 1:6-7*

*“Would your governor be pleased with you when you offer a defective sacrifice?” Malachi 1:8*

*“But now entreat God’s favor, that He may be gracious to us.” Malachi 1:9*

*“Who is there among you who would shut the doors?” Malachi 1:10*

*“From the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles.” Malachi 1:11*

*“You profane My name, and you say ‘What a weariness!’ Should I accept this from your hand, says the Lord.” Malachi 1:12-13*

*“I am a great King,’ says the Lord of hosts, and My name is to be feared among the nations.” Malachi 1:14*

**lesson 3**

**Further Charges that the Lord Brought Against His People Israel,  
Who were in a Backslidden State;  
A Call to Repentance  
Malachi 2:1-17**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. God is not pleased when His people are ignorant of His word.
2. God is not pleased when His people do not separate from this world.
3. God is not pleased when His people are unfaithful in their marriages.

**practical application**

1. How blind can you be?

**questions**

1. What is the theme of Malachi?
2. When was Malachi written?
3. Why did God raise up the prophet Malachi at this time?
4. Refer to Malachi Chapter 1. Why were the people rebuked by God?
5. Refer to Malachi Chapter 2. What were the other areas of rebuke?

### answers

1. Backsliding rebuked.
2. At the end of the Old Testament period.
3. When Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem in 445 B.C., he motivated the people to rebuild the city wall, and at that time there had been a great revival. But after some time, Nehemiah had to return to Persia for a couple of years. It may have been during this time that the backslidden state of Israel, described by Malachi, came about. God raised up Malachi to rebuke the people because of their backsliding.
4. The people were rebuked for bringing defective sacrifices to the Lord, and for despising God's way of worship.
5. The failure of the priests to instruct the people in the law of the Lord; the sin of intermarriage with the surrounding pagan peoples; and the problem of divorce, which the Lord hated.

### discuss / consider

1. Read Malachi 2:1-9. The priests were rebuked for failing to teach and instruct God's people in the law. One of the responsibilities of the priests was to instruct people in the law of God. See Deuteronomy 33:10.

The Levites of Malachi's day dishonored God by not fulfilling their responsibilities, and therefore they would not be blessed, but they would actually experience the curses that were pronounced in the law.

Just as the priests and Levites of Malachi's day had a responsibility to teach and instruct the people of God in the ways of the Lord, so do preachers and servants of the Lord today have a responsibility to teach the word and instruct God's people in the ways of the Lord. Many of those with this responsibility are not doing their job. As a result, the people of God are ignorant of God's word and in the ways of the Lord. What do you see as your responsibility here?

2. In Malachi's day, there was a problem of intermarriage between the people of God and pagans of the surrounding foreign nations. This sin was expressly forbidden in God's law (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). Intermarriage was a serious sin because God's people were no longer separate from this world.

The same is true today when believers live a worldly life style. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Are you living a life pleasing to God or are you catering to a worldly life style?

3. The men of Malachi's day were divorcing their wives so that they could marry younger women or pagan women. This was wrong. God had said that He hated divorce. Has God changed His mind now that we are in modern times? No. God still hates divorce, and He is pleased with repentance and forgiveness and reconciliation. God loves to see Christian families where children are being brought up to love and serve the Lord. Divorce makes it difficult to raise godly offspring. What is your part in this scene?

### challenge

1. The people of Malachi's day were saying that God was not just because evil people were getting away with wrong doing. God was getting weary of this kind of talk. How blind could they be? They were the guilty ones; they deserved to be judged; yet they thought they were not so bad, and they were still going through their religious rituals. They were desensitized to their sins. Is it possible that you are questioning God and wondering why He is not blessing your life? Is it possible that you are blind to your own sins? Have you examined your life in light of scripture? Has the world desensitized you to your sins? Are you just going through the motions of church? Don't be blind like the Israelites in Malachi's day.

### memorize

*"The lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and the people should seek law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord. But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law; you have corrupted the law." Malachi 2:7-8.*

*"You have profaned the law...the Lord's holy institution which He loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god." Malachi 2:1:11*

*"You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying..." Malachi 2:13*

*"God seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth." Malachi 2:15*

*"God hates divorce." Malachi 2:16*

*"You have wearied the Lord with your words...by saying, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord.'" Malachi 2:17*

lesson 4

**A Prediction of the Coming of John the Baptist;  
Further Rebukes of the People for Their Backsliding;  
and Finally an Encouraging Word for the Godly Remnant  
Malachi 3:1-18**

**background notes**

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3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. Believers commit the sin of robbery when they give sparingly.

2. Believers commit the sin of arrogance when they think selfishly.

**practical application**

1. Is your name written in the book of remembrance?

**questions**

1. When the Jews came back to Jerusalem from their seventy-years captivity in Babylon, there was good news and there was bad news.

- a. What was the good news?
- b. What was the bad news?

2. Refer to Malachi 3:1-6. What is this portion of scripture about?

3. When will the Lord come in judgment and how will he come?

4. What kind of teaching method does Malachi use predominantly in his book?

5. Why will God refine Israel and ultimately restore them?

### answers

1. a. The good news was they rebuilt the altar of sacrifice, and then they rebuilt the temple, and finally they rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem.  
b. The bad news was that they were not fully committed to the Lord for much of this time.
2. This is a parenthesis in the rebukes, predicting the coming of John the Baptist. He is the messenger who precedes the coming of the Lord. See also Matthew 11:10.
3. He will come at His second advent. Then he will come and judge Israel like a refiner's fire, burning out the impurities. See Malachi 3:2-5.
4. The question-answer method.
5. Because of His covenant promises with them. God does not go back on His promises.

### discuss / consider

1. Under the law, the Jews were required to tithe from their substance in order to maintain the work of the Lord. But the people of Malachi's day were not tithing. From God's perspective, this was robbing Him.  
As Christians, we are not commanded to tithe. However, voluntary tithing is a biblical principle. Believers commit the sin of robbery when they give sparingly. Are you giving freely or are you robbing God?
2. The backsliders of Malachi's day had the nerve to say that it was futile to serve God. They were so arrogant that they were saying that obedience and repentance did not pay off in benefits to themselves. They were so blind to their own arrogance and evil that they actually accused God of blessing others, who they said were unworthy.  
Have you ever had a what's-in-it-for-me attitude when you served the Lord? Have you ever been so arrogant in your thinking that you thought God was unfair and unjust when He passed over you in favor of someone you considered more unworthy than yourself? Beware of the sin of arrogance when you think selfishly.

### challenge

1. "Those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. A book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His Name."  
Malachi 3:16. The people spoken of here were and will be the godly remnant.  
How about you? When you are with other believers, what is your conversation? Do you please the Lord with your words? Do you center your conversation on the Lord Jesus? The Lord listens, and He writes in a book of remembrance.

### memorize

*"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me." Malachi 3:1*

*"Who can endure the day of His coming? He is like a refiner's fire... He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; he will purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." Malachi 3:2-3*

*"Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old..." Malachi 3:4*

*"I am the Lord, I do not change..." Malachi 3:6*

*"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse... try Me now in this, says the Lord... 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." Malachi 3:10*

*"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." Malachi 3:16*

*"They shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I may them My jewels." Malachi 3:17*

**lesson 5**

**A Prophecy Concerning the Coming Day of the Lord,  
and a prediction of the Coming of Elijah in the Future  
Malachi 4:1-6**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. Judgment and blessing are part of the coming day of the Lord.
2. Elijah will appear before the coming day of the Lord.

**practical application**

1. Let's pray for more Malachi 4:6 families.

**questions**

1. What is the last book in the Old Testament?
2. Name the three post-exilic prophets.
3. What is the approximate date of Malachi's writing?
4. What happened, biblically, after the time of Malachi?
5. What and when is the day of the Lord?
6. What are the two aspects of the day of the Lord?
7. What will characterize the coming kingdom of our Lord here on this earth?

**answers**

1. Malachi
2. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
3. About 430 B.C., about one hundred years after the return from captivity.
4. There came the so-called 400 silent years, where no prophet of God spoke until the coming of John the Baptist.
5. In general, the day of the Lord could be said to be anytime that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of nations. It could be for judgment or for blessing.
6. There is an historical aspect to the day of the Lord. That is, some prophecies of the day of the Lord have already been partially fulfilled in history. There is also an eschatological or future aspect to the day of the Lord.
7. Righteousness will reign.

**discuss / consider**

1. The day of the Lord is a major theme in the Old Testament, and it is mentioned in the New Testament as well. Remember, the day of the Lord has two aspects: 1) the historical aspect, where some prophecies have already been partially fulfilled in history, and 2) the eschatological aspect, when prophecies will be fulfilled completely in a future day. The future day of the Lord includes both the coming tribulation period and the coming millennial kingdom of Christ here on this earth. Righteousness will characterize the coming kingdom of our Lord here on this earth. There will be universal restoration and healing for all that man has destroyed. there will be no terrorism, for the wicked will be judged and righteousness will reign. Think about this! Thank the Lord for His righteous judgment and His coming reign of righteousness.

2. When the Jewish people celebrate the Passover today, at one point during the meal a child goes to the door to see if Elijah has arrived. This tradition stems from this Elijah prophecy here in Malachi 4:5. The Elijah prophecy was a contingent prophecy. IF Israel had received her Messiah and His kingdom when He came the first time, then John the Baptist would have completely fulfilled the Elijah prophecy. But because they rejected their Messiah, their king and His kingdom the complete fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy awaits the second coming of Christ. See Revelation 11. The two witnesses will precede the second coming of Christ to this earth. they will come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and indeed, one of them may be Elijah himself. Consider this prophecy.

**challenge**

1. Read the last verse of the Old Testament, Malachi 4:6. God is looking for families where the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children and the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers. That is, families where the biblical faith of the fathers is maintained. These are families in which there is repentance from sin, and the authority structure in the home is honored and respected. God is looking for Malachi 4:6 families. Pray for your own family and for other families. Pray for more Malachi 4:6 families.

**memorize**

*"Behold, the day is coming...all the proud and those who do wickedly will be stubble and burned up, says the Lord..." Malachi 4:1*

*"To you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings..." Malachi 4:2*

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Malachi 4:5*

*"He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Malachi 4:6*