

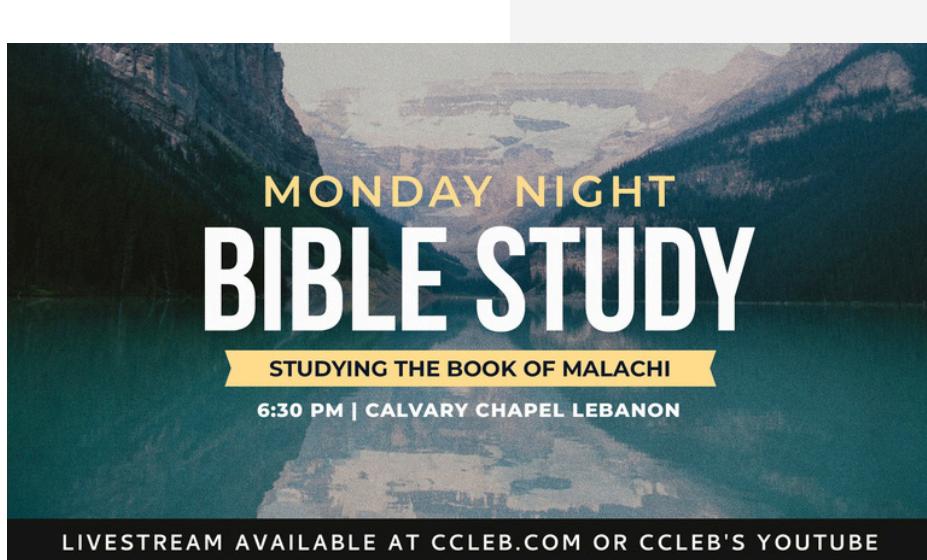
CCLEB BIBLE STUDY

NOTES



MONDAY JANUARY 12
MALACHI INTRO

MATT KORFF



Verse 1: To begin with, I would like to give a few historical notes that will help us, because, as Malachi is a short book, I would like to read the whole thing so we can see the whole context of Malachi.

First, Malachi is usually given an easy time stamp of 400BC

The setting of Malachi was that the Jews were allowed to return to their land after Babylonian captivity. Of course, the balance of world power switched hands from Babylon to Persia, so it was the Persian king Cyrus who allowed the Jews to return. The Babylonians were ruthless, and often treated the Jews poorly, whereas Cyrus allowed the Jews to return home, and even allowed them to set up the city, the Temple, and practice religious worship again. Sounds like good times in Malachi's day right?

Malachi is the last of the minor prophets. We have finally made it! The way the minor prophets are set up is chronologicalish order. The reason for the "ish," and no, that is not the Hebrew word for man "ish," but "ish," as in, like, so chronological-like order, is because some of them are living together. So, its not necessarily one prophet right after another, but as you read through the prophets you are reading through time.

It could be important to distinguish between the major and minor prophets, the major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel (sort of). They are called major prophets because they have major works, whereas the minor prophets have minor works, that is, smaller. The major prophets also follow a chronological pattern. Isaiah about 700BC, Jeremiah the 500s, as well as Ezekiel, then Daniel would be 500s as well.

I said Daniel was sort of a major prophet, his has more to do with content than length, because it is about the same size as Hosea, Amos, and Zechariah. But in the Hebrew Bible, which the Jews use, Daniel is not grouped with the prophets. TaNaK

But Malachi would be the last book of the Bible, and that is because it was the last one written, then proceeds a "silent period" of 400 years before Jesus and the New Testament. Don't let that whole "silent" part fool you, it was anything but silent.

and once we finish Malachi I will talk about that then jump into Matthew for context. But, with Malachi as the last book of the Old Testament, consider, as we read this book, what the Jews would have been left with, the last words from God, for 400 years. The last part of Malachi is very important for shaping the Messianic anticipation.

Malachi is a word that means, "My angel," or, "My messenger." The word for angel, or messenger in the Old Testament is Malak, not to be confused with malak, which means to reign. One of those is a noun, the other a verb. There wasn't really a distinct word in the Old or New Testament for Angel, in the sense we use the word today. You had messengers, and either they came from man or God, and the way you knew it was the messenger from God was fantastic in one way or another. Our English word for angel comes from the Greek word angelos, we simply transliterated that word, and that is why we call God's messengers angels today.

Angels being messengers and not having a specific name in the Old and New Testament, will help us understand when we see passages in Genesis, Job, Psalms, and various other places that say things like, "The divine council," "the sons of God," etc.

But anyway, Malachi means, "My messenger," which comes up a couple times in his book. So, without further adu, to you and you and you, lets read Malachi

Malachi is quoted 5 times in the New Testament. 4 times are from Malachi 3, Matthew, Mark, and Luke quote **Malachi 3:1** to refer to John the Southern Baptist, of course with his turn or burn message, it might be John the Reformed Baptist. Revelation 6 seems to be alluding to **Malachi 3:2**

Revelation 6:12-17 says, "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Finally, Paul quotes **Malachi 1:2** in **Romans 9**, that difficult to understand passage about Israel being predestined, leading to chapter 11 which mentions Israel being grafted out of the olive tree, and the Gentiles grafted in, but that Israel will be grafted back into the olive tree. And, it is ok to say that Paul has some things that are hard to understand because it's Biblical. **2 Peter 3: 14-16** says, "Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."

I didn't say, and neither did Peter, that you can't understand Paul, just that it can be hard to understand what he wrote.

So, also by way of introduction, I mentioned that Malachi was written in a time when the Jews had their lives given back to them. I mean, man, they ought to be pretty grateful, and God should just have some good news for them, right? Well, wrong. As we perused through Malachi, we saw topics like:

- Not trusting God's love
- Not giving tithes
- Abuse of the disadvantaged
- Unfaithfulness in marriage
- Marriage to idolators
- Corrupt priests

Well, where did all that come from? Well, I am glad you asked.

As we read through the other minor prophets, we were able to gather the context from **1 and 2 Kings**. In the same way, the context for Malachi is actually Ezra and Nehemiah. Pretty much, Zechariah was part of the return to Judah and the rebuilding of the city, and Malachi would have been a contemporary with Zechariah (more of his later years, or just after his death). So, let's read a few places in Nehemiah to try to get a better understanding of what was going on when Malachi wrote.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

Here we can see that not all things are hunky dory when they are rebuilding the city and Temple. This sheds light into why God would be mad at them and prophesy through Malachi about them.

Nehemiah 8

In this passage, they celebrate the Feast of Booths. If you remember when we finished Zechariah last week, God said that all nations would need to celebrate the Feast of Booths or there would be no rain. Interesting that they make a point, not only to do so, but to record it. Zechariah would likely have written that before they celebrated it here.

Nehemiah 10

Here in this chapter, the people are agreeing to start tithing again, and to honor a Godly marriage, which seems to indicate that they were not doing so well at this before.

In spite of their commitment, Nehemiah takes a trip back to Persia, and look what he finds them doing again once he comes back **Nehemiah 13**

So, at first thought, considering the Jews were allowed to return home and rebuild the temple, and put hard work in to do so, believe it or not, people are people and tend to return to the same dumb things they have always done. Notice I said, "They," because, surely no one here, or myself would do that. Well, that is me. I tend to fall right back into comfortable patterns, doing the same old things, but thank God the cross. His forgiveness. At this point in history, when Malachi is written, there is no cross. Just the hope that if they keep the law God will forgive them. I don't know how they thought that would work out.

Now, those who truly trusted God recognized that they weren't good enough, but God promised to take their sins away, so they believed Him. But those who did not truly trust God thought they were good enough because they were chosen.

I think one of the scariest parts in Scripture is where Jesus says that one day there will be people that say, "Didn't we do miracles in Your Name..." and the King will say to them, "Depart from Me, I never knew you." That is a major downer. If there are people who think they know Jesus but don't, how can you be sure that you know Him?

Well, I went to a seminary where these people thought they knew Jesus. They also "knew" that your religion doesn't really matter, because all roads lead to heaven, Jesus didn't die for our sins because that would be divine child abuse for His Father to do that. They also "knew" that sin is not our problem, just societal pressures.

These are the types of people that I cower to think of what sort of greeting they will receive from our Lord.

I believe the types of people who will hear Jesus say, "Depart from Me I never knew you," will be those who change certain things in the Bible because they can stomach it better. Some of you may have heard of the Thomas Jefferson Bible, pretty much Thomas Jefferson (the guy on the nickel) went through the Bible and cut out all the miracles. Why is that, because he was a man of reason, so God was not able to do things outside of reason.

They will be those who disregard or trivialize the cross of Jesus Christ. Like I said earlier, I heard people say the idea that the Father would give His Son for the sin of the world is divine child abuse. But how Biblical is the idea that “the Father so loved the world that He gave...His Son...” It is one of the two verses everyone knows. The other one is **Matthew 7:1**: “Judge not that ye be not judged.” People tend to know that in the KJV.

First of all, the cross is not Divine child abuse, Jesus is not a child. Also, Jesus was part of the party planning committee on that one. When people trivialize the cross of Christ, it is because they do not see the gravity of their sin. When people don’t see the gravity of their sin, they don’t see the majesty of God. Lie

They will be those who trivialize the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Many will say that Jesus did not actually rise from the dead, and that the idea of His Spirit, is that the spirit of His teaching lives on in His followers. But as Paul says, if Christ is not raised, neither will we be raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

Then there are those who will say that Christ was raised as a spiritual being. But then there wouldn’t be an empty tomb.

Those whom Christ will welcome with open arms are those who recognize their need for a Savior, surrender their life and will, their intellect and reason, and trust the blood of Jesus alone for their redemption, and the empty tomb for their eternity.