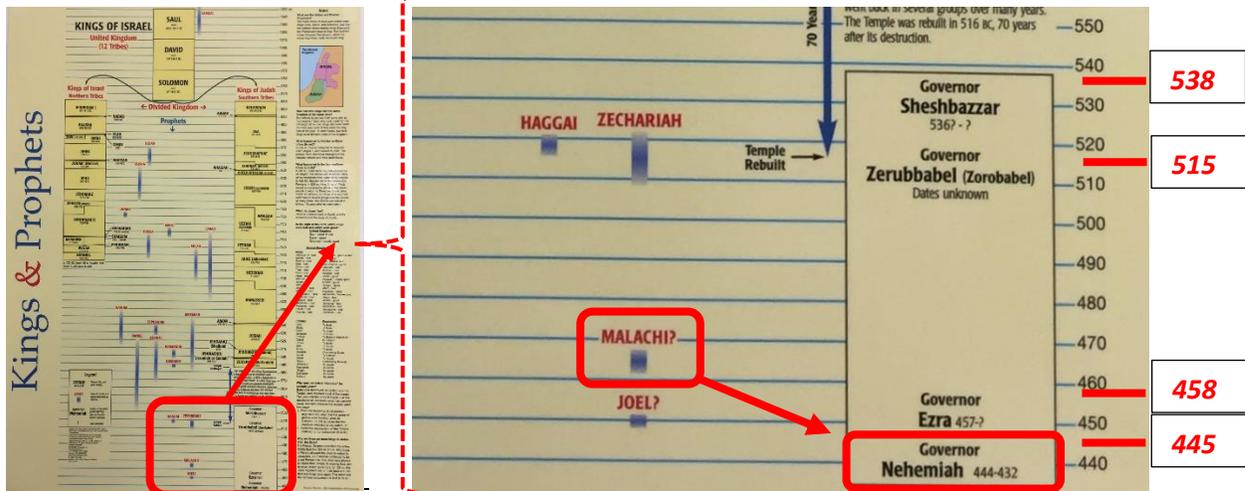


## Book of Malachi

### Chapter 1:1-14

<sup>1</sup>The pronouncement of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi:



**Wiersbe** > In **538** BC, Cyrus issued a decree that the Jews exiled in Babylon could return to their land and rebuild their temple (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1). About fifty thousand of them accepted the challenge; and in **515**, after much delay, they completed the temple. Ezra visited them in **458**, and in **445** Nehemiah became their governor and served for twelve years (Neh. 5:14).

While Nehemiah was back at his post in Shushan (Neh. 13:6–7), things began to fall apart in Jerusalem, and when he returned, he had to take some drastic steps to reform the nation.

It's possible that the prophet Malachi was called at that time to expose the sins of the people and call them back to God. The conditions described in the book of Nehemiah are the very things Malachi deals with in his book: poor crops and a faltering economy (Mal. 3:11), intermarriage with the heathen (2:11), defilement of the priesthood (1:6ff.), oppression of the poor (3:5), lack of support for the temple (vv. 8–10), and a general disdain of religion (v. 13ff.). It was a low time spiritually for Judah, and they needed to hear the Word of God.

**G Campbell Morgan** > Compares three identical areas of concern expressed by Nehemiah and Malachi

1. The corrupted priesthood
2. Saved individuals marrying unsaved individuals
3. Tithes not coming in to support those in the ministry

**Morgan** > (Comparing Malachi to Nehemiah)

1. **Nehemiah 13:29**: *“Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.”* Remembering the force of these words, turn to the prophecy of **Malachi 2:8**: *“But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts.”* Nehemiah complains in the closing years of his history that the priesthood has corrupted the covenant; while Malachi, in this second chapter, addresses himself very largely to the priests, and the specific charge that he brings against them is that they have corrupted the covenant of Levi. It is a peculiar expression which we shall consider more closely when we come to study the book itself. ii.
2. In that same chapter of **Nehemiah 13:23-27** > you find that Nehemiah complains that the peculiar people of God have entered into unholy alliance with idolaters in the way of marriage, and follows that complaint by separating those thus united. **Malachi 2:10-16** > speaks of exactly the same condition of things - the evil of mixed marriages, and the awful neglect which ends in the tears and sobs of the women about the altars of God.
3. Again, in the last chapter of **Nehemiah 12:10** > *“I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.”* **Malachi 3:10** calls attention to this omission, saying, *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven.”* These three notes establish the fact that Malachi’s prophecy was uttered in the days of Nehemiah’s influence. I do not say in the days of Nehemiah. I know that it is a remarkable thing, upon which comment has not been wanting, that Malachi’s name does not appear either in the book of Ezra or Nehemiah. It seems most probable that Malachi’s name is not mentioned because he follows immediately after Nehemiah. The people have fallen back into the very abuses that Nehemiah set himself to rectify, and Malachi is raised up, the last of the prophets, to bear this message to them.

**Pronouncement** > (Boda) contends that a *maśśā’* introduces the word of Yahweh that renews prophecy along the lines of earlier prophecy. As a heading, it bolsters the status of the ensuing prophecy.

**Malachi** > (Keil) The circumstances of Malachi's life are so entirely unknown, that it is a disputed point whether (the word “Malachi”... “My Messenger”) in the heading (Malachi 1:1) is the name of a person, or merely an ideal name given to the prophet who foretells the sending of the messenger of Jehovah (Malachi 3:1), and whose real name has not been handed down.

<sup>2</sup> ***"I have loved you,"** says the LORD. But you say, **"How have You loved us?"***  
***"Was Esau not Jacob's brother?"** declares the LORD. **"Yet I have loved Jacob;<sup>3</sup> but I have hated Esau,** and I have made his mountains a desolation and given his inheritance to the jackals of the wilderness."*

***I have loved you** > (Precept Austin) The NLT paraphrase really catches the sadness and tragedy of this first interchange... "I have loved you deeply," says the LORD. But you retort, "Really?" Yes "really" - God has really loved Israel and still really loves them! And yet they question His love... *How have you loved us?*" And the LORD replies, "I showed my love for you by loving your ancestor Jacob."*

***How have You loved us?** > (Morgan) We come now to the consideration of the condition of the people at the time when Malachi uttered his prophecy. There is a keyword in the book revealing this condition, a word these people used in reply to every message which the prophet delivered to them, showing what their real attitude was. It is the word **"Wherein"**. (**"How"** in the NASB)*

1. ***Mal 1:2*** But you say, "How hast Thou loved us?"
2. ***Mal 1:6*** But you say, "How have we despised Thy name?"
3. ***Mal 1:7*** But you say, "How have we defiled Thee?"
4. ***Mal 2:14*** Yet you say, "For what reason?"
5. ***Mal 2:17*** Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?"
6. ***Mal 3:7*** But you say, "How shall we return?"
7. ***Mal 3:8*** But you say, "How have we robbed Thee?"
8. ***Mal 3:13*** Yet you say, "What have we spoken against Thee?"

***I have loved Jacob;<sup>3</sup> but I have hated Esau** > Many of the commentators take us to Genesis 29:30, 31 where the same Hebrew word for "hate" is used.*

***Genesis 29:30, 31** > <sup>30</sup> So Jacob had relations with Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years. <sup>31</sup> Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved (Same Hebrew word for hate as in Malachi), and He opened her womb, but Rachel was unable to have children.*

**Wiersbe** > Someone said to Dr. Arno C. Gaebelin, the gifted Hebrew Christian leader of a generation ago, "I have a serious problem with Malachi 1:3, where God says, 'Esau I have hated.'" Dr. Gaebelin replied, "I have a greater problem with Malachi 1:2, where God says, 'Jacob, I have loved.'"

**Constable** > It is remarkable that God loved Jacob in view of the person Jacob was, and it is equally remarkable that God hated Esau, because in many ways he was a more likeable individual than his brother.

**Clarke** > Let it be remembered that it does not concern the two brothers at all, but the posterity of each.

The birth of Jacob and Esau > **Genesis 25:22-26** > <sup>22</sup> *But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why am I in this condition?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.* <sup>23</sup> *And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people will be stronger than the other; And the older will serve the younger."* <sup>24</sup> *When her days leading to the delivery were at an end, behold, there were twins in her womb.* <sup>25</sup> *Now the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.* <sup>26</sup> *Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so he was named Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.*

**Precept Austin** > Can you see Jehovah's "logic"? Although they were twins, **God chose Jacob**. And although Esau was the elder, **God chose Jacob**. So what does all of this say about God's love for Jacob?

<sup>4</sup> *Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; this is what the LORD of armies says: "They may build, **but I will tear down;** and people will call them the territory of wickedness, and the people with whom the LORD is indignant forever.*

**But I will tear down** > (Clarke) The pulling down predicted here was by Judas Maccabeus; see 1 Maccabees 5:65; and by John Hyrcanus; see Joseph Antiq., lib. 13 c. 9. s. 1.

<sup>5</sup> **And your eyes will see this, and you will say, "The LORD be exalted beyond the border of Israel!"**

**And your eyes will see this ...** > (Barnes) Malicious pleasure in looking on at the misery of Judaea and Jerusalem, had been a special sin of Edom: now God would show Judah the fruit of its reversal, and His goodness toward themselves.

**Got Questions. Org** > "Why did God judge Edom so harshly in the book of Obadiah?"

- **Obadiah 1:3** > *The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, the one who lives in the clefts of the rock, on the height of his dwelling place, who says in his heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'*
- **Obadiah 1:10** > *"Because of violence to your brother Jacob, shame will cover you, and you will be eliminated forever.*
- **Obadiah 1:12** > *Do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah on the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast On the day of their distress.*
- **Obadiah 1:13** > *Do not enter the gate of My people on the day of their disaster. You indeed, do not gloat over their catastrophe On the day of their disaster. And do not lay a hand on their wealth on the day of their disaster.*
- **Obadiah 1:14** > *Do not stand at the crossroads to eliminate their survivors; And do not hand over their refugees on the day of their distress.*

**Constable** > The point of this message was to get the Jews of the restoration community, who were thinking that God had abandoned them and forgotten His promises to them, to think again. Even though they seemed to be experiencing the same fate as their ancient enemy, the Edomites, God would restore them because He had entered into covenant relationship with them. He would keep His promises, both to the Israelites and to the Edomites, for better and for worse respectively.

<sup>6</sup> *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, **where is My honor?** And if I am a master, **where is My respect?**" says the LORD of armies to you, the **priests** who despise My name! But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?'*

**Where is My honor? ... where is My respect ... priests** > (Benson) What is here said is addressed in particular to you priests, because, being chosen and appointed, according to your office, to honor and glorify me, you ought to have been the first and most forward to do it; but, instead of that, you have been the first to dishonor me.

<sup>7</sup> *You are presenting **defiled** food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we **defiled** You?' In that you say, **The table of the LORD is to be despised.**'*

**Defiled** > (Strong's) A primitive root, to soil or (figuratively) desecrate

**Despised** > (Strong's) A primitive root; to disesteem -- despise, disdain, contemn(-ptible), + think to scorn, vile person.

**The table of the LORD is to be despised** > (Barnes) literally "*contemptible is it*", and so any contemptible thing might be offered on it.

**Benson** > By your actions you declare how little value you have for the worship of God, since you care not in how slight and contemptuous a manner it is performed.

**Septuagint** > *In that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and that which was set thereon ye have despised.*

<sup>8</sup> ***And when you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not evil? Or when you present a lame or sick animal, is it not evil? So offer it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you, or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of armies.***

**And when you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not evil? ...** (Barnes) **Deuteronomy 15:21** > <sup>21</sup> *But if it has any impairment, such as a limp, or blindness, or any serious impairment, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God.*

**Governor** > (Clarke) Offer it now unto thy governor - פּחַת pechath, a word signifying a lieutenant, or viceroy, among the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Persians; for neither at this time, nor ever after, was there a king in Israel.

**Wiersbe** > "Over the years, I've participated in many ordination examinations, and I've looked for four characteristics in each candidate: a personal experience of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ; a sense of calling from the Lord; a love for and knowledge of the Word of God; and a high respect for the work of the ministry. Whenever we've examined a candidate who was flippant about ministry, who saw it as a job and not a divine calling, he didn't get my vote. Whether as a pastor, missionary, teacher, choir member, or usher, being a servant of God is a serious thing, and it deserves the very best that we can give."

**Morgan** > To carry offerings to the house of God simply because it is commanded, is to be guilty of sacrilege. There is only one motive sufficiently strong to maintain the relation between the heart of God and the heart of man, and that is **love**.

**Campbell** > Sacrilege we have always thought was the breaking into a church and stealing therefrom. That is not so; it is going into Church and putting something on the plate. Do not forget that. Sacrilege is centered in offering God something which costs nothing, because you think God is worth nothing. God looks for the giving at His altar of a gift that costs something. Men are perpetually bringing into the Christian Church the things they do not need themselves.

<sup>9</sup> *“But now, do indeed plead for God’s favor, so that He will be gracious to us. With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?”* says the LORD of armies.

**But now, do indeed plead for God’s favor ... will He receive any of you kindly** > (Keil and Delitzsch) In order to disclose to them their wrong in the most striking manner, the prophet asks them whether the governor would accept such presents; and then draws this conclusion, that God also would not hear the prayers of the priests for the people.

<sup>10</sup> *“If only there were one among you who would shut the gates, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar for **nothing!** I am not pleased with you,”* says the LORD of armies, *“nor will I accept an offering from your hand.*

**Nothing** > (Strong’s) From *chen*; *gratis*, i.e. Devoid of cost, reason or advantage -- without a cause (cost, wages), causeless, to cost nothing, free(-ly), innocent, for nothing (nought, in vain).

**Nor will I accept an offering from your hand** > (Precept Austin) Literally " a present I do not accept of your hand."

**Isaiah 1:11-13** > *“What are your many sacrifices to Me?”* Says the LORD. *“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. <sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courtyards? <sup>13</sup> Do not go on bringing your worthless offerings, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the proclamation of an assembly—I cannot endure wrongdoing and the festive assembly.*

**Amos 5:21-24** > *“I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your festive assemblies. <sup>22</sup> Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fattened oxen. <sup>23</sup> Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. <sup>24</sup> But let justice roll out like waters, And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

<sup>11</sup> *For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name shall be great among the nations,* and in every place frankincense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name shall be great among the nations,” says the LORD of armies.

**Nations** > (Strong’s) Rarely (shortened) *goy* {go'-ee}; apparently from the same root as *gevah* (in the sense of massing); a foreign nation; hence, a Gentile

**For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name shall be great among the nations** > The **Septuagint** translates this sentence in the present tense and, therefore, gives it a whole new meaning (although Bible Org. translates it is the future tense)> *For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty.*

Compare the Septuagint translation to the next verse and the interpretation becomes very clear! "You (priests) disparage my offerings ... They (the Gentiles) honor and worship me!"

(**Precept Austin** > Note that the NAS, KJV, ESV, NET, NIV translate this passage using the future tense ("will be great...will be great") whereas the NAB, NJB, YLT translate it using the present tense as "My Name is great")

<sup>12</sup> *"But you are **profaning** it by your saying, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be **despised**.'*

**Profaning** > (Strong's) properly, to bore, i.e. (by implication) to wound, to dissolve; figuratively, to profane (a person, place or thing), to break (one's word), to begin (as if by an 'opening wedge')

**Despised** > (Strong's) A primitive root; to disesteem

**Precept Austin** > First, what are they profaning? From the context, it is clear that they are profaning His great Name (Mal 1:11). Second, how were they profaning the LORD's Name? The priest defiled the table and despised its food. They were treating the Lord's table (altar) with abuse, irreverence and contempt. In Malachi 1:7 they were profaning God's altar by presenting defiled food on it

**Constable** > It is one of the bookends that flanks the central command to stop the pointless sacrifices ( Malachi 1:10).

<sup>13</sup> *You **also** say, '**See, how tiresome it is!**' And you view it as **trivial**," says the LORD of armies, "and you bring what was taken by **robbery** and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I accept it from your hand?" says the LORD.*

**Tiresome** > (Strong's) From *la'ah*; distress -- travail, travel, trouble.

**It** > (Bible Org.) The "it" (masculine singular) should possibly be the term "Me"

**Trivial** > (Strong's) A primitive root; to puff, in various applications (literally, to inflate, blow hard, scatter, kindle, expire; figuratively, to disesteem)

**Clarke** > A metaphor taken from cattle which do not like their fodder. They blow strongly through their nose upon it; and after this neither they nor any other cattle will eat it.

**Robbery** > (Bible Org.) The term "robbery" (cf. NKJV, TEV, NJB, JPSOA) can mean "violence". This seems to be used in the sense of a wild animal attack. If that is the sense, instead of robbery, it is a sacrilege as well as a sin to offer previously killed animals on the altar.

<sup>14</sup> ***"But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of armies, "and My name is feared among the nations."***

Please look at where the sin occurs in this verse. A very apt comparison is seen in the Book of Acts (**Acts 5:1-11**)

**Swindler** > (Strong's) A prim root; to defraud, i.e. Act treacherously

**Cole ...**

1. Is your service for God less than you would offer a human dignitary?
2. Is God answering your prayers?
3. Are you playing church?
4. Are you bored with worship and/or Christian service?
5. Is your passion in life to promote God's glory among the nations?