



***Malachi: Living in the Light of a Better Hope***

*Date: 11/20/2016*

**Pray Together**

**Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.**

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

**Read Together**

Occurring at least some twenty years after Zechariah's prophecy, Malachi contains the last prophetic words contained in the Old Testament. After Haggai's call to rebuild the temple in 520 B.C., construction was completed in 515 B.C. And while Israel was actively participating in Temple worship, they had ignored God's call to repent. Their failure to repent was the foundational reason they were not experiencing God's covenant blessings.

Malachi calls Israel to covenant faithfulness in worship (1:6-14), priestly leadership (2:1-9), marriage (2:10-16), messianic expectancy (2:17-3:5), tithing (3:8-12), and proper fear of the Lord (3:13-18). Malachi's structure is framed by an accusation from God, a rebuttal from Israel, and clarification on the charge levied against them.

**Outline**

1. The Lord's Love For His People (Malachi 1:2-5)
2. Dispute about the contempt the priests show God (Malachi 1:6-2:9)
  - a. Question: "How have we despised Your name?"
  - b. Answer: "By offering defiled food on My altar."
3. Dispute about Israel's covenant breaking (Malachi 2:10-16)
  - a. Question: "Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"
  - b. Answer: "You have divorced the wife of your youth."
4. Dispute about God's justice (Malachi 2:17-3:5)
  - a. Question: "How have we wearied the Lord?"
  - b. Answer: "By accusing God of honoring or ignoring evil."
5. Dispute concerning repentance (Malachi 3:6-12)
  - a. Question: "How can we return to God?"
  - b. Answer: "By not robbing God of the tithe."
6. Dispute about harsh words against the Lord (Malachi 3:13-4:3)
  - a. Question: "How have we spoken against God?"
  - b. Answer: "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God.'"
7. Appendix (Malachi 4:4-6)

**Discuss Together**

**Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.**

- As you study Malachi, identify the most significant questions you need to answer to better understand its message.



- The Triune God is always the main character of Scripture. What does the book of Malachi teach us about God?
- Knowing what Malachi teaches us about God, what does the book teach us about humanity?
- Pure worship is a testimony to the nations. The Lord says, “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations.” (1:11) And, “I am a great King... and my name will be feared among the nations.” (1:14) How will the nations honor the Lord by observing the pure worship of His followers? What is one step you can take toward more holy worship?
- God rebukes His people for faithlessness and apathy (2:10-16); two sins that every disciple fights, even today. How does spiritual apathy develop in your own life? Diagnose some of the symptoms that lead to apathy and faithlessness. What would happen if you opened your life to a few carefully selected, trusted, loyal partners who challenged you to greater faithfulness and Gospel urgency?
- The Lord now promises a righteous judgment to cleanse the hearts of man. God compares His judgment to a refiner's fire and fullers' soap (3:1-4). Discuss the imagery this illustration communicates. What is the outcome of this cleansing?
- Israel was robbing God of their tithes and contributions. In what ways, might you be robbing God? Financially? Through service to Him? By living on mission? By being obedient? What other ways? What is the most important thing you must do to return to God in this area?
- How should the Body of Christ “go there” with the message of Malachi? How do you personally need to “go there” with this message?

## Do Life Together

**These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!**

- How is God calling you to exchange doom for everlasting hope?
- How has Jesus already provided hope in this area?
- Who do you need to share this hope with this week?

## Pray Together

**Pray through Matthew 7:15-23. Seek the lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas of your life.**

