



August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 • Malachi 1:1-5

Page 801 in the church Bibles • The Book of Malachi

Message #1/6 • by Pastor Marcus Johnson

“Fearing the Great Name of the LORD & Experiencing His Love”

Sermon Series Theme Verse – “For from the rising of the sun to its setting

my name will be great among the nations . . . says the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 1:11)



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## Knowing the LORD, Experiencing His Love & Declaring His Greatness

1. The LORD spoke to Israel – thru Malachi the prophet
2. The LORD has loved Israel – who He rebukes for doubting His love
3. The LORD shows His love & sovereign reign to Israel – who will declare His universal greatness
4. Heeding the Prophetic Word
  - Know the loving God of the OT – who speaks & fulfills His promises
  - Experience the inseparable love of God for us – in Christ Jesus our Lord
  - See the Lord’s sovereign reign & declare His greatness – by fearing Him & speaking with one another

## Excursus: Some Highlights of the Book of Malachi

**The LORD of hosts:** Malachi uses the name “the LORD” or “the LORD of hosts” 46 times in 55 verses (43% of the verses in this book). The name “the LORD” is the personal name of God (Yahweh) given to His people Israel (see Exodus 3). “The LORD of hosts” is a name for God which refers to Israel’s personal God who reigns over all hosts (powers, armies) that exists. This name for God would have comforted & reassured Israel who was living as a minority people subject to other nations/empires (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).

**Background:** “The book of Malachi reflects a period of tension. God had not brought in the greatness of his kingdom after the construction and dedication of the temple (see Hag. 2:6-9) ... But neither had his people conformed to God’s expectations ... The people of God were in dire straits. They had suffered from drought and famine. The poor were forced to sell their sons and daughters into slavery if they could not pay their debts. Since financial gain was hard, many divorced their wives in order to marry pagan women for financial profit. In contrast to God’s people who struggled, the wicked prospered. God seemed to overlook their evil and to be apathetic to the condition of his own people. Malachi entered into this historical context to explain the delay in fulfillment and to set before his hearers the unpopular message of ‘human failure and divine promise’” (*Interpreting the Prophetic Word*, VanGemeren, p.202).

**Six Disputations:** Malachi records 6 disputes the LORD has with His people. In each case His people dispute with Him (designated by the recurring phrase “but you say”). These 6 disputations are based on 3 repeated themes arranged as a \*chiasm & summarized below (\*using repetition in listing points, such as ABBA or ABCCBA instead of ABCDEF).

A. The LORD’s Love & Israel’s Experience: (1:1-5) The LORD rebukes Israel for doubting His love. Despite her unfaithfulness, the LORD still loved Israel, but she was not experiencing His love because of her sin & her focus on her troubled circumstances.

B. The LORD’s Name & Israel’s Begrudging Offerings: (1:6 – 2:9) The LORD rebukes the ungodly priests for allowing Israel to give begrudging offerings which dishonored the LORD’s Name among the nations.

C. The LORD’s Favor & Israel’s Ungodly Marriages: (2:10-16) The LORD rebukes Israel for being unfaithful in her covenantal relationship with Him (marrying women outside the Jewish faith, divorcing & treating their wives violently, shamefully & with neglect).

C’ The LORD’s Justice & Israel’s Ungodliness: (2:17 – 3:5) The LORD rebukes Israel for questioning His justice (based on her troubled circumstances), when she was the one living unjustly (embracing sorcery, committing adultery, and oppressing the needy). But God will purify His people who repent and bring judgment on those who do not.

B’ The LORD’s Faithfulness & Israel’s Begrudging Offerings: (3:6-12) The LORD rebukes Israel for robbing Him of their tithes & He exhorts her to return to Him in whole-hearted worship. Those who do will experience His abundant blessings & protection.

A’ The LORD’s Vindication & Israel’s Experience: (3:13 – 4:6) The LORD rebukes Israel for her blasphemous charge that God blesses those who do evil & He warns about the coming judgment. He also promises that those who fear & serve the LORD are His treasured possession, and one day He will make a distinction between the righteous & the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.