

*Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies*

# Malachi

## “Looking For His Coming”



Bible Studies  
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# Malachi

## “Looking For His Coming”

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## Introduction to Malachi

Questions are a great way to start a conversation. When the right question is asked, everyone in the conversation is given an open door to say what they are thinking...and to learn in the process.

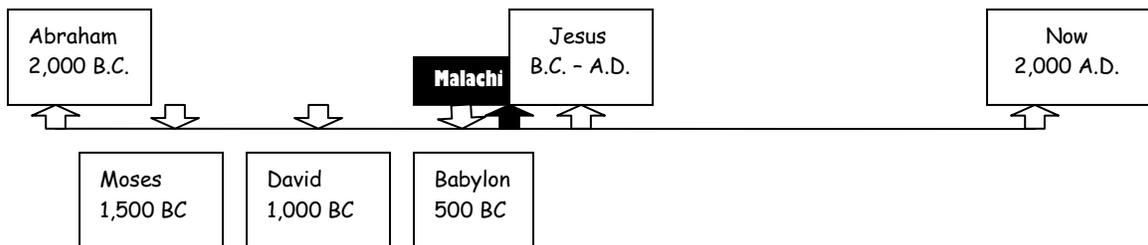
The Old Testament prophet, Malachi, knew the art of conversation. He presents his messages to God's people in the form of questions...some from God....some from His people, the Jews. We are given an armchair seat, as we read through Malachi, to view this conversation with God, and to ask ourselves how we would answer.

You will probably feel guilty at times as you listen to this conversation – because God could easily be speaking these things to you, some 2,500 years after the time of Malachi. And at other times you will feel full of hope, for the solution to guilt is still the same as it was so long ago....the Savior from sin. Malachi looks forward to the coming of that Savior. He taught the Jews of his day to also look forward to His coming. In his thought-provoking style, he will teach us the same thing. And then, in a time yet to come, Malachi will add his voice to the voices of 144,000 Jewish "Malachi" 's as they zero in on the remaining chosen people of God with the same message of hope – The Promised Savior is Coming Again!.

### Malachi Background

- James Montgomery Boice, The Minor Prophets, has an excellent section on Malachi.
- I always like Barnes' Notes for the Old Testament prophets. Malachi is no exception.

- The Bible Background Commentary (John H. Walton) for the Old Testament is helpful with cultural questions.
- The name means "my messenger"
- Some have wondered if the name was only a title, and not a proper name (for several reasons...mainly because the name "Malachi" is translated "His messenger" in chapter 1, verse 1, of the Septuagint)
- Most likely, Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament era – a contemporary of Nehemiah.



- Malachi's writing style is prose – including a series of questions asked both by the LORD and the people of Israel.
- Malachi speaks of the certainty of the coming Day of God's Wrath, but also includes great hope for those who fear His name
- The last 2 verses in the book predict the coming of Elijah before the coming of Christ. That explains why the priests of Jerusalem thought John the Baptist might be Elijah (John 1:21) and why Jewish families today leave a seat empty for Elijah at the Passover table.
- Malachi is a link between the Old and New Testaments, not just because it is physically between the two in your Bible, but because it accurately summarizes the whole Old Testament in that it points to the promised Old Testament Messiah of Israel as the only hope for the whole world.

## “How to Begin a Conversation With God”

### Malachi Chapter 1 - Questions

1. (:1-5) God makes a statement, and the Jews answer with a question. What is the statement, and what is the question?
  - a. Why would the Jews ask this question? What do you suppose they are thinking that would make them ask this?
  - b. Have you ever wondered if God really loves you?
  - c. What was God’s answer to their question?
  - d. What is God’s answer to you?
  - e. What is the proper response to God when He has answered this question?
2. (:6) God makes a statement, then God asks a question, then God makes another statement, then the priests ask a question. What are they?
  - a. God’s statement:
  - b. God’s question:
  - c. God’s statement:
  - d. The Priest’s question:
3. (:7-14) This passage goes on to describe the priests of Israel and how they are looking at their responsibility. What were they doing?
4. (:14) Look at the last part of this verse. What reason does God give them for not doing things the way they were doing them?
5. Have you ever been guilty of giving God less than what He deserved? Have you ever given a gift to God knowing it was not the best you could give? Why did you do that?

### **APPLICATION:**

6. If you could ask God one question, and you knew He would answer, what would it be?
7. Why would you ask that particular question?
8. Are you willing to accept rebuke as part of God’s answer to your question?
9. Do you realize that God also has questions for you?

## **“How to Begin a Conversation With God”**

### Malachi Chapter 1 – Discussion Notes

Start out your Bible Study time with these two questions:

- If you could ask God one question, and you knew He would answer, what would it be?
- What is the reason you would like to ask that particular question?

If you studying this book as a group, go around your circle and give each person a chance to answer the first question, and also the second. Take time to listen to each other’s answers – you will learn a lot about each other as you realize the questions each has for God. No one has all the answers....most of us just have a lot of questions.

The point of this “questions” conversation above is to help each of us realize the value of having questions for God, and the importance of actually voicing them. God knows the questions we have, but none of us will probably ever benefit from those questions until we are brave enough to ask them out loud...and then are brave enough to listen to God’s answers.

Now....in Malachi chapter 1, Malachi voices a few questions for us:

1. (:1-5) God makes a statement, and the Jews answer with a question. What is the statement, and what is the question?

The statement by God: “I have loved you.”

The Question by the Jews: “How have You loved us?”

Here are some things we might ask to understand this better:

- Why would the Jews ask this question? What do you suppose they are thinking that would make them ask this?
  - ❖ Seems like they are being slightly tongue-in-cheek with this question...almost as if to challenge God’s words. “You love us”? “It sure doesn’t look like it”! They are wondering if God really loves them.

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- How did things get so bad that they are wondering if God really loves them?
  - ❖ They were chosen by God long ago, in the time of their ancestor, Abraham. They were led by God's man, Moses, out of slavery in Egypt. They were given the ability to conquer those who would have killed them in the land of Canaan, and were able to occupy this land God had promised to them. They had a mighty and Godly King, David, who led them to trust in God and to be the mightiest nation in the world...for a little while. Then their own sin drew them down and away from God, and they became a weak, defenseless nation, conquered by ruthless enemies and carried away into slavery. But God saw their pitiful condition and brought them back home to their sweet homeland. And He spurred them on to rebuild their temple and once again worship Him.
- All of that sounds pretty good. It all sounds like God did, indeed, love them, and was definitely showing it. What was so bad that they now are brazen enough to laugh in the face of God when He says He loves them?
  - ❖ What had gotten so bad was their own sin, once again. We'll see, in the next 2 chapters, just how bad it had gotten. When anyone is given over to sin, anger at God just boils near the surface. Awful...but true.
- So...the Jews are being rebellious here...kind of snotty with God. What was God's answer to their question?
  - ❖ I have chosen you. That's how you know I have loved you. I chose you. I saw you as you were, loved you, and chose you to be my own. I drew you to me. I helped you see Who I Am. I helped you see your own sin and how much you needed me. I did all those things. That is proof enough that I love you...no matter how hard your life might feel. There may be others around you who brag that they don't need God. There may be others who seem to be happier or better off than you. But I have not chosen them...I have chosen you....you are loved, they are not. Believe it.

- At this point it would be smart for us to ask ourselves a question: What is the proper response to God when He has been willing to talk so honestly with us?
  - ❖ Verse 5: "The LORD be magnified beyond the borders of Israel." In other words, "May God be seen for Who He is everywhere in the universe – not just in my little world." In other words, the proper response is humility. The right thing to do is let the whole world know I accept Who God is, and bow my knee to whatever He has chosen for my life. The response God is looking for is me turning away from my own selfish nature and turning my eyes on His holiness.
  
- 2. (:6) God makes a statement, then God asks a question, then God makes another statement, then the priests ask a question. What are they?
  - a. God's statement: "A son honors his father, and a servant his master."
  - b. God's question: "So why don't you honor me?"
  - c. God's statement: "You priests have despised my name"
  - d. The Priest's question: "How have we despised your name?"

Sounds kind of like a conversation between a parent and an extremely rude child, doesn't it? Sort of like the 5-year-old who boldly looks you in the eye asking "What goldfish in the toilet?"

- 3. (:7-14) This passage goes on to describe the priests of Israel and how they are looking at their responsibility. What were they doing?

The priests of Israel had a job to do. They were to teach the people of Israel...and thus the people of the world...what God was like. As the priests went about the business of the temple...as they offered sacrifices...they would be showing the world that God was perfect and could not be approached by imperfect people. The sacrifices made on the altar were to show that a perfect sacrifice was necessary to pay the price for an imperfect person to have the right to enter the presence of God.

But the priests of Israel were taking shortcuts. They were sacrificing the weak and sickly or blemished of the animals, saving the strongest

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and the healthiest for themselves - to increase their own wealth. They were saying to themselves..."what a shame to kill the healthiest, best animals. Let's pick out the animals who are not going to reproduce well and sacrifice those. That way we will increase in our own riches...and of course God wants us to prosper...so He'll understand."

God understood, all right. But it wasn't OK with Him. The picture the priests were commissioned to give the world was being ruined. The purpose of the sacrifices was to show the world that someday a perfect sacrifice was coming. A perfect sacrifice...an unblemished sacrifice...a sinless sacrifice...was coming. And once that sacrifice was made, there would never be a need to a sacrifice ever again.

All those sacrifices - all those animals slain and offered upon the altar in the temple - were for one purpose - to point to Jesus, who someday would be the perfect sacrifice.

And the priests were making it impossible for the people of Israel....and the people of the world...to have faith in the perfect sacrifice that would someday come. By sacrificing the weak and sickly animals, the priests were putting a stumblingblock in the way of people who needed to come to God by faith.

The priest were worse than useless...they were blaspheming God.

4. (:14) Look at the last part of this verse. What reason does God give them for not doing things the way they were doing them?

"My name **is** feared among the nations." You ridiculous priests! Do you think God will be mocked? Do you think God will be fooled? Do you think God will accept less than the praise He deserves? What in the world are you thinking?

If the priests were doing less than they were supposed to....sacrificing animals which were less than what God required....they were not only disobedient, they were just plain dumb. They were missing a chance to serve the Almighty King of the Universe, and thinking it didn't matter. Foolish.

5. Have you ever been guilty of giving God less than what He deserved? Have you ever given a gift to God knowing it was not the best you could give? Why did you do that?

**APPLICATION:**

6. Have you ever wondered if God really loves you?
7. What questions do you have for God?
8. Are you willing to accept rebuke as part of God's answer to your question?
9. Do you realize that God also has questions for you?

Is there a chance you are like the priests of God in Malachi's time? Are you giving less than God requires? How will you know whether or not you are just like them?

I'll tell you how. Start a conversation with God.

How do you begin a conversation with God?

Ask honest questions. Ask those questions even if you are afraid God will answer with rebuke. It's better to be rebuked by God than to never talk with Him at all. Talk to Him. Tell Him your honest thoughts. Ask Him how you are doing. Believe me, He'll let you know.

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts. And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." Psalm 139:23&24*

Here's a promise: If you are brave enough to start that conversation with God, it will end with a longing look into the skies. Once you actually connect with God, your natural response is to want to see Him....to want to know Him better....to want to talk with Him again...even if you found, in your connection with Him, that you were much worse than you thought. When you finally get a chance to talk to God, your eyes will more often go to the skies, longing for Him to come back again - *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him..." (Rev. 1:7)* - because you will find that you can't get enough of Him.

## **“What to Do When God Rebukes You”**

### Malachi Chapter 2 - Questions

1. (:1-2) In Chapter 1, God told the priests of Israel what they were doing wrong. What does God say will happen to them if they don't listen to Him?
2. Why is God being so hard on them? (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)
3. (:1-2) The job of a priest was to extend God's blessings to people. What will happen to everyone if the Lord "curses" the blessings of the priests?
4. Who are the "priests" today? (I Peter 2:9)
5. (:3) What is going to happen to the priests and their descendants if the priests do not change their ways?
6. (:4) What does God want to happen as a result of His rebuke of the priests?
7. (:5-7) God chose Levi as the first priest about 1,000 years before Malachi. Levi was an example of a good priest. What was a good priest like?
8. (:8&9) The priests of Malachi's day didn't measure up. So, if you and I are the priests of today, how do we measure up?
9. What response did God want out of the priests?
10. (:10) In verses 10-16, the Lord turns His rebuke to the general population of Israel (He calls them "Judah"). What is His question for them?
11. What does it mean to "break faith"?
12. The LORD tells Judah they have "broken faith" in two areas:
  - a.
  - b.
13. (:17) What two things has Judah been saying which have wearied the Lord?
  - a.
  - b.

### **APPLICATION:**

14. The first application of this is for the people of Malachi's day. Very few of them were true believers in God. All of them were horribly caught up in the culture of their day. Most of them were not doing the things God wanted them to do. Almost none of them were looking for the Messiah they so desperately needed. *How did they respond to God's rebuke?*

15. The second application of this is for our day. Since we are all priests, and we are all the children of God, how should we react? *If we respond to God's rebuke, how will that look?*
16. The third application of this is for end times. The picture Malachi gives us of the Jewish people in 400 BC is the very same picture of the Jewish people when the end times begin. Very few of them will be true believers. All of them will be horribly caught up in the culture of their day. Most of them will not be doing the things God wants them to do. Almost none of them will be looking for the return of the Messiah they did not recognize the first time He came. *Will they respond to God's rebuke? (Zechariah 12:10 - 13:1)*

## **“What to Do When God Rebukes You”**

### Malachi Chapter 2 - Discussion Notes

1. (:1-2) In Chapter 1, God told the priests of Israel what they were doing wrong. What does God say will happen to them if they don't listen to Him?

Remember from Chapter 1 that the priests were not doing their job. They were to offer perfect sacrifices on the altar, but instead they were offering imperfect sacrifices - 2<sup>nd</sup> best. If these priests hear this rebuke from God and do not listen and respond, the Lord says He will curse them. He will make sure they suffer. He will take what should have been a blessing and turn it into a curse. Yikes!

2. Why is God being so hard on them? (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)

Because sin is really bad. There's no way I can say that to get the point across well enough. Sin – rebellion against God's will – is the worst thing in the world. Little sins are not better than big sins. All sins are ugly and terrifying. Why? Because sin causes death. Look at the two verses noted above: *Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"*, and *Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Everyone sins, and sin always causes death.

The job of the priests of Israel was to tell the Jews and the world that there was hope. The whole world was stumbling under the weight of sin...dying because of it...and the priests had the unbelievably fantastic job of telling the world they didn't have to die. They didn't have to be slaves of sin. The priests could offer innocent, unblemished little animals on an altar, and picture for the world that God would someday provide a perfect sacrifice – so that sin could be gone forever. The priests had the privilege of carrying out a small drama, day after day after day. The drama was a sacrifice of an animal. And in carrying out that drama, the priests could show in picture form what *the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Romans 6:23* was saying: *"...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Of course God was being hard on the priests. They were the means for people to understand how to have faith in God – in Jesus. And they were choosing to mess it up.

3. (:1-2) The job of a priest was to extend God's blessings to people. What will happen to everyone if the Lord "curses" the blessings of the priests?

Everyone would suffer if God cursed the blessings of the priests. Every person alive desperately needed the blessing of God.

4. Who are the "priests" today? (I Peter 2:9)

Us. All believers in Jesus Christ are priests to the world we live in. Hmmm. This is getting a little personal here....

5. (:3) What is going to happen to the priests and their descendants if the priests do not change their ways?

Their descendants will suffer. And the very burned-up ashes of the sacrifices they are making will be "smeared" on their faces, and they, themselves will be carried out of Jerusalem, just like the ashes of their sacrifices were often carried out. Wow. This is a very clear promise from God that the priests, their families, and all Israel would be scattered – away from Jerusalem – if repentance did not take place. And the promise was actually carried out....about 500 years later...in 70 AD, when the Romans burned down the temple in Jerusalem and the Jews ran for their lives.

Why did this happen in 70 AD? Because the priests of Israel did not listen to and respond to the rebuke of God in 400 BC.

6. (:4) What does God want to happen as a result of His rebuke of the priests?

He wants His covenant with Levi (the first priest) to continue.

7. (:5-7) God chose Levi as the first priest about 1,000 years before Malachi. Levi was an example of a good priest. What picture can we see from Levi of what a good priest was like?

- He passed on God's life and peace to people
- He revered God – respected Him
- He was in awe of God
- He spoke the truth of God to people...and only the truth
- He lived uprightly
- He turned many from sin
- He instructed people, and made sure truth was kept safe
- He was the messenger of God

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8. (:8&9) The priests of Malachi's day didn't measure up. So, if you and I are the priests of today, how do we measure up? That's the question, isn't it?

9. What response did God want out of the priests? He wanted repentance. An about-face. Going one direction and then turning around going the exact opposite direction.

10. (:10) In verses 10-16, the Lord turns His rebuke to the general population of Israel (He calls them "Judah"). What is His question for them? He asks them why they have broken faith.

11. What does it mean to "break faith"? Making a covenant with someone and then breaking that covenant. Making a promise and breaking it. Doing what you said you would not do...or...not doing what you said you would do.

12. The LORD tells Judah they have "broken faith" in two areas:
- a. (:11-12) What is the first thing He zeroes in on? They have first of all "broken faith" with God, because they have begun to worship other Gods – to give honor to other religions. How have they done that? They have married women who did not worship the One, True God. They have married idol-worshippers.
  - b. (:13-16) What is the second thing He zeroes in on? They have broken faith with each other. They have promised one thing and done another – to each other. The best example of this in their lives was their casual attitude towards divorce. They thought nothing of marrying and then divorcing in order to please themselves. God tells them in no uncertain terms that divorce is not just a piece of paper...not just a decision to change living arrangements. It is a violent act. And it was an example of their attitude towards each other in all areas of life. They had a covenant to love and be bound to one another in a sacred covenant given them by God, and they were very casually breaking that covenant in every area of life.

13. (:17) What two things has Judah been saying which have wearied the Lord?
- The people of Israel were saying: "God doesn't care about the sins in your life. He just wants you to be happy. Don't get so uptight about sin. God loves you. In other words....**yes, there is a God, but He doesn't care about sin.**"
  - Or they were saying: "If there were really a God up there, He wouldn't be allowing us to suffer at the hands of our enemies. There isn't a God. There isn't justice. We will take care of ourselves and do things our own way. In other words, **no, there is no God**"

Either way, these Jewish people of Malachi's day had it wrong. They were blind to the truth, stubborn in their love of sinful ways, and proud.

#### **APPLICATION:**

14. The first application of this is for the people of Malachi's day. Very few of them were true believers in God. All of them were horribly caught up in the culture of their day. Most of them were not doing the things God wanted them to do. Almost none of them were looking for the Messiah they so desperately needed. *How did they respond to God's rebuke?*

*Most of them did not.*

15. The second application of this is for our day. Since we are all priests, and we are all the children of God, how should we react? *If we respond to God's rebuke, how will that look?*

*We will melt in the presence of our God...begging for a second or third or umpteenth chance to serve Him in the way He wants to be served.*

16. The third application of this is for end times. The picture Malachi gives us of the Jewish people in 400 BC is the very same picture of the Jewish people when the end times begin. Very few of them will be true believers. All of them will be horribly caught up in the culture of their day. Most of them will not be doing the things God wants them to do. Almost none of them will be looking for the return of the Messiah they did not recognize the first time He came. *Will they respond to God's rebuke? (Zechariah 12:10 - 13:1)*

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*Praise God, they will. They will repent, weep, grieve, and stand eventually to their feet, bringing glory to God again.*

What should you do when you have started a conversation with God...and He rebukes you? This is serious business....history testifies to that....so take it seriously. Respond, in a way pleasing to Him, while there is time.

**“A Challenge for All Times –  
Stay in your Safe Place....or....Take a Risk”**

Malachi Chapters 3&4 - Questions

1. (3:1) After all the rebuking of chapters 1 and 2, the Lord suddenly slips in a promise to those who are listening. What is the promise?
2. (3:2-4) What will happen when the Lord returns to His temple?
  - a. (:2)
  - b. (:3)
  - c. (:4)
3. Look at the passage above and determine whether it is referring to the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ or the 2<sup>nd</sup>. What helped you come to your conclusion?
4. (3:5) Who will the Lord judge when He returns?
5. (3:6) Why haven't the Jews, who are doing all these things, been destroyed before now?
6. (3:7-12) The Lord is asking the listening Jews to take their response even further. What does He ask them to do? Why would this be an important step of repentance?
7. (3:13–14) What are the harsh things the Jews have said about God?
8. (3:16a) Some of the Jews do repent...what do they do?
9. (3:16b-18) What does God do for them when they repent?
10. (4:1-4) What is guaranteed to happen at the Lord's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming?
11. (4:5) What else is guaranteed to happen before the Lord's wrath descends?

**APPLICATION:**

12. Summarize some of the things the Lord has confronted the Jews about through the prophet Malachi:
  - a. (1:2-5) The Jews were questioning God's \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. (1:6-14) The Jewish priests were not honoring God because they were offering \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifices at the temple.
  - c. (2:1-9) T or F? The Jewish priests were not measuring up to God's standards in any area.
  - d. (2:10-16) The Jews were not faithful to one another – evidenced by their casual attitude towards \_\_\_\_\_

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- e. (2:17) The Jews are basically denying the existence of God because of their acceptance of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. (3:7-12) The Jews need to return to a relationship with God, evidenced by their again supporting the temple with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - g. (3:13&14) The Jews have said \_\_\_\_\_ things against God.
13. How does this book apply to Christians of today?
  14. How will this book apply to Jews at the beginning of the Last 7 Years?
  15. What is the powerful message about the future in this book?
  16. How much do you talk about that coming event?

## **“A Challenge for All Times – Stay in your Safe Place....or....Take a Risk”**

Malachi Chapters 3&4 - Discussion Notes

Now in Chapters 3&4, we will finish Malachi’s challenge to not only the Jews of 400 BC, but also to:

- You and me - Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and
- Some day - Jews at the beginning of the Last 7 Years.

1. (3:1) After all the rebuking of chapters 1 and 2, the Lord suddenly slips in a promise to those who are listening. What is the promise?

That He (the Lord) is coming. He will send a messenger before Him to prepare the way, and He will return, Himself, to His temple. He will come.

2. (3:2-4) What will happen when the Lord returns to His temple?
  - a. (:2) He will clean things up – with fire and purity
  - b. (:3) He will purify even the priests who have so messed up
  - c. (:4) Then offerings will be acceptable again. In a clean temple, with clean priests.

3. Look at the passage above and determine whether it is referring to the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ or the 2<sup>nd</sup>. What helped you come to your conclusion?

I think this passage is talking about the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ, because it refers to a time when the offerings of the Jews will be acceptable again – and that didn’t happen at His 1<sup>st</sup> coming. And it hasn’t happened yet.

4. (3:5) Who will the Lord judge when He returns?

Sorcerers  
Adulterers  
Perjurers,  
Those who defraud laborers of their wages,  
Those who oppress the weak,

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Those who deprive others of justice  
Those who do all these things and do not fear God.

5. (3:6) Why haven't the Jews, who are doing all these things, been destroyed before now?

Because God doesn't change. He has made promises to the Jewish people (Jeremiah 31:33&34), and He is patiently waiting for a generation of Jewish people to arrive who will respond to Him in faith – so that He can fulfill those promises to them.

6. (3:7-12) The Lord is asking the listening Jews to take their response even further. What does He ask them to do? Why would this be an important step of repentance?

He asks them not only to feel bad about what they are doing....not only to listen to Him as He tells them the truth....but to take action. What action? They need to begin again to financially support the temple. Why? Because that is the best way to show they truly do expect Him to return to that temple some day. It's the best way to show that obedience to God is more important than their own comfort and wealth.

7. (3:13–14) What are the harsh things the Jews have said about God?

They've said "It's not worth it to serve God." And "What does it matter if we sin – the sinners are the ones who are prospering." They love their prosperity more than they love their Maker.

8. (3:16a) Some of the Jews do repent...what do they do? They talked with each other. My, so simple. They just talked. About God. About how right He was. About how much they wanted to be what He desired.

Every once in a while I get a chance to start a Bible study with a group of people not used to Bible studies. They are often a little nervous about what to expect. What, exactly, will they have to do in a Bible study? With that type of group I love to look together at these verses in Malachi. We talk about the fact that a Bible study is very simple. It's just a group of people talking about God. Wanting to know Him better. Wanting to see what His ways are. And wanting to please Him by becoming the people He desires them to be.

9. (3:16b-18) What does God do for them when they repent? He wrote their names down. The ones who repented were recorded in a book in God's keeping. And God will not forget what He has written

down. Their faith was evidenced by their words of belief to one another.

10. (4:1-4) What is guaranteed to happen at the Lord's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming?

All evil ones will be destroyed

Those who have had faith will be rejuvenated

Those who have had faith will fight back against evil

11. (4:5) What else is guaranteed to happen before the Lord's wrath descends?

The prophet Elijah will come to preach repentance one more time – so that hearts will be turned back to God.

This verse is the reason Jewish families today leave an empty chair at the Passover ceremony. Those Jewish families often have no idea why they are doing this – but the tradition remains. The Lord the Jewish people do not know – the Lord they will someday be looking for – will someday return to His temple...and Elijah will come first to prepare the way.

Many people believe the Elijah of old will be one of the Two Witnesses who appear at the temple in Jerusalem 3 ½ years into the Last 7 Years, and remain there for 3 ½ more years to preach the Good News of Jesus to the whole world...and especially to the lost nation of Israel.

### **APPLICATION:**

12. Here are some of the things the Lord has confronted the Jews about through the prophet Malachi:

d. (1:2-5) The Jews were questioning God's love

e. (1:6-14) The Jewish priests were not honoring God because they were offering blemished sacrifices at the temple.

f. (2:1-9) **True** The Jewish priests were not measuring up to God's standards in any area.

g. (2:10-16) The Jews were not faithful to one another – evidenced by their casual attitude to marriage and divorce.

h. (2:17) The Jews are basically denying the existence of God because of their acceptance of sin.

i. (3:7-12) The Jews need to return to a relationship with God, evidenced by their again supporting the temple with tithes.

j. (3:13&14) The Jews have said harsh things against God.

Looking For His Coming  
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13. How does this book apply to Christians of today?

It's obvious just from looking at that list that there are many things the Jews of 400 BC were doing which we, too, are doing today. Even the comments to the priests of Israel can apply to us today, because we are the priests of God today. Repentance from any and all of these is very appropriate for us, today.

14. How will this book apply to Jews at the beginning of the Last 7 Years?

It's equally obvious that this list plainly describes the Jewish nation today, and we can assume it will also describe the Jewish nation at the beginning of the Last 7 Years, when the Lord starts the clock once more for Daniels' 70 weeks of years to be completed.

When the Last 7 Years begins, Jews all over the world will be either atheists or religious people who are counting on their own good works to make them right with God. Those who are religious will be questioning the love of a God Who seems to have forgotten them through the centuries, they will be unfaithful to one another, they will be living in sin, they will be unconcerned about supporting financially the things of God, they will be saying harsh things against the Lord, and their leaders will be consistently leading them away from God.

15. What is the powerful message about the future in this book? The Lord is returning to His earth. To His temple. In judgment for those who do not trust in Him, and in saving protection for those who do.

16. How much do you talk about that coming event?

How much do you and I even talk about the next coming of our Lord....much less think about it? For most of us, the answer to that question is: "not much".

If the people of Malachi's time were honoring God by simply talking about God and His future dealings with men – then perhaps we ought to begin talking, too. Talking about the return of our Savior to the world someday. Talking to one another. Talking to the lost. Talking to God. Talking to strangers. Talking to friends. Talking to family. Talking to ourselves.

It's time to take a risk....and start talking about His return.



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