

March Teaching Theme: The Book of Malachi

讲员 Speaker: Elder Yin / Dr. Ted Moon

题目 Topic: 真敬拜 / “Is that a Sick Animal I See?”

经文 Scripture: Malachi 1:6-2:9

Monthly Theme: For the next two months (outside of Easter), we will be walking through the prophetic book of Malachi. Malachi is a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah; thus, the historical context for this book is the same as Ezra-Nehemiah's. It is debated if Malachi's prophetic ministry comes in between Zerubabel and Ezra's return to the land or if it is shortly after the ending of Nehemiah, which we just looked at last week. Either way, we know that God was speaking through Malachi to the people of Israel within the same storyline and context as Ezra-Nehemiah. Recall, in the Ezra-Nehemiah, the hopes were high upon the return to the land, but after it is all said and done, the people prove to be just as corrupt, unjust, and unfaithful as before the exile. Malachi steps on the scene to confront the sin, corruption, and injustice that has become characteristic of this new generation in the land. Something lurking in the background of the story of Ezra-Nehemiah that we did not mention in our last series is the pressures of mixed allegiances within the Israelite leadership. Recall that the temple and wall project and the paychecks of many Israelite leaders were being funded by the Persian government, which had other plans and agendas. So, for instance, the Persian government would have likely used the temple to collect governmental taxes, opening up the door for confusion and corruption. Thus, it is likely that these mixed allegiances to Yahweh and the Persian government contributed to the failings of Israel at the time. And this is the context that Malachi confronts - a lack of full allegiance to Yahweh, leading to corrupt, unjust, and unwise actions. The book is divided into six disputes between God and the people. Most of these disputes are formatted with God making a claim, the people responding in disagreement, and God responding with the final word.

三月 March: 瑪拉基書 Malachi (四旬期 Lent)

March 6th – 神的愛與信實 God's Love & Faithfulness (瑪拉基書 Malachi 1:2-5 – Dispute 1)

March 13th - 鄙視聖殿 Despising the Temple (瑪拉基書 Malachi 1:6-2:9 -Dispute 2)

March 20th – 拜偶像與離婚 Idolatry & Divorce (瑪拉基書 Malachi 2:10-16 - Dispute 3)

March 27th – 公義的神 God of Justice (瑪拉基書 Malachi 2:17-3:5 - Dispute 4)

Structure of Book:

Dispute 争论 1 - 1:1-5

Dispute 争论 2 - 1:6-2:9

Dispute 争论 3 - 2:10-16

Dispute 争论 4 - 2:17-3:5

Dispute 争论 5 - 3:6-12

Dispute 争论 6 - 3:13-18

Conclusion 结论 - 4:1-6

Dispute Format 争论形式:

1: God makes a Claim 神宣告一件事

2: The People Respond in Disagreement 百姓反驳

3: God Responds 神回应

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#) (Elder Yin)

[Sermon Video](#) (Dr. Ted Moon)

[Sermon Slides](#) (Dr. Ted Moon)

[Overview: Malachi](#) (Bible Project) [English]

[Overview: Malachi](#) (Bible Project) [Mandarin]

[Map of Israel/Judah/Edom before Babylonian Exile](#)

[Maps of Persian Empire](#)

[Map of Judah \(Yehud\) under Persian rule](#)

[Timeline of Rebuild under Persian Rule](#)

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne / Elder Yin):

Pastor Will: (Based on Dr. Moon's Sermon)

- (1) Read Malachi 1:6-2:9 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage?
- (2) In Malachi's time, the people gave the worst of their flocks as sacrifices to the LORD. What are some examples of us doing a similar thing in our day?
- (3) Read Mark 12:38-44 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage? How does this help us understand the heart of Malachi 1:6-2:9?
- (4) Read Romans 11:33-12:2 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage? How does this add to our understanding of Malachi 1:6-2:9? What does it look like for us to be living sacrifices? In what ways are we tempted to be only partially allegiance to God?

Elder Yin:

- (1) 敬拜形式有几种? What are the forms of Worshiping God?
- (2) 为什么基督必需敬拜神? Why do Christians have to worship God?
- (3) 为什么旧约有动物献祭来敬拜主? 现在为什么不再以牺牲动物来献祭? Why was there any more sacrifice to worship God in Old Testament? Why is it not used now?
- (4) 旧约以色列人的敬拜和新约的敬拜有何不同? What were the differences in worshiping God between Old Testament and New Testament?
- (5) 所以, 弟兄们, 我以 神的慈悲劝你们, 将身体献上, 当作活祭, 是圣洁的, 是 神所喜悦的; 你们如此事奉乃是理所当然的。”罗马书 12:1, 这里的活祭什么意思? In Romans 12: What does living sacrifice mean?
- (6) 神是个灵, 所以拜他的必须用心灵和诚实拜他。”约翰福音 4:24, 这里的心灵和诚实指什么? 这二样如何来帮助我们敬拜神? In John chapter 4:24, what do the spirit and the truth really mean? How do they help us in worshiping God?

There are a lot of questions here, so feel free to use any set of questions provided here for group discussion, lots of wonderful directions to go. Let's grow together!

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q1: Please take note of the context, both recalling what we learned in Ezra-Nehemiah and using the above resources (maps, videos, etc.).

Notes on Q2: We usually don't take the idea of "sacrificial giving" or "firstfruits" seriously in our lives. The things of God and the needs of others are usually far secondary to our wants, and we typically give out of what we have leftover (if we have any, leftover after our consumer habits). When we give to those in need, we often give our junk we don't want instead of actually giving good gifts. Like the people in Malachi's day, we usually only act generously and give if it is of convenience or benefit for us. God despises this type of giving, as it reveals a heart of greed, selfishness, and little reverence or honor for God.

Notes on Q3: We see in Mark 12:38-44 that Jesus didn't give praise to the rich who gave a lot but not sacrificially, but he gives praise to the poor widow who gave even in her need. Not only that, but Jesus, at the beginning of the passage, warned against people who only serve, give, or participate in religious activities to lift up themselves. This is like us serving, giving, or doing "church things" so that we look good or only to add a line to our resume line under community service. Jesus points out that this sort of action is not only selfish and not authentic, but it ultimately hurts the poor and marginalized ("devour widows houses"). Jesus' strong words, "these men will be punished most severely," show drive us to serious self-examination. As we have seen in both Malachi and here in Mark, giving is not just about what you give but your motivations and heart behind the giving.

Notes on Q4: Paul's words in Romans 12:1-2 flow out of the doxology ending chapter 11, keeping it all in perspective of the type of God we serve and are called to give our complete allegiance to - a wise, all-knowing, Creator God. The idea of "presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice" takes us beyond "sacrificial giving" of our finances and material good but to live sacrificially in all of life. "Paul is urging a fundamental renovation of a person at the deepest level of his or her desires, intellect, and will" (Bird). We are called to embody the ways of Jesus and the Kingdom of God in our physical bodies and actions in the world. And when we are submitted with total allegiance to the LORD in this way, we are told that we will receive a "renewing of the mind." "The mind renewed by the Spirit is able to discern the good, the pleasing, and the perfect purposes of God with a view to aligning their own attitudes and values with it." (Bird). So, in light of Romans 12 and Malachi, we see that our attitudes and offerings go beyond just financial, but they encompass all of life. As Dr. Moon ending story called us, "I'm going to give my Lord 100% because 90% just won't do!"