

Malachi

The book of Malachi forms a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

As you read and meditate on Malachi's words, see yourself as the recipient of the Word of God to His people, all Christians.

Evaluate the depth of your commitment to your Creator God, the sincerity of your worship [**John 4:23**] and the direction of your life, [**Romans 8:14; John 16:13**].

Then allow the Creator God to restore your relationship with Him through His love and forgiveness.

Malachi in Hebrew means "*my messenger*" and there is **no** clear evidence that it was ever used as a proper name. It can also refer to an angel of God.

No specific date can be put to message but generally assumed to be about 430BC.

The temple at Jerusalem had been rebuilt for almost a century, and the people were losing their enthusiasm for worship.

Apathy and disillusionment had set in because the exciting prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah had not been fulfilled.

2 Peter 3:3-4 [NIV] *"First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'"*

This similar attitude of mind is prophesied in the last days before Jesus Christ's Second Coming.

Malachi 1:1-5 [NIV] *"An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. 'I have loved you,' says the LORD. 'But you ask, "How have you loved us?"' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' the LORD says. 'Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.' Edom may say, 'Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.' But this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. You will see it with your own eyes and say, "Great is the LORD, even beyond the borders of Israel!"'"*

God's first message through Malachi is His love for His people. Although this message is specifically to Israel, it is a message of hope for all humanity through the ages.

Unfortunately, many people are cynical about God's love, using political and economic progress as a measure of His love.

Because the leaders were corrupt and the economy poor, the Israelites assumed that the Creator God did not love them. The same attitude of mind applies today with people saying "how can God be a God of love with all the evil, violence, pain and suffering there is in this world, and He is not responding to put things right?"

Such an attitude is wrong.

God loves all humanity, for He created them to be an object of His love, and shows this through the sacrifice of His Only Son, Jesus Christ.

John 3:16-18 [NIV] *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to*

condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

However, God's eternal rewards go **only** to those who are faithful to Him and reflect and return that love, [1 John 4:19].

The phrase "Esau I have hated" does not refer to Esau's eternal destiny but to the fact that he placed little value on his birthright or inheritance, [Genesis 25:27-34].

What value do we place on our inheritance with Jesus Christ, [Romans 8:16-17], do we even know what that inheritance will be?

God allowed Esau to father a nation, but this nation, Edom, later became one of Israel's chief enemies. Among the descendents of Esau are many Arab tribes as well as the direct descendents of Abraham, who are still hostile to Israel today.

Because God chose Jacob and his descendents as a nation through whom the world would be blessed, God cared for them in a special way.

Ironically, they rejected Jesus Christ through whom the whole world has and will be blessed.

Malachi 1:6-10 [NIV] *"A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the respect due to me?" says the LORD Almighty. 'It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. But you ask, "How have we shown contempt for your name?" You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, "How have we defiled you?" By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?' says the LORD Almighty. 'Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?' says the LORD Almighty. 'Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and I will accept no offering from your hands.'"*

God is charging His priests with failing to honour Him, to the very point of showing contempt for His name and failing to be good examples to the people.

By Malachi's time the nation's leaders had fallen away from worshipping God in a right way and the people followed their poor example.

The worship of God was no longer heartfelt adoration, instead it was simply a burdensome job for the priests.

God, through Malachi, accuses priests and people of dishonouring Him by offering imperfect sacrifice.

If we give God only our "left over" time, money and energy then we are repeating the sins of these worshippers who did **not** bring anything of real value to the Creator God.

What we give to God reflects our true attitude towards Him.

John 4:23-26 [NIV] *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.' The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.' Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am he.'"*

We find what is truth through the words and life of Jesus Christ, [John 14:6; John 17:17], and the Holy Spirit working actively within us will guide us into all truth, and open our minds to what the Creator God is planning for **all** humanity in the future, [John 16:13].

[Please download and study the articles listed under ‘Religion’ on this website to show how humanity has at this time drifted away from true worship of the one and only Creator God.]

As human intermediaries between God and His people, priests were and should be now, responsible for reflecting God’s attitude and character.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

As Christians we are in the same position as the priests of Israel because we should reflect the attitude of the Creator God to our friends, workmates and family.

We need to ask what image of the Creator God’s character and attitude do they see in us?

Malachi 1:11 [NIV] *“My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty.”*

This theme is repeated throughout the Old Testament, that “God’s name will be great among all nations” is affirmed in the book of Malachi.

God had a chosen people, the Jews at that time, through whom He planned to save and bless the entire world.

The Christians are now God’s chosen people, and our pure offering is our new life in Jesus Christ, [Romans 6:1-4, 8-13].

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 [NIV] *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Are you available to the Creator God to be used by Him in “making His name great among all nations”?

Our mission begins in our homes and neighbourhood but it must **not** stop there.

We must all pray for God’s worldwide mission, part of which is this website that is seeking to make God’s Word available to people worldwide.

Malachi 1:12-14 [NIV] *“But you profane it by saying of the Lord’s table, “It is defiled”, and of its food, “It is contemptible.” And you say, “What a burden!” and you sniff at it contemptuously,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?’ says the LORD. ‘Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and my name is to be feared among the nations.’”*

A repeat of the charge in **Malachi 1:7**.

The food of the Lord's table was the priests subsistence, their part of the sacrifice, which they looked on as contemptible.

They regarded serving God as irksome and tried to get it over quickly by offering worthless sacrifices.

Those who made sacrifices were not offering what was acceptable, not out of poverty, for avarice was the cause of their mean offerings.

It is only when our serving the Creator God is our number one priority that it can be acceptable to Him, [Luke 14:26-27, 33].

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The Creator God is **only** worshipped in a way that is acceptable to Him, [**John 4:23**] when our whole life is offered to Him. The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*soma*” meaning the body, mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8**].

This is the laying aside, on a daily basis, our desires to fulfil the will of the Creator God for our lives, the good works that He has prepared in advance for us to do, [**Ephesians 2:8-10**].

This was **not** the attitude that these priests had towards their responsibilities in worshipping the Creator God, so their bad example was followed by the people they were supposed to be teaching God's way of life.

Twice in this warning to the religious leaders of Israel, the Creator God prophesied the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles, [**1 Peter 2:10**].

Malachi 2:1-2 [NIV] *“‘And now this admonition is for you, O priests. If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honour my name,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honour me.’”*

The priests in particular are reproved, as it is the job of ministers to lead the people in the right and true path of life.

Whereas these ministers had by their sinful example led others to sin, we are not without this happening in the Christian Churches today and the Creator God will respond in the same way towards the offenders today.

All true Christians are called to honour the Creator God's name, by worshipping Him.

This means acknowledging the Creator God before all we come in contact with in our day-to-day life, [**Matthew 5:14-16; 2 Corinthians 4:6**] and be ready to tell others of the hope we have in Jesus Christ, [**1 Peter 3:15-16**].

This means acknowledging the Creator God for who He is, the almighty creator and sustainer of the universe, who alone is perfect in all He does.

Our Creator who reaches down to sinful humanity with perfect love, [**John 3:16-17**].

According to this definition we have to ask the question ‘are we honouring the Creator God's name?’

Malachi 2:3 [King James] *“Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.”*

To “*corrupt seed*” is the very opposite to the promise of **Malachi 3:11**, so pests will devour their crops.

The maw of the sacrificed animal was part of priest’s due, [**Deuteronomy 18:3**], but God is saying that all they will receive is the dung that remained in the maw of the sacrificed animal and it would be spread on their faces as an example of their corrupt ways.

This would cleave to them, wherever they went they would be dung-begrimed, [**1 Kings 14:10-11; Jeremiah 16:4**], **not** a pleasant sight!

Malachi 2:4 [NIV] “*And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue,*’ says the LORD Almighty.”

These priests and people “*will know*” as a result of the bitter experience of these consequences.

Know that it was their duty to focus their attention on the covenant that the Creator God had made with Levi which they had corrupted.

Malachi 2:5-6 [NIV] “*My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.*”

Levi was the ancestor of the tribe of Levites, the tribe set apart for service of God, [**Number 1:47-56**].

The Levites became God’s ministers [servants] first in the tabernacle, then in the temple.

In these verses, the Creator God was addressing the priests who were from the tribe, saying that they should listen to the laws He gave their ancestor Levi and follow his example, [**Deuteronomy 33:8-11**].

The priest was the ordinary expounder of the law, the prophets were so **only** on special needful occasions.

“*Walked with me*” by faith and obedience, Enoch was an early example of this relationship, [**Genesis 5:22**], the result of this obedience and faith is peace.

Peace with the Creator God, with other human beings and with your own conscience, [**Job 22:21; James 3:13-18**].

“Turned many from sin” both by positive instruction and by personal example.

Jeremiah 23:20-22 [NIV] “*The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly. I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.*”

Jeremiah had a similar problem in his day.

James 5:20 [NIV] “*remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*”

Direct the person on the path to confession, repentance and faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The “*multitude of sins*” is those of the person who has repented, [**Proverbs 10:12**] love for that repented sinner by **not** making public their past sins.

Malachi 2:7-8 [NIV] *“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the LORD Almighty.*”

Levi in doing what he did in his life was fulfilling his duty as a priest.

The duties of a priest or minister of God –

Be well aware of the law, doctrines and positive and negative precepts, [**Leviticus 10:10-11; Deuteronomy 24:8; Jeremiah 18:18; Haggai 2:11**].

Be able to give wise counsel, [**James 3:17-18**].

Act as a messenger of the Creator God, [**Haggai 1:13**].

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 [NIV] *“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

An ambassador is a representative of his country in a foreign land. We are to be the living Word of God in this society that is ruled over by an evil being, [**1 John 5:19**].

Malachi 2:9 [NIV] *“So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”*

“Shown partiality in the matters of the law,” having respect to persons rather than to truth in the interpretation and administration of the law, [**Leviticus 19:15**].

The priests had allowed influential and favoured people to break the law. The priests were so dependent on these people for support that they could not afford to confront them when they did wrong.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 [NIV] *“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”*

The context of this problem is a time near to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, [verse 1] when many false prophets will abound, not having the will or courage to teach the truth, [Matthew 24:5, 11, 24].

Malachi 2:10 [NIV] *“Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?”*

Why, seeing all humanity has one common origin, do we deal treacherously against one another?

Paul expands on this in his letter to the Church in Rome, a city which was the centre of pagan worship and people who had **no** fear or respect for the one true Creator God, [**Romans 1:18-32**].

There are today many parallels to what Malachi was confronting.

Malachi 2:11-17 [NIV] *“Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob, even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty. Another thing you do: You*

flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, 'Why?' It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not [the LORD] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. 'I hate divorce,' says the LORD God of Israel, 'and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,' says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. You have wearied the LORD with your words. 'How have we wearied him?' you ask. By saying, 'All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them' or 'Where is the God of justice?'"

The people were being unfaithful to the Creator God.

Though not openly saying they rejected God, they were living as if He did not exist.

Men were marrying pagan women who worshipped idols.

Divorce was common, occurring for **no** reason other than a desire for change.

People acted as if they could do anything without being punished.

Yet they wondered why God refused to accept their offerings and bless them, [verse 13].

They could **not** understand that we **cannot** separate our dealings with the Creator God from the rest of our lives.

The Creator God demands that He rules every part of our lives, making our whole life an act of worship, [Romans 12:1].

After the temple had been rebuilt and the walls completed the people were excited to see past prophecies coming true.

But as time passed, the prophecies about the coming of a Messiah were **not** immediately fulfilled, the people became discouraged, and they grew complacent about obeying all of God's Laws.

We have a similar situation in this generation as there has been in most generations since the beginning of the Christian Church.

2 Peter 3:1-4 [NIV] *"Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'"*

If we preach about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time as Lord of lords and King of kings, [Revelation 19:16], also that we all will have to face Him and the actions of our lives will be judged by Him, [2 Corinthians 5:10-12] people will laugh at what we say.

Jesus Christ Himself made His Second Coming a part of the very message He had brought from God the Father, [Matthew 24:3-51].

Malachi 3:1 [NIV] *"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty."*

There are two messengers in this verse, the first is understood to be John the Baptist and the second Jesus Christ for whom both Malachi and John the Baptist prepared the way.

“Whom you desire” in the coming of the Messiah the Jews [God’s people] were looking for a temporal Saviour, to free them from domination of Rome, **not** in Who He was, Saviour from sin and freedom from eternal death.

Malachi 3:2 [NIV] *“But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.”*

“The day of His coming” and “suddenly” [verse 1] both point towards the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as our judge, [2 Corinthians 5:10] “stand when He appears” when God appears in His glorified state, humans prostrate themselves before Him, [Exodus 3:1-6; Matthew 17:1-6].

No sinful human being can stand approved before the Holy Creator God, [1 Samuel 6:20; Ezra 9:15; Job 41:9-10; Psalms 76:7; Psalms 130:3; Revelation 6:17].

“Refiner’s fire” [Hebrews 12:28-29] ore is heated by fire to purify it into a pure metal.

“Launderer’s soap” is an alkali used to whiten cloth, symbolic of purity.

Malachi 3:3 [NIV] *“He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,”*

Specifically the Levites, as spiritual leaders, will be purified and all should make themselves available to the process of purification.

Psalms 51:6-11 [New King James] *“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”*

It was this attitude of mind that David had that made him special to the Creator God, [Acts 13:22] as we all can if we accept the Creator God’s personal discipline, [Hebrews 12:5-13].

The idea that judgement will start with God’s people is also found in the New Testament.

1 Peter 4:16-17 [New King James] *“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*

Judgement referred to here is more of a refining discipline, the fire being destructive only of what is base and worthless in our lives.

Malachi 3:4 [New King James] *“Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years.”*

As a result of this corrective purification we, as we offer our lives to God, will be acceptable to Him.

Malachi 3:5 [NIV] *“So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but **do not fear me,**” says the LORD Almighty.”*

We will then understand, when will we see this judgement [Hebrew word “*mishpât*”] which involves both justice the giving of a verdict both favourable or unfavourable, and correction.

Malachi does **not** follow a simple sequence of events, the prophets thoughts dart from past to future to add urgency to his message. This time it is the future directed towards those among God's people who violate the integrity and destroy the liberty of others.

"Do not fear me," Malachi's social concern for people is beyond question, but for him worship and ethics coincide. Most evil is the result of the lack of fear and humble respect for the Creator God, [Romans 1:18-32].

Malachi 3:6 [New King James] *"For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."*

Throughout all judgement and correction, the Creator God's great love and mercy is always the basis of all His actions.

Malachi 3:7 [New King James] *"Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'"*

The break in our relationship with our Creator God is never on His side.

If we return to humble submission to God's ways, which in the end are what is best for us, He will return to us and bless us in many ways, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Malachi sees that it depends on the people's willingness to take the first step for the relationship with the Creator God being restored, [rather like the prodigal son in Jesus Christ's parable who sets out for home on his own accord], yet the initiative that makes it possible is God's.

Then comes the inevitable question, 'How do we start to return to a right relationship with our Creator God?'

Malachi 3:8-12 [New King James] *"Do Not Rob God 'Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,' says the LORD of hosts; 'and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,' says the LORD of hosts."*

Malachi urged the people to stop holding back offering a tenth of their income from the Creator God, a very direct sign of obedience to our Creator God.

The tithing system was defined during the time of Moses, [Leviticus 27:30-34; Deuteronomy 14:22].

The Levites received some of the tithe because they were not allocated land of their own, [Numbers 18:20-21].

During Malachi's day the people were **not** giving tithes to the Levites so they had to work outside of temple to earn a living, as a result neglecting their God-given responsibilities to care for the temple and for the service of worship, and the teaching of God's people the law and statutes.

God owns everything, [Deuteronomy 10:14; Haggai 2:8].

Are we selfishly wanting to keep all that the Creator God gives to us or are we willing to return at least ten percent towards the advance of God's work of bringing salvation and eternal life to all human beings?

Luke 6:38 [New King James] *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

Jesus Christ is preaching the same generous attitude along with the same promise of blessings coming our way from the Creator God.

Malachi 3:13-15 [NIV] *“‘You have said harsh things against me,’ says the LORD. ‘Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’ You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.’”*”

These verses describe the people’s arrogant attitude towards the Creator God. They see no value in serving God.

This is because of their total ignorance of God’s promises and His power to fulfil those promises as found in His Word, the Christian Bible.

Their focus is totally selfish.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

When we know and acknowledge what God has done for us, which we **cannot** do for ourselves, through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our response should be a total surrender of our whole life to the Creator God out of pure thankfulness for His love and grace.

We must serve our Creator God, just because of who He is as well as what He has done for all humanity to express His love for all people, both those who disobey Him as well as those who obey Him, [Matthew 5:44-45].

Malachi 3:16 [NIV] *“Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and **the LORD listened and heard.** A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.”*

Despite all that the sceptics have maintained about the Creator God’s indifference to humanity, Malachi simply states, “the Lord listened and heard.” Two different Hebrew words are used in this statement, “listened” is Hebrew “qâshab” meaning to incline the ear, mark well, regard. “Heard” is Hebrew “shâma” to hear intelligently, to perceive and understand, all with the intent of responding to what is heard.

“A scroll of remembrance” refers to a book of remembrance that the eastern monarch had, as a permanent record of their commitment to those who had faithfully served them, [Esther 6:1-3].

Malachi 3:17 [King James] *“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”*

“My jewels” the Hebrew word “segullâh” meaning an acquired property. This is expanded in Exodus.

Exodus 19:5-6 [King James] *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”*

“Peculiar treasure” the Hebrew word “segullâh” to be used as a family of priests, [Revelation 5:9-10; 1 Peter 2:9-12].

Malachi 3:18 [King James] *“Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”*

Here is the answer to those sceptics in **verse 14**. The difference between God’s faithful servants and those who ignore His claims will be made clear at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

This is the only instance in Malachi where the terms *“the righteous”* and *“the wicked”* are used to denote two diametrically opposed groups.

This was a time when moral distinctions had become blurred and when God’s name was profaned.

This is the hallmark of our present society where the knowledge of the true Creator God is in very “short supply,” a time of a famine of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, [Amos 8:11-13].

The God that Malachi is showing us is a just God to whom humans are accountable for their actions. His justice is tempered with mercy, as a father to his children. Yet He is **not** a God who can be bent to human will.

Malachi 4:1-2 [King James] *“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and **all that do wickedly, shall be stubble**: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”*

The prophet Malachi has no doubts about the coming of this day of judgement.

This will be a day of joy and liberation for those who commit themselves to the Creator God.

The image of the sun, Hebrew word *“shemesh”* meaning brilliance, with its healing rays, typifying the glory and saving powers of the Creator God. The destiny of each individual depends upon person and deliberate choice.

God’s offer of healing and liberation is open to all but it requires the risk of faith, the kind of faith that is prepared for commitment to the Creator God, come what may.

All wickedness is at last to be eliminated. The Hebrew word translated *“wickedness”* is *“râshâ”* meaning morally wrong or ungodly.

The emphasis here is not on vengeance but on the reversal of the moral environment.

One event associated with this day is foretold in the revelation given by the apostle John.

Revelation 20:1-3 [New King James] *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”*

Satan, along with all his deception, will be taken out of circulation for 1,000 years.

What will be burnt up as useless stubble? The influence of Satan on human beings –

Satan blinds the majority to the gospel message, [2 Corinthians 4:4].

Satan holds and uses his power of physical death, [Hebrews 2:14].

Satan is controlling this present world, [1 John 5:19].

Satan is a liar and murderer, [**John 8:44**].

Satan is the god of this world, [**2 Corinthians 4:4**].

Satan has deceived the whole world, [**Revelation 12:9**].

Satan is the power of the air, TV and Internet!! [**Ephesians 2:2**].

When this prophecy was written “ashes” were the sign of mourning.

Does this indicate that all who had been deceived by Satan will be mourning what their wickedness had inflicted on other people?

Malachi 4:4-6 [New King James] *“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

These last three verses are widely recognised as a later addition, furnishing a conclusion not simply to Malachi but to law and the prophets, [as it does in the Hebrew Bible as used by Jews].

The arrangement in the Christian Bible of the same Old Covenant books is different, Malachi forms a bridge between Old and New Testaments, looking forward to the New Covenant brought by Jesus Christ.

The specific mention of Elijah fills out the vague reference to the Lord’s messenger at the beginning of **chapter 3**. Moses and Elijah traditionally represented the law and the prophets, hence their appearance with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, [**Matthew 17:1-3, 9; Mark 9:2-10**].

It ends on a note that points forward to the New Testament John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, compared by Jesus to Elijah, [**Matthew 17:10-13**].

The final remarks point towards the work of reconciliation that is a key focus of the work of the future New Testament Church.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 [New King James] *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

The Creator God brings us back to Himself by blotting out our sins and making us righteous. We are no longer God’s enemies, when we have this trusting relationship.

Because Christians then have this privilege of encouraging others to do the same, we are acting as Jesus Christ’s ambassadors.

This is the beginning of an even more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ in the future, [**Revelation 19:6-8**].