

(Through the Bible) Malachi

by Chuck Smith

God's love is strong and not weak, and He disciplines those He loves to correct them for their own good.

Duration: 1:30:14

Scripture: Nehemiah 13:10-12, Malachi 3:10-11, Malachi 3:13-14, Malachi 3:17, Malachi 4:1, Malachi 4:5-6

Topics: "Stewardship", "Faith Giving"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of giving and receiving in accordance with a divine spiritual law. He compares it to the natural laws that govern our universe, such as gravity, which we may not fully understand but still abide by. The preacher emphasizes that giving to God is a spiritual law, and the more we give, the more we will receive from Him. He challenges the listeners to prove God by giving and experiencing the blessings that overflow.

Transcript

Now let's turn to Malachi, the final word of God in the Old Testament period, God's final message before the coming of Jesus Christ. Who Malachi was, where he came from, we know nothing. Some believe that the name of Malachi is just an assumed name, not the true name of the writer.

But there is no real evidence to back up that belief. But the name Malachi, remember this morning I told you there were meanings in the names, that they just didn't name a child any name out of the dictionary. But they looked for the meaning of a name and they named the child for the meaning of the name.

Malachi means my messenger. And so Malachi was God's messenger, the last messenger of the Old Testament period. And he doesn't give any background concerning himself as some of the other minor prophets do, telling you where they came from and who their fathers were.

It just is the burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. So that's your introduction to the book, declaring the author and to whom the book is sent. Malachi, but the author really is the word of the Lord, the messenger Malachi, and the people addressed Israel.

What is God's first word of the final word? I have loved you. What a glorious thing for God to say to a person, I have loved you. Now that isn't a past tense, that is past and present.

I continue to love you. I have loved you. God's love never ceases.

I have loved you, saith the Lord. But Israel in their cold spiritual condition responds, wherein have you loved us? Rather than responding in warmth to God, there is the challenge of that love. Now many people today still are guilty of challenging God's love.

And so many times a statement is begun with the words, if God loves me, then why? And oftentimes the circumstances of my life, which seem to be very difficult or adverse, cause me at times to challenge God's love. Now you find that today in Israel, there is a tremendous challenge to this statement by the people. If you would go over there today and proclaim to the people in Israel, God loves the people of Israel.

90% of them would say, if God loves the Jew, then how come 6 million of them were killed by Hitler? And I've had them say to me, we don't need that kind of love. But God declares, I have loved you, saith the Lord. We think of love as some weak kind of thing that just is totally indulgent.

But the Bible tells us that if you as a parent totally indulge your child, if you do not correct your child, you really aren't demonstrating love for that child, but you hate your child. And the failure for you as a parent to discipline your child is not a sign of love, but of disregard, of hatred. God, because he loves us, disciplines us.

Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. But we're so used to thinking of love in the sickly, sweet Hollywood sentimentality of the full moon and the beach in Hawaii and the guitars in the background and the waves gently coming up on the sand, you know, and this whole kind of scene that we don't understand the nature of true love and of real love. That's Hollywood.

True love is strong, strong enough to rebuke when rebuke is necessary, strong enough to chasten when chastening is for the best good. And oftentimes chastening is necessary for our best good. A child left to himself will bring reproach to his parents, according to the scriptures, because we love our children, we chasten them, because we're concerned in their well-being and in their safety.

We just, when they run out in the street, we just don't, you know, take a very haphazard attitude towards it. Say, look, he's playing in the street. Isn't that cute? But we discipline the child.

We tell them the dangers of playing in the street. We run out and we grab hold of them and we get them out of the street and we warn them of the dangers. And if they continue and persist to go in the street, then we spank them to keep them out of the street because we know the danger that exists if they walk off the curb and into the street.

And because we love them and are concerned in their well-being, we take that necessary step and the strength of discipline, we stop them. And so God, in His love for us, has that strength of love that brings discipline when we are doing those self-destructive acts. Now, oftentimes it is during the discipline that we challenge the love of God.

If God loves me, then why is this happening to me? It's happening to you because He does love you and He's averting some tragedy down the road and you should be thankful. Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. So there was the challenge.

Where in does God love us? And God answers that challenge by pointing out the fact that He chose Jacob over Esau. Now, they were twin brothers and Esau was the elder. And according to tradition, the blessings should have gone to Esau.

The birthright should have gone to Esau, although they were twins because he was born first. The right of the birthright was his and the blessing was his. But God reversed things and God gave to Jacob the birthright and the blessing and the promise.

And being descendants of Jacob rather than Esau was the proof of God's love for Israel. Now, both the descendants of Esau and Jacob were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and carried away as captives to Babylon. However, the prophecy here is that Esau will, though they are endeavoring, will not be rebuilt or Edom will not be rebuilt.

The descendants of Esau, though they're trying, their area is going to be wasted and desolate and they're not going to make it. They're not going to recover, whereas God is going to recover Jacob and Israel in the land. Were they not brothers, the Lord said, and yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau.

Now, a lot of times people get hung up on this idea of God saying He hated somebody. Actually, it is a term that means love in a lesser degree. I loved Jacob, but I loved Esau in a lesser degree.

The word hated Esau is a rather difficult translation, but I laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness, whereas Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down and they shall call them the border of wickedness and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever. And so the Edomites were to be destroyed.

God was going to cast them down, though they tried to repatriate and recover. They were unable to do so. And the Edomites were lost from history.

Herod was the last of the Edomites, the King Herod's. And from there, their ethnic identity is lost in history. And the Lord said, your eyes shall see, and you shall see the Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel and the border of Edom, the border of wickedness.

It'll be desolation, but God will be magnified from the border of Israel. Now, the Lord brings out here an interesting thing. He said a son honors his father and a servant, his master.

If then I am your father, where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my reverence? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priest that despised my name. And you say, wherein have we despised his name? So God says, look, a father receives honor from his son. In fact, under the law, it says, honor your father and your mother and the master receives reverence and respect from his slave.

God is saying, look, if I'm your father, then where is the honor that you should be giving me? If I'm your master, then why aren't you respecting or reverencing me? And then the Lord speaks out about the priesthood. And he said, O priest that despised my name. And they say, where have we despised your name? And God said, in that you have offered polluted bread upon my altar.

And you say, where have we polluted thee? And God said, in that you say the table of the Lord is contemptible and you offer the blind for sacrifice. Is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it to your governor and see how he thinks about it. God said, you wouldn't offer that kind of lame, sick stuff to your governor.

And yet you offer it to me. It's amazing how many times God gets the castoffs. You know, I don't know what to do with it.

I don't want to send it to the dump. Well, let's give it to the church. The castoffs.

We had the ugliest rocking chair in our church parsonage in Tucson. It was double ugly. And so we were talking with some of the members of the church about how we plan to get some new furniture in the parsonage.

And we were going to get rid of the rocking chair. Oh no, no. You can't get rid of the rocking chair.

We said, why not? He said, well, that's our rocking chair. We gave it to the church. And we said, but we won't have room for it.

When our new furniture arrives, we'll bring it back to your house. Oh no, no, we don't want it. But you know, it had some sentimental value to them, but they really didn't want it themselves.

So the church becomes a storage place. And we've got to have that dumb, ugly rocking chair in our living room because they don't know what to do with it. Giving God the castoffs and God, God speaks of his disdain for it.

Offering me polluted offerings, offering me the lambs that are sick, the lambs that are lame, the lambs that are blind, maimed, can't do anything else with them. Give them to God, use them for sacrifice. When God in the law said that they were to offer the first fruits, when they offered a lamb, it was to be without spot or blemish.

They were to offer really unto God the sacrifices that were the best that they had. I read of a man who had an old upright piano in his home and he loved playing the piano. And so he went out and bought himself a beautiful Steinway, baby grand.

And he didn't know what to do with the old upright piano and so he decided, well, I'll give it to the church. And so he called the pastor and he said, I have a piano I want to donate to the church. And the pastor said, fine, you know.

And the Lord began to speak to him and said, you're going to give that old rickety, worn out, upright to me and you're keeping for yourself that Steinway. And God really began to nail this guy. So when the van came to pick up the piano, guess which one went on the van? The Steinway.

And he kept his old upright. He just couldn't give to God the cast off. And yet how many times we pollute our gifts by giving to God the cast offs when God requires the first and the best of our lives.

God said, will the governor be pleased? Will he accept the person for that sick lame sacrifice he's trying to offer? Of course not. Now, I pray you beseech God that he will be gracious unto us. This has been by your means.

Will he regard your person, saith the Lord of hosts? If the governor won't regard you for that sacrifice, do you think that I should regard you and be pleased? Then the Lord said, who is there among you that would shut the doors for nothing for not? Neither do you kindle a fire on my altar for not. Now, there are some who have interpreted this as a professional priesthood. In other words, they don't just give their service to God, but they want a for their service to God.

However, that is not evidently what the Hebrew implies. God is saying, actually, I would just as soon that someone would close the doors of the temple so that you wouldn't offer me any more of these sacrifices

that are nothing. Don't bother coming.

If that's all you have to offer, forget it. I just wish that someone would close the doors of the temple so they wouldn't be offering me any more of this junk. I can do without it.

This is the idea behind the Hebrew text. I have no pleasure, God says, in you. These things don't please me.

I don't have any pleasure in your junk. Neither will I accept the offering from you. Now, it should be of great concern to each of us when we consider the benefits of being a child of God.

When we consider all that God has done for us, it should be a primary concern to us, even as it was to the psalmist in Psalm 116, when he said, What shall I render unto the Lord for all of his benefits unto me? When I think of all of the blessings and the benefits that God has bestowed upon my life, the question, what can I give to God? Well, what can I give to God that he needs? He doesn't need anything that I have. You know what the psalmist finally came up with? He said, I will just take his cup of salvation and call upon his name. I don't know what to give to God.

I'll just receive that which he wants to give to me. I'll take the cup of salvation and I'll just call upon his name. Because you see, I really don't have anything of value that I can give to God that he really needs.

I read of a mission out in New Mexico where they were ministering to the Indians out there on the reservation. And this one old Indian came into the meeting and he was really touched. His heart was touched by God.

And so when they passed the offering plate, when they came to him, he told the usher, put it down lower. And the usher put it down with a quizzical look. And he says, lower yet.

And he put it down lower yet. And he says, lower yet. And finally he put the offering plate on the floor and the old Indian stepped in it.

He said, this is all I have. Giving himself. But you know, as far as God is concerned, that's all he wants.

What better gift can you give to God than just giving yourself to him? Giving God your life. Take the cup of salvation. Call upon the name of the Lord.

Now the Lord speaks concerning the Gentiles. The priesthood has been more or less corrupted. For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles.

And in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. So that promise, which is yet future in the kingdom age, when Jesus shall reign where air, the sun doth their successive journeys run. When every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God, the father.

When Psalm two is fulfilled and the father has said to his son, ask of me and I will give you the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy dwelling place. And when that glorious day is come from the rising of the sun, even to the going down thereof, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles. And in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, a pure offering.

Now we are told in the book of revelation, chapter five, that when Jesus takes the scroll out of the right hand of him who is sitting upon the throne, that the 24 elders come forth with little golden bowls filled with incense that they offer before the throne of God. And the Bible tells us that the incense is the prayer of the saints. Now the offering of incense is a symbolic act.

The sweet savor, the sweet savory smoke going up is a symbolic act. And we were talking Thursday night of the danger of taking the symbol and replacing the symbol or using the symbol to replace the reality and how this is so commonly done in religious realms where you take a ritual that began as a symbol and soon you place a greater emphasis upon the ritual than you do the reality and you forget the reality and it's all your trust is just in the ritual itself. The offering of some incense was a ritual symbolic act for the prayers were to represent or the the incense was to represent the prayers of God's people that ascends up to God as a sweet smelling savor before the Lord.

How God enjoys the prayers of his people. So in the book of Revelation the incense, these little golden vials full of incense odors which are the prayers it says of the saints. So that offering of incense, the pure offering is actually the prayers that are offered up to God from around the world from the hearts of his people in every language.

Now God says concerning the Gentiles they will be offering up these sacrifices. My name shall be great. But he said you have profaned it.

That is you profane the name of God, the name of the Lord. In that you say the table of the Lord is polluted and the fruit thereof even as meat is contemptible. Now they had begun to take a very bad attitude towards their service to God and their worship of God.

It had become a labor. It had become a burden to them. It is tragic when people are serving God out of a sense of obligation or pressure or giving to God out of the sense of pressure.

It to me is tragic that churches use pressure tactics to get people to make their pledges for the year. They use that old psychology of sending two or three important people from the church to your home to sit down and to discuss with you what will be your pledge for the church for this next year. And of course you don't want to look like a skin flint and these people are important people and you want to look good to them.

And so while they're there you are more or less coerced into making a pledge that is really more than you intended to give. But you just want to look good in the eyes of the people. But then each month as you get your little done from the church saying your pledge is due, you get angry and you write out that check and your name has a little cross on the T you know that indicates that I don't like this you know.

But I made the promise and you know and and you're actually resenting what you give to God and that's terrible. You'd be better off by far not to give to God at all than to actually resent what God doesn't want you to resent anything. That's why Paul the Apostle in the New Testament said let every man as he is purposed in his own heart set aside that portion that he wants to give to God for your giving should never be out of constraint.

It should never be through pressure for God loves a cheerful and the word in the Greek is hilarious giver. Now whatever you can give to God hilariously give and what you can't give to God hilariously keep. Don't pollute and God says you've polluted the whole thing.

Why? Because of the attitude of your heart when you're giving to God. Your attitude is that it's contemptible. Oh I gotta do that again.

None of my giving to God should ever create within me a contempt. If I if it is then I shouldn't be doing it. God loves a cheerful hilarious giver.

You've said oh what a weariness it is. Oh do we have to go to church again tonight? Oh a neat program coming on tv and I gotta go. You know if I'm not there then they're gonna be calling me.

I don't want them calling me. I can't stand it. See him again.

Weariness to me. Oh what a sad sad state of spiritual affairs when the things of God become worrisome. Tragic.

My wife always gets after me because even on vacation I can't stop ministering. Going to Hawaii next month for a vacation. But we'll be ministering in Honolulu for Bill Stonebreaker while we're there.

But I love it. You know it's not worrisome to me. Now she would like to be with me more.

In fact she told me tonight to pray about spending more time with her. I'm praying about it. You know they're the minister's wives are many times some of the unspoken heroes of this whole warfare.

We talk about the sacrifices a minister has to make but the wife also makes many sacrifices. And I thank God for the sacrifices that Kay has made and the reflection of those sacrifices in the lives of our children. Because I was gone so much a great part of the burden of giving to the children that security and word and love and all within the home fell upon her.

She made it a point to never allow the children to come home to an empty house. Always to be there whenever they came home from school. And we thank God for the blessed fruit that we have now from those sacrifices that she made while we were engaged in the work of the Lord.

But if serving God ever becomes weariness to you then it's time to get out. Time to do something else. Surely you should not be inflicting yourself upon others.

If you yourself have become wearied doing the work of the Lord. You say oh what weariness it is and you've snuffed at it. And you brought that which was torn.

That which was lame. That which was sick. And thus you brought an offering.

And should I accept it? Saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male and vows and sacrifices unto the Lord a corrupt thing. God pronounces a curse upon that man that would make a promise to God.

And then substitute on it. Give God sacrifice something that was corrupted. For I am a great king saith the Lord of hosts and my name is awesome among the heathen.

Now he addresses himself to the priest. And now oh ye priest. This commandment is for you.

And if you will not hear. And if you will not lay it to heart. To give glory unto my name saith the Lord of hosts.

I will even send a curse upon you. And I will curse your blessings. Yea I have cursed them already because you do not lay it to heart.

Now in order to get a real background to Malachi. You need to read again the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Because Malachi was prophesying during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

This was the time when the children of Israel had returned from their Babylonian captivity. And were starting to rebuild the nation. And we remember how they read to the people the law of the Lord.

And how that the people have begun to put away their wives and began to marry the wives from the cities of Ashdod and Ammon and the Moabites. And Malachi will come down on this pretty soon. But you get a historic background to Malachi in Nehemiah and Ezra which you should reread just to put the whole prophecy in perspective.

Behold I will corrupt your seed and spread dung upon your faces. Even the dung of your solemn feast and one shall take you away with it. God isn't really very gentle is he.

And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you. That my covenant might be with Levi saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace.

And I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me and was afraid before my name. Now God established the covenant the priesthood with the tribe of Levi because of the fear of the Lord. The reverence that he had towards God.

The covenant was of life and of peace. God's covenant with man is that of life and peace. God has promised to you eternal life and the peace of God which passes human understanding.

These are the benefits of our covenant with God. This is the covenant that he had made with Levi because of Levi's reverence for him. The law of truth was in his mouth.

Iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and in fairness and did turn many away from iniquity. And of course that was the duty of the priest to walk before the Lord honestly, in righteousness, in peace.

For the priest lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth. For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Now that really is the ministry of bringing the people the knowledge of God.

For we are the messengers of the Lord. And that's what we stand here to do to proclaim to you a message from God. And that should always be what is upon our hearts.

Whenever we step into the pulpit, I have a message from the Lord for you. As Paul the apostle said, that which I have received from the Lord, I also delivered unto you. And that should always be the means of communication to the church.

God through his servant, proclaiming his word, his truth to his people, but you are departed out of the way that is the priest. You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, sayeth the Lord of hosts.

And this can be said of so much of the apostate ministry today. I have no respect for those ministers who deny the word of God, who denied the authority of the word of God, who denied the authenticity of the word of God. I don't know why they're in the ministry.

They've corrupted their positions. They have turned people away from the Lord. And there are many people today who are turned away from the Lord because the churches and the ministers totally failed to proclaim to them the truth of the Lord.

And the church became a social center and the ministers became the head of social organizations and their emphasis became the social program. And their messages were sweet little nothings about birds and flowers and butterflies and the reviews of the latest books. But they had no message from God for the people.

And the people were turned away from God because of the failure of the priest or of the ministers. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, God said. Therefore, have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people.

Now, what happened is the people turned against the priesthood and they began to treat the priest contemptibly and rightfully so. It is interesting in Brazil how that the people have turned against the ministers, treating them with contempt. And it, you can't blame the people, you have to blame the ministers who were derelict in their duty of bringing the people the truth of God's word and of God's law.

And foisting upon them some social action program. There is a place for social action, but not the church. Our place is to proclaim God's truth to the people.

And it is the changed people who change the society. There are, because of that, I've made you contemptible and base according as you have not kept my ways, but have been partial in your administering of the law. Have we not all one father? Is there not just one God who has created us? Then why are we dealing so treacherously against our brothers? Would to God that the churches could realize that we have only one father.

We're serving only one God. Why should we have all of the divisions within the church? Why should we have, you know, this church downing that church and, and, you know, all of this competition, fighting, jealousy, strides going on within the body of Christ. We should realize that there's only one God.

We all serve the same Lord. God help us. If we are Baptist or Lutherans or Presbyterians or Catholics or Nazarenes or whatever, God help us to just simply be Christians, one God, one father.

We're all brothers. God said, how come they don't realize that? Why is it that there's all this treachery going on between them? All the rivalry Judah hath dealt treacherously and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved and has married the daughter of a strange God. So the Lord is here speaking about this treacherous thing that was going on in that the men of Judah who had returned to rebuild the nation had begun to divorce their own wives of their youth.

And they began to marry these girls from Ashdod, that is the Philistines, from Amman, that is the area of Moab, Jordan today, leaving their wives and marrying these young gals from these foreign nations who were strangers to God and to the covenants of God. And so he speaks about the treacherous dealing, these husbands. Actually in the book of Nehemiah, when Nehemiah saw what was going on, he called all

the people together and he really laid a trip on these guys who had left the wives of their youth and had married these young gals and had children by them.

And he said, all right, this is what you've got to do. Put away every strange wife, every man of you, you've got to put away your strange wife and the children that were born by them. And he went among them and started pulling their beards and knocking their heads and just really treating them rough.

And he was setting things in order. The last chapter of Nehemiah, interesting picture of how Nehemiah was dealing very forcibly with this thing, which was such an abomination unto God that a man would deal so treacherously with the wife of his youth when he became older. The Lord will cut off the man that does this, the master and the scholar out of the tabernacles or the tents of Jacob and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

And this have you done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears and weeping and crying out in as much as he regards, not the offering anymore, nor receives it with good will at your hand. All of your tears and crying and everything else in the altar of God doesn't alter what you have done. It does not allow God to condone what you have done.

You say, well, why? Because the Lord is the witness between you and your wife, the wife of your youth against whom you have dealt treacherously. Yet she is your companion and the wife of your covenant. You made a vow, you covenanted till death do us part, the wife of your covenant.

And did he not make the two of you one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit and wherefore and why one that he might seek a godly seed. God was seeking to preserve a godly seed for the nation Israel in order that they might bring forth his son into the world. That's why he commanded them not to marry outside of the race.

Therefore, he said, take heed to your spirit. Let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. There are people who imagine that the Bible teaches against interracial marriages, but it really does not except for the Jews.

And that was to preserve the godly seed that he might bring forth the Messiah from this nation. But there is really no prohibition in the scripture as such against interracial marriages. Again, we all have one father and we all serve one God.

Culturally, there may be difficulties, but scripturally, I see none. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hates divorcing. For one covers violence with his garments, saith the Lord of hosts.

Therefore, take heed to your spirit that you deal not treacherously. So God sets himself against divorcing. He said, I hate it.

And the Lord said there was only one cause for divorce, and that was adultery, fornication. Then the Lord said, you have wearied the Lord with your words, yet you say, where did we weary him? He said, when you say that everyone is good in the eyes of the Lord. Doesn't matter, you know, everyone is good.

There's a spark of good in everybody. I said, you wearied me with your words. The innate goodness of man.

Everyone is good before the Lord. There are still those today saying that. And God delights in all men.

Where then is the God of judgment? God will judge the wicked. And God is wearied by this false philosophy. Oh, everyone is good.

God delights in all men. The universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. No matter who you are, what you've done, we're all the sons of God and everyone is good in the eyes of God.

Then wherein is the God of judgment? Why does God speak so much about the judgment that is going to fall upon the wicked? Now the promise of the coming of John the Baptist as the forerunner to Jesus Christ. Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in.

Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like the fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver.

And he will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord as in the days of old and in the former years. Now, here we have a commingling of both the second, the first and the second comings of Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist did come as the forerunner. Proclaim the coming of the Lord after him. There is one coming after me mightier than I, the lachet of whose shoes I'm not worthy to unloose.

And when he saw Jesus, he said to his disciples, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He bore testimony of Jesus Christ. But Jesus was rejected.

He did come to the temple. He did cleanse it. He drove out the money changers and those that were selling the doves.

But he was rejected. But he is coming again. And before he comes again, Elijah shall come, precede him and prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Lord.

So part of this was fulfilled in his first coming. Much of it remains to be fulfilled in his second coming. But with Malachi and so many of the others, they did not see the two aspects of the coming of the Messiah.

And so as they wrote, Peter said they wrote of things that they really didn't understand, earnestly desiring to look into these things and to understand them. But they really didn't. And they didn't understand really the seeming ambiguity and contradictions of the prophecies that they were making.

For they were prophesying that he would reign as king and Lord forever upon the throne of David and establish the kingdom forever. And yet they were saying, and he is despised or rejected of men, a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief, cut off from the land of the living. Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself or without receiving the kingdom.

And so they were giving these prophecies that they could not themselves understand because there was this seeming paradox, the differences. But yet they wrote of them honestly obeying the voice of the spirit that was speaking to their heart, though they themselves did not understand the things of which they wrote. The Lord said, and I will come near to you to judgment.

Now this is referring, of course, to the second coming of Christ. He's coming to judge the world and the first duty and the first activity of Christ when he returns to the earth is that of judgment, gathering the nations together for judgment. And I will be swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers.

Now the sorcerers are those, the word in the Greek is pharmakia from which we get pharmacology, which is the use of drugs. Those that are using the drugs for hallucinogenic purposes against the adulterers, against those who are liars, false swears, those who swear falsely against those who are oppressing their employers or the employees in his wages withholding. Actually in James it says, go to now ye rich, weep and howl for the woes that have come upon you.

For you have defrauded the labor. You've been holding back his wages or that you might live sumptuously. And now, you know, the Lord speaks of their being cut off.

So those that are oppressing the hirelings, holding back the wages, oppressing the widow and the fatherless and that turn aside the stranger and fear, not me sayeth the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord. I change not.

Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. God's promises to Jacob are sure. Otherwise he would have consumed them.

He would have consumed the people, but his promises he keeps. And he promised that to Jacob there would arise the star, the morning star. So God keeps his word, but God is here declaring that if it were not for his word, they would be consumed.

But I am the Lord. I change not. This is what is called from a doctoral standpoint, the immutability of God.

That is God does not change in the New Testament. We read concerning Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. He does not change God's immutability.

One of the divine attributes of God, even from the days of your fathers, you are gone away from my ordinances and you've not kept them return unto me and I will return unto you sayeth the Lord of hosts. But you said, why should we return? So God is even now giving them the chance to turn to me, turn to me, return to me. God said, I'll return to you.

They said, why should we? They were surely impotent people. And then the question, will a man rob God? Yet the Lord said, you have robbed me. But you say, where have you robbed me? Where have we robbed you? And God said in the tithes and in the offerings, the word tithes means a tenth.

And God claims that a tenth of the increase belonged to him. And for them to withhold it from God was robbing God. And God looked upon it as actually robbing from him.

This is under the Old Testament law. And God said, you are cursed with a curse for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Now, when Nehemiah came back the second time, the worship in the temple had been forsaken because the people were not bringing tithes and offerings into the temple.

And thus the priest had left the ministry in the temple and they had gone out into the fields and they were cultivating fields and they were working in order to provide for their own necessities, for their own survival. And thus the temple worship was neglected when Nehemiah returned. And so he called the people together and he rebuked the people for the fact that the priest had to leave the ministry of the temple and

go out into the fields to work to support themselves.

And Nehemiah set this thing straight. So again, the book of Nehemiah helps give you a background for what Malachi is saying. God talking about the people robbing him and then God commands them, bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house.

And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour out unto you a blessing that you'll not have room enough to receive it. Now, it is interesting to me that as far as I know, this is the only place in the scripture where God has actually challenged a person to prove him. Where God says, prove me and see if I will not pour out upon you a blessing so great that you won't be able to contain it.

Now, we often hear the objection, well, there is no mention of tithing in the New Testament. It is a part of the Old Testament law. It is not something that is applicable to the church age.

And this for the most part is true. There is only one mention of tithing as such that I can think of. And that is when Jesus was speaking about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and how they had twisted so many things.

Straining at a gnat, swallowing a camel kind of thing. He said, you pay tithes of your anise, your mint and your cumin. Now, these are spices, they're little spice gardens that they would grow.

And they would take these little anise seeds and count out nine for me, one for God. Nine for me, one for God. And they're little tiny seeds.

And they were very careful that God got his tenth part of this spice from their herb gardens. He said, you pay tithes of these things. But he said, you totally overlook the more important things of fairness and honesty.

You know, you're crooked in your dealings yet you're so careful that God gets his tenth part even of your spices. Now, God said, this you, Jesus said, this you ought to have done in the reference to their tithing. You ought to do that.

But he said, you shouldn't leave the other undone. Now, I do not, and you know that I don't preach tithing as a requirement or as a law. You know that oftentimes I have spoken to you of the grace of God and that God will never be a debtor to any man.

And how that our blessings from God are not predicated in this covenant of grace upon our obedience to the law or faithfulness in devotions or faithfulness in tithes or whatever. Where the people at one time related to God through the law, God has chosen that we should relate to him in love. And God has chosen to bestow upon us his blessings on the basis not of our obedience or faithfulness to the law, but upon the basis of his grace towards us.

So that all of God's blessings are bestowed upon my life, not because I merit them, not because I deserve them, but because God just loves me. And I just can't help that. I'm so thankful for it.

That God just loves me so much he wants to give to me. Now, wouldn't it be rather stupid for me to say, oh God, don't do that, you don't do that. You're too good, Lord.

I often say you're too good, but I don't say stop. I appreciate the goodness of God. I thank God for his grace.

And I thank God that I can relate to him in love, not the law. I feel sorry for people who have a legal relationship with God. Oh, how I thank God for this love relationship that I have.

I love him. He loves me. And it's just a neat deal because he loves me more than I love him.

And he is always showing to me how much he loves me. And quite often he is showing me how much he loves me right after I have failed so miserably, just so I won't get discouraged. By his grace, he just sort of says, hey, I know your frame.

I know you're but dust, but I still love you anyhow. And, you know, I want to show it to you. And God just is constantly overwhelming me with his love.

However, there is a divine law involved in giving. And I would be derelict as a minister if I did not point out to you a divine spiritual law that God has enacted in this universe. And the law is basically expressed in the New Testament in these words, give and it shall be given unto you.

Measure it out, press down and running over shall men give into your bosom. Now, that's a spiritual law of God. The more you give, the more you will receive.

Paul, the apostle, expressed it by saying he who gives sparingly will receive sparingly, but he who gives bountifully will receive bountifully. It's a divine spiritual law. Now, we are quite conscious of the natural laws that govern our universe, though we don't really fully understand them.

We are aware of them and we live in accordance to them and we take advantage of them. Now, I'm certain that none of us really understand how gravity works. We just know it does work.

We know that an apple falls down, not up. And just how the principle of gravity may work, how mass attracts, we don't really know, but we know that there is an attraction by mass. And so we learn to respect the law of gravity and abide by the law of gravity.

Now, we have learned through our scientific developments and technology to learn that there are other laws of aerodynamics by which we can compensate against the law of gravity and we can put airplanes into flight by laws of aerodynamics, which we understand, the thrust of air and so forth, going over and under the airlines and so forth, the lifting power and thrust. And we've learned through the laws of aerodynamics to compensate against the laws of gravity. But basically, we, all of us respect the laws of gravity.

We don't just jump off of a 10-story building saying, well, I don't care for the law of gravity. I don't understand how it works and I just don't believe in it. You know, we're not that stupid that we would defy the law of gravity in such a way.

Now, there is the law of electricity, how that the positive particles repel and the negative particles attract. And we know the, you know, the opposite poles, the attraction of opposite poles and so forth. But yet, to understand electricity, we really don't, but we sure learn how to use the electricity and make it our servant.

Now, just as there are laws of gravity, laws of electricity, laws of aerodynamics, and these basic laws of nature that we've learned to live with and to use, so there are spiritual laws in the universe that God has

inaugurated that you can use for your benefit. God has established these laws and they are just as powerful in their cause and effect as is the law of gravity or any of the other laws of nature which we have learned to live with. And one of the laws, the spiritual laws, involves the giving to God and that is give and it shall be given unto you, measured out, pressed down, running over.

And the more you give to the Lord, the more you will receive from Him. That's just a basic spiritual law. You say, well, how does it work? I don't know.

All I know is that it does work and God only in this area challenges people to prove Him. Just prove me. God says, see, if I will not pour out unto you blessings that you won't be able, you won't have room enough to contain.

Now, you want to take God's dare, God's challenge to you? Try it. Prove the Lord. See if He will not pour out unto you blessings that you cannot contain.

There will not be room enough to receive it. For the Lord said, I will rebuke the devourer for your sake. He shall not destroy the fruit of your ground.

Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. And your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord.

Yet you say, what have we spoken so much against you? Every time God tells them something is wrong, they challenge, where, why, when, how? You said that it was vain to serve God. It doesn't pay to serve the Lord. That's what you're saying.

The Lord said, you're saying that it's vain to serve God. It doesn't pay to serve God. It doesn't pay to try and be good.

What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, that we have walked mournfully before Him? God doesn't, it doesn't pay. God has not responded to us. There's nothing, you know, the Lord hasn't done anything.

It doesn't pay to serve the Lord. How many times Satan tries to throw that little trip on us? It doesn't really pay. What profit is it that I've tried to be good, that I tried to be, look, they took advantage of me.

Well, it doesn't pay to serve God, you know. And now we call the proud happy. Yes, they that work wickedness are, they are voted into office many times.

Thank God we've got some good Christians in some of the areas of government. I think that it is the duty of every Christian to really know the position of a candidate on spiritual things. I really feel that that's our obligation, that we really can't complain about bad government if we are not exercising our privilege of voting and if we are not using diligence in determining those that we vote for.

And when Dr. Peterson runs for the school superintendent of Orange County, you should know that he is a beautiful born-again brother in Jesus Christ. And you should think about that when you vote. It's illegal for me to try to persuade you to vote for a particular candidate.

And I wouldn't think of doing that. But don't forget the name Dr. Peterson. He happens to be the incumbent.

But find out about the candidates. Find out about their position. God help us.

It would be glorious if we had all spiritual men serving in the cabinet of the president, serving in the legislatures, the offices of legislature. Of course, then we probably wouldn't be so anxious for the Lord to come. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.

The Bible says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The Bible says that to fear the Lord is to hate iniquity or is to depart from iniquity. The fear of the Lord is not a phobia type of fear that debilitates a person.

The fear of the Lord isn't even a healthy, cautionary type of fear that is so important for our survival. But the fear of the Lord is a reverential awe as we stand in the presence of his greatness, of his glory, of his majesty and of his power. And we think of the greatness of the God who created this vast universe.

We think of the wisdom of God who created all of the life forms and we just sort of stand in awe of that greatness and power and wisdom. That's what the fear of the Lord is. And they that feared the Lord spake often one to another about the Lord.

Always talking about the Lord. Isn't it glorious to be around people who want to talk about the Lord all the time? You know, whenever you get around them, the conversation of the Lord comes up and they say, oh, you know, the Lord is so good. Oh, let me tell you what the Lord has done.

Let me tell you what the Lord did for me today. You know, I'm just so full of the Lord. They speak often one to another about him.

And as they speak about the Lord, the Lord hearkens unto them and hears it. The Lord eavesdrops on every conversation concerning him. Isn't that neat? God just loves you to talk about him.

We used to sing a chorus. Let's talk about Jesus. The king of kings is he.

The great I am the way, the truth, the life, the Lord. And it's just a what better conversational piece can you have than the Lord? Isn't it interesting how the world says, well, you know, you want to open a conversation, just start talking about the weather. Well, it's sort of a, you know, well, the sun did come out today, didn't it? I wondered if it was going to come out.

Typical May weather, you know, and, you know, talk about the weather. Well, the weather is such a changeable thing, you know, and yet, isn't it sad that people have nothing better to talk about some of them than the weather. Now, there are people who all have their favorite subjects and they can be a total dud until you get on their subject.

And then they come alive. They become animated. Now you're in their field.

Oh, now they'll really expound. But you bring up the subject of the Lord and things go strangely quiet. What happened? You know, but they that fear the Lord speak often concerning him one to another.

The Lord hearkens, he hears, and he's keeping a book of remembrance for them who feared the Lord and thought upon his name. Names in the Hebrew culture were all meaningful. They didn't just choose the name out of the dictionary for their children, but they chose a name that meant something.

Now, our name still means something. You can look up in a dictionary and find out what your name means. But your parents, as a general rule, weren't thinking of the meaning of the name when they named you that.

But when they were in school, they had a friend by that name and they liked that friend very well. And so that name always has been a good name to them. And there are some names, you know, you knew some dummy in first grade who couldn't read and his name was this.

And so it sort of stained you on that name. You just never did like that name, you know, because it always reminded you. And so it's interesting how we don't think of names as far as significant in their meanings, or else we would probably be naming our children different names than what we do.

You know, recalling our children Beautiful Sunshine or something, you know, or things that mean something to us. But a little kid go to school in first grade and teaches and what's your name? Beautiful Sunshine Smith. And so it just isn't appropriate in our culture.

But in those days, names were significant and the name of the Lord is extremely significant. And so much in the Psalms and in the Proverbs, you find the references to the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is great and so much concerning the name of the Lord and the awe and the reverence that a person should have concerning the name of the Lord.

And the name of the Lord is actually a Hebrew active verb. The name Yahweh means the becoming one. And so God has expressed his nature in his name.

And God is expressed in his name, his desire for it is his desire to become to you whatever your need may be. So the name of Yahweh was often compounded with other Hebrew words. And so you have the Yahweh Rafa, the Lord has become our healer.

Yahweh Shalom, the Lord has become our peace. Yahweh Yaira, the Lord will provide. Yahweh Tesigkenu, the name of Jesus in the Kingdom Age.

It won't be Yeshua, then it will be more difficult for you. Yahtesigkenu, which means the Lord has become our righteousness. And he is, he is our righteousness for us who trust in him.

But the name was significant. The name of the Lord or the name Yahweh is a strong tower, the Book of Proverbs says. The righteous runneth into it and is safe.

Have you ever run into the name of the Lord, just sort of closed yourself around with it, oh Jesus, Lord Jesus, you know, and you just sort of have fled to the refuge of the name. In danger, in peril, you've fled into the name of Jesus, oh Jesus, and you feel that warmth and that protection and that comfort and that assurance of the name of Jesus. The name Yahweh, Yeshua, is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

And so they who thought upon his name, they who reverence the Lord and thought upon his name, God keeps this book of remembrance. Their names are written in the book of life, in his book of remembrances. And the Lord said, they shall be mine.

I get so excited when I think of God speaking about me in the personal possessive pronoun. When God speaks of me as my son, my child, my servant, oh how I love God to speak about me with the personal

possessive pronoun, I belong to him, I'm his. They shall be mine, the Lord says.

And in that day when I make up my jewels, you are his treasure. Peter said, for we are his peculiar treasure. The Lord speaks of you as a treasure that was hid in the field, that he bought the whole field, that he might take the treasure out of it.

Paul in writing to the Ephesians prayed that God might open up their understanding, that they might know what is the exceeding riches of his inheritance in the saints. Now in another place he says, oh I wish you knew what God has in store for you, the riches and the glory of God's kingdom. But then he is praying, oh God help them to understand the riches of his inheritance.

In other words, God help you to understand how much God values you. We're so often putting ourselves down. Oh I'm not worthy, oh I'm nothing, oh I get so miserable.

And we're often times putting ourselves down and God looks upon you as a valuable gem, as a treasure. And in those days when I make up my jewels, the Lord said, and he treasures you and he values you so highly that he was willing to send his only begotten son to take your sin and to die in your place that he might redeem this world in order that he might claim you as my child. All possible because Jesus paid the price of the redemption for the world that you might be saved.

They shall be mine, saith the Lord the host in that day when I make up my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him. So the Lord has promised to spare us from what and when? The Lord will spare us when his day of judgment comes.

Chapter 4 verse 1, for behold the day comes that shall burn as an oven and all of the proud, yes and all that do wickedly shall be the stubble. And the day that shall come shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. The great day of God's judgment that is coming.

But those who fear the Lord, those who think upon his name, those who talk of the Lord, they will be his, his jewels written in his book of remembrance spared from the day of judgment that is coming to destroy the wicked. Now wickedness is contrasted with the lack of the fear of the Lord or is associated with a lack of the fear of the Lord and is contrasted with those that fear the Lord. So in verse 2, but unto you that fear my name or reverence my name, shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings and you shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.

So the glorious promise of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of righteousness with healing in his wings to establish God's glorious kingdom upon the earth. And you will tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all of Israel with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. So the promise of the coming again of Elijah before the great and notable day of the Lord that causes me to be convinced that in Revelation chapter 11, as God sends his two witnesses to witness for a period of time here upon the earth, while the antichrist is in power, that one of the two witnesses will indeed be Elijah. Behold, I will send Elijah.

Now John the Baptist was not Elijah. They came out and said, are you Elijah? Nope. Who are you? I'm the voice of one in the wilderness crying, make straight the way of the Lord, you know, but Jesus said of John the Baptist.

Of all of the women born of men, there has not been a greater prophet arise than John. And yet he was least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And this, if you're able to take it is Elijah of whom the scripture spake a partial fulfillment.

When Zachariah, his father was accosted by Gabriel, the angel and told that his wife, Elizabeth in her old age was to have a son. He said, and he shall go forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the children under their fathers coming in the spirit and the power of Elijah, a type of the actual coming of Elijah before the second coming of the Lord. Now it is my own personal deep conviction that somewhere on the earth today, Elijah is alive.

I think we're that close to the coming of the Lord. And of course, who and where he might be, I don't know, but I do. I am personally convinced that he's alive somewhere in the world today.

And, uh, I've had some people come and tell me that they were Elijah and I directed them back to Metro, but I do believe that he is alive somewhere today. Along with the other witness. And, uh, I think that God is winding things up.

And I think that we're just on the border of, of seeing the culmination of things. Things are happening in Israel. Uh, Israel is still prepared to invade Lebanon.

They are waiting patiently for a provocation from the PLO that they can use it as an excuse. They are presently have mobilized 40,000 troops on the Lebanese border. The army reserve is on an alert standby basis right now.

And they're just waiting for the provocation of the PLO to move on into Lebanon. The Syrians have dug in, in Lebanon expecting their attack. And it no doubt will be a very fierce battle.

And I believe that it will bring Russia's involvement into the Middle East. And, uh, of course that could surely bring to pass, uh, the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38, 39. So we're living in exciting days.

A lot of attention is on the Falklands, but that's not where it's going to happen. Uh, the real excitement will take place over in the area of Israel. And, uh, that's where you need to keep watching.

Shall we stand? May the Lord bless and keep you in the love of Jesus Christ. May you feed this week upon the word. May the Lord just open up your hearts to the understanding of his truth and cause you to grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

May he give you just a beautiful blessed week walking in fellowship with him in Jesus name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6495.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-malachi/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net