

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

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Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Class Schedule

Lesson	Date	Title	Teacher
1	Sunday, Aug 2 nd	Class Introduction	Sam
2	Wednesday, Aug 5 th	Introduction to Haggai	Sam
3	Sunday, Aug 9 th	The Book of Haggai	Sam
4	Wednesday, Aug 12 th	Introduction to Zechariah	Erik
5	Sunday, Aug 16 th	Zechariah 1-2: Visions 1-3	Erik
6	Wednesday, Aug 19 th	Zechariah 3-4: Visions 4-5	Erik
7	Sunday, Aug 23 rd	Zechariah 5-6: Visions 6-8	Erik
8	Wednesday, Aug 26 th	Zechariah 7-11: The Two Burdens: Part 1	Erik
9	Sunday, Aug 30 th	Zechariah 12-14: The Two Burdens: Part 2	Erik
10	Wednesday, Sep 2 nd	Introduction to Malachi	Sam
11	Sunday, Sep 29 th	Malachi 1-2	Sam
12	Wednesday, Sep 6 th	Malachi 3-4	Sam
13	Sunday, Sep 9 th	Application	Sam

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Lesson 12: Malachi 3-4, Robbing God

“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.”

Malachi 3:7b-8a (ESV)

God’s promise of blessings had always been conditional. Man must cooperate by doing his part; this they had not done. Jehovah’s returning to them is conditioned on their returning to Him. The nation of Israel has robbed God, and He wants back what is rightfully His before a relationship will continue.

The Messenger of the Lord

Malachi 2:17 – 3:5

Assertion	Objection	Refutation
“ ¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words.”	“But you say, ‘How have we wearied him?’”	“By saying, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them.’ Or by asking, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”



The faithless multitude of the people had worn Jehovah’s patience thin by their skeptical attitude toward Him.



To ask this question is to be in denial of any wrongdoing. Are we ever guilty of denying our own sin?



Those who stood condemned were asking for God’s righteous judgment, not realizing that they were practicing the evil that would be judged.

Thought Questions:

- Do you have any habits that are wearisome to God?
- Do you ever think yourself more righteous than you should?
- Do you spend more time thinking of the evil of others than your own sins?

Jehovah’s response to their question, “Where is the God of justice?”, is that He Himself will come, and suddenly. But before He comes He will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him.

Fill in the blanks:

The Messenger of the LORD is _____. This promise of a messenger rests on the prophecy found in Isaiah chapter _____. He is known as _____ per Malachi 4:5. All four gospels affirm the identity of the messenger by quoting the prophecy in Isaiah (Matt _____, Mark _____, Luke _____, John _____).

Jehovah will not come as they suppose, though. He would not simply come to judge the heathen, but also His own people. Malachi 3:5 gets to the heart of the Lord’s reply to their ignorant question in 2:17; not only will He come in judgment against the priests, but He will come also against all the wicked among the people. Consider the sins listed in 3:5 and their penalty:

Sin	Law	Result / Penalty
Sorcery	Lev. 20:27	
Adultery	Lev. 20:10	
False swearing	Exo. 20:7; Lev. 19:12	
Oppress workers due wages	Lev. 19:13	
Oppress widows Oppress fatherless Oppress sojourners	Exo. 22:21-24	

Robbing God

Malachi 3:6-15

Here is declared an immutable principle on which man can depend in all ages and generations: “I the LORD do not change.” His infinite love, which is basic to His immutable character, will provide mercy that they not be completely consumed.

The history of Israel is not a record of ever-increasing obedience. Instead, it is a long, sad story of recurring departure from God. Therefore:

“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 3:7b (ESV)

Class discussion:

When the people ask how they have robbed God in verse 8, He answers with the example of their tithing. They were giving, but they weren’t giving everything they were supposed to. They weren’t giving their *best*. Try to find another example in the scriptures of God being displeased with something partial (heart, gift, sacrifice, etc), as opposed to the instruction we’re given in verse 10.

The Book of Remembrance

Malachi 3:16-18

Several writers in the scriptures refer to the Book of Remembrance:

Exod	32:32-33	(Moses)	God teaches us to remember and value the good that people do (Phil 4:8), and He does the same as He commands.
Ps	56:8; 69:28; 139:16	(David)	
Ezek	13:9	(Ezekiel)	Think of some specific times when this thought can be a great comfort to us.
Dan	7:10; 12:1	(Daniel)	
Phil	4:3	(Paul)	
Rev	20:12	(John)	

The Great Day of the LORD

Malachi 4:1-6

The prophet closes with a description of the ultimate, complete destruction of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous. Verses 4-6 give us an admonition, a final promise, and a threat:

Admonition	Final Promise	Threat
“ ⁴ Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.”	“ ⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.”	“ ⁶ ...lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
↓	↓	↓
To meet the judgment of God in confidence the true Israelite must respect and keep the law. Horeb is another name for Sinai, where among scenes of awe, terror, and wonder, Jehovah made known His law.	As the David whom Jehovah will raise up to be king and shepherd over His people is not David in person, but fulfilled in Christ, so the Elijah here is not to be thought of as Elijah in person, but his spirit in another.	A return to Jehovah was the only way to avert destruction. Some listened, most did not. Consequently, Jehovah destroyed their city and their land in A.D. 70.

The book of Malachi serves as a fitting close to God’s ancient revelation to His people. A final appeal is made to the people to purge out the wickedness found among them and to render to Jehovah an acceptable service. A final warning is given of inevitable judgment upon the wicked. And a final promise is made of Jehovah’s righteousness to be provided in Him who would be the personal bond of unity between Jehovah and His people. There was no more that Jehovah could say or do; therefore no word was heard from Him until the silence was broken by the messenger who would introduce the Messiah. This messenger’s call to repent was followed by the words of grace spoken by Him in whom God was doing His work and revealing Himself and His will.