

**Episode:** Other Letters Series No. 18

**Narrator:** Malachi

**Primary Scriptures:** Malachi 3, 4

**Story Summary:** The messages of Malachi are applicable in all times

**Location:** Israel

**Time:** circa 430 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Malachi 3:10, 3:17-18, 4:5-6

In 587 BC, the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's Temple. At that time, they continued deporting wealthy and politically connected Jews to Babylon. Half a century later, in 538 BC, Cyrus the Great started allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem and Israel. In about 515 BC, the foundations for the Second Temple were laid.

Apparently, the Jewish people did not learn their lessons about being faithful to God. By the time of Malachi, about 430 BC, the priests were lax in leading the people and the people had lapsed into complacency in serving God. Malachi's messages are sent to those people and are applicable to God's people of all times who lapse into complacency.

One of the underlying messages of Malachi is that God is the only real god and he is all powerful. So, God is worthy of ultimate respect and worship. His people should never waiver in their understanding of God's magnificence.

Israel's unfaithfulness begins by doubting God's love for them. Their unfaithfulness and contempt for God continues by offering him blemished sacrifices. God reminds them he is a great king and deserves their best sacrifices. He challenges them to offer blemished gifts to an earthly ruler and see what happens.

Malachi continues to show the Israelites how they have demonstrated their disobedience by making divorce common, having unjust social systems, and accepting sinful behaviors of all kind. The Lord calls them to account and tells them that they obviously don't fear him and his power.

In Malachi 3, God offers to let them return by simply resuming tithing to him. He tells them that they are actually robbing God by not offering tithes, and that he has been punishing them for acting that way. In one of the most poignant pleas of God in the Bible, he challenges them to bring their full tithes and see if he won't bless them by opening the floodgates of heaven. (Malachi 3:10).

In a fitting close to the Old Testament, God tells them that there will be a faithful remnant of people who will get to experience the day when he acts and reestablishes his justice. God ends the Old Testament by sending the prophet Elijah to them who will turn

the hearts of the people to him. More than four centuries later, that happens when God sends Elijah in the form of John the Baptist to proclaim the coming of the Messiah...Jesus!