

GENESIS ROAD PRESENTS...

A scroll of aged parchment with the word "Malachi" written in calligraphy. The parchment is yellowed and has a rough, torn edge. The word "Malachi" is written in a black, elegant cursive script with some ink splatters around it.

*Malachi*

a look at the picture of God  
in every chapter of  
the 39th book of the Bible

# Chapter 1

---

## GOD WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.

There was something very funny to me about the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter and how it's recounted by God. It's apparent that He has been having a conversation with the Israelites, and it seems they've had as many questions for Him as He's had answers for them!

“I have loved you,’ says the Lord. *But you ask,* “How have you loved us?” . . . ‘It is you priests who show contempt for my name. *But you ask,* “How have we shown contempt for your name?” By offering defiled food on my altar. *But you ask,* “How have we defiled you?”” (vs 2, 6-7)

As you'll see, this back-and-forth continues throughout the four chapters of Malachi. We don't know how long the people had been asking all those questions and how long they had been waiting for the answers, but it's encouraging to know that God doesn't ignore or miss anything we say to Him!

God wants to talk to you. He wants to have a dialogue, a conversation, a back-and-forth. He doesn't want you to be confused or left in the dark. He wants to answer all of your questions, and He will... in the right way and at the right time.

It's good to remember this, particularly during those times when God seems distant or silent. Yes, there are times when it can seem like the conversation is just a one-way street, but Malachi reminds us that God hears absolutely everything we say to Him, and He *will* answer.

Sometimes, it may feel like you've waited an eternity just to hear a word from Him. And if that's where you're at right now, try to be patient.

God wants to talk to you. And He will.

## Chapter 2

---

### GOD IS A BLESSING .

I think this blog could end with the title. God is a blessing. Period. What else is there to say? If you have Him in your life, then you are blessed—no matter the circumstances—because *He* is a blessing. If you don't have Him in your life, then even your blessings will turn into curses.

Did you catch that in this chapter? “And now, you priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘I will send a curse on you, and *I will curse your blessings*. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me. . . And you will know that I have sent you this warning *so that my covenant with Levi may continue*,’ says the Lord Almighty.” (vs 1-2, 4)

I thought it was rather interesting that God mentioned the tribe of Levi in this rebuke of the priests—because, if you remember from Genesis 49, when Jacob blessed his sons at the end of his life, it was Levi who received *a curse!* Because he brutally avenged the rape of his sister Dinah, the descendants of Levi were told that they would not receive an inheritance in Israel, but would be “scattered” throughout all the tribes.

And what happened next? *God turned that curse into a blessing!* He bestowed the priesthood and all of its blessings on the tribe of Levi, honoring them with an exalted position in Israel. They didn't receive an earthly inheritance; *God* was their inheritance. How wonderful!

There's an important lesson to be learned here. When we stick with God, even our curses will become blessings! But when we kick God out of our lives, even our blessings will become curses! That's because it is *God Himself* who is the blessing.

If we have Him, we have everything.

If we don't have Him, we have nothing.

## Chapter 3

### GOD IS AN OUTRAGEOUS GIVER.

There aren't too many places in the Bible where we are encouraged to test the Lord, but this is one of them: "You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and *see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.* I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,' says the Lord Almighty.'" (vs 9-11)

I love those verses. God, in essence, is saying, "See if you can out-give Me." Let me give you a hint: it'll never happen. There's absolutely no way you can out-give *the* Giver. In fact, His entire universe runs on the law of give-and-take. So, the more you give, the more you get. It's that simple.

That's why robbing God (or anyone else) leads to a curse—not because God is angry that you're trying to withhold something from Him and punishes you, but because it violates the laws upon which He created the universe.

Let me give you an example. Our planet's environment, in part, operates on the basis of a symbiotic relationship between human beings and plants. Plants produce and release oxygen into the environment, which humans need to breathe in order to survive. In return, human beings produce and

release carbon dioxide into the environment, which plants need in order to survive. (It's *so not* an evolutionary coincidence that it works like that!)

Let's say you get tired of giving so much in this symbiotic relationship and decide, from now on, that you won't be sharing any more carbon dioxide with the environment. So, you tie a plastic bag over your head in an effort to stop your body from releasing carbon dioxide.

What will happen to you? *Nothing good!*

Breaking the cycle of give-and-take, determining to take without giving (which, in effect, is robbery) will put you under a curse faster than you can say, "Who shut off my oxygen?" Whenever we try to live outside of the law of give-and-take, we will find ourselves cursed.

In fact, we have a name for cells in the body who "decide" to stop giving. It's called *cancer*. That's right. Cancer happens when a group of cells begin hoarding resources in the body—creating tumors and a whole lot of other bad things in the process. Ironically, the cancer cells "curse" themselves, because as they hoard more and more resources, they eventually kill the host—and themselves.

So, don't be cancer. God created you to live within the bounds of the law of give-and-take, and let me promise you, there is *no* way you can ever give

more than He can! God is such an outrageous giver that when we think we've given away all we have, we'll be blown away by the mountain of blessings that continues to arrive in our lives.

The opposite is also true: When we determine *not* to give and we clench our fists shut, when we are only concerned with keeping what we have for ourselves, we are no longer in a position to receive God's gifts.

And that is the fastest way to a curse!

# Chapter 4

---

## GOD DOES NOT ULTIMATELY REWARD OR PUNISH.

Oh, cursed be those arbitrary chapter divisions! I never realized until now that the ending of Malachi 3 belongs with Malachi 4: “On the day when I act... *you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked*, between those who serve God and those who do not. *Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace*. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.’” (Mal 3:17 – Mal 4:2)

When I read the ending of chapter 3 yesterday, I realized that it was not the *ending* of Malachi’s previous thoughts, but the *beginning* of what was to come in chapter 4. For, it is on the day when the Lord comes and everyone—righteous and wicked—is alive and awake at the same time that we will, indeed, see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

I think it’s very important to notice how that’s worded. It’s a distinction between the *righteous* and the *wicked*. It is *not* a distinction between *how God treats* the righteous and the wicked. When we delve into Malachi 4, we see right away that God doesn’t treat them any differently at all. Everyone is alive on that day, and *the day* “will burn like a furnace.”

So, who will be in the fire? *Everyone!*  
Who is the fire? *God!*

That is a foundational principle in Scripture: God is fire! (Heb 12:29, Deut 4:24, Ps 18:8) He is the sun of righteousness. (Mal 4:2) He is the morning star. (Rev 22:16) And He is the everlasting burning which the *righteous* dwell in. (Isa 33:14-15)

Thus, we see that when the end of time has come and God’s children have made their ultimate decisions regarding righteousness and wickedness, *God does not ultimately reward or punish them for those choices*. He doesn’t “reward” the righteous for choosing Him. He doesn’t “punish” the wicked for rejecting Him. The consequences (good or bad) of *both* of those choices are inherent, not imposed.

Satan has often pictured God as one who would be kind to His friends and mean to His enemies, but in admonishing us to be like our Father in Heaven, Jesus told us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. (Matt 5:44) Indeed, any time God appears to “punish” one of His children for wrongdoing, it is for the purpose of discipline, to correct them so that they might turn and be saved.

Once there is no further possibility that a person would turn and be saved, God does nothing more

to them but give them up to the consequences of their choice. He doesn't ultimately punish wickedness, just as He doesn't ultimately reward righteousness. Both wickedness and righteousness have *inherent* punishments and rewards, and they are, respectively, so awful and so wonderful that God need not impose any additional curse or blessing.

Wickedness metes out its own punishment.

Righteousness bestows its own reward.

Be careful which one you choose!