

“The Book of Malachi” (Route 66)

All right, let's turn in our Bibles this morning to the Book of Malachi... The LAST BOOK of the Old Testament... the LAST of the Minor Prophets...

We could call this “**God’s Final Words**” before a 400-year SILENCE known as the **INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD** before the Gospel of Matthew... Let's dive right in ...

Chapter 1, Verse 1, begins: “**The burden [or ‘oracle’] of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.**” – Not much is KNOWN about this Malachi... His name means “*My messenger*:” – But he isn’t mentioned **ANYWHERE ELSE** in the Bible...

He doesn’t mention ANY KINGS (though he DOES mention “Governors”)... He also ALLUDES to a rebuilt temple MULTIPLE TIMES throughout the text...

THAT—along with the use of certain **PERSIAN** words & phrases—suggest a POST-EXILE date... MOST scholars place this during the time-frame as Nehemiah (about 450-400 BC).

So, it’s been about 100 years since Zechariah & Haggai were on the scene encouraging the people to FINISH rebuilding the temple... The WALLS had been rebuilt under Nehemiah...

“*But now,*” Jon Courson writes: “*A mediocrity had crept in. They had lost their... passion. They might not have been committing big, blatant sins. [But they] started to... slack off. So, the Lord sends Malachi to stir up his people concerning their lukewarm state.*”

It’s been SAID that Malachi was to Nehemiah what Haggai & Zechariah were to Zerubbabel. – In fact, in MANY ways, Malachi addresses some of the VERY SAME SINS as Nehemiah.

Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: “*Following [a] revival (in the days of Nehemiah), the people became religiously & morally lax. It is this state of things that Malachi addresses.*”

The STRUCTURE of this Book is interesting. – The Bible Project writes: “*This book is designed as a series of... disputes. Most sections begin with God making a claim... followed by Israel... questioning God’s statement. And finally, God responds and offers the last word.*”

Dr. Scroggie calls these the “*sevenfold wherein*” statements. – So, here’s THE SEVEN QUESTIONS the people ASK God in the Book of Malachi (which—according to David Guzik—“*reveal their doubting, discouraged, sinful hearts*”)...

- In Chapter 1, Verse 2, they ask: “**In what way have You loved us?**”
- In Chapter 1, Verse 6, they ask: “**In what way have we despised Your name?**”
- In Chapter 1, Verse 7: “**In what way have we defiled You?**”
- In Chapter 2, Verse 17: “**In what way have we wearied You?**”
- In Chapter 3, Verse 7: “**In what way shall we return?**”
- In Chapter 3, Verse 8: “**In what way have we robbed You?**”
- And—in Chapter 3, Verse 13—“**In what way have we spoken against You?**”

Now, we don't have time to DISSECT EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS today, but—IN MY OPINION—these EXPRESS something that has become VERY COMMONPLACE in our day... And, that is: a “*victim mentality*.”

Each of these questions **SQUARELY** places the **BLAME**... on some kind of FAILURE—or DEFICIENCY—of GOD... while ABSOLVING the PEOPLE of THEIR responsibility!

It's like they're **GASLIGHTING GOD!** – It would be like me saying: “*Well God... The church hasn't grown to the size that I thought it would, so... I don't think I need to put in the kind of effort & prayer to prepare to teach as I would if the church was 1,000 people.*”

Somebody might hear that, and think “*That's really lame!*” (which is EXACTLY THE WORD God uses in the Book of Malachi!)... And I would say, “*You're 100% right!*”

BUT... it's no different from a person thinking: “*Well God, if I just made more money, I WOULD tithe faithfully.*” – So, you SEE whose fault it is in that statement that you're not tithing? It's God's fault... Because HE hasn't given you a job where you earn more.

Or a person who says: “*If I just knew more people at church, I WOULD get involved.*” – So, it's not YOUR fault you're not serving the way you should be... It's somebody ELSE'S fault...

Because people have reached out to you, or – let's just say it – God has not ALLOWED YOU to build friendships to where you're serving the way you should be...

This was the MENTALITY in Malachi's day... And God CALLS THEM OUT... In the area of UNFAITHFUL MARRIAGES... RAMPANT DIVORCE RATES... NOT SERVING THE LORD with their BEST... Not GIVING to the work of God FINANCIALLY...

Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: “[They] were guilty of profanity & sacrilege... sorcery, adultery, fraud... untrue to family responsibilities... ‘robbing God’ of tithes... These abuses have their equivalence in the modern church. How prevalent is a “form of godliness,” but the power denied... How weak are many Christians with regard to great moral questions; how frequent is alliance & marriage of saved & unsaved; how shamefully lax are Christians in matters of giving their wealth and energies to God's work. To this situation, the Book of Malachi still speaks.”

Another author adds: “*Malachi's criticisms of religious indifference [are] valid today. Initial devotion... can diminish. Genuine worship turns to mechanical observation. Delinquent tithing, rampant divorce, marriage between believers and nonbelievers creates havoc... [And] often... like the people in Malachi's day... we claim victimhood, and God is blamed.*”

Of these 55 Verses, 47 are spoken directly by God! [which is a HIGHER PERCENTAGE than ANY OTHER BOOK of the BIBLE!] – So, it really IS like “**God's Final Word**” before the close of the Old Testament...

In Chapter 1, the Lord OPENS by ASSURING HIS PEOPLE of His LOVE. He says—in Verse 2: “**I have loved you...**” – But the PEOPLE ask: “**In what way have You loved us?**””

So, the Lord reaches ALL THE WAY BACK to the OPENING CHAPTERS of the Bible and REMINDS them that He CHOSE them—the House of Jacob—over the House of Esau...

MORE RECENTLY, He reminds them of how he dealt with the SIN OF EDOM... If you remember—from our study through the Book of Obadiah—the EDOMITES are DESCENDED through the line of Esau... And they dealt TREACHEROUSLY with the people of Israel...

Chuck Swindoll writes: *“Obadiah pictured the violent behavior that Edom carried out on their [cousins... Israel]... cutting down those fleeing from the invaders in Jerusalem.”* – God SAID to Edom—in Obadiah 1:10: **“For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.”**

Malachi 1:4 SEES this fulfilled. Edom was eventually **ABSORBED** into Israel... and God says: **“Even though Edom said, ‘We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,”** Thus says the **LORD** of hosts: **“They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called... the people against whom the **LORD** will have indignation forever.”**

So, God **REMINDS** THEM of His LOVE for them... Next, He addresses their **POLLUTED OFFERINGS**... In Verse 6, He OFFERS a COMPARISON...

He says: **“A son honors his father, and a servant his master.”** He asks: **“If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?”** – So, here’s their reply: **“In what way have we despised Your name?”** – [They’re like, *“What do You mean???* *We would never do that!”*]

So, God says: **“You offer defiled food on My altar.”** – But THEY said: **“In what way have we defiled You?”** – [It’s like a conversation with my kids, sometimes!]...

But, PAY ATTENTION to what God says next... because there’s a **LOT** here... IN RESPONSE, starting in Verse 8—God says: **“When you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? – And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?”** – He says: **“Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?”**

In the SECOND HALF of Verse 10, He says: **“I have no pleasure in you... Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.”** – In Verse 13, God says:

“You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it’... And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; [THIS IS WHAT YOU BRING AS] an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?”

Okay, there’s TWO THINGS going on here... And, we **NEED** TO SEE THIS... ‘Cause it APPLIES to us today... For one thing) The PEOPLE were bringing LESS THAN THEIR BEST to God... and two) The PRIESTS were LETTING THEM... Back-up in Verse 8... God asks:

“When you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? – And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?” – Now, watch what He says... He says: **“Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?”**

Okay, to put this into a MODERN CONTEXT... This is like a person who PERPETUALLY SHOWS UP LATE to offer a “sacrifice of praise to God... the fruit of our lips” (Hebrews 13)... But SOMEHOW—**MIRACULOUSLY**—can show-up to their JOB every day on time...

It’s the person who puts in **HOURS of OVERTIME** in their job, but who won’t volunteer ONE SUNDAY A MONTH in their local church to SERVE OTHER PEOPLE...

And, somebody might say: “*Yeah, but Kevin, I get PAID to do that.*” – Yes, but you owe God **EVERYTHING!** – God GAVE YOU THAT JOB...

This is God saying, “*If you’re gonna show up late for ME, try showing up LATE for your BOSS and see how it flies.*” – He says: **“You offer the blind... [and] the lame and [the] sick... Offer [that] to your governor! – Would he be pleased with you?”** – “*Is your BOSS gonna be happy with that?*”

And it isn’t that the people COULDN’T DO MORE—or GIVE MORE... They just didn’t WANT to... Again, in Verse 13, they say: **“Oh, what a weariness! [They] sneer”** at this idea. – In Chapter 3:14, they’re attitude is: **“It is useless to serve God...”** – But, it’s a LIE!

In Verse 14, God says: **“Cursed be the deceiver who has [a male] in his flock... But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished...”** – So, they HAVE **GOOD** STUFF... they’re just NOT giving it to God... It’s like Ananias & Saphira in the Book of Acts...

God says: **“I am a great King... My name is to be feared among the nations.”** – Giving LESS THAN OUR BEST to God... in our TIME, our TALENT, our ENERGY, our FOCUS, our MONEY, our ATTITUDE... is a SIN...

There’s lots of people who “**dabble**” at church—the BUILDING of God’s Kingdom... But who bring their ‘A’ game for the world and a paycheck...

God says to the priests—in Verse 10—I would rather you “**shut the doors**” of the temple, and **“not kindle fire on My altar in vain...”** – David Guzik writes:

“Not everything that is offered to God as worship is accepted by God as worship. Sometimes God would prefer that [we]... just stop... and... says, “I have no pleasure in you.” We are often concerned with church growth, evangelism, and planting churches. [But] in some cases, the best thing we could do... is shut the doors of many churches.”

And, somebody could say: “*Yeah, but Kevin, this is the Old Covenant. We’re saved under the New Covenant. There’s GRACE... Things are different now!*”

But I would say: THINK about NEW TESTAMENT passages—like 1st Corinthians Chapter 3—which make it clear that our **WORKS** are going to be TESTED... by FIRE...

Scripture says—“[SO] let each one take heed how he builds...” because “each one’s work will become clear... the Day will declare it... the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built... endures, he will receive a reward. [But] If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss...”

Think about Matthew 7, where Jesus says: “Many will say to Me... ‘Lord... have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you...’”

These passages make it clear that there is a **STANDARD**... There ARE things that we can offer-up to God that will **NOT** be accepted. – There is “*lip service*,” and a “*show of worship*” that will eventually become clear... We need to bring our **BEST** to God...

And—by Chapter 2—the Lord becomes very pointed... He says, in Verse 1: “**And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.**” – Verse 2: “**If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name... I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take [it] to heart.**” – In Verse 3, He says: “**I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces.**”

The animals brought for sacrifice still had **POOP** in their insides... and—according to Exodus 29:14—this was supposed to be burned outside the camp. – But here, God says He’s gonna **SPREAD THAT POOP** on the **FACES** of the unfaithful priests... **BECAUSE...**

He says—in Verse 7—“**the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.**” – “But,” He says, “**you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble... You have corrupted the covenant of Levi... Therefore,**” Verse 9: “**I... [make] you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept My ways but... shown partiality in the law.**”

In Verse 13, He says: “**This is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying; so [that] He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.**”

“**Yet you say,**” Verse 14: “**For what reason?**” — [Still PLAYING DUMB]... “**Because the LORD,**” says, “[I] have been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”

This word “*treacherously*”—which God REPEATS **4 TIMES** in this passage—means: “*to act in a faithless, deceitful, or disloyal way.*” – Adam Clarke says: “[The priests here] kept their wives until they... passed their youth, then [they] put them away, [and] got young ones in their place.”

In Verse 15, God says: “**did [not] [I]... make them one...?**” — Which is CLEARLY a reference to Genesis 2:24... “**And why one?**” God asks... Because “**He seeks godly offspring.**”

This is SUPPOSED to be ONE of the **PURPOSES** of marriage... It's possible it's one of the **MAIN** purposes of marriage: to **RAISE DISCIPLES**...

According to Pew Research... JUST based on DEATH RATE and BIRTHS alone—Muslims will outpace any other religious group in the world within ten years...

Because OLDER CHRISTIANS are DYING, but FEWER YOUNGER CHRISTIANS are having children... they've bought into the "**double income, no kids**" mentality...

Compared to the ISLAMIC WORLD where they have more and more children... with a CLEARLY-STATED AGENDA to take over the world... It's very strategic... God says: "*I want you to MAKE GODLY CHILDREN.*" – He says:

"Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth." – Because—important Verse, Malachi 2:16— "**the LORD God of Israel says that He HATES divorce...**" – It's interesting that—multiple times in this passage...

In addressing their marriages, God says: "**take heed to your spirit.**" – Marriage is a Godly institution... In fact, "**The... holy institution which He loves,**" He says in Verse 11...

Marriages "*not working out*" is something **MORE** than two people just "*not getting along.*" – There is something **INNATELY SPIRITUAL** about marriage...

And, God says that He **HATES** divorce... That's STRONG LANGUAGE! – There's TWO BIBLICAL INSTANCES where God "**allows**" for divorce, but... I don't believe that it's **EVER** God's DESIRE... And, I think we can SAY that from a Book like Hosea...

But, "*According to... [the] Barna Group, between 33—38% of born-again Christians have been divorced... This statistic is not far off... the national average of around 40%.*" – So, there's NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE between Christians and Non-Christians...

I believe—in the modern church—we have become SO FOCUSED on condemning **homosexuality** that we have NOT **ROUNDLY CONDEMNED ALL** forms of "**sexual immorality**"—which would include premarital sex, pornography... and DIVORCE...

So, it's become COMMONPLACE to have churches where a Pastor will SPEAK OUT against homosexuality... but—within the congregation—people have gotten divorced and remarried for UNBIBLICAL REASONS, thus CAUSING people to COMMIT ADULTERY...

God **HATES** it... and it's RAMPANT in the church... And it has CRIPPLED the POWER and TESTIMONY and MINISTRY of the church in the world today...

Now—skipping ahead a LITTLE bit—to Chapter 3, Verse 8... the Lord asks: "**Will a man rob God?**" – He says: "**you have robbed Me!**"

But, once more, the PEOPLE said: “**In what way have we robbed You?”** – God STRAIGHT-UP tells them: “**In tithes and offerings.**” – “**you have robbed Me...**”

TITHING is one of those topics that—for some reason—seems to be CONTROVERSIAL within churches... And, maybe that's because there **HAS** been a lot of ABUSE and SCANDAL in the area of CHURCH and MONEY...

But, to have a BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING... the word “**tithe**” simply means “*a tenth.*” – And, in the Old Testament, God's people were **COMMANDED** to DONATE a TITHE of all they had to support the PRIESTS and service of the TABERNACLE and TEMPLE... and the POOR.

Now, that's just a BASIC IDEA... But—**LIKE** the people in Nehemiah's day—these people were WITHHOLDING their TITHE from the Lord... And—from God's perspective—it wasn't a THEOLOGICAL or PHILOSOPHICAL difference-of-opinion... From God's perspective...

THEY were committing a **CRIME**... The Tithe belonged to **HIM**... They were “**ROBBING**” Him... And, God makes it clear that “*BECAUSE they did not give to Him as commanded, He [would] not BLESS them materially or spiritually the way He could have.*”

A very common thing I'll hear from Christians today is that tithing isn't commanded in the New Testament... And yet, **GIVING** is EVERYWHERE IMPLIED... In Matthew Chapter 6—when Jesus speaks on giving—He says: “**WHEN** you do [your] charitable deed...” — Not IF...

In 2nd Corinthians 9, Paul says: “**concerning the ministering to the saints, it is UNNECESSARY for me to write to you; for I KNOW your willingness...**”

In fact, I would say that TITHING was only meant to be a STARTING POINT for our giving, and—perhaps—we OUGHT to give MORE... Think of it this way...

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: “**You have heard... it... said... ‘You shall not [commit] murder...’** – So THAT'S THE LAW... But, Jesus says: “**I say to you... whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.**” – So, Jesus points to something **DEEPER** than the law...

He said: “**You have heard... it... said... ‘You shall not commit adultery.’**” – “**But I say to you... whoever looks at a woman to lust... has already committed adultery... in his heart.**” – So, Jesus points **BEYOND** THE LAW...

If we held to that SAME LINE OF THINKING... We could IMAGINE Jesus saying: “**You've heard it said that you should tithe... But, actually... there's something MORE than that that I want you to do...**” – Jesus **COMMENDS SACRIFICAL GIVING...**

In Mark Chapter 12: “**Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury.**” – Which I always thought was interesting... “**And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites...**”

Now, Jesus didn't CORRECT HER, and say: "*Hey! This is the New Covenant, lady! You don't have to TITHE ANYMORE!*" – We read: "[Jesus] called His disciples to Himself and said... **'This poor widow... put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they... put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had...'**"

Paul commends a VERY SIMILAR THING about the Macedonians in 2nd Corinthians Chapter 8... I won't read the whole passage, but he says: "**In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing.**" – He says: "**As you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.**" – For "**God LOVES a cheerful giver.**" – So, God tells the people in Malachi to:

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this... 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."

He says—in Verse 11: "**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... And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,**" says the **LORD of hosts.**"

A GOOD New Testament "COMPANION" to this passage one is 2nd Corinthians 9... Which says: "**He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.**" – It's POINTLESS to try and predict HOW God will provide for us...

All we need to know is "**God is ABLE.**" – In the Malachi passage—God speaks of "**windows of heaven and pour[ing] out... such blessing... there will not be room enough to receive it.**"

David Guzik writes: "*It's [difficult] to find a comparable passage of Scripture [to Malachi 3:10] – where the **LORD COMMANDS** His people to test Him. It was as if God said, 'See if you can give to Me and be the **poorer** for it. See if you can out-give Me. '*"

Now, not EVERYTHING in Malachi is a REBUKE, or a WARNING... God speaks of TWO COMING MESSENGERS... In Chapter 3, Verse 1, He says: "**Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.**" – So, that's ONE MESSENGER... Then, we read:

"...the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight." THIS is a reference to JESUS, the MESSIAH

But Malachi does something SIMILAR to a lot of OTHER PROPHETS... Robert Alden writes: "*Like most Old Testament prophets, Malachi... mingles the two advents... of Christ [together].*" – He speaks about the FIRST and SECOND COMING of Jesus **SIMULTANEOUSLY.**

He asks: “Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.” – In Verse 5, He says: “I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers... [and] adulterers... perjurors... [and] those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans... those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts.”

And—by Chapter 4—the language **SHIFTS** to the “**day**” of the Lord... The ‘**The Day of the Lord**’ is an IDEA that appears over 25 TIMES in the Bible... And, it DOESN'T necessarily refer to a LITERAL **DAY**... It’s more the “*time of the Lord.*” – David Guzik writes:

*“Now is the **day** of man... but [that time] will not last forever. One day, Messiah will **end** the day of man and herald the day of the LORD.” – “A day of wrath... where mankind receives the... penalty for his rebellion [and many Old Testament prophets] paint [a powerful picture of it]... ” – **BUT**, he adds: “When we are right with God, we WANT the day of the LORD. We long for Him to show His strength because... we abide in Him. When we are not right with God, we fear the day of the LORD, because when God shows Himself strong, His strength [will] work against us.”*

And this IDEA is REFLECTED in MALACHI Chapter 4... In Verse 1, we read: “**Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. and the day which is coming shall burn them up... That will leave them neither root nor branch.**” – “But to you who fear My name,” Verse 2 says...

“**The Sun of Righteousness shall arise**”—a CLASSIC REFERENCE to Jesus... “**With healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.**” – Verse 3: “**You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,**” says the LORD of hosts.”

And, the Book of Malachi CLOSES by saying: “**Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel...**” – So, Malachi looks **BACK**...

But THEN, Verse 5 says: “**I... send you Elijah the prophet BEFORE the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.**” – Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: “*Malachi’s conclusion looks BACKWARD to Moses and FORWARD to Elijah...*”

And, this is INTERESTING to me, because... For ONE THING, MOSES and ELIJAH really **REPRESENT** the “**law and the prophets**”—which are REFERENCED TOGETHER 5 TIMES in the New Testament... as being the TOTALITY of Old Testament scripture...

Plus, God met BOTH men at Mount Sinai (or Horeb)... They BOTH appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration... And they’re PROBABLY the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.

See, there is a SENSE in which this coming of Elijah is still FUTURE... Verse 5 says: “**I will... send... Elijah the prophet BEFORE the... great and dreadful day of the LORD.**”

That HASN'T HAPPENED YET... BUT, the phrase back in Chapter 3, Verse 1, when God says: **“I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.”** – Matthew 11:10 and Luke 7:27 **BOTH** AScribe this Verse to John the Baptist who PREPARED THE WAY for Jesus...

And Jesus said of John the Baptist—in Matthew 11:14—“**He is Elijah who is to come...**”

This is why the OPENING CHAPTER of LUKE—where we'll be NEXT week—devotes SO MUCH TIME to the miraculous birth of John the Baptist... He IS the prophesied “**messenger**” of this LAST BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT who will PREPARE the way for Jesus...

The LAST VERSE of Malachi says: **“...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.”** We CAN'T HELP but point-out that the LAST WORD of the Old Testament is “**curse.**”

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” Galatians 3:10 says... But **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse... having become a curse for us...”**

If we COMPARE THIS with the LAST VERSE of the NEW TESTAMENT... Revelation 22:21 says: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!”** – This is the GLORY of the New Covenant! – James Montgomery Boice points out that:

“The Masorites, who have given us most of the copies of the Hebrew Old Testament... they repeated the next-to-the-last verse of Malachi after the last verse. Similarly, the Septuagint reverses the last two verses so the Old Testament ends, not with a curse, but with a blessing.”

But, guys... we don't have to MANIPULATE—or CHANGE—God's Word to receive a blessing... All we have to do is put our faith in Jesus Christ...

The CURSE IS LIFTED, and the BLESSINGS FLOW... And I look forward to celebrating His birth with you next week, and then getting into the glorious New Testament in the New Year... when Route 66 continues... So, there you have **THE ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT!**