

## RELATED SCRIPTURES

## STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 09.7.25

Deuteronomy 28:1–14 | Deuteronomy 28:15–35 | Lamentations 3:22–23

## SUMMARY

Malachi is the last of the twelve minor prophets in the Old Testament canon. His message was written around 460 B.C., which was after the Lord's people returned from Babylonian exile. The Babylonians defeated the people of God in 586 B.C. In no uncertain terms, this defeat was an instrument of God's justice upon his people for their unfaithfulness, and with this judgment came the destruction of the temple—the ultimate symbol of God's faithfulness and presence among his people. In 539 B.C., the Persian empire defeated the Babylonians, and by the Lord's mercy, the Persians began releasing the Jews from captivity, allowing them to start rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. Despite the Lord's persistent faithfulness and mercy and despite all that the Lord's people had been through, it seemed as though they had learning nothing. The Lord disciplined them for their unfaithfulness, yet there was no discernible difference in their behavior once the temple had been rebuilt and their land was restored; they were the same old unfaithful people of God. The priests were corrupt, and they continued in sinful patterns; they mistreated the poor, were unfaithful in their marriages, and were very sloppy with their giving. So, Malachi's message to God's people—especially the leaders—was to remember God's laws. He told them to remember God's faithfulness because if they fail to remain faithful to him, they will be judged—yet again—and face the “day of the Lord.” As Malachi's word opens, he reminds them that the Lord has said, “I have loved you,” yet the response of the people with their hardened hearts is, “How have you loved us?” (v. 2). Their hearts, once again, had hardened. This has been a persistent pattern of God's people throughout redemptive history. Though the Lord is faithful and has extended his people grace upon grace, and mercy upon mercy, we forget *his* love for *us*. In his loving-kindness, the Lord preserves his people—not by our merit—but because the Son of God came to be the faithful Child of God and apply his righteousness to his people; he earned the merit for us, by God's grace.

## GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Malachi 1:1-2a.

If God loves his people, why would he allow his people to be defeated by another nation and then held captive for so many years? Does it serve a redemptive purpose?

Despite everything the Lord's people had experienced—defeat, captivity, release, and reconstruction—their faith remained lukewarm. What does this tell us about the human condition? What hope does the church have when they can't be faithful?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

## CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.