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Malachi Overview (Part 1)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In "Malachi Overview (Part 1)," Steve Gregg provides insights into the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi. Malachi's message warns the Israelites of God's impending judgment and rebukes the priests for not teaching the Law to the people. The book contains predictions of Christ and John the Baptist and emphasizes that true worship of God is a matter of the heart. Throughout the lecture, Gregg explores the significance of Malachi's prophecies and their fulfillment in the early Christian Church.

Transcript

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And then you come to Malachi 1.1, it's the burden of the word of the Lord. Those are the only three places in the whole Bible that that expression is used. It'd be great if I could tell you why that's significant, but I don't know why it's significant.

It's just interesting because only Zechariah, besides Malachi, used that expression. And Malachi, for some reason, is using it too, though the other prophets did not use it. Now, God begins in verse two.

I have loved you, says the Lord, yet you say, in what way have you loved us? Now, what we're gonna find, one of the features of Malachi, that's different than the prophets, and it's almost amusing if it wasn't so offensive, is that every time God says something to people, they say, oh yeah, prove it. They challenge everything he says. He says, I have loved you, and their first response is, oh yeah, in what way have you loved us? If you look at verse six, he says, as a son honors his father and his servant, his master.

If I'm a father, where's my honor? If I'm a master, where's my reverence, says the Lord of hosts. You priests that despise my name. Yet you say, in what way have we despised your name? See, they like to challenge everything.

In chapter two, in verse 14, it says, well, verse 13, the second thing you do, you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying, so he does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it from your hands. And you say, for what reason? Well, that's, they don't actually, I mean, for what reason is still a challenge here. But they usually ask, in what sense are you mean this? For example, in verse 17, chapter two, verse 17.

You have wearied the Lord with your words, yet you say, in what way have we wearied him? In chapter three, verse seven, it says, yet from the days of your fathers, you've gone away from my ordinances. They have not kept them. Return to me, and I'll return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

But you said, in what way shall we return? And then in chapter three, verse 13, he says, your words have been harsh against me, God says to them, says the Lord. Yet you say, in what way have we spoken against you? So, I mean, this is a feature in this book that

just shows what the attitude of the people are at this time. They're not stoning the prophet, they're just challenging whether he's really got a valid complaint.

Yeah, in what way is that true? In what way are we guilty of that? He's making his charges. Now, most of the time when the prophets made charges against the people, they were pretty obvious things, like you're worshiping idols, you're committing adultery, you're stealing from your neighbor. And you never find in the earlier prophecies, oh yeah, where are we worshiping idols? Where are we committing adultery? Because it was obvious.

It was something they knew they were doing. They didn't challenge the validity of the charge, they just killed the messenger because they didn't like being accused. But here, these people are not responding violently.

They're just saying, oh yeah, prove it. Defend your position. And they're saying it to God.

And the first time they say it is when he says, I have loved you, says the Lord. And by the way, God, you can see, even though God has got some complaints about them, and he makes some threats, he's actually speaks to them quite gently and quite patiently, much more than I would if I were in his position with these people. He says, I've loved you, says the Lord, yet you say, in what way have you loved us? Like, we don't feel very loved.

Now, maybe at this point, they were not prospering. There were times when the prophets earlier, especially the pre-exilic prophets, had said that when God brings them back from Babylon, he'll pour out blessings on them. And they expected to be prospering.

They expected to have great abundance of crops, great prestige as a nation. And these things hadn't really happened, not the way they thought. And so that's why they were now saying things like you read them saying in chapter three, verse 14.

He says, you have said it is vain to serve God. What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance and that we have walked in his as mourners before the Lord of hosts? They're saying it's vain to serve God. And there's no good reason to do it.

What profit is there to us in this? They expected something more for themselves than they've experienced. Now, of course, God is not slack in keeping his promises, but it's obvious that these people didn't love God. They weren't exactly zealous for God.

Why should God zealously do for them the best things that he could do if they had been zealous for him? In any case, they're questioning. So you say that you love us, right? In what way do you love us? Why should we believe you love us? We don't see all the things we'd like to see. You're not providing for us all the things we'd love to have.

And so he answers them. He says, Now, this is a very famous statement where he says, Jacob, I have loved, Esau, I have hated. And the reason it's famous is not because it's in Malachi, but because Paul uses it in a very well-known passage where he's arguing for God's choice of his people.

And particularly for the choice of the remnant of Israel who are followers of Christ. It's part of the fabric of his argument in chapter nine of Romans. And it's very often quoted sometimes to the wrong effect because people are missing his point.

One thing I would point out here is that Esau is the name not only of the man who is the twin brother of Jacob, but it's also the name of the nation. Jacob had two names, Jacob and Israel. Esau had two names, Esau and Edom.

In their lifetime, these two men were both known by both these names each. So they had alternative names. But after their lifetime, they had founded nations.

And the nations they founded were called either Jacob and Israel on the one hand, or Edom and Esau on the other. The nations that came from them were named after their progenitors. So in later biblical books, it talks about Jacob or Israel, which is really a man's name, but in later books of the Bible, it's not talking about him.

It's talking about the nation of Israel. Likewise, when later people talk about Edom or Esau, they're not usually talking about the man, but the nation that came from him, the Edomites, as we would say. Now, when God said, Jacob, I have loved, Esau, I have hated, he's not talking about the men particularly, although it is true he favored Jacob over Esau.

But that's not what he's getting into. He's clearly talking about the nations. He has treated the nation of Israel better than he has treated the nation of Edom.

If the people of Israel think God hasn't shown love toward them, and that's what they're challenging him on, they should notice the difference between the way he treated them and the way he treated the Edomites. It's clear that he loved Jacob because although he disciplined them and sent them into captivity, he did bring them back and restore them as a nation again 70 years later. They had been taken into Babylon in 586 BC.

Three years later, the Edomites had been taken into captivity in Babylon also. They were conquered in 583 BC, just three years after Israel was. But they were never restored.

The nation of Edom never was brought back into existence. After the Jews came back from Babylon and reestablished their nation, there were Edomites around, although there were just a remnant of them. And most of them had been conquered by the Nabateans or Sabians and other what we'd call Arab-raiding tribes.

And the remnant of those who had been descended from Esau now lived in southern

Judah. They didn't have their own land anymore. They lived in southern Judah, and they were known as the Edomians.

And they were conquered by Jewish leaders before the time of Christ, and they became basically vassals. They were not ever restored as a nation. They were just a vassal ethnic group that served Israel.

And God had said, when the two sons were in the womb, they were both twins, God had said to their mother, Rebekah, the older shall serve the younger, meaning Esau will serve Jacob. Well, that actually never happened in the lives of the two men. But it's true that the nation of Esau did serve the nation of Israel.

And the last known Edomian in history was Herod the Great, who lived right up until the time that Jesus was born and died shortly afterwards. So the Edomites, they vanished. They're gone.

God didn't let Israel vanish. Edomites and Israelites both went into captivity, but God restored Israel. He did not restore Edom, and that's what he's saying here.

He's saying, I have shown love and favoritism toward Jacob. I have not shown such favoritism toward Esau. In fact, I've wiped out the mountains of Esau.

I've laid them waste. And true, there are Edomites who'd like to rebuild their kingdom, and they say, well, we're going to rebuild it. And he says, well, they may build, but I'll throw it down.

In other words, I don't treat Israel and the Edomites the same, although they were twin brothers. And Esau was not necessarily a worse man than Jacob was. God didn't choose to bless Jacob and his descendants because he was a better man than Esau.

In fact, that point is what Paul makes. If you look quickly over Romans chapter 9, because this is the place where this particular passage of Malachi is mostly remembered from, because Paul is more widely read than Malachi is by Christians. And what Paul is doing in Romans 9 is pointing out that the promises God made to Israel, which do not appear to have been fulfilled in the Messiah, because the Jews have mostly rejected the Messiah, are not unfulfilled in fact, because the remnant of Israel has in fact received Christ.

The disciples, they were the remnant of Israel. The 3,000 converted to Christ on the day of Pentecost, they were the remnant of Israel. The Jewish church that was only Jewish for years after Pentecost, until the Gentiles started to come in, they were the remnant of Israel.

The true faithful of Israel were those in Israel who received Christ. And what Paul is saying is, it may seem like God has made promises of salvation to Israel that have not

happened because most Jews are still lost, but God has in fact fulfilled them to the remnant. And he says in Romans 9, 6, it is not as if the word of God, meaning the promises God made to Israel, it is not as if it has taken no effect.

In other words, if it looks to you like God has not fulfilled his word, to Israel, you're not seeing it right. It's not that it isn't, that's not really what is the case. It's not as if the word of God has failed to take effect, but they are not all Israel who are of Israel.

And what he means by that is, there are promises made to Israel, but not everyone whose ethnic Israel is part of the remnant of Israel. Now, how do I know Paul means that? Well, because he says it in plainer words a little later in the same chapter. If you look at chapter 9 of Romans, verse 27, he's quoting from Isaiah, and he says, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved.

In other words, he's saying, the people who are descended from Israel might be as multitudinous as the sand of the sea, just like God promised, but it's only the remnant of them that will be saved. God's promises of salvation was to the remnant. And you can see this for yourself.

If you read the passages in the Old Testament that promise that the Messiah will save Israel, read them and you'll find there's many references there to the remnant, the remnant of his people. He will save the remnant of his people. And what Paul is saying is, the promises were never that the whole nation would be saved, but that the remnant would.

So when you see most Jews reject Christ, it's not that God's promise to save Israel failed to come true. He was only promising to save the remnant. They are the true Israel, the faithful, who have the faith of Abraham.

In Galatians, Paul says, only those who have the faith of Abraham are the children of Abraham. You can't claim to be a child of Abraham just because you have ancestors from Abraham, because Abraham was defined not by his biology, but by his faith. And that's why John the Baptist himself said to the Jews, do not say we have Abraham for our ancestor.

He said God could raise up from these stones, children of Abraham. In John chapter 8, Jesus said, I know you are descended from Abraham, but if you are Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But you're of your father, the devil, and his works are what you want to do.

So it's very clear that Jesus, Paul, they said, listen, when we talk about Israel, we're talking about the remnant. And God has in fact sent Christ and has saved the remnant because the remnant received him. Just like the remnant in Old Testament times received Isaiah or Jeremiah.

There weren't many of them, but they followed Elijah. The remnant followed the prophets. And when Jesus came, the remnant followed the Messiah and became what we call the church, the Jerusalem church.

And so Paul is saying, if you think God has not saved Israel, as he said he would, think again. They are not all Israel who are of Israel. Not everyone descended from the nation of Israel are the Israel that God made the promises to.

And he goes on to point out that Abraham had two sons. God chose one of them, not both of them. Isaac had two sons.

God chose one of them, not both of them. And he's pointing out that within the biological family of Abraham and Isaac, not everyone had was the chosen ones. Not not everyone had a specialness in the sight of God.

So that he says in verse 10, Romans 9, 10, And not only this, but when Rebecca had conceived by one man, even by her father Isaac, for the children not being yet born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works, but of him who called, it was said to her, the older shall serve the younger. I mentioned, of course, this verse a moment ago. It is Genesis 25, 23, where God said to Rebecca of the two twins, the older one will serve the younger.

And then it says, as it is written, Jacob, I have loved Esau, I have hated. Now that's from Malachi chapter two, chapter one, verse two. Now we know that the common way this is used popularly by theologians to say, you see, God chooses who's going to be saved before they're even born.

But there's nothing in Romans 9 talking about these people being saved. There's no indication in the Bible that Jacob was any more saved than Esau was, or that Isaac was more saved than Ishmael was. If saved means having a good relationship with God.

We don't know that they didn't have a good relationship with God. That's not what that's about. God didn't choose some of Abram's seed to save them unilaterally and others to damn them unilaterally.

What he chose is which branch of the family in each generation would carry on the Abrahamic promise, which is to bring the Messiah into the world. The promise was that through Abram's seed, the Messiah, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. That was an earthly mission that Israel had.

God never mentioned heaven or hell to any of them. Read the whole Old Testament. You'll never read about heaven or hell.

God did not talk to Israel about the afterlife. That's not what they were chosen for. The ones who love God, they're in heaven.

The ones who don't love God, they're in hell. But he never talked about that. What he chose them for, he didn't choose a nation to go to heaven.

He chose a nation to, on earth, produce a lineage that would bring forth a man, the Messiah, through whom all the nations would be blessed. That's what the nation was chosen for. And in every generation after Abram, there'd be one line of the family that carried on that promise.

It wasn't going to be Ishmael. It was going to be Isaac. It wasn't going to be Esau.

It was going to be Jacob. Now, this has nothing to do with whether these men were saved or lost. There's no discussion in Romans 9 about these men being chosen to be saved or chosen to be lost.

But rather, one branch of the family was going to carry on the promises, and the other branch would be irrelevant to the promises. That's the point Paul's making. Now, I won't go into Romans 9 any further right now.

If you want my teaching on that, verse by verse, it's at the website under Romans. Another thing about this that's arresting is the way it's worded. Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.

Does God really hate people? Well, I guess he sometimes hates people in the sense that he finds them loathsome and disgusting and so forth. I mean, there are things the Bible says the Lord hates, including, the Bible says, those who sow discord among brethren, those whose feet hasten to shed innocent blood, those who have a proud look. It says God hates those, it says in Proverbs chapter 6. There are people that God hates in that sense that we, just like I would hate to eat a monkey's brain if I was in India or something like that.

I'd hate that. I got no animosity toward monkeys. I'm not hostile toward monkeys.

I have no malice toward them. But I would hate that because I'd find it disgusting. There are people that God finds disgusting.

But he doesn't have malice toward them because God so loved the world. Everyone in the world that he gave his only begotten son. And that's greater love has no one than that.

Than to sacrifice like that. God loves everybody, including Esau. And frankly, I have no reason to believe that Esau isn't in heaven today.

He might well be. This is not discussed in the scripture. But he could be.

What is being said here is that Jacob and Esau represented a crossroads in the family. There were only two people who were descended from Abram and Isaac. They were

Jacob and Esau.

One of them was going to carry on the family tradition and promise. The other was going to be not involved in that. God chose Jacob for that.

And there were many people who were in that family that brought the Messiah who were not personally saved. Many apostate kings of Judah who no doubt died as worshippers of Moloch. Still were in the line of the Messiah.

So being in the line of the Messiah doesn't mean you're personally saved. It just means you're in that family line that's chosen to bring the Messiah into the world. That's all that's being discussed here.

But why hate it? Because in the Hebrew culture, it is commonplace to compare two things which you could not love equally and say, I choose that and not that. I favor that and not that. I prefer that over that.

And in the language or the idioms of the day, they'd say the one that you chose is the one you love. The one you didn't choose is the one you hated. It doesn't mean you had malice or hostility.

It just that's just the way of speaking. For example, Jacob, we're told in Genesis, had two wives, Rachel and Leah. In one passage in Genesis, two successive verses, one of them says, Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.

The next verse says, when God saw Leah was hated, he opened her womb. She wasn't hated. He just loved Rachel more than he loved her.

But if you prefer one over the other, that's the way you talk. I love that one. I hate that one.

Jesus said the same thing. He says no man can serve two masters. He'll love the one and hate the other.

Really? If you have two jobs, two bosses, do you have to hate one of the bosses? No, but you have to prefer one over the other. If they both want you to work the same shift, you're going to choose one. This is my favorite.

I'm going to work for him. This one's going to have to bite the bullet and do without me. I don't hate him.

But Jesus put it that way. You'll love the one and hate the other because that's basically how they talk that way. Jesus talked about if you come to me and don't hate your father and mother and wife and children, you can't be my disciple.

It's the same thing. That's in Luke 14. But in Matthew 10, he said, anyone who loves

father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Anyone who loves wife or children more than me is not worthy of me. That's hating. If you love Jesus more than you love them, that's hating them.

Not in the sense that we use the word hate, but the way the Bible uses the word hate. So when there are two sons and God was going to choose one and not the other, he chose Jacob, not Esau. And he said, I love Jacob.

I hated Esau. He's not talking about his emotions toward Esau. He's talking about the objective fact that he passed over Esau for the privilege of being, you know, the family line that would bring the Messiah.

It's not talking about God's emotions necessarily, though he does have evil, I mean, negative emotions toward sinners too. That's not what he's talking about here. He's not talking about the life of Esau, as Paul makes it very clear.

The choice of the two, choice of one over the other was before either of them had done good or bad. They're both in the womb. They haven't done anything bad.

And Paul's not saying, and he foreknew they would do these things. No, the issue is this choice was made without reference to anything they did and before they had done anything. Because it's not really a choice of God really hating someone like we would use the term.

But the way it's used in scripture, of course, God in every generation had to make a choice. Is it going to be this child or one of their siblings? That's going to be the one. And the one you choose is the one you love.

The others are the ones you hated in the sense of the way it's used. Okay, so he says, I restored Jacob. I did not restore Esau.

Therefore, that's the evidence I have loved you, as he said. And they had challenged him on that point. He says, well, look, Jacob and Esau were brothers.

I chose Jacob. That's your group. That's your family.

I chose you, not them. Now, verse six, a son honors his father and a servant, his master. If then I am the father, where is my honor? And if I'm a master, where's my reverence? Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise my name.

Now, much of this early part of the book is going to be addressed toward the priests. Because they dropped the ball. Now, they're also suffering for it.

Because by the time you get chapter three, you find that the people are not bringing in the tithes. And the priests lived on the tithes. So the priests were going hungry because

the people were not zealous to bring in their tithes.

But this was a punishment of the priests because they were bad priests. In fact, in chapter two, verse nine, God says to the priest, Therefore, I have made you contemptible and base before the people. Because the priests were so compromised, the people couldn't respect them.

And no doubt that's why they didn't bring their tithes. Why should I support that guy? Why should I support these priests? They're worthless. So he's made the priests contemptible in the eyes of the people.

This has resulted in the people not bringing in their tithes. And therefore, the priests are suffering the consequences of their own apostasy, or at least, if it's not apostasy, at least it's neglect of their duty. You're not honoring me.

A master is honored by his servants. A son honors his father. If I'm a father and a master, why aren't you honoring me? What's up with that? How can you justify that? And then they say, of course, at the end of verse six, Yet you say, In what way have we despised your name? Okay, so you're not honoring me.

Let me tell you how. You can see it in the offerings you bring. He says, You defile the food on my altar.

But you say, In what way have we defiled you? By saying, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And when you offer the blind, that is, blind animals, as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor. Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably, says the Lord of Hosts? Now, when they bring sacrifices to God, according to the Torah, they were supposed to bring the most perfect animals they could.

No spots, no blemishes, certainly no broken legs, no blind eyes. They had to give the best to God. That was written into the code.

What were they doing? They're saying, Well, I don't want to neglect going to church. I'm still going to go to church. I'll still put something in the bag when it goes by.

Or I'll still bring an animal and sacrifice it like we're supposed to do. But hey, I've got this lamb over here who's blind. Here's one who's lame.

It's going to die anyway. Why don't I just take it? I remember a former pastor of mine used to tell a story about a man who, one cold night, he went out to the barn, and he came back in and told his wife, Wow, God gave us two calves. Our cow had twins.

I'm going to give one of them to the Lord. And the next morning he went out and checked. He came back and said, Oh, the Lord's calf died.

To give God that which has no value to you because you're going to lose it anyway. I lived in a Christian school that I ran for years up in Oregon, and it was a community. We had the dining hall.

We ate in the dining hall regularly. And there was a weekly rotating menu for the dining hall. And I liked to fast one day a week at the time.

And I would go and check the menu. I say, What day do I want to fast? Oh, they're having, oh, yeah, that's my fast day. I did that for a short time, and I realized, wait a minute, I'm offering God the blind and the lame.

If I'm going to fast, it's unto the Lord. It's making a sacrifice for his sake. But if what I'm sacrificing is a meal I didn't even like anyway, and I wouldn't have eaten, then am I killing two birds with one stone? No, I'm killing no birds at all.

God knows I'm offering up to him what costs me nothing. I should pick the day that has the food I like the most. That's going to be my fast day.

And same thing with, you know, you give God the best if you give him anything. And this is what they weren't doing. And this is the first mark of being lukewarm.

They have not given up being worshipers of God. They've just given up on zealously worshiping God, sacrificially. They still bring their sacrifices, but they bring sacrifices that are the least expensive to them, the ones that are going to die anyway, the ones that are no use to them.

And I think that Christians often do that, too. They still attend church. They still put a little something in the bag when it goes by.

By the way, we don't pass bags here, but most churches do, of course. And yet they do in many cases. You can tell your love is growing cold when you're not wanting to give God the best.

It's not that you don't want to give God anything, but you don't want your worship of God to impinge on your own interests too much. And if you've got a blind sheep, why not give that one? Well, why not? Because God's offended. Give that to your governor.

Will he like that? You bring gifts to your governor? You bring him your blind sheep. See what he thinks about that. Is he going to favor you for that? I don't think so.

And yet you bring that to God. Verse 9. But now entreat God's favor that he may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, will he accept you favorably, says the Lord of hosts? Who is there among you who would shut the doors, meaning of the temple, so that you would not kindle the fire on my altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts.

Now, when he says, who is there even among you who would shut the doors? Most of the other translations I read today said, oh, that somebody would shut the doors, meaning they'd shut off, they'd just close the temple down, bolt the doors, nail up boards, don't let anyone in, so that they will stop bringing these sacrifices that dishonor God. I wish someone would just shut the doors, don't light the fire on the altar, just don't bring these vain sacrifices because I'm not accepting them. I'm not pleased with them.

Might as well not even have the temple. Might as well not worship God if that's how you're going to do it. That's what he's saying.

He says in this 11, for from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. In every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. Now, the statement from the rising of the sun to the going down of it, we probably think that means from sunrise in the morning till evening.

So all day long. But actually in the Old Testament, that's not how they talk. The rising of the sun is a Hebrew idiom for the east, and the going down of the sun is a Hebrew idiom for the west.

It's a direction, not a time of the day. In fact, you'll even find times in the Old Testament where it talks about from the east even to the going down of the sun. Or it'll say from the rising of the sun even to the west.

You see, obviously, the rising of the sun just means the east. The going down of the sun means the west. So he's saying all over the world.

He's not talking about all day long from sunrise to sundown. He's saying the world over, from the east to the west, my name will be great among the Gentiles. My name will be praised among the heathen.

Now, this is a very important statement, because one of the themes of the Bible frequently in the Prophets and certainly in the New Testament is that where the Jews often drop the ball with reference to their zeal and service of God, the Gentiles often would pick it up. When a Gentile came to Jesus and said, I know you want to heal my servant, but don't come to my house because I'm not worthy to have you under my house. You just give the command.

I know that it'll be done. Jesus said, I haven't found this kind of faith in all of Israel. Here's a Gentile who's got more faith than any of the Jews have.

And that's a very common theme in the New Testament. In Romans chapter 2, Paul's rebuking Jews. He says, you say you're a Jew, you boast in the law, but here's some Gentiles who keep the law better than you do.

You say that not to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You say that people shouldn't steal, but do you steal? You say that people shouldn't do this, but you're doing it. But these Gentiles over here, meaning the Christian Gentiles, they're living up to the code that you say people should live up to, and you're not. And so it's very clear.

Even Jesus said to Israel, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it. The idea of the prophets and Jesus is often that the Jews, they're apathetic about God, whereas many Gentiles would be excited about God. And that's what it's saying here.

You guys are apathetic. Yeah, you still come to the temple. Yeah, you offer these worthless animals just so you're doing something.

But the world over, the nations, my name's going to be great among the nations. The pagans, they'll have a different attitude than you. It says, my name should be great among the Gentiles.

In every place, incense shall be offered to my name and appear often. You know, there's an early church document called the Didache. If you've listened to me, you may have heard me quote from it before, because it's one of the most ancient documents outside of the New Testament itself, from the early church.

It came out right around the year 100 AD, so like a generation after the apostles, and it's a document of church order. But it's interesting, in the Didache, in chapter 14 of the Didache, we have this statement. But every Lord's Day, gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions that your sacrifice may be pure.

For this is that which was spoken by the Lord. In every place, incense shall be offered to my name and appear often. In other words, he quotes this passage from Malachi.

And the Didache says, when we come together and worship God, when we offer our thanksgiving to God, this is a fulfillment of Malachi's prediction that among the Gentiles, God's name would be honored. They would offer up incense to his name. Now, in the book of Revelation, the prayers of the saints is likened to incense in Revelation 5, 8. And again, in chapter 8, I think it's verse 3. And over in Hebrews, it talks about the offerings that we offer up as a holy priesthood.

In Hebrews chapter 13, it says in Hebrews 13, verse 15, Therefore, by him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. So we, as a spiritual priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices, our praise to God, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

Well, that's what, that's the Gentiles, us, the world over, the church, the world over, is honoring God, honoring Christ, offering up praise and offerings in our sacrifice to him in

that sense. And so Malachi is predicting the results of the coming of Christ and the Gentiles coming to Christ. But it says in verse 12, Malachi 1, 12, But you profane it, in that you say, The table of the Lord is defiled, and its fruit, its food is contemptible.

You also say, Oh, what a weariness, as they find it a weariness to have to go and do these rituals and serve God. What a burden it is. And you sneer at it, says the Lord of hosts, and you bring the stolen, the lame, the sick, meaning defective animals.

Thus you bring an offering, exclamation point. Should I accept this from your hand, says the Lord, but cursed be the deceiver, who has in his flock a male, and makes a vow that sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great king, says the Lord of hosts, and my name shall be feared among the nations, that is, among the Gentiles.

A curse upon the man who's got a qualified animal to offer for sacrifice, and he vows to give a sacrifice to God, but instead of bringing the qualified animal, he brings a defective animal. There's a curse on him for that. But he says, that's not what the Gentiles will do.

Well, some of them probably do, actually. But, I mean, there are Christian Gentiles who are no more, who are every bit as lukewarm as the Jews were at this time. But certainly, he's saying, the real worship, the real zealous worship, the real true heartfelt worship is going to come largely from the Gentiles.

Not that the Jews are left out, because many Jews have followed Christ too, and are zealous for Christ. But certainly, as you look at the demographics of the people of God throughout the world, it's more Gentiles than Jews. Partly because there's more Gentiles in the world than there are Jews.

And therefore, the cross-section that have come to Christ are more Gentile than Jews. So, God's receiving honor from Gentiles, which he did not receive from his own people in some cases. Now, chapter 2. You know what? Instead of going to chapter 2, I'm going to take a break.

Because I would have liked to take this in one session, but it's going to take more, obviously. We gave an introduction that took up more time than the rest of the chapter is going to take up. So, why don't we take a stretch break, and then we'll finish it up after that.