

# ***Malachi***

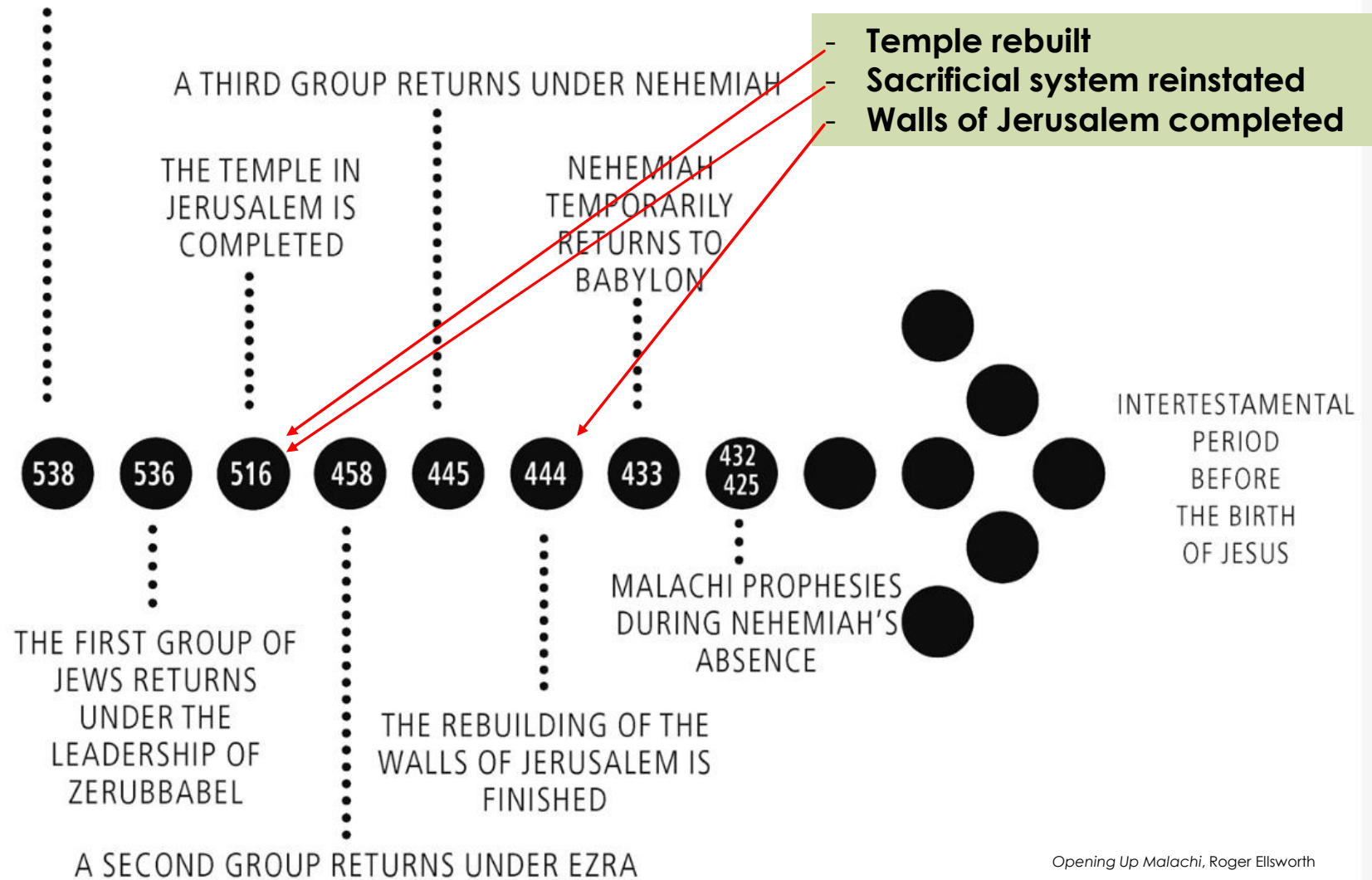
- Part 1 -



## Some background ....

- Why study Malachi 2,400 + years later ?
  - Parallels between then & now
    - Challenges to faith in God & His Word
    - Believers' lives separated to spiritual (not much) & secular
    - Religious worship had become a dead ritual
  - Note the history behind the current culture .... x

CYRUS ISSUES THE DECREE PERMITTING  
THE JEWS TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND



## Some background .... (cont'd)

- Yet the mood of the nation was not upbeat
  - People were in constant state of depression
  - The mood also affected the priests
  - Religion had become a matter of ritual
  - Stinginess toward God grew
- WHY ?!?
  - Prophecy about the temple from Haggai & Zechariah > Hagg 2.1-9
  - The people expected the Messiah back to inhabit the temple
  - Over 80 years of expectation and no fulfillment by Malachi's time
- Drastic results
  - Religious observations without enthusiasm
  - Priests brought defiled sacrifices, complained about their work
  - People ignored laws about marriage and tithes
  - Service to God was rapidly losing meaning
  - All had nearly lost their faith in a coming Messiah x

## Some background .... (cont'd)

- Note how God chooses to response to all this
  - He holds a direct **dialogue** with the people through Malachi
  - There are seven such dialogues in Malachi
    - God addresses the people in the first person (pretty heavy, no ?)
    - He confronts the people and the priests with their sins
      - God makes His accusations
      - The people object
      - God refutes their objections with facts
- **God also affirms that the Messiah is indeed coming** x

# God opens the dialogue by declaring His love for Israel

- Mal 1.1: Malachi declares that it is God that is speaking (not him)
  - Why is Malachi the messenger ?
  - Malachi indicates that God is speaking directly to the people
  - Malachi is delivering a message directly from God  
(God is speaking directly through him)
- Mal 1.2-4: God cites His love for Israel to begin His complaints
  - God: "...I have loved you..."
  - The People: "...how have You loved us ?..."
    - They distrusted Him
    - They challenged If He was meeting His part of the covenant
    - Distrust > loss of love > failure to have faith in Him
  - God reminds them that they are His chosen people
    - Jacob chosen over Esau
    - Israel favored, Edom desolate
- Mal 1.5: God promises an even better day for Israel x

# God's specific charges on the priests

- They had dishonored His Name
- (1.6) God identifies Himself as Israel's Father
  - What is the proper respect for a father ?
  - The priests did not honor God as God or their Father
- (1.7-8) God gives the basis for His charge
  - Bringing unlawful sacrifices
  - Would they bring the governor such sacrifices ?
  - What does God think of what we bring Him ? x



## God's specific charges on the priests *(cont'd)*

- 1.9: Malachi chides the priests with sarcasm
  - Hebrew for "entreat" = "to soothe or make sweet the face of anyone"
  - Do you really think that God will accept such sacrifices ?
- 1.10: In fact, God declares their worship to be useless
  - "worship" > "worth-ship"
  - God says that He wishes somebody would shut the temple doors
    - "...I am not pleased with you... nor will I accept an offering from you..."
  - Remember what Christ says to the church at Laodicea (Rev 3.15-16)
  - And what He said true worship is (John 4.24)
    - "in spirit" = worship Him fully invested in Him with our hearts
    - "in truth" = worship according to what is revealed about Him in His Word x

## God's specific charges on the priests *(cont'd)*

- 1.11: God concludes by proclaiming **His** commitment to His Name
  - Israel was not allowing God to have His glory, so He would turn to the Gentiles
    - "from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations..."
    - "incense is going to be offered to My name"
      - Foreshadowing a change in religious worship ??
- God concludes by repeating His charges against Israel
  - Before it was for their activities, now it was for their attitudes
    - 1.12a: They say the Lord's table is polluted
    - 1.12b: They complained about their food
    - 1.13a: They regarded their work as tiresome
    - 1.13b: They brought unworthy sacrifices
    - 1.14a: They collaborated with false worshippers
    - 1.14b: They failed to acknowledge God's greatness and glory x

## God's specific charges on the priests *(cont'd)*

- God then announces His curse on the priests
  - 2.1: God deliberately aims His decision as a curse against the priests
  - 2.2: The curse's elements
    - It is on their "blessings"
      - Their livelihood
      - Their respect among the people
  - 2.3: God describes the effects that this curse will foster
    - Their "offspring" will be rebuked
      - Heb "zera" is really "zeroa" = arm ??
    - They would be disposed of
  - 2.4: God gives the reason for this harsh curse
    - He had created a covenant with Levi and would keep it x

## Three Covenants have been broken by Israel

### ➤ 1. The priestly covenant has become perverted

#### ➤ 2.5-7: The covenant's ideal

- Covenant = agreement between two parties
  - God's part: Give Levi life and peace
  - Levi's part: Hold God in awe, serve Him according to His commandments
- Responsibilities of Levi = priesthood
  - "True instruction was in his mouth" > incorruptible doctrine
  - "...unrighteousness was not found on his lips"
  - "...he walked with Me in peace and uprightness"
  - "...he turned many back from iniquity"
  - "...the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge"
  - "...men should seek instruction from his mouth"

#### ➤ 2.8-9: The covenant ideal had been broken by the priests

- "you have turned aside from the way" > perverse in their lives
- "you have caused many to stumble by the instruction"
- "you have corrupted the covenant of Levi"
- "I also have made you despised and abased before all the people"
- "not keeping My ways"
- "showing partiality in the instruction" x

# Three Covenants have been broken by Israel (cont'd)

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## ➤ 2. The national covenant had been broken

- Formed by (Exod 34.16) & (Deut 7.3)
  - Israelites forbidden to marry from other nations
  - Ezra forced divorces from such marriages (Ezra 10.3-5)
  - Had now become common once again
- Malachi stated three critical results from the broken covenant
  - 1- 2.10: The covenant was defiled
  - 2- 2.11: Malachi describes the sin that broke the covenant
    - Israelites had married pagan women
  - 3- 2.12: Judgement was brought on Israel for breaking the covenant
    - Any man marrying a pagan woman would have his line cut off
    - Not even repairable by bringing sacrifices x

# Three Covenants have been broken by Israel (cont'd)

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## ➤ 3. The marriage covenant had been broken

### ➤ Overview

- Marriage was instituted by, and governed by, God
- The people were guilty of divorcing their lawful wives to marry pagan women
  - The only lawful divorce under Mosaic law was if a woman was guilty of indecent behavior

### ➤ Malachi's observations

- 2.13: Innocent people are hurt by unlawful divorce
  - The results of breaking the covenant are given 1<sup>st</sup> here
- 2.14: The sin causing the broken covenant now stated
  - The divorcing husbands object to the charge that they were responsible
  - God had been a witness to their marriage, and to their treacherous treatment of their lawful wives x

# Three Covenants have been broken by Israel (cont'd)

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## ➤ 3. The marriage covenant had been broken (cont'd)

➤ Scholars agree vs 15 is the most difficult to translate in all of Malachi

➤ Alternatives to 1<sup>st</sup> phrase

➤ "Did not One make them?"

➤ "Did not He [the LORD] make one?"

➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase even more difficult

➤ A simpler consensus of vss 14-15

➤ 1<sup>st</sup> phrase

➤ ESV: "Did he not make them one ...?"

➤ NIV: "Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one?"

➤ The answer... NIV: "Because he was seeking godly offspring. "

➤ The reason for this is ...

➤ ESV: "So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth" x

# Three Covenants have been broken by Israel (cont'd)

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## ➤ 3. The marriage covenant had been broken (cont'd)

### ➤ 2.16: God puts His final word on breaking the marriage covenant

- The man's garment covering him symbolizes the marriage
  - They were guilty of doing violence to the marriage by divorce
- The Mosaic statements were actually given to protect the divorced wife (Deut 24.1-4)
- Jesus emphasized the same (Matt 19.7-9)
- God stressed keeping faith in the marriage covenant to protect the nation
  - God 1<sup>st</sup> >> family >> the church >> the nation x x