



SERMON SERIES RESOURCE

MALACHI

Going Deeper

A Study Companion for the Nine-Part Sermon Series

All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

How to Use This Resource

This companion is built for personal study — working through it on your own, at your own pace, alongside the sermon audio or video. Each section follows one sermon in order. “Quick Recap” reminds you where the message landed. “Study Notes” adds historical background, word studies, and cross-references that didn't fit into a single sermon but are worth knowing. “Dig Deeper” is a set of questions for your own reflection and journaling — there's no need to answer all of them in one sitting.



SERMON 1

"A People Who Argued with God"

Malachi 1:1

01

WATCH THIS SERMON

<https://www.youtube.com/live/2TIQkJkdFLc?si=0xvBDZWvEjnuLv0O&t=1719>

QUICK RECAP

Malachi ("my messenger") is the last book of the Old Testament, written roughly 460–430 BC to a post-exilic Judah that had the temple rebuilt and the rituals running again — but hearts gone cold. "Burden" describes a heavy message God required His prophet to deliver, not a message Malachi enjoyed bringing.

STUDY NOTES

- Author & canon: Malachi's name never appears anywhere else in the Old Testament, and some early Jewish tradition even wondered whether "Malachi" was a title rather than a proper name. But every other prophetic book identifies its human author in its opening line, and the traditional (and most widely held) view is that Malachi was a real individual's name or prophetic title, later identified in Jewish tradition with the Great Synagogue that helped preserve the Scriptures.
- The word "burden" (Hebrew massa) opens several other prophetic books — Isaiah 13:1 (against Babylon), Nahum 1:1 (against Nineveh), Habakkuk 1:1 — and always signals a weighty message the prophet is compelled to deliver, whether or not it's welcome.
- Structure: Malachi's question-and-answer ("disputation") format is almost unique among the prophets. God brings a charge, the people push back, God answers with evidence. It reads like a courtroom transcript — and it models how to bring real doubt to God honestly rather than suppressing it.
- Historical tie-in: Nehemiah's second term as governor (roughly 433–424 BC) confronted nearly the same list of sins Malachi addresses — corrupt priests, withheld tithes, and intermarriage/divorce (see Nehemiah 13). Many scholars believe Malachi's ministry overlapped with or immediately preceded Nehemiah's reforms — meaning this series is essentially reading the prophetic diagnosis alongside the history book that shows the cure being applied.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Malachi describes a people who "still showed up" but had cold hearts. What routines in your own faith life might be running on autopilot right now?
- 2** Why might a spiritually stagnant church be more dangerous, in some ways, than open rebellion?
- 3** Read Revelation 3:14–16. What does "lukewarm" look like practically today, in a home or a church?

4 Malachi opens with a "burden" — something hard God gave him to say. Has God ever burdened you to say something hard to someone you love? How did you handle it?



SERMON 2

"The God Who Loved You First"

Malachi 1:2–5

02

Video not available for this message.

QUICK RECAP

Israel cynically demands proof of God's love. God answers not with an argument but with history: the diverging fates of Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom) — evidence that God has kept covenant faithfulness Israel never earned.

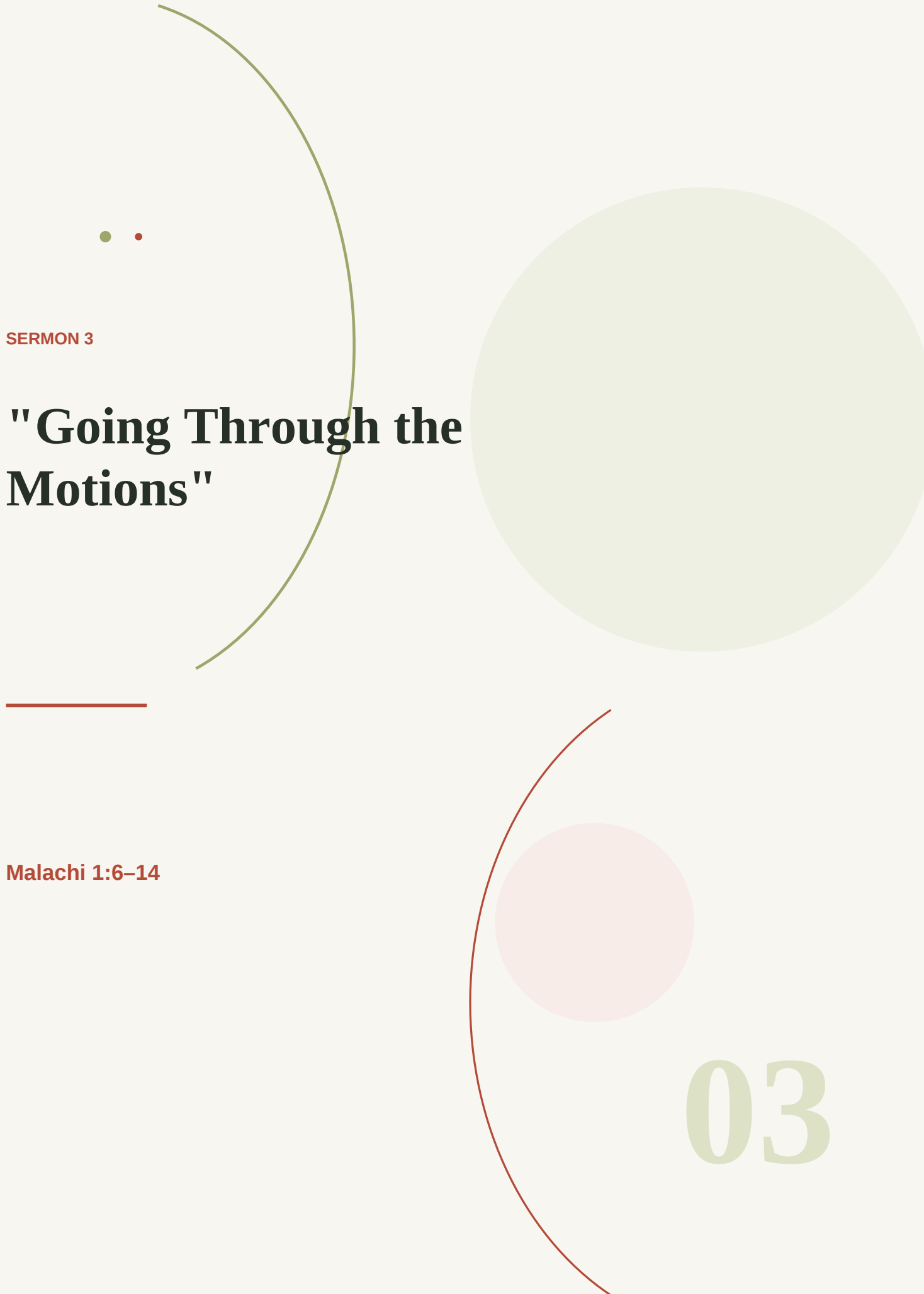
STUDY NOTES

- A note on a debated verse: "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" is one of the most contested lines in Scripture because Paul quotes it in Romans 9:13 while arguing for God's sovereign purpose. Calvinist readers often use Romans 9's citation of this verse to argue for unconditional individual election to salvation or damnation. But in both Malachi's original context and Paul's argument, the Jacob/Esau language is about corporate destiny — the nations of Israel and Edom and their historical roles — not a statement about which individuals within those nations would be personally saved. Malachi 1:2–5 never mentions personal salvation; it's entirely about national judgment and covenant faithfulness. This lets us affirm God's genuine, sovereign initiative in pursuing Israel while still holding, per John 3:16, that salvation is offered to "whosoever will" and received only through repentance and faith — a real human response God foreknew but did not force.
- "Hated" (Hebrew *sane*) functions in ancient covenant language as comparative preference ("loved less"), not necessarily raw emotional hatred — the same idiom appears in Genesis 29:31, where Leah is described as "hated" compared to Rachel, meaning simply less favored. Worth having in your pocket if the word "hated" comes up.
- Historical note: Nabatean tribes began driving the Edomites from their mountain strongholds (Sela, Bozrah) as early as the 6th–5th century BC — meaning Malachi's original audience could plausibly "look east" and see the beginning of what he described, not just take it on faith.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Have you ever asked God, even privately, "In what way have you loved me?" What prompted it?
- 2** God answers cynicism with evidence from history rather than an argument. What has God actually done in your own history that you can point to as evidence of His love?
- 3** Read Romans 9:10–1
- 3** How does knowing the corporate/national context of Malachi 1:2–5 shape how you read Paul's use of it?

4 Edom's boast was "we will rebuild." What are you tempted to rebuild in your own strength rather than surrender to God?



SERMON 3

"Going Through the Motions"

Malachi 1:6–14

03

WATCH THIS SERMON

https://www.youtube.com/live/GLPvBxxC3Yg?si=i6V-kmtawh6Tp_e_&t=1441

QUICK RECAP

God confronts the priests for offering blind, lame, and sick sacrifices while reserving their best for political leaders — and declares that even sincere Gentile worship, hypothetically, would honor Him more than Israel's hollow rituals.

STUDY NOTES

- Leviticus 22:20–25 spells out exactly which defects disqualified a sacrifice. The priests weren't confused about the standard — they simply decided cutting corners with God was acceptable in a way it never would be with a governor (v.8). That's the real indictment: not ignorance, but contempt wearing the appearance of thrift.
- Malachi 1:11's promise that God's name will be great "among the Gentiles" is genuinely debated among commentators. Some read it as irony or hyperbole (even pagans, who don't know better, would treat Me better than you do). Others read it as a real prophecy of Gentile worship — fulfilled progressively through the church age, or awaiting a fuller future fulfillment. Worth knowing this is one defensible reading among a few live options.
- "Weariness" language (v.13, "what a weariness this is") reappears in the very next unit (2:17, "you have wearied the LORD"). Malachi is tracking one root problem showing up in every relationship — priest to God (ch.1), husband to wife (ch.2), people to God (ch.3) — cascading outward from the altar into the whole community.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Where in your life are you currently offering God your leftovers — time, energy, attention — rather than your first and best?
- 2** The priests would never have treated a governor the way they treated God. Where do you unconsciously give more respect to people than to God?
- 3** What's the difference between reverence that's just external performance and reverence that actually comes from the heart?
- 4** Read 1 Peter 5:1–4 and James 3:
 - 1** How should the added accountability given to leaders shape the way you pray for your pastors and teachers?



SERMON 4

"Get Your House in Order"

Malachi 2:1-9

04

WATCH THIS SERMON

https://www.youtube.com/live/_7HJ6xvB8HQ?si=ifwmawfOPW96WK0G&t=2048

QUICK RECAP

God pronounces judgment on the priests directly, contrasting the faithful priesthood of Levi — life, peace, truth, turning people from sin — with the corrupted priesthood of Malachi's day: partiality, stumbling blocks, and cursed blessings.

STUDY NOTES

- Peresh (v.3, "refuse") is the Hebrew word for sacrificial-animal waste — the unclean material carried outside the camp and burned (Leviticus 4:11–12). God isn't using a polite euphemism; He's saying the very things the priests thought made them holy, He now counts as ceremonially unclean garbage, and He will make that visible on their own faces. It's one of the most graphic images in the Minor Prophets.
- Nasa panim ("shown partiality," v.9) literally means "to lift the face" — courtroom language for a judge who looks up and rules favorably for whoever has influence or money standing in front of him, rather than keeping his eyes fixed on the law. It's the ancient equivalent of a judge who rules based on who's in the room rather than what's true.
- The "covenant of Levi" (vv.4–5, 8) points specifically to Numbers 25:12–13 — God's "covenant of peace" given to Phinehas for his zeal in confronting sin at Baal-Peor. Malachi's audience would have recognized the reference: the very covenant meant to reward decisive faithfulness against compromise had, generations later, been corrupted by compromise itself.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Verse 3 says God's judgment on the priests would affect their descendants. What have you seen modeled — good or bad — that shaped how the next generation in your own family approaches God?
- 2** "Partiality in the law" (v.9) meant applying truth selectively depending on who was asking. Where might you be tempted to soften a hard truth depending on who's in the room?
- 3** Verses 5–7 describe what a faithful spiritual leader looks like. Which of those qualities do you most need to grow in — whether or not you hold a formal leadership title?
- 4** How does knowing Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of everything the Levitical priesthood failed to be change how you read this chapter?



SERMON 5

"Now to the People!"

Malachi 2:10–16

05

WATCH THIS SERMON

<https://www.youtube.com/live/GdsN4lczsHc?si=6zLWsWyF4LrcNWmt&t=1895>

QUICK RECAP

God confronts the men of Israel for treacherously divorcing their Hebrew wives to marry pagan women — covenant-breaking God takes seriously and refuses to bless, whatever tears are offered at the altar.

STUDY NOTES

- The devastating social and economic position a divorced woman faced in this culture is the whole reason God calls this "violence" (v.16). These men weren't just breaking a private vow; they were exploiting a legal system with no real protection for the party being wronged. Malachi ties worship directly to how the vulnerable are treated at home — a pattern that runs throughout Scripture (Isaiah 1:17, James 1:27).
- Verse 15's Hebrew is famously difficult, and the NKJV's "godly offspring" reading follows one defensible path through a genuinely ambiguous text; other major translations render it somewhat differently. Scholars disagree on the precise wording, though the main point — God made marriage as one-flesh, for life, from creation — is not in dispute, and is confirmed directly by Jesus quoting Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:4–6.
- The wedding-garment custom behind verse 16 — a groom covering his bride with his own garment as a symbol of protection and provision (see also Ruth 3:9, Ezekiel 16:8) — sharpens the "stained garment" image: the very symbol of covenant protection has become, through unfaithfulness, a visible record of covenant violence.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Malachi says God "was witness" to marriage covenants (v.14). How does it change a marriage to remember God is an active party to it, not just a spectator?
- 2** The text ties corrupt worship directly to how these men treated their wives. Where do you see a disconnect today between how people "worship" and how they treat the people closest to them?
- 3** If you're married, what's one concrete way you can guard your covenant this week?
- 4** If you're not married, how does this passage shape what you look for — or refuse to accept — in a future spouse?



SERMON 6

"The Refiner's Fire"

Malachi 2:17–3:5

06

WATCH THIS SERMON

<https://www.youtube.com/live/oEk4eQ5CHgQ?si=WaQFU4IOlzW1kWBK&t=1966>

QUICK RECAP

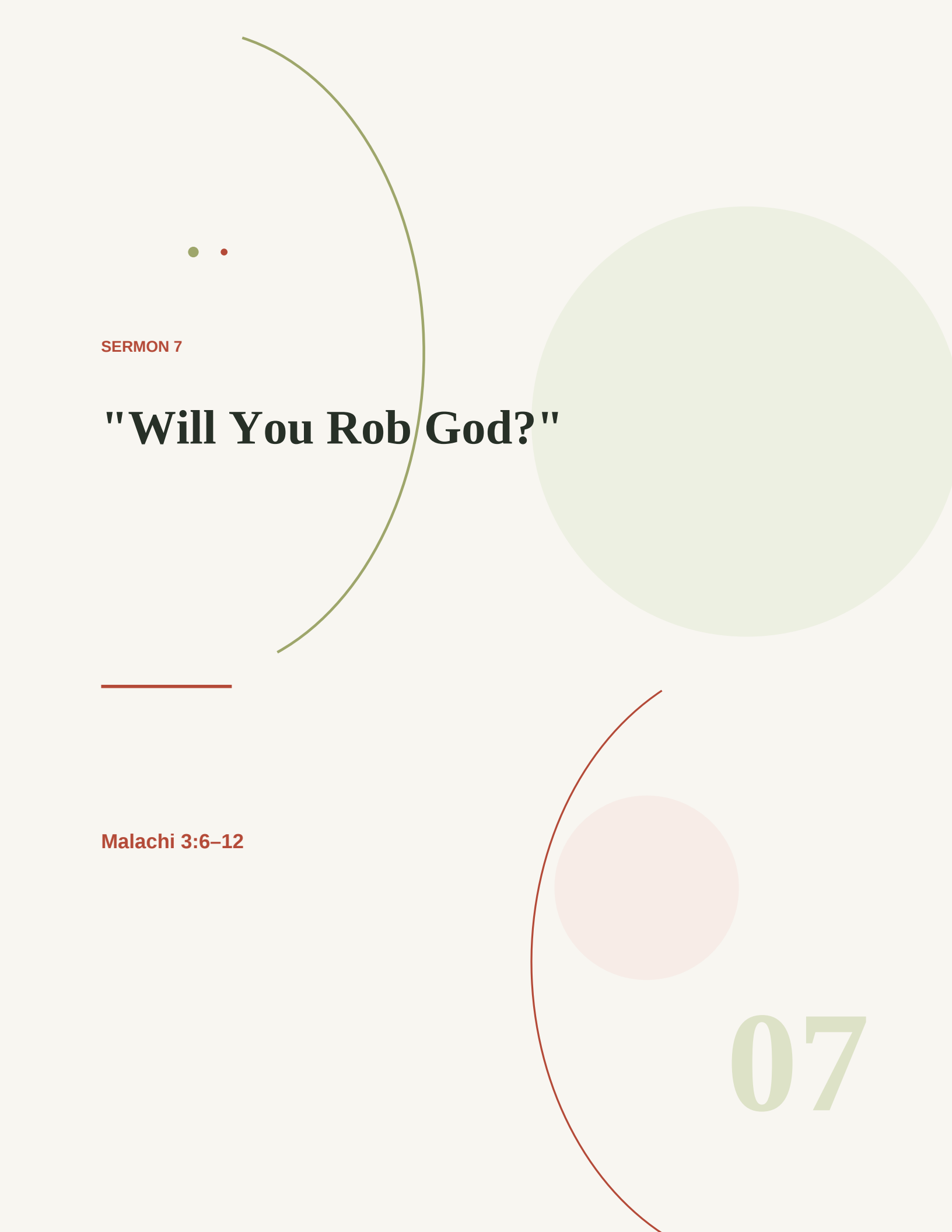
Israel wearies God by claiming He favors evildoers. God answers with a prophecy: a messenger (John the Baptist) will prepare the way, then the Lord Himself will come suddenly to refine and purify His people like a metalworker burns away impurities from silver.

STUDY NOTES

- The refining process (vv.2–3) is chemically accurate to ancient metallurgy. Raw silver ore naturally contains lead, copper, zinc, and other trapped minerals — including arsenic and antimony, both toxic when heated — that must be melted out at high temperature, with the refiner skimming off the rising impurities. Ancient refiners were doing genuinely hazardous work to produce something pure. The image of a Refiner who "sits" (v.3), patiently watching, emphasizes attentive, personal involvement rather than a hands-off process.
- Malachi 3:1's "messenger" (Hebrew malak — the same root behind "Malachi," my messenger) who prepares the way is quoted directly by all three Synoptic Gospels regarding John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:27), making this one of the most explicitly fulfilled prophecies in the whole book.
- Watch the shift within verse 1 itself: "the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple" describes one figure who is both "the Lord" (Adon) and the "messenger of the covenant." Many conservative commentators see this as an early, veiled hint at the dual identity of Christ — fully God, coming to His own temple, while also being sent as the covenant's messenger.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Israel's complaint was essentially "the wicked prosper and nothing happens to them." Have you ever felt that way? How did you work through it?
- 2** God's answer to their complaint isn't an argument — it's a promise of coming refinement. How does it change your perspective on hardship to see it as refining rather than random?
- 3** Refining requires heat and time; it can't be rushed. What's something in your life right now that feels like it's "in the fire" longer than you'd like?
- 4** The refiner knows the work is done when he sees his own reflection in the metal. What would it look like for people to see more of Christ's reflection in you this year?



SERMON 7

"Will You Rob God?"

Malachi 3:6–12

07

WATCH THIS SERMON

https://www.youtube.com/live/jq8wUzBSf6M?si=ndZua82R_FchvHs4&t=2589

QUICK RECAP

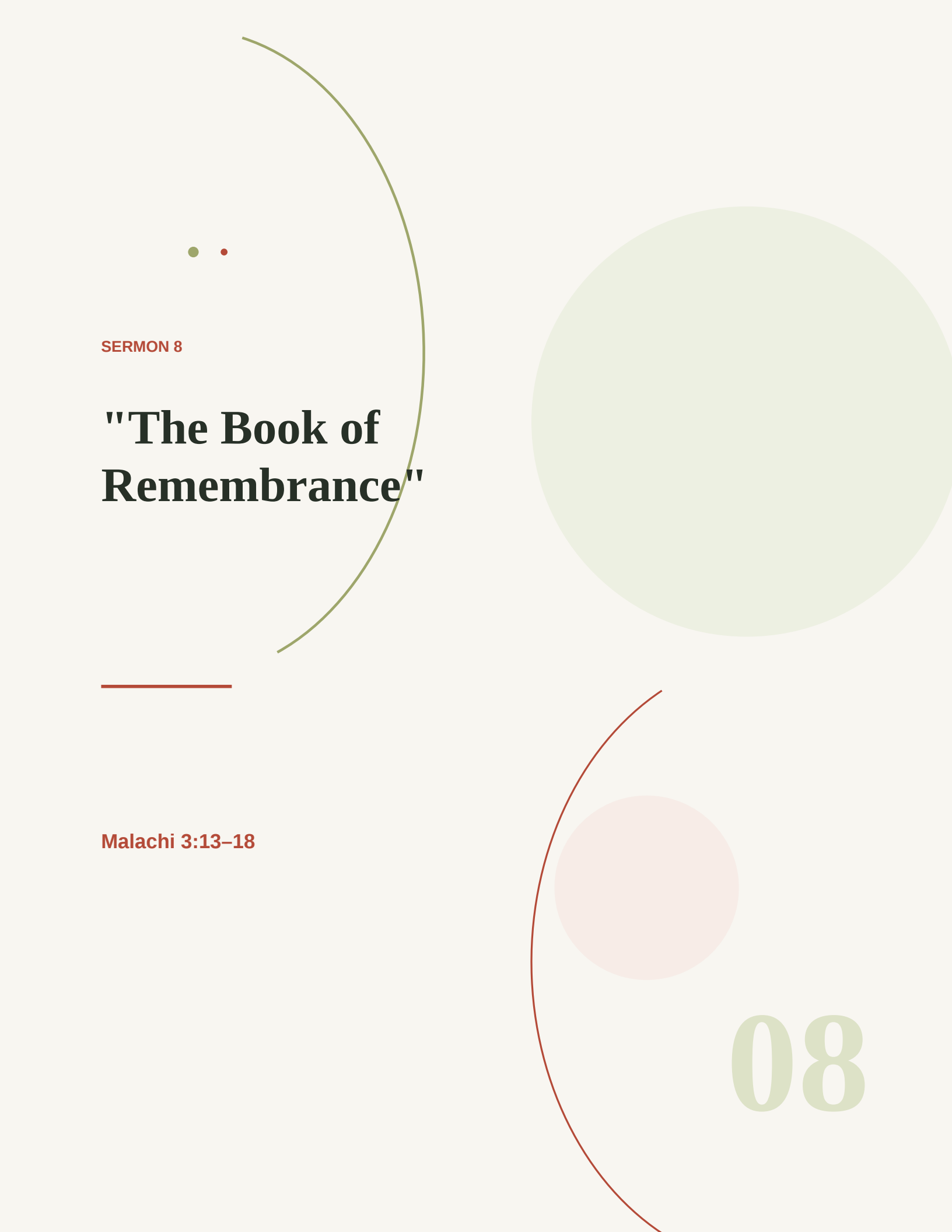
God declares His unchanging nature, calls Israel to return, exposes their robbery of Him through withheld tithes, and promises overflowing blessing if they'll obey.

STUDY NOTES

- "Rob" (Hebrew qaba, vv.8–9) is sometimes preached as sharing a root with Jacob's name (from aqab, "to supplant/deceive," Genesis 27:36). The thematic echo — God's people acting like their trickster ancestor — genuinely fits, but Hebrew scholars are divided on whether the two words share a direct linguistic root or are simply similar-sounding. Safer to lean on the thematic connection than to assert a certain shared etymology if it's ever pressed.
- Malachi 3:10 is the only place in Scripture where God invites His people to "test" Him (Hebrew bachan — the same word used for testing or proving metal, tying directly back to the refiner's fire of 3:2–3). Everywhere else, testing God is forbidden (Deuteronomy 6:16, Matthew 4:7). This is a deliberate, singular exception — not a general principle about testing God for whatever you want, but a specific, one-time invitation tied to covenant obedience on the tithe.
- The tithe functioned as a form of social welfare in ancient Israel, specifically supporting the Levites (who owned no land of their own, Numbers 18:21–24) plus provisions for widows, orphans, and foreigners through the triennial tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28–29). Withholding it wasn't just a private financial choice — it directly defunded the most vulnerable people in the covenant community.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** "Return to Me" (v.7) implies drifting can happen without a dramatic, obvious moment of rebellion. Where might you have drifted without realizing it?
- 2** God ties generosity directly to trust. What does your current giving — of money, time, or attention — reveal about how much you actually trust God to provide?
- 3** Verse 10 is the one place God invites testing. Have you ever stepped out in obedience specifically to see if God would prove faithful? What happened?
- 4** God's response to robbery wasn't destruction — it was an invitation back. How does that shape the way you respond when you've fallen short, rather than avoiding God out of shame?



SERMON 8

"The Book of Remembrance"

Malachi 3:13–18

08

WATCH THIS SERMON

<https://www.youtube.com/live/7NfYKHH69-w?si=kGNlvngfexeeMQ2r&t=2168>

QUICK RECAP

Israel complains it's futile to serve God since evildoers seem to prosper unchecked. God responds by pointing to a small, faithful remnant whose names He personally records and calls "Mine," promising they'll be spared on the day of judgment.

STUDY NOTES

- "Harsh" (v.13) comes from a Hebrew root (chazaq) also used for something "strong" or "hard." The people's complaints weren't whispered private doubts — they were bold, public, repeated accusations against God's character. That's part of why God addresses it directly instead of letting it slide.
- The "book of remembrance" (v.16) echoes a genre found elsewhere in the ancient world: Persian kings kept official court records of loyal service to be rewarded later — see Esther 6:1–3, where a similar royal chronicle ends up saving Mordecai's life. Malachi's original audience, living under Persian rule, would have immediately understood the image: God keeps better records than any earthly king.
- "Mine" (v.17) translates the Hebrew segullah — the same word God uses in Exodus 19:5 when He first calls Israel His "special treasure" at Sinai. Malachi is deliberately reaching back to the very beginning of Israel's covenant identity to reassure a demoralized remnant that the original promise still stands, even after centuries of failure on their part.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** The people's mistake was serving God transactionally — obedience in exchange for blessing. How can you tell the difference between genuine worship and a transactional relationship with God in your own life?
- 2** God doesn't rebuke people for having hard feelings — He rebukes public slander in place of honest, private wrestling. What's a healthier way you could bring a hard question to God this week?
- 3** God calls the faithful remnant "small" — it was easier to list who was faithful than who wasn't. Does it discourage or encourage you to know faithfulness has often been a minority position, even among God's own people?
- 4** What would change in your life this week if you fully believed God has your name recorded and calls you "Mine"?



SERMON 9

"Healing in His Wings"

Malachi 4:1–6

09

WATCH THIS SERMON

https://www.youtube.com/live/j7v17j_aaWU?si=DITH1-U2FDr-kq7K&t=2088

QUICK RECAP

Malachi closes the Old Testament with a picture of the coming Day of the LORD — total judgment for the arrogant, healing for those who fear God's name — and a promise that Elijah will come before that day to turn hearts toward reconciliation.

STUDY NOTES

- The Hebrew word for "wings" in verse 2 (kanaph) is the same word used in Numbers 15:38 for the "corners" of a garment — the exact place a tassel (tzitzit) was tied as a reminder to keep God's commandments. Roughly four and a half centuries later, in Luke 8:43–48, a woman who had suffered a twelve-year hemorrhage reaches for that precise detail. Luke uses the Greek word kraspedon, the term the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) used to translate the very same concept — and she is healed. She reached for the exact place Malachi had already named, generations before either of them was born.
- The book's closing warning — "lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (v.6) — is the last verse of the Old Testament as arranged in most English/Protestant Bibles. Then: roughly four centuries of prophetic silence, broken only when the angel Gabriel tells a priest named Zechariah that his coming son (John the Baptist) will go "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), quoting this very verse almost word for word.
- A question worth being ready for: if John the Baptist is Malachi's promised Elijah, why didn't the judgment of verse 1 happen at Jesus' first coming instead of waiting for His second? The best answer is that Jesus Himself seems to split this deliberately. In Luke 4:18–19, reading Isaiah 61 in the Nazareth synagogue, He stops mid-verse — right before the phrase "the day of vengeance of our God" — announcing only the mercy half of the prophecy as fulfilled "today." The judgment half waits for His return. Malachi saw Messiah's coming and Messiah's judgment as one mountain on the horizon; from where we now stand, we can see it's actually two peaks, separated by the age we're living in right now.

DIG DEEPER

- 1** Verse 1 and verse 2 describe the same day producing two totally different outcomes depending on who you are. Does that reality feel more like a warning or a comfort to you — and why might it be both?
- 2** The woman in Luke 8 reached for a promise she'd apparently learned from Scripture, long before she needed it. What promises are you storing up now that you might need to reach for later?

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- 3** Malachi 4:4 tells Israel to remember the Law they already had rather than wait for something new. Where might you be waiting on a "new" word from God instead of obeying what He's already clearly said?
- 4** The healing offered in verse 2 isn't only physical. What would it look like for you to receive spiritual healing this week — the kind that will never be burned?

Series Wrap-Up

Malachi opens with a people going through the motions and closes with a promise of healing for those who fear God's name and judgment for those who don't.

Across nine sermons, the same diagnosis keeps surfacing in a new relationship each time — priest to God, husband to wife, people to God — and the same cure keeps being offered: not a new revelation, not a new ritual, but a return to the God who loved us first, before we did a single thing to deserve it.

If one thing is worth carrying out of this whole series, let it be this: the most dangerous place to be is not outside the church in open sin, but inside the church with a cold heart wearing a warm smile.

Malachi's cure for that is always the same — repentance, and a fresh look at the evidence of a God who has already proven His love.