We will be a congregation who knows, honors, and reads the Bible.

“I grasp the story of the Bible, respect it as authoritative, know how to read it, and actually read it.”

1. The Bible is how God speaks to us today.

2. The Bible is a collection of ancient artifacts we can't understand without help.

Malachi 101

- Malachi is last book of OT before NT Christmas story
- We know nothing about Malachi personally
- Mal 1:1 – The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.
- We might call him the “Mystery Messenger”
- He was a prophet (aka covenant lawyer for God)
- He ministered to the “post-exile” Jewish community in Jerusalem area

Four Stages of Covenant

OLD COVENANT (TESTAMENT)

1 Abraham's Covenant (Gen 12:1-3)

- Blessing to the world through one family

2 Moses' Covenant (Dt 28-30)

- The family is rescued from Egypt and made into a nation

3 David's Covenant (2 Sm 7:12-13)

- The line of King David identified as blessing-carrier

NEW COVENANT (TESTAMENT)

New Covenant – (Jer 31:31-37)

- Enablement of blessing (Jesus' Covenant)

Moses' Covenant in a Nutshell (Deuteronomy 28-30):

When you go into the Promised Land, follow God's law.

-Obedience: Blessing & Life (global leadership, the other nations will admire you)

-Disobedience: Punishment & Death
(global enslavement, the other nations will rule you)

-Prediction: Moses says, "Based on what I've seen in the wilderness, y'all heading back to slavery eventually."

-Promise: BUT! … good news! God won't break His promise to bring blessing to the world through you.

- 2000 – Abraham is born
- 1500 – Moses is born
- 1011 – David as king of Israel
- 722 – Samaria destroyed by Assyria, exile of N. Kingdom
- 605 – Nebuchadnezzar first invades Judah
- 587/586 – Jerusalem + Temple destroyed by Babylon, exile of S. Kingdom
- 539 – King Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon
- 538 – 50k Jewish exiles return to Judea - (released by Cyrus) + (led by Zerubbabel)

- 536 – Temple rebuild begins: (1) build altar for sacrifice; (2) lay new foundation
- 536 – Construction halted by local enemies/ opposition
- 520 – Resume construction after Haggai throws down
- 516/515 – Temple rebuild completed & dedicated but God's presence does not fall
- 515-458 – Malachi probably between Haggai and Ezra
- 458 – Artaxerxes allows Ezra to go back to Jerusalem
- 455-433 – Artaxerxes allows Nehemiah to return as governor of Judea

(1) LEV 9 – FIRE
(2) 1 KGS 8 – CLOUD

Ezra 3:12-13

536

But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.

Hag 2:3

520

"Does anyone remember this house—this Temple—in its former splendor? How, in comparison, does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all!”

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Life After Exile for Malachi

-The people were disappointed with God's response to their return and rebuild

-Because of that, they were living in disobedience:

(1) the people doubt their identity as God's chosen & beloved (1:2-5);

(2) church leadership is corrupt and complacent (1:6-2:9)

(3) the institution of marriage is not honored and families are falling apart (2:10-16)

(4) social injustice is endemic (2:17-3:5)

(5) the people neglect their tithes to the temple (3:6-12)

(6) they question/accuse God's goodness (3:13-4:3)

Interpretive Key:

The post-exilic community feels slighted by God. They expected covenant blessing but were receiving something that felt like continued punishment. Malachi explains why God is still faithful and calls the people to repentance, but ultimately highlights how the exile didn’t actually change them and consequently is not over.

Six quarrels - God/Malachi vs. the People

-**TRUTH**: God makes a claim or accusation

-**DISPUTE**: Israel gives Him sass and talks back

-**PROOF**: Then God throws down and ends the conversation

(1) “God loves you.” … “Nu-uh!”

TRUTH:

1:2a - “I have always loved you.”

IDENTITY

DISPUTE:

1:2b – “Really? How have You loved us?”

PROOF:

I chose you as My special covenant people from the beginning.

(2) “You don’t respect the sacrificial system.”
“What? No way!!”

TRUTH

1:6 – “If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt for My name!"

DISPUTE

1:6b – “How have we ever shown contempt for Your name?”

PROOF

1:7 – “By offering defiled sacrifices on My altar.

CHURCH

DISPUTE

1:7 – “How have we defiled the sacrifices?”

PROOF

The people are bringing blemished sacrifices, and the priests are tolerating it.

(3) “You are divorcing your wives and wrecking your families.” “So?”

MARRIAGE

TRUTH

2:11 – “The men of Judah have defiled the LORD’s beloved sanctuary by marrying women who worship idols.”

FAMILY

DISPUTE

2:14 – “Why doesn’t the LORD accept my worship?”

PROOF

You made marital vows before God and then broke them.

(4) “God expects Israel to uphold social justice.” “Whatever.”

JUSTICE

TRUTH

2:17 – “You have wearied the LORD with your words.”

DISPUTE

2:17 – “How have we wearied Him?”

PROOF

You question His justice and oppress the poor and powerless.

(5) “You don’t give enough money back to Me.” “Who? Us? Noooo!”

MONEY

TRUTH

3:7 – "You have scorned My decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to Me..."

DISPUTE

3:7 – “How can we return when we have never gone away?”

PROOF

3:8 - “You have cheated Me!”

DISPUTE

3:8 – “When did we ever cheat You?”

PROOF

You don’t give your tithes to the temple.

(6) “Rather than trusting in, you question God's goodness.” “OMG … Get over it.”

TRUST

TRUTH

3:13 – “You have said terrible things about Me."

DISPUTE

3:13 – “What do You mean? What have we said against You?”

PROOF

You question the point of obeying God. One great and terrible day in the future, the faithful remnant will receive reward and the wicked will be judged.

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Malachi 4:2-5

But for you who revere My name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts. Remember the teaching of My servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

Lk 1:12-17

When Zechariah saw [the angel], he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Lk 1:12-17

He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before Him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Mal 4:5-6 - Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents …

Lk 1:17 - With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before Him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children.

Mt 11:11-15

I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it. For before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. And if you are willing to accept what I say, he is Elijah, the one the prophets said would come. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

Lk 1:76-79

And you, My little son,
will be called the prophet of the Most High,
because You will prepare the way for the Lord.
You will tell His people how to find salvation
through forgiveness of their sins.
Because of God's tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace.

Advent means the arrival of a person who we have been waiting for.

Luke 2:8-14

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

Luke 2:8-14

And you will recognize Him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."