

# MALACHI

**1**<sup>1</sup>An oracle. The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi [Malachi: *or my messenger*].

## Religious decline and hope of recovery

**2**I LOVE YOU, says the LORD. You ask, 'How hast thou shown love to us?' Is not Esau Jacob's brother? the LORD answers. I love Jacob, <sup>3</sup>but I hate Esau; I have turned his mountains into a waste and his ancestral home into a lodging in the wilderness. <sup>4</sup>When Edom says, 'We are beaten down; let us rebuild our ruined homes', these are the words of the LORD of Hosts: If they rebuild, I will pull down. They shall be called a realm of wickedness, a people whom the LORD has cursed for ever. <sup>5</sup>You yourselves will see it with your own eyes; you yourselves will say, 'The LORD's greatness reaches beyond the realm of Israel.'

**6**A son honours his father, and a slave goes in fear of his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the fear due to me? So says the LORD of Hosts to you, you priests who despise my name. You, ask, 'How have we despised thy name?' <sup>7</sup>Because you have offered defiled food on my altar. You ask, 'How have we defiled thee?' Because you have thought that the table of the LORD may be despised, <sup>8</sup>that if you offer a blind victim, there is nothing wrong, and if you offer a victim lame or diseased, there is nothing wrong. If you brought such a gift to the governor, would he receive you or show you favour? says the LORD of Hosts. <sup>9</sup>But now, if you placate God, he may show you mercy; if you do this, will he withhold his favour from you? So the LORD of Hosts has spoken. <sup>10</sup>Better far that one of you should close the great door altogether, so that the light might not fall thus all in vain upon my altar! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of Hosts; I will accept no offering from you. <sup>11</sup>From furthest east to furthest west my name is great among the nations. Everywhere fragrant sacrifice and pure gifts are offered in my name; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of Hosts. <sup>12</sup>But you profane it by thinking that the table of the LORD may be defiled, and that you can offer on it food you yourselves despise. <sup>13</sup>You sniff at it, says the LORD of Hosts, and say, 'How irksome!' If you bring as your offering victims that are mutilated, lame, or diseased, shall I accept them from you? says the LORD. <sup>14</sup>A curse on the cheat who pays his vows by sacrificing a damaged victim to the Lord, though he has a sound ram in his flock! I am the great king, says the LORD of Hosts, and my name is held in awe among the nations.

**2**<sup>1</sup>And now, you priests, this decree is for you: <sup>2</sup>if you will not listen to me and pay heed to the honouring of my name, says the LORD of Hosts, then I will lay a curse upon you. I will turn your blessings into a curse; yes, into a curse, because you pay no heed. <sup>3</sup>I will cut off your arm [*Or posterity*], fling offal in your faces, the offal of your pilgrim-feasts, and I will banish you from my presence. <sup>4</sup>Then you will know that I have issued this decree against you: my covenant with Levi falls to the ground, says the LORD of Hosts. <sup>5</sup>My covenant was with him: I bestowed life and prosperity on him; I laid on him

the duty of reverence, he revered me and lived in awe of my name. <sup>6</sup>The instruction he gave was true, and no word of injustice fell from his lips; he walked in harmony with me and in uprightness, and he turned many back from sin. <sup>7</sup>For men hang upon the words of the priest and seek knowledge and instruction from him, because he is the messenger of the LORD of Hosts. <sup>8</sup>But you have turned away from that course; you have made many stumble with your instruction; you have set at naught the covenant with the Levites, says the LORD Of Hosts. <sup>9</sup>So I, in my turn, have made you despicable and mean in the eyes of the people, in so far as you disregard my ways and show partiality in your instruction.

<sup>10</sup>Have we not all one father? Did not one God create us? Why do we violate the covenant of our forefathers by being faithless to one another? <sup>11</sup>Judah is faithless, and abominable things are done in Israel and in Jerusalem; Judah has violated the holiness of the LORD by loving and marrying daughters of a foreign god. <sup>12</sup>May the LORD banish any who do this from the dwellings of Jacob, nomads or settlers, even though they bring offerings to the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>13</sup>Here is another thing that you do: you weep and moan, and you drown the altar of the LORD with tears, but he still refuses to look at the offering or receive an acceptable gift from you. <sup>14</sup>You ask why. It is because the LORD has borne witness against you on behalf of the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner and your wife by solemn covenant. <sup>15</sup>Did not the one God make her, both flesh and spirit? And what does the one God require but godly children? Keep watch on your spirit, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup>If a man divorces or puts away his spouse, he overwhelms her with cruelty, says the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel. Keep watch on your spirit, and do not be unfaithful.

<sup>17</sup>You have wearied the LORD with your talk. You ask, 'How have we wearied him?' By saying that all evildoers are good in the eyes of the LORD, that he is pleased with them, or by asking, 'Where is the God of justice?' **3**<sup>1</sup>Look, I am sending my messenger [*my messenger: Heb Malachi*] who will clear a path before me. Suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight is here, here already, says the LORD of Hosts. <sup>2</sup>Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand firm when he appears? He is like a refiner's fire, like fuller's soap; <sup>3</sup>he will take his seat, refining and purifying [*prob. rdg, Heb adds silver*]; he will purify the Levites and cleanse them like gold and silver, and so they shall be fit to bring offerings to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Thus the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the LORD as they were in days of old, in years long past. <sup>5</sup>I will appear before you in court, prompt to testify against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, against those who wrong [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the wages of*] the hired labourer, the widow, and the orphan, who thrust the alien aside and have no fear of me, says the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>6</sup>I am the LORD, unchanging; and you, too, have not ceased to be sons of Jacob. <sup>7</sup>From the days of your forefathers you have been wayward and have not kept my laws. If you will return to me, I will return to you, says the LORD of Hosts. You ask, 'How can we return?' <sup>8</sup>May man defraud God, that you defraud me? You ask, 'How have we defrauded thee?' Why, in tithes and contributions. <sup>9</sup>There is a curse, a curse on you all,

the whole nation of you, because you defraud me. <sup>10</sup>Bring the tithes into the treasury, all of them; let there be food in my house. Put me to the proof, says the LORD of Hosts, and see if I do not open windows in the sky and pour a blessing on you as long as there is need. <sup>11</sup>I will forbid pests to destroy the produce of your soil or make your vines barren, says the LORD of Hosts. <sup>12</sup>All nations shall count you happy, for yours shall be a favoured land, says the LORD of Hosts.

## **Murmurers warned, the righteous triumphant**

<sup>13</sup>YOU HAVE USED HARD WORDS ABOUT ME, says the LORD, and then you ask, 'How have we spoken against thee?' <sup>14</sup>You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what do we gain from the LORD of Hosts by observing his rules and behaving with deference? <sup>15</sup>We ourselves count the arrogant happy; it is evildoers who are successful; they have put God to the proof and come to no harm.'

<sup>16</sup>Then those who feared the LORD talked together, and the LORD paid heed and listened. A record was written before him of those who feared him and kept his name in mind. <sup>17</sup>They shall be mine, says the LORD of Hosts, my own possession against the day that I appoint, and I will spare them as a man spares the son who serves him. <sup>18</sup>You will again tell good men from bad, the servant of God from the man who does not serve him.

**4**<sup>1</sup>The day comes, glowing like a furnace; all the arrogant and the evil-doers shall be chaff, and that day when it comes shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of Hosts, it shall leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup>But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings, and you shall break loose like calves released from the stall. <sup>3</sup>On the day that I act, you shall trample down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, says the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>4</sup>Remember the law of Moses my servant, the rules and precepts which I bade him deliver to all Israel at Horeb.

<sup>5</sup>Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>He will reconcile fathers to sons and sons to fathers, lest I come and put the land under a ban to destroy it.