

# THE WHOLE STORY

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From Genesis to Revelation

**Malachi 2:17-3:5**

## ***Introduction:***

This weekend Pastor JD preached from the Gospel of Matthew, and following along with the reading plan you will recognize that we are officially into the New Testament. All of the shadows and whispers of this Savior Messiah, who was to come, have finally been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. All of the hard work you put into wading through unrecognizable words, defunct countries, and names that will tie your tongue into knots will have a great pay off as you begin reading the New Testament. Now you will begin to see how all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, truly does whisper Jesus's name. Presently, however, there is one more Old Testament whisper we must study together before we begin our small group studies in the New Testament.

The Book of Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament and like Zechariah from last week it is one of the Minor Prophets. The name Malachi means, *messenger*, and what you will learn in this study is that Malachi is a messenger prophesying of a future messenger who will be proclaiming an ultimate messenger who will purify a people who are severely polluted and far from the ways of God.

## ***This Week's Main Focus:***

***I am impure, and the only purification is found in the fiery love of Jesus.***

Malachi spends the majority of its energy discussing the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel, and the hope that exists in God's purifying love. He does this by using a unique question and answer format. There are actually six sets of these in Malachi (1:2-5; 1:6-2:9; 2:10-16; 2:17-3:7; 3:6-12; 3:13-4:3), but we will only be focusing on the fourth (2:17-3:7). One of the greatest things that we learn in these six "discussions" is that God can easily prove both Israel's unfaithfulness to God, and God's great unchanging love for His people.

## ***Sermon Response Question:***

1) Pastor JD began his sermon by teaching on John the Baptist's proclamation, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*" What are the differences and similarities between repenting and confessing?

2) When discussing your sin with God is the majority of your time spent confessing, or repenting?

***Bible Study Questions:     Read Malachi 2:17-3:5***

3) Have your group describe what is happening in this passage? (What is being said, what is the reaction, what is taking place, what is spoken of etc.)

4) When are the things in this passage taking place in the big picture of the Bible and history? Are the things being spoken of in the past, present, and/or future?

5) Why is God sending his messengers?

6) What do we know from this passage about the people's sin and attitude toward God? Why must there be a refining fire?

7) Based on what we have read and studied, who do you think these two messengers are?

***Group Application Questions:***

8) In 2:17 we read about two, specific attitudes the people held: deceiving themselves on the holiness of their behavior and assuming that there would be no penalty for their sin. What role does your church family play in helping you fight these very same attitudes?

9) Confession and repentance are difficult and take practice. How can your small group help one another fight sin together? Brainstorm a plan for how your group can practice these disciplines over the next month.

***Prayer:                     Read Malachi 4:1-3***

Break into groups of 2-3 and practice praying in repentance together.

- If you have never repented of your sins, trust God for the very first time that he can give you freedom from your sin. Ask God to be the Lord and Savior of your life. And to purify you of your impurities. His love is the only thing that can do this.
- If you are a Believer ask God to help you to not hide your sin but confess and repent of it. The Lord wants to purify you.