

**This book contains the account of Malachi proclaiming that God loves his people, Israel, that he will punish them for their sins, and that later he will restore them. We call this book Malachi**

<sup>1</sup> *This is the message that Yahweh gave to the prophet Malachi to give to the people of Israel.*

*Yahweh's love for the people of Israel*

<sup>2</sup> *Yahweh says, "I have always loved you Israeli people."*

<sup>3</sup> *But you reply, "In what way have you loved us?"*

*Yahweh replies, "This is how I loved you: It is true that your ancestor Jacob was [RHQ] Esau's younger brother, and I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau. I caused his hilly region to become ◀desolate/a place where crops did not grow▶. I caused the land which he possessed to become a desert where jackals/wolves live."*

<sup>4</sup> *The descendants of Esau who live in Edom may say, "Yes, we have been crushed/ruined, but we will rebuild houses in the ruins."*

*But the Commander of the armies of angels replies, "They may build houses again, but I will demolish them again. Their country will be called 'The land where wicked people live' and*

*their people will be called* ‘The people with whom Yahweh is angry forever’.”

<sup>5</sup> When you *Israeli* people yourselves see *what I will do to them*, you will say, “*It is evident far beyond the borders of Israel that Yahweh is very great!*”

### *Unacceptable sacrifices*

<sup>6</sup> But the Commander of the armies of angels says to the priests, “Boys honor their fathers, and servants *respect* their masters. So, if I am *like your father and your master*, why [RHQ] do you not honor and respect me? You have despised me [MTY]!”

But you ask, “◀How/In what way▶ have we despised you?”

<sup>7</sup> *Yahweh replies*, “*Instead of honoring me, you have despised me* by offering sacrifices on my altar that are unacceptable to me.”

Then you ask, “What sacrifices have we given that have been unacceptable to you?”

*Yahweh replies*, “You think that ▶it does not matter/it is okay▶ if you do not respect my altar.

<sup>8</sup> You offer for sacrifices animals that are blind. ▶Is that not wrong?/That is disgusting!▶ [RHQ] And you offer for sacrifices animals that are crippled or that have diseases. ▶Is that also not wrong?/That *also* is disgusting!▶ [RHQ] If you tried to give presents like that to your governor, ▶do you think [RHQ] that he would be pleased?/he would certainly not be pleased!▶ ▶Would he [RHQ] accept such gifts?He would certainly not

accept such gifts!► *That is what the Commander of the armies of angels says!"*

<sup>9</sup> *And he also says, "You plead with me to be merciful to you. But you bring to me sacrifices that are not acceptable to me, so why should I be kind to you [RHQ]?"*

<sup>10</sup> *The Commander of the armies of angels also says, "I wish/desire that one of you would shut the gates of the temple courtyard, in order that no one could offer those worthless sacrifices. I am not pleased with you, and I will not accept the offerings that you bring to me. <sup>11</sup> People of other nations honor me [MTY] every day, from sunrise/morning until sunset/evening. All over the world people offer incense and other pure/acceptable offerings to me [MTY]. They do that because people among all the nations know that I [MTY] am very great.*

<sup>12</sup> *But you priests show that you despise me by what you do. You say, 'It is all right if people pollute the altar by bringing sacrifices that are unacceptable.' <sup>13</sup> You say 'We are tired of burning all these sacrifices on the altar.' You ◀turn up your noses at/act very disrespectfully toward► me. When you bring to me animals that have been stolen or ones that are crippled or that have diseases, to offer them for sacrifices, do you think that [RHQ] I should accept them?*

<sup>14</sup> *I will curse anyone who tries to cheat me by solemnly promising to bring to me a perfect ram from his flock of sheep and then brings to me one that has defects. If anyone does that, I will punish him, because I am a great king; I am the*

Commander of the armies of angels and *people of the other nations* revere me [MTY], *but you do not!*"

## 2

### *A warning to the priests*

<sup>1</sup> You priests, I will say something to warn you.

<sup>2</sup> The Commander of the armies of angels says *this*: "Pay attention to *what I am saying*, and *then* decide [IDM] to honor me [MTY]. If you do not do that, I will curse you, and I will curse *the things that I have given to you* to bless you. And I have already cursed them, because you have not honored [IDM] me. <sup>3</sup> I will punish your descendants [MET], and *it will be as though* I will splatter on your faces *some of* the material inside the stomachs of the animals that are brought to be sacrificed, and you will be thrown away with the rest of that material.

<sup>4</sup> When that happens, you will know that I warned you like this, in order that my agreement with *you priests who are descendants of Levi* will continue to be obeyed. *That is what I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, am saying to you. <sup>5</sup> My agreement with *your ancestor Levi* was because I wanted the priests to live prosperously and peacefully. And that is what I have done for them. I required that they greatly respect me and revere [DOU] me. <sup>6</sup> They told the people that what I instructed them to do was right. And they did not tell [MTY] lies. They worked for me peacefully and loyally, and they helped many people to stop sinning.

<sup>7</sup> What priests say [MTY] should enable more people to know *about me*, and people should go to them [MTY] to be taught *what I want them to know*, because priests *should* be messengers from me, the Commander of the armies of angels. <sup>8</sup> But, you priests have stopped doing what I wanted you to do. What you have taught people has caused many *of them* to sin. You have rejected the agreement *that I made with the descendants of Levi long ago*. <sup>9</sup> Therefore I have caused all the people to despise you, and I have caused you to be humiliated, because you have not obeyed me. When you teach *people* my commands, you do not treat all *people* equally.”

*Wrong things that they have done regarding marriage*

<sup>10</sup> Now I will warn you about something else. We all certainly [RHQ] have the same *heavenly* Father. We are certainly [RHQ] *all* created by the same God. So why are [RHQ] *some of* you disobeying/despising the agreement *that Yahweh made* with our ancestors, by not doing for each other what you said that you would do?

<sup>11</sup> *You people of* Judah have been unfaithful *to Yahweh*. You have done detestable things in Jerusalem and in *other places* in Israel. You Israeli men have defiled the temple that Yahweh loves. *You have done that by* marrying women who worship idols. <sup>12</sup> I wish that Yahweh would expel from Israel every man who has done that, *even though they say that they are obeying the*

Commander of the armies of angels by bringing offerings to him.

<sup>13</sup> This is another thing that you do: You cover Yahweh's altar with your tears. You wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings; but he is not pleased with them. <sup>14</sup> You *cry out*, saying, "Why does Yahweh not like our offerings?" The answer is that Yahweh heard what each of you men solemnly promised to your wives when you were young. But you men have not done what you promised your wives; you sent them away, the ones to whom you made that agreement.

<sup>15</sup> It is certainly [RHQ] Yahweh who joined you together. Your spirits and your bodies belong to him. So what he wants [RHQ] from you are godly children. So make sure that each of you men remain ◀with/loyal to▶ the woman that you married when you were young.

<sup>16</sup> Yahweh, the God to whom *we* Israelis belong, says, "I hate divorce!" So if you men divorce your wives, you are overwhelming them by being cruel to them. So be sure that you are ◀not disloyal/remain united▶ to your wives. *That is what* the Commander of the armies of angels says.

<sup>17</sup> Yahweh *also* says, "What you have said has caused me to become disgusted."

You reply, "What have we said that caused him to become disgusted?"

*The answer is that you have caused him to become disgusted* by saying that Yahweh is pleased with all those who do evil things. *You have*

*caused him to become disgusted by constantly asking, "Why does God not act fairly?"*

### 3

#### *The time of judgment is near*

<sup>1</sup> The Commander of the armies of angels says *this*: "Listen! *I am about to send my messenger who will prepare the people to receive me when I come. You claim that [IRO] you are wanting to see me, and I will suddenly come to my temple. The messenger who will tell you about a new agreement, the one whom you are eagerly [SAR] awaiting, is certainly going to come to you.*"

<sup>2</sup> But will anyone [RHQ] be able to survive when he comes? Will anyone [RHQ] be able to *remain* standing in front of him? *Certainly not*, because he will be like [SIM] a blazing fire that refines/purifies *metal/gold*. He will be like [SIM] a very strong soap *that bleaches clothes*. <sup>3</sup> *He will be like a worker who sits in front of his work to cause silver to become pure by burning all the impurities. Like a worker refines silver and gold, he will cause the ◀descendants of Levi/priests▶ to become pure, in order that they will again become acceptable to offer sacrifices that will be acceptable to him.* <sup>4</sup> When that happens, Yahweh will *again* accept the offerings brought to him by *the people of Jerusalem and other places in Judah, as he did previously.*

<sup>5</sup> *This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says: "At that time, I will come to you to judge you. I will quickly testify against all*

those who practice sorcery/witchcraft, *all* those who have committed adultery, and *all* liars. *I will testify* against those who have not given their workers the pay/wages that they promised, those who ◀oppress/treat cruelly▶ widows and orphans, and those who do not allow foreigners who live among you to be treated fairly. *I will testify that all* the people who do those things do not revere me.”

### *Not bringing tithes*

<sup>6</sup> “I am Yahweh, and I never change. And although you *deceive people like* your ancestor Jacob did, I have not yet gotten rid of you. <sup>7</sup> You and your ancestors have ignored my commands and you have not obeyed them. *Now* return to me; and when that happens, I will ◀return/do good▶ to you. *That is what I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, say.”

But you ask, “*We have never gone away from you, so how can we return to you?*”

<sup>8</sup> *I reply*, “People should certainly not [RHQ] cheat God; but you people have cheated me!”

You ask, “In what way did we cheat you?”

*I reply*, “*You have cheated me by not bringing to me each year* ◀the tithes/one tenth of all your crops and animals▶ and *other offerings that you are required to give to me*. <sup>9</sup> All that you do is cursed, because all you people in this country have been cheating me. <sup>10</sup> *Now* bring all the tithes to the storage rooms *in the temple*, in order that there will be *enough* food *for the people who serve me* there. If you do that, I, the Commander



of the armies of angels, promise that I will open the windows of heaven, and pour out *from them* blessings on you. *If you bring your tithes to the temple, the blessings will be* very great, with the result that you will not have enough space to store all of them. So test me *to see if I am telling the truth.* <sup>11</sup> You will have abundant crops *to harvest*, because I will protect them in order that they will not be harmed by locusts/insects. Your grapes will not fall from the vines *before they are ripe.* <sup>12</sup> When that happens, *the people of all nations* will say that *I* have blessed you, because your country will be delightful. *That is what I,* the Commander of the armies of angels, say.

<sup>13</sup> *I, Yahweh, have something else to say to you. You have said terrible things about me."*

But you reply, "What terrible things have we said about you?"

<sup>14</sup> *I reply, "You have said, 'It is useless for us to serve God. We have gained nothing [RHQ] by obeying the commands that he gave to us and by trying to show the Commander of the armies of angels that we are sorry for the sins that we have committed.* <sup>15</sup> From now on, we will say/consider that those who are proud are *the ones whom God has blessed. We will say that because it seems that it is* those who do evil who become rich, and *that it is* those who try to find out how many evil things they can do without God punishing them who are not punished.' "

<sup>16</sup> *After the people heard my message, those who revered Yahweh discussed those things with*

each other; and Yahweh listened to what they said. While Yahweh was watching, they wrote on a scroll the things that would remind them *about what they promised*, and they wrote on that scroll the names of those who revered Yahweh and who *said that they* always wanted to honor him [MTY].

<sup>17</sup> The Commander of the armies of angels says this *about those people*: “They will be my people. At the time that I judge people, *they will be like* [MET] a special treasure to me. I will be kind to them, like [SIM] fathers are kind to their sons who obey them. <sup>18</sup> When that happens, you will again see that *the manner in which I treat* righteous people is different from *the manner in which I treat* wicked people. *You will see that the manner in which I act toward* those who serve me is different from *the manner in which I act toward* those who do not.”

## 4

### *The coming time of punishment*

<sup>1</sup> *This is also what* the Commander of the armies of angels says: “There will be a time that I will judge *and punish* people. *When that happens, it will be like* [SIM] a very hot furnace. At that time, all the proud and wicked people will be burned up like [MET] stubble burns. They will be burned up completely, *like roots and branches and everything else on a tree burns completely in a very hot fire.* <sup>2</sup> *But as for you who revere me* [MTY], *the one who will save you will come to you like* [MET] *the sun shines in the morning, and*

*enable you to become righteous (OR, do what is righteous); he will restore you and protect you like a bird protects its chicks [MET] under its wings. When he comes, you will be very joyful, like [SIM] calves that go out from a barn into the pasture leaping joyfully.* <sup>3</sup> At the time when I judge people, you will tread on wicked people as though [SIM] they were the dirt under your feet. *That is what I, the Commander of the armies of angels, promise.*

<sup>4</sup> Be sure to obey the laws that I gave to Moses, who served me well. *Obey all the commandments and regulations that I gave him on Sinai Mountain, for all you people of Israel to obey.*

<sup>5</sup> Listen to this: *Some day I will send to you the prophet Elijah. He will arrive before the great and dreadful/terrible day when I, Yahweh, will judge and punish people.* <sup>6</sup> Because of what he preaches, parents and their children will love each other again [IDM]. If that does not happen, I will come and curse your country and destroy it.”

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