

# Malachi

Come Follow Me



# The Sons of Levi and the Offering

- D&C 13 "until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering"
- D&C 84.31 "the sons of Moses and Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering"
- D&C 128.17 "his eye fixed"
- D&C 128.24 "a book containing the records of our dead"

# "Esau have I hated" - Malachi 1.3

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Reading this passage through an ancient lens will help. This passage should be read through the lens of the Near Eastern vassal treaty. **In the Near Eastern treaty, vassals were required to love their superiors:** "If you do not love the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal," warns the Assyrian treaty of Esarhaddon, "[then] may Ashur, king of the gods, who determines the fates, decree for you an evil, unpropitious fate."

As cited in James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton University Press, 1969), 537, 538.

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# "Esau have I hated" - Malachi 1.3

Scholars in recent decades have shown that in the biblical world the word love often represented a covenantal devotion to one's superior, while its opposite, namely hate, at times signified the status of an individual outside of this affiliation.

N. Lohfink, "Hate and Love in Osee 9, 15," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): 417, emphasis added.



## The Problems Addressed in Malachi 1-2

One of the main problems faced by Malachi was the lack of faith the Jews felt toward Jehovah. This problem expressed itself in **four specific ways**: questioning the Lord's love, offering impure sacrifices, marrying outside the covenant, and lack of diligence in keeping the commandments. The prophet addressed each of these.





# Malachi

A key to understanding Malachi 3:1-4 is in identifying the messenger who would announce the day of judgment. The Savior identified John the Baptist as that messenger: “For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Matt. 11:10).

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# John the Baptist

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John's ministry was a perfect type of the lesser priesthood due to the fact that he would "prepare the way before" the greater ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to come (Malachi 3:1). John's witness of Jesus during the Lord's mortal ministry partially fulfilled the prophecy, but the context of Malachi 3:1-4 seems to deal with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Malachi asks, "who may abide the day of his coming? He shall purify the sons of Levi... (Malachi 3:2-3). John seems to have understood that his role would extend beyond his mortal ministry. When people asked who he was, he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1:23), referring to Isaiah 40:3.



The context of Isaiah's prophecy is similar to Malachi – Isaiah speaks of every valley being exalted and every mountain being brought low, with the glory of the Lord revealed and all flesh seeing Him together. It would seem to be that **both prophets speak plainly of the second coming.**

From a Latter-day Saint perspective, this is fascinating. What other Christian denomination *even claims* that John has had a role in their priesthood or organization as we prepare for Jesus Christ in the last days?

# The Prophet Joseph Smith



John would therefore be the Lord's messenger *twice*, once to prepare the way for his first coming and then again for his second. The latter-day fulfillment was when John bestowed the priesthood upon his *fellow servants* (see D&C 13 and Revelation 6:11) Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The prophet Joseph Smith, by receiving the priesthood and making the way for the Restoration, is also an individual who fulfills this prophecy. In the JST of Matthew 17 we read the following:

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, *as the prophets have written. And again I say unto you that Elias has come already, concerning whom it is written, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me;* and they knew him not, and have done unto him, whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. *But I say unto you, Who is Elias? Behold, this is Elias, whom I send to prepare the way before me.* Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist, *and also of another who should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets.*” (JST Matthew 17:10-14) Clearly the prophet Joseph Smith fits as the messenger that shall prepare the way before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “*another who should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets.*”

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Along with this prophecy Malachi noted that two important events would also take place: the Lord would come to his temple (Malachi 3:1), and the sons of Levi would be purified and then make an acceptable offering before the Lord (Malachi 3:3). The Lord came suddenly to his temple on 3 April 1836, as described in Doctrine and Covenants 110. His coming marked the beginning of the great latter-day work of the house of the Lord: “This is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people,” he proclaimed (D&C 110:10).





Elijah Appearing in the Kirtland Temple, by Dan Lewis, © 2007 Dan Lewis

# Elijah

His appearance was followed by that of others, including Elijah, whose coming fulfilled another prophecy in Malachi (D&C 110:13-16; Mal. 4:5-6). The messenger spoken of in Malachi 3:1 has direct linkage to the passage in Malachi 4:5, thus tying this prophecy to Elijah as well.

# My Messenger - Moroni

The name מְלַאכִי Malachi is interesting, it literally means, “my messenger”. The root of the word comes from מְלַאךְ Malak, which means “angel.” From Joseph Smith History we read:





“He (the angel Moroni) called me by name, and said unto me that **he was a messenger** sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; **that God had a work for me to do**; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.” (Joseph Smith History – verse 33, emphasis added).

Moroni also fits the description of this messenger who will prepare the way before the second coming of Jesus Christ. He brought knowledge to the Prophet Joseph Smith relative to his specific mission, was the messenger to deliver the Book of Mormon – the text that will be used in the last days to gather Israel and bring all people to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and His gospel.





# Application

Are there other readings here?



Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3.1)

What if this passage has multiple fulfilments?

# The Hebrew Bible begins and ends with a tree

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The Tree of Life – Genesis 2-3.

Roots and branches – Malachi 4.1.

A book of remembrance – Malachi 3.16.

The turning of the hearts of the children  
to the fathers – Malachi 4.6.

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