

11 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<b>ACT JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, WALK HUMBLY MALACHI</b>
Key Passages	<p>Don't attempt to cover all this study. Select aspects most relevant for your group and use the appropriate passages from Malachi.</p> <p>For application see Romans 12:1-2 and, perhaps, 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 13-15</p>
Main Points	<p>Malachi closes the Hebrew Bible about four hundred years before the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ.</p> <p>In Jerusalem, the Jews who returned under Ezra and Nehemiah are disillusioned and disheartened. Faith is at rock bottom. This is played out in their careless lives and contemptuous worship. Malachi brings six challenges in the form of disputes between God and his people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God's people are dishonouring him with corrupt worship – they bring God their failed produce, not their best. ch. 1:7b to 2:9</li> <li>• The leaders encourage this and fail to teach their people. ch. 2:7-10</li> <li>• The men are unfaithful to their women. ch.2:10</li> <li>• The people pervert truth. ch. 2:17</li> <li>• The people need to turn back to God and to give him his due. ch.3:7</li> <li>• The people are arrogant: why follow God when evildoers prosper?</li> </ul> <p>Following these accusations, Malachi brings hope for the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God's messenger will come to purify the leaders. The outcome will be pure worship. God always longs to bless his people.</li> <li>• Elijah will return. This is fulfilled in John the Baptist who points to Jesus as Messiah, Saviour, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.</li> </ul>
Discussion questions	<p>How do we measure up against the six challenges God brings through Malachi? Our worship? Our growth (Leaders need to answer for this)? Our faithfulness to our partners and each other? Our truthfulness? Our closeness to God? Our humility in sensing our need of God?</p> <p>Are we prepared for God to refine and purify us? (see Romans &amp; Peter as above). Do we choose to honour God in our family life, our work, our social life, our gathering for worship?</p>
This week	<p>Let's open ourselves to God to have his way in us. Let's make a conscious effort to honour God in all that we do. Let's develop the habit of meeting with fellow believers to encourage each other in faith and to bring God our best in Worship. As we do so we will experience God's blessing.</p>