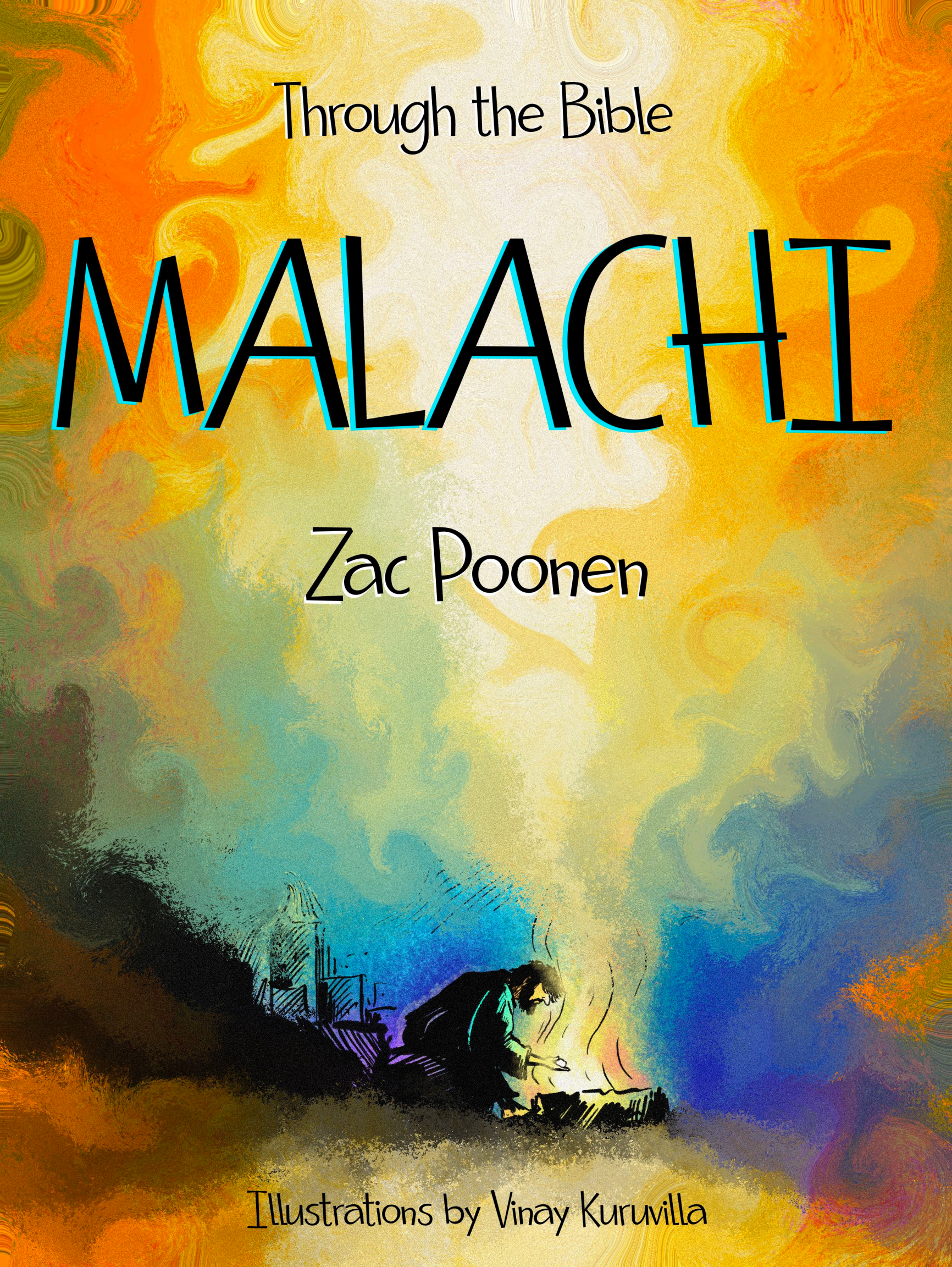


Through the Bible

MALACHI

Zac Poonen

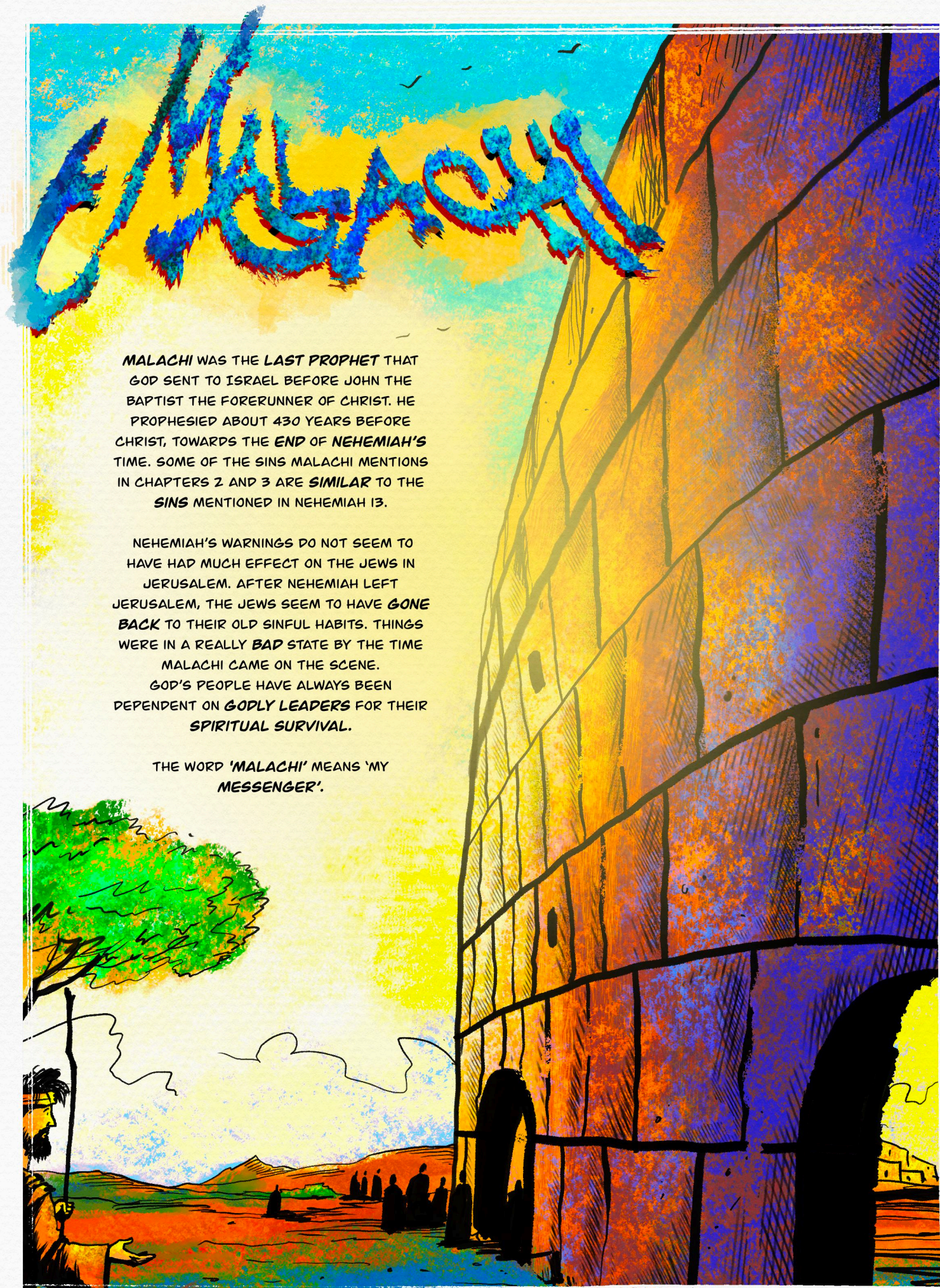
Illustrations by Vinay Kuruville



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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

**69 PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI
KANNUR POST, BANGALORE - 562 149
INDIA**

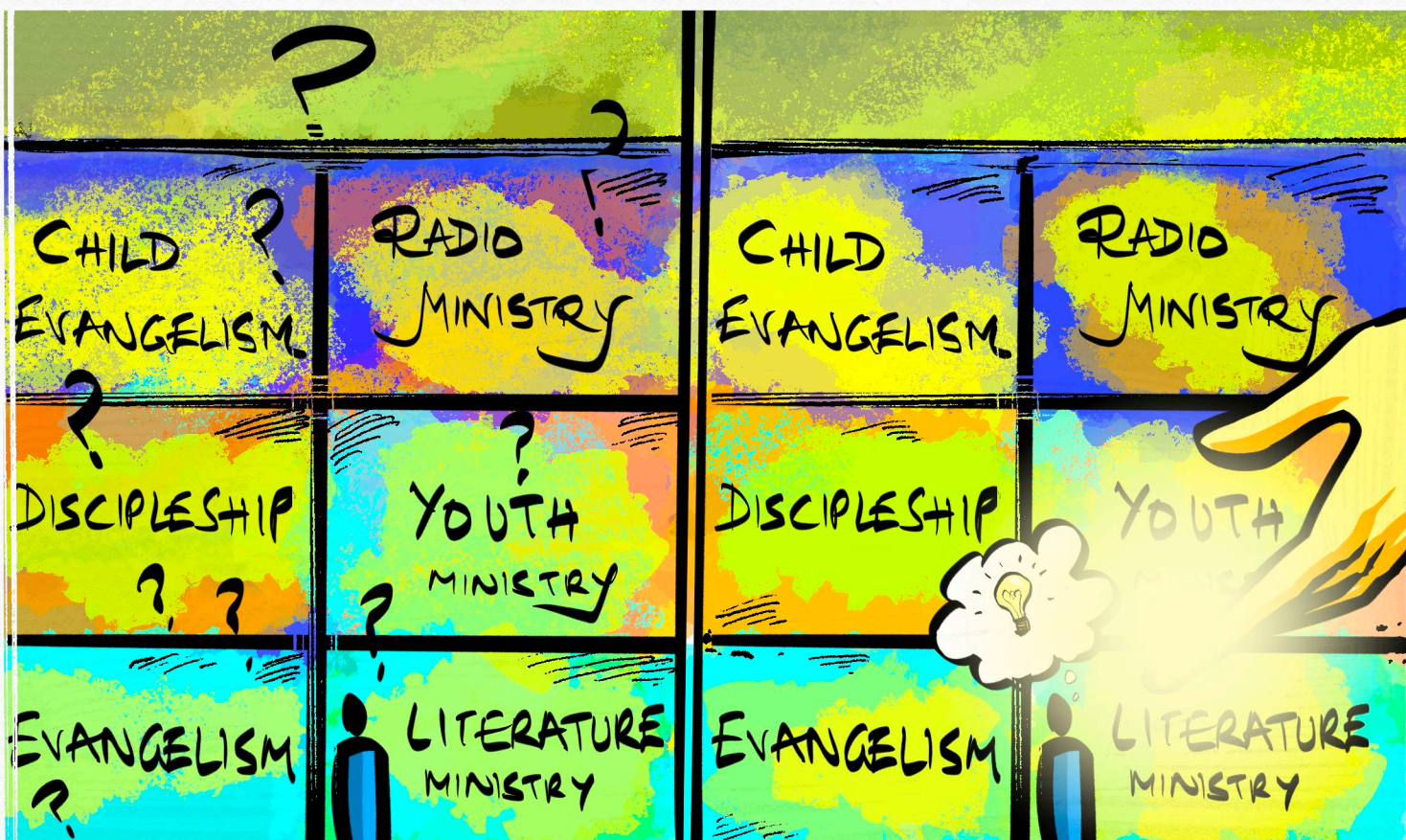


MALACHI WAS THE **LAST PROPHET** THAT GOD SENT TO ISRAEL BEFORE JOHN THE BAPTIST THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST. HE PROPHESIED ABOUT 430 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST, TOWARDS THE **END OF NEHEMIAH'S** TIME. SOME OF THE SINS MALACHI MENTIONS IN CHAPTERS 2 AND 3 ARE **SIMILAR** TO THE **SINS** MENTIONED IN NEHEMIAH 13.

NEHEMIAH'S WARNINGS DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE HAD MUCH EFFECT ON THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM. AFTER NEHEMIAH LEFT JERUSALEM, THE JEWS SEEM TO HAVE **GONE BACK** TO THEIR OLD SINFUL HABITS. THINGS WERE IN A REALLY **BAD** STATE BY THE TIME MALACHI CAME ON THE SCENE.

GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DEPENDENT ON **GODLY LEADERS** FOR THEIR **SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL**.

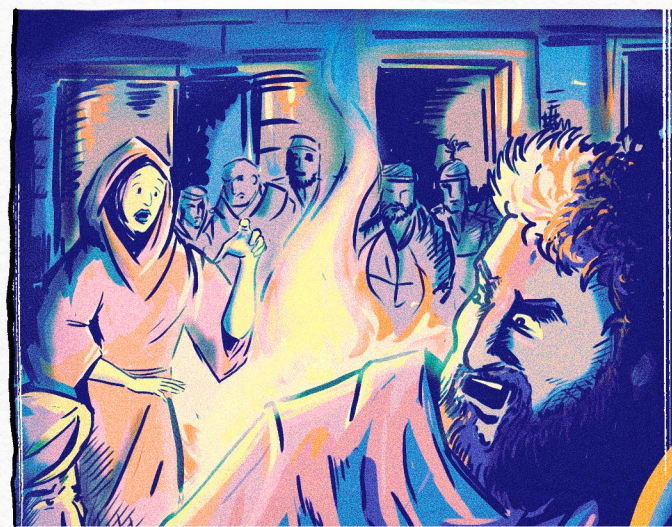
THE WORD '**MALACHI**' MEANS '**MY MESSENGER**'.



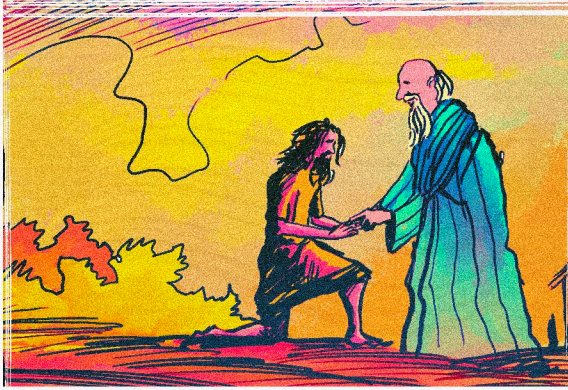
LIKE THE OTHER PROPHETS, MALACHI ALSO HAD A BURDEN. EACH PROPHET HAD A **UNIQUE** BURDEN GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD -- BUT ALL OF THEM WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF **HOLINESS** AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE. THE **BURDEN** GOD LAYS ON OUR HEART IS ALMOST ALWAYS AN INDICATION OF THE **MINISTRY** HE HAS PLANNED FOR US. IF WE SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT A BURDEN, WE WILL GET **BORED** WITH THE LORD'S WORK AFTER A WHILE, AND WE ARE LIKELY TO END UP **SEEKING** AFTER **MONEY**, **MAN'S HONOUR** OR **EARTHLY COMFORT**. GOD GIVES **DIFFERENT** BURDENS TO **DIFFERENT** MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY. WE MUST NOT **IMITATE** SOMEONE ELSE'S **MINISTRY** OR TRY TO HAVE HIS BURDEN. DON'T **FORCE** OTHERS TO HAVE **YOUR BURDEN**; AND DON'T ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO GIVE **YOU HIS BURDEN**. GOD HAS A **DEFINITE TASK** FOR YOU TO FULFIL IN THE **BODY OF CHRIST** AND YOU MUST KNOW WHAT IT IS. WHEN **GOD** GIVES YOU A BURDEN, YOU **CANNOT GIVE THAT UP** JUST BECAUSE SOME **ORGANISATION** OFFERED YOU BETTER **EARTHLY BENEFITS** TO DO **ANOTHER MINISTRY**.



THE LORD HAS A **COMPLAINT** HERE AGAINST HIS PEOPLE: "I HAVE **LOVED** YOU **DEEPLY**. AND YOU SAY, 'WHEREIN HAVE YOU **LOVED** US?'" WHEN **SATAN** TEMPTED EVE, HE FIRST PLANTED A **DOUBT** ABOUT **GOD'S LOVE** IN HER MIND. THE **IMPLICATION** OF THE TEMPTATION WAS, "GOD DOESN'T **REALLY LOVE** YOU. IF HE DID, HE WOULD HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO EAT THIS **BEAUTIFUL FRUIT**." THAT MADE EVE **DOUBT** GOD'S LOVE. AND THEN SHE FELL INTO **SIN** EASILY.

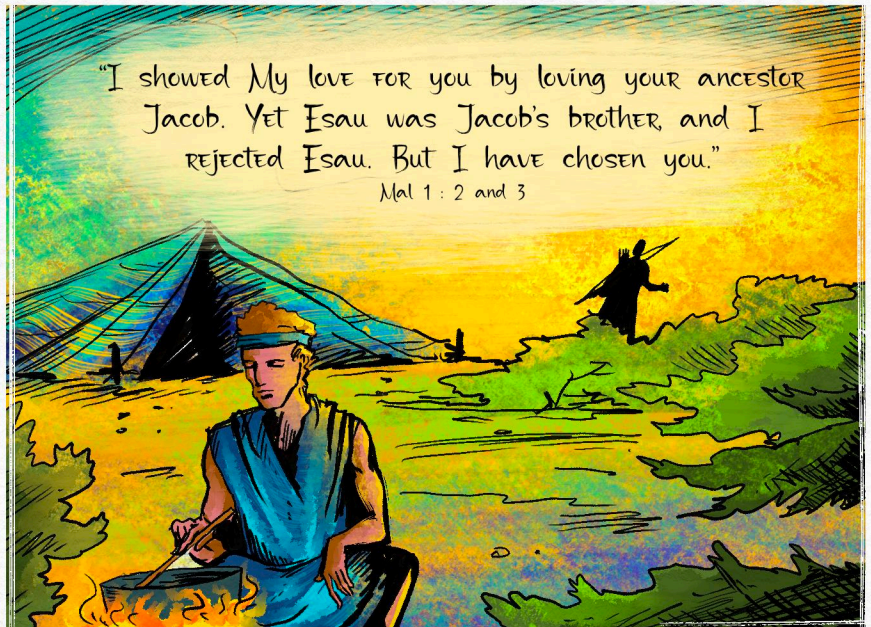


WHEN THE LORD PRAYED FOR PETER, HE SAID, "**SATAN** HAS DEMANDED PERMISSION TO SIFT YOU LIKE WHEAT. BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU THAT YOUR **FAITH** SHOULD NOT **FAIL**." (LUKE 22:31, 32). THE LORD PRAYED THAT, EVEN AFTER PETER HAD FALLEN INTO THE **DEPTHS** OF SIN (DENYING THE LORD THRICE), HE WOULD **STILL BELIEVE** THAT **GOD LOVED HIM**. THIS IS **FAITH**



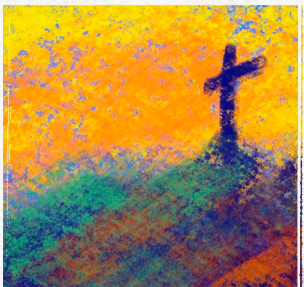
AFTER THE **PRODIGAL** SON HAD **MESSED UP** HIS LIFE AND **LOST EVERYTHING**, HE STILL **BELIEVED** ONE THING -- THAT HIS **FATHER** **LOVED** HIM.

WE MAY HAVE MESSED UP OUR LIFE TOO. IF SO, REMEMBER THAT GOD **STILL** **LOVES** YOU. **DON'T** EVER **LOSE** **FAITH** IN THAT FACT.



"I showed My love for you by loving your ancestor Jacob. Yet Esau was Jacob's brother, and I rejected Esau. But I have chosen you."

Mal 1: 2 and 3

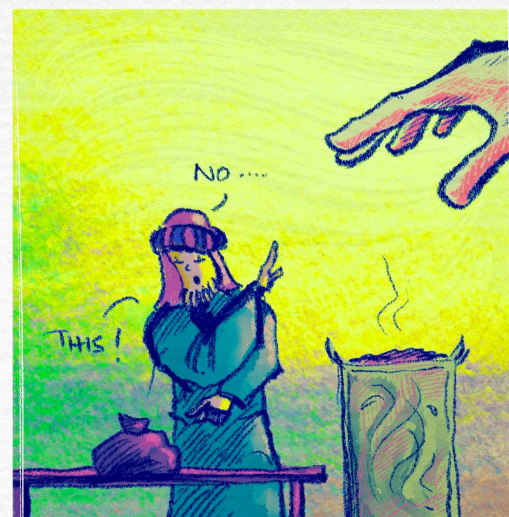


HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GOD LOVES US? FIRST OF ALL, BECAUSE HE SENT **CHRIST** TO **DIE** FOR OUR SINS. HE PICKED US OUT FROM MANY **BILLIONS** OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD TO BE AMONG THE **FEW** WHO WOULD FIND THE WAY TO **LIFE**. WHY DID HE CHOOSE US? WAS IT BECAUSE WE WERE **MORE** **RIGHTEOUS** THAN OUR **UNCONVERTED** FRIENDS AND RELATIVES -- WHO ARE, HUMANLY SPEAKING, BETTER PEOPLE THAN WE WERE? **NO**.

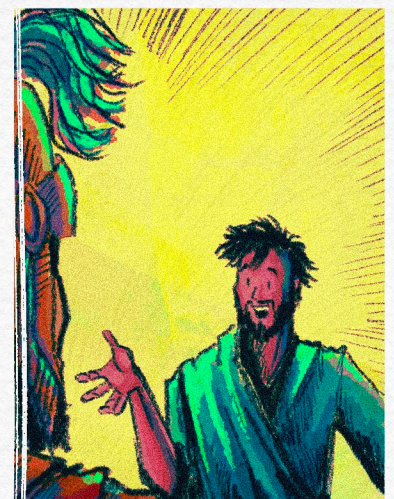
GOD ACCEPTED US BECAUSE WE RECOGNISED THAT WE WERE **SINNERS**. JESUS CAME TO CALL **SINNERS** AND **NOT** THE **RIGHTEOUS**. AND IF WE THINK WE CHOSE THE LORD FIRST, THAT IS NOT TRUE. IN JOHN 15:16, JESUS STATES VERY CLEARLY, "**YOU** DIDN'T CHOOSE ME, BUT **I** **CHOSE** YOU."



IN 1:6, WE READ, "THE LORD ALMIGHTY SAYS TO THE **PRIESTS**...." NOTICE AGAIN HOW GOD SPEAKS TO THE **LEADERS** FIRST. THROUGHOUT ISRAEL'S HISTORY, IT WAS ALWAYS THEIR **LEADERS** WHO LED THEM INTO **SIN**. AND IN THE 20 CENTURIES OF **CHURCH** HISTORY TOO, IT IS THE LEADERS WHO HAVE LED THE CHURCH INTO **COMPRO-MISE** AND **WORLDLINESS**. EVERY NOW AND THEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD WOULD SEND A **PROPHET** TO SPEAK TO THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL. THE PROPHET WOULD TELL THEM OF THEIR **FAILURES**. AND ALMOST ALWAYS THE LEADERS WOULD **HATE** HIM AND **PERSECUTE** HIM..



WHAT THE LORD SAID TO THE PRIESTS AND THE LEADERS WAS, I AM YOUR **FATHER** AND I AM YOUR **MASTER**. WHERE IS THE **HONOUR** AND RESPECT YOU GIVE ME? YOU HAVE **DESPISED** MY NAME. YOU CARE MORE FOR THE **RICH** PEOPLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION THAN FOR ME." THESE LEADERS WANTED **HONOUR** FROM THE PEOPLE, BUT THEY THEMSELVES DID NOT HONOUR **GOD**. A ROMAN CENTURION ONCE SAID TO JESUS, "I AM A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY AND I HAVE AUTHORITY OVER THE SOLDIERS. I TELL A SOLDIER, 'GO,' AND HE GOES; TO ANOTHER, 'COME,' AND HE COMES" (LUKE 7:8). TO HAVE AUTHORITY WE MUST BE **UNDER** AUTHORITY.



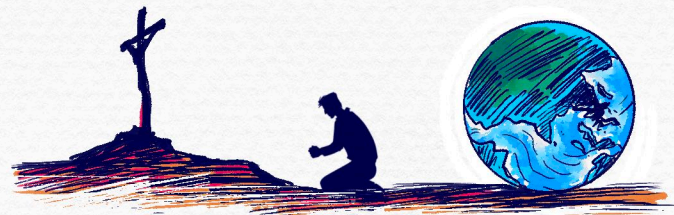


"IF YOU OFFER GOD **SACRIFICES** WHICH ARE **DEFILED** THAT IS AN **INSULT** TO GOD" (1:8). THESE PEOPLE DID **NOT** **FEAR** GOD. HOW WAS THAT MANIFESTED? IN THAT THEY OFFERED **BLIND** AND **LAME** AND **SICK** ANIMALS AS SACRIFICES TO GOD. DON'T CHRISTIANS DO THAT TODAY? WHAT DO MANY BELIEVERS GIVE TO THE LORD? THE **LEFT-OVERS**. THEY RETIRE FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND THEN WANT TO JOIN A **CHRISTIAN** ORGANIZATION TO "SERVE THE LORD"! THEY HAVE ALREADY GIVEN THE **BEST PART** OF THEIR **LIFE** TO THE **WORLD** TO MAKE **MONEY** AND NOW THEY WANT TO GIVE THE **DREGS** OF THEIR **LIFE** TO THE LORD

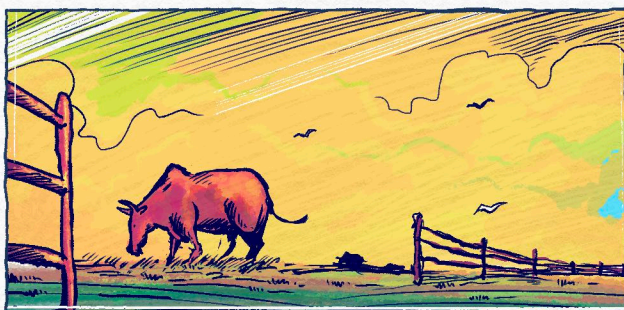


THE LORD SAID, "TRY AND GIVE THAT TO YOUR **GOVERNOR** AND SEE HOW **HAPPY** HE WILL BE" (1:8). WHEN YOU GIVE A GIFT TO AN **EARTHLY** GOVERNOR, DO YOU PICK OUT THE **WORST** THING AVAILABLE IN YOUR HOUSE? SUPPOSE THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE CAME TO YOUR HOUSE AND YOU WANTED TO GIVE HIM A CUP OF **TEA**. WOULD YOU MAKE A CUP OF **TEA**, **DRINK MOST** OF IT **YOURSELF** AND THEN GIVE HIM THE **DREGS**? NO. BUT THAT IS WHAT MANY BELIEVERS ARE OFFERING THE LORD. THEY LIVE FOR THE **WORLD**, PURSUING THEIR **OWN INTERESTS**, FOR **MOST** OF THEIR LIVES, AND THEN GIVE THE **LAST BIT** OF THEIR LIVES TO THE LORD. THAT IS A **DISGRACE**. GIVE THE **BEST** TO THE LORD. GIVE HIM YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU ARE **YOUNG**.

Giving our lives fully to the Lord means putting God first - whether God calls you for full time Christian work or to a secular job.



MALACHI HAS A MESSAGE FOR OUR TIME BECAUSE HE PROPHESIED TOWARDS THE **END** OF THE **JEWISH AGE**. AND THE STATE OF AFFAIRS AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE THEN WAS VERY **SIMILAR** TO THE STATE OF AFFAIRS AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE **NOW** AT THE **END** OF THE **CHURCH AGE**. WE NEED **PROPHETS TODAY** IN CHRISTENDOM WITH **MALACHI'S** MESSAGE, TO **PREPARE** PEOPLE FOR THE **COMING** OF THE LORD.



"BUT MY NAME IS GOING TO BE **HONOURED**, AND IN **EVERY** PLACE AROUND THE **WORLD**, THERE IS GOING TO BE A **PURE TESTIMONY** FOR MY NAME" (1:11). SPEAKING IN OLD COVENANT TERMS, WHAT IS THE USE OF A **BIG BULLOCK** IF IT IS **SICK**? LET IT BE A SMALL LAMB, OR A **TURTLEDOVE** BUT LET IT BE **HEALTHY** AND **SPOTLESS**, WITHOUT BLEMISH. THE LORD LOOKED FOR **QUALITY** AND **NOT** FOR **SIZE** OR **WEIGHT** IN THOSE DAYS. EVEN **TODAY**, HE LOOKS FOR A **PURE CHURCH** AND NOT A LARGE ONE.



SO, IF YOU ARE BUILDING A CHURCH, MAKE SURE IT IS A **PURE** CHURCH, WHATEVER ITS **SIZE**. **WORLDLY** WAYS OF THINKING MAKE MOST CHRISTIANS TO BE **IMPRESSED** BY SIZE RATHER THAN **PURITY**. WE CERTAINLY WANT **MANY MILLIONS** TO COME TO THE LORD. BUT THEY MUST ALL BE **DISCIPLES** AND NOT JUST PEOPLE WHO SIGNED A **DECISION-CARD** OR WHO CAME FORWARD IN AN EVANGELISTIC MEETING. GOD WOULD RATHER HAVE A **SMALL, HEALTHY TURTLEDOVE** THAN A **LARGE, SICK BULLOCK!!**



IT IS EASY TO BECOME **DISCOURAGED** AND **DISAPPOINTED** WHEN YOU SEE **COMPROMISE** AND **WORLDLINESS** IN CHRISTIAN LEADERS TODAY. AND THEN IT IS EASY TO **BACKSLIDE**.



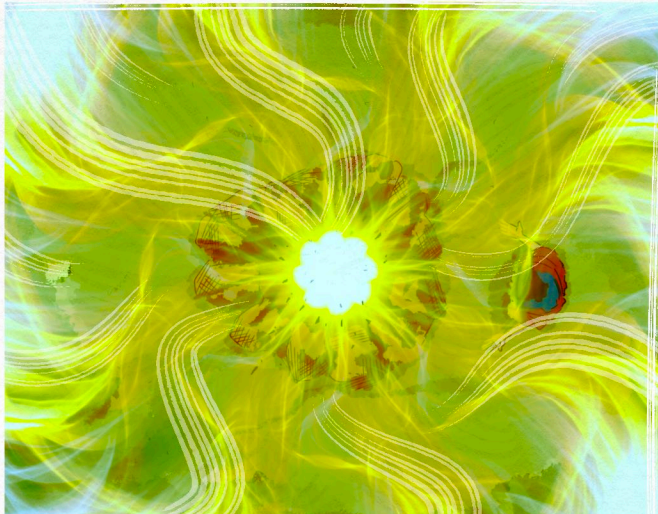
THE LORD SAYS, "**HONOR** MY NAME OR I WILL BRING A TERRIBLE **CURSE** AGAINST YOU. I WILL CURSE EVEN THE **BLESSINGS** YOU RECEIVE. INDEED, I HAVE ALREADY CURSED THEM, BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN MY **WARNING** SERIOUSLY. I WILL REBUKE YOUR DESCENDANTS AND SPLATTER YOUR FACES WITH THE **PUNG** OF YOUR FESTIVAL SACRIFICES, AND I WILL ADD YOU TO THE **PUNG HEAP**." THESE PROPHETS WERE **NOT GENTLE, NICE PREACHERS** WHO STOOD BEHIND ORNAMENTED PULPITS AND SAID **PLEASANT** THINGS TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY. THEY USED **STRONG** WORDS. THAT'S HOW **JESUS** WAS.



IN 2:5, 6, MALACHI COMPARED THE **LEVITES** OF HIS TIME WITH THE LEVITES OF OLD. THEY **REVERENCED** GOD. THEY HAD A **CONCERN** FOR GOD'S NAME. THEY SPOKE THE **WHOLE TRUTH**. THEY **HATED SIN** AND **TURNED** MANY AWAY FROM IT. THEY WALKED **UPRIGHTLY** WITH GOD.



IN THOSE TWO VERSES, WE HAVE A **BEAUTIFUL** DESCRIPTION OF WHAT A TRUE PREACHER SHOULD BE LIKE. "THE PRIESTS' LIPS SHOULD **GUARD** KNOWLEDGE, AND PEOPLE SHOULD GO TO THEM FOR **INSTRUCTION**, FOR THE PRIESTS ARE THE **MESSENGERS** OF THE LORD" (2:7). WE MUST GO TO THE LORD FIRST AND **RECEIVE** HIS WORD AND ONLY **THEN** GO TO THE **PEOPLE** AND GIVE THEM HIS WORD. A MESSENGER MUST HAVE GOD'S WORD IN HIS MOUTH. BUT THOSE LEVITES, LIKE MANY **TODAY**, HAD **LEFT GOD'S PATHS, CORRUPTED** HIS COVENANT AND **CAUSED** PEOPLE TO **STUMBLE** BY THEIR PREACHING (2:8, 9).



MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE, "THE LORD IS **NOT** LISTENING TO YOUR PRAYERS, BECAUSE HE HAS WITNESSED YOUR **UNFAITHFULNESS** TO YOUR WIFE. YOU HAVE **NOT** BEEN **TRUE** TO THE **VOWS** YOU MADE TO HER" (2:14). YOU CAN BE UNFAITHFUL TO YOUR WIFE EVEN BY THE WAY YOU **TALK** WITH OTHER WOMEN. YOU MAY **NOT** TOUCH A WOMAN'S BODY AND YET COMMIT **ADULTERY** IN YOUR **HEART**. NOWADAYS, MEN AND WOMEN WORK TOGETHER IN **CLOSE PROXIMITY** IN OFFICES. **PREACHERS** ARE IN GREAT DANGER, BECAUSE THEY STAND IN THE **PULPIT** SO MUCH AND CERTAIN TYPES OF WOMEN CAN BE **ATTRACTED** TO THEM.



IN 2:11, MALACHI REBUKES THE PEOPLE FOR **MARRYING UNBELIEVERS** AND THEN BRINGING **OFFERINGS** TO THE LORD. A SERVANT OF GOD MUST HAVE A **GODLY** HOME. MANY SERVANTS OF GOD THROUGH THE CENTURIES, LIKE **JOB**, HAVE HAD **UNGODLY** WIVES. BUT THAT NEED **NOT** HINDER THEM FROM BEING **GODLY HUSBANDS** AT HOME. IF YOU ARE **NOT** YET MARRIED, THEN YOU MUST BE **CAREFUL** ABOUT THE **WIFE** YOU CHOOSE. ENSURE THAT YOU MARRY SOMEONE WHO HAS THE **SAME GOALS** AS YOU HAVE, SOMEONE WHO **LOVES** THE **LORD** LIKE YOU DO.

AND ONCE YOU ARE MARRIED, BE TOTALLY **FAITHFUL** TO YOUR WIFE -- **IRRESPECTIVE** OF WHETHER SHE IS **SPIRITUAL** OR **NOT**. THE PEOPLE HERE WERE FASTING AND WEEPING AND PRAYING **BUT** THEY WERE **UNFAITHFUL** TO THEIR WIVES. BUT GOD WHO SAW THEIR PRIVATE LIVES, WAS NOT LISTENING TO ANY OF THEIR PRAYERS.

SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT WHAT WE NEED TODAY IS NOT MORE PRAYER, BUT MORE **ANSWERED** PRAYER. **BAAL'S** PROPHETS PRAYED FOR **HOURS**, WHILE **ELIJAH** PRAYED FOR **LESS** THAN A **MINUTE**.

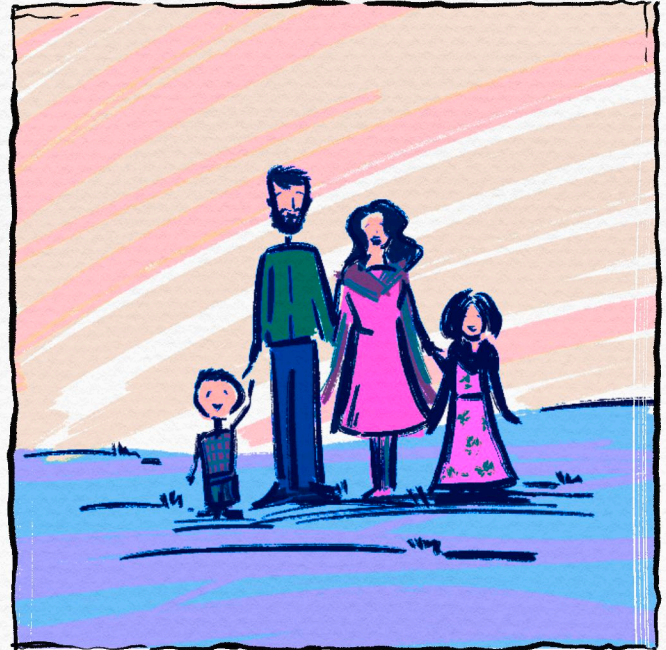
IN THE FIRST CASE, THERE WAS PLENTY OF PRAYER. IN THE **SECOND** CASE THERE WAS **ANSWERED** PRAYER. IT IS EASY TO FIND SATISFACTION THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING -- AND EVEN TO **GLORY** IN IT. MANY MEASURE THEIR **FELLOWSHIP** WITH GOD NOT BY THE **PURITY** OF THEIR HEARTS BUT BY HOW MANY **HOURS** THEY **PRAY**! THAT IS THE **CLEAREST** PROOF THAT SUCH PEOPLE DO **NOT** LOVE GOD AT ALL. IF WE LOVE THE LORD, WE WILL NOT BE LOOKING AT YOUR **WATCH** WHEN YOU **TALK** WITH HIM.



HERE THE WIFE IS CALLED "THE **WIFE** OF YOUR **YOUTH**" (2:14). THAT MEANS, THAT EVEN WHEN YOUR WIFE IS **OLD** AND **WHITE-HAIRED**, YOU MUST SEE HER THE WAY SHE WAS WHEN SHE WAS **YOUNG** AND **ATTRACTIVE**. THAT'S THE WAY I LOOK AT MY WIFE. MY WIFE HAS GOT GRAY HAIR. BUT I SEE HER TODAY JUST AS I SAW HER ON OUR **WEDDING DAY** -- AND SHE IS JUST AS PRETTY AND ATTRACTIVE TO ME **TODAY** AS SHE WAS **THEN**.



GOD SAYS, "I HATE DIVORCE. I HATE THE VIOLENT DISMEMBERING OF THE 'ONE FLESH' OF MARRIAGE" (2:16 - MSG). SO, IF YOU ARE A SERVANT OF GOD YOU WILL HATE DIVORCE TOO AND YOU WILL PROCLAIM EVERYWHERE THAT GOD HATES DIVORCE. UNFORTUNATELY, DIVORCE HAS REARED ITS UGLY HEAD EVEN IN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.



THE WAY YOU BRING UP YOUR CHILDREN IS ALSO IMPORTANT. WHY DID THE LORD MAKE YOU ONE WITH YOUR WIFE? "DIDN'T GOD MAKE YOU ONE BODY AND SPIRIT WITH HER (YOUR WIFE)? WHAT WAS HIS PURPOSE IN THIS? IT WAS THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE CHILDREN WHO ARE TRULY GOD'S PEOPLE" (2:15 - TEV). IT IS EASY TO PRODUCE CHILDREN. BUT TO RAISE THEM UP AS GODLY YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IS THE TASK OF A LIFETIME. SO BE LOYAL TO YOUR WIFE AND WORK TOGETHER WITH HER TO RAISE A GODLY FAMILY.



IN 3:1, THE LORD SAYS, "BEHOLD, I AM GOING TO SEND MY MESSENGER (JOHN THE BAPTIST), AND HE WILL CLEAR THE WAY BEFORE ME. AND THE LORD (CHRIST), WHOM YOU SEEK, WILL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE; AND THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, IN WHOM YOU DELIGHT, BEHOLD, HE IS COMING."



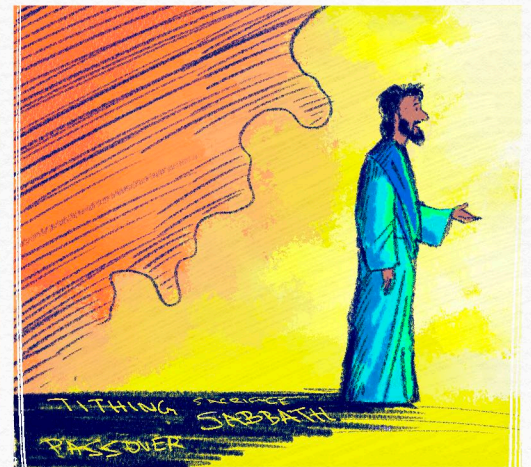
HE WILL SIT DOWN TO REFINE THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE THIS IS GOING TO TAKE A LONG TIME (3:3). THE LORD REFINES UNTIL ALL THE DROSS OF WORLDLINESS AND SIN IS BURNED AWAY FROM OUR LIVES. AND HE WILL STOP ONLY WHEN THAT GOLD IS SO PURE THAT HE CAN SEE HIS FACE REFLECTED IN IT -- WHEN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST IS SEEN IN US. UNTIL THEN WE HAVE TO BE REFINED. THIS IS THE WORK OF A LIFETIME. IN 1 JOHN 3:3, WE ARE TOLD THAT EVERYONE WHO HAS THE HOPE OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL PURIFY HIMSELF AS CHRIST HIMSELF IS PURE. OUR CALLING IS TO COOPERATE WITH THE LORD AS HE PUTS US INTO THE FIRE OF DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, TRIALS, SICKNESSES AND OTHER THORNS IN THE FLESH THAT THE LORD PERMITS



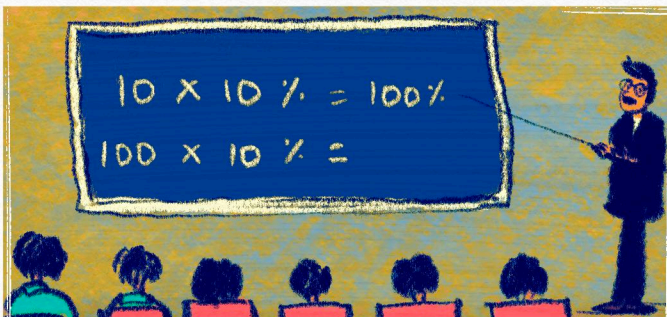
ONLY THEN WILL WE BE ABLE TO OFFER HIM A **PURE SACRIFICE**. IF YOU ALLOW THE LORD TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THE FIRES OF **TESTING, PERSECUTION, TRIBULATION, TRIAL, MISUNDERSTANDING, FALSE ACCUSATION, ETC.** AND YOU RESPOND IN EACH OF THOSE WITH **SUBMISSION TO GOD** AND **LOVE TO YOUR PERSECUTORS**, THEN YOU WILL BE SO PURE THAT WHEN YOU GIVE GOD'S WORD TO OTHERS, THERE WILL BE A **RICH ANOINTING** ON YOUR **WORDS** AND THE **POWER OF GOD** IN YOUR **MINISTRY**.



"I, THE LORD, **DO NOT CHANGE**; THEREFORE YOU, O SONS OF JACOB, ARE NOT CONSUMED" (3:6). THIS VERSE IS FOUND AT THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO CORRECT THE **FALSE** VIEWS OF THOSE WHO IMAGINE THAT THE GOD DESCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS A **GENTLER** GOD THAN THE ONE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THAT IS JUST NOT TRUE. HE **HATES SIN TODAY** JUST AS MUCH AS HE DID IN **OLD TESTAMENT** TIMES; AND HE WAS JUST AS **MERCIFUL** AND **COMPASSIONATE** THEN, AS HE IS **NOW**. HE HAS **NOT** CHANGED -- AND HE **NEVER** WILL.



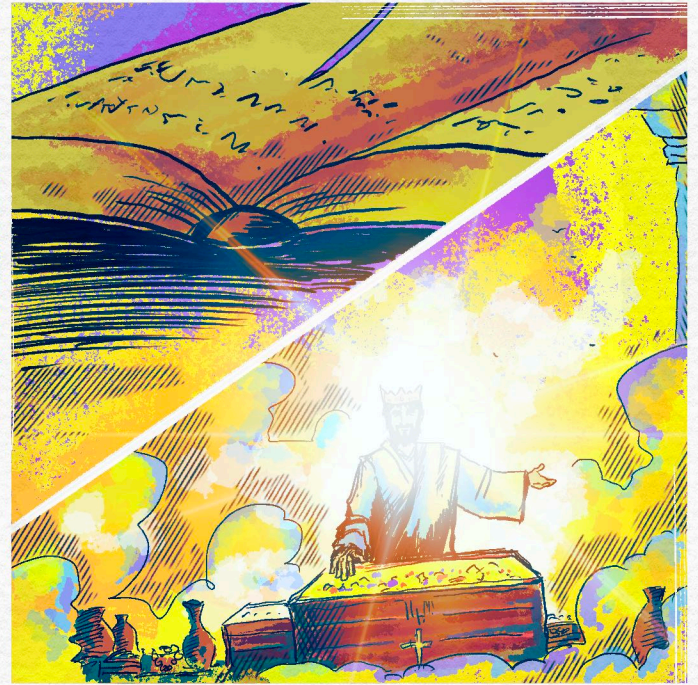
MALACHI 3: 8 - 11 TALKS ABOUT TITHING... DID YOU KNOW THAT **TITHING** IS **NOT** MENTIONED EVEN **ONCE**, AFTER THE DAY OF **PENTECOST** (WHEN THE **NEW COVENANT** WAS INSTITUTED)? TITHING IS **NOT** COMMANDED UNDER THE NEW COVENANT AT ALL -- YET MULTITUDES OF **COVETOUS PASTORS** STILL PREACH IT **TODAY** AND **EXPLOIT POOR, IGNORANT** BELIEVERS. JESUS DID NOT TEACH HIS DISCIPLES TO **TITHE** BUT TO **GIVE**. WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE TO GOD **FIRST** OF ALL? ROMANS 12:1 STATES, "I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, PRESENT YOUR **BODIES (NOT YOUR TITHES)** AS A **LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD**." IT IS FAR **EASIER** TO GIVE 10% OF OUR **INCOME** EACH MONTH TO GOD THAN TO KEEP OUR **EYES PURE** EACH DAY OF THAT MONTH. TITHING WAS MEANT TO BE A **TYPE**, JUST LIKE THE PASSOVER LAMB AND THE SABBATH DAY. THE LAMB WAS A **TYPE** OF CHRIST, AND THE SABBATH WAS A **TYPE** OF THE **INWARD REST** THAT CHRIST GIVES US. THESE OLD TESTAMENT RITUALS WERE ALL **SHADOWS** OF WHAT WAS FINALLY **FULFILLED** IN **CHRIST** (COLOSSIANS 2:16, 17). CONCERNING TITHING, GOD HAD SAID, "THE PURPOSE OF TITHING IS TO **TEACH** US ALWAYS TO PUT **GOD FIRST** IN OUR LIVES" (DEUTERONOMY 14:23 - LB).



THE EARLY **APOSTLES** WERE **POOR**. BUT IF 10 PEOPLE GIVE A PASTOR **TODAY ONE-TENTH** OF THEIR INCOME, HE GETS **ONE** MAN'S **AVERAGE SALARY** (BECAUSE $10 \times 10\% = 100\%$). THIS IS **REASONABLE**. BUT WELL-KNOWN PASTORS RECEIVE TITHES FROM **HUNDREDS** OF GOD'S PEOPLE. IF EVEN 100 PEOPLE GIVE THEIR TITHES TO A PASTOR, HIS INCOME WILL BECOME **TEN** TIMES THAT OF THE AVERAGE MAN -- AND VERY SOON HE WILL BECOME A **MILLIONAIRE**, AT THE **EXPENSE** OF HIS **SUPPORTERS!** AND THEN IN ORDER TO **JUSTIFY** HIS BECOMING WEALTHY, HE WILL BEGIN TO PREACH **PROSPERITY** AS THE **MARK OF GOD'S BLESSING!**



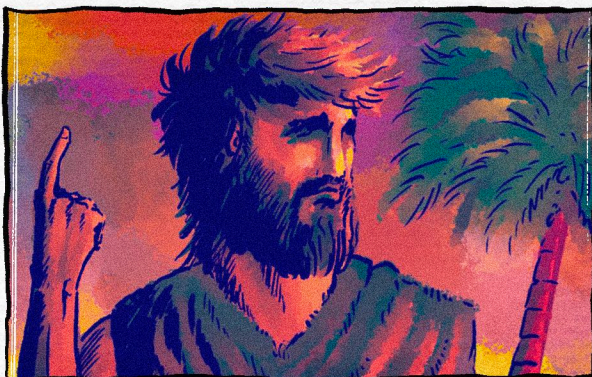
THIS IS THE **DECEPTION** FLOODING CHRISTENDOM TODAY, ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND IT IS ALL BEING DONE IN THE **NAME OF JESUS**. THE **MONEY-CHANGERS** ARE **BACK** IN THE **TEMPLE OF GOD** -- AND THERE IS **NO-ONE** TO **DRIVE THEM OUT**, AS **JESUS** DID; AND THERE IS HARDLY ANY PREACHER WHO IS **BOLD** ENOUGH TO **EXPOSE** THESE **CONFIDENCE TRICKSTERS**. THEN HOW MUCH MONEY SHOULD WE TO GIVE FOR GOD'S WORK? ONLY WHAT WE CAN GIVE **CHEERFULLY**



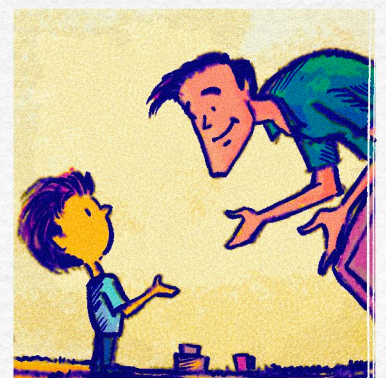
IN 3:16, WE SEE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S **REMNANT** OF THE **LAST-DAYS**. THEY **FEAR GOD**. THEY ARE CAREFUL WITH THEIR **SPEECH**. THEY ARE **CONCERNED** ABOUT THE **GLORY** OF **GOD'S NAME**. AND THE LORD PUTS THEIR NAMES DOWN IN A BOOK CALLED THE **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE**. THIS IS **NOT** THE BOOK OF LIFE WHICH HAS THE NAMES OF **ALL** THOSE WHO ARE **BORN AGAIN**. THE LORD SAYS THAT **THESE** SAINTS WILL BE HIS **SPECIAL TREASURE**. **ONE DAY** HE WILL **REVEAL** THEM TO THE WORLD -- AND ONLY IN THAT DAY WILL WE SEE WHO **REALLY SERVED** GOD AND WHO **PRETENDED** TO BE HIS SERVANTS BUT IN FACT SOUGHT THEIR **OWN**.



CHAPTER 4 TELLS US OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT THAT IS COMING. THE FIRST PEOPLE TO BE JUDGED WILL BE THE PROUD. "THEN THE LORD SAYS, "BUT FOR YOU WHO **REVERE MY NAME**, THE **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** WILL ARISE WITH **HEALING** IN HIS **WINGS**; AND YOU WILL **TREAD DOWN THE WICKED**, FOR THEY WILL BE **ASHES** UNDER THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET ON THE DAY WHICH I AM PREPARING" (4:2, 3). WHEN **CHRIST** RETURNS, **SATAN** WILL FINALLY BE **CRUSHED** UNDER **OUR FEET** (ROMANS 16:20).



MALACHI FINALLY PROPHESED THAT THE LORD WOULD SEND "**ELIJAH** THE PROPHET **BEFORE** THE COMING OF THE **GREAT AND TERRIBLE** DAY OF THE LORD" (4:5). **JOHN THE BAPTIST** CAME TO ISRAEL "IN THIS SPIRIT OF **ELIJAH**" (LUKE 1:17). THEY **DIDN'T LISTEN** TO HIM. AS WE APPROACH THE LAST DAYS NOW, GOD WILL SEND AN **ELIJAH-MINISTRY** TO THE WORLD BY THE **LAST-DAYS** "**BODY OF CHRIST**".



MALACHI'S FINAL STATEMENT IS THAT ELIJAH "WILL RESTORE THE **HEARTS** OF THE **FATHERS** TO THEIR **CHILDREN** AND THE **HEARTS** OF THE **CHILDREN** TO THEIR **FATHERS**", SO THAT THE LORD DOES NOT SMITE THE LAND WITH A **CURSE** (4:6). WE MUST BUILD **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**, EMPHASISE **HOME-VALUES** AND BRING FATHERS AND CHILDREN **CLOSER** TOGETHER.