### The Time Frames of Malachi

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<th>Malachi's Present (433-424 BC)</th>
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<th>Yeshua's First Coming</th>
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MALACHI
Theme / Application Chart

SCRIPTURE: Malachi 1:1 – 2:16

THEME: Israel’s spiritual condition

BIBLICAL APPLICATION: The restoration community …
1) Questioned God’s character “have you really chosen us”

2) They felt deprived that they belonged to God. They dishonored Him by
   complaining that it was such boring drudgery to be a priest – no fun at all. The
   ungodly have all the fun in life.

3) They showed disrespect for God by not bringing Him their best offerings.

4) They neglected the study of the word of God and the teaching of it.

5) They broke faith with God and their wives and would not keep their marriage
   vows.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: What are our attitudes toward God? Are we tempted to …
1) doubt his choice of us?

2) feel that being a believer is such a boring dull lifestyle and we yearn for the
   hedonism of the world?

3) give our broken-down leftovers to God and His people?

4) neglect the study of the word of God for other things, TV, cheap novels, sports, a
   hobby, etc…? Could we accurately teach God’s word to an individual who came
   to us with a question?

5) break faith in business or personal matters?

What application strikes home most forcefully to you? Circle it.

PLAN OF ACTION: Write down something practical you might do to deal with that
area of application.
## The Abrahamic Covenant
(Nature: Unconditional and Eternal)  
(Discipline for Disobedience)

**Abrahamic Covenant:** Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 13:14-17, 15, 17

**Confirmed through Isaac (NOT ISHAMAE):** Genesis 26:2-5, 24

**Confirmed through Jacob (NOT ESAU):** Genesis 28:13-15

**Confirmed to all 12 tribes:** Genesis 49

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<td>1. National Election</td>
<td>1. I will bless you.</td>
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<th>DAVIDIC COVENANT</th>
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REFINER, REFINING. The Heb. root *ṣrp* expresses the melting, testing, and refining of metals, especially precious metals such as gold and silver. This same terminology was also used of God testing men and of God’s tried and tested word. A less-common term for refining or purifying was *ẓqq*. In the ancient world crude metal was customarily remelted to remove impurities and to make metal castings (tools, weapons, images, etc.). The metal was heated in pottery crucibles (Pr. 17:3; 27:21) in ovens or hearths, bellows often being used to provide a draught to create greater heat.

The Heb. term *ṣōrēp* for refiner, metal-worker, is often rendered as goldsmith in E.V.V. In the days of the Judges Micah’s mother had a silver image cast (Jdg. 17:4), while much later Isaiah (40:19; 41:7; 46:6) and Jeremiah (10:8–9; 51:17) graphically describe the futile manufacture of metal and metal-plated idols. David provided refined gold and silver for the future Temple at Jerusalem (1 Ch. 28:18; 29:4); various metal-smiths shared in the repair of Jerusalem’s walls under Nehemiah (Ne. 3:8, 31–32).

God, like a master-refiner seeking the pure metal, is often said to try or test (*ṣrp*) men’s hearts. Cf. Jdg. 7:4 (Gideon’s men); Pss. 17:3b; 26:2b; 66:10; 105:19; Is. 48:10; Je. 9:7; Zc. 13:9; Mal. 3:2–3. See also the graphic pictures in Ps. 12:6 and Pr. 30:5 of God’s Word. For the latter concept, cf. also 2 Sa. 22:31 (= Ps. 18:30); Ps. 119:140. Pure metal was used for casting (cf. Pr. 25:4). God sought to purify his people from sin as the removal of dross and alloy (Is. 1:25), but in simile even a fire heated with the bellows was sometimes not enough to do this (Je. 6:29–30). Trials are sometimes used to refine men, and the wise refine (purify) themselves (Dn. 11:35; 12:10). Wine is once so referred to (Is. 25:6). (*ARTS AND CRAFTS.*

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.** For Egy. scenes of such metal-working, actual moulds and crucibles, see ANEP, p. 40, figs. 133–136; Singer, Holmyard and Hall, A History of Technology, 1, 1954, p. 578, fig. 383 (use of bellows). In general, see ibid., pp. 577–584; R. J. Forbes, Studies in Ancient Technology, 6, 1958, pp. 70–73, 81–85; 8, 1964, pp. 133ff., 170ff., 239ff.; 9, 1964, pp. 67ff.; A. Lucas, Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries, 1962, ch. 11. K.A.K.

Tithe

Pronounced: tith (Hebrew: màasè; Greek: dekaè): The custom of giving a 10th part of the products of the land and of the spoils of war to priests and kings (1 Maccabees 10:31; 11:35; 1 Sam. 8:15, 17) was a very ancient one among most nations. That the Jews had this custom long before the institution of the Mosaic Law is shown by Gen. 14:17–20 (compare Heb. 7:4) and Gen. 28:22. Many critics hold that these two passages are late and only reflect the later practice of the ancient and deeply rooted in the history of the human race that it seems much simpler and more natural to believe that among the Jews the practice was in existence long before the time of Moses.

In the Pentateuch we find legislation as to tithes in three places. (1) According to Lev. 27:30–33, a tithe had to be given of the seed of the land, i.e. of the crops, of the fruit of the tree, e.g. oil and wine, and of the herd or the flock (compare Deut. 14:22, 23; 2 Chr. 31:5, 6). As the herds and flocks passed out to pasture they were counted (compare Jer. 33:13; Ezek. 20:37), and every 10th animal that came out was reckoned holy to the Lord. The owner was not allowed to search among them to find whether they were bad or good, nor could he change any of them; if he did, both the one chosen and the one for which it was changed were holy. Tithes of the herds and flocks could not be redeemed for money, but tithes of the seed of the land and of fruit could be, but a 5th part of the value of the tithe had to be added. (2) In Num. 18:21–32 it is laid down that the tithe must be paid to the Levites. (It should be noted that according to Heb. 7:5, ‘they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, ... take tithes of the people.’ Westcott’s explanation is that the priests, who received from the Levites a tithe of the tithe, thus symbolically received the whole tithe. In the time of the second temple the priests did actually receive the tithes. In the Talmud (Yebhamoth 86a et passim) it is said that this alteration from the Mosaic Law was caused by the sin of the Levites, who were not eager to return to Jerusalem, but had to be persuaded to do so by Ezra (Ezra 8:15).) The Levites were to receive the tithes offered by Israel to Yahweh, because they had no other inheritance, and in return for their service of the tabernacle (Num. 18:21, 24). The tithe was to consist of corn of the threshing-floor and the fullness of the wine press (Num. 18:27), which coincides with seed of the land and fruit of the trees in Lev. 27. The Levites, who stood in the same relation to the priests as the people did to themselves, were to offer from this their inheritance a heave offering, a tithe of a tithe, to the priests (compare Neh. 10:39), and for this tithe they were to choose of the best part of what they received. (3) In Deut. 12:5, 6, 11, 18 (compare Amos 4:4) it is said that the tithe is to be brought "unto the place which Yahweh your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there," i.e. to Jerusalem; and in Deut. 12:7, 12, 18, that the tithe should be used there as a sacred meal by the offerer and his household, including the Levite within his gates. Nothing is said here about tithing cattle, only grain, wine and oil being mentioned (compare Neh. 10:36–38; 13:5, 12). In Deut. 14:22–29 it is laid down that if the way was too long to carry the tithe to Jerusalem it could be exchanged for money, and the money taken there instead, where it was to be spent in anything the owner chose; and whatever was bought was to be eaten by him and his household and the Levites at Jerusalem. In the third year the tithe was to be reserved and eaten at home by the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. In Deut. 26:12–15 it is laid down that in the 3rd year, after this feast had been given, the landowner should go up himself before the Lord his God, i.e. to Jerusalem, and ask God’s blessing on his deed. (According to the Mishna, Sotah 9:10; Ma’aser Shenai 5 65, the high priest Johanan abolished this custom.) In this passage this 3rd year is called "the year of tithing."
There is thus an obvious apparent discrepancy between the legislation in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. It is harmonized in Jewish tradition, not only theoretically but in practice, by considering the tithes as three different tithes, which are named the First Tithe, the Second Tithe, and the Poor Tithe, which is called also the Third Tithe (Pe’ah, Ma’aseroth, Ma’ser Shenit, Dema’i, Ro’sh ha-shanah; compare Tobit 1:7, 8; Ant, IV, iv, 3; viii, 8; viii, 22). According to this explanation, after the tithe (the First Tithe) was given to the Levites (of which they had to give the tithe to the priests), a Second Tithe of the remaining nine-tenths had to be set apart and consumed in Jerusalem. Those who lived far from Jerusalem could change this Second Tithe into money with the addition of a 5th part of its value. Only food, drink or ointment could be bought for the money (Ma’aser Shenit 21; compare Deut. 14:26). The tithe of cattle belonged to the Second Tithe, and was to be used for the feast in Jerusalem (Zebbachim 5 8). In the 3rd year the Second Tithe was to be given entirely to the Levites and the poor. But according to Josephus (Ant., IV, viii, 22) the "Poor Tithe" was actually a third one. The priests and the Levites, if landowners, were also obliged to give the Poor Tithe (Pe’ah 1 6).

The explanation given by many critics, that the discrepancy between Deuteronomy and Leviticus is due to the fact that these are different layers of legislation, and that the Levitical tithe is a post-exilic creation of the Priestly Code, is not wholly satisfactory, for the following reasons: (1) The allusion in Deut. 18:1, 2 seems to refer to the Levitical tithe. (2) There is no relation between the laws of Num. 18 and post-exilic conditions, when the priests were numerous and the Levites a handful. (3) A community so poor and disaffected as that of Ezra's time would have refused to submit to a new and oppressive tithe burden. (4) The division into priests and Levites cannot have been of the recent origin that is alleged.

W. R. Smith and others suggest that the tithe is simply a later form of the first-fruits, but this is difficult to accept, since the first-fruits were given to the priest, while the tithes were not. The whole subject is involved in considerable obscurity, which with our present information cannot easily be cleared away.

The Talmudic law of tithing extends the Mosaic Law, with most burdensome minuteness, even to the smallest products of the soil. Of these, according to some, not only the seeds, but, in certain cases, even the leaves and stalks had to be tithed (Ma’aseroth 4 5), "mint, anise, and cummin" (Dema’i 11 1; compare Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42). The general principle was that "everything that is eaten, that is watched over, and that grows out of the earth" must be tithed (Ma’aseroth 1 1).

Considering the many taxes, religious and secular, that the Jews had to pay, especially in post-exilic times, we cannot but admire the liberality and resourcefulness of the Jewish people. Only in the years just after the return from exile do we hear that the taxes were only partially paid (Neh. 13:10; compare Mal. 1:7ff; and for pre-exilic times compare 2 Chr. 31:4ff). In later times such cases seldom occur (Sotah 48a), which is the more surprising since the priests, who benefited so much by these laws of the scribes, were the adversaries of the latter.

— Paul Levertovf

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1Orr, J. ( ). The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (electronic ed.). ☼ ☼ ☼
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Approx. Date</th>
<th>School</th>
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<td>Moses</td>
<td>Mosaic Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>450 BC to 150 BC</td>
<td>Soferim (Sofer: Scribe)</td>
<td>A Sofer can disagree with a Sofer but not with the Law of Moses.</td>
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<td>Ezra and his disciples</td>
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<td></td>
<td>developed principles of</td>
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<td>150 BC to 200 AD</td>
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<td>A Tanna can disagree with a Tanna but not with a Sofer.</td>
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PHARISEES (Heb. פַּרְוִים, Perushim), a Jewish religious and political party or sect during the Second Temple period which emerged as a distinct group shortly after the Hasmonean revolt, about 165–160 B.C.E. They were probably successors of the Hasideans (or Hasidim), an earlier Jewish sect which promoted the observance of Jewish ritual and the study of the Torah. The Pharisees considered themselves the traditional followers of Ezra, whom they cherished, after Moses, as the founder of Judaism, maintaining the validity of the Oral Law as well as of the Torah as the source of their religion. They tried to adapt old codes to new conditions, believed in a combination of free will and predestination, in the resurrection of the dead, and in recompense for this life in the next. At first relatively small in number, the Pharisees came to represent, by the first century C.E., the religious beliefs, practices, and social attitudes of the vast majority of the Jewish people. They attempted to imbue the masses with a spirit of holiness, based on a scrupulous observance of the Torah, by spreading traditional religious teaching. So greatly did the religious values prevail over political in the Pharisaic framework that, in contrast to the Zealots, they were willing to submit to foreign domination—so long as it did not interfere with their inner way of life—rather than support an impious government of their own.

Origin of the Name

The meaning of the word "Pharisee" is uncertain. It is generally believed that the name derives from a Hebrew stem, parash ("to be separated") hence "Pharisee" would mean "the separated ones" or the "separatists" (cf. Kid. 66a where this meaning is clearly implied). According to some scholars, "Pharisee" would mean "those who are set apart," i.e., avoiding contact with others for reasons of ritual purity, or those who "separated themselves" from the heathens (Gal. 2:12ff.) and from the heathenizing tendencies and forces in their own nations, such as the Sadducees.

History of the Pharisees

The Pharisees' first bid for power was made in a period two centuries after the Babylonian exile during the struggle to remove the Temple and religious control from the sole leadership of the aristocratic Sadducees. The inception of the synagogue worship traced to this time is seen as an attempt by the Pharisees to undermine the privileged authority exercised by the Sadducees. Ceremonies originally part of the Temple cult were carried over to the home, and learned men of non-priestly descent began to play an important role in national religious affairs. While the priesthood exhausted itself in the round of Temple ritual, the Pharisees found their main function in teaching and interpreting the Law of God.

By the time of the Hasmonean revolt, it had become evident that the Pharasaic theological doctrines were giving utterance to the hopes of the oppressed masses and affecting the entire life of the Jews. This hope was especially seen in doctrines which included belief in the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, reward and retribution in the life after death, the coming of the Messiah, and the existence of angels, and also divine foreknowledge along with man's free choice of, and therefore responsibility for, his deeds. These beliefs touched on the theological foundations of life.

Concept of God

Based on the sayings of the prophets, the Pharisees conceived of God as an omnipotent spiritual Being, all-wise, all-knowing, all-just, and all-merciful. They taught that God loved all His creatures and asked man to walk in His ways, to act justly, and to love kindness. Though all-knowing and omnipotent, God endowed man with the power to choose between good and evil. He created in him two impulses, a good one and a bad, advised him to do good, and gave him the Torah as a guide. Since God was transcendent, He could not be comprehended in anthropomorphic terms, nor could His totality of being be designated with a name. Several terms were used merely to describe some attributes of God. The Pharisees spoke of God as "The Creator of the World" (Bore Olam), "the Place" (Ha-Makom), "the Divine Presence" (Shekinah), and so forth.
Free Will and Divine Retribution

In opposition to the Sadducean belief that God took little cognizance of and little interest in human affairs, the Pharisees held that everything in the world was ordained by God, but that man had it in his power to choose between good and evil. Although “fate does not cooperate in every action,” and although God could determine man's choice of conduct, He left the choice open to man himself. In talmudic reports the followers of the Pharisees declare, "Everything is in the hands of God but the fear of God" (Ber. 33b), and although "everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given" (Avot 3:16). As the Talmud puts it, "If man chooses to do good the heavenly powers help him. If he chooses to do evil, they leave the way open to him" (Shab. 104a). This belief in man's responsibility for his actions led to the Pharisaic doctrine of divine retribution. For the Pharisees, man would be rewarded or punished in the next life according to his conduct. This belief in divine retribution also rests on the more basic idea that man's existence is not limited to this life alone.

Resurrection

According to the Talmud and the New Testament, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead. This belief in another world makes possible the belief in divine justice in the face of apparent injustices on earth. Ideas of immortality and resurrection are generally attributed to Greek or Persian origins, yet to the Pharisees it was a genuine Jewish belief based on passages in the Torah.

Place of the Torah

For the Pharisees, the Torah God gave to Moses consisted of the Written and the Oral Law, and both were truth. The divine revelations in the first five books of Moses were supplemented and explained by the prophets and the unwritten tradition, and were intended to guide men in the right way of life. The Torah, they felt, was the center of their teachings and sufficient for all men and all times. Their view of the law was that its commandments were to be interpreted in conformity with the standard and interpretation of the rabbis of each generation, and to be made to harmonize with advanced ideas. Therefore, when a precept was outgrown, it was to be given a more acceptable meaning, so that it would harmonize with the truth resulting from God-given reason. The law must be understood according to the interpretation of the teachers who are endowed with God-given reason to do so. When the letter of the law seemed to oppose conscience, it was to be taken, accordingly, in its spirit. The Mosaic law of "an eye for an eye," for instance, was interpreted to refer to monetary compensation and not retaliation. The Pharisees generated a ramified system of hermeneutics and found no great difficulty in harmonizing Torah teachings with their advanced ideas, or in finding their ideas implied or hinted at in the words of the Torah. It was due to this progressive tendency, therefore, that the Pharisaic interpretation of Judaism continued to develop and remain a vital force in Jewry.

For discussion of the evolution of the Oral Law and its relation to the Torah, see Oral Law and Talmud.

Synagogue Worship

The Pharisees believed that since God was everywhere. He could be worshiped both in and outside the Temple, and was not to be invoked by sacrifices alone. They thus fostered the synagogue as a place of worship, study, and prayer, and raised it to a central and important place in the life of the people which rivaled the Temple.

Relation to the New Testament

While the Pharisees, as a whole, set a high ethical standard for themselves, not all lived up to it. It is mistakenly held that New Testament references to them as "hypocrites" or "offspring of vipers" (Matt. 3:7; Luke 18:9ff., etc.) are applicable to the entire group. However, the leaders were well aware of the presence of the insincere among their numbers, described by the Pharisees themselves in the Talmud as "sore spots" or "plagues of the Pharisaic party" (Sot. 3:4 and 22b). The apostle Paul himself had been a Pharisee, was a son of a Pharisee, and was taught by one of the sect's most eminent scholars, Gamaliel of Jerusalem. Pharisaic doctrines have more in common with those of Christianity than is supposed, having prepared the ground for Christianity with such concepts as Messianism, the popularization of monotheism and apocalypticism, and with such beliefs as life after death, resurrection of the dead, immortality, and angels.

The active period of Pharisaism extended well into the second century C.E. and was most influential in the development of Orthodox Judaism. The Pharisees were deeply earnest in the religion of their forefathers, represented the most stable elements in their religion, and were most instrumental in preserving and transmitting Judaism. Unlike the Zealots, they rejected the appeal to force and violence, believing that God was in control of history and that every true Jew should live in accordance with the Torah. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Pharisees devoted much of their efforts to education. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., it was the synagogues and the schools of the Pharisees that continued to function and to promote Judaism.

SADDUCEES (Heb. סדוקים, Zedukim), sect of the latter half of the Second Temple period, formed about 200 B.C.E. Active in political and economic life, the Sadducean party was composed largely of the wealthier elements of the population—priests, merchants, and aristocrats. They dominated the Temple worship and its rites and many of them were members of the Sanhedrin (the supreme Jewish council and tribunal of the Second Temple period.)

Origin of the Name
According to a talmudic tradition (ARN150), the name derives from Zadok, a disciple of Antigonus of Sokho who, misunderstanding his teacher's maxim, denied afterlife and resurrection and formed a sect in accordance with those views (see Boethusians). The most probable explanation of the name, however, is that it is derived from Zadok, the high priest in the days of David (II Sam. 8:17 and 15:24) and Solomon (cf. I Kings 1:34ff. and I Chron. 12:29). Ezekiel (40:46, 43:19 and 44:10–15) selected this family as worthy of being entrusted with the control of the Temple. Descendants of this family constituted the Temple hierarchy down to the second century B.C.E., though not all priests were Sadducees. Hence the name "Sadducees" may best be taken to mean anyone who is a sympathizer with the Zadokites, the priestly descendants of Zadok. In the talmudic literature, the designations Boethusians and Sadducees are used interchangeably to designate the same party or sect. Some scholars believe, however, that the Boethusians were a branch of the Sadducees, deriving their name from their leader Boethus. (See L. Ginzberg, in: JE, 3 (1902), 284–5, and Schuerer, Gesch, 2 (19076), 478–9.)

Beliefs and Doctrines
The Sadducees were the conservative priestly group, holding to the older doctrines, and cherishing the highest regard for the sacrificial cult of the Temple. The party was opposed to the Pharisees down to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The main difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerned their attitudes toward the Torah. The supremacy of the Torah was acknowledged by both parties. However, the Pharisees assigned to the Oral Law a place of authority side by side with the written Torah, and determined its interpretation accordingly, whereas the Sadducees refused to accept any precept as binding unless it was based directly on the Torah. The theological struggle between the two parties, as J. Z. Lauterbach puts it (Rabbinic Essays, 23–162), was actually a struggle between two concepts of God. The Sadducees sought to bring God down to man. Their God was anthropomorphic and the worship offered him was like hommage paid a human king or ruler. The Pharisees, on the other hand, sought to raise man to divine heights and to bring him nearer to a spiritual and transcendent God.

The Sadducees therefore rejected the Pharisaic supernatural beliefs, claiming that they had no basis in Mosaic Law. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the body (Matt. 22:23; Mark 22:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8), denied the immortality of the soul (Jos., Wars, 2:162ff. and Ant., 18:16), and rejected the Pharisaic doctrine regarding the existence of angels and ministering spirits (Acts 23:8). Because of the strict adherence to the letter of the law, the Sadducees acted severely in cases involving the death penalty. The Mosaic principle of Lex talionis, for instance (Ex. 21:24), was interpreted literally rather than construed as monetary compensation—the view adopted by the Pharisees. They were opposed to changes and innovations and refused to accept the oral traditions with which the Pharisees supplemented the Written Law. It was never a question of whether certain laws were derived from tradition, but whether those laws that were admittedly derived from tradition were obligatory. Apart from differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees as to the oral tradition and supernatural beliefs, there were numerous legal ritualistic details upon which these two parties differed, especially those connected with the Temple. On the whole, it can be said that while the Pharisees claimed the authority of piety and learning, the Sadducees claimed that of genealogy and position.

The rivalry between the Pharisees and the Sadducees was, in a sense, the renewal of a conflict between the prophets and priests of pre–Exilic times. Following the restoration of the Temple and its sacrificial cult, the priests were also restored to their former position as religious leaders. Priestly authority was, however, weakened by two factors: the rise of laymen and "scribes" who
possessed a knowledge of the law; and the advent of Greek rule—since among the Greeks themselves priests were the servants not the leaders of the community.

**Attitude Toward Prayer and Sacrifice**

Josephus and the *Talmud* say little about the Sadducean position on prayer, but the Sadducees would naturally not favor a religious service consisting of prayer and study alone, as would the Pharisees. This would tend to lessen the importance of the sacrificial cult and thereby weaken their own position as priests.

**Fate**

On the problem of human conduct and activities, the Sadducees seemed to have believed that God is not concerned with man's affairs. As Josephus puts it: "As for the Sadducees they take away fate and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal, but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we ourselves are the cause of what is good and receive what is evil from our own folly" (Ant., 13:173). Unfortunately no statement has survived from the Sadducean side on their beliefs and principles. There are controversial references in rabbinical literature with regard to the Sadducean interpretation of the law. The Sadducees have been represented as lax and worldly-minded aristocrats, primarily interested in maintaining their own privileged position, and favoring Greco-Roman culture.

**The Sadducees and the New Testament**

In the New Testament, John the Baptist jointly condemned the Pharisees and the Sadducees, calling them a "generation of vipers" and challenging them both to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:7ff.). In his denunciation of their doctrines, Jesus, too, grouped Sadducees and Pharisees together (Matt. 16:6ff.) and both parties were said to have posed questions designed to perplex Jesus (Matt. 15:1). According to Acts (4:1ff., 5:17), Peter and John were imprisoned by them. Since many Christian doctrines have more in common with those of the Pharisees than with those of the Sadducees, it is clear why the Apostolic Church, in the first years of its existence, had most to fear from the Sadducees (Acts 4 and 5).

Historically the Sadducees came under the influence of Hellenism and later were in good standing with the Roman rulers, though unpopular with the common people, from whom they kept aloof. The Sadducean hierarchy had its stronghold in the Temple, and it was only during the last two decades of the Temple's existence that the Pharisees finally gained control. Since the whole power and *raison d'être* of the Sadducees were bound up with the Temple cult, the group ceased to exist after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.

[Menahem Mansoor] *Encyclopedia Judaica, CD Rom Edition*
MALACHI
Theme / Application Chart

SCRIPTURE: Malachi 2:17–4:6

THEME: Israel’s attitude and relationship to God.

BIBLICAL APPLICATION: Israel is …

1) Cynical: Doubting God’s character and promises to dispense ultimate justice.

2) Apathetic: Turning from obeying God as evidenced by their lack of giving – a man’s commitment can be judged by his wallet.

3) Faithless majority: They thought it was a real burden and handicap to be God’s people.

4) Faithful remnant: Responded and despite all outward appearances chose to trust God’s character. This caused them to obey in all areas including giving of their money.

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Has the world gotten to you? Do you sometimes feel cynical, apathetic and have no faith in God? Write down how your situation is tempting you to feel today – 1) cynical 2) apathetic 3) doubting God.

PLAN OF ACTION:

Write down something that you could do to follow the example of the faithful remnant. Their cure was to encourage each other in 3:16. Perhaps you could talk to a trusted friend about your cynicism or apathy or doubts and let God encourage you through them. (Heb. 3:12-13 & Heb. 10:25). In 3:16 they also thought upon His name. They meditated on God’s character – perhaps you could read through the Psalms and meditate on what you learn about God’s character.