

1. **Introduction: Change as a Constant Challenge**

1. **Story** of major change in our life - The birth of our twins
2. **Main Idea** - Change comes about as new thoughts or emotions charge ideas to change or reinforce changed behavior. - John Kotter *Heart of Change Field Guide*
3. **Concept:** For the last prophet to the fledgling nation of Israel, his warning to the priests results in a forerunner to Christ who fulfills his priestly calling in a most unexpected way.
  1. **Text:** Malachi 4:1-6
  2. Outline of Malachi (Hebrew for “My Messenger”)
  3. NASB outline of Malachi -
    1. God’s Covenant Love for Israel (1:1-5)
    2. Israel’s Unfaithfulness (1:6-2:16)
      1. The Unfaithfulness of the Priests (1:6-2:9)
      2. The Unfaithfulness of the People (2:10-16)
    3. The Lord’s Coming (2:17-4:6)
4. **Story in Focus:** Malachi 2:4-7 - a reference to a story of change in the history of Israel
  1. After the story of Balaam & just before they cross the Jordan, the Lord sends a plague on the people because of Midianite Idolatry & intermarriage.
  2. Phinehas is rewarded for his zeal for the Tent of Meeting - Numbers 25:1-15 & Patriarchs & Prophets Chapter 41 - Apostasy at the Jordan
    1. **Quote** - “At Balaam's suggestion, a grand festival in honor of their gods was appointed by the king of Moab, and it was secretly arranged that Balaam should induce the Israelites to attend. He was regarded by them as a prophet of God, and hence had little difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Great numbers of the people joined him in witnessing the festivities...When Moses was aroused to perceive the evil, the plots of their enemies had been so successful that not only were the Israelites participating in the licentious worship

at Mount Peor, but the heathen rites were coming to be observed in the camp of Israel. The aged leader was filled with indignation, and the wrath of God was kindled...A terrible pestilence broke out in the camp, to which tens of thousands speedily fell a prey. God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God's abhorrence of their sin and the terror of His wrath against them. All felt that the punishment was just, and the people hastened to the tabernacle, and with tears and deep humiliation confessed their sin...While they were thus weeping before God, at the door of the tabernacle, while the plague was still doing its work of death, and the magistrates were executing their terrible commission, Zimri, one of the nobles of Israel, came boldly into the camp, accompanied by a Midianitish harlot, a princess “of a chief house in Midian,” whom he escorted to his tent. Never was vice bolder or more stubborn. Inflamed with wine, Zimri declared his “sin as Sodom,” and gloried in his shame. The priests and leaders had prostrated themselves in grief and humiliation, weeping “between the porch and the altar,” and entreating the Lord to spare His people, and give not His heritage to reproach, when this prince in Israel flaunted his sin in the sight of the congregation, as if to defy the vengeance of God and mock the judges of the nation. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, rose up from among the congregation, and seizing a javelin, “he went after the man of Israel into the tent,” and slew them both. Thus the plague was stayed, while the priest who had executed the divine judgment was honored before all Israel, and the priesthood was

confirmed to him and to his house forever.” -  
Patriarchs & Prophets pg. 453-456

3. **Key Text:** ““Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts. “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. “He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.”
4. (Malachi 3:1–3 NAS95)
5. Malachi was foretelling a messenger who would show the same zeal for God as Elijah, and Phinehas and when Zecharias was prophesying - Luke 1:76 is a quote from malachi 3:1
  1. ““And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”” (Luke 1:76–79 NAS95)
6. **Concept:** But in between Malachi and the gospels, we have information that helps us understand the times in which John and Christ were born into.
  1. - Timeline of the Silent Years
    1. Alexander the Great is generally tolerant of localized religions - Brief History
    2. 323 BC - Alexander the Great dies leaving the world in chaos described in Daniel 7’s vision of the Leopard having four heads
      1. North @ Damascus - Seleucid Dynasty
      2. Judea in the DMZ between opposing dynasties
      3. South @ Alexandria - Ptolemaic Dynasty
      4. East @ Pergamum - Attalid dynasty - Lysimachus
      5. West @ Macedonia - Antigonid Dynasty
2. **Concept:** Ezra & the scribes: Compilation of the OT
  1. Pseudopigrapha
  2. Apocrypha
  3. Deuterocanon
  4. Ethiopian Canon
  5. Talmud - Teachings of the Rabbis in two parts: Mishnah and Gemara
3. Political Strife and Change
  1. Formation of the Sanhedrin -
4. Emergence of sects within Judaism
  1. Tax Collectors - Matthew Levi, Zaccheus
  2. Essenes - Aesthetics who prepared Qumran and dead sea scrolls
  3. Pharisees - Favored Davidic Kingdom & Aaronic Priesthood
  4. Sadducees - Aligned with Hasmoneans and rejected resurrection
7. John’s ministry of baptism and calls for repentance were recounted in all gospels
  1. “Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. “His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to

gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

2. So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.” (Luke 3:15–18 NAS95)
8. John’s message is an Adventist Message and is a burden for us to carry to the world. If we raise the expectations of the second coming, the Holy Spirit will aid our ministry just like Phinehas, Malachi, John the Baptist, and ultimately Jesus.
9. **Concept:** Jesus referred to conversion as a new birth.
  1. He surprises a pharisee on the Sanhedrin council.
  2. **Text:** “For God expressed His love for the world in this way: He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not face everlasting destruction, but will have everlasting life. Here’s the point. God didn’t send His Son into the world to judge it; instead, He is here to rescue a world headed toward certain destruction. John 3:16-17 Voice Translation
  1. **Commentary:** “God came to earth embodied in flesh, and then He reached His greatest acclaim through a torturous death. If this is all true, then believers will find strength and beauty in places never imagined. Abiding in Jesus the Anointed is the good life, regardless of external circumstances.”

10. **Appeal Poem:** “I See Myself”

One day I looked at myself,  
At the self that Christ can see;  
I saw the person I am today  
And the one I ought to be.

I saw how little I really pray,  
How little I really do;  
I saw the influence of my life—  
How little of it was true!

I saw the bundle of faults and fears  
I ought to lay on the shelf;

I had given a little bit to God,  
But I hadn’t given myself.

I came from seeing myself,  
With the mind made up to be  
The sort of person that Christ can use  
With a heart He may always see.  
—Selected

1. Source: Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers. Garland TX: Bible Communications.