12 - MALACHI AND MODERN TIMES – MAR 1997 ELM

Article by Brian H. Butler B.A., D.O., F.A.S.K.

Class of '64 Graduate & former Faculty Member of Ambassador College, England.

These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

The book of Malachi, which means "messenger" was undoubtedly written by Ezra who, under the direct inspiration of God and Jesus Christ, canonized the whole of the Old Testament. The result of Ezra's work was recognized as being the inspired Word of God by all Jewry. The Old Testament, the Tanak as they called it, was also validated by Jesus Christ who quoted liberally from many of the books it contains as being the Words of God to mankind.

The Apostle John, who canonized the New Testament at the end of the 1st Century wrote the last book in the Bible, Revelation, under the direct inspiration of Jesus Christ. Revelation is a compilation that contains quotations from many of the Old Testament books.

The book of Malachi is the "wrap-up" of the Minor Prophets, and indeed the Old Testament, finishing up with God giving a ferocious condemnation of the 12 tribes of Israel's religious leaders at the time it was written in the 6th Century B.C.

Malachi's clear prophetic message is also directed to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, wherever they are scattered in the world; to the Jews in particular (in the country of Israel and elsewhere in the world); and also to include 'religious' Gentiles, prophesying that similar problems between human beings of all origins and God were going to still be serious issues right up to "the time of the end".

Much of this book, written hundreds of years before Christ was on this earth, is taken up with "Israel", the priests and religious leaders of the time actually arguing with God, consistently just not getting the point that God is making to them at all, in fact to an amazing degree, again and again and again.

The religious leaders around 430 B.C., just could not seem to understand why the blessings that God had promised had not eventuated. They could see nothing wrong with their behaviour at all. So God explains it clearly at each and every juncture. They still do not get it. This refusal to listen to what God is saying to human beings is a pandemic problem today in our era some 2500 years later. In our modern world, 'people' just cannot 'get it' either, that it is **their** behaviour, **their** rejection of God, **their** disobedience of His laws that is producing all the results humans do **not** want.

Instead, just like their forebears, they blame God for all the problems that exist, like failing crops, wars, natural disasters, human cruelty, diseases, and so on. People can be heard in this era asking all the time, "How can there be a God of Love that allows all these terrible events to occur on this world of ours?" They are ignorant of God's Word, the Holy Bible, and that His promises for blessings including peace and plenty for all are **conditional** on humans respecting God's wishes concerning our lifelong conduct.

Humans have even invented, no doubt with some dubious 'spiritual' help, to devise a well known popular notion that there is indeed such a thing as **"unconditional love"** when there is decidedly NO such thing taught in the Bible. God's love and blessings have always been **conditional** on a proper response from His children. Obedience and respect for our Creator, Sustainer, Designer, Saviour, and Redeemer and His guiding principles for our lives on this earth are required.

We have 'free will' and we have choice, **and** we are forced to make the right choice if we want the right results in our lives. This fact is not popular with religious (or irreligious) people who think that they can ignore all God's teachings for Godly human behaviour, AND still get all the blessings.

The writings we call the book of Malachi complete the twelve Minor Prophets. Seven, Hosea to Nahum were written in the Assyrian Period, the next two Habakkuk and Zephaniah were written in the Neo-Babylonian era, and the last three Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were written in the Chaldean or Persian era of King Cyrus.

All the twelve sections of this one book contain information about the chronology of the time period, about people, events, geographical, and political factors that existed when they were written. They also contain information about those factors which are prophesied to occur again in our era and the years to come, called the 'end time' or the 'consummation of the age' that is ahead of us now.

The events in the Minor Prophets that are prophesied to take place in our modern times, will be centred around Jerusalem and the Middle East, and will affect the lives of the population of the entire world.

The Temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar on a specific day, the 10th of Ab, then in 70 A.D., Herod's Temple was destroyed by the Romans on exactly the same day of the year. The Minor Prophets are speaking of a new Temple that will be built in the years just ahead of us now on the Mount of Olives, possibly in the month we call December, and the resumption of sacrifices that will happen when it is built.

There was a first Elijah. Then Jesus Christ referred to John the Baptist as "Elijah" so he was the 'second' Elijah. Matthew 11:10 For this is he, of whom it is written, (In Malachi 3:1) Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you: Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

John. 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. but Jesus also spoke of an "Elijah to come".

Matthew 17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

But Jesus was also talking about an 'Elijah' coming in the 'last days'.

Malachi – 423 – 430 B.C. centre is Jerusalem, the Elijah to come –the two anointed ones, a great disappointment at no blessings, consider YOUR ways – Haggai and Zechariah were 60 yrs before Malachi, they were talking about a future Temple, Joshua, Zerubabbel, etc.,

But John the Baptist did not restore all things before he was murdered, but the 'Elijah' to come at 'the time of the end' will be instrumental in the times of 'restoration of all things', which will be made perfect at Christ's coming.

The religious people reckoned they had done the job required of them by God, but God said they had not, and that they were still unclean, and were offering inappropriate unclean sacrifices, and robbing God of tithes for the Temple, charging money for doing everything,

Zechariah said that sin would be taken away in "one day" and that one day is yet future, when Christ returns.

The first chapter of the book of Ezra, King Cyrus who had the Jews captive is given a commission by God who calls him "His shepherd".

Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Cyrus gave the Jews money, jewellery, the trappings of the Temple which Nebuchadnezzar had removed, and instructed the people to give wealth and animals to the Jews as well, and sent them on their way.

Isa 44: 21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. 22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. This forgiveness and blessings from God were what the Jews expected, yes, but did not get them then because of their lack of respect and obedience to God. This is a prophecy for the 'end time'. Notice the verb tense, O Israel you **shall** not be forgotten, not **are**!

But when they return, Malachi goes on to say they were expecting much and getting little in the way of blessings because they had not fulfilled the commission God gave them to build the Temple.

B Side

What was happening 70 years after Haggai, and Zechariah was explaining what Haggai meant.

Malachi came along, and they were still grumbling not having got the blessings they were looking for, and thought they should be getting, but

Jews still had not built the Temple properly. So God thunders: "Consider **your** ways, not mine."

There is to be a future Temple built in Jerusalem, the corner stone will be laid on 24th day of the 9th Month Keslef, some time in December, which year of course we do not know. This New Temple will be started, the same day over two thousand years later than the one they had been told to build and had not done properly.

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The priests of Malachi's time were indulging in sarcastic argument and responses to God! The same problem exists today.

In 3-2 B.C. when Christ was born, Matthew reports that the wise men were led to the place by a Star, but there was not just a Star, but there was also an amazing celestial display of immense proportions that announced the arrival of our Creator to this Earth. Two or three generations had passed to the time Matthew wrote his Gospel in around , and much of the information about the celestial events of from 3-2 B.C. which had been passed down from one generation to another had been lost.

Now we are living in the time when "knowledge shall be increased", and with modern technology and computers, today's astronomers and scientists can wind back the celestial clock, and show exactly where the planets and the patterns in the sky were in 3-2 B.C. Even secular astronomers are astonished at the spectacular nature of the heavenly display that occurred at the time of Christ's birth.

Malachi 1:1 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

2 I have loved you, saith the Lord.

Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? What an attitude!

Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated (or loved less) Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

The land of Edom had been laid waste.

4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places;

Oh really?

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them (Edom), The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.

Border of Israel and Edom were adjacent, and the time is coming when you will see one side will be desolation, and the other the Israel side, beauty.

6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. Everyone knew that one's earthly father was to be respected, as the first commandment with promise states, and also that servants knew only too well to honour those who employed them; but far from honouring their Father and "boss", they actually despised (disdained, looked down on) His name. And they still had the effrontery to say:

1:6 And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Now God centres in on the leaders, the religious leaders then and now!

God replies: 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar;

And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible.

In saying the table of the Lord was 'contemptible', the priests were complaining that they were not paid enough for their work, and that their portion of the sacrifice was also 'contemptible'.

8 (God says:) if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; (boss) will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.

All sacrificial animals had to be perfect. Try offering the lame and the sick to your earthly boss as a gift, do you think he would like that? And see how he feels about you if you do! 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? (just because you are priests) saith the Lord of hosts.10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

The greedy avaricious priests and religious leaders had been charging fees for doing everything they should have been doing as part of their duties. The Pharisees and the Sadducees really did nothing drastic towards Jesus until He threw the money changers out of the Temple, and affected their incomes and their finances! The they got really cross!!

11 (God says:) For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

The heathen Gentiles nations have more respect for Me than My chosen people Israel that He had married, and with whom He had a very special Holy relationship which they had profaned,

Profaned is a very strong word! It means: abusive, blasphemous, coarse, crude, filthy, foul, obscene, vulgar, to commit sacrilege, contaminate, debase, defile, desecrate, misuse, pervert, pollute, prostitute, or violate.

But they still have the nerve to argue with God!!

12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

Why have you worried about it God?

13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

The priests were sick and tired of their job as being tiresome, and snuffed (or sniffed in disdain) at their work.

14 But cursed be the deceiver (lying to God!), which hath in his flock a male (but said he didn't), and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful (highly respected) among the heathen.

I deserve to be respected and you are not respecting Me!

Malachi 2:1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. 2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings (your unclean tithes): yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

Here God is directly addressing the priests, he is talking about tithes, and by reference anyone claiming to be a God's minister! And to any ministers behaving like this now!

3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung (taken from the entrails of the polluted sacrifices) upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; (their pagan unholy practices disguised as "Godly", just like today's Xmas, Easter, etc.,) and one shall take you away with it. (To the dung heap outside the Temple!)

Then God explains what the attitude and the conduct of His priestly nation should be, and what they should be doing:

4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.6 The law of truth was in his (Levi's) mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger (Malachi) of the Lord of hosts.

8 But ye (priests) are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

The Jews of this era learn and perform abominable practices written in their version of a holy book called the Babylonian Talmud which recommends

and sanctions dreadful things like sex with children. Many of them know the truth but they will not teach it.

The so-called Christian churches of churchianity now openly flaunt their rebellion against God's law in knowing that many of their priests and bishops are practicing homosexuals and paedophiles; other denominations have 'gay' ministers who perform same-sex marriages and other foster other abominations like 'gay pride' marches.

Isaiah 3:9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

Homosexuals use facial expressions that 'witness against them', and not only declare their sin, but literally take pride in it.

9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

'I also made you', or more accurately 'will have made you' when this prophecy has its latter fulfillment.

Not only Levi, but Judah and Israel, which was appointed to be a 'holy nation, a priesthood', had also misled the people, as religious people do today. They revealed themselves to be mercenary (even stealing tithes) in mind, who were 'partial in the Law' ignoring parts that did not suit their purposes, overlaying their own interpretations, and ignoring those parts they did not want to deal with,

10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

Many Jews, read Nehemiah, had married outside the boundaries of their own kith and kin, and in marrying idolators, had departed from the Living God and descended into vile and abominable practices, leaving the wives they had divorced destitute. This still happens with some Jews. Today's priests and ministers of all denominations sanction divorce, allow same sex 'marriages', tolerate homosexuality, and pagan rites among their colleagues and in their church congregations making a mockery of God's original intentions for the institution of marriage.

12 The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles (synagogues and churches) of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

Both the 'masters' (ministers) who teach these things, and the 'scholars' (congregations) that follow their teachings will be 'cut off', and lose the protection of the Almighty.

13 And this have ye done again, (your divorced wives) are covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

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4 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

'Cut off', why? They are still questioning and arguing their case with God! Amazing!!

15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Why are man and wife one? To produce a godly seed, children who would be brought up in the true type of marriage planned by God, where they were bought up by the joint care of both parents who were living in a loving relationship, and trained in Godly ways in harmonious agreement.

So these Levites and Jews having treacherously dumped their wives having succumbed to the wiles of a newer model who was both godless and pagan, there was little or no chance that the children would be brought up in a truly God-respecting and loving environment. The whole of God's plan for marriage was thwarted.

16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away (divorce): for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

God hates divorce, divorce might be needed on some rare occasions, but just because...? No!

17 Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.

Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? They will not quit!!

When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment? (God is dead! Or far off.)

And those that call evil good, and good 'evil', which many profane and ignorant people do.

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will (future) send my messenger (My 'Malachi' or My 'Elijah', or my Zerubbabel), and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, (Jesus Christ) whom ye seek, shall (future) suddenly come to his Temple (which will have been built in Jerusalem), even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall (future) come, saith the Lord of hosts.

John the Baptist was there to proclaim the coming of the Lord. Another will come to proclaim the second coming too.

2 But who may abide **the day of his coming**? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

When? This is about the "Day of the Lord", the second advent of Christ. And what will follow, is the change of heart among the Levites, the Jews in Jerusalem.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. 'Jews' of all types are prone to point to anti-semitism as the cause of all their problems, still failing to see that all that befalls their race is entirely due to God allowing punishments for their rebellious ways. Also to be clear, the Israelis killing of Arabs is also even worse anti-semitism, if thre can be such a thing, as many of them who are true Jews are 'sons of Abraham' and so of course are the Arab peoples through Ishmael!!

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

God's ways are not old-fashioned! He does not change.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me.

But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?

Still being disrespectful in the extreme.

God says: In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Who has robbed God, and in what way? He is talking to the priests, the Levites whose duty it was to make sure that the Temple stores were kept sacrosanct. Tithes were collected only for the benefit of maintaining the Temple, but they were not doing it. It is against the law in this era to ask for or receive tithes. Only Levites and Priests were allowed to receive tithes, and only for the purpose of maintaining the Temple, and there is of course no Temple at the moment.

1. The Levites were the only group of people authorized by Law to receive tithes from the people.

2. The Levites paid a tithe of the tithes they received for the running of the Temple to those Levites and priests who worked and served in the Temple.
3. Tithes were of crops and fruit from trees; and the tenth animal that 'passed under the rod', not the first, the tenth, so if someone only had nine cattle, they did not pay tithes.

4. The tithes collected were stored in storehouses adjacent to the Temple.

In our era now, there is no body of Levites to pay tithes to, and there is no Temple, so it is actually illegal, and a sin against God's law, for religious people of any denomination to ask for, or demand tithes from their adherents and congregations. Who wants to be in the shoes of ministers when the scales are removed from their eyes and say, I was not a minister, I was a farmer!

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

Verses 10-12 are typical of prophetic pronouncements, they had a present day relevance (i.e. in Malachi's time), AND a future relevance when the new Temple is built in Jerusalem in our era, whenever that happens.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord.

Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Still arguing!

14 Ye have said, (this past tense is actually prophetic future) it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

How many times have you heard people saying it is a waste of time being religious, and trying to worship a God that is allowing all the wickedness in the world?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

Don't they call it 'gay pride'? Are they not proud of their 'sexuality, and happy with themselves about it? They are not delivered yet, but deliverance is on its way, just before the second coming of Christ.

16 Then (When? After Christ has returned) they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and

that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (in His crown); and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Which the Jews, and religious people of all shades of belief have not done, and do not discern between those who are actually serving God and those who are not, because they are still blinded to their own arrogant disobedience.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

That is a fierce judgement onto Israel.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

Here is the conclusion.

4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Here again repeated is the promise of the "Elijah" to come. When?

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The children will be teaching the fathers at the end of the age, not the other way around.

If any part of the book of the Minor Prophets was written for the 'last generation' (and they all were) it surely was Malachi. Everything God is remonstrating with His people about in Malachi is occurring in our era.

So is once again demonstrated the saying that: History repeats itself. It surely does!

The appalling sins of God's chosen people, Jews, Israel, and ultimately all of the nations of the world continue unabated to this day, and will continue until the coming Messiah brings in a new era.

"Thy Kingdom come".