

## **The Burden of the Word of the Lord in Malachi**

(The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

### **Meeting 10**

It is very important for us to know God and not just to know doctrine, theology, man's interpretation of the Bible, or wonderful teachings. We do need the Bible, but just reading the Bible and books about it by itself is not enough for us to be perfected. We want to hear what the Spirit is speaking to us today. We need to have a heart that wants to know the living God and to experience Him. This is why the priesthood is so important – we do not want to just know the Bible, but to experience and live this wonderful Christ day by day. It is hard to explain, but if you know Him, you know Him. This is our desire: “Lord, we want to know You.” Paul had the same desire, *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”* (Phil. 3:10-11). All these points are not a matter of doctrine, but a matter of our experience of the Lord. We have heard many messages about our old man being crucified with Christ, yet our old man is still very much alive. We talk so much about the Spirit, but we are not living according to the Spirit. We have talked much about the building, the church life, and the Spirit but what is the result? What is the use of having so much knowledge and teaching? Aren't you tired of that? I am tired of that – I want the reality, the substance, the practice! I want to be a person who lives according to this wonderful life in me, to have an ear to hear the Anointing teaching me, not some teacher from somewhere. We need to be the true messengers. The letter kills, but it is only the Spirit, the Lord, who gives the reality of life (2 Cor. 3:6).

In the book of Malachi, as in the book of Revelation, God's speaking is short and straight to the point. He exposes our true condition. Just like the priests in Malachi, we often do not even know our real condition –

we think we are not doing badly. After so many years of being a Christian, are you happy and satisfied with your spiritual life? Probably not, because we still have much to learn, and God still has much work to do to refine us. Paul himself wrote: *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected..."* (Phil. 3:12). None of us is already perfected. Woe to you if you think that you are already perfected, that you are alright. We are not alright. I am not alright. But we all need to learn together and encourage one another in practicing the priesthood and bringing the offerings. In 2014, despite much opposition, we started to learn to offer spiritual sacrifices to the Father, and we have not perfected this priestly ministry. It is not an easy thing to do. But God the Father wants to have the true worshipers, who worship Him in spirit and with the reality of Christ as the offerings (John 4:23-24; 1 Pet. 2:5). This is how He wants us to worship Him. We have no other choice; it is up to Him. It is wonderful and encouraging to see the offerings of the saints! I am so thankful to the Father because of the real improvement! May the Father be satisfied!

God has much to do to refine us. Gold can be refined up to 99.5%. But God wants to build the heavenly Jerusalem with gold that is pure, crystal clear, and transparent. Have you ever seen transparent gold? That is very special gold! Would God be happy with gold that is refined up to 90%, 95%, or even 99.9%? No, that would not be good enough for God. Our God is perfect and knows what He is doing. He wants to fully bring us to glory. That is not an easy job. If we look at ourselves, are we glorious? No, only God is glorious. Is He happy being the only One who is glorious in this universe? No, that is why He sent His Son, the Captain of our salvation, to lead many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). He is not only saving us, justifying us, but He is sanctifying us and will glorify us (Rom. 8:30). He will not quit refining us. Our God is a perfectionist. He is perfection! He will not be satisfied until He finishes the job. That is why He is sitting there as a refiner (Mal. 3:3). It is not easy to just sit there for so long until the job is finished. He is not yet through with you and me. And if He cannot finish the work in this age, He will finish it in the next age. When do you want God to finish His job in you? In this age!

A refiner knows that the silver is fully refined when he can see his image clearly reflected in the silver. Then he knows that the work is done. God

will sit as a refiner of silver until He sees His reflection in you. When the Lord looks at you and me, what does He see? Does He see you or does He see Himself? He is the true refiner. He is not just an earthly refiner of silver. When we are fully conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God, when He looks at us and sees His own image in us, then His work is done. Do you have this concept? Ask the Lord: "Lord, do I look like You?" This is the refiner's work. It takes time for Him to change us because we are still rebellious; we run away and do not cooperate so well. It is hard for us to change. At times, I am disappointed when I look at myself and I ask the Lord, "Lord, how long is it going to take for You to change me?" and tell Him, "I want to change, to be transformed from glory to glory until the work is done, until You can see Your image reflected in me." This is the Lord's work today; this is what it means to be saved to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25), to be sanctified completely, and to have our whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 5:23). Paul really meant the words that he wrote. The dear apostles who went before us were not just talking about doctrine, but they had a desire to be fully transformed. But for us, it is a doctrine that we hear and then forget about. We do not take God's word seriously. And because the whole priesthood did not take God's word seriously and rebelled against God, they and the whole nation of Israel became corrupted.

Let us continue in Malachi 3. When we read Malachi, we may think the Lord's words are too harsh. But here, the Lord has a complaint against the priests, *"Your words have been harsh against Me..."* (Mal. 3:13a). How often do we complain against God? "Lord, why is this happening to me? I've cried out to You for so long, but You haven't heard me! Why are others doing so well, and I'm not? Why am I suffering when they are wrong, and I am right?" We utter many complaints against God. We should turn quickly instead of complaining. We say harsh words against Him because we do not know Him and because we misunderstand Him. Would you want God to give you so many things so that you would be just as corrupted as the people in the world? Do you want everything to go your way? The Lord knows what is good for us! We say, "We are being persecuted and people are laughing at us. We have so many problems and they have so many blessings! Look!" We complain and are not happy. *"Your words have been harsh against Me," says the LORD,*

'yet you say, "What have we spoken against You?"' (Mal. 3:13). We do not even realize how much we complain.

Then the Lord told them, *"You have said, 'It is useless to serve God...'"* (Mal. 3:14a). Many people start out being for Christ and the church. But after going through many problems and being kicked out, they end up being full of bitterness: "I gave my life to Christ and the church. Look what happened! Forget about the church!" There are also many who have been completely disappointed by the Catholic Church. And now they want nothing to do with the church or with God because they think that what they experienced before was the church, and that it was from God. So, they speak harsh words against God. But why not seek the truth instead? Why not seek the church that Christ loves?! Churches may talk about "oneness," but the real oneness that God desires is the oneness the Father had with the Son, and the Son with the Father. God's purpose is to bring us into that oneness, where He is in us, and we are in the Father and the Son; our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). That is the real oneness! Man-made "oneness" only causes division and when we see that, we get fed up and speak harsh words against God. But whose fault is that? It is our fault because we believe what men say and do not understand what real oneness is. We do not seek the true oneness that God desires. Don't blame God and speak harsh words against Him. *"You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free'"* (Mal. 3:14-15). They were looking at the situation and were asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

However, there was another group who feared the Lord: *"Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another"* (Mal. 3:16a), praise God! If you do not fear the Lord, you will use many harsh words to blame God and to say that His words and promises do not work. Today, there is so much division among God's people. Will you blame God for this and tell Him, "God, Your plan doesn't work"? Those are all idle words. The Lord said that we will be judged for every idle word which we speak (Matt. 12:36). How do we speak to each other? Do we criticize one another and the church? This is not how those who fear the Lord speak.

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They spoke to one another with a heart and a spirit which feared the Lord. *“And the Lord listened and heard them”* (Mal. 3:16b). We often do not have an ear to hear Him, but He listens to everything that comes out of our mouth. *“So a **book of remembrance** was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name”* (Mal 3:16c). This book is only referred to here in the last book of the Old Testament. Many know the Book of Life that is mentioned in the Bible. People say, “As long as my name is in the Book of Life, I will be okay.” Then, in Daniel 10:21, there is a Book of Truth in which God recorded everything that would and did happen. The book of Revelation contains truths about what will happen. Every word recorded in it will be fulfilled exactly as written. Here, in Malachi, there is a book of remembrance. When the Lord returns, you cannot tell Him, “Lord, I forgot.” He will help you remember by asking for the book with the record of everything you spoke. Everything will be recorded. Just like in the book of Esther, the king had a book that had everything recorded, especially the good things that had been done to the king. And one night, when he could not sleep, he commanded his servant to bring that book, and something good about Mordecai was read (Esther 6:1-3). There is a book of remembrance, a record. The Lord remembers what those who fear Him say. Remember that many books will also be opened before the great white throne, which is there to judge the unbelievers. Nobody will be able to escape. Everything is recorded.

But I am happy about the book of remembrance because the Lord will not forget what those who fear Him speak to one another. So, we must be careful about what we speak because somebody is recording! I love the book of Malachi because it warns us to be careful about what we say. The book of remembrance is for those who fear Him and for those who meditate on His name. The Lord already knows everything; He knows what we think about, even if we have not said anything with our mouth.

*“‘They shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘on the day that I make them My jewels’”* (Mal. 3:17a). This is what He says concerning those who fear Him and meditate on His name. His jewels are His special treasure. Have we not read that God wants His people to be His special

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treasure (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Ps. 135:4)? Do you not want to be His special treasure? We may just be a few, but a special treasure is very rare. Let us be those who are made His jewels – special and very rare. The Lord looked for beautiful pearls and paid everything for that one pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46). May the Lord open our eyes to see the truth and to see what God's word is saying. We have to know what He is seeking. He is not looking for something in the junkyard. He is looking for a real treasure. Look at His building in the heavenly New Jerusalem! Then the Lord said, *"And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him"* (Mal. 3:17b). We want to be His sons who serve Him as priests in His house, who are faithful, true and wise.

*"Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him"* (Mal. 3:18). Remember that at the end of Malachi 2, the people spoke harsh words against God and asked, *"Where is the God of justice?"* (Mal. 2:17b), "Look at them, they did so many unrighteous things but are having such a good time and are so blessed, and they have everything. What about me?" Do you wish you were like them? Just wait, because the end has not yet come! In the end, you will be happy that you are not like them, but you will only realize this at the end. In the end, they will end up in the lake of fire. In Luke 16:19-31, the Lord spoke about Lazarus, the poor beggar, and a certain unnamed rich man who lived in luxury. However, after both died, Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom, while the rich man was tormented in Hades. Which one would you prefer to be: the one who suffers in this lifetime like Lazarus, or the one who enjoys his life now but ends up being tormented in Hades like the rich man? The problem is that the rich man did not realize the consequences of his way of life until it was too late! We may think, "I believe in God and try to follow the ordinances and statutes of the law of Moses, so why am I suffering, while the rich man who does not care about the law and who does not even believe in God is enjoying life?" Which life would you prefer? Do not be like Esau, who sold his birthright just for a little bit of enjoyment. The Lord said, *"Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him"* (Mal. 3:18). We want to be those who serve God today, even if that means that we may suffer a little bit. Paul said that our suffering today cannot be compared with the

exceedingly great glory which will be given to us at His coming (Rom. 8:18).

The last chapter in Malachi is about the great and dreadful day of God's wrath – the second coming of the Lord. This day will come exactly when the sixth seal is opened (Rev. 6:12-17). Then the whole world will know that the great day of God's wrath has come, but it will be too late for them because there will be no place to hide. By His mercy, the Lord God has already told us what will happen. Believe it or not, it is up to you to decide what you will do. Don't say, "Lord, I didn't know..." No, it is written in God's word. You cannot give the excuse, "Lord, I thought I still had time..." There is absolutely no excuse. It is written in simple language at the very end of the Old Testament Scriptures.

*"For behold, the day is coming..."* (Mal. 4:1a). Today is the time to already see that the day is coming. You must see it now, not then on that day. Don't say, "Behold, the day is coming, but nobody knows when. I'm still young and have time to do the things I want. I have the energy. I want to live my life." If you think this, go ahead. When I was young, shooting a ball into a basket was really satisfying, but only for a little moment. Fleeting satisfaction is what the world has to offer. May the Lord really open our eyes. You must behold and see it now, clearly. Believe the word of God! *"God is not a man, that He would lie"* (Num. 23:19). His word will be fulfilled! "Behold" is a very strong word meaning "see, look, watch"! That day is really coming! The Old Testament prophets like Joel mentioned the day of the Lord very often. For us, if we obey God's word, that day will be a wonderful, joyful day – a wedding day. But for people who are not saved, it will be a dreadful day. Even for many of God's people, that day will be *"burning like an oven"* (Mal. 4:1b), like a furnace turned up to a very high temperature. *"And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble"* (Mal. 4:1c). Stubble burns very easily, so do not be proud before God. We must humble ourselves before the living God because He is God! *"And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts* (Mal. 4:1d). Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, that the Day of the Lord will come with fire to test the work of every man. So, it depends on how you build today and with which materials you are building: with gold, silver and precious stones, or with wood, hay and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12-

13). Paul must have read Malachi 4 because he spoke about the same materials. If you build with gold or silver, the more the fire will refine you; but if you build with stubble, you will be burned up. This is a big warning. This word does not come from just anyone but from the LORD of hosts. *"That will leave them neither root nor branch"* (Mal. 4:1e). Everything will be burned. Nothing will remain, everything will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10, 12) and rolled up (Heb. 1:10-12).

*"But to you who fear My name"* (Mal. 4:2a) – Malachi again mentions fearing the Lord. Remember these words. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"* (Psa. 111:10a; Prov. 9:10). *"But to you [the Levites, the priests, those who are faithful] who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings..."* (Mal. 4:2a). Do you like the rising of the sun in the morning or are you afraid it will burn you up? People love the sun in California. The sun is healthy for us and gives light. All plants and animals need the sun to exist. *"Let there be light"* (Gen. 1:3). Light is the first thing God created through His living word. The sunlight can heal you. Nobody can look directly at the sun; but if the atmosphere were clean (as it was in the beginning and as it was created by God), the rays of the sun, the sunlight, would be very healthy for us. This sun, the Sun of Righteousness, is like the Son of Man walking amid the golden lampstands with His face shining like the sun in its strength (Rev. 1:13, 16) to give light and healing rays. Plants and animals are bright and alive in the sunlight, and are asleep when it is dark. The sun is something wonderful. If you do something bad, you will want to hide. All those who are righteous are not afraid of light; they do not hide but walk in the light. The sun is called the Sun of Righteousness. The Lord said, *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"* (John 9:5) and *"He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life"* (John 8:12b). The first message that John received and declared to us was: *"...God is light and in Him is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5b). Do we love light? Then we must know God. If we walk with God, the first thing we will realize is that God is light. *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth"* (1 John 1:6) and we have no fellowship with God. If you want fellowship, it must be in His light and love.



*“And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves”* (Mal. 4:2b). Another version says you shall go out skipping or leaping like well-fed calves. You will be leaping like a young and healthy calf, full of energy and strength and well-fed. Are you well-fed with the food in God’s house, with the living word of God?

*““You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,’ says the LORD of hosts”* (Mal. 4:3). Rest assured that the day is coming. The wicked will not win. They will be under our feet. Just be patient. Meanwhile, skip and jump like well-fed calves. Practice in your prayers to slaughter the enemy left and right! Learn to use the sword of the Spirit!

*“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments”* (Mal. 4:4). This is why Leviticus is so important for us. Don’t say, “It is the Old Testament.” No, it contains God’s statutes! Is it not good for us to bring burnt, meal and peace offerings? The meal offering is food for you. How can anyone say that the peace offering only applies to the Old Testament days? Is it okay for us to quarrel and fight and argue today in the new covenant? No, we need peace today as well! We need the sin and the trespass offerings. We need the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, or do we have no trespasses? We need the power of His resurrection in the wave offering and must also sit with Him in the heavenlies through the heave offering. Today, we have the reality of all these offerings! So, every word of God in the statutes and judgments have an application in our Christian life today. Hebrews 3 and 4 speak about keeping the real Sabbath. Christ is the reality of the Sabbath and the new moon (Col. 2:16-17). The feasts of the Lord are not limited to the Old Testament; they are for us to keep and experience today (1 Cor. 5:7-8). Remember the statutes and judgments. God is a righteous God and there will be judgment. Do not think that there is no judgment in the New Testament. Peter said that judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). Was Peter mistaken? Certainly not.

Moses was the most faithful servant of the Lord (Heb. 3:2, 5). He was the lawgiver: *“For the law was given through Moses”* (John 1:17a). So the Lord said, *“Remember the Law of Moses”* (Mal. 4:4a). Do not think

that it is of the Old Testament and that we do not need God's statutes and judgments. We do! Otherwise, Paul would not have written, *"Children, obey your parents... 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise"* (Eph. 6:1-2; Exod. 20:12). It is written, *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* (Exod. 20:3; Deut. 5:7), and *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..."* (Deut. 6:5a; Matt. 22:37a; Mark 12:30a; Luke 10:27a). *"You shall not murder...You shall not steal...You shall not covet"* (Exod. 20:13-17). People say, "We don't need the law anymore." That's like saying we can now kill, steal and covet. It is awful to say that! God's word will never pass away (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). Every jot and point will be fulfilled (Matt. 5:18)! Paul said that we do not abolish the law, *"on the contrary, we establish the law"* (Rom. 3:31). *"Remember the law of Moses..."*

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD"* (Mal. 4:5). Here the Lord is talking about His second coming. Moses and Elijah are famous – every Jew knows them. Moses is the lawgiver, and Elijah is the favorite prophet. On the Mount of Transfiguration who appeared and spoke with Jesus? Moses and Elijah! In Revelation 11:3-12, the two witnesses that the Lord will send in the last 3½ years to bear witness to the Jews in Jerusalem will be these two wonderful men, Moses and Elijah.

John the Baptist came before Christ's first coming. In John 1:21, the people asked John, *"Are you Elijah?"* He said very clearly, *"I am not."* But the Lord said that John the Baptist would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). So, John the Baptist was Elijah and yet he was not. At the second coming of the Lord, it will not be John the Baptist who will come. The two witnesses in Revelation 11 will definitely be Moses and Elijah. They will do exactly what Moses and Elijah did when they were on this earth. They have already had practice and experience in stopping the rain and striking the earth with plagues. Elijah was trained by the Lord in the days of Jezebel so that he can come again at the very end. The Lord will send Moses and Elijah again to turn those who still have a heart for Him back to Him. And the Lord will turn back to them: *"Return to Me, and I will return to you"* (Mal. 3:7b). God will give His earthly people a final chance to return to Him, to receive salvation. Then

God will pour out the Spirit to fulfill what Joel said (Joel 2:28-29). It will be like the day of Pentecost. That will be their Pentecost. That will be the second coming of the Lord. Praise the Lord! If they will not return, the Lord will come and truly strike the earth with a curse on that day (Mal. 4:6b).

*Note: The above content has not been reviewed by the speaker.*