

The Burden of the Word of the Lord in Malachi

(The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

- I. Malachi – “My messenger”** <LXX His or My ἄγγελος>
(Hag. 1:13; Mal. 3:1)
- II. The LORD God started by expressing His love to His people**
(Mal. 1:2-5; Hos. 11:1; Eph. 2:1-7; Tit. 3:3-7; 1 John 4:10, 19)
 - A. Beginning with the story of Jacob and Esau (Deut. 7:6-8; 10:15; Isa. 41:8-9; Gen. 25:21-23; 32:28; Rom. 9:10-13)
 - B. God loved Jacob; but Esau He hated
 - C. God’s people became numb (insensitive) towards God’s love (Rev. 2:4)
- III. The Lord’s stern rebuke to the unfaithful priests** (Mal. 1:6-14; Eph. 4:17-19) **who defiled the priesthood and covenant of Levi**
 - A. For despising the Lord’s name – not giving honor and reverence to His name (Heb. 12:28; Prov. 14:26-27; Ps. 34:11; Luke 12:5; Rev. 14:7)
 - B. For profaning the table of the Lord
 - 1. Saying that it is contemptible and defiled (Mal. 1:7-9, 12; 1 Cor. 11:17, 20-29)
 - 2. Offering stolen, blind, lame, and sick animals as sacrifices to God (Mal. 1:13b; Lev. 22:19-25; Deut. 15:21)
 - 3. Sneering at the Lord’s table, saying “what a weariness!” or “*how burdensome*” (Mal. 1:13a; Isa. 43:22-24)
 - C. Such sacrifices (offerings) are NOT well pleasing and NOT acceptable to God (1 Pet. 1:19; 2:5)
 - D. God’s indignation at such degraded behavior of the priests (Mal. 1:8-14)

1. Considered such actions evil
2. Preferred that the doors of His house be shut
3. Pronounced a curse to them who dealt craftily with God – attempting to cheat God
 - a. Who is the great KING – the LORD of Hosts (Mal. 1:11, 14)
 - b. Whose name shall be great and be feared among the nations
 - c. To be fulfilled in the coming age; but must be demonstrated by His people today

IV. God's warning with severe punishment to the unfaithful priests (Mal. 2:1-4; Heb. 3:7-8, 13, 15; 4:7)

- A. The need to hear the word of God, and to take it to heart (to repent), and to give glory to His name
- B. If they refuse to listen:
 1. God will continue to send a curse upon them and curse their blessings
 2. God will rebuke the seed (Mal. 2:3) – causing them not to grow; other translations: "I will rebuke your descendants" or "I will take away from you the shoulder" (see Lev. 7:31-34; Deut. 18:3)
 3. God will spread (throw, scatter) the dung of their sacrifices (feasts) upon their faces
 4. And throw the priests out together with the dung

V. God's Covenant with Levi (Mal. 2:4-7; Neh. 13:29; 7:64)

- A. God's plan with His people from the very beginning is to have a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10)
- B. A covenant of life and peace to those who fear the Lord
 1. To the tribe of Levi – appointed to keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony (Exod. 32:26-29; Num. 1:47-53)
 2. Priestly service to Aaron and his sons (Exod. 28:1; Num. 18:1-7)

3. Especially to Phinehas (Num. 25:10-13) regarding Balaam (Num. 31:8, 16)

C. Priests are the messengers of the LORD of Hosts

1. The law of truth was in his mouth (Deut. 33:8-11; Lev. 10:10-11; Ezek. 44:23)
2. Injustice was not found on his lips
3. He walked with God in peace and uprightness
4. He turned many away from iniquity (Dan. 12:3)
5. The lips of a priest should keep knowledge
6. People should seek the law from his mouth

VI. [God's high requirements for the priesthood]

(Lev. Chapter 21; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 7:1)

VII. Degradation of the Priesthood (Mal. 2:8-9)

- A. Departing (turned aside) from the way of the Lord (Mal. 2:8; Jer. 17:13; Dan. 9:5; Heb. 3:12)
- B. Causing many to stumble at the law
- C. Corrupting the covenant of Levi (Neh. 13:29)
- D. Showing partiality (respect of persons) in the law
- E. The Lord's judgment: making the priests contemptible and base before the people

VIII. The influence of the corrupt priesthood on the people

(Mal. 2:10-16)

- A. Profaning the covenant God made with the fathers – dealing treacherously with one another (v. 10)
 1. Committing abomination by mixed marriages with “the daughter of a foreign god” (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1)
 2. Profaning the **holiness** of the Lord, which He loves
 - a. Israel (God's people) is a holy race <seed>, a holy nation (Ezra 9:2; Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6; 26:19; Jer. 2:3; Zech. 14:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:9; Mal. 1:2)
 - b. God's sanctuary is holy (1 Kings 8:6; Ps. 5:7; 11:4; 65:4; 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:18-20; Eph. 2:21; Lev. 15:31)
 - c. The priests and the people defiled the temple (Mic. 3:9-12; Ezek. 7:20-21; Ps. 79:1)

- d. Both the one who is awake (teacher, the priest) and the one who is aware (the pupil, the learner) will be cut off (Matt. 15:14; 23:16)
- B. Dealing unfaithfully with the wife of your youth – destroying the marriage relationship
 - 1. Covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying of the mistreated wives (Mal. 2:13)
 - 2. Marriage is honorable, holy, and undefiled (Heb. 13:4; Eph. 5:23-32)
 - a. A great mystery expressing Christ and His glorious church
 - b. Husband and wife joined together by God to become one flesh (Matt. 19:3-9)
 - c. Purpose of a holy marriage: The LORD God seeks godly offspring (Mal. 2:15)
 - 3. To divorce the wife is to deal treacherously with her (Matt. 19:3-6)
 - 4. The LORD God of Israel hates divorce (Mal. 2:16)
 - 5. Therefore, take heed to your spirit
- C. They wearied the LORD God with their words (Mal. 2:17; Ps. 95:9-10; Isa. 7:13; Amos 2:13)
 - 1. Questioning the righteous judgment of God
 - 2. Provoking God, saying: “Where is the God of justice?”

IX. Prophecy concerning the sudden coming of the Lord
(Mal. 3:1-5)

- A. His first coming as the “Messenger of the covenant”
 - 1. To His temple (John 2:17; Ps. 69:9)
 - 2. To accomplish the work of redemption
 - 3. To bring in the New Covenant
 - 4. Sending John the Baptist as His messenger
 - a. To prepare the way before Him

- b. Going before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:1-3; 11:10-11; Luke 1:76; John 1:6-7)
 - c. To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:6; Luke 1:16-17, 76-77)
 - B. His second coming is for refining and judgment (Mal. 3:2-5)
 - 1. As a refiner and purifier of gold and silver
 - a. To purify and purge the sons of Levi (Zech. 13:8-9; 1 Pet. 1: 6-7; 4:12-13)
 - b. That they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness
 - c. That the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD
 - 2. To bring judgment for all the evil doers (both Jews and Gentiles) because they do not fear the LORD (Mal. 3:5; Zech. 12:1-9; Rev. 19:11-21)
 - C. The reason why God did not fully consume the sons of Jacob (Ps. 89:28-37; Rom. 9:27; 11:5; Isa. 10:20-23; 59:20-21)
 - 1. He is the LORD that does not change (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:12; 6:16-18; 13:8)
 - 2. He is perfect, the "I am", the One who is and who was and who is to come
 - 3. The God who made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- X. Further reproofs from the Lord against His unfaithful people** (Mal. 3:7-18)
 - A. They turned aside from God's ordinances (v. 7)
 - B. Robbing God – withholding the tithes and offerings (vv. 8-12)
 - C. Speaking harsh words against God (vv. 13-15)

- D. The book of remembrance (v. 16-17)
 - 1. A record of the words spoken by those who fear the Lord, who meditate on His name
 - 2. These ones will receive the reward on the day of His return (v. 17)
 - a. They will be His treasured possession
 - b. The Lord will spare them from judgment
- E. Those who spoke harsh words will realize on judgment day
 - 1. That the righteous and those who serve God will be rewarded
 - 2. The wicked and those who do not serve God will be punished

XI. The great and dreadful day of God's wrath (Mal. 4:1-6; Joel 2:31; Acts 2:19-20; Rev. 6:17)

- A. Burning as a furnace and all the proud and all who do wickedly will be fully burned up – a total destruction
- B. Christ – the Sun of Righteousness shall rise
 - 1. With healing in His wings to those who fear Him
 - 2. They shall trample the wicked as ashes beneath the soles of their feet
- C. The Lord will send His two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-14)
 - 1. Moses – to remind them of the law with the statutes and judgments
 - 2. Elijah the prophet – to give His people a final chance to turn back to Him
 - 3. To save the land from total destruction