

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

(The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

- I. **Malachi – “My messenger”** <Septuagint Translation (LXX) His or My ἄγγελος> (Hag. 1:13; Mal. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:21)
  
- 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; Rom. 8:28-39; Jer. 31:3)
  - 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 (Heb. 12:4-17; Matt. 16:22-26)
  - C. God’s people became numb (insensitive) towards God’s love (Rev. 2:4; Matt. 24:13)
  
- 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; 4:13; 1 Cor. 10:11)**

- A. God's commandment specifically for the priests (Mal. 2:1, 4)
- B. The need to hear the word of God, and to take it to heart, and to give glory to His name (Mal 1:6; Lev. 10:3; Rom. 2:24; Heb. 12:25)
- C. If they refuse to repent:
  - 1. God will send a curse upon them and curse their blessings (Mal. 2:2b; Mal. 3:9; Deut. 28:15+)
  - 2. God will rebuke their seed (Mal. 2:3a) – causing them not to grow (Hag. 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14); other translations: "I will rebuke your descendants" or "I will take away from you the shoulder" (Lev. 7:31-34)
  - 3. God will spread (throw, scatter) the dung of their sacrifices (feasts) upon their faces and throw the priests out together with the dung (Mal. 2:3)

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

- A. God's plan with His people from the very beginning: to have a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 20:6; 22:3)
- B. A covenant of life and peace so that the priests might fear the Lord (Mal. 2:5; Rom. 8:5-14; Gal. 5:16-25; Heb. 12:28-29)
  - 1. With the tribe of Levi (Exod. 32:25-29) – appointed to keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony (Num. 1:47-53)
  - 2. The priestly service in the sanctuary and at the altar is solely for Aaron and his sons (Num. 18:1-7)
  - 3. Especially for Phinehas (Num. 25:10-13) regarding Balaam (Num. 31:8, 16)
- C. Priests are the messengers of the LORD of Hosts (Mal. 2:6-7)
  - 1. The law of truth was in his mouth (Deut. 33:8-11; Lev. 10:10-11; Ezek. 44:23-24)
  - 2. Injustice was not found on his lips (Rev. 14:5; Eph. 4:25, 29; Jam. 1:19; 3:2-10)
  - 3. He walked with God in peace and uprightness (Gen. 5:21-24; 6:9; Lev. 16; Isa. 35:8; 1 Pet. 1:15; Eph. 5:8-11; 1 John 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:12)
  - 4. He turned many away from iniquity (Jer. 23:22; Dan. 12:3; Jam. 5:20)
  - 5. The lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth

**VI. Insertion: God's high requirements for the priesthood**

- (Ezek. 44; Lev. 21; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 7:1)
- A. The sons of Zadok shall come near the Lord (Ezek. 44:15-16)
    - 1. Because they kept charge of His sanctuary

2. To minister to HIM and offer food to HIM  
(Lev. 21:6, 8, 17, 21)
- B. The laws concerning the priestly garments  
(Ezek. 44:17, 18)
  1. They shall put on linen garments so that they do not sweat (Gen. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:10; Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 19:8; Phil. 3:3-9)
  2. They shall have linen turbans on their heads  
(2 Cor. 10:5; Psalm 1:2; Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 4:17-18; 6:17; 1 Thess. 5:8)
  3. The garments shall not come into contact with the people
    - a. What is holy is made unclean by what is unholy  
(Hag. 2:11-13; 2. Cor. 6:16-18)
    - b. Do not give what is holy to the dogs (Matt. 7:6; 1 Cor. 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:2)
    - c. Our service is wholly sanctified unto God – it is not first and foremost for man (John 6:38; Rom. 1:9; Ezek. 44:10-11; Lev. 6:10-11)
- C. They shall keep their hair well trimmed (Ezek. 44:20; Ecc. 7:16-18; John 1:14; Rom. 11:22; Col. 4:6)
- D. No priest shall drink wine when he serves – wine intoxicates and leads to lack of discernment  
(Ezek. 44:21, 23-24; Lev. 10:9-10; Isa. 28:7; Prov. 23:29-35)
- E. They shall only marry virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests (Ezek. 44:22; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 7:27; Gen. 3:18, 21)
- F. They shall not defile themselves with death (Ezek. 44:25; Num. 19:13, 15; Rom. 6:23a; Jam. 1:15; Rev. 1:18)
- G. The LORD is their inheritance (Ezek. 44:28; Deut. 18:1-2)
- H. They shall eat the portion of the offerings allotted to the priests (Ezek. 44:29-30; Num. 18:8-24)

- I. They shall not eat anything that died naturally or was torn by wild beasts (Ezek. 44:31; Matt. 16:6, 12; Phil. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:17; Heb. 5:13-14; 13:9)
- J. No man who has any defect may approach to offer the bread of his God – but, he may eat of the offerings (Lev. 21:17-23; Tit. 1:7; 1 Cor. 16:13; Matt. 9:35)

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

- A. Departing (turned aside) from the way (Mal. 2:8; Jer. 48:10; Matt. 15:3)
  1. The fall of the churches (Rev. 2-3)
  2. They corrupted the covenant with Levi (Lev. 22:17-31; 1 Sam. 2:12-17)
  3. Mixture with the world (Mal. 2:11)
- B. Causing many to stumble at the law (Mal. 2:8; Isa. 9:12-16)
  1. They are drunk and lead the people astray (Isa. 28:7)
  2. They judge unrighteously (Mal. 2:9; Deut. 25:13-16)
  3. God will judge them (Mal. 2:9)

## **VIII. The influence of the corrupt priesthood on the people (Mal. 2:10-17)**

- A. Profaning the covenant God made with the fathers – dealing treacherously with one another (Mal. 2:10)
  1. Committing abomination by mixed marriages with “the daughter of a foreign god” (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1; Neh. 13:26)
  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 (the 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. The wife as companion and wife by covenant (Mal. 2:14; 1 Pet 3:7; Gen. 26:8)
    - d. Purpose of a holy marriage: The LORD God seeks godly offspring (Mal. 2:15; 1 Tim. 2:15; 3:4-5; Josh. 24:15)
  - 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; Gal. 5:16-25)
  - 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. Prophecies concerning the sudden coming of the Lord**

- (Mal. 3:1-5)
- A. His first coming as the “Messenger of the covenant” (Mal. 3:1)
    - 1. To His temple (John 2:17; Ps. 69:9)

2. To accomplish the work of redemption and bring in the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15)
3. Sending John the Baptist as His messenger (Mal. 4:5-6)
  - a. To prepare the way before Him (Isa. 40:3; Matt 3:1-3; 11:10; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 1:76)
  - b. Going before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mal. 4:5; Luke 1:17)
  - 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; 77-79)
- B. His second coming is for refining and judgment (Mal. 3:2-5)
  1. As the glorified Son of Man (Rev. 1:13-18)
  2. To purify and purge the sons of Levi (Ps. 66:10-16; 105:17-19; Acts 14:22; 2 Pet. 3:11-13)
    - a. As gold and silver (Zech. 13:8-9; Isa. 1:25; 1 Pet. 1: 6-7; 4:12-13; Rev. 3:18a; 21:18)
    - b. Receiving God's chastening with thanks (Heb. 12:5-11; Job 5:17-18; Ps. 141:5)
    - c. Then they will offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness and their offering will be pleasant to the LORD
  3. To bring judgment upon all the evildoers and those who do not fear the LORD (Zech. 12:1-9; Rev. 19:11-21)
- C. The LORD God, does not change (Mal. 3:6; Jam. 1:17; Heb. 1:12; 13:8) – the reason the sons of Jacob did not perish entirely (Ps. 89:28-37; Isa 41:4; 46:4; Lam. 3:22-25; Rom. 11:29; Heb. 6:17)

**X. Further reproofs from the Lord against His unfaithful people**  
(Mal. 3:7-18)

- A. They turned aside from God's ordinances – God's call to return (Mal 3:7; Deut. 8:10-20; 9:7-13; 22-24)
- B. He is the LORD of hosts (Mal 3:7, 10-12)

1. His name is to be glorified (Mal. 1:11; Matt. 6:9; Ps. 50:23)
2. The best is due to the Father and King (Mal 3:10; Num. 18:29-30; 1. Sam 8:11-17; Luke 20:25; 21:1-4)
- C. Robbing God – withholding the tithes and offerings (Mal. 3:8-12; Num. 18; Deut. 14:22-29; Deut. 26:12-19; Mal. 3:5b; Heb. 13:16)
  1. The curse for disobedience
    - a. The devourer (Mal 3:11; Deut. 28:38-45; Judg. 6:1-10)
    - b. Much toiling with sweat, but yielding little (Gen. 3:17-19; Hag. 1:5-10; Ps. 127:1-2)
  2. God’s blessing for obedience – a cycle of blessing (Mal. 3:10-12; Acts 20:35; Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 9:6-12)
    - a. The devourer is rebuked – victory over the enemy
    - b. Peace (Ps. 133; Prov. 15:16-17)
    - c. Spiritual fruits and material provision (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 6:33; Col. 1:10; Rom. 1:13)
    - d. A testimony for the nations and a delightful land (Matt 5:16; Isa. 62:4; Ps. 132:13-18)
- D. Speaking harsh words against God (Mal. 3:13-15)
- E. The book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16-17)
  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 (Mal. 3:17)
    - a. They will be His treasured possession
    - b. The Lord will spare them from judgment
- F. Those who spoke harsh words will realize on judgment day that...
  1. ...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 – all the proud and all who do wickedly will be fully burned up – a total destruction (Mal. 4:1)
- B. Christ – the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to those who fear His name (Mal. 4:2-3)
  - 1. With healing in His wings
  - 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

## **The Book of Malachi**

### **Chapter 1**

*The LORD God started by expressing His love to His people*

- 1** The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.
- 2** “I have loved you,” says the Lord.  
“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’  
Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?”  
Says the Lord.  
“Yet Jacob I have loved;
- 3** But Esau I have hated,  
And laid waste his mountains and his heritage  
For the jackals of the wilderness.”
- 4** Even though Edom has said,  
“We have been impoverished,  
But we will return and build the desolate places,”  
Thus says the Lord of hosts:  
“They may build, but I will throw down;  
They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,  
And the people against whom the Lord will have  
indignation forever.
- 5** Your eyes shall see,  
And you shall say,  
‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’

*The Lord’s stern rebuke to the unfaithful priests who defiled the  
priesthood and covenant of Levi*

- 6** “A son honors his father,  
And a servant his master.  
If then I am the Father,  
Where is My honor?

And if I am a Master,  
Where is My reverence?  
Says the Lord of hosts  
To you priests who despise My name.  
Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'"

- 7** You offer defiled food on My altar,  
But say,  
'In what way have we defiled You?'  
By saying,  
'The table of the Lord is contemptible.'
- 8** And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,  
Is it not evil?  
And when you offer the lame and sick,  
Is it not evil?  
Offer it then to your governor!  
Would he be pleased with you?  
Would he accept you favorably?"  
Says the Lord of hosts.

- 9** "But now entreat God's favor,  
That He may be gracious to us.  
While this is being done by your hands,  
Will He accept you favorably?"  
Says the Lord of hosts.

- 10** "Who is there even among you who would shut the doors,  
So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?  
I have no pleasure in you,"  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
"Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.

- 11** For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down  
My name shall be great among the Gentiles;  
In every place incense shall be offered to My name,  
And a pure offering;  
For My name shall be great among the nations,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.

- 12** “But you profane it,  
In that you say,  
‘The table of the Lord is defiled;  
And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.’
- 13** You also say,  
‘Oh, what a weariness!  
And you sneer at it,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;  
Thus you bring an offering!  
Should I accept this from your hand?”  
Says the Lord.
- 14** “But cursed be the deceiver  
Who has in his flock a male,  
And takes a vow,  
But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—  
For I am a great King,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“And My name is to be feared among the nations.

## Chapter 2

*God’s warning with severe punishment to the unfaithful priests*

- 1** “And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.  
**2** If you will not hear,  
And if you will not take it to heart,  
To give glory to My name,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“I will send a curse upon you,  
And I will curse your blessings.  
Yes, I have cursed them already,  
Because you do not take it to heart.

- 3** “Behold, I will rebuke your descendants  
And spread refuse on your faces,  
The refuse of your solemn feasts;  
And one will take you away with it.
- 4** Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to  
you,  
That My covenant with Levi may continue,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.

### *God’s Covenant with Levi*

- 5** “My covenant was with him, one of life and peace,  
And I gave them to him that he might fear Me;  
So he feared Me  
And was reverent before My name.
- 6** The law of truth was in his mouth,  
And injustice was not found on his lips.  
He walked with Me in peace and equity,  
And turned many away from iniquity.
- 7** “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,  
And people should seek the law from his mouth;  
For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

### *Degradation of the Priesthood*

- 8** But you have departed from the way;  
You have caused many to stumble at the law.  
You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.
- 9** “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base  
Before all the people,  
Because you have not kept My ways  
But have shown partiality in the law.”

*The influence of the corrupt priesthood on the people*

- 10** Have we not all one Father?  
Has not one God created us?  
Why do we deal treacherously with one another  
By profaning the covenant of the fathers?
- 11** Judah has dealt treacherously,  
And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in  
Jerusalem,  
For Judah has profaned  
The Lord's holy institution which He loves:  
He has married the daughter of a foreign god.
- 12** May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob  
The man who does this, being awake and aware,  
Yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!
- 13** And this is the second thing you do:  
You cover the altar of the Lord with tears,'  
With weeping and crying;  
So He does not regard the offering anymore,  
Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.
- 14** Yet you say, "For what reason?"  
Because the Lord has been witness  
Between you and the wife of your youth,  
With whom you have dealt treacherously;  
Yet she is your companion  
And your wife by covenant.
- 15** But did He not make them one,  
Having a remnant of the Spirit?  
And why one?  
He seeks godly offspring.  
'Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.
- 16** "For the Lord God of Israel says  
That He hates divorce,

For it covers one's garment with violence,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.

"Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
That you do not deal treacherously."

**17** You have wearied the Lord with your words;

Yet you say,

"In what way have we wearied Him?"

In that you say,

"Everyone who does evil

Is good in the sight of the Lord,

And He delights in them,"

Or, "Where is the God of justice?"

### Chapter 3

#### *Prophecies concerning the sudden coming of the Lord*

- 1** "Behold, I send My messenger,  
And he will prepare the way before Me.  
And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,  
'Even the Messenger of the covenant,  
In whom you delight.  
Behold, He is coming,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.
- 2** "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 launderers' soap.
- 3** He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;  
He will purify the sons of Levi,  
And purge them as gold and silver,  
That they may offer to the Lord  
An offering in righteousness.

- 4** “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem  
Will be pleasant to the Lord,  
As in the days of old,  
As in former years.
- 5** And I will come near you for judgment;  
I will be a swift witness  
Against sorcerers,  
Against adulterers,  
Against perjurers,  
Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and  
orphans,  
And against those who turn away an alien—  
Because they do not fear Me,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.
- 6** “For I am the Lord, I do not change;  
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

*Further reproofs of the Lord against His unfaithful people*

- 7** Yet from the days of your fathers  
You have gone away from My ordinances  
And have not kept them.  
Return to Me, and I will return to you,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.  
“But you said,  
‘In what way shall we return?’
- 8** “Will a man rob God?  
Yet you have robbed Me!  
But you say,  
‘In what way have we robbed You?’  
In tithes and offerings.
- 9** You are cursed with a curse,  
For you have robbed Me,  
Even this whole nation.



- 10** Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this,”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you such blessing  
That there will not be room enough to receive it.
- 11** “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,  
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,  
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,”  
Says the Lord of hosts;
- 12** “And all nations will call you blessed,  
For you will be a delightful land,”  
Says the Lord of hosts.
- 13** “Your words have been harsh against Me,”  
Says the Lord,  
“Yet you say,  
‘What have we spoken against You?’
- 14** 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?
- 15** So now we call the proud blessed,  
For those who do wickedness are raised up;  
They even tempt God and go free.’ ”
- 16** Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another,  
And the Lord listened and heard them;  
So a book of remembrance was written before Him  
For those who fear the Lord  
And who meditate on His name.

- 17** “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts,  
“On the day that I make them My jewels.  
And I will spare them  
As a man spares his own son who serves him.”
- 18** Then you shall again discern  
Between the righteous and the wicked,  
Between one who serves God  
And one who does not serve Him.

## **Chapter 4**

### *The great and dreadful day of God’s wrath*

- 1** “For behold, the day is coming,  
‘Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’”  
Says the Lord of hosts,  
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.
- 2** But to you who fear My name  
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise  
With healing in His wings;  
And you shall go out  
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
- 3** 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.
- 4** “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,  
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,  
With the statutes and judgments.
- 5** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the  
Lord.

- 6** And he will turn  
The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,  
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”