

July 16th 2006 Malachi :Accountable Before God: Chapter 3:1—4

Malachi.... Final book.....He is the last Prophet.....400 years

So we would expect to find in this book.....a very definite prediction...coming Messiah
A prophecy linking the Old Testament.....Covenant of law....to the New...Grace

- **And we are not disappointed**The Prophetic link is spelled out so strongly....
But it is portrayed....not so much as an encouragement....like it was in Zechariah
.....**but rather as an underlying threat.....**A Call to pull themselves together before..

When we look into their situation at that time.....we can better understand why....

1. **You see the Temple.....rebuilt by 516BC.....**
2. **By 457 however.....**there was a need for the Lord to raise up Ezra...
3. **Then in 444Bc.....Nehemiah.....**came and rebuilt the walls
And in 432 returned to Persia.....leaving God's people experiencing prosperity

Unfortunately.....prosperity and a falling away from godliness....often go together
By the time Nehemiah returned in 425.....

Malachi had begun to preach...to a people that had become spiritual corrupt...apathetic
Materially prosperous.....Spiritually bankrupt

Malachi prophesied 100 yrs after Zechar....& the change in the spiritual state..dramatic
About many of them 2 Tim 3:1-5 could have been written.....

The worst thing about their relationship with God....they thought...were doing ok
They saw their prosperity as proof of God's blessing
That they had fooled God.....or He just didn't mind...notice.....luke warm worship

But God did noticeand the book of Malachi stands as a warning....to change
As the promised Messiah is soon to come

One of the TV shows.....Border Patrol
I am constantly amazed by the self righteousness.....passengers coming into
They have agreed to a contract with.....they won't bring in.....They have signed a...

- **I want you to consider Malachi.....Not just as a book**
But as a card.....that God has had His people fill in.....
It has 5 questions...Yes/no.....and now He is reviewing
And will make a judgment.....on whether they are fit to remain in the covenant
- **He begins with their thoughts about Him**
As He states in v2.....He knows how much He has loved them
But in their hearts.....do they recognize His love.....or are they harbouring a complaint

1. So question one is.....Has God truly loved you most of all ?

And God knew that many were thinking....No He hasn't

**And the reason they were thinking that.....The nation of Edom:::Descendents of These Jews had bitter memories.....of the time when Jerusalem was destroyed...150
And the Nation of Edom had pillaged....and betrayed.....& God had sat on His hands**

Consider what God says:→

**You are so wrong about me.....Open your eyes and see the big picture
Compared to my love for you.....my regard for Edom is hatred**

I always loved you....chose you to be my people....Can't you see that !!!

- **His next question.....moves from their thoughts...to their actions**

2. Have you shown contempt for the Lord's name ? 1:6

**There answer the Lord knew...would be a very definite NO
For God even to suggest that they could be guilty of such a thing...was an affront
An affront to their Jewishness....their dignity**

They were regular at the Temple with their sacrifices.....

Their priests were doing a fine job.....Even (2:13)...flooding the altar with tears

But that's not what I see says God

I see you bringing the worthless and the broken animals.....keeping the best

**Some of the sacrifices you give to me.....you wouldn't even serve on your own table
You have forgotten...that Almighty God deserves the best....the pure in worship
In sacrifice and offering**

Turn with me to 1:7—8.....

**On top of all that....they were treating their sacrifices as a necessary burden....had to do
The priests were no longer dedicated to the Lord.....Their teaching...causing..stumble
And in both priests and people.....attitude to marriage....against all God wanted
And that's why God had rejected their offerings.....not heard their prayers**

The next question is referred to in 2:17

3 Have you wearied God?

**Have you ever thought how God is wearied.....by the thoughts, words, actions of...
Isaiah 43:24 says.....**

Here God tells them how they had wearied Him in 2:17.....

To suggest that God is on the side of evil.....That He doesn't give you justice
But helps your enemies.....just to spite you.....HOW LOW CAN YOU GET

It is directly after this question that God speaks in chapter 3

First about the messenger...The One who would prepare the way for the Messiah

But then after him will come the Messiah...The messenger...new covenant

- **The one you desire...the one you are seeking**

But.....and here lays the problem.....**THE way you are now in your sin....**

You won't be able to stand before Him

Of course we know.....the one preparing the way was John the Baptist

Calling for repentance.....in order that they would stand before the Coming One

And the Messiah.....Jesus.....God the Son

So to question 4.....and it seems that here the Lord gets down to practical matters

He deals with a specific act when He asks:

4. Have you robbed the Lord?

How would you respond....if the Lord Almighty asked you such a question ??

- **Look at 3:8.....Because their response is a horrified NO**

How could we be robbing you.....when all that is in the whole world belongs to you

And God says

In tithes and offerings....you are robbing me

But also robbing yourselves

The lord does not have any hesitation in talking about money

He wants His people to honour Him.....To show their trust.....**By taking one tenth**

And the Lord has some wonderful mathematical formulae.....He gives back more

Some suggest that tithing is just for the Old.....But God doesn't change...so how can
Indeed.....the only diff is in the new.....Tithes is the just starting point

God told His people...that they were putting themselves under a curse...by holding back
What a terrible condemnation.....**IN 3:10 He says**

*(At the beginning I struggled.....Until I realised that the 9 tenths that remained
seemed to go so much further than the ten.....And the joy of bringing the whole tithe...*

Then to 3:13 and Question 5

..5. Have You spoken against the Lord

To do so was equal to an act of Treason.....No Jew would dare admit to such a thing
But you have said God.....By complaining about worshipping me

By saying that fulfilling religious acts...worship...sacrifice...tithing...is futile

By lacking joy in my presence...but going about like mourners...don't want to be there

(I rang the bank to complain....but as they explained...they were right....I had to pay)
And there were some who heard what God was saying.....and they realised...sin

Together they sought God; **Look at 3:16—18.....**

That's the wonderful promise of Malachi.....God points out our failings
Only so that we might turn back to Him....feel His love....and know we are still
His most treasured possession

As we turn to communion....Once again God says....See How I love you...
What is the response of your heart to Him

Notes on the Book of Malachi

Written by Malachi (which means messenger) in about 430 BC
Last Prophet for 400 years

Historic Position:

Temple finally rebuilt in 516 BC

457 BC the Lord raises up Ezra to return to Jerusalem and call for reform.

444 BC Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and rebuilds city walls

432 BC Nehemiah goes back to Persia to serve the King

A time of material prosperity but spiritual decline

430 BC about, Malachi starts to preach

| | Yes/No |
|--|--------|
| 1. Has God truly loved you most of all ? | / |
| 2. Have you shown contempt for the Lord ? | / |
| 3. Have you wearied God? | / |
| 4. Have you robbed the Lord? | / |
| 5. Have you spoken against the Lord? | / |

Chapter 3 speaks of John the Baptist and the Coming Messiah

Chapter 4 speaks about the coming Day of the Lord with verse 2 giving a wonderful promise.

Important events between the Testaments

334 BC Alexander crosses the Hellespont

331 BC Alexander defeats the Persians

323 BC Alexander dies at age 32 in Babylon

260 BC The Translation of the Septuagint(OT into Greek)

214 BC The Great Wall of China begun

169 BC Epiphanes defiles the Temple on December 15th

166 BC The revolt of the (Jewish) Maccabees

165 BC The cleansing of the Temple on December 25th

146 BC Destruction of Carthage by Rome and the end of the Punic wars

63 BC Pompey conquers Jerusalem

44 BC Julius Caesar is assassinated in March

37 BC Herod is appointed to govern Jerusalem

20 BC The rebuilding and enlargement of the Temple

4 BC Jesus is born and the Age of Grace begins.

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