

# Commentary (Sermon Notes)

## Book of Malachi

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### **I Loved Jacob, but Hated Esau**

*Malachi - Pt. 1*

### **Malachi 1:1-5**

#### I. Introduction to the book of Malachi

A. Today we begin a new book of Scripture, moving to the Tanak (TNK) portion of our Bibles.

B. This book is titled “Malachi” because that is the name of the prophet who wrote the book.

1. It is called sometimes one of the “minor prophets.” This terminology doesn’t mean there are some books that are more important than others, but rather it refers to the length of the prophecy. Isaiah would be a major, whereas Malachi would be a minor.

2. This book was written during the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (400 years before Messiah) and was written around the time of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. As we will see, there are many parallels between Malachi and Nehemiah showing that Malachi was dealing with issues that arose during the time of Nehemiah.

3. This means that the book deals with a timeframe when the House of Judah had come back from Babylonian captivity and rebuilt the walls of the city of Jerusalem. At this time Nehemiah was making great attempts to “get things back into order,” seeing that captivity had gotten a lot of things out of order. (Scholars state the primary audience to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation after the return from captivity.)

4. How many know the reason why Judah was placed in Babylonian captivity? SIN IS CORRECT. In fulfillment of both Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 Yahweh ultimately was the cause of the captivity. Therefore Nehemiah - a man whom Scripture says feared Yahweh more than most - wanted to make sure they were worshiping Yahweh properly when released from captivity and placed back in their home town.

5. As we will see the people were very complacent in their relationship with Yahweh. Malachi receives a word from Yahweh that chastises the people in hopes of causing a return to the true genuine worship towards the Father.

## II. Malachi 1:1-5

### A. Verse 1

1. Oracle = a prophetic speech of threatening character. The word is often translated as “burden” in the KJV and carries with it the meaning of “this is not going to be positive.

a. In other words Yahweh is going to speak a word of rebuke to his people.

b. True messages do not just carry exhortation and comfort, but also rebuke. Yahweh rebukes His children when they go astray because He loves them. It’s similar to when Proverbs say “he that spares the rod, hates his son, but he that loves his son, disciplines him at the proper times.”

2. The word of Yahweh to Israel through Malachi

a. Although this is the book of Malachi, we must understand that Malachi is only an instrument in the hand of Yahweh.

b. Yahweh is the one speaking, but Yahweh often uses means to perform his work in the earth.

c. You may show someone something in this book and they may respond, “Yeah but that’s just the writing of a man.” This is incorrect. A man was the instrument through which Yahweh wrote down His very words. The Scriptures are not from the minds of men but from the very mind of Yahweh. This is fundamental - if you do not get this you will be “wishy-washy” in your relationship with the Father.

d. Apostle Peter informs us in his book (2 Peter 1:20-21) that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one’s own interpretation because no prophecy ever came by the will of man. Instead, moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God. When you read Malachi you are reading the voice of Yahweh.

e. Take note before we move on that this book was written to Israel, specifically the house of Judah. Judah, though separate from

the house of Israel were still called Israel because they stemmed from the same father - Jacob/Israel.

## B. Verse 2

1. Yahweh says He loves Judah, but they ask “How so?”
2. Through this book we will see the very “prideful” attitude of Judah as a whole. Yahweh has done so much for them yet they fail to see what is right in front of their noses. In this case Yahweh has loved them dearly, yet they cannot see His love.
3. We do the same thing today. Yahweh loves you and blesses you, yet you ask him at times, “How have you loved me? How have you blessed me?” We get so caught up in the mundane things of life that we forget to see the multitude of areas wherein Yahweh has blessed us. If you’re alive that’s a blessing from Yahweh, but we take for granted that when we go to sleep we will wake up the next morning.
4. Yahweh then goes on to remind these Israelites about Esau, the brother of Jacob. If you remember with me back to this birth. Isaac and Rebekah had two children here, twin sons. One named Esau (oldest) the other named Jacob (youngest). Esau’s name means “hairy” and Jacob’s name means “heel holder” or “supplanter.”
5. The text goes on to say in verse 2 and 3 that Yahweh loved Jacob but hated Esau. Yahweh is here pointing out the people of Israel how that their father (Jacob) was the twin brother of Esau, and the younger of the two at that. Yet Yahweh chose Jacob and passed over Esau. Yahweh chosen people came from the loins of Jacob/Israel and not from the loins of Esau.
6. Does Yahweh really hate Esau? Some theologians attempt to bypass this text of Scripture (and others that are similar) and say that it really doesn’t mean Yahweh hated Esau, it just means that he loved Esau less than Jacob.
  - When I look at this word hated in Hebrew (saneh) I get the idea of hatred.
  - It is used in Genesis 37:5 of Joseph’s brothers feelings toward him when he claimed to have dreams from God.
  - It is used in Leviticus 19:17 where Yahweh commands us not to hate our brother in our heart.
  - It is used in Deuteronomy 12:31 to speak of Yahweh hating all sorts of abominations done by the heathens.

- It is also used later in this very book (Malachi 2:16) where it states that Yahweh “hates putting away” (some translations say “divorce”). We will get to this text in a future lesson.

- When examining the Hebrew word it appears that one cannot come to any other conclusion but that the word has to do with a dislike and a disdain for someone or something else.

7. The Aramaic Targum here reads “rejected Esau” and this is exactly how Yahweh’s hatred for Esau was carried out. Yahweh chose Jacob, but did not choose Esau. He accepted one, but passed over the other.

8. People tend to have a problem when it comes to the Free Will of Almighty Yahweh. We act like we are the only beings who can make choices and that Yahweh cannot. We think that Yahweh can’t choose to save one and pass over the other based upon His Free Will. Yet it is Yahweh’s will that is Freest of all, even more so than ours.

- Our free will is limited. In other words we can will and desire one thing, but if it “butt’s heads” with Yahweh’s free will our will loses every time.

- This is why we sometimes pray for things that do not happen. We may have a sick loved one who we pray for to get healed and stay alive, but they die. We may pray for other things like a new job or home, but nothing takes place. Why is this? Sometimes it is not Yahweh’s will.

- Yeshua understood this concept when he prayed before his death, “Father let this cup pass from me, but not my will but yours be done.”

- Yahweh can alter the nature or the will of a person or persons making them desire either good or bad. In Genesis 20 when Abimelech (king of Gerar) took Abraham’s wife Sarah (thinking she was only Abraham’s sister) the text says (20:6) that Yahweh kept Abimelech from sinning against Him. Yahweh’s will overpowered the will of a human being. He is Yahweh, we are not.

9. Yahweh has the right to choose one and not choose the other (love, hate). We mustn’t accuse Yahweh of injustice for He is Yahweh. He created all of creation and thus has rights over the entirety of creation. If he chooses a Jacob, and passes over an Esau that is His right to do so.

### C. Verses 3-4

1. This verse comments further for us on just how Yahweh hated Esau. He did not deal with Esau, but let him go about his business.
2. From the time Jacob was born Yahweh always dealt with him as a Father. When Jacob would sin Yahweh would rebuke, discipline, and thus love Jacob. This was not the case with Esau. Esau's sins were not dealt with in the same way. Esau was left to run free without discipline. His mountains were turned into a wasteland and his inheritance was given to the desert jackals (*parallelism here = same thing said twice.*)
3. Verse 4 mentions Esau by the name Edom. The first use of the word Edom in Scripture (KJV) is Genesis 25:30 where Esau requests some of Jacob's "red" soup. The text says this is why Esau was also called "Edom" a word which literally means "red."
4. Edom (Esau) speaks as says that they've been devastated and will rebuild their ruined places. However Yahweh speaks as well. Notice again the free will of Esau is overpowered by the free will of Yahweh. Yahweh says that they may build, but He will tear demolish. I ask you, if Yahweh wants to demolish a city that the Edomites built could the Edomites stop Yahweh? Of course not, Yahweh's free will is the most powerful in the universe.
5. Verse 4 goes on to say that they (Esau/Edom) will be called a wicked country and the people that Yahweh has cursed forever. The word for cursed here is translated as "angry" in some translations.

### D. Verse 5

1. Yahweh tells the Israelites that their own eyes will see this take place and it will show them that Yahweh is great (powerful) even outside of the borders of Israel.
2. Yahweh's actions will prove just how He loves Jacob/Israel and hates Esau. These actions should shut the mouths of the proud in Israel. These actions should cause the question "How do you love us?" to cease.
3. Yahweh would allow the Israelites to rebuild, and turn and follow Him, but not so for Edom. They would build, but He would destroy.

III. Conclusion - If we have the mindset that Yahweh is not All Powerful; that He doesn't have the right to choose one and not the other (allow one people to build and flourish, but allow the other to build and then He demolish) we need to repent from this thinking. We do not serve a weak, limp-wrested mighty one who bows to the will of man. We serve

one who is Almighty and has the power to do as He pleases. This includes loving some and not dealing redemptive with others.

### **Bringing a Sick Goat to a Great King**

*Malachi - Pt. 2*

Text: **Malachi 1:6-14**

#### **I. Malachi 1:6-14**

##### **A. Verse 6**

1. Yahweh begins this section of the oracle with an opening statement to the priests of the Southern Kingdom.
2. He speaks of how there is honor in a “son to father” and “servant to master” relationship. This is to show how that although they call Yahweh “Father” and refer to Him as “Master” there is no honor and fear being given.
3. They are actually despising His name, and are doing so by their actions. Always remember that words alone mean nothing in our relationship with Yahweh. You can say the most honorable things about Yahweh and sing the most beautiful songs about Yahweh, but neither of these mean anything if there is no fruit of righteousness being produced in your life.
4. Never get to the point where you fall further and further away from obedience, but still think you’re okay because you come to church and say “nice” things about Yahweh. Yahweh is honored by our life, and dishonored when we honor Him with our lips but do not serve Him in what we do.

##### **B. Verse 7**

1. Once again remember last week when Yahweh said “I have loved you” and Judah replied “Where have you loved us?” Here Yahweh has told the priests they are despising His name and they ask “Where have we despised your name?” In other words they think everything is okay and are in denial of despising Yahweh’s name.
2. Notice the answer Yahweh gives them. You would think the answer would include what we would define as gross sins against Yahweh. I can think of many things I would expect to come after this question is asked by the priests. But the answer is one we may not necessarily expect, yet it is of great importance to Yahweh.

3. The priests are presenting defiled food on the altar of Yahweh.
  - a. Some translations read “polluted bread” here and it has been suggested that this may be a reference to the “bread of the presence” in the Tabernacle.
  - b. I do not believe the actual “bread” is what is spoken of here but rather the word “bread” (translated “food” in the HCSB) is in reference to the animals being sacrificed upon the altar. This is primarily because of the context of what comes in the verses that follow after this one.
4. The priests then ask another question, “How have we defiled you?” The answer is when they say, “Yahweh’s table is contemptible.” The word here means “to be despised.”
  - a. Now, note once again a vital point. There is no record that the priests were literally speaking the words - “The table of Yahweh is to be despised.”
  - b. The reference to them saying this is a reference to their actions. In what they were DOING they were SAYING that the table of Yahweh is to be despised.
  - c. They were of the attitude that although Yahweh had given strict commandments concerning what was and was not to be offered at His table, it did not matter what they brought to offer before Yahweh by way of sacrifice.
5. All of Yahweh’s instructions are important. We would not think that Yahweh would bring up defective sacrifices as how His name was being despised but He did.
  - a. We get it in our minds that if we speak out against abortion and homosexuality we are spiritual. I believe both practices are sin, but that’s not where sin starts and stops.
  - b. You may be committing a sin in your life but do not even realize it. You may think it’s not that big of a deal - “Surely it doesn’t dishonor Yahweh’s name (?)” you say or think to yourself.

### **C. Verse 8**

1. They were bringing animals that were blind, sick, and lame to offer up before Yahweh.

\* **NOTE:** Sacrifice dates back to the fall of Adam and Eve where tunics of SKIN were made (*in this we see the teaching of substitute sacrifice*), and then to Genesis 4 where Abel brought of the firstling of the flock. It appears from studying Scripture that the point of sacrifice was to give back to Yahweh a portion of what He had blessed you with. This was a way in which the worshiper could genuinely show Yahweh he was thankful for Yahweh's provision. We recognize this when we say, "He or she made a sacrifice for that person." It's an acknowledgment that there is love and respect for a person when we make a sacrifice in our lives for them.

2. Hold your finger there, and turn with me to **Leviticus 22:17-25**. Now turn to **Deuteronomy 15:19-23**.

3. What we see is that the priests had begun to directly violate the instructions of Yahweh in the area of offering sacrifices. Sure, they were offering the sacrifices but they were blind, sick, and even sometimes unable to walk!

4. Turn back to Malachi. Yahweh then remarks to the priests that they should take such sacrifices to their governor and see if he would be pleased to receive them. The point here is that they would NEVER take such a gift to the governor... and he was a human being! How dare they bring such a disgraceful thing to Yahweh.

#### D. Verse 9

1. The point of verse 9 is not that the priests are being commanded to repent necessarily (although they should genuinely) but rather it is irony and sarcasm being spoken to the priests.

2. The point is this: "Do you think that you can ask for God's favor and receive His blessing while you are directly violating His precepts?!?"

3. The answer is obviously NO. The priests were insulting Yahweh by bringing such sacrifices to Him, thus all the pretty words they could muster up meant nothing to Yahweh. Genuine repentance was in order.

#### E. Verse 10

1. Yahweh was so fed up with their polluted food that He desired for one of them to just shut the doors of the temple so that this nonsense would stop.

2. Basically Yahweh is telling them that He would rather receive no sacrifices at all than for this to continue on the way it's going.



3. When you attend the holy convocation is it because you need something to do, to fill in space for an evening, you'd like to see a friend, or are you really coming to worship the Father? Are you bringing your best? Would you act this way in front of your governor?

4. While you're here bringing your sacrifice of praise is it really coming from your heart or is it a nuisance to you? Are you looking around, day dreaming, complacent, or are you seriously here to worship?

5. When the Scriptures are being taught are you really listening? Are you diligently and intently hearing Yahweh speak to you through His word being preached?

6. Does Yahweh wish for you to just "shut the doors" of His temple?

#### F. Verse 11

1. I believe this is Yahweh saying that His name is to be honored amongst the nations, and if the nations see this that is going on at the temple - **IN HIS NAME** - Yahweh will not be honored.

2. Look with me to **Deuteronomy 4:5-8**. The point here is that other nations would see that Yahweh was wonderful and the Torah was wonderful and be moved to serve the God of Israel. On the flip side, when such blemished worship was going on at the temple it would be dishonoring to Yahweh's name.

3. Yahweh says that Incense and pure offerings are what should be offered in His name.

4. When you leave the holy convocation do you leave and live for yourself all week long or do you live for Yahweh first and others second? Is He the Father and Master of your life or are you mastered by other things?

5. Does the life you live cause others to see the holiness of Yahweh? Do you bring honor to His name or a reproach to His name? Do people who know you think, "Now there's a person who does more in action than just speaking." Or do people think, "Now there's a person who pretends to be a Christian, but there's no way he or she could be."

6. You may think that you're not a very good speaker - and you may really not be a very good speaker. But I'm going to tell you about the loudest message you could ever give to someone - the way you live your life. If your single it may be remaining chaste and seeking only a person who loves Yahweh. If you're married it may be loving your spouse and serving

them and raising godly children in the fear and love of Yahweh. People listen to these messages more than words, tracts, etc.

#### **G. Verses 12-14**

1. They are profaning His name by what they are bringing to the table of Yahweh.
2. Verse 13 has the priests proclaiming that this is such a nuisance! In other words their heart is not in what they are doing. They are going to the motions of the sacrifices but it is a bother to them; they'd rather be doing something else.
3. It is once again reiterated that they were bringing defected animals to offer, and possibly even stolen ones! The meaning of the Hebrew word behind "stolen" could be a reference to a "torn" animal, but the word does have a reference to something taken by theft.
4. The meaning however remains the same. They were bringing to Yahweh something that did not mean anything nor cost anything.
5. This is why verse 14 says what it does. You have a person who has an acceptable male (remember Leviticus 22) to offer and has made a vow to offer this male, but instead he sacrifices a defective animal to Yahweh.
6. It's like looking across the herd and seeing the most beautiful male goat and thinking, "That's my most prized, precious, and pricy animal. He is healthy, strong... that's the one Yahweh would love to have for sacrifice." However you then think, "But this goat is worth so much, and he is such a good goat for breeding. I think I'll just offer this one over here that's sick and beginning to grow blind. I don't need him anyway."
7. Yahweh ends by saying that He is a great King and is to be feared.

Do you fear Him tonight? Is He a GREAT KING in your life? I'm going to pray to finish out this service; if you need to do some repenting then please do so during the prayer. Don't continue to bring Yahweh defective sacrifices.

#### **Levi Breaks the Covenant**

*Malachi - Pt. 3*

Text: **Malachi 2:1-9**

#### **I. Malachi 2:1-9**

##### **A. Verses 1-2**

1. Based upon the rebuke that Yahweh had given the priests (what we covered last week in regards to *defective sacrifices*) He now gives them a decree.

2. If they don't listen and take it to heart. They have been dishonoring Yahweh's name in their *crazy* sacrificial method and they need to take His word to heart. When Yahweh speaks we've got to be listening. Some of the best teachings from the Scriptures are the ones that challenge us. All Biblical teaching is good, but to hear instruction that *cuts in love* and is a challenge to our life; that's good teaching. Teaching that says "TAKE IT TO HEART!"

3. The punishment towards the priests here (if they didn't take to heart what He was telling them) would be a curse. Yahweh says that He would curse their blessings.

a. The things which were once a blessing to them would now be a curse to them. When Yahweh blesses us in this life, His blessings are always to be used to further pursue His glory, His purposes, and thus His kingdom. His blessings produce such with His people.

b. However, if we are not honoring His name with our blessings He can curse our blessings. The things that are meant as blessings now become a curse. We begin to use these blessings Yahweh gave us in ways we should not. We neglect Yahweh, Yeshua His Son, His laws, etc. Yahweh curses our blessings when we are not honoring His name in them.

4. Yahweh ends verse 1 by saying that He has already began to curse their blessings, BECAUSE they aren't taking His instruction to heart.

### B. Verse 3

1. Rebuke your descendants. I believe that the HCSB here has translated a literal phrase figuratively and missed the intent of the passage. Here are some other translations of the phrase.

a. **KJV** - "I will corrupt your seed"

b. **ASV** - "I will rebuke your seed"

c. **Aramaic Targum** - "behold, I will rebuke you in the increase, the fruit of the seed."

d. This word (*zerah*) can refer to actual seed sown into the ground

but also figuratively to refer to the seed of the man or the descendants (children) from a man. Here I believe it refers to the seed sown in the ground.

e. Remember, **Numbers 18:21** says this of Levi (the priesthood), “Look I have given the Levites every tenth in Israel as an inheritance in their land; there will be no portion among them for you. I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites.”

f. The Levites received 10% of all the seed in Israel, but Yahweh here says that he is going to rebuke *their* seed, in other words, cause something bad to happen to 10 % of the seed sown in Israel so that the Levites portion is damaged and good for nothing. Remember, He curses their blessings.

2. Yahweh also says that on top of this He will spread the animal waste from their sacrifices over their faces. When we read this we should see very clearly that Yahweh means business.

a. Normally the internal waste of an animal would be taken outside the camp and burned. (**Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:11-12; 8:17**)

b. Here Yahweh says that instead I spread it over your face. Yahweh is making the point that He detests their practice.

### C. Verse 4-6

1. At this point any priest who has heard the words of Malachi (or possibly even read them) would know that Yahweh was serious about this.

2. Yahweh desired for His covenant with Levi to continue on. **Turn first to Exodus 32:21-29 and then to Deuteronomy 33:8, 10-11.** Yahweh chose the Levites to teach and instruct the people and to be in charge of all the offerings and sacrifices in the nation of Israel. However, the priests in the day of Malachi had abandoned their end of the covenant. They were however still trying to claim the *privileges* of the covenant, but at the same time neglecting the *conditions* of the covenant.

3. A “covenant” is the Hebrew word *beriyth*. The meaning of the word is an alliance or a pledge between two parties.

a. For example, Yahweh established a covenant with Noah and his progeny in Genesis 9. He states in *Genesis 9:11*, “I confirm my covenant with you that never again will all flesh be wiped out by the waters of a flood; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.” God then gave what was called the SIGN of the covenant; the rainbow. This type covenant had no conditions,

Yahweh made it with Noah and his progeny unconditionally.

b. Sometimes covenants are made between Yahweh and certain peoples that require conditions. In other words Yahweh says if you do this, I will do this. Such is the case here with Levi. He promised them life and peace but that was only if they honored the covenant that was made between them and Yahweh.

4. So, we can now see why Yahweh is being so harsh with Levi. He desired for His covenant with Levi to continue.

a. **Malachi 2:4-6** again. There were times when the Levites revered Yahweh's name and spoke the truth of the law from their lips. They turned many away from sin *by teaching the right paths*.

b. *Not so though* in Malachi's day. They were only teaching by example but in this case it was a *bad example*. People who looked to the Levites for guidance were looking at priests who had abandoned their end of the covenant between them and Yahweh. We all influence people whether we know it or believe it. A friend, a neighbor, a fellow church member, a spouse, children, etc. We can be a light to them with our example, or we can be death to them with our example.

#### D. Verse 7

1. A priest should be a man who knows the truths of Yahweh. **Leviticus 10:10-11** says to the Levites, "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, and the clean and the unclean, and teach the Israelites all the statutes that Yahweh has given to them through Moses." Contrast this with **Ezekiel 22:26** which states, "Her (Israel's) priests do violence to My law and profane my holy things. They make no distinction between the holy and the common, and they do not explain the difference between the clean and the unclean. They disregard My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

2. People would come to a priest to receive instruction. They would come to him thinking, "*This man has been communing with Yahweh and has spent much time meditating about the narrow way. I will go to him and ask him my question and recognize that He speaks the truth because he loves the Father genuinely.*" And this is how it should be - I realize that this is not how it was here in Malachi, but Yahweh is saying this is the proper way.

3. The priests are the messengers of Yahweh. The word for messenger

here is the word *malak* which means a representative and is also used to refer to angelic beings. The priests were to be the human beings that spoke as Yahweh's vice-regents on the earth.

#### E. Verses 8-9

1. We see here that these priests were not doing what verse 7 says they should have been doing.
2. Instead of turning people away from sin they were causing many to stumble by their instruction. **The LXX renders this part of verse 8 as, "...you've caused many to fail (or weakened many) in following the law..."** In doing this they had violated the covenant. Part of their end of the alliance with Yahweh was to teach and instruct Israel in the Torah; they had failed to do so here.
3. Seeing they did not keep *their end* of the agreement Yahweh was no longer obligated to keep *His end* of the agreement of life and peace and blessing. Yahweh made them despised and humiliated before the people. And think of just how despised and humiliated they felt when Malachi came out and spoke all these words we've been studying.
4. The text ends in verse 9 by saying that the priests had been showing partiality in their instructions. This could be speaking of both (1) showing partiality in judgment (rich over poor) as well as (2) neglecting certain parts of the law (non-defective sacrifices) while attending to others.
5. I recognize that preachers in 2010 are not Levite priests, but at the same ↓ time I recognize that people who hold to the position of an Elder in the New Covenant Assembly are required to preach the word even as Paul wrote to Timothy in **2 Timothy 4**; in season and out of season.
  1. Preachers who follow in the path of these Levite priests in Malachi are under the same condemnation as those in Levi. The Elders are required to (1) guard knowledge, (2) turn away people from sin, and (3) be an example in their own life.
  2. Instead of this though many have forsaken the covenant of Yahweh by causing many to fail at keeping the law. How is this done? By teaching people "You don't have to keep God's law." Or, "You are not under the law, and that means all that stuff was for then, we live in the *New Covenant* now."
  3. When people come to seek the law from the mouth of an Elder, the law of Yahweh is what they should find. They shouldn't find an Elder who tells them Yahweh's law is unimportant, or that they

shouldn't concern themselves with such trivial matters, but that's what the majority of so-called "Elders" are doing today.

**2 Timothy 4:1-4 is being fulfilled - don't fill the part of the listener.**

4. Likewise Elders should not be partial in the law. They shouldn't think that they have the right to neglect certain laws and focus in on others. All of Yahweh's word is important. **All Scripture** is profitable for doctrine, reproof, and correction in righteousness.

5. In Yahweh's providence He has maintained some Elders even to this day across the world who are guarding knowledge and turning many people away from sin. Aren't you glad that our chief Elder, our Elder Brother Yeshua the Messiah did this? When we read the biographies of His life in the gospels we read of a man whose lips spoke much knowledge and always taught people to keep the law of Yahweh. He was never partial in the law. Let's follow His example. Be a genuine Christian.

**Never Marry Outside the True Faith**

*Malachi - Pt. 4*

Text: **Malachi 2:10-12**

I. Last week we discussed how that Levi (the Levite priesthood) had violated the covenant Yahweh made with them.

A. They were bringing these sick, lame sacrifices to Yahweh.

B. They were neglecting to teach the people of Israel the Torah properly.

C. This week we will see that the priests had also begun to marry women whom Yahweh had directly told them not to make marriages with. YES, the priesthood had begun to do this.

1. As we've discussed, you would expect the priesthood, as the leaders in Israel, to set the example for the people. It's like the qualifications for the Elders and Deacons. Most of the qualities exhibited in the godly Elder are for an example for the other men.

2. But as we've seen here in Malachi - the priests were the ones who were goofing everything up. They were making a mess of everything when they should have been keeping the true worship alive.

3. Let me say that all this doesn't mean every individual Levite priest was involved in all this transgression. I mentioned last week that Ezra the priest was faithful to Yahweh, and it is almost a certainty that Malachi's prophecy was given during some of the days of Ezra's life. Ezra was faithful to the priesthood (see **Ezra 7:10**).

4. However, what usually happens is this. When the nation of Israel or a tribe in Israel would go astray, the majority would be in the astray category but a small remnant would be left in the true worship. Thus it is not proper to judge true worship by numbers. People find Biblical safety in numbers, and sometimes you will find a lot of people believing something correct, but never judge truth based on how many people believe something.

D. So, getting back to the subject at hand today. The Levite priests had married foreign wives, and this obviously would lead them to follow foreign gods.

## II. **Malachi 2:10-12**

### A. **Verse 10**

1. One Father and One God = same.
2. Father is used in the sense of originator / designer and thus as the text uses the word - "create."
3. "US" here refers to all in Israel.
4. Deal Treacherously and Profane Covenant
  - a. Verse 10 can be seen as being attached to the context of verse 9. Remember how the priests were showing partiality in their instruction. The indictment of verse 10 could be that why do they show partiality in their judgments when all in Israel are "family?" One God and Father created them, thus they shouldn't be showing partiality.
  - b. However, there is a phrase here in this verse "act treacherously" that will be familiar to the verses that follow (vss. 11-16 specifically).
  - c. I don't think it does harm to see verse 10 as attached to BOTH contexts. So, the argument from Malachi is this. "We are all brothers as we have ONE Father and ONE God. So why do we treat one another (fellow family) the way that we do?"



e. They were profaning the covenant of their fathers. Whether you look at it as the Covenant as a whole, or the specific covenant of Levi.

## B. Verse 11

1. Notice “acted treacherously” = detestable thing. Something detestable is equivalent to what we would regard as “nasty.” Something we would turn our head from because it was so gross.

2. The second part of verse 11 tells us what the treacherous, detestable act was. Judah (the House of Judah) had profaned Yahweh’s sanctuary by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. The word profaned means to “defile, pollute, or desecrate” and of course we know that the sanctuary of Yahweh was the dwelling place of Yahweh.

3. Look at the phrase “the daughter of a foreign god.” Many times in Scripture the Israelites are called the sons and daughters of Yahweh (one example; **Deut. 32:19**). Those who worshiped other gods were called the sons and daughters of the other gods. So Judah had begun to practice intermarriage with people who did not worship the One true God Yahweh. This was looked upon as nasty, detestable, and an abomination to Yahweh.

4. The LXX translates the last part of verse 11 as “and has gone after other gods.” In other words the women whom some in Judah had married were causing the men to go and worship gods other than Yahweh.

a. Women have a way of alluring men. This is not always a bad thing. For example, an ancient Judahite commentator on the Tanak (Rashi) mentions an old understanding of a passage in **Exodus 38:8**. The bronze laver was made from the mirrors of the women in Israel. The women had brought their mirrors as a contribution towards building the tabernacle.

b. He states that when Moses first saw the women bringing their mirrors he thought to himself, “How can I accept these contributions for God’s holy tabernacle? These are instruments of vanity.” However, Yahweh replied to Moses with this: “Accept them because these contributions are the dearest to Me of all, for by means of them, the women established many legions of offspring in Egypt.” In other words, during the misery and affliction in Egypt the women of Israel used the mirrors in adorning themselves to allure their husbands and then... the children of Israel continued to multiply in Egypt. This is an example of good alluring.

c. However, wicked, foreign women are also beautiful. They can

used their beauty to draw men of Israel away from the true faith, and this is what was happening. Look at **Nehemiah 13:23-30**.

d. Particularly notice **verse 25**. Nehemiah says he rebuked them, cursed them, beat them, and pulled out their hair. Evidently Nehemiah understood how detestable the act was. Notice down in **verse 29 and 30** that the Levites had defiled the priesthood, and Nehemiah was reforming and purifying the priesthood for all things foreign to the worship of Yahweh.

e. In verse 26 Nehemiah mentions Solomon. This tells us that it was foreign women that drew Solomon into sin. Turn now to **1 Kings 11:1-10**.

5. We must take heed here and recognize that it is a sin to marry out of the faith of Yahweh. We must teach our sons and our daughters to only marry within the Scriptural faith. **Nehemiah 13:25** states, “You must not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters as wives for your sons or yourselves.”

a. It is our responsibility as parents to protect our children from marrying people that will turn their heart away from Yahweh.

b. I’m sure Solomon thought to himself, “I’m a spiritual person. I’ll be sure to witness to these wives after I marry them. Surely they’ll come around.” Of course we see the outcome.

c. For us as parents, the number one question before even considering a mate for our children should be the faith practice of the other male or female. Likewise, if a person is grown that should be the number one question from them in looking for a mate for themselves.

d. For Solomon it wasn’t the number one question. The beauty of the foreign women allured Solomon and faith came secondary or maybe even later than second.

e. We see the problem hopefully. You don’t marry outside of the Scriptural faith because the party in the marriage that doesn’t serve Yahweh will turn you away to follow after their god or gods. And it doesn’t have to be just a god of another faith practice, but it could be the god of money, materialism, and the list goes on and on.

f. Paul mentions this law in **2 Corinthians 6:14** when he writes for us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Marriage

definitely applies here. Paul is taking the law of **Deuteronomy 22:10** (yoking an ox and a donkey) and applying it in principle to people and relationships.

g. Never, never, never, never.... marry outside of the Scriptural faith. Don't even look for mates for your children outside of the faith. Don't even consider it an option. You are beginning a cycle that may continue on for a very long while.

### C. Verse 12

1. The cutting off of descendants. Tents of Jacob refer to the families that follow Yahweh in Jacob/Israel. See, if we allow our children whom we are supposed to be rearing in the fear of Yahweh, to make marriages with foreigners who do not serve Yahweh we are beginning a chain of events that may last for 3 or 4 generations; maybe even longer.

2. Remember the second commandment. Do not make an idol for yourself.. It is in the context of this commandment that He mentions punishing the children to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations. In other words, He cuts off the descendants from the tents of Jacob.

3. Verse 12 goes on to speak of even if they offer an offering to Yahweh of hosts. This is probably better translated as including those who bring offerings to Yahweh of hosts. In other words, the priesthood was involved in this treachery, and they shouldn't think that they are exempt from the rebuke because they are of the priestly class. **Ezra 10:18-44** mentions at least over 100 priests who had married foreign women.

4. Brothers and Sisters, marriage is a holy union. If you are looking for a husband or wife, never EVER look outside of the Christian-Israelite faith. Likewise parents, teach your children from a young age that marriage outside of the faith is not optional. Keep those generations pure for Yahweh.

### Be a Faithful Husband to Your Wife

*Malachi - Pt. 5*

Text: **Malachi 2:13-16**

I. Last week we talked about how the priests had married foreign wives. This week we will see yet another action they had taken (leading the people away from Yahweh) and how it was tied into the first act of treachery.

A. Although there are two acts of treachery here in Malachi 2:10-16 they are both tied together.

B. Not only were they making marriages with women they should not have been, they were at the same time being disloyal to the Israelite wives of their youth. They were abandoning their good Israelite wives for bad foreign women.

## II. Malachi 2:13-16

### A. Verse 13

1. *Cover the altar with tears* - this lets us know that the priesthood is still being spoken of for the other tribes in Israel did not have access to the altar in the tabernacle/temple. The tears describe some type of remorse as we sometimes when we are sorry about something cry in emotion. Notice it also mentions weeping and groaning.
2. Even though all this crying was going on Yahweh was still not respecting their offerings. Yahweh was not receiving the offering. Why? Because true repentance was not taking place. They were continuing to act treacherously and only seeming to be sorry in their emotions but not changing their lives.
3. I have witnessed before people in church who talk a very big talk. You may see them cry or get very happy in public. However, I've seen these same people continue to violate Yah's law over and over again even after they are told of their sin and are fully aware of their sin.
4. Unless you are willing to turn away from your sin do not expect Yahweh to see your tears and your groaning. True repentance means you stop sinning and fight to never commit that sin again.

### B. Verse 14

1. *For what reason?* - Notice here that the priests are still giving these same old lame questions to Yahweh. Remember back in chapter 1 they asked questions like "Where have you loved us?" and "How have we defiled you?" These questions show that they were somewhat blind to their own sin.
2. Brother Arnold has made a very good statement over the years and that is this: "There is none so blind than he that refuses to see." You can be so caught up in emotions and rituals that you do not even see the blatant, open sin in your life. At the same time you are all over everyone else's sin, but yours remains because it is your own and you aren't interested in changing yourself, just others around you.
3. It is okay, and there is a time to rebuke others in love, but the first

person you need to rebuke is yourself. Look at your own life, and sweep out from under your own rug before judging everyone else.

4. Why did Yahweh not accept their offerings? What were they doing wrong? Well, Yahweh was witnessing what they were doing to the wife of their youth; their marriage partner and wife by covenant.

a. This wife of their youth was obviously a lawfully wedded wife. This was not a heathen wife or a foreign wife, but rather an wife in Israel.

b. This was a woman they had a relationship with from a very young age as evidenced by the word youth.

c. This woman was the covenant wife of the priest. At a young age the priest made vows before Yahweh and people; vows to this woman to be a faithful husband and love and take care of this woman. However, as age set in the husbands were acting treacherously toward their wives. The LXX reads that she had been forsaken instead of “treacherously.” Same meaning carries.

d. Carefully take note that it says Yahweh has been witness of these things. Yahweh sees when we act treacherously towards our wife husbands. Yahweh sees when we do wrong towards anybody.

### **C. Verse 15**

1. We now come to some verses that are a little difficult to translate. Not that there unknowable, but there is more than one way to translate verse 15 and 16 from Hebrew into English.

2. I will first follow the HCSB translation, and explain to you what I gather from reading verse 15 in this particular translation.

### **3. HCSB**

a. The One God made man by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. It was the breath or spirit of Yahweh that caused man to become a living soul.

b. Seeing that it is from Yahweh that we receive life we should be grateful and do that which He desires for us to do. What does this One God seek from us? Answer: a Godly offspring. Yahweh would have us men marry a godly woman and produce godly children.

c. This ties in with last weeks marriage. Godly children are not produced from marital alliances with foreign wives. We saw in Nehemiah that some of the children born from women of Ashdod, etc. couldn't even speak the Hebrew language. Marriages to foreign women not only produce husbands leaving Yahweh, but they also produce children that do not serve Yahweh because of the heathen impact of the foreign wife. Same applies to a relationship with an Israelite woman and a foreign man.

d. Because all this is true watch yourselves carefully men of Israel. Don't forsake the wife of your youth. Keep your marriage vows with her and produce godly children.

4. Now the alternate translation some Bibles give is in reference to the word ONE. The HCSB believes the word ONE refers to the ONE GOD. However, there is a possibility that the word ONE refers to the ONE FLESH union spoken of in Genesis between the male and female.

a. The KJV reads, "And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed."

b. In other words Yahweh made them in the beginning male and female and for this cause a man shall leave his parents and cleave to his wife and the two shall become ONE FLESH. (Remember, when Eve was brought to Adam he said, "She is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.")

c. These words in Scripture refer to kinship. When someone spoke of another person being their flesh and bone it meant they were blood family. This is the one flesh relationship in marriage.

d. So the intent of taking the passage to be speaking of the "ONE FLESH" relationship is that Yahweh instituted marriage to be a kinship that lasts forever, i.e. till death.

e. When the text says "Wherefore one?" It is meant to be taken as this: Yahweh wants a man to leave his parents, cleave to a woman/wife, become one flesh with this woman, and both of them love Yahweh and produce godly children.

5. Which do I believe the word "ONE" is referring to?

a. I'm not really sure, and let me tell you that there are some other complexities in this passage that I'm not even going to get into.

b. All that being said, let's keep this in mind. The meaning of the passage is concrete whether we take the ONE to refer to Yahweh God or to the ONE FLESH relationship.

c. The point is that Yahweh created the men and women of Israel to marry, stay married, and produce godly children by training them in the ways of Yahweh. This was not happening because (1) the men of Israel were marrying foreign women, and (2) in the process they were forsaking the Israelite wife of their youth.

d. The men shouldn't have been doing either of these two practices.

#### D. Verse 16

1. Okay new verse... however this one has some difficulties attached to it too, but with some diligent study we can gain the meaning.

### The Levites Have Not Been Cast Off

*Malachi - Pt. 6*

Text: **Malachi 2:17 - 3:1-6**

#### I. Malachi 2:17

##### A. Verse 17

1. Once again the priests are said to be wearying Yahweh with their words, but they are so blind to their sin they ask, "How have we wearied You Yahweh?"

2. The answer is in two statements they are making. Two sayings are coming from the lips of the priests.

a. ***The first is this:*** "Everyone who does evil is good in Yahweh's sight and He is pleased with them."

b. They priests were calling evil-good, bitter-sweet, darkness-light.

c. When we look at things that Yahweh calls evil or unlawful in his instruction manual and we just glance over those who commit those evils we are using our own judgment instead of Yahweh's.

d. Some things we may see as being evil (murder, theft, etc.). However, some things in Yahweh's law we may not think are such

a big deal.

- i. Standing in honor of the elderly
- ii. Wear garments that are pure and not mingled
- iii. Eat circumcised fruit (5 year old fruit trees).
- iv. Eat only that which has fins and scales (aquatic life)
- v. Make tassels on the four corners of your garment.

e. These are laws of Yahweh and to violate these laws is an act that is evil. Think about it; keeping these laws is considered lawful so not keeping these laws is considered unlawful or evil.

d. We need not be in the business of calling evil good or making light of any of the instructions of Yahweh. Obviously the priests were doing just this. They had been offering blemished sacrifices, not teaching the Torah in Israel, marrying foreign wives, and putting away the Israelite wives of their youth. Yet the entire time remaining blind to their wickedness.

e. ***The second thing they were saying is this:*** “Where is the God of justice?” What is the meaning of this saying and how were these words wearying Yahweh?

i. Here’s one possibility. They may have been making this remark to those like Malachi that were rebuking them for their actions.

ii. In other words they were saying this: “If what we are doing is so bad and evil as you say, why doesn’t God judge us? Why doesn’t he just kill us right now?”

iii. I have people respond similarly to me today when I explain to them that they should obey Yahweh’s law. They say, “Well, I pretty blessed; I live a pretty good life. If I’m living an ungodly life why isn’t Yahweh judging me harshly?”

iv. You know what the answer to this is? He is a merciful Mighty One. He bestows common grace on the lives of even those who do not serve Him.

v. The fact that Yahweh doesn’t strike evil doers this very instant does not show His pleasure with their lifestyle, it only shows His grace upon the lives of His creation.



## II. Malachi 3:1-4

### A. Verse 1

1. Who is the messenger whom Yahweh calls “My messenger?” It is none other than Yochanan the Immerser (John the Baptist).

a. Luke 1:57-66 speaks of the birth and naming of John, and verses 67-79 tell us of Zechariah his father’s prophecy concerning John and other Messianic themes. **Luke 1:76** is the key verse here.

b. Let’s also look at **Matthew 11:7-10**. The subject is John (vs. 7) and in **verse 10** Yeshua says that John is the one it is written about and then Yeshua quotes Malachi 3:1.

c. I do want you to look at something carefully. The last phrase in Malachi 3:1a says, “...*he will clear the way before me.*” However, in Yeshua’s quotation of this text (Matthew 11:10) it says, “...*he will prepare Your way before You.*”

d. This is not a variant between the Hebrew text and the LXX (as in many cases). Malachi 3:1 has Yahweh speaking as though the messenger is preparing the way for Him - Yahweh. Yeshua, however, quotes the text as though Yahweh is talking about the messenger preparing the way for someone else.

e. I believe the answer is found in reading the remaining portion of verse 1. It says that the Lord you seek will suddenly come to His temple, and then it calls this Lord the messenger of the covenant.

i. First off this is not the messenger that was just spoken about in the first part of verse 1. This is a different messenger who is called “the Lord.”

ii. Secondly notice at the end of verse 1 that this is a declaration of Yahweh of Hosts. Yahweh is saying that the Lord will suddenly come to His temple.

iii. The first word Lord is the Hebrew word “adon” and I believe this word refers to Yeshua. The second word LORD in the text is the Hebrew name Yahweh.

f. This shows us that Yahweh speaks in verse 1 saying that John the Baptist will “clear the way before Me.” However, this is fulfilled by the agency of the Son of Yahweh as spoken by Yeshua in Matthew 11:10. Yahweh speaks of Himself in Malachi, and this

is fulfilled by His Son per Matthew 11:10.

g. An example of this is in **Exodus 7:17-21**.

h. So Malachi 3:1 is talking about Yochanan the Immerser coming to prepare the way before Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua is the Lord that will suddenly come to the temple; Yeshua is the messenger of the covenant.

## B. Verse 2

1. The first portion of verse 2 asks a question and the question is asked because the day of the Lord's coming will not be endured by many.

2. Who can endure and who will be able to stand are parallel questions.

3. The verse goes on to speak of Yeshua as a refiners fire and cleansing lye.

a. The process of refining metal in Biblical times was simple. It involved heating the metal to the liquid state and then skimming or blowing of the impurities, sometimes called dross in Scripture. Gold and silver that had been refined was more precious and expensive.

b. The cleansing lye is a reference to washing something to make it clean. Some translations following the LXX render the word as "herb" instead of soap, believing that there was a certain plant grown in Palestine that had cleansing properties and was used by "fullers" to take dirt or spots out of clothes.

4. Do not make the mistake here of thinking that at the coming of the Lord everyone will be precious silver and clean clothes. Look briefly at **Malachi 4:1**. There will be those that are left unrefined and are described as stubble, without root or branch.

## C. Verses 3-4

1. Who is cleansed? Verse 3 tells us that Yeshua, the messenger of the covenant who works on Yahweh's behalf will purify the sons of Levi - the LEVITES!

2. The priests whom we have been discussing will be a purified priesthood at the coming of the Lord. They will be refined like gold and silver and they will present offerings to Yahweh in righteousness. In context, the offerings spoken of here are the animal sacrifices offered by the Levitical priesthood.

3. Notice verse 4, the offerings will please Yahweh as in the years past and days of old. Animal sacrifices are pleasing to Yahweh when offered correctly. Think about Abel's sacrifice (more excellent) and then think about Noah's sacrifice (no more flood).

### III. Which coming of the Lord is being spoken about?

A. Malachi 3:1 most definitely speaks of John the Baptist preparing the way of Yeshua the Messiah.

B. At the same time Malachi 3:3-4 speaks of Yeshua (the messenger of the covenant) refining the Levites and the Levites then offering up pure offerings as in the days of old. This isn't happening currently.

C. The only answer I can come up with in my mind is that Malachi speaks of both the first coming and second coming of the Lord.

1. I believe you can already clearly see John the Baptist in Malachi 3:1; thus the first coming is not difficult to see.

2. The second coming of the Lord, I believe, is just as easy to see here directly in the text if you understand the plan Yahweh has in store for the Levites. Ezekiel 40-48 speaks much about this.

3. There is coming a time when the temple of Yahweh will exist and in that temple there will be Levites who offer pure offerings that please Yahweh. This time is the 1,000 year kingdom that comes after the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah, but before the new heavens and new earth.

### IV. Malachi 3:5

#### A. Verse 5

1. Here is the judgment aspect of the Lord's coming. Notice again that the coming of the Lord isn't a refiners fire for everyone. Some people receive wrath.

2. Verse 5 gives a list of those who do not fear Yahweh. Yahweh says He will be a ready witness against all these people.

3. Keep in mind what we covered back at the end of chapter 2. The priests were saying Where is the God of justice? All who do evil are good in Yahweh's eyes. Yahweh has answered their ridiculous speech by showing them that at the Lord's coming, the righteous will be kept and the wicked will be consumed.

## **Tithing: Like You've Never Heard It**

*Malachi - Pt. 7*

Text: **Malachi 3:6-12**

I. Introduction - we will cover more than just the subject of tithing tonight, but we will cover some key points concerning Biblical tithing. Points many know nothing about.

A. Why is this? It is because of a lack of Bible study. The subject of tithing is one of the most preached about subjects in nominal Christianity, and it may be the least studied subject.

B. I ask you right now - have you ever gotten your Bible out and looked up every place in Scripture about tithing? Have you ever done a diligent exegetical study on this subject.

C. I will tell you that most preachers have not. Most preachers proclaim that people owe the church 10% of their paycheck every week and if they do not give it they are robbing God.

D. My Granddaddy told me of a preacher one time who tried to say that Malachi was the first book of the New Testament, so he could get the tithes into the New Testament.

E. Isn't it funny that many people boldly proclaim that we do not have to keep the law/commandments, but when it comes to tithes they boldly proclaim to pay them or else you're disobeying God.

F. I believe in tithing, it's just that I believe exactly what Yahweh has told us about in His inspired Word.

## **II. Malachi 3:6**

A. Before we delve into what I will speak about mostly tonight, let's cover verse 6 of this chapter.

B. Malachi 3:6 is a very famous passage that you've probably heard quoted. Most of the time people quote it like this, "Yahweh does not change" or "The Lord does not change." Very rarely however are we given the meaning contextually.

1. Notice that there is a context to Yahweh's statement here.

2. Yahweh is saying that He has not changed in regards to His covenant with Jacob-Israel.

3. The reason the descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed is not because of their righteousness, it is because of the covenant and oath of Almighty Yahweh. Yahweh keeps His promises.

4. Look briefly to **Deuteronomy 9:1-6**. Notice why the Israelites were being given the land of Canaan. Because of the oath Yahweh swore to their fathers. This is what Yahweh means when He says He does not change in Malachi 3:6.

C. Now, I believe Yahweh does not change in relation to His law and in relation to other subject matters in Scripture. That being said, we should always handle the word of Yahweh accurately. Do not get into the habit of quoting this verse out of context (or any verse for that matter).

1. It's easy to do when you're in a heated argument with someone.

2. People do it with this verse and with another well known verse - Hebrews 13:8: "Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

3. I used to hear this verse quoted all the time in relation to healing from sickness. I believe in healing; I believe Yahweh can heal any disease He wants to heal, but this verse doesn't have anything to do with healing.

4. In context (and you can check it out in your studies) the verse has to do with the TEACHINGS of Yeshua or the GOSPEL of Yeshua. The author is telling us that although there are various kinds of strange teachings, the good, righteous teachers only proclaim what is true. And what is true about Yeshua is the same yesterday, today and forever.

D. Let's make sure to use the Scriptures justly.

### III. The same stands for **Malachi 3:7-12**

#### A. Verse 7

1. First off notice how this verse follows a theme in Malachi. As we've went through this book we've seen how that Yahweh will make a statement, pronounce a judgment and then who answers back with a question wondering what Yahweh is talking about?

2. The priests are the ones Yahweh is talking to here. The Levite priests.

3. Yahweh says they have turned from His statutes and not kept them.
4. He says to return to Him and He will return to them, but they ask Him how will they return?

## B. Verse 8

1. Yahweh begins by asking, “Will a man rob God?” The question is asked because no one in Israel would even think that robbing God would be a good thing. Of course we are not supposed to steal, especially when it is in relation to stealing from the Most High.
2. But... they were robbing God. Yet they continue to be blind to their sin as we’ve seen through the whole book so they ask, “How are we robbing You?”
3. The answer: by not making the payments of 10% and the contributions. Now, someone is bound to say something like this here. “You mean that the Levites had to make payments of 10%? I thought the Levites were the ones who received the 10%!” Let me explain.
  - a. Turn with me to **Numbers 18:21-24**. There is no way we will cover everything on tithes in this sermon, but I will try to explain most of it from the Bible, and give you the references to go and study this for yourself.
  - b. Now, after reading Numbers 18:21-24 lets turn to the first place in the Bible where there is a commandment to tithe. **Leviticus 27:30-34**.
  - c. Basically, when the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, most of the tribes received an inheritance of land. Upon this land they could grow food and raise animals. The Levites however performed the work of the tent of meeting. They were busy performing the prescribed sacrifices for the children of Israel. In order to feed the Levites, Yahweh commandment that the children of Israel bring a 10<sup>th</sup> of their produce and livestock to the Levites.
  - d. You might ask, “Where did the Levites live?” Numbers 35:1-8. The Levites were given “cities” or locations within all of the other tribes of Israel. Each tribe was to establish Levitical cities within its territory. Because the Levites had no land of their own, they could not engage in serious agriculture. They derived their living primarily from the tithes offered by the rest of the tribes. Their work was supposed to be the study and pursuit of the Torah, as

well as the holy matters of the Tabernacle and priesthood.

e. Now, turn back to **Numbers 18**, but this time let's read verses **21-29**, centering in on verses **25-26**. Here we see that the Levites paid 1/10 of the 10% given to them. Most people have no clue this was even done. This was the best part of the 10<sup>th</sup> as we've read, and was to be given to the High Priest which at this time was Aaron, the brother of Moses.

4. Now, back to **Malachi 3:8**. Not only were the Levites robbing God by not paying the tithe, but they were also robbing God by not paying what the text here calls "contributions."

a. The Hebrew word is "terumah," and is defined by Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee lexicon as - "*An oblation, offering, gift, or heave offering.*" Examining the texts in the Tanak that use this word we see that the contributions could range in anything from money (silver, gold) to produce or livestock.

b. Exodus 25:3 mentions a contribution (terumah) of gold silver and brass. Exodus 29:27 mentions the shoulder or thigh of a ram as a contribution (terumah). Exodus 30:11-16 mentions the half-shekel offering for the service of the tent of meeting as a contribution (terumah).

c. Numbers 18:8-19 mentions several contributions that belonged to the Levites. Included are grain offerings, sin offerings, restitution offerings, first fruits, and first born animals.

d. I think what we see here is that the robbing from God was not only taking place amongst the priests but also from amongst the people. Generally when a priest or ruler goes bad so do the people under the priest or ruler.

e. At the same time we have seen how that the priests were offering sick, lame, and blind animals to Yahweh, and were stealing from Yahweh what he had commanded them to offer.

### C. Verse 9

1. This verse verifies that the entire nation was robbing God. From the priests down to the people.

2. The nation was under a curse because they were not obeying the law of the tithes and contributions.

### D. Verse 10

1. Yahweh commanded that the entire 10% be brought into the storehouse so that there would be food in His house.

2. Turn to **Nehemiah 13:4-13**. This is what was taking place in Israel at this time.

a. Notice that the tithe was food for the priests. It was edible. Grain, new wine, olive oil, bullocks, rams, etc. are all food and drink.

b. If the tithes were not given, the priests would not have any food.

c. Let's also look at **Nehemiah 10:35-39** concerning this storehouse or treasury.

3. Next Yahweh says to test Him in this way. What He is saying here is to try Him for His Word. He promises to open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing upon the nation if they will not rob Him of tithes and contributions.

a. None of this refers to money or even silver or gold as many preachers will tell you.

b. The floodgates of heaven opening relate back to **Genesis 7:11-12** and also **Genesis 8:1-2**. Opening refers to rain and closing refers to no rain.

c. Yahweh is saying that if they obey Him he will bless them with rain for their land and thus their crops and animals.

#### E. Verse 11

1. This verse verifies the understanding of verse 10. Rebuking the devourer means Yahweh will not allow pestilence to come upon their crops. Devourer could refer to insects that would destroy produce or even strangers that would come into the land and steal the produce from the children of Israel.

2. Notice that the rebuking of the devourer was for the purpose of their produce not being ruined. Notice also the vine not being barren. Their will be plenty of grapes on the vine.

#### F. Verse 12

1. The nations will look at the children of Israel and call them blessed.



2. Why? The land will be delightful. In other words the land is plentiful. Much produce is grown from off the land of Israel and many animals are fed from the rich grass and pure water that is produced.

#### IV. Closing

A. This is proper understanding of Malachi's mentioning of tithing.

B. It has nothing to do with...

1. Paying 10% of your paycheck to a local assembly.
2. Paying 10% of money to any preacher.
3. Paying what some are now calling a first fruit offering to a preacher.

C. Biblical tithing was never on money, which in that day would have been silver and gold. And Biblical tithing was never to be paid to a preacher.

1. Even Yeshua never took tithes from people - he wasn't a Levite priest.
2. If you're interested in understanding Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek please let me know and I'll give you a message on that subject.

D. What can we learn and apply?

1. We should not rob God by not giving any offerings (contributions) he requires of us.
2. There were many times that monetary offerings were commanded in the Torah for things like the building of the tabernacle or the up-keep of the tabernacle. The widow in the Bible who gave her last two coins (Mark 12:41-44) wasn't paying tithes. She was giving money into the temple treasury.
3. We should give monetarily today. We give to our local assembly in order to have things like a place to worship or keep feasts, up keep of the assembly hall, literature for evangelism, and even sometimes for a full time elder that labors in studying and teaching. We also support widows that are genuine widows and help the poor, etc. When we do not do this we are truly robbing God. He has commanded us to be givers, and neglect to do so is theft.

### **Universal Reconciliation is False**

*Malachi - Pt. 8*

Text: **Malachi 3:13 - 4:3**

## I. Introduction

A. Have you ever looked around at people in general and wondered why they prosper in spite of living a life of sin?

1. You may be doing your very best, but struggling to make ends meet.
2. All the while people who do nothing for Yahweh seem to have more than enough.

B. Or how about this; you may be serving Yahweh and prospering in doing so, but the entire time you see others not serving Yahweh and prospering the same amount as you.

C. This is the situation we face tonight in Malachi. There were those in Israel (beginning with the priests and then down through the people) who were saying harsh words to Yahweh.

1. They were looking at the other nations around them and noticing that these other peoples did not serve Yahweh yet lived “the good life.”
2. They were thinking to themselves, “Why make these efforts to serve Yahweh?” They were thinking, “I could just be doing what I want to do and still prosper like these other nations.”

## II. Malachi 3:14-18

### A. Verses 13-15

1. Number one: the words being spoken here were harsh words towards Yahweh.
2. Number two: don't think that the words have to be spoken, they can be in the form of thoughts. To think such thoughts but never utter the words is still a harsh thing to THINK towards Yahweh.
3. Verse 14 shows us the thoughts and words that are harsh. Some in Israel were saying it was useless to serve God. They were saying that they weren't profiting from keeping what Yahweh required or walking mournfully (probably an idiom of a repentant heart and lifestyle) before the Great King.
4. The *Aramaic Targum* at the verse paraphrases it like this: “Ye have said, he gains nothing who worships before the Lord; and what mammon (or riches) do we gain because we have kept the observation of his word, and because we have walked in contrition of spirit before the Lord of hosts?”

5. Here you are, striving to keep the commandments, statutes, ordinances of Yahweh. Striving to live a life of holiness, yet other people around you are not and everything seems to be working out for them just fine.

6. Look at verse 15 again. The Judahites were even considering the heathen as being blessed! They were saying that those who do wickedness prosper - they are even able to test God and no harm comes to them.

#### B. A Few Things to Ponder on From **Verses 13-15**

1. Always recognize that in the Bible you do not determine who is doing right or wrong by how much “material” they have. There are both extremes in Christianity today. One example of a poor, righteous woman is Miriam, the mother of Yeshua. In Luke 2:21-24 we read that the offering she brought to dedicate Yeshua at the Temple was either a pair of two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Normally, a flock animal was brought in addition to a turtledove or pigeon, but for those who were poor two turtledoves would suffice. (Lev. 12:8).

2. Recognize as well that Yahweh disciplines those whom He loves, and He doesn't love everyone. You may be receiving the discipline of Yahweh for what might seem like small mistakes in your life while other people commit capital crimes and live luxuriously. The discipline you are receiving should be taken by you as a loving act of your heavenly Daddy - Yahweh. (BTW - Abba in Aramaic can be translated “Daddy” into English.)

#### C. **Verses 16-17**

1. Here we see that those who feared Yahweh (revered Him) spoke to each other about Him (His name, His ways, etc.)

2. Yahweh listens when we talk about Him. When we ride down the road and discuss Him with our brothers and sisters in Messiah. When we think about Him or pray to Him. When we meditate upon His Torah. Yahweh is listening according to this text.

3. Verse 16 also teaches us that a book of remembrance was written before Him. This book is for those who fear Him and think about His name.

4. It certainly does not mean here that Yahweh needs a book so He can remember. The prophet is using this as an illustration to teach us that our righteousness before Yahweh is rewarded. When we love Yahweh and keep His commandments He sees and knows and remembers.

5. Verse 17 tells us that these righteous will be a special possession to Yahweh on the day He is preparing. I believe this day refers to the final judgment. These are the ones He will spare or have compassion on. Yahweh's compassion is likened to the compassion a man has upon his son who serves him. If you're a father with a son or daughter, think about how wonderful it makes you feel when your child serves you as their parent. You love them dearly. That's what Yahweh is trying to tell us here. That's how He feels about His people.

#### **D. Verse 18**

1. On the day Yahweh is preparing there will be a clear line of distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

2. The righteous are the ones who serve God, and the wicked are the ones who do not serve God.

3. This is the prophets answer to those who were making the harsh statements back in verses 14 and 15. The prophet reminds them that one day a crystal clear line will be drawn. I don't believe most people believe in such a day. They continue to live without serving Yahweh or either thinking they are serving him because they show up for church once a week and warm a seat. No, the day will come when you will see that all those who thought they were living their "best life now" will become ashes under the sole of the feet of the righteous. All will see that Yahweh rewards righteousness and punishes wickedness.

4. Next is a text from which Paul probably got the idea that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

### **III. Malachi 4:1-3**

#### **A. Verse 1**

1. Here we read that the day is coming. This aligns with the "day I am preparing" back in chapter 3 verse 17. I believe this refers to the final judgment day spoken of many times by the prophets and spoken about by Yeshua in places like Matthew 25 (sheep and the goats).

2. Yahweh says that this day is "burning like a furnace." Here Yahweh will begin to give us some word pictures that paint a picture in our mind.

3. He then states just who this "furnace" will be for. He mentions the arrogant and all who commit wickedness. These are the ones mentioned back in 3:18; the ones who do not serve Yahweh.

4. The text says they will become stubble. Stubble here probably refers to something like chaff, or the portion of the plant stem that was left after harvesting.

5. The next sentence says that this “coming day” will consume them not leaving them root or branch. This picture then reveals to us the “destiny” of the wicked.

6. This picture is also mentioned to some degree by a well-known figure at the time of Yeshua - Yochanon the Immerser. Turn to **Matthew 3:10-12** and we will see John’s description of the wicked that fits very well with the prophet Malachi.

7. These are just a couple of verses that lead me to the belief in what’s commonly called the “total annihilation” position of hell. To be stubble in a burning furnace, consumed, not having root nor branch, and burned up like chaff, are pictures of annihilation, and not eternal conscious torment.

## B. Verse 2

1. Now the scene changes to the destiny of the righteous; the one who serves God.

2. He states that the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.

a. Take note that the word is s-u-n and not s-o-n. Some make a common mistake of hearing the word “sun” and thinking it says “son.”

b. I do believe this is most likely a reference to Yahweh’s Son Yeshua, and he is likened to the sun which produces light, warmth, and thus health to the earth.

c. Zachariah (father of John the Baptist) may have alluded to this in **Luke 1:76-79** where he mentions the dayspring or dawn as visiting them. The word here in the Greek means sunrise and is often translated “east” in the NT.

d. We might also take note of the healing in the wings, which is the Hebrew word *kanaph*. This is the same word used in speaking of the borders or corners of the garment in **Numbers 15:37-41**. The tassels were worn here upon the garment and reminded the children of Israel to keep the commandments (**Proverbs 3:1-2, 8**). It is interesting that when the woman with the 12 year old issue of blood touched Yeshua’s tassel she was healed instantly (**Luke**

**8:43-48; Matthew 14: 34-36).**

3. Next He says that those same ones who have feared His name will playfully jump like calves from the stall. If you've ever seen a newborn or baby calf or lamb you know how that they jump back and forth playing with the other calves. This is the picture for the righteous and is a picture of life as opposed to what we saw for the wicked - a picture of death.

**C. Verse 3**

1. Now he gives us the picture of the righteous trampling over top of the wicked.
2. He describes the wicked as "ashes" (another picture of annihilation) under the soles of the feet of the righteous. You picture here a calf joyfully leaping out the stall after being fed and landing on ashes or dirt beneath his hooves.
3. Yahweh says this is how it will be on the day He is preparing.
4. Once again, Yahweh will reward those who fear His name, but will punish those who reject Him. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

**Don't Forget the Law of Moses**

*Malachi - Pt. 9*

Text: **Malachi 4:4-6**

**I. Introduction**

A. The book from the prophet Malachi has been one of stern rebuke upon the priests in Judah and upon the people in Judah.

B. Many, many times we have read Yahweh speaking to these people to honor Him with the life that they live. Each of these times is a call to be obedient to His instructions.

1. In 1:6-14 he instructs them to keep His commands concerning unblemished sacrifices.
2. In 2:1-9 he instructs them to be diligent the people the law.
3. In 3:10-12 he tells them not to marry the daughter of a foreign god.

4. In 2:14-16 He reprimands them for putting away the Israelite wife of their youth.
5. In 3:5 He speaks of judging against sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, those who oppress widows and orphans, those who cheat others, and those who deny justice.
  
6. In 3:7-12 He rebukes them for not robbing Him by not paying the tithe or giving the contributions.

C. However, we did see in the last message that there was a faithful remnant amongst Judah that feared Yahweh and spoke about Him and His ways often to one another. We saw how that there is and will be a definite distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Between the one that serves God (keeps God's law) and the one that does not serve God (disobeys God's law).

## II. Malachi 4:4-6

A. This brings us to the final 3 verses in the book and the theme continues.

### B. Verse 4

1. The prophet gives an instruction here, and that is to REMEMBER the Law of Moses. Here we find the word torah translated as instruction which is good. It can be translated as this but also as direction, guidance, teaching, etc. It is a word that refers to all of Yahweh's commandments.
2. When Yahweh states here for Judah to remember the law of Moses it is asking them to recall, bring to mind, think about, cause to be memorialized the law of Moses.
3. Here we have one of the last instructions given in what is commonly called the Old Testament writings. There will be about a 400 year gap between the time of Malachi and the time John the Baptist is born. This is sometimes called the intertestamental period. One of the last things out of the prophets mouth is to bring to mind or don't forget the Law of Moses. Wasn't that the problem through the whole book of Malachi? They had forgotten the law, forgotten to keep the Law of Moses.
4. It is important for us to take extreme caution here. If Yahweh asks us to remember the law of Moses we need to be extra sure to make mention of it and practice it else it will be forgotten. It's kind of like His name. If you cease to use it, it will eventually be forgotten which is exactly what happened. Well if you cease to bring the law to mind and do not obey it, it too will be forgotten.
5. A few good ways to remember are:

1. Read it
2. Study it
3. Practice it
4. Tell others about its goodness (Psalm 119)
5. Teach it to your children

6. I know it seems like an uphill battle in the midst of so many people who don't want to remember the law of Moses, but we've got to listen here to Yahweh's words. This is what He says before He sends Yeshua the Messiah. (Isn't it odd that He would give such an instruction if He intends to abolish His law about 500 years later?)

### C. Verse 5

1. Next He tells us that He will send Elijah the prophet before the Day of Yahweh comes.

2. I do not believe this verse is a reference to Elijah himself being raised from the dead and sent by Yahweh.

3. It appears from reading other passages that this verse is fulfilled in the coming of John the Baptist.

a. Remember that we identified John back in Malachi 3:1 when comparing to Matthew 11:10.

b. Look now at **Luke 1:13-17**. Notice the similarity in Luke 1:17 with Malachi 4:5-6. It even mentions the turning the hearts of the fathers to the children.

c. Look now to **Matthew 11:7-15**. It is clear here that Yeshua sees John the Baptist as fulfilling the prophecy in Malachi.

d. Now turn to **Matthew 17:10-13**. The disciples asked him why the scribes say that Elijah must come first. It was a common belief that the prophet Elijah would show up before the coming of the Messiah. It is possible that there is a future fulfillment of this in some way before Yeshua comes again, but what we know for sure is that Yeshua believed the prophecy was fulfilled in John.

- recognize that restoring here means to put things in a proper state of order for the Messiah.

- This is exactly what John preached. Repentance; a turning back to Yahweh.



e. Some point to **John 1:19-21** as showing John the Baptist was not Elijah, and there right in this sense. John was denying that He was literally Elijah the prophet. Many in that day believed Malachi 4:5 to refer to Elijah coming de-facto, but Scripture shows it refers to one who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah.

#### D. Verse 6

1. Notice what is spoken of here as the reformation or restoration. Remember to Matthew 17 where Yeshua says that Elijah will restore all things. This verse gives us the meaning of that.
2. A big part of it is turning the fathers hearts to the children and the children's hearts to the fathers.
3. John the Baptist's mission would consist of bringing fathers and their children together in a complete understanding of truth. This is good verse to teach us the importance of fathers training their children in Yahweh's law and having their heart focused on their children.
4. We get very busy today in the world we live in and we take time out to do many things, but one thing that very few fathers take time out to do is to train their children in Scripture. We play video games with them, train them how to hit a baseball, throw a football, shoot a basket ball. We teach them to hunt, fish, ride a bike, etc. All of these things are not bad, it's just that so much time goes into these things and so little time goes into the study of the Word.
5. It is important to have a heart for your children in this area. You need to make sure that you teach them while they are young so they will have a heart turned towards you as a father. As they grow older they will listen to your instructions because they were not "thrown on the back burner" but rather you took the time to teach them about Yahweh.
6. He then ends by saying that otherwise He would come and strike the land with a curse. If we don't get back to remembering the law accepting John the Baptist and the Messiah and turning our heart towards our children we will be causing a curse to continue. Cursed is the nation, family, father, person who does not follow the teachings here.