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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Malachi 2.

(2014)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises  
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Malachi 2.

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### Topics.

- The LORD will rebuke the priests' offspring, and spread dung on their faces.
- The fear of the LORD.
- The priest should guard knowledge and people should seek his instruction.
- The priests have caused many to stumble and corrupted the covenant.
- Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?
- God is seeking godly offspring so be faithful to the wife of your youth.
- You have wearied the LORD with your words.

**INTRODUCTION:** to the book of Malachi. Malachi means, messenger of Jehovah or my messenger. It is clearly after the Babylon exile. The Temple had been completed and sacrifices were being offered (Mal. 1:7-10) (Mal. 3:8). A Persian governor (the word for governor in (Malachi 1:8) is a borrowed word, used for the Persian governors in Palestine during the time after the Babylonian exile) was ruling in Jerusalem. This indicates a date later than that of Haggai and Zechariah. Although the urging of Haggai and Zechariah had brought the completion of the Temple (515 B.C.), this had not produced the Messianic age many expected. Zechariah's call to repentance had gone unheeded, and God apparently had not restored the covenant Blessings. Malachi, writing a short time later, called the people to repentance because: -

- The priesthood had become corrupt.
- Worship, had become routine.
- Social justice was being ignored.
- Tithing was neglected (the tax system for the nation Israel).

Malachi predicted the coming of both John the Baptist and Jesus, referring to each as a "messenger" of God (Malachi 3:1).

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### Malachi's focus is the Priests.

Malachi 2:1-2 ----- <sup>1</sup>"And now, O priests, this command is for you. <sup>2</sup>If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart.

The focus is the priests (the religious leaders of Malachi's day). At the birth of Israel the entire nation entered into a covenant with the LORD at Mount Sinai. This covenant came with tremendous blessing if they faithfully followed the LORD. Their land would be blessed, they would abundantly prosper in all they did, sickness would flee, their children and livestock would multiply and they would be head of the nations and not the tail. But it also came with a horrific curse if they rebelled against the LORD and corrupted his statutes and laws. For a complete list of the blessings and curse (see Deuteronomy 28). Malachi is warning the priests if they do not listen to his message and turn from their wickedness and corrupt ways and give God the honour due to him the curses of the covenant will come upon them.

## **The LORD will rebuke the Priests Offspring, and Spread Dung on their Faces.**

Malachi 2:3-4 ----- <sup>3</sup>Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. <sup>4</sup>So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with *Levi (the priesthood)* may stand, says the LORD of hosts.

The focus is still the Levitical priesthood. The people of Israel were to bring a tithe (10%) of their offerings and sacrifice to the priests. The priests were to give the best of the peoples tithe to the high priest and his family, but they were taking the best for themselves. The tithe was always food it supplied the high priest and his family and the Levitical priesthood and their families and the poor with food. This tithe was the tax system God had established for the nation of Israel during the Old Testament during this time the priesthood was not to own property and the only tax God imposed on the entire nation of Israel was ten-percent and it was always food.

For further information concerning tithing, see the title: -

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Dung:** comes from the Hebrew word (peresh) and literally means excrement (as eliminated), and figuratively carries the idea of separating and dispersing or wounding and scattering.

The Levitical priesthood entered into a covenant with the LORD, which stated, if they kept His statutes He would bless everything they did, but if they turned from God He would withdraw His favour and blessing and everything they put their hand to would come to nothing.

## **The Fear of the LORD.**

Malachi 2:5 ----- <sup>5</sup>My covenant with him (Levi) was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name.

The covenant was one of fear because of the consequences (the curse) that came upon the nation if they broke it, but the rewards were enormous if they had remained faithful.

The fear of the LORD for all mankind has the following two aspects: -

1. **An eternal aspect:** wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
2. **An aspect for the present moment:** the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, crime and wars in most countries.

Having a fear of the LORD means respecting the lives of others, respecting creation and doing what is right before God. Fear is about recognising that though we might be a good person in this world we are nevertheless sinners before the Holiness of God (1 John 1:1-10) and will give an account of our actions and be judged accordingly and allowing this truth to motivate us to seek God and his forgiveness. This is why the Bible says: -

- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 111:10) (Proverbs 1:7)

The fear of the LORD should motivate mortal men and women to seek after God and eternal life and motivate them to do the right thing.

**NOTE:** after observing mankind the author of Ecclesiastes gave the following advice to those who choose to deny God and live for themselves: -

- Eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which they toil under the sun the few days of their life that God has given them, for this is their lot. (Eccles. 5:18).

**The Priest should Guard Knowledge and People should seek his Instruction.**

Malachi 2:6-7 ----- <sup>6</sup>True instruction was in his (Levi) mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He (Levi) walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. <sup>7</sup>For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

It is right and proper that people seeking God should be instructed by others, but they should never simply accept what they hear just because someone is standing behind a pulpit or is a brilliant orator and speaks with great authority. These are the chosen priests of the LORD, (the religious leaders of Malachi's day) they are doing the outward religious acts, but their heart is not right. We should never turn our minds off as we enter the doors of any teaching environment, we are all responsible to filter things through common sense, logic, reason and ask questions.

**Reasoning religious matters:** sadly reasoning is a skill that is lacking in some churches today since congregations are not only told what to believe, but also discouraged to even consider another point of view and often if they do try to question something they are verbally condemned or considered a rebel amongst the flock, but this is not how brothers and sisters of the early church fellowshipped, rather they got together and reasoned with each other over the Scriptures to prove what they were being taught was actually so.

Remember their churches were made up of Jews who had been steeped in the customs of Moses, Greeks who had been devoted to their pagan gods and leading women of cities who had authority and influence. Obviously they had certain teachers, but their teachers taught expecting their listeners to study and question what they had heard and they commended them for doing so. They encouraged their congregations to take the responsibility upon themselves to see if what they were saying was so rather than simply switching off their mind and accepting what they were hearing was absolute truth (Acts 17:11).

**Paul and Silas at Berea:** Paul refers to the Jews in the Berean church as being noble (meaning honourable, principled, admirable, praiseworthy and upright) because they received what Paul and Silas had to say about the Lord Jesus Christ with all eagerness, but they did not simply believe it because two great men were proclaiming it. After the meetings the Bereans gathered together to examine the Scriptures to prove that what Paul and Silas were saying was true, and for this they were not only commended by the apostles, but also encouraged to continue holding meetings to examine the Scriptures for themselves (Acts 17:11).

**The Priests have caused many to Stumble and Corrupted the Covenant.**

Malachi 2:8-9 ----- <sup>8</sup>But you (the priesthood) have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>9</sup>and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction."

These priests had authority over the nation, they had the scrolls of the prophets, the Temple and dressed in holy garments they appeared holy on the outside but were so corrupt on the inside that they caused many seeking God to stumble. This shines a spotlight on the truth, "the greater the responsibility and the greater the power and the gift, the greater the power to do harm to God's name and to His people. Just because a church is very large or a religious organisation is global it is not proof that it is right before God.

These priests not only had all the power and authority over an entire nation, but their religion also had been going for thousands of years yet they were leading the people of Israel away from God and not toward Him.

## **Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?**

Malachi 2:10-12 ----- <sup>10</sup>Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? <sup>11</sup>Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. <sup>12</sup>May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob, any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

Malachi's focus now is, upon all the people of Israel and Judah, notice the passion in Malachi's voice for the LORD'S name. He is saying, to the people of Judah and Israel why do they show favouritism to each other, when they all have the same heavenly Father, and all belong to the same family. Added to their wickedness of showing favour to each other the men of Israel and Judah had polluted God's Temple by marrying woman who worshipped idols and pagan gods.

### **God is Seeking Godly Offspring so be Faithful to the Wife of your Youth.**

Malachi 2:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD'S altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. <sup>14</sup>But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. <sup>15</sup>Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup>"For the man who hates and divorces, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

The men of Israel were being faithless to their wives, meaning they were committing adultery. At this time Jewish men believed they could put their wives away for almost any reason. The wife of your youth implies that she is much older now, so it is most likely the men were having affairs with the younger women (probably the women that worship pagan gods and idols). Notice what the LORD desired from their marriage unions was godly children. This was especially true for Israel for the following two reasons: -

1. The children inherited the land God promised to Israel.
2. Israel as a nation was called to be a light and beacon of God to all nations.

Corrupt practices are the fruit of corrupt principles and the fruit of those who are false to their God. The Jews had their own nation, but they put away their wives, (probably to make room for younger wives) and in the sight of others, they outwardly appeared holy and pretended to be tender toward their followers while they were secretly living a life of adultery and making their wives bitter.

They are going to the LORD'S altar praying and weeping, yet the LORD withholds blessing from them. This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth it matters not how much we pray or weep before the LORD it will count for nothing if we willing intend to continue in our corruptions and wicked ways.

### **You have Wearied the LORD with your Words.**

Malachi 2:17 ----- <sup>17</sup>You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

Malachi rebukes the people for their discontent and their lack of faith, telling them that they have wearied the LORD with their words. Since God cannot be wearied Malachi is speaking of God after the manner of men worn tired after listening to the continuous afflictions and ills of others.

These Jewish sceptics have wearied the LORD with their words by trying his patience by their unbelief, mistrust and blasphemous speeches and by persisting to say the following three things: -

1. Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of God.
2. God delights in those who do evil.
3. By asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

From these three mentioned in (Malachi 2:17) it can be supposed that they also wearied the LORD in the following ways: -

- By charging God's wisdom with injustice.
- By saying God delights in the wicked, because He does not punish them.
- By saying everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the LORD.
- By asking where is, the God of justice (implying there is no God of justice).
- By murmuring against God, because he did answer as soon as they called.
- By saying God has no delight in those that do good and faithfully serve him.
- By judging God's and His justice according to their judgments.
- By their perverse thinking and reasoning against God and his justice.
- By asking where is the proof that Israel's God is the God of judgment?

These Jewish sceptics upon seeing that the nations around them who served idols and believed in other gods were abounding in wealth and strong in body and possessing all that is accounted good in this world while they were themselves who had the knowledge of God where overwhelmed with want, hunger and servitude were saying that, "Nothing is governed by the judgment of God, but all that happens, happens by blind chance. Then corruptly reasoned: -

- Evil pleases God, because the wicked prosper.
- Good things displease God, because those who have the knowledge of God are in want and struggle.
- God cannot be in the world, because there is no judgment and the wicked are not punished.

Some have thought that these corrupt, hypocritical and prideful priests were able to continue in their superficial and outward worship of God while they cast their wives aside so they could continue in their affairs to take younger women because they had no fear of God because of their corrupt belief that there was no such thing as moral right or moral wrong since they saw that no punishment was laid on the wicked and no encouragement, reward or blessing was bestowed on the righteous.

This is the reasoning of many in our age and why some atheists' say that God does not exist because they see good people overwhelmed with want and sorrow while the wicked live in luxury and abundance. They reason if God is a God of justice where is He, since justice cannot be found in our world (at least not as we think of justice) since many who are innocent suffer while many who are wicked prosper.

Peter in his letters wrote: -

- Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.  
<sup>4</sup>They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Those who do not believe in the world to come raise these sort of questions when they see the wicked in power and prospering and the faithful in low estate and struggling. Peter says, because judgment is delayed scepticism will be rife before Christ's return in glory people will say, "Where is the God of judgment, why does

he not arise and show himself to be a God that judges the earth, by taking vengeance on the wicked, and granting prosperity to his people? Due to the long delay of the Messiah's coming, this was the scoff of the Jews at the time of Malachi, because they expected immediate outward prosperity and happiness. Likewise in the last days this will be the scoff of unbelievers at the promise of Christ's return in glory. The following words with which the next chapter begins: -

- 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; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1).

Answer the questions of the scoffers. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace, but a day will come when the Lord will suddenly and unexpectedly return in glory as a consuming judge.

**The author of Ecclesiastes wrote: -**

- God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Eccles. 12:14).

The writer of Psalm seventy-three feels that all his faithfulness toward God was in vain, he was envious of the arrogant when he saw the prosperity of the wicked whose bodies were fat and sleek, and who were not suffering trouble as others were even though they were full of pride and violence and their hearts overflowed with follies and malice and they set their mouths against God. He feels his faith has been vain because he is suffering and stricken. Until he looked to their end and realised they were in a slippery place because in a moment they could be utterly swept away in terrors and destroyed to the darkness of the grave. He then praises God and declares: -

- Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. <sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. <sup>27</sup>For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. <sup>28</sup>But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works. (Psalm 73:25-28)

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End.