

THE FINAL MESSAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

WHY WAS GOD SILENT FOR 400 YEARS?



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INTRODUCTION

The author of the last book of the Old Testament is called Malachi. Malachi is a Hebrew word meaning "my messenger." The writer of this book is anonymous simply because in the Word of God it is never the man who is important, like in our day. His message, the Word of God, only is important. This book was written 100 years after Zechariah, in the fifth century B.C., during the days of Nehemiah.

The close of the Old Testament Canon left Israel in two great divisions. The mass of the nation was dispersed throughout the Persian empire, more as colonists than as captives. A remnant, chiefly, of the tribe of Judah, Zerubbabel, a prince of the Davidic family, and the survivors of the priests and Levites, had returned to the land under the permissive decrees of Cyrus and his successors, and had established again the temple worship. Upon this remnant the interest of the student of Scripture centers, and this interest concerns both their political and religious history.

Politically, the fortunes of the Palestinian Jews followed with one exception, the Maccabean revolt, the history of the Gentile world empires foretold by Daniel 12:7.

The Persian rule continued for about 100 years after the close of the Old Testament Canon, and seems to have been mild and tolerant, allowing the high priest, along with his religious functions, a measure of civil power. But under the overlordship of the governor of Syria, the sources of the history of the Jewish remnant during the Persian period were purely legendary. When Josephus wrote during this period, the rival worship of Samaria, John 4:19, 20, was established. Palestine suffered much from the constant

wars between Persia and Egypt, lying as it did "between the anvil and the hammer."

In 333 B.C. Syria fell under the power of the third of the world empires the Greco-Macedonian of Alexander. That conqueror, as Josephus writes, was induced to treat the Jews with much favor, but upon the breaking up of his empire, Judaea again fell between the hammer and the anvil of Syria and Egypt. Falling first under the power of Syria, but later under Egypt as ruled by the Ptolemaic kings.

During this period, B.C. 320-198, great numbers of Jews were established in Egypt, and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made, B.C. 285.

In B.C. 198 Judaea was conquered by Antiochus the Great, and annexed to Syria. At this time the division of the land into five provinces familiar to readers of the gospels, Galilee, Samaria, Judaea, (often called Judaea, collectively) Trachonitis, and Peraea, was made. The Jews at first were permitted to live under their own laws, under the high priest, and a council. About B.C. 180 the land became the dowry of Cleopatra, a Syrian princess married to Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt, but on the death of Cleopatra it was reclaimed by Antiochus Epiphanes, the little horn of Daniel 8:9, after a bloody battle.

In 170 B.C. Antiochus, after repeated interferences with the temple and priesthood, plundered Jerusalem, profaned the temple, and enslaved great numbers of the inhabitants.

December 25, B.C. 168, Antiochus offered a sow upon the great altar, and erected an altar to Jupiter. This is the "desolation" of

Daniel 8:13, type of the final, "abomination of desolation" of Matthew 24:15. The temple worship was forbidden, and the people were compelled to eat swine flesh.

The excesses of Antiochus provoked the revolt of the Maccabees, one of the most heroic pages of history. Mattathias, the first of the Maccabees, a priest of great sanctity and energy of character, began the revolt. He did little more than to gather a band of godly and determined Jews pledged to free the nation, and restore the ancient worship. He was succeeded by his son Judas, known in history, as Maccabaeus from the Hebrew word for hammer. Judas was assisted by four brothers, of whom Simon is best known.

In B.C. 165 Judas regained possession of Jerusalem, purified and rededicated the temple, an event celebrated in the Jewish Feast of Dedication. The struggle with Antiochus and his successors continued. Judas was slain in battle, his brother Jonathan succeeding.

In him the civil and priestly authority were united, B.C. 143, under Jonathan, his brother Simon, and his nephew John Hyrcanus. The Hasmonean line of priest-rulers was established, under sufferance of other powers. They possessed none of the Maccabean virtues. A civil war followed, which was terminated by the Roman conquest of Judaea, and Jerusalem by Pompey, B.C. 63, who left Hyrcanus, the last of the Hasmoneans, a nominal sovereignty.

Antipater, an Idumean, wielded the actual power, B.C. 47. Antipater was made procreator of Judaea by Julius Caesar, and appointed his son Herod governor of Galilee. After the murder of Caesar, disorder ensued in Judaea and Herod fled to Rome. There he was appointed, B.C. 40, king of the Jews, and returned. He conciliated the people by his marriage with Marianne, B.C. 38, the beautiful grand-daughter of Hyrcanus and appointed her brother, the Maccabean, Aristobulus III, the high priest. Herod was king when Jesus Christ was born.

The religious history of the Jews during the long period from Malachi, B.C. 397, to

Christ followed, as to the outer ceremonies, the high priestly office and the temple worship, the course of the troublous political history, and is of scant interest. Of greater moment are the efforts and means by which the real faith of Israel was kept alive and nurtured. The tendency of idolatry seems to have been destroyed by the Jews' experience and observation of it during the captivity. Deprived of temple and priest, and the possibility of continuing a ceremonial worship, the Jewish people were thrown back upon that which was fundamental in their faith, the revelation of God as one, the Creator, to be conceived of as having made man in His own image, and therefore as having such analogies to the nature and life of man as to be comprehensible by man, while remaining the eternal Spirit, God.

This conception of God enforced by the mighty ministries of the pre-exilic prophets, finally prevailed over all idolatrous conceptions, and this ministry was continued amongst the returned remnant by Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The high ethics of the older prophets, their stern rebuke of mere formalism, and their glowing prophecies of the ultimate restoration of Israel in national and religious supremacy under Messiah, were all repeated by the three prophets of the restoration. The problem was to keep alive this exalted ideal in the midst of outward persecutions and sordid and disgraceful divisions within.

The organic means to this end was the synagogue, an institution which formed no part of the biblical order of the national life. Its origin is obscure. Probably during captivity, the Jews, deprived of the temple and its rites, met on the Sabbath day for prayer. This would give opportunity for the reading of the Scriptures. Such meeting required procedure and some authority for the restraint of disorder. The synagogue doubtless grew out of the necessities of the situation in which the Jews were placed, but it served the purpose of maintaining familiarity with the inspired Writings, and upon these the spiritual life of the true Israel was nourished.

During this period also, was created that mass of tradition, comment and interpretation, known as Mishna, Gemara, forming the Talmud. Halachoth, Midrashim and Kabala, so superposed upon the law that obedience was transferred from the law itself to the traditional interpretation. During this period also rose the two great sects known, as the gospel narratives state, the Pharisees and the Saducees. The Herodians were a party rather than a sect. Amongst such a people, governed under the suzerainty of Rome, by an Idumean usurper, rent by bitter and unspiritual religious controversies, and maintaining an elaborate religious ritual, appeared the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and our Saviour.

Malachi, "My messenger," the last of the prophets to the restored remnant after the 70 years captivity, probably prophesied in the time of confusion during Nehemiah's absence, Nehemiah 13:6. The burden for the message is the love of the Lord, the sins of the priest, and of the people and the future day of the Lord. Malachi, like Zechariah, sees both advents, and predicts two forerunners, Malachi 3:1, 4:5, 6.

As a whole Malachi gave the moral judgment of God on the remnant restored by His GRACE under Ezra and Nehemiah. He has established His house among them, but their worship was formal and insincere. It is about the burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel, and it is placed at the end of the Old Testament Canon. God indicts the people and the priesthood in His last Old Testament message.

I. Case one: **The need for regeneration. An indictment of the people**, Malachi 1:1-14.

Verse 1, "The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord, yet ye say, wherein hast Thou loved us? 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' saith the Lord, yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

- A. Here we have God's attitude expressed in terms of human emotions. This is called in theological circles, an anthropomorphism.
- B. He loved Jacob and hated Esau, because Jacob was a believer, and regenerated, and Esau was an unregenerate unbeliever.
- C. They were twins and before they were born God loved Jacob and hated Esau. Romans 9:11. This illustrates the sovereignty of God, and free will of man.
 - 1. The free will of man, and the sovereignty of God, Romans 9.
 - a. The unique position of Israel, Verses 1-5.
 - 1. Paul uses a triple oath. Verse 1, "I say the Truth in Christ, I lie not. My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit."
 - 2. Paul was burdened because of his brethren, national Israel.
 - b. The premise. God's promises are for believers, verse 6, "Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."
 - 1. There is nothing wrong with the Word of God. It was given to Israel in four unconditional eternal covenants: Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and new covenants.
 - 2. All Jews by physical birth are not the spiritual seed of Israel. For a Jew to inherit these promises, he must have eternal life by being born again.
 - 3. God's promises are for the believing Jews, the spiritual seed of Abraham.
 - c. The premise illustrated: The formation of the Jewish nation, verses 7-18.
 - 1. Isaac and Ishmael, verses 7-9.
 - A. Not all the seed of Abraham are children of God, verse 7. In Isaac not Ishmael was the seed

called. “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

B. Isaac was a believer, known to God before time, omniscience. He was the recipient of God's promises as a believer.

2. Jacob and Esau, verses 10-13.

A. Esau and Jacob were twins. Esau was the older and had a better right to God's promises from the human viewpoint.

B. God made the statement before their birth, verse 11, and had an attitude toward them in eternity. “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.”

3. Moses and Pharaoh, verses 14-18.

A. There is no unrighteousness with God, verse 14. That is unthinkable and impugns the character of God, a trait of Satan.

B. Pharaoh hardened his own heart, so God hardened his heart that his power and might be known through the whole world, verse 18. Pharaoh made a decision, free will, volition, but God knew how his decider would decide.

C. The premise illustrated, God's essence, character, verses 19-23.

1. God chose to deal with man in GRACE, and if man rejected GRACE, the alternative is judgment.

2. Man that was created has no right to stand up habitually against God, and argue. Who is man to question God's character? Verse 19, “Thou wilt say them into me. Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”

3. God has a right to do anything He wants to do. Verse 20, “Nay but. O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?”

4. There are two kinds of vessels, vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor, made by a potter. Verse 21. Each vessel has a decider, a free will.

5. God, willing to show and make His power known, endured with Pharaoh. He was longsuffering with those who rejected Him, vessels of wrath, Pharaoh. Pharaoh equipped himself to destruction, verse 23, by rejecting God's GRACE, “and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.”

6. God also makes known his GRACE, riches of His GRACE, on believers, vessels of honor, which He prepared before in eternity, verse 23.

D. Salvation of the Gentiles. Verses 24-29.

E. Conclusion, verses 30 ff. Faith is human responsibility.

Malachi 1:3-5

God's judgment on Esau and his descendants.

- I. God loved Jacob, verse 2, and now Israel asked God to show them His love.
- II. Esau rejected the GRACE of God, and God's judgment passed to him and his descendants, verse 3. Edom, the descendants of Esau, become a desert, where jackals, not dragons, wandered.
- III. Edom tried to come back, but He threw them down, verse 4. "Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus said the Lord of hosts. They shall build but I will throw down; and they shall call

them. The border of wickedness and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever."

- A. This is a summary of the history of Edom of Idumea. Once they were thriving and powerful, but were conquered by the Romans.
- B. Unregenerate individuals of nations are unable to use the promises of God in time, and will be judged by God in eternity. "Against whom the Lord hath indignation forever." i.e., unbelievers.

II. Case II: The need for temporal fellowship and service. An indictment of the Levitical priesthood, Malachi 1:6-2:10.

It is one thing to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but we must be in temporal fellowship in order to do so. You need to confess your sins, and forget those things which are behind and keep moving. Service is really to keep moving in the Christian way of life.

A. The Levitical priesthood.

1. God illustrates His indictment by the father-son and master-servant relationship. The prophets had constantly despised His Name.
2. Reuben, as Jacob's eldest son, was heir to the tribe rulership, family priesthood, and double portion. But he lost the rulership to Judah, the priesthood to Levi, and the double portion to Joseph, 1 Chronicles 5:1, 2.
3. The Levitical priesthood was "specialized," but has been set aside, because of the universal priesthood of the believer-priest.

III. Case III: The need for worship, Malachi 1:7-14.

A. The table of shewbread, verse 7. "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar: and ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible."

1. The priests were using polluted or leavened bread on the table of shewbread in the temple. The purpose of every article of furniture in the temple was to show the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Leaven is a type of sin, 1 Corinthians 5:7, and the bread is a type of Christ, the bread of life, John 6:35. Now Christ was without sin in His humanity. 2 Corinthians 5:21. And the broken bread is a picture of His death.
3. Bread put in the mouth pictures salvation. In swallowing it, it becomes part

of you, and you become part of it, a picture of our positional truth in Christ, Revelation 3:20.

4. The priests broke the type by using leavened bread. All revelation was pointing to Christ in type.

B. The brazen altar, verse 8. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lamb and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor: will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts?"

1. They were also offering blind and sick animals at the brazen altar as sacrifices. These sacrifices, too, were a picture of Christ, who was perfect, the Lamb without spot or blemish.

a. John 1:29, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

b. 1 Peter 1:19, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

2. When they returned from the Babylonian captivity, Darius, the king of Persia, had supplied them with perfect cattle to use in sacrifices.
3. It is suggested that they offer these imperfect animals to the Persian governor in the area. That would have been an insult, and he would have cut off their ears and noses.

C. The answer for this need. The GRACE of God and discipline, verse 9. "And now, I pray you, beseech God that He will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will He regard your person? saith the Lord of hosts."

1. GRACE.

- a. The people were to pray, beseech, God that He would be gracious. Before you can pray for GRACE, you must know the doctrine of GRACE. This means having no allusions about yourself, but to depend completely on God's provision.

b. God will respond and give more GRACE.

1. Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know who to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"
2. James 4:6, "But he giveth more GRACE. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth GRACE unto the humble."
3. Romans 8:32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"
4. Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of GRACE, that we may obtain mercy, and find GRACE to help in time of need."

c. The only basis of an approval to God is on the basis of GRACE, we do not have a "leg to stand on," but we have GRACE to sit on.

d. It was the fault of Israel that they were being disciplined, "This hath been by your means." Even under discipline we can ask for GRACE and get it.

1. Discipline.

- a. When we fail and make mistakes, we are to keep our eyes on the Lord, not on ourselves, Hebrews 12:1, 2, we are to get back into fellowship and keep moving.
- b. We are not to hate being spanked in GRACE, Hebrews 12:5, but give thanks on everything, discipline is a sign of God's love, Hebrews 12:6.

IV. Case IV: **The necessity for regeneration**, verses 10, 11. "Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on Mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither

will I accept an offering at your hand."

"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered in My Name, and a pure offering; for My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

- A. If there was only someone honest, and shut the door of the temple, instead of formalism and activity with no meaning, verse 10.
- B. Worship of God is utterly meaningless apart from regeneration, and a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.
- C. Everything in the temple pointed to Jesus Christ. So why go through this rigmarole? Ritual without reality is meaningless and religious.
- D. A part of the punishment of Israel is mentioned in verse 11. Israel failed in their responsibility to disseminate spiritual truth, and now had ritual without reality.

V. Case V: **The reaction of Israel**, verses 12, 13. "But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible." "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering; should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord."

- A. Israel offered polluted bread and lame sacrifices, and the Lord would not accept them.
- B. Yet they disclaimed any knowledge of their sin.

VI. Case VI: **The Lord's greatness**, verse 14. "But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts.

and My Name is dreadful among the heathen.”

A. He would not accept corrupt things, because He is a great King.

B. His Name is revered, feared, among the heathen.

C. The indictment of the priesthood, Malachi 2:1-10.

1. The priests were supposed to be spiritual leaders, verse 1, and were a specialized priesthood, “And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.”

2. The Lord made a covenant with them, Leviticus 23, Numbers 25:12, 13. If they turned from the Lord, and did not teach the Word, they would be taken out of camp and burned as dung. Verses 2-5, “If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto My Name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that My covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My Name.”

3. The Levitical priesthood was to walk uprightly, know, and teach the Word of God. Believer priests are to pass on the Truth of God’s Word also. We are messengers of the Lord as they were. Verse 7, “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law of His mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.”

4. They had shown partiality, verse 9, to the wealthy against the poor. “Wherefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye gave not kept My ways, but have been partial in the law.”

5. They conducted themselves as if God had treated them with partiality. God the Son had created them.

a. John 1:3, “All thing were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”

b. Colossians 1:16, 17, “For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.”

c. Hebrews 1:10, “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the Earth; and the Heavens are the works of Thine hands.”

VII. Three ways to ruin or destroy a nation, Malachi 2:11-17.

A. Treachery: Ignoring faith, verses 10-13.

1. Judah had dealt treacherously with the Lord. Believers, men had married unbelievers, heathen women. These are called “daughters of a strange woman.”

2. They also committed an abomination, verse 10. That is idolatry or putting anything before the Lord. Verse 10, “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother. by profaning the covenant of our fathers.” Verse 11, “Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel: for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.”

3. They had profaned the holiness or sanctuary of the Lord by going into the temple.

4. Facts about marriage,

a. Marriage is a Divine institution for believers and for unbelievers. Believers are to marry believers only. And unbelievers are to marry only unbelievers.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said. I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will re-

ceive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

b. Marriage, the home, family, national entities, capital punishment, and freedom of choice are all Divine institutions.

c. Marriage was a Divine institution before sin entered the world, and since has been corrupted by divorce, polygamy, homosexuality, and lesbianism.

d. Divorce and polygamy occurred in the Old Testament and they were always wrong, and trouble always was the result.

e. Marriage is a type of the believer's relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 5:25-32.

f. In the selection of a mate, God has promised wisdom.

1. James 1:5, 6, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”

5. Divorce in the Old Testament.

a. It was permitted because of the hardness of heart of sin.

1. Deuteronomy 24:1-4, “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the

latter husband die, which took her to be his wife: Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”

2. Leviticus 5:3, 7:21, 10:10, “Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him: when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.”

3. Leviticus 11, 13, 15.

4. Numbers 9:19, “And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not.”

- b. Man has always divorced the woman.
- c. The basis of divorce must be uncleanness. A man could claim his wife was unclean under the Mosaic law for most any reason, although she might actually be clean. Then he could divorce her.
- d. She was free to marry again. When God recognizes divorce, there is a right to re-marry. **This was to protect the woman.** Once he divorced her, he could not marry her again.

6. Divorce in the New Testament.

- a. Matthew 5:27-32, 19:3-12, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” “The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto Him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But He said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs

of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

b. Mark 10:2-12, "And the Pharisees came to Him, and asked Him. Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting Him. And He answered and said unto them. What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart He wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith unto them. Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

c. Luke 16:18, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

d. 1 Corinthians 7.

e. Romans 7:1-4, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth,

she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

f. The New Testament recognizes four ways to dissolve a marriage:

1. Adultery. Jesus Christ commenting on the Mosaic Law said divorce is permitted if fornication has been committed. One who divorces the other party for any other reason than fornication causes that party to commit adultery.

A. Matthew 5:31, Deuteronomy 24:1.

2. Desertion.

A. 1 Corinthians 7, Romans 7:1-4.

B. 1 Corinthians 7 deals with marriage, divorce, and celibacy. Verses 1-11, and mixed marriages, verse 2:24 and perpetual virginity, verse 25 ff.

C. If one member, an unbeliever, deserts the other member, unbeliever, in a marriage, the one deserted has a right of divorce and remarriage. If they are both believers, and one walks out, the one left should not get a divorce.

E. Many believers get a divorce after they are born again. In that case they should use 1 John 1:9, and "stand pat," riding out any discipline, if any, in temporal fellowship.

3. Death.

A. Romans 7:1-5.

B. The living believer or unbeliever can remarry.

4. Pre-salvation divorce.
 1. Any one who had been divorced before salvation has it blotted out. He will never be penalized for any sin in the past.
 2. Isaiah 44:22, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee."
 3. Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."
 4. Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."
 5. Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His GRACE."
 7. Divorce destroys a nation. Malachi 2:14-16.
 - a. Believing Jews were marrying unbelieving Gentiles. To do it the man had to divorce his wife.
 1. The Lord will cut off a man marrying an unbeliever, "daughter of a strange go."
 2. While marriage is a Divine institution, a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever is not sanctioned by the Word of God.
 - b. The heathen priests, "masters," were crying out before the altar, and the believer who had married an unbeliever, "scholar," was answering. "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." "And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek
a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."
 - c. The woman who had been divorced is also crying out before the altar, verse 13. The man who divorced her was making an offering, but it was not acceptable. He thinks ceremony is an okay with God, but it is **no good**.
 - d. True worship begins with regeneration and fellowship with God, verse 14. God still recognizes her as his true wife.
 - e. God, He, verse 15, made Adam and Eve, one, yet God would have had enough breath, spirit, to make another woman. However He only made one wife, that Adam might follow the Divine institution of God's plan for a home.
 - f. God hates divorce, verse 16. Man is the responsible party, and he is not to deal treacherously with his wife.
- VIII. Relativity, ignoring God's Word.**
Verse 17, "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"
- A. The Jews were claiming evil was good and good was evil, and were saying they were better than others. They were absolutely wrong according to the criterion of the Word of God.
 - B. They said God blessed those who did evil, or that He was not a God of judgment.
- IX. God's messengers, Malachi 3:1-6.**
- A. Christ's first advent. Verse 1a, "Behold, I will send My messenger."

1. "My messenger" can refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to His herald, John the Baptist. Christ had a herald because He is a King. Moses and Elijah will herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.
2. He is like a refiner's fire and lye, "fullers soap." This is the baptism of fire, Matthew 3:11. Verse 2, "But who may abide in the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap."
3. He will straighten out the Levitical priesthood, verse 3, who had failed to instruct the people about the meaning of the temple sacrifices, which picture Christ, and His work on the cross. "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."
4. In the Millennium, verse 4, there shall be offerings in Jerusalem as a memorial to Christ's sacrifices. "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as on the days of old, and as in the former years."
 - a. Ezekiel 40-48.
5. He will judge those who oppress their workers, verse 5, the orphans, etc. This is a manifestation of unbelief, "Do not trust Me." "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts." "Do not trust Me."
6. He is immutable, verse 6, and it is because of His GRACE they are not consumed, but He spared a remnant, because God does not go back on His Word. He has promised certain things

to regenerate Jews in the covenants of the Old Testament. We have it in writing, the Word of God. Verse 6, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Immutable.

X. God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness, Malachi 3:7-9.

A. Israel had a long line of failures, verse 7, and faithlessness, yet God was, and is, always faithful. Our faithlessness never phases God.

1. 2 Timothy 2:13, "If we believe not, ye He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." Israel claimed they were unaware of their faithlessness. "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?"

2. They were not keeping His Word, and this is illustrated by robbing Him in tithes and offerings. Verse 8, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." Verse 9, "Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

3. This book of Malachi is addressed to Israel, Malachi 1:1. "The Word of the Lord to Israel." And in Malachi 3:9, "Even this whole nation." **Malachi is not Church truth.** This is the last message to Israel followed by 400 years of silence. And then the New Testament, which is still to Israel and the coming of Christ. The Church is never mentioned in the Old Testament. Cf Ephesians 3:1-7, Cf Colossians 1:25, 26, Romans 16:25, 26.

4. Israel gave two tithes of 20% as a part of the Mosaic Law, and the offering was anything given sacrificially, anything more than a tithe.

5. They were to bring all the tithes and offerings into the temple treasury. The Church is not the temple treasury. This was in order to insure there being enough food, (meat). Verse 10, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, the temple treasury, that there may be meat, food, in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” That’s based on an agricultural economy.
- The levitical priesthood was being judged. They did not inherit any land originally, but the other tribes supported them. The priesthood was to devote its time to the dissemination of the Word of God.
 - The Mosaic Law always promised blessing for obedience, and cursing for disobedience, i.e., the five cycles of discipline to Israel, famine, etc.
6. New Testament giving.
- 2 Corinthians 8, 9. These are the primary passages.
 - We are to give as the Lord prospers us, 1 Corinthians 16:1. The percentage then is flexible, and not absolute. Your ration is based on your income. James 1:5.
 - “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.”
 - “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”
 - We are to have the proper mental attitude. If giving is done grudgingly, it is “wood, hay, and stubble.” 1 Corinthians 3:12.
 - We are to give hilariously, literally cheerfully, 2 Corinthians 9:7. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, ..”
 - A local church does not have the right to put pressure on you or stir up your emotions on giving.
 - Christ is the example in giving. 2 Corinthians 8:9, “though He was rich, yet He became poor for your sakes, that you might become rich in His GRACE.”
 - The example is also the Corinthian believers, 2 Corinthians 8.
 - They gave out of poverty. Verse 2.
 - They did not give by commandment or necessity. Verse 6.
 - They gave themselves. Verse 5.
 - They were sustained by God. 2 Corinthians 9:5-10.
 - They gave systematically. 1 Corinthians 16:2.
- B. God’s faithfulness, Malachi 3:10-18.
- During the Tribulation the king of the North, “devourer,” verse 10, will try to destroy Israel, but he will be destroyed at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Verse 11, “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your wine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.”
 - In the Millennial reign all nations will call Israel blessed, verse 12, because the Lord keeps His Word. “And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.”
 - Israel has been faithless in the past, verses 13, 14, saying it was useless to serve the Lord and to keep His Word. They also said in verse 15, that those in defiance of God, the proud, were happy, and that the wicked were honored. Their perspective was centered only in time. Verses 13-15, “Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against

Thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we gave walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” “Why do the wicked prosper?”

4. Those who trusted, feared, the Lord had fellowship with other believers, and the Lord did not forget them. Time is nothing compared to eternity. “They that feared, trusted, the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for them that trusted the Lord, and that thought upon His Name.” A believer in fellowship is always rewarded and produces the character of Jesus Christ no matter what he or she does.
5. The Lord will reward those who are faithful, and will bless them in a future day, verses 17, 18. God is always faithful. “And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.”

XI. Judgment at the Second Advent of Christ, Malachi 4.

- A. Nature of the judgment. Verses 1-3.
 1. It will be as fire, devouring the proud and wicked as stubble.
 2. It will be complete destruction. “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall

burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” That is the baptism of fire.

- B. The Judge, verse 2. The Lord will judge unbelievers, but to believers He will be the “Sun of righteousness.” “But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”
- C. His heralds. Verses 4-6.
 1. Moses, verse 4, and Elijah, verse 5, will be heralds of Christ at His second coming.
 2. Then Christ shall set up His coming kingdom, and will fulfill His promises to Israel, the four unconditional eternal covenants to the born again Jew at the Second Advent of Christ. “Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. Lest I come and smite the Earth with a curse.”

The last message of the Old Testament ends with a curse. The first message of the New Testament ends with a blessing, “Even so come Lord Jesus.”

Buddy Dano, Pastor

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