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## Lessons from the Book of Malachi

By Ken Raggio

### "I Loved Jacob, And I Hated Esau"

This verse is problematic for those who think that God loves every person unconditionally. I know that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. But I also know that God is angry with the wicked every day. God loves you until you sin against Him for the last time. Then He will judge you without mercy. God will have righteousness.

Malachi 1:2-3 - "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."

### The LORD's Reputation Goes Beyond Israel's Borders

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, and historical enemies of the children of Israel. They were determined to rebuild and strengthen themselves in defiance of the God of Israel, but they could not. God greatly impoverished them, and finally made their place a desolate place. The ancient nation no longer exists. Far beyond Israel's borders, our God reigns.

Malachi 1:4 - "They shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel."

### God Deserves Honor More Than Fathers Or Masters

Malachi, who is only mentioned by name one time in the Bible, had the unsavory task of pronouncing the judgments of God on the Jews returned

from Babylonian captivity. Despite the amazing grace of God to return them to their homeland, they nevertheless failed to honor and fear God. They fell into the same sins of their forefathers.

Malachi 1:6 - "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you."

### **Effectual Prayer Requires Right Relationship With God**

The foremost important factor in effectual prayer is not faith. It is right relationship with God. It is possible to have faith without right relationship. Prayer will not work, no matter how much faith you have, if you are not in right standing with God. Malachi rebuked Israel for dishonoring God, having no fear of God, and offering polluted and blemished sacrifices.

Malachi 1:8-10 - "Will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? ...will he regard your persons? ...I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."

### **Polluted Bread And Contemptible Sacrifices**

So you do not think that God cares about the quality of your living sacrifice? Will you give Him a half-hearted life, tainted with carnality or worldliness? That kind of self-deception cost Israel their relationship with God. Instead of pure, excellent sacrifices, they brought polluted bread, and blind, lame, torn and sick animals.

Malachi 1:13-14 - "Should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which ...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."

### **Give Glory To His Name**

We commonly ask much from God, only talking to Him when we have a problem that only He can solve. Change your priorities. Glorify Him daily with praises.

Malachi 2:2,13,17 - "If ye will not ...give glory unto my name, ...I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: ...And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Ye have wearied the LORD with your words."

### **Priests Must Keep Covenant With God**

God reminded the priests of His covenant with their ancestor, Levi. "My covenant was with him of life and peace; ...The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he ...did turn many away from iniquity." God rebuked them for corrupting that covenant, causing many to stumble with their errors. "The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar."

Malachi 2:7 - "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."

### **Malachi Prophecies John The Baptist And Christ**

This is one of the truly great prophecies of the Old Testament, the one that John the Baptist fulfilled. John was the LORD's messenger. He prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus suddenly appeared to the multitudes, and straightaway, was seen in the temple in Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of the New Covenant.

Malachi 3:1 - "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

### **A Refiner's Fire And A Fuller's Soap**

The coming of the LORD will not be a quiet, inconspicuous event. It will be the biggest, most dramatic event in human history. Jesus Christ will "thoroughly purge His floor," (Matthew 3:12). He will come in judgment, making a swift witness against the sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, oppressors, and every worker of evil. Even the rich and powerful will be terrified, and try to hide from His Presence.

Malachi 3:2 - "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap."

### **Israel's Offerings Will Again Be Pleasant Unto The LORD**

In the olden days of the Tabernacle and Sanctuary, daily sacrifices made on the holy altar were the heart and soul of the people's relationship with God. As they presented their offerings to the LORD, their sins were atoned, and God was pleased. When the people backslid, that entire system broke down. God yearns for the day when the children of Israel will once again honor Him with their offerings (Ezekiel 45:17).

Malachi 3:4 - "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

### **God Never Changes**

God is forever the same - in mercy and judgment; in goodness and severity. What He loves, He will always love. What He hates, He will always hate. His longsuffering and mercy affords us the opportunity to be saved. His judgment and wrath assures us that heaven will be eternally pure and righteous.

Malachi 3:6-7 - "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. 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."

### **The Tithe**

Abraham was the first on record to offer a tithe (tenth) of his income - to the priest of Salem, Melchizedek. Jacob vowed his tithe to the LORD. God prescribed that all of Israel should tithe into the Tabernacle for the support of the priesthood. Without the tithe, the ministry would have been starved out of business. God curses those who refuse to tithe.

Malachi 3:8 - "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me."

## **Tithing Activates A Prophesied Blessing**

Paying tithes sets into motion the promises of God. God wants His people to support the ministry. When you underwrite the work of God, God will underwrite you. Besides, He says the first ten percent is His (v 8). NEVER spend God's money on yourself.

Malachi 3:10 - "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat 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."

## **Tithers Are Very Important People**

Who can you turn to for this kind of security? Nobody but your Creator can make this offer. The tithers - God's people who faithfully return to Him the first-fruits of their labors - become the VIP's in this world. God's Very Important People. "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field."

Malachi 3:12 - "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts."

## **A Book Of Remembrance For His Jewels**

Imagine yourself in God's place, looking down on a world full of God-haters, and only a tiny number of God-fearing men and women. THOSE are your precious jewels. Write them in a book. Save THEM.

Malachi 3:16-17 - "Then they that feared 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 feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

## **A Warning To Speak Kindly About God**

Malachi indicted the people for their "stout words" - brazen, defiant words against God. "Your words have been stout against me, ...Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?" He reminded them that God separates His friends from His enemies. "Then they that feared 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 feared the LORD."

Malachi 3:17 - "I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

## **The Day That Shall Burn As An Oven**

Almost every book in the Bible mentions the fire of God's judgment in one way or another. One of the most recurrent prophecies is that God will judge the earth by fire shortly before Jesus establishes His earthly kingdom at Armageddon.

Malachi 4:1-3 - "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, ...the wicked ...shall be ashes under the soles of

your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts."

### There Is Healing In His Wings

Six thousand years of human history are littered with horrific calamities, pain, sorrow, sickness and death. Nobody but God can measure the suffering that men have borne for their sins through the ages. But there is exciting hope for those who fear and trust in God. He will arise as the Sun of righteousness, and heal us and make us strong again. O, happy day!

Malachi 4:2 - "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."

### Elijah Will Come Before The Day Of The LORD

The angel told Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son named John. "He shall go before [Christ] in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." Jesus said, "Elias is come already, ...and the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

Malachi 4:5-6 - "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 their fathers."

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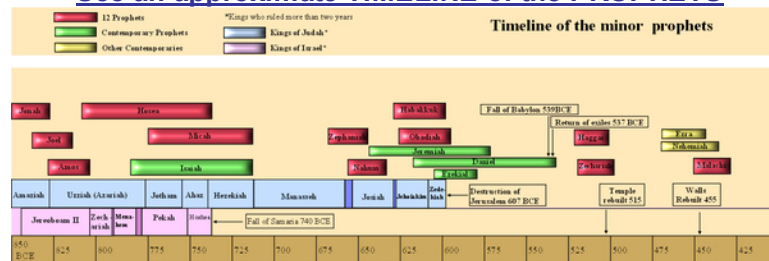
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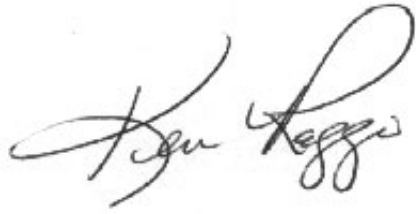
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