

MALACHI

LESSON TWO

CONTEXT: Presence of Sin

A. People had cold hearts toward God. They were both indifferent and apathetic.

B. When confronted with their sin, they began to ask a series of questions. Their questions revealed a lot about their spiritual condition.

Malachi 1:2—“In what way have you loved us?”

A. This question revealed their lack of trust in God. The implication was that God had been unfaithful to His covenant. “If you really love us, why are we still under foreign oppressors, waiting for the promised kingdom?”

APPLICATION: Do we demand proof of God’s love for us?

Malachi 1:6—7—“In what way have we despised Your Name? In what way have we defiled You?”

A. Their response to God shows the half-heartedness and the rationalizations of the nation’s religious leaders. In essence, they were saying “We have been making the required sacrifices. What more do you want?” Malachi points out in verses 8-10 that their sacrifices to God were unfit animals.

APPLICATION: Do we offer God our best in worship, or do we just go through the motions?

MALACHI 2:1-17

1. FOR THEIR DERELICTIONS OF DUTY, THE PRIESTS ARE THREATENED WITH PUNISHMENT.

Malachi 2:1-4—These verses remind us that God’s Word is strong, powerful, and true. It never changes.

““The Lord will give you prosperity in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, blessing you with many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. The Lord will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens and will bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them. If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today, and if you carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always be on top and never at the bottom. You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them. “But if you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and do not obey all the commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overwhelm you: Your towns and your fields will be cursed. Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be cursed. Your children and your crops will be cursed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be cursed. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be cursed.”

Deuteronomy 28:11-19 NLT

A. “If you will not give glory”—the behavior of the priests was defiling the Name of God.

B. “I will send a curse”—As the people passed into the Promised Land, the Levite’s spread before the people the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience (Deuteronomy 27; 28). Because the Levite’s were disobedient, they would receive the curses.

C. Refuse was the dung in the sacrificial animal that should have been removed when the animal was prepared for sacrifice. This was God’s way of saying to them that they would be delivered over to shameful treatment which would cover them with contempt.

D. My covenant with Levi—the Levite’s has been given the privilege of serving the tabernacle.

Malachi 2:5-7—Numbers 24:1-14 remind us that the covenant of God was with Phinehas, a descendant of the tribe of Levi.

1. Life and Peace
2. Godly Fear—Reverence of God
3. Worshipping Him in Spirit and Truth

TASKS OF PRIESTS

- A. To represent the people of God in holy worship before the Living God
- B. To teach and apply God's law to the people
- C. Peace and Equity—Complete moral virtue in all things before the Lord
- D. Messenger—In the Old Testament, the prophet was commonly referred to as a "messenger of the Lord".

Malachi 2:8-9—Results of their Priestly Failure (departure from God)

- A. Stumbling of many
- B. Judgement on the corrupt priest would be greater because they had caused many others to stumble.
- C. The priests had the truth but had not kept it or practiced it. As judges, they showed partiality, making their sin even worse.

““Suppose a case arises in a local court that is too hard for you to decide—for instance, whether someone is guilty of murder or only of manslaughter, or a difficult lawsuit, or a case involving different kinds of assault. Take such legal cases to the place the Lord your God will choose, and present them to the Levitical priests or the judge on duty at that time. They will hear the case and declare the verdict. You must carry out the verdict they announce and the

sentence they prescribe at the place the Lord chooses. You must do exactly what they say. After they have interpreted the law and declared their verdict, the sentence they impose must be fully executed; do not modify it in any way. Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents the Lord your God must die. In this way you will purge the evil from Israel. Then everyone else will hear about it and be afraid to act so arrogantly.”
Deuteronomy 17:8-13 NLT

CONTEMPTIBLE—Because of their behavior, the glory of the priesthood had been turned into contempt. Honor had diminished if not disappeared altogether. When men compared the ideal service of a priest to their reality, it was an absolute disgrace. Their conduct was partial to the point of loss of respect and credibility. This special sin of the priests was most flagrant—perversion of judgement—partiality in administration of the law!!!

TREACHERY OF INFIDELITY

A. Betrayal of trust; deceptive action or nature

B. God is the creator of all humanity (Genesis 1:27). He requires that we deal with one another equitably.

C. Abomination—indicates a stomach revulsion; the people had done something so awful as to make one ill (God). The people had done something to pollute something in which God took great pleasure.

D. Daughter of a foreign God—Intermarriage had taken place in ancient Israel. This was not racial or ethnic but spiritual; lack of faithfulness to God Himself.

E. Introduction of foreign wives (non-followers of Jehovah into the sanctuary)

RESULT OF INFIDELITY

A. Cut off—this implies that the transgressor shall be deprived of his position as one of the covenant people and shall leave no one to maintain his name and

family. Until repentance comes, such would be the lot of such persons.

B. Not only did they marry heathen females, but they divorced their legitimate wives to facilitate these unholy alliances.

C. The picture he exhibits is that of a multitude of repudiated wives coming to the temple with weeping and lamentation, and laying their cause before the Lord. At this point, the Lord had no regard for their offering. Their cruel and wicked conduct raised a barrier between them and God, so that He regarded with favor no offering of theirs. When right things are done for the wrong attitudes, God does not accept them. God's pleasure is in sacrifices offered with attitudes of humility, faithfulness, and joy.

DANGER OF APATHY

A. Feigned innocence—God is not mocked/fooled.

B. God as Witness (wife of your youth; dealt treacherously with her). These men had not only married pagan wives, but they had divorced their first wives to make room for their new wives.

C. Companion—describes a permanent partnership

D. Wife by Covenant—The union of a marriage is formal, public, legal, and sacred, a binding contract.

E. Make Them One—Genesis 2:24—“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

F. Godly Offspring—offspring of godly parents—raised in the admonition of the Lord

G. Treacherously—To the Lord, attitudes of indifference toward marriage vows and duties are the actions of a traitor.

H. God is WEARIED—Malachi makes his charge. The faithful multitude have

worn out God's patience by their murmuring and discontent. Because their expectation of prosperity and glory were not at once fulfilled, they called into question God's justice and holiness, and even the future judgement.

CONCLUSION:

The cursing of blessing is a strange work to the blessed God, the Father of mercies, who rather delights to turn curses into blessings.

Causes of the Curse:

- A. Disregard for the Glory of God
- B. Neglect of God's appeals and warnings