

Mike Balko - Malachi

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Or thoughts you're going to see. Just as Brother Ray spoke about Amos, there's a theme going on of chastisements for disobedience and then promises of blessing, and this is also the case in the Book of Malachi. So what is the message of the Book of Malachi? Malachi's mission really, brethren, was that of reinforcing the people's belief and confidence in Jehovah and reminding them of their responsibilities as members of the covenant community with him.

Indeed, the concept of that covenant of Israel is fundamental to Malachi's message. It is a dominant theme in the book. Malachi's prophecy concludes the Old Testament canon, or sacred principles, that God expects from those who he has given blessings to. Who he is dealing with contains not only a rebuke for sin, as we mentioned, but also a divine promise of rescue, and it fits well to the time generally assigned to it.

Nehemiah's period, and Malachi the prophet spoke and represented Jehovah to the Israelites. His prophecy is supposed to have been written during the time of the absence of Nehemiah, the governor at the court of the king of Persia. The interim of this absence is thought to have been one of religious decline, as the record shows, a considerable stirring up and setting in order again after his return. Malachi's prophecy, therefore, may have served a double purpose.

First, to reprove and stimulate the people at that time, and secondly, and much more important, to give a general lesson applicable all the way down through the more than over 20 centuries since his prophecy again is given to us, first to natural Israel, but then it has an application, as I mentioned, to spiritual Israel. So again, Nehemiah may at that time have seemed like a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. The Lord, whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, Malachi 3 1, and no doubt the testimony of the Lord given through Malachi prepared the people for their quick response to Nehemiah's energetic appeals and commands. Now, just to briefly highlight the points, four natural divisions of the book of Malachi.

The first, the love of God for Israel, Malachi 1 5, Malachi 1 5. Secondly, the sins of the priest, Malachi 1 6 9, Malachi 1 6 9, and the sins of the people rebuked, and the promise of special messenger that would come their way. Malachi 2 10, 3 18. Again, Malachi 2 10, 3 18.

And the fourth point, the day of the Lord. Malachi 4 1 6. So Malachi 4 1 6, we're going to bring out some of Our thoughts concerning these four natural divisions in the book of Malachi. Again, as we mentioned, this prophecy is addressed to Israel. A reproof for their wayward and evil course, and a warning of the just retribution that must surely follow if they continue to dwell in sin and unrighteousness.

If they did not repent and turn to God, these things would come to pass. So Malachi's name signifies the messenger of Jehovah, and so true, that is, he was the last messenger of the Hebrew prophets to Israel previous to John the Baptist, and even that's touched on in Matthew 11:10 and 11, Matthew 11:10 and 11. So the immediate assurance of Christ the forerunner, he's the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, he's a great messenger of Jehovah's covenant, and well would have been for Israel if they had heeded the warning, had listening ears, and prepared their hearts to receive the Lord's anointed. While it is clear that the prophecy thus addressed to Israel applied to them primarily as we mentioned, it is shown, it is also manifest, as shown by the Lord and the apostles, that had a much wider application and that in a yet fuller sense it addressed to spiritual Israel and applies to the second advent of our great messenger of the covenant, our

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Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, who work will foolish accomplish his work will foolish accomplish all these predictions.

So we see that it has much information, many ramifications to consider, to study on and to apply. Look at Malachi 1 1. Malachi 1 1. The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. So this burden, intending not only divine rebuke for sin, but divine promise for rescue, as we've mentioned, it carries through really throughout the whole book of Malachi.

And now Malachi 1, verse 2. I have loved you, saith the Lord, yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Love and reverence should be greater to God, since he is greater than all others. We're reminded of the verse from Luke 10:27. Luke 10:27 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and strength and mind.

Again, put these laws within your heart. Keep them in your mind to be used, to be called upon, when you consider what great things the heavenly Father has done for all of us, especially the household of Israel. Now really, God's blessings are numberless. They're in great variety also to mankind in general. He gives the sunshine and the rain, which in turn contribute to the bringing forth of food from the earth to sustain life.

And there are countless other gifts of God to the Natural man, his own people of this gospel. AIDS are all the precious gift designed for the joy and growth of the new creature in Christ Jesus. We have the finest of the wheat, the water of truth. We have meat in due season again, how does that developing new creature use that? He must digest it and continue to grow in a way pleasing to the Father, and stay close to the Father in all matters of life and go to him for help and guidance.

The chief among these wonderful promises and blessings, of course, is God's gift of His Son to be our Redeemer, to bring the world of mankind from sin and death and degradation. He's the life giver. Indeed. This is an unspeakable gift that the world doesn't understand, but it will eventually result in eternal life as humans. For all who throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign, believe on him, obey the laws of the kingdom, hardly really respond to this gift.

How enthusiastic will be the response of the world in general during the kingdom age now rapidly approaching, we pray. Our lesson, indeed is a reminder that typically Israel failed many times to show the appreciation to God's goodness. God made certain requirements of the Israelites, and while outwardly they made a pretense of responding, it was not from the heart. They robbed God, robbed one another, and especially the needy among them. They sinned in many other ways.

The Lord told them that the whole nation had robbed him, and they said, is it vain to serve God? And what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy, yea, they that work wickedness, are set up, yea, they that tempt God are even delivered, and that's from Malachi 3, verses 14 and 15.

And we see this even in the world today. It's true in the world in general that the wicked, even they prosper, they can be set up, even delivered, or rewarded for their iniquities. But that need not have been the case. As we said with the Israelites, God promised them upon the basis of their faithfulness that he would bless them, that he would bless them and keep them in basket and in store. But they were not faithful, even though, as we said, they claim to be.

But God's eyes run to and fro throughout this earth. He beholds the evil and good. He could read the intents of the heart of mankind, and so God invited them to return to him and promise that if

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they did, he had returned to them. But they, as we said, were not faithful, and they had chastisements placed against them.

So, as we have already mentioned, God's chosen people of the covenant that he made with them at Sinai is fundamental to Malachi's message and also has an application to spiritual Israel. To those who have entered into a covenant relationship with him through sacrifice and going again walking in the Lord's footsteps and being faithful to that covenant, it's a wholehearted effort. It takes our time and our energy to complete again. Jehovah was sorely displeased with the many sins of Israel, and they believed that he would bless them again. He we know that he eventually will there to bless our nation, and through them shall all the families of the earth be blessed, their seed through our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus.

And also the priests, by evil example became stumbling blocks instead of spiritual leaders. Malachi 2, 1, and now, ye priests, this commandment is to you. If you do not hear and take it to heart, I will send a curse upon you. Now, brethren, recall the Scripture.

To whom much is given, much is required. Luke 12:48 and also brought out in Micah 6, 8. Remember Lot's wife. Our Lord Jesus told his disciples in Luke 17:32, because difficult times were ahead, the Son of Man would return. It's also an instruction to the foolish virgins.

Love not the world, neither the things of the world. Don't be caught up in worldly things, but trust in me, and I will help you. I will recover you, I will keep you in my perfect peace. If what your heart and your mind is stayed on me, and they fell short.

We must not fall short of that. The Lord had already reminded them through Malachi in chapter one, verse six. As a son honors the Father and a servant his master, his people should praise and honor him. Is it too much to ask? He deserves our reverence, our love and our devotion.

Through the prophet, God assured Israel, I am the Lord. I change not. Just think of that, brother. Just think of that phrase. I change not.

Do you see that any place in the world today, in our leaders, in our governments, people of power, even our neighbors, because he is perfect in justice, love, wisdom and power, and therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. He could have consumed them. He could have wiped them off the face of this earth. But through his love, his generosity, his perfect character, he did not.

That's Malachi 3, 6 again. He continues the Lord's message in the words from verse seven, including another invitation for them to return unto me, and I will return unto you. Reminds me also of James 4:8. Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh to you.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Remember, we're told you cannot serve God and mammon. You're going to love one or the other. You can't be lukewarm, and also John 14:23, John 14:23.

It is, as we have alluded to the development of character pleasing to the Lord, that we serve him in spirit and in truth, and he will bless you. He will bless them and keep those who are strong in him along that right path. Now, brethren, this is the word of the faithful. The Lord is prompt and faithful in giving blessing to those that trust in him.

And this is the theme. Chastisements, penalties, blessings, more offering of blessings. Following the Lord's. The words, excuse me from verses 6 and 7. He promised if they would bring all the

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tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.

And prove me thou, herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out you a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. That's verse 10. Room enough to receive it again. His blessings, his promises are something that we take to heart. We trust in Him.

We know he will deliver these things. It's so important that we continue along those lines, brethren. So all the ties. We know that the Jews had two obligatory ties or tents. One taxed for the support of the government, and the other for the religious purposes to be used in maintenance of the priestly tribe, the Levites, and for relief of widows and orphans and other unfortunate ones.

So to teach the people generosity, to instill in them a realization of our obligations to God that they all enjoyed were his bestowments or the presentation of gifts to his chosen people. Again, to stress the importance of doing his will in all things, and we must do that will also. It's a proper attitude of heart that we should have. Joshua 24:15.

For me and my house, we shall serve the Lord. Whoever has this determination will be blessed. We are to realize that everything we have, everything we are, everything that we will be, rightfully belongs to the Lord. Our time, our talents, our energy in our love, and even our lives themselves. So if we continue this way, in this way, we know that there's no obligation mentioned concerning holy ties.

They're left to the option of the believer, the spiritual Israelite. But how much more should we pour out our hearts, do acts of kindness to our brethren, pray for them, if that's all we can do. It's a lot because we remember them in prayer and we want the best for them in growth and development, in their trials and experiences. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Thy law is within my heart.

We have an obligation to spend and be spent in his service, and he'll pour out a blessing. It says a revival of spiritual health. Not physical health, but spiritual health, energy, vigor and joy, so that these called of God may progress along that narrow way of sacrifice. Look at First Corinthians 4, verses 14 through 16.

Just going to mention part of First Corinthians 4, 14, 16 knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound or do what is necessary to bring good tidings, honor and glory to the Father. Not honor to self, but giving up our self and selfish interest, which was a snare to the nation of Israel. In this world which is full of doubt and discouragement, uncertainty, we can trust and build upon Christ, the solid rock and God's promises. Luke 6:48 look at Hebrews 13:6 8 Again, just a portion, Hebrews 13:6 8 He Jesus is just, faithful, loving, and we can count on him to be the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow also brought out in Psalm 33, verse 11, the counsel of the Lord stands forever, stands forever.

He's there. He has a listening ear. His plans and purposes are being worked out. The plans of his heart go to all generations, and his word is timeless, and his promises are everlasting. So the basis for our hope lies in the unchangeable character and enduring mercy of God.

Once again, Malachi 3, 16 and 17 speak of reward for the faithful class, a word for the faithful class, and so important that we keep that in mind, and it has to do with a book of remembrance. A book of remembrance from Malachi 3 16, and as we go on, we're going to hopefully touch on verse 17 of

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that, the book of remembrance I'm reading from King James. They that feared the Lord, or revered him, spake often to one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that revered or feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

We know this is not a literal book, but it's a real book. We believe that God has a record of all those faithful to him in times past and present and future, and that this constitutes a book of remembrance for time when rewards are to be bestowed and those who are worthy, especially remembered once again, rewards of faith and trust and growth and development, and doing what our hands find to do to serve him, the brethren and the cause of truth and righteousness. So important that we keep our minds focused on these things, brethren. So important. So we realize that there are several books mentioned in the Bible.

We're not going to get to all those now, obviously, but we have one in that we're going to mention in Malachi 4, and also here we're talking about the Book of Remembrance. Thy book my book. One is brought out in Exodus 32:31 to 33, Exodus 32:31 to 33, and also realize that another one is brought out by the revelator in chapter 20, verse 12.

It's the book of life. So again mankind has to be written in that book of life. The incorrigibly wicked, during the future reign of Christ and his Church, being again brought about to enlightened minds of the world of mankind, being taught and gone up the highway of holiness, not having their names written in the book of life, he will cut them off. Isaiah 35, 8, Acts 3, 23, and another one again from Revelation 20:15. God will not permit any such to be part of that glorious kingdom.

You know, it's also brought and it's brought out in Malachi the fourth chapter, and there are only six verses of this but very meaningful prophecies and prophets prophesying concerning the day of our lord. That's verse one in Malachi 4. The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble. The day cometh that shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts.

But then remember a promise of penalty, and now we have in verse 2 from Malachi 4, a promise of blessing. The Son of righteousness arises with healing in his wings, his beams, his beams of grace and truth. After the completion of the church flow the blessings to all the families of the earth, and give an opportunity to them to grow, be taught of God the man Christ Jesus in verse 4, by full obedience to the law, superseded Moses, and also the truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17, Malachi 4:5.

You'll send Elijah the Christ in the flesh, head and body, realizing again God the mighty one of Jehovah, or my God is Jehovah a fit name for the Lord's anointed those who work to restore all things, and one more verse 6 of Malachi 4. It'll take the fullness of the time of trouble to have mankind learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and then be able, as I mentioned, to be fully taught of God, to learn of him, to have their stony heart turned to a heart of flesh that had compassion and understanding and love for one another. Remember, love is a fulfilling of the law. After being tested and found faithful, they will have that opportunity to dwell on a restored, perfect earth forever.

So while this book of remembrance, as we mentioned, had special application to natural Israel, it is also of deep significance to spiritual Israel, the church of this gospel age. Men have largely forgotten God. They don't need him, or have not required the required reverence for him, and there are some who even revere him, who wait upon his name, who think upon him, and whom he is well pleased. You, my dear brethren, you trust in him, you love him.

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You devoted your lives through consecration to Him. It's our joy to reverence the Heavenly Father and little fulfillment of Malachi's words, speaking often one to another as we meet together, brethren, whether a number is only two or three, or large assemblies, or whether we're meeting as we're meeting today, on this increase of knowledge application that we have, the manner that we meet with humbleness of heart and desire to be taught of God is so important in each matter of our lives. We're able to fellowship, enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit, to build up, to encourage one another, and again, moreover, we learn what is required of students, and again to be found faithful. First Corinthians 4:1 and 2.

Now continuing in verse 17 of Malachi 3 they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels special treasures, the marginal translation says, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own Son that serveth him. Our Father promises, spare us to have a loving heart toward us, knowing that we're tabernacled in this imperfect human body. He blesses us those that reverence him. He knows our frame he remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103, 13, 14.

He knows we cannot speak and act perfectly, but he covers us with that robe of his Son's righteousness because of our faith in full consecration in him. We have that righteousness on account of our faith. Philippians 3:9. We are accepted and beloved. It says now in Ephesians 1:6 there is now therefore, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1. Now we walk in newness of life, striving to be conformed to our perfect pattern of God's dear son. Romans 6:4. Unintentionally we at times stumble and come short of our heart's desire because of our fallen frame, as we mentioned. But we gratefully approach Heavenly Father at the throne of grace for cleansing, for forgiveness of our unrighteousness, casting our care upon him that we can go on and be better the next moment, minute or hour, the next day, whatever he has planned for us that he permits.

And so there is this book, the names of the faithful children of the Gospel age, and Jesus referred to this record, but he did not call it a book. He sent for the disciples to be part of those who dedicated their lives and made a covenant with him. Service to the disciples. He had the power over the sick and to heal them.

And unto people the kingdom of God is nigh unto you. Luke 10:1 and 9 so then in verse 20 we read in this Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven, and here's the privilege and honor to which we indeed rejoice. It's the church of the firstborns, whose names are written in heaven. It's God's dwelling place that tells us that in Hebrews 12:23, his church, when complete and glorified, the heavenly Zion will be God's dwelling place.

The Lord hath chosen Zion. He hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever. Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. Psalm 132, verses 13 and 14.

God then, looking at the names in his book of remembrance, will say to various members of the church, this woman, that man was born in her Zion. Psalm 87:5,6. Again, he's no respecter of persons. He's called you. You're a people for a purpose.

We don't know why he's called us, but he saw something in each of us that can be blended together as body members to bring glory and honor to him and bring blessings to all the founders of the earth. What's the requirement? You know that faithful unto death. If we're faithful, it tells us an

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experience here in Revelation 3, 4 and 5 also, thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments. They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name, the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before angels. Remember you'll be called by a name unknown to us. But he knows that name, and you were given that promise by that white stone that if faithful, you will see him as he is, the glorified Lord in heaven.

So this book of remembrance again, faith one to death. Revelation 2:10. The words are they walk in me in white robes because they are worthy, the conquerors. But not only that, the more than conquerors, the called, the chosen, the faithful, those who want from faith to sanctification and then glorification, and that's our goal.

Brethren, recall really some more words from how we should realize that this wisdom of above is so important in our lives. It's pure, it's peaceable, it's easily to be treated, and full of mercy and good fruits. Again, it's gentle. Our heavenly Father loves us. Sometimes he puts his arms around us and protects us and guides us and loves us.

And our Lord Jesus is the same, and sometimes he has to chastise us. You're going the wrong direction, and you say to him, show me the way. I gladly accept it, dear Father, let my will be your will.

We desire to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. James 3:17 so the grace of God which brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live how soberly Godly in this present world. No matter what's going on in the world about us. It's our time to strive to make our calling.

Election sure looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Titus 2:11,13 and brethren, this is really the key of determining where we are concerning our spiritual lives. Examine yourself daily. Look, am I living up to our vow? Am I fulfilling my commitment to my vow of consecration?

Design and demonstrate our trust and faith in God through His Son. Let's look to the Father and His Word, his dear Son in the Scriptures, our source of hope and strength. We're not going to find it out there in the world, but we'll find it through this unity of the Spirit, the love and devotion for one another, learning from our experiences. Again, one of the tests. The final test, I think, is the love for the brethren that we should have.

Love is the fulfilling of the law. God is love. We should be love also. Now recall, as we come to our end of our time shortly, recall the verses from First Corinthians 16, 13 and 14. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith.

Quit you like men. Be strong. Let all your things be done with Charity and love. Again, as I mentioned, it's the fulfilling of the law against the various opposition of the world, the flesh and the adversary who tries to stumble us, who tries to trip us up. But we stand fast in this faith in the way of righteousness.

And the Lord has a right to expect strong characters. Be strong in the faith, strong in the Lord, strong in character to show we be pleased and acceptable to God. Again, if you lack faith, pray. Lord, increase my faith. Help me to learn the benefit from the experiences that I'm having.

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Let me have strength and courage that are necessary to faithful service and to success, to fight that good fight of faith. Both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under various trials, and to stand fast, adhere to those fixed principles, be steadfast, said Lord, which we see from Malachi and other minor prophets. The nation of Israel did not do, and they had chastisements brought upon them. So stand firmly and loyally with God, our Redeemer, our instructor and King. Without him we can do nothing.

So, brethren, we realize that the Father that we have is above all. One faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all, and walk worthy of vocation in when you are called, with loyalness and meekness and long suffering. Again, Ephesians 4:1 5. Knowing that those who prove faithful will be transformed to his spiritual image and likeness, and so that they his church, would be associated with him in that great work of bringing blessings, the money, away to all, and what, brethren say, what's standing in the way of these things coming?

The world says that sometimes it's the completion of the church. So we have to do our all to honor him, to trust in him, to develop and to reach those marks set before us. So, my dear brethren, beloved of God, seek the Lord with sincerity, with honesty and peace of heart and mind, without guile, without selfishness, without fear. Our Lord desires us to bear fruit, the fruits of the Spirit, manifested as we know in temperance, meekness, meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness and love. Galatians 5, 22 and 23.

So it's my prayer, dear brethren, dear ones, that you go on faithfully to trust in him, that you'll study the word. Not only study, but you'll apply it. We can all reach that goal that is set before us. Amen.