

Malachi 1

5-29-03

“Careless Cynicism & Leaders Lethargy!”

1. Intro:

1.1. **Story** - I was sitting at a stop light this morning. The lady in front of me was going through papers on the seat of her car, and when the light changed to green she did not obey its command - a green light is a commandment - NOT a suggestion. When the light turned to red, and she had still not moved, I began (*with my windows up*) screaming epithets and beating on my steering wheel. My expressions of distress were interrupted by a **policeman**, gun drawn, tapping on my window. Against my protestations of, "You can't arrest me for hollering in my car," he ordered me into the back seat of his. After about two hours in a holding cell, the arresting officer advised me I was free to go. I said, "I knew you couldn't arrest me for what I was yelling in my own car. You haven't heard the last of this." The officer replied, "I didn't arrest you for shouting in your car. I was directly behind you at the light. I saw you screaming and beating your steering wheel, and I said to myself, "What a jerk. But there is nothing I can do to him for throwing a fit in his own car. Then I noticed the 'Cross' hanging from your rear view mirror, the bright yellow 'Choose Life' license tag, the 'Jesus is Coming Soon' bumper sticker, and the Fish symbol and I thought you MUST have stolen the car."

1.1.1. Sometimes I think we as Christians are a lot like “Zots”. **Sweet** sugar candy on the outside, but **sour** on the inside!

2. CARELESS CYNICISM & LEADERS LETHARGY!

2.1. (1) Background info on the book & Malachi!

2.1.1. Vs.1 answers “from whom”(the Lord), “to whom”(to Israel), “through whom”(through Malachi).

2.2. **Malachi** – means “my messenger”.

2.2.1. Nothing else is known about him.

2.2.2. **Q:** How many know the 1st name of your **mailman**(person)?

2.2.2.1. **Q:** How many children the have?

2.2.2.2. You might not know anything about your **mailman** but what is most important, is the messages he/she brings.

2.2.3. Maybe Malachi was more concerned about being **faithful** not being **famous**?

2.3. **Time period** – 4 centuries before Christ. During Nehemiah’s day.

2.3.1. The Jews had been back in the land for 1000 yrs.

- 2.4. **The book** – Malachi has more verses “spoken by the Lord”(1st person) directly to Israel, at a whopping “47”! (That is out of only 55 verses total!)
- 2.4.1. That is the highest % in the whole bible!
- 2.4.2. Talk about straight talks from God!
- 2.4.3. **The book is written as a “verbal tennis match” w/back-n-forth volleys.**¹
- 2.4.3.1. **See** my highlighted “Statements & Questions” [1:2,6,7; 2:13-14, 17; 3:7,8,13]
- 2.4.4. Here we’ll see 6 sermonettes or oracles. Each zeroes in on their Bad Attitude.
- 2.5. **Malachi’s Mission** – “was to light the lamp of faith in a disheartened people.”²
- 2.5.1. This is to remind them that God had **kept, continues to keep, & will into the future keep**, His word - **& so must they!**
- 2.5.2. They have been waiting for the Lord to send His Messiah for a long time now...& they simply gave up **hope & went back** to their lives!
- 2.5.3. **Q: Do you know of anyone who has done the same today?**
- 2.5.4. They were asking the question, **“Is serving God worth it?”**
- 2.5.5. **They slipped into a rut of religious motions.** Their **faith** withered into cynicism; their **love for the law** into callous indifference.
- 2.5.5.1. Their **revival fires** had dwindled to smoldering embers!³
- 2.5.5.2. Oh, Lord rekindle our flames!
- 2.5.6. Wilbert L. Mcleod, **“Revival is God's finger pointed right at me.”**
- 2.5.7. D.M.Paton, **“Revival is the inrush of the Spirit into a body that threatens to become a corpse.”**
- 2.6. **Let’s now look at 3 of the questions:**
- 2.7. **#1 - IN WHAT WAY HAVE YOU LOVED US?**
- 2.8. (2) **Q:** Ever say to your parents growing up, **“you don’t love me!”?**
- 2.8.1. So **Israel** whines to God!

¹ Jim Townsend; Minor Prophets, pg.98

² New Geneva Study Bible.

³ Chuck Swindoll; pg.108

- 2.8.2. They had ignored every sign of his love. But as soon as a **little hardship** or **difficulty** blew there way, they quickly saw Him as an **unloving God!**
- 2.8.2.1. **Be cautious of the contempt that is bred from familiarity!**
- 2.8.2.1.1. It is easy for husbands & wives to go through this!
- 2.8.2.1.2. It's easy to over look 25 years of marital fidelity; or financial diligence(both in the making & in the spending).
- 2.8.2.2. **It is easy to become blind to these, & to the love of God!**
- 2.8.2.3. *Those who continue to love can see signs in their partner every day!*⁴
- 2.8.3. **Q: Do you ever battle with God's love for you?** [cuz of sin, feeling unworthy, not being blest!]
- 2.8.4. **Q: How might you battle that when those thoughts come?** [look back!]
- 2.9. (3-5) To remind them of his love He **contrasts Jacob**(Israelites)whom He has **chosen** & **Esau**(Edomites)whom he has **rejected**.
- 2.9.1. **Jacob** & his offspring received **land** & an **inheritance**.
- 2.9.2. **Esau** received, "[his mountains] laid waste and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."
- 2.9.3. **Quick history** – The Nabataeans pushed northward and seized the territories of Edom and Moab, forcing Edom into southern Judah.
- 2.9.3.1. How God evicted them from southern Judah was exhibit #1.
- 2.9.4. **Hated?** – *The amazing thing is not that God hated Esau, but that he loved lying & conniving Jacob!*(& we are all Jacob's)
- 2.9.4.1. **Q: Why does God hate any man?** The only right answer... because that man deserves it!
- 2.9.5. Regarding Esau some note that "*well God waits to pronounce this doom upon him till the end of OT history*"(last book). But in the context of "**election**", Paul says in Romans 9:11-13 "**Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."**"(NIV)
- 2.9.6. Oh, we'll justify til our dying day all the good reasons **we** have for holding **hatred** towards another believer...but for **God** to hold to a justified righteous hatred...no way!

⁴ William Barclay; pg.229

2.10. **#2 – IN WHAT WAY HAVE WE DESPISED YOUR NAME?**

- 2.11. (6) He 1st targets the **priests**, accusing them of lack of **honor & reverence** or **respect!**
- 2.11.1. When Rodney Dangerfield says, *“I don’t get no respect!”* we laugh...when God says it, **we ought to weep!**
2.11.1.1. **Comedy becomes tragedy!**
- 2.11.2. See, when an **unbeliever** sins he **breaks God Law!**
When a **believer** sins he not only **breaks God Law**, but he also **breaks the heart of God!**

2.12. **#3 - IN WHAT WAY HAVE WE DEFILED YOU?**

- 2.13. (8,13) 1st let’s **read Lev.22:20-22.**
- 2.14. They had offered the **blind & lame(8)**; & **stolen, lame, sick, & blemished(13).**
- 2.14.1. **Blind** – Giving God what you’ll probably lose anyways!
2.14.1.1. “It will probably fall into a ditch or be injured”.
- 2.14.2. **Lame** – Giving God what’s leftover.
- 2.14.3. **Stolen** – Giving God what doesn’t belong to me!
2.14.3.1. “No sweat off my back!”
- 2.14.4. **Sick** – Giving God what’s quickly slipping through my fingers!
- 2.14.5. **Blemished** - Giving God what’s less than best!
- 2.14.6. **Q:** Match whom this **slogan** goes with, **“When you care enough to send the very best!”** [Hallmark cards]
- 2.14.7. The **Koh-i-noor diamond** is among the most spectacular in the world. **Queen Victoria** received it as a gift from a **maharajah** when he was a lad. Later as a grown man this maharajah visited Queen Victoria again. He requested that the stone be brought from the Tower of London to Buckingham Palace. The maharajah took the diamond and, kneeling before the Queen, **gave it back to her, saying**, “Your Majesty, I gave this jewel when I was a child, too young to know what I was doing. I want to give it to you again in the fullness of my strength, with all of my heart and affection, and gratitude, now and forever, fully realizing all that I do.” [We need to do the same]
- 2.15. (8-10) It would be better to **lock up** the church than to insult the King of Kings with our wretched offerings!
- 2.15.1. I remember “playing church” as a little kid.
- 2.15.2. We always need to check ourselves to make sure that’s not what we are doing presently!

- 2.16. (11-14) Ironically, these same priests rejected the food offering the people bring to the Lord's table.
- 2.16.1. They **sneer/sniff** at it!(13)
- 2.16.2. **Be cautious not to sneer at others gifts & sacrifices!**
- 2.16.3. Charles Spurgeon and his wife, according to a story in *The Chaplain magazine*, would **sell**, but refused to **give away**, the eggs their chickens laid. Even close relatives were told, "You may have them if you pay for them." As a result some people labeled the Spurgeons greedy and grasping. They accepted the criticisms without defending themselves, and only after Mrs. Spurgeon died was the full story revealed: All the profits from the sale of eggs went to support **two elderly widows**. Because the Spurgeons were unwilling to let their left hand know what the right hand was doing (Matt. 6:3), they endured the attacks in silence.
- 2.17. (11b) "**among the nations**" - Many miss the opportunity afforded by the 1 million international students who study in the U.S.A. each year. Many of them are open to new ideas and would be responsive to the gospel.
- 2.17.1. He wants it to be magnified in all the earth!(5)
- 2.18. (13) **Q: Are you tired of serving God?**
- 2.18.1. Gal.6:9 "**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**"
- 2.18.2. Ok to be tired "**from**" the work, but we shouldn't be tired "**of**" the work!
- 2.18.3. **We need personal revival** so we don't fall into the same burn-out trap as the priests did here!
- 2.18.3.1. **Personal Revival** is like remodeling your house: it takes **longer** than you hoped, **costs more** than you planned, and **makes a bigger mess** than you ever thought possible.
- 2.18.3.2. [1] **Longer** – no quick fix to spiritual apathy!
- 2.18.3.3. [2] **It Costs** – no cheap way.
- 2.18.3.4. [3] **Big Mess** – no leap frog over personal hidden sins.
- 2.19. (14) 6 times in this book he will refer to "**His Name**"! [already in 6,11,13]
- 2.19.1. This speaks of His **reputation & character**.
- **End:** We don't need **the sand** that Jesus walked on; we need **the Jesus** who walked on the sand.
 - It is the duty of the pastor not only to **comfort the distressed** but to **distress the comfortable**.
 - Some churches are so dead they don't need **revival**--they need **resurrection**.
 - When Christians are **on fire**, **believers are warmed** and **sinner are attracted to the light**.⁵

⁵ Croft M. Pentz, *The Complete Book of Zingers* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1990)