

Malachi Healing in His Wings

- As we step into this Christmas season we do so in a time when it is more apparent than it has been in a while just how broken this world really is
 - People are angry, confused, and fearful
 - It is a dark time, and it is not clear yet if and when we might see any light at the end of that tunnel
- But we are reminded by history that dark times are a part of the cycle of time itself since the day Adam chose to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- And we are reminded at Christmas every year
 - When we Pause to contemplate the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ
 - That the darkness that is of the world
 - Though it will touch us because we are IN the world
 - Need no longer overcome us, because we are not OF the world
- That the healing which Jesus brought into the world can reign in our hearts moment by moment
 - So that as the world rages and burns
 - Our hearts can live in joy and rest
- And today I want to take you to one of those times of darkness
 - When God's people were discouraged
 - When the nation in which God's people lived had drifted far from Him
- Today I want to present to you for your consideration the final book of the OT
 - The final revelation of God before 400 years of silence →

Malachi Healing in His Wings

- The book written by the prophet Malachi
- Let's lay down the context
 - The final chapter of Nehemiah tell us in NEHEMIAH 13:6 that in the 32nd year of Artaxerxes king of Persia, somewhere around 433 BC
 - Nehemiah is called back to report to the king
 - Several years later Nehemiah returns to find the nation had drifted
 - They were at some points in open disregard for the law
 - At other points acknowledging the law in word while ignoring it in deed
 - Tobiah the enemy of Israel was living in the court of the temple
 - The offerings for the Levites had been abandoned so that they were in the fields working rather than attending to their priestly duties
 - People unapologetically did work on the Sabbath days
 - Jews were intermarrying with the Ammonites and Moabites against the law of the Lord
- Nehemiah, at his return began the process of renewing the kingdom and correcting these manifold errors
- And it is believed that this was the time when God raised up Malachi to exhort the land
 - That like Haggai and Zechariah had been called to exhort the nation to finish the tabernacle in their day
 - Some years later Malachi was called to support Nehemiah in calling the people back to purity
- Now the book is made up of Divine claims and counter-arguments by the priests of Israel
- The first of these is in the first verses →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 1:1-2

(1) The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. (2) 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,

- READ
- God's first message to the people is simple and beautiful
 - I have loved you
- And the first response, as we will see with nearly every response, is incredulity
 - Wherein has thou loved us?
 - What do you mean you have loved us, God?
 - What is your proof that you love us, because we don't feel very loved
- And God begins this proof by pointing out that they are the nation God chose
 - God did not choose Esau
 - God chose Jacob
- God made them a special people
 - And being a special people came with privileges, but also responsibilities
 - Because those whom the Lord loves He chastens
 - He teaches
 - He stretches
 - He holds upon them expectations
 - And all of that BECAUSE he LOVES THEM, not because He has rejected them
- The next claim and argument is in VERSES 6-8 →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 1:6-8

(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, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? (7) Ye offer polluted bread upon

- READ
- CONTINUE →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 1:6-8

mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. (8) And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame 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.

- READ
- God then says to the priests “I am your father and your master”
 - Fathers and masters receive honor by default
 - So where is my honor
- The priests reply with the same incredulity
 - What do you mean that we have despised your name, God?
 - How?
 - God answers – you offer polluted bread upon my alter
 - They did not offer their offerings with due respect for the ceremonial law
 - They were DOING the offerings, but with no regard for the WAY that God wanted it done
 - This shows contempt for the one who asked you to do it
 - It is one thing for my children to fail to do what I tell them
 - It is another thing for them to do it, but to do it in a wrong manner
 - This is an expression of disregard at best
 - Contempt at worst
 - They offered animals, but they were the bad and useless ones
 - The blind, the lame, the sick
 - The cast-offs
 - The ones that weren’t good for anything else anyway
- They offered, but they didn’t sacrifice
 - Because their offerings were not a sacrifice at all
 - They gave of their least and of their worst to God
 - They gave him the leftovers →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 1:6-8

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- And in this they showed contempt for the LORD
- Now let's think about this in relation to that first claim
 - I have loved you
- See the nation failed to understand God's love
 - And in their failure to understand God's love, they felt no compulsion to return God's love
 - Now God deserves their honor whether he loved them or not
 - Because he is the Father, He is the master, He is the creator
- But the book begins "I have loved you"
 - He DOES love His people
 - And thus he not only deserves their honor by right
 - But he is also worthy of their honor by recourse for his love
- As the text continues God calls them to repent
 - He promises them that His name will be great, not only among them, but also among the Gentiles
- This is the first promise in the book of Salvation, but not the last
 - Though the nation had scorned his name
 - Though they had poured contempt upon Him
 - There was coming one who would glorify Him to the world
 - Would offer a pure offering
 - So that even among the Gentiles the name of the LORD would be great
- What follows in CHAPTER 2 then is a warning →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 2:1-2

(1) And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. (2) 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.

- READ
- The priests weren't listening
 - They weren't taking what God said to heart
 - They weren't giving glory to His name
 - They weren't directing the people to love him and obey Him
 - And they weren't even setting a good example of love and obedience for the people to follow
- Such was the darkness of this time
 - It is not just that the people were lost in the darkness of their own selfishness
 - But those who were called to lead the people were lost in the darkness of their own selfishness as well →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 2:6-7

(6) The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. (7) For 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.

- VERSE 7 tells us that the priests lips were supposed to keep knowledge
 - That the people were supposed to be able to come to him and seek unto the law
 - The law of truth was supposed to be in his mouth, not iniquity
- But instead notice how God describes these leaders of the nation →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 2:8

But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

- READ
- Where there should have been truth there was only lies
- Where there should have been integrity there was only deceit
- And many stumbled
- And much was corrupted
- And the times were times of darkness
- Not just among the leaders, but among the nation
- So God says in VERSE 11 →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 2:11

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

- READ
- Like we read in NEHEMIAH 13, so in MALACHI
 - Not only did the priests profane the temple
 - But the people married the daughters of strange gods
- It was not just the leaders in the land
 - But in the void which the leaders left
 - The people sought unto themselves
 - Until the world around them
 - They profaned their own nation through compromise and selfishness
 - They allowed the unbelieving world into their lives, into their homes
 - They became comfortable around strange God's
- So God at the end of MALACHI 2 makes another Divine claim, and the people make another counter-argument →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 2:17

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?

- READ
- God tells them that he has been wearied with their words
- And like with the last two contentions
 - They don't even see it
 - "wherein have we wearied him"
- The answer:
 - When they say "every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD and delighteth in them"
 - Because the heathen nations prosper
 - And they do not
 - They claim that God delights in the wicked
 - And has forsaken judgment
- To this God had a response as well →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:1-3

(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. (2) But who may abide the day of his coming?

- READ
- CONTINUE →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:1-3

who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: (3) 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.

- READ
- God tells the nation
 - Don't you worry about the heathen
 - Don't you worry about the unbeliever
 - Don't you worry about the wicked
- The messenger of the LORD is coming
 - And when He comes he is going to take care of the wicked
- But do you know what else
 - He stands as a refiner of the sons of Levi
- Don't worry about the judgment upon them
 - Instead, worry about where you will stand on that day
- And that is exactly where God turns their attention as he continues
- Contention number 4 is found in VERSE 7 →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:7

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?

- READ
- God tells them that they, like their fathers, and fathers fathers, have gone away from his ordinances
 - The call of God here is not anger though, but pleading to return
 - Return to me and I will return to you
- Then the counter argument? Wherein shall we return?
 - What have we done?
 - Unto what do we need to return?
- God's answer is divine contention #5 →

Understand Malachi

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.

- READ
- God says the first way you can return is to stop robbing me
- Their counterpoint?
 - How have we robbed you
- And God tells them that, like as they have ignored the law in offerings and sacrifices
 - They have ignored the law in tithes and offerings
- Recall in NEHEMIAH 13 the levites were forced to the fields to work because the tithes were not coming in
 - So God says →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:10

(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.

- READ
- God says put me in my house
 - Bring the levites back to the temple
 - And see if blessings will not pour out upon you
 - He continues →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:11-12

(11) And 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, saith the LORD of hosts. (12) And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

- READ
- In summary
 - The solution to the darkness of the land is obedience to the LORD
- The 6th and final contention and counter-argument is found in MALACHI 3:13 →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:13-15

(13) Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? (14) Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before

- READ
- CONTINUE →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:13-15

the LORD of hosts? (15) And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

- READ
- God says their words have been stout AGAINST HIM
 - And they say “where have we spoken against you”
- His answer
 - When you say that serving God is empty and valueless
 - We keep God’s ordinances and the wicked prevail
- Let’s summarize the darkness of this time
 - The darkness of this time was that the leaders of the nation had failed its people
 - The people floundered, walking in their own way but thinking they were walking in God’s way
 - Their understanding of God was so diminished that they saw no reason to serve him
 - They saw serving him as a loss rather than a gain
 - As a step backward rather than forward
 - They were angry, selfish, confused, and rebellious
- But in MALACHI 3:16 we are introduced to another group of people
 - This group is called “they that feared the LORD”
 - And now God has some words for them →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:16-4:2

(16) 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. (17) And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that

- READ
- CONTINUE →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:16-4:2

day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. (18) Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. (1) For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven;

- READ
- CONTINUE →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:16-4:2

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. (2) 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.

- READ
- Days of darkness? Yes
- Failure of leadership? Yes
- Rebellious society? Yes
- But those who feared the Lord
 - The Bible says they spoke to one another often...
 - The LORD saw
 - He heard them
 - He remembered them
- A book of remembrance was written for them that thought upon His name
- God says they are mine
 - In the day of judgment they will be spared
 - The day of judgment will burn up the adversaries
 - But unto those that fear the name of the LORD will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings
- In the midst of the darkness of the society that surrounds the light of life will shine into their hearts
- And though the leaders fail
 - And the society flounders
 - They that fear the Lord shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall
 - What does that mean?
 - Have you ever seen a young animal gambol, prance around in its innocent happiness? →

Understand Malachi

Malachi 3:16-4:2

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. (2) 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.

- That's actually the idea here
- They that fear the name of the LORD will rejoice with joy
- The rays of the sun of righteousness will warm his heart and he will have joy

- Now Malachi ends with the sign that this promise will come to pass
 - That this Sun of righteousness will come
- A prophet will be sent before the coming of this day of the LORD
 - He would turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the children to their fathers
- That prophet was announced six months before Messiah, to be born of a priest and his wife
- On the day of his circumcision His father blessed the LORD and said in LUKE 1 →

Understand Malachi

Luke 1:68-79

(68) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, (69) And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; (70) As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: (71) That we should be saved from

- READ

Understand Malachi

Luke 1:68-79

our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; (72) To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; (73) The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, (74) That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies

- READ

Understand Malachi

Luke 1:68-79

might serve him without fear, (75) In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. (76) And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; (77) To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the

- READ

Understand Malachi

Luke 1:68-79

remission of their sins, (78) Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, (79) To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

- READ
- This is the testimony of God's working in the hearts of them that fear His name
- Christian, the days are still dark
- Society is floundering
 - It's leaders have failed
 - It has forsaken the LORD and is reaping the consequences of that forsaking
- But it's Christmastime
 - It's the season where we remember the One who visited and redeemed his people
 - Who performed the mercy promised to the fathers
 - So that we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life
 - To live light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death
 - To guide our feet into the way of peace
-

Malachi Healing in His Wings

- Through the prophet Malachi God describe a people who lived in the midst of the darkness of the hour
- A people whom He called “they that feared the LORD”
 - To this people God said He was sending the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings
 - When that Sun of righteousness was nigh to be born
 - Zecharias the priest proclaimed that this child, who would become a man
 - Who would die on the cross to bear the sin of the world
 - Would give that same people
 - They that fear the Lord
 - Knowledge of salvation
 - A heart to serve Him without fear
 - And would guide their feet into the way of peace
- GOSPEL?
- And in this Christmas season may it be so
 - It’s dark out there...let it be bright in here
 - People are angry...let us be joyful
 - People are confused...let us live in the clarity of the light of life
 - The dayspring from on high – the divine sunrise – has visited us
 - Let us walk in that light
 - And shine that light
- NOT as they which have no hope
 - But as those who have the ONLY hope →

Malachi Healing in His Wings

- And may this Savior who came with healing in his wings effect that healing
 - Not just in us
 - But through us
- To a world lost in darkness, and broken through sin