

SERIES: "LAST...BUT NOT LEAST":
An In Depth Study of MALACHI - the Final Prophet of the Old Testament Era-
PART II

WEDNESDAY, November 12th, 2008

- I. It had been 100 years since Israel had heard the voice of any Prophet- the last one being ZECHARIAH.
- II. Malachi prophesied a considerable time AFTER the rebuilding of the TEMPLE and the restoration of the RELIGIOUS system.
- III. It is very likely that Daniel's "70 - WEEKS prophecy" (Daniel chapter 9) gives us the greatest clue as to the date when Malachi prophesied.

Daniel was told that 70 "weeks" of years would sum up the future of his people, the Jews. This prophecy BEGAN in 445 B.C. at the decree by the Persian emperor to rebuild JERUSALEM. This prophecy was divided into three parts: 7 "weeks" (49 years); 62 "weeks" (434 years); and 1 "weeks" (7 years). When you subtract 49 years from 445 B.C. you end up in the year 396 B.C.: THE VERY YEAR THAT MALACHI - the great and final prophet of the Old Testament - prophesied! It served as a kind of milepost along the way towards the ultimate fulfillment of this prophesy.

IV. God's PATIENCE was far spent. It was now time for either REVIVAL - OR RUIN!

V. Malachi's fresh voice came against both PRIEST and PEOPLE alike!

VI. The reaction of the people can be summed up with the following two descriptive phrases: 1) righteous INDIGNATION, 2) self- DEFENSE.

VII. Seven times Malachi challenged Israel; seven times the people of Israel

ANSWERED back:

1. "Wherein hast thou LOVED us?" (1:2)
2. "Wherein have we DESPISED thy name?" (1:6)
3. "Wherein have we POLLUTED thee?" (1:7)
4. "Wherein have we WEARIED thee?" (2:17)
5. "Wherein shall we RETURN?" (3:7)
6. "Wherein have we ROBBED thee?" - (3:8)
7. "What have we SPOKEN so much against thee?" (3:13)

VIII. Like America today, Israel was soon to be shaken to its core by troubles, PERSECUTIONS, WARS and rumors of WAR, and MILITARY and ideological onslaughts unlike any it had ever known before.

IX. It became the great BURDEN of Malachi to deliver this very urgent and important message - though it was ultimately REJECTED.

- X. The theme of "MESSENGER" is repeated on several occasions in this book:
1. Malachi 2: 7 - Here Pastors are referred to as "messengers" (literally, "ANGELS") <cf Revelation 2:1>;
 2. Malachi 3: 1 - Here John the BAPTIST is revealed to be the next "Malachi" to be heard from;
 3. Malachi 3: 1 - Here the coming Messiah (JESUS) is called the "messenger of the COVENANT". (THE NEW TESTAMENT)
- XI. The urgency of Malachi's message was compounded by the fact that, though the people were desperately wicked, they seemed to be completely UNWARE of their own spiritual condition before God.
- XII. Because of the response by Israel to the precious statement by God that He LOVED the people of this nation, God pointed way back in history to the twin brothers named JACOB and ESAU. (1:2-3a; cf Genesis 25:23)
- XIII. God's statement was based upon the infinite FOREFOREKNOWLEDGE of God related to the choices that each of these brothers - and the nations they spawned - would make in an overall historical/ national sense.
- XIV. Because of the choice of Jacob to FOLLOW God (in spite of his many faults and failures) he did indeed become the channel of BLESSING to all of mankind with (among other things) * the SCRIPTURES and * the SAVIOR.
- XV. But ESAU'S choices led he and his people down a very different path. He spawned a nation called EDOMITES who were filled with the most implacable HATRED of all things HOLY. The EDOMITE religion was both foul and fierce and their character was EVIL. It eventually came to a head in the HERODS who ultimately did ALL they could to destroy both CHRIST AND His Church! In light of these things it is much easier to comprehend God's Holy HATRED for ESAU - as well as His LOVE for JACOB.
- XVI. Notice the contrast of WILLS in verses 4 and 5 of chapter #1.

NOTES: