

SERIES: "LAST...BUT NOT LEAST":

An In-Depth Study of MALACHI - the Final Prophet of the Old Testament Era-  
PART XVI - Malachi Chapter 2:17-3:6

"WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE?"

WEDNESDAY, April 29th, 2009

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- I. When Judah returned to her land, she Expected to once again – and immediately – experience the Prosperity and Glory which they once knew in the days of King Solomon. When that did NOT materialize, they began to Question whether God was truly Holy and Just as HE had "claimed"!
- II. After hearing these people express their disappointments, God moved his prophet, Malachi, to WARN the people that His PATIENCE was wearing thin. ("ye have wearied me with your words")
- III. God reveals 3 False complaints that Judah had uttered against the LORD:
  1. "Every one that doeth evil is Good in the sight of the LORD."
  2. "...He delighted in them.."
  3. "...where is the God of Justice?" (\* a sarcastic skepticism expressing their doubt as to whether or not God was even AVAILABLE to take action against the wicked?!)
- IV. At the "heart" of the reason for Judah's questionings was a fundamental belief that material Prosperity was a sign of God's blessing on those who were obedient to Him.
- V. This was a perplexing issue for several of God's choicest servants within the Old Testament, including: JOB, DAVID (Psalm 73:11-20), Solomon, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk (2:3; 3:2-9). But God revealed within the New Testament that blessings come to the Just AND the Unjust alike! (Matthew 5:45)
- VI. But although the wicked do often prosper in this world, God's hand of Judgment ultimately falls on them. (Character!)
- VII. In response to Judah's questioning of God's JUSTICE, God had a surprising revelation for them: The LORD executes Judgment NOT ONLY upon the Gentiles - BUT ALSO upon the sinners within Judah!
- VIII. Although Malachi's name means "messenger", HE was not the one God was predicting would come to "prepare the way of the Lord" (3:1) That prediction of a coming "messenger" would be

fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist. (see also Matthew 3:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23)

IX. Not only were the priests in John's day unprepared, but they were also guilty of placing spiritual "stumbling blocks" in the way of the people (Matthew 3: 7 - 10). It was customary in those days for men to go ahead of great LEADERS and smooth the ROAD, remove obstacles and stumbling STONES, and fill in Holes. Therefore this exhortation indicated that the people would NOT be prepared for the coming of the Messiah!

X. Notice the indication of the plurality of the Godhead in the different usages of the word "LORD" in verse #1.

XI. The word "SUDDEN" is used 25 times within the Old Testament and in every case but one is connected with DISASTER or Judgment! Therefore, this prophecy is related to "the time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) when His judgment will fall upon ALL Unrighteous men. (see II Chron. 29:36)

XII. In relating the Messiah to the "COVENANT", Malachi was alluding to His Deity

XIII. In speaking of the Messiah's PURGING work, Malachi used two metaphors: 1) FIRE, and 2) SOAP → (The Fuller was the "laundry man")

NOTES: Fires: used to purge the dross from the metal. The "refiner" controls the purifying process, filtering the dross until the metal is pure. When the metal becomes as clear as a liquid mirror (and he can see his own reflection in it) then the process is complete.

XIV. God let Israel know that though at times His judgment may APPEAR to be TARRYING, when it DOES fall, it would be swift!

XV. Four categories of sin which God will judge are identified in this prophecy as: 1. Sorcery 2. Adultery 3. Perjury - and 4. Usury

XVI. Those who victimize those who are too weak to defend themselves are said to be those who "fear not" the Lord. (v. 5)

XVII. God does NOT "wink" at the sin of the wicked (as Judah was claiming) but as the unchanging God, He will never break His Covenant with Judah. He may CHASTEN Judah, BUT He will not CONSUME them!

XVIII. The Jew's SURVIVAL is guaranteed for as long as the earth exists. (Romans 11:25-29)

XIX. We ALL ought to thank God that though He is INDEED a God of Justice, He is ALSO a God of Mercy! (Lamentations 3:22)