

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 41 w/Answers

Malachi

We will now conclude our survey of the Old Testament with a look at the book of Malachi. As relevant today as it was some 2,400 years ago when Malachi first wrote these words, his message will challenge our relationship and our walk with Christ.

Providing the perfect ending for the Old Testament, we see one final time how God's people continue to sin against Him and yet His great grace will continue to shine through, even those dark days. In the four hundred years that follow Malachi's writings, no other word from God will be proclaimed as He readies the world for the birth of Jesus, the Christ, His only Son – the promised Redeemer.

Read the book of Malachi and consider the following questions:

1. Look at Chapters 1 and 2 of Malachi and identify the sins being committed by the Priests. Are these same sins being committed today by church leaders? Can you identify a few specific examples?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Blemished offerings or no offerings at all
 - b. ANSWER 2: Outwardly "godly" but inwardly unrighteous
 - c. ANSWER 3: Misguided or intentionally false teachings, causing people to stumble and preventing people from knowing the truth, the real Gospel
 - d. ANSWER 4: Exhibiting partiality versus fairness when dealing with issues within the church
 - e. ANSWER 5: Marital unfaithfulness
 2. Read Malachi 3:8-12. Does the principal of tithing apply today, and if, so how? (See 2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9; see also, Leviticus 27:30-33, Numbers 18:20-32, and Deuteronomy 14:22-29)
 - a. ANSWER: Clearly this principal applies to us today just as it did then. God wants us to honor Him, to acknowledge through our offerings and gifts that He is the provider of all that we have. If God is truly first in our lives this means that we will honor Him in everything we do, including our tithes, offerings, and including how we manage all of the material things that He provides us. Our approach to tithing is a tremendous witness of God's love abiding in us. Our desire to help the poor and those in need reflects God's love to others and demonstrates our love of God and our desire to help those less fortunate.
 3. In Malachi 4:4, Israel is commanded to "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel." What about Christians today? Do we have to "remember the law of Moses" and the "decrees and laws" that God gave him? (See Matthew 5:17, Matthew 22:34-40, Romans 13:10 and Galatians 6:2)
 - a. ANSWER: Yes, if we love God above all else, followed by love of our fellow man, then our adherence to the rest of the laws and decrees follows naturally from keeping these two primary commandments. Christ's death on the cross abolished the burden of the law, but He did not abolish the law. Rather his death and resurrection fulfilled the law through His love of God the Father and his great love for us.
-

And thus we conclude our Old Testament Survey with a book that speaks to each of us about the importance of setting priorities and keeping Christ first in all that we do. Compromise and back-sliding is all-too-often an easy thing to do. Putting off doing the things of God while we move our personal desires higher up the priority list is a trap that can easily ensnare us, and one we must avoid at all costs.

It is also important to note how close and personal that God's walk with mankind began, as evidenced by His daily walk in the garden with Adam and then Eve. Yet, by the end of the Old Testament, God had gone silent and seemed distant for over 400 years, only to reemerge with the birth of His only son Jesus. Over that span of time, like the two thousand plus years that have passed since His birth, God's only desire has been, is, and will be, to love us in spite of ourselves. He is our Creator and Savior, and in turn His desire is for us to love him.

So let us take away from this survey of the Old Testament that one truth: that in spite of ourselves, God the creator of the universe sent His one and only Son Jesus to die on the cross to pay for our sins so that through His great grace and love for us, this sacrifice would reestablish the relationship God once had with mankind.

Rejoice with me today over this Good News and commit today to strive to grow in your walk with Him, keeping the will of God predominant in your daily living. Go out and be a blessing to someone and let the love of God shine through you!

Thanks again for being faithful in studying with us.

In Christ,

Wes