

## The Last Words – The Book of Malachi

We've finally arrived at the end of the Old Testament - only 4 chapters left! 4,000 years of history, 1,000 years of writings, ends with the book of Malachi!

Nehemiah wraps up the O.T. narratively, but Malachi ends it prophetically – Here is God's final word to His people before Jesus comes! But the journey from the end of Malachi to Matthew is far more than just a turn of a page!

Malachi (his name means messenger) was sent to facilitate a conversation between God & His people, and the result of that conversation was silence!

400 years of silence between God & His people followed this conversation! Have you ever had an interaction w/someone that ended in a similar way? Can you remember what was said that led to such an outcome?

What was said between God & His people that led to 4 centuries of silence is found right here in the book of Malachi! Let's be a fly on the wall!

The conversation starts w/God speaking, then the people give their rebuttal. Then God responds to their objections, & the process starts all over again!

- ***"I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" (1:1)*** God answers by pointing out His choice of Jacob over Esau!

God chose Jacob & his descendants to be His covenant people, but they failed to acknowledge God's blessings/covenantal faithfulness to them!

- ***"Where is my honor? Where is my fear? Says the Lord of host to you, O priests..." But you say, "How have we despised your name?" (1:6)*** God responds with ***"By offering polluted food upon my altar."***

The priests failed to lead the people of God to honor Him with offerings of the first and the best of their flocks/fields!

- ***"You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping & groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand." But you say, "Why does he not?" (2:13-14)*** God responds with ***"Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to who you have been faithless..."***

God will no longer accept their sacrifices, b/c they have not only broken

covenant with Him, they also have broken covenant with their spouses.

- ***"You have wearied the Lord with your words." But you say, "How have we wearied him?" (2:17)*** God responds - ***By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, & he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"***

God's people have called evil good & say that God gives approval to those who practice such things. They also claim that God will do nothing about it!

- ***"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you says the Lord of hosts." But you say, "How shall we return?" (3:7)***

Responding in this way is nothing less than a complete hardness of heart!

- ***"Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me." But you say, "How have we robbed you?" "In your tithes & contributions... Bring the full tithe into the storehouse... & thereby put me to the test, says the Lord (3:8-10)***

God says trust me & take me at My word! If you give to me what I ask, I will bless you by opening the floodgates of heaven! But they refused!

- ***"Your words have been hard against me", says the Lord. But you say, "How have we spoken against you?" (3:13)*** God responds - ***You have said, "It is vain to serve God.", "What's the point of following Him?", "Evildoers prosper and won't be punished!"***

The people didn't receive what they wanted from God, so they rejected Him & 400 years of silence was the result! But there was a remnant! (3:16-18)

In every generation there will be those who choose to serve God, & those who do not! What path will we choose, & how can we learn from Malachi?

God's Law does not change, even though we have a redeemer today who has fulfilled it - Jesus Christ! He makes a way for us, but we're still called to:

Love God! Honor Him with our worship! Honor the covenant between us & God by keeping our marriage covenants! Honor God by calling evil, evil, & by clinging to what is good! Honor God by living a life of repentance! Honor God by refusing to rob Him of our tithes & offerings! And honor God in both word & deed! Which of these areas need work in our lives?

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