

Malachi Review

I Have Loved You. 1:2-5

God loved the descendants of Jacob and had entered into a special covenant relationship with them. The people didn't feel that God loved them because their lives were not as easy and wonderful as they wanted them to be. Their doubt of God's love led to disobedience which in turn led to other problems. For us, God the Father showed his love by sending his only begotten Son. God the Son showed his love for his sheep by laying down his life for them. We love God because he first loved us. But if we doubt God's love for us we are going to have problems.

The Priests Despised God's Name. 1:6-2:9

The priests allowed sacrifices to be offered which God said should not be offered. They offered animals which were blind, lame and blemished. The priests not only needed to offer sacrifices but they needed to do in the way God commanded. God told them that if they were not going to do it the right way he would rather that they didn't do it at all. The sin sacrifices pointed to Christ's death on the cross to make atonement for sin. To offer blemished sacrifices to God was to imply that God had low standards. That was a blatant falsehood. God is holy, just and righteous. That is why the sacrifices needed to be without blemish. Another reason was that the unblemished sacrifice was a type of Christ. Jesus was without sin. He was the fulfillment of the unblemished, perfect sacrifice. The type needed to be strictly followed because of what it taught about the One who fulfilled it.

The Covenant of Marriage was Broken. 2:10-16

The people of Judah were divorcing their Jewish wives and marrying foreign women. They were harming one another and also disobeying God. The danger in marrying foreign women was that the husband might be influenced to worship foreign idols. Marriage is also a type of Christ and his bride, the Church. It was important for the type to be preserved. Christ will not abandon and break covenant with his church as some of the men of Judah were doing with their wives.

Where is the God of Justice? 2:17-3:6

The people wanted to know "where is the God of justice." They wanted God to come and punish "those people over there" that they didn't like. They didn't want God to come and judge themselves. God said that he was coming and that the people of Judah would not like it because he was coming to judge them. He would judge the priests and Levites as well as the people of Judah. In this promise of judgment and justice, God promised to send a messenger who would prepare his way. Then the Lord would come to his temple. John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way. The Son of God was the one who came to his temple. There was judgment in Jesus' first coming but he was also full of grace and truth. He came as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. For those who believe in Jesus, there is eternal life. For those who do not believe, there is a terrible judgment.

You are Robbing God in Tithes and Offerings. 3:7-12

The people were not bringing their full tithes into the storehouses in Jerusalem. The priests and Levites lived off this tithe since they did not have an inheritance of land like the other tribes did. While the priests and Levites were busy attending to the temple, they did not have time to sow, weed, and reap crops. They depended on the tithes brought to Jerusalem. If the tithes were lacking, then the service at the temple suffered. God challenged them to obey his commandment to tithe. Disobedience brought a curse. Obedience brought blessing.

It is Vain to Serve God. 3:13-4:3

The people said that it didn't do any good to serve God. They weren't being rewarded for their efforts. They said that it was better to be evil because God didn't punish evildoers. There was a group of people who feared God and came together and distanced themselves from those who accused God of being unjust. God promised that he would punish the wicked and reward those who feared him. This promise finds its fulfillment in both Jesus' first coming and in his second coming. John the Baptist was the one who came in the "spirit and power of Elijah". He prepared the way for Jesus' first coming. He told the people to repent and proclaimed that the one coming after him was greater. Verses 4:5-6 end the book of Malachi and the Old Testament but they make a fitting introduction to the New Testament. The Messiah is coming!