

The Minor Prophets #32

Malachi

by: *Ronald L. Dart*

It's fascinating how the words of the old prophets echo down through the generations and still resonate. It's not entirely surprising because God never changes and neither does human nature it seems. The spiritual leadership of God's people has failed them, the same things happen again and again. I don't know how or why it's entirely so but I suspect it has something to do with the accumulation of power and prestige. Jesus was concerned about this with the twelve disciples those guys he named apostles. The mother of two of them came to him asking for special privilege for her sons but not now but when he comes in his kingdom. Well that didn't go down too well with the other fellows and when Jesus saw all this he had to say something about it, so he got them together and talked to them.

Matthew 20:25: **But Jesus called them to him and said,** *you know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

I don't suppose there has ever been a man on the face of the earth who had the power at his beckon call that Jesus had, but there was never ever a time when he abused it. He tried to make this lesson clear in the last supper when he got up from supper, took a towel, laid aside his outer garment and got a basin of water and began to wash his disciples feet. He said if I wash your feet you should wash one another's feet, the whole idea is we are all servants, we're not emperors, lords nothing of the kind, we are not masters, we are servants. Now it seems odd to me when I think about it but of all the things that Jesus might have said, of all the instructions he might have left us these are his only words about church governance. He forbade his men to exorcizing dominion over or authority upon the people, it's that simple. And Jesus it seems also taught that, he is govern best who is govern least, that old principle still applies. And if you trace the grief that has followed the church down through the ages an awful lot of it has come straight from ignoring these words, and letting some person become the boss, governor or the leader of all the people. I think this lies somewhere near the source of what God told Malachi to tell the priest in his time.

Malachi Chapter 2 Verse 7: **For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you are departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law; you have**

corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.” (NIV)

Now it's really ironic, this is the era of the great assembly the time in what we call today, Judaism was being born. The days of the great scholars the great rabbis who have been quoted again and again down through the generations of Judaism. These men were experts in the law, and here is Malachi objecting strenuously to the corruption of the law at the hands of the leaders and priest. These are the fathers of the traditions of the elders what became to be called the oral law. They were the very one whose judgment Jesus sharply challenge on more than one occasion. What the Jews called the oral law is what Jesus called the tradition of the elders, and this tradition became a fundamental stumbling block for the first Christians. The arguments you read about in the New Testament, particularly from Paul, are mainly arguments against the oral law and traditions that some still wanted to impose on the first Christians. One day the Jews came to Jesus and they were saying, why do your disciples transgress the traditions of the elders, they don't wash their hands when they eat bread. Jesus answered and said to them, why do you transgress the commandment of God by your tradition, and he went on to tell them specifically what it was they were doing, and said thus you nullify the word of God for your tradition. And if I may point out the obvious, they did it for the sake of their power. This is what was corrupting them and corrupted leaders of Gods people down through time so Jesus said.

*Matthew 15:7: You hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, **This people draws near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.***

These doctrines that Jesus is objecting to right here were being hatched in the days of Malachi and he said.

Chapter 2 Verse 10: Have we all not one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and has married the daughter of a strange god.

I think he is referring to the fact that down through history Israel had moved strange Gods on the temple mount. They actually had the houses or the rooms of the Sodomites, male temple prostitutes' right there on the temple mount.

The LORD will cut off the man that does this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offered an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

God lays this great sin at the feet of the master, the scholar, and the priest.

And this have you done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he won't even regard your offering any more, or receive it with good will at your hand. And you say, Why? Well, Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against who you have dealt treacherously: yet is she your companion, and the wife of your covenant.

I can't stress this enough, marriage is a covenant where a new family is made where one did not exist before and a man and his wife is one flesh in covenant. Now, why is it God took such a stringent view of this covenant of man and his wife?

Verse 15: And did he not make them one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. But why did he make them one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, said that he hates putting away: put another way he hates divorce for one covers violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that you don't deal treacherously.

Treacherously God is using this expression anytime you break covenant you are being a traitor to your covenant. Now God will forgive divorce but that doesn't mean he hates it any less. Why is he so strict about divorce, why is he so strong about it, hey it's the children. Did you hear why he did it, that he might seek a Godly seed, divorce hurts more than anyone the children. So if you can't just get along with each other anymore, can't you at least negotiate some kind of settlement till the kids are out of the house and in their own lives?

Verse 17: you have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, well how have we wearied God? Well when you say, everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them; or, you say where is the God of judgment?

The God of judgment was not long in the future.

Malachi Chapter 3: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Every Christian scholar sees this as the first and second coming of Christ, the messenger first mentioned is John the Baptist, as he prepared the way before Christ, then Jesus came the first time as the messenger of the covenant,

3:2: Behold, he shall come. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he'll purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, so they can offer unto the LORD an offering in

righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

It's fascinating to me that God will remember the ancient covenant he made with the tribe of Levi. They would always have a man to stand before him if they would always be able to serve him. How this will play out with Jesus is not clear, but it is clear that God keeps covenant even we don't. So the first coming he's the messenger of the covenant then he comes back again like a refiner's fire and that is going to be a different matter all together.

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearing, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and who don't fear me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Ah, - OK, who is this, that is going to come near for judgment, well Jesus said something on one particular day, it's found in John. 5th where the

John Chapter 5 Verse 18: **Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Jesus because he not only had he broken the Sabbath but he also said that God was his father making himself equal with God. Then Jesus said to them. Verily, verily, I'll tell you the truth. The son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the father do, these also does the Son likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and showed him all everything that himself done: and he will show him greater works than these that you may marvel. For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom he will.** Then he says this startling thing. *For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son:*

Think about that, if that being the case who is this that is talking about here? When he says I will become near to you for judgment. Well Jesus went on talking about this particular element and explains even why it is so.

Verse 25: *Verily, verily, I'll tell you the truth. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself; and has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

This is something important to understand, the father judges no man because God the father has never been man. The son is given all authority to judge, the father doesn't do it the son does it because he has been a man and understands.

Malachi Verse 6: **For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, saith the LORD of hosts. But then you said, well wherein shall we return? He answered Will a**

man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say how can we have robbed you? God answers In tithes and offerings.

A tithe is a tenth of whatever God gives to you and there is a much overlooked premise behind this statement. The tithes and the offerings must belong to God in the first place because you can't steal something that is already yours.

I've got X numbers of dollars in the bank, maybe I've worked hard maybe saved up a thousand bucks, it's mine how can I have robbed God. You have robbed God because if you haven't given him the tenth that he was due. God says on one occasion the Earth is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills, I own it all says God. We are granted the stewardship of the land and the cattle and we owe something to God for the use of what belongs to him. Now your free to disagree with this but the underlying premise of what Malachi says is right there and it's not restricted to the temple and the Levites. Abraham paid tithes long before there was a temple and long before Levi was born. Then there also is the story of his son Jacob, it is told back in Genesis when Jacob was on his way up to another country. He stopped one night to sleep and when he was sleeping he had a vision, a dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder. Of which the old song of Jacob ladder comes from and it was like there was a doorway to heaven right there on the very spot where he was. Well he woke up the next morning, he set up the stones that he had there and made a pillar out of them then he poured oil on the top of it. Jacob then called the name of the place Beth-el whereas the name of the place was called Luz before.

Genesis 28:20:And Jacob made a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: actually it says then shall Jehovah be my God And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that you shall give me I will surely give the tenth to you.

Jacob made a covenant with God, it's an, if, then statement, if you will do this then I will do that, we have got a deal. I've often wondered why it is in our covenant with God and our walk with God we would want to leave anything out of it. In other words if you're going to become a Christian and you want to have a relationship with God, would you want to leave your children out of your blessing or out of God's blessing on your household, I wouldn't think so. Then the obvious question is why you would want to leave your financial affairs out of your covenant with God.

I saw a cartoon once a man was getting baptized in a river and the minister was standing there and he held up his hand and the guy was standing there ready to go under the water for baptism and the preacher says everything that goes under the water belongs to God, it moves to the next panel and the man is immersed in the water but his hand is sticking up with his wallet in it and the dollars sticking up out of it, that didn't go under the water.

I've often thought about that just what are you prepared to exempt from your covenant with God? Well because of the fact that they have robbed God he went on to say.

Malachi Verse 9: You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for you shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.

It's really something when you realize that all this stuff hinges on bringing the tenth to God of all that he has given you. It's not because God need money it's because you need to realize who has given you everything that you have got and in a way the failure to bring the tenth to God is tantamount to saying God hasn't given me anything I owe him nothing.

Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet you say, what have we said against you? Well God replies, you have said, it's vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

You know what good is it, and I think that's a fairly common attitude that people have toward God.

Verse 15: And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are delivered.

And you know, if you want to know what that looks like just watch television, in our country we honor the proud, the vain, and the wicked and everything else, it's a terrible situation. Then however there comes this marvelous hopeful prophecy in the middle of all this and it's something to remember to your dying day.

Chapter 3 Verse 16: Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD listened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for those that feared the LORD, and thought upon his name.

When you think about that, God listens when we as saints talk to one another, when we send to one another an encouraging E-mail. When we take the time to send a note a letter or a card and say I'm thinking about you or I'm praying for you, I know it's not easy for you for what you're going through. God has heard this and has a book of remembrance there before him and somebody writes that down before him that we did that for one another.

Verse 17: And those people will be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that stays with him and works with him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not.

And you know that's one thing if we will let ourselves just do it, we can all do it and you can know who is serving God and who is not serving him. If we just pay attention you will know in the light of his word.

Malachi 4: For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

You know I was watching this video, I think it was called hyperspace which told the story of our solar system. It told the story of the life of our planet and it showed how at this point in the life of our system we on the planet earth live in a kind of a green zone. Here only the temperature is just right, it has allowed us to have life to live and to survive and prosper. But as the sun grows hotter and time passes the green zone will move out away from us and the earth will dry up and it will indeed burn like an oven and everything will be like stubble with neither root nor branch the whole thing burns up.

And you shall tread down the wicked; for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I will do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember you the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Not the traditions of men not the law and commandments of man by the way, remember the law I gave Moses on Mount Sinai. Then he say's this remarkable thing.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a destruction.

It was John the Baptist the first time who was the Elijah to come and it's really strange there have already been many pretenders for that the second time. You can find them on the internet if you want to look for them but they are just pretenders. When the Elijah really does come it won't be long now. And it's fascinating that the issue that is at stake is the family, he'll turn the heart of the children to their fathers and the fathers to their children. Doing that is about the only way to save us.

This is the last program in the Minor Prophet Series, its number 32; yep there are 31 programs before this dealing with all the Minor Prophets. As it happens though we have so much audio of the prophets we can't hardly tell you what all of them are, we've done all of the prophet Isaiah done all of Jeremiah, Jeremiah is part of a series called Real Prophets. In fact I asked one of our people about this and he told me that in the last 12 months we have sent out 70,000 CD's or tape or what have you on this type of stuff, though we have quite an inventory of them fell free to get in touch with us and ask what it is that we have available. You can also look us up on the World Wide Web at www.borntowin.net and if you want to see the whole range of things we have to offer you can look at our book store where we list all this stuff we have available. We give away all that we can afford and we sell the rest of it, and that question of what we can afford is kind of important because the way this radio program is sponsored is by contributions from our listeners, if it weren't for people who like what we say and send us money to stay on the air we could go into retirement pretty quickly, so drop us line or give us a call and be in touch until next time, I'm Ronald Dart.

This article was transcribed with minor editing from a message given by
Ronald L. Dart titled: "The Minor Prophets #32" (MP32) 1/24/08
Transcribed by: tl

Ronald L. Dart is an evangelist and is heard daily and weekly
on his Born to Win radio program.

You can contact Ronald L. Dart at Christian Educational Ministries
P.O. Box 560 Whitehouse, Texas 75791
Phone: (903) 839-9300 — 1-888-BIBLE-44

www.borntowin.net