

43. Malachi & Conclusions

The last recorded action prior to Malachi's prophecy in 397 BC was Nehemiah cleansing the priesthood in 432 BC, about 35 years.

I see that Reese places Nehemiah's passing at age 70, about 8 years before Malachi speaks.

Then, it is about 415 years between Malachi and John the Baptist. The change from BC to AD messes up the count of years both because there is no year 0 and because the beginning of AD is incorrect. Jesus was born in 5 'BC.'

The first two chapters of Malachi show us that God fits Himself to each regardless of our human persona.

A Godly Offspring.

The end of chapter 2 gives us God's purpose.

But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? – He seeks godly offspring.

And then – You have wearied the Lord with your words;
**yet you say, “In what way have we wearied Him?” In that
you say, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of
the Lord, and He delights in them.”**

A rational mind could make this same charge against speaking Christ or against our understanding of union with Christ.

Does God “delight in us” regardless of what we do?

Placing Our Wrong.

I think you will find an assumption, a dividing line, beneath my words every time I place myself with all abandon into the Lord Jesus regardless of my failure and inability.

I never place myself into Jesus in order to justify any wrongful action. On the contrary, I place myself into Jesus in Godly sorrow, in spite of any wrongful action.

I do that in order to place my WRONG upon the Lamb Slain, for I have no where else I dare put it. But I never use “union with Christ” to justify the wrong or to call it “right.”

And when you look at God’s complaint through Malachi, you see that His anger is against hurting other people.

Purifying Fire.

“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts. “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

In the move fellowship, being refined and purified by the Lord was our continual expectation and desire.

Before Our Change Comes.

Christian community IS refining fire.

In my own experience, it took about twelve years of the purging of the Lord inside of the press of community before I could even see that the “issue” was never the issue, but respect for one another was the only true concern.

When I consider others whom I knew well, I surmise that twelve such years before a change comes is a general rule.

In the fall of 1987, which was for me the “season of deliverance,” the communities were fifteen years old. It was only then that complaining, complaining, complaining, finally vanished from the brethren.

The Lord Jesus Will Eliminate.

Then we see that Paul's word in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the same as Malachi's, the same FIRE that is the Lord.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already energeoing; but is only presently restrained until it might become out of the midst. And then lawlessness will be unveiled which the Lord Jesus will eliminate with the breath of His mouth and will render inoperative by His presence made visible and known.

By bringing you into the knowledge of union with Christ, I have brought you into refining FIRE that will not rest until everything not of God has been purged out from your soul.

Cleansing Fire.

I have worded 2 Thessalonians 2 in this way. – Christ must be all first before anything not Christ could ever vanish away.

But how does the not-Christ vanish away?

Union with Christ will never remove our permission to God to be cleansing FIRE inside of us.

When I place my wrong as WRONG into the Lord Jesus as my ALL-first, I do so because I know that He cleanses me.

But I never use “union with Christ” to justify doing or saying things that hurt other people.

Union with Christ never justifies wrong.

My Problem.

In the last lesson, “Two Leaders and a City,” I used the metaphor of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem to share the meaning of a Godly covering as a wall of protection.

Everything I shared in that lesson was of the Lord.

Nonetheless, God has brought me up short concerning myself. My problem was a wrong expectation that I was placing on you matched with a wrong expectation concerning my own abilities.

To put it quite simply, I do not have the gift of being any kind of “covering” in a long-distance relationship. If there is no face to face, I cannot know how to word things and things appear quite impossible to me.

I Was Wrong.

Then, at the same time, I realize that I was thinking of the depths of respect for one another that I knew in the Blueberry eldership, and in my foolishness, I was actually imposing that expectation upon you.

You are what God made you to be and the place He has you right now is perfect for right now.

I was wrong, both concerning my own lack and concerning the perfect place of God in which you presently live.

And in being wrong, I ask your forgiveness.

At the same time, I must withdraw from any of the practice of Godly covering because of no face-to-face.

Who Can Endure?

In turn, I am placing myself before you as an example of Christ inside His Church.

I, as your teacher, say to you, “I was wrong.” And I, as an example of Christ to you ask of you, “Please forgive me.”

And in doing so, I am inviting you to consider Christ Community. – But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is **like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit** as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they **may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.”**

I invite you to consider the cleansing FIRE that is God.

Sealed in the Storm.

I would then point you to three letters I wrote in this order: “[Strange Fire](#),” “[Defining the Apostolic](#),” and “[The Importance of Being Wrong](#).”

Of truth, all three are circling around a particular difficulty in my life story that is found in the next chapter, “Sealed in the Storm,” that I am, again, reluctant to plunge into.

There is no community without reciprocal respect, back and forth as equals, without honesty towards one another.

Nonetheless, the purifying Fire of the One seated upon your heart takes, as I said, maybe twelve years of hurting one another inside of community before most are willing to see something different.

Those Who Feared the Lord.

Thus, in receiving you as the Lord Jesus as you are right now I am also pointing you to the FIRE straight ahead.

What you “are” right now I have no way of knowing, of course, apart from face-to-face reciprocity.

Yet I can also give you the same promise the Lord gave me and has fulfilled in my life. – Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate **on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”**

The Tithe of God.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may **be food in My house, and try Me now in this,**” says the **Lord of hosts,** “**If I will not open for you the windows of** heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

We are the tithe of God, the firstfruits of Christ, and the storehouse is Christ Community. I am emphatic and unbending on the expression of that truth.

Nonetheless, we must also consider the seasons of God. And over the last few weeks, the Lord Jesus, by His graciousness to me, has brought an end to a particular season of my life.

Let It Go.

For 23 years, since we left Blair Valley in August of 1998, I have held in my heart a continuous expectation of a return to community, not as I had known it in the move, but as how I knew it must be in my own heart.

Everything I have done and everything I have written from then until now has been for that hope and expectation.

Yet the Lord Jesus came to me and said to me, “**Let it go.**”

It is in great sorrow that I yield myself to Him, yet it also brings great peace. You see, in letting such a hope vanish away from me, I know also that, whatever God meant it to be, it **WILL** return to me in its time.

Tabernacles.

One of the reasons why I refuse to lay out anything more than a general outline of what God is about to do in the earth is that we must always get it wrong.

We know what God will do, but the layout of timing and what it looks like inside human history we do not know.

And by that I mean the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the life of the Church and how it fits into the turning of the age.

But the Lord Jesus has not left me alone, for in letting go of the immediate fulfilment of Tabernacles in Christ Community, He has given me an in-between word.

Come, Come My People.

And that word is from Isaiah instead of Malachi.

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain (Isaiah 26:20-21).

We sang this in my early years at Graham River, inside the fire and inside the tears. “**Come**, come My people, enter into thy chambers and shut the door around about thee. And hide thyself for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast.”

Our Place of Safety.

For 23 years I have hoped that “my chambers,” my place of safety during the time of indignation, would be a small community in a rural setting.

To let go of that definition is a loss to me greater than most could understand.

Nonetheless the word of the Lord to us remains.

And it remains because this PLACE of safety, these chamber walls, this secret place of the Most High where we have fled for refuge is the Lord Jesus, the One who lives inside our hearts and who keeps us utterly inside Himself.

Indignation is poured out and we are safe.

Inside the Fire.

Yet we never make light of that indignation as if it is “nothing.”

Consider **Moses**’ words. – A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked (Psalm 91:7-8).

To stand in a crowd of ten thousand people and to watch them drop dead all around you with you the only one remaining is no light thing.

And so yes, read all of Psalm 91, more than once. But read it in tears; read it inside the FIRE of a purifying God.

You Who Fear My Name.

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And **the day which is coming shall burn them up,” Says the Lord of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name...”**

There we will leave Malachi in order to summarize briefly what this series, *After My Own Heart*, has meant to us.

One thing we have learned is how to regard and include the Old Testament. In following the example of the New Testament writers, we take that which shows us the gospel in one way or another, and we set aside that which, as Paul said, is contrary to the gospel, yet even that points to the cross.

Heart-Relationship.

And the most wonderful thing we see is just how much the Old Testament fits perfectly with our understanding of Paul's gospel, of union with Christ and His revelation through us.

But the biggest thing we have learned is to see the heart-relationship between all the major Old Testament individuals and God, a relationship of love and respect.

Yes, there was an adherence to the law, but never a pharisaical adherence. Instead, we see all of them, including Moses, engaging with God by grace through faith. We see a profound knowing of Jesus.

Precious Brothers and Sisters.

Then the fruit we have received as a result of this Godly way of seeing the Old Testament people is that we also receive each one of them as brothers and sisters inside of Christ.

To receive Ruth and Isaiah, Esther and Abraham, as our brothers and sisters, fellow Christians in the present day, part of all who are now interceding for us, this is wealth without measure.

We are part of a great company, and that company is close, and it is filled with people whom we know, brothers and sisters who have laughed and loved, cried and fought, and who stand with us now in all that is coming upon the earth.

What Comes Next?

I have thought of a number of things that could be the next series for the Zoom meetings, but none have remained thus far. I do like a path in front of me.

At the same time, it has been years since I have been as busy with outward doing as I am right now.

The title company has been negligent on its side, and thus the closing on our new home has been delayed until the survey can be completed. This was very distressing to me, but the Lord Jesus spoke to me that He was taking care of everything.

You see, this small piece of land has caught my heart.

Like Christmas Eve.

Here is the property for you to see.

<https://www.har.com/homedetail/791-cherry-creek-dr-shepherd-tx-77371/5914405>

The “contract pending” is ours. I just ordered over a thousand dollars of fruit trees, bushes, and vines. I won't list them all, a total of 62 plants, but I'm as excited as a little boy on Christmas Eve, more excited than I have been in years.

Needless to say, these next two or three weeks, as we gather the things we need, close on the contract, and move to our new home, will be even more busy.

And so I will not be on Zoom with a new series for two or three weeks. I will let you know.

Let's Pray Together.

In our prayer today, we want to ask the Father to seal inside our hearts the things He has taught us in *After My Own Heart*.

“Father, we give You thanks that You live inside of us and that You share every moment and particle of our lives. And Father, we give You thanks for the history of all these wonderful people that You have given to us.

“Father, we see their example of walking forward in You into the fire, letting that Fire You are cleanse away everything that must go. And Father, we ask that You would grace us with that same willingness, that we also might be made pure and devoted inside Your Fire.

Such a Great Company.

“Father, with Abel, we place the Lord Jesus between ourselves and everything else. With Abraham, we take every step in the expectation that You ARE raising us out from the dead. With Moses, we place ourselves inside Your presence for the sake of Your people.

“With Joshua, we take courage, and with Ruth, we lay ourselves at Your feet. With David, we run with all boldness into Your holy presence in everything we are and do. With Elijah, we stand for the truth, and with Isaiah we see the Lord Jesus arising as the Salvation of all.

“Father, as we stand here in the midst of such a great company, we rest in the certainty of all Victory. It is so.”