

THE LAST WORD

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Malachi 1:6

1. The name Malachi means, “My Messenger.”
2. Around 433 BC God had a message to deliver to His people, and He chose to use His messenger Malachi. (433-415 BC)
3. For centuries God had spoken to His people, the Jews, through many different messengers.
4. Yet, in spite of God’s message through His messengers, the Jews, for the most part, ignored the true implications of what God had to say to them.
5. After seventy years in exile in Babylon God had graciously restored the Jews to the Promised Land, helped them to rebuild the Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel and with the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, sent Nehemiah to rebuild the city walls, and finally sent Ezra the priest to restore the religious life of the nation.
6. Sadly the initial zeal of the people and their religious leaders waned rather quickly.
7. In response God confronted His wayward people one last time.
8. They would not hear another prophetic voice until John the Baptist appeared on the scene 400 years later.
9. From an Old Testament perspective God had said all He was going to say.
10. This did not rule out God speaking to people from the written word, but it did mean that the speaking voice of God would not be heard; there would be no direct revelation.
11. It is a sad thing when God has nothing else to say to a person or a group of people.
12. Those of us who have tried to speak God’s truth into the lives of others understand that at some point everything that needs to be said has been said.
13. That does not mean that communication is shut off completely; it just means that, from a spiritual and moral perspective, the ball is no longer in our court.
14. All of this does not imply our being passive; for we pray, watch, and wait for the Word of God to produce fruit in the lives of those to whom we have spoken and for whom we pray.
15. So what was God’s last word to the Jews, and what are the implications of those words for us?
16. What specific issues did God raise?

I. Their failure to respect (fear) God. 1:6

- A. The word respect could be translated fear.
- B. God is saying, “You honor and respect your fathers, your masters, and your governors more than you honor and respect Me.”
- C. He dared them to try and treat people they answer to the same way they treat Him.
- D. How many modern day Christians would keep their job if they treated their employers like they treat God?
- E. Every April 15 we all bow to Caesar and file our taxes, while many withhold from God their love, loyalty, and lives.
- F. God will not take second place to anyone or anything. Matt 10:37-39
"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

II. Their failure to offer God their best. 1:14

- A. "Cursed be the swindler who offers Me less than their best."
- B. Think about the time, effort, and dedication people put into earthly, temporal pursuits while, at the same time, offering to God less than their best.
- C. God should have the preeminent place in all we do. 1 Corinthians 10:31
Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- D. We cannot be what God wants us to be related to others if He does not have first place in our lives.

III. The failure of the priests to faithfully proclaim God's Word? 2:7-9

- A. Those called to the ministry of the Word are to be the messengers of the Lord of Hosts.
 - B. Yet many fail to proclaim the full counsel of God, and subsequently cause many to stumble.
 - C. Such will answer to God for putting themselves and others before God's Word.
- NOTE: Every believer is to be God's example and God's messenger to others. Matthew 18:17
"Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes."

IV. Their failure to prioritize marriage and the family. 2:13-16

- A. God's plan for marriage and the family is clearly laid out in the Scriptures.
- B. It is a sad thing that there is little difference between the culture and the church when it comes marriage and divorce.
- C. As a side note it matters to God how we treat our spouse.
- D. God intended marriage to be a blessing, and not a test of endurance.

V. Their failure to give to God what God wanted them to give. 3:7-12

- A. In the Old Testament giving was pretty straightforward and proportional.
- B. In the New Testament it is not proportional.
 - 1. Luke 14:33
"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.
 - 2. 2 Cor 9:6-9
Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9 as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER."

VI. Their failure to manifest humility in relationship to God. 3:13-15

- A. They arrogantly charged God with being unfair.
 - B. They saw themselves as worthy of His blessing just because they claimed to be His people.
- NOTE: What they did they did for their own benefit rather than to honor God.

APPLICATION

1. We should take the time to pray about the matters God raised with His people through Malachi.
 - a. Does my life show respect for God?
 - b. Am I giving God my best?
 - c. Am I in any way a stumbling block to others?
 - d. Am I honoring God in all of my personal relationships?
 - e. Have I given up all of my own possessions, and am I cheerfully giving of myself and my wealth?
 - f. Am I envious of others, and resentful related to my lot in life?
2. We will soon arrive at the end of our lives, or the present age will end.
3. Are we living our lives for time or eternity?
4. Every human being will hear one of two statements from the mouth of Jesus one day.
 - a. To many He will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."
 - b. To some He will say, "Enter into the joy of your Lord."