

Subject: God's Burden for His Blessed People – Part 2

Scripture: Malachi 2:1-17

Most of the OT is about the history of Israel, God's chosen people. God had abundantly blessed Israel, but they didn't realize and appreciate their blessings. That's why Malachi's message from God is called "the burden of the word of the Lord (Mal. 1:1)."

1. The people doubted God's love (1:2-5)

The people doubted God's love (1:2-5), but they had no reason to doubt God's love because they were God's chosen people.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 ⁶ For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. ⁷ The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: ⁸ But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

2. The people dishonored God's name (1:6-7)

They dishonored God's name (1:6-7) and forget that God was their Father, their Master, and their King.

3. The people defiled God's altar (1:7-8)

They defiled God's altar (1:7-8). Worship had become a burden instead of a blessing. It should have been a privilege, but it was a pain. How could Israel become so indifferent toward God's rich blessings? The root of the problem was their neglect of God's Word. Israel had the Scriptures to remind them of where they came from and how God blessed them and preserved them over the centuries.

Psalms 147:19-20 ¹⁹ He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. ²⁰ He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

Romans 3:1-2 ¹ What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? ² Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Romans 9:1-5 ¹ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: ⁴ Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; ⁵ Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

4. The priests disobeyed God's Word and defiled His covenant (2:1-16)

In chapter 2 Malachi directs God's message to the priests, the religious leaders of the nation. The priests had three main duties: 1) to offer sacrifices and offerings on the altar; 2) to pray for themselves and the people; and 3) to teach God's Word to the people. They were worshipers, intercessors, and teachers. They had a special calling. Malachi mentions God's covenant with Levi several times (vs. 4, 5, 8), His covenant with "the fathers" referring to the nation (vs. 10), and the covenant of marriage (vs. 14). Levi was the priestly tribe of Israel. The priests and Levites (assistants to the priests) had a high and holy calling.

The priests disobeyed God's Word and defiled His covenant. This was an indictment against the nation because they were a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God also rebuked them for intermarriage with women who worshiped false gods. King Solomon was guilty of the same sin about 500 years before this. God had warned His people not to intermarry. They covered the altar with their tears (2:13), as a show of repentance, but saw through it and knew it wasn't true repentance. God also knew they had divorced their wives in violation of His command (2:14-16). They "dealt treacherously" with one another (vs. 10) and with their wives (vs. 14, 15, 16). To deal treacherously is to break faith or be unfaithful.

Exodus 19:3-6 ³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

In the NT Peter described God's people, the church, using the same words.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: ¹⁰ Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

5. The people discredited God's character (2:17)

The people wearied the Lord by saying that He didn't even care about sin and they even taunted God by asking if He would judge their sin. Can you imagine God's people saying that God treats sin like it is good, and if God is concerned about sin, then why doesn't He come and judge it? This is why God's message is called a burden. He had blessed them in so many ways, but they could care less.

And what about God's people today? The people who profess to know God and belong to Him are so blessed, but they're not acting like it. Christ said, "To whom much is given, much is also required." Where is the humility, the gratitude, the desire to worship and serve Him? This is something we must answer for ourselves.