

## The Last Message of the Old Testament

400 years is how long God would be silent after His last message to Israel through the prophet Malachi. After Malachi's preaching there would cease to be prophets among Israel until the opening of the New Testament. This is something that the people of Israel acknowledge in their writings between the testaments (the Apocrypha). To properly appreciate the book of Malachi, it is important to understand where the nation was in their history at this point in time.

- Malachi preaches to Israel in 400 BC.
- The people of Israel have been restored after 70 years of Babylonian captivity.
- The temple has been rebuilt.
- The priesthood has been restored.
- The system of animal sacrifices has been restored.
- Ezra and Nehemiah have been among them.

Malachi's message for Israel was one of rebuke and chastisement because the people had broken their promises to God. They had failed God in so many ways.

### I. Israel's failures:

- A. A failure to honor God (Malachi 1:6-9)
  1. Instead of giving God their best, they gave Him what was equivalent to junk!
  2. The priests were even accepting these defective sacrifices from the people.
- B. A failure to honor their marriage (Malachi 2:13-16)
  1. They would put away the wives of their youth to marry foreign women.
  2. God knew these foreign women would lead them down the path of idolatry.
- C. A failure in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-9)
  1. The people were being selfish and stingy.
  2. They failed to trust that God would continue to take care of them if they gave correctly (Malachi 3:10). They were standing in the way of their own blessings!
- D. A failure to love God (Malachi 1:2, 13).
  1. They actually questioned God's love (Malachi 1:2).
  2. God loved them, but they did not love Him! They proved this with the weak and feeble sacrifices they offered to Him.

### II. The questions for us:

- A. Have we been honoring God (Romans 12:1, 11)?
- B. Have we been honoring our marriages (Matthew 19:6; Ephesians 5:22-33)?
- C. Have we been robbing God (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7)?
- D. Have we been loving God (Matthew 22:37; Romans 5:8; John 14:15)?

**Conclusion:** If we are failing God in these areas, God says that is unacceptable (Malachi 1:10-11, 14). But we can change! Even with all their failures, God offered hope for Israel and all mankind through His Son Jesus Christ (Malachi 4:1-6).