

# MALACHI #1

"RETURN TO ME"

DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

7 PM

\*Returning to normal is often never a reality.

*\*Malachi 1:1 A prophecy: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.*

*2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."*

*4 Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. 5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!"*

*6 "A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you priests who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?"*

*7 "By offering defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. 8 When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.*

\*Understanding God's love reveals a heart that has returned to God.

1. **\*V:2 How have you loved us?** God's love is unconditional. **Ephesians 1:4-5** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. (This is a book of corrections to people who have an estranged relation with God. Notice, before correction God assures his love) Jacob was chosen before he was born. **Genesis 25:23**
2. **V:6 How has the leadership shown contempt for God's name?** To despise someone often happens in degrees, a gradual indifference becomes a total contempt in time.
3. **V:7 How have we defiled you?** When our message is more about us than about God and His Word we are offering defiled food before God and humanity.

*\*Malachi 1:9 "Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty. 10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. 11 My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.*

*12 "But you profane it by saying, 'The Lord's table is defiled,' and, 'Its food is contemptible.' 13 And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty. "When you bring injured, lame, or diseased*

animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. 14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

### \*When we return to God our actions reveal our hearts.

1. **V:12 Their offerings** show dishonor and even contempt for God. Because they want a God who serves them. (Is God only God, when He does what we want or expect him to do? If so, you could view serving God as a burden.)
2. **V:13 Lamé efforts** instead of a spirit of passion and total surrender. Be careful what you judge as lame it may just be immaturity and God loves the efforts of a newborn believer.
3. **V:14 When a nation disrespects** God the problem is in the behavior of His leaders. When the fear of the Lord is not in the pulpits, a nation will not fear Him either.

*\*Malachi 2:1 "And now, you priests, this warning is for you. 2 If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me. 3 "Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. 4 And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty. 5 "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. 6 True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness and turned many from sin. 7 "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8 But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty. 9 "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."*

### \*If a nation does return to God it starts with leadership.

1. **Malachi 2:1-4 Godly leaders** who do not heed warnings. Take heed there is a double warning as a witness that we have been warned. We must resolve to honor God's name and Word.
2. **V:5-9 Three key ingredients** to living in a right covenant with God.
  - A. **Reverence/Worship** is non-negotiable with God. In the Old Testament, it was evident by the sacrifice they offered. Today it is evident by the level of awe we show God.
  - B. **Teaching people** the path of righteousness. Causing others to stumble is considered breaking the covenant with God.
  - C. **Dividing the Law/Word** correctly. **2 Timothy 2:15** In these matters if you lead or cause others to stumble you are held responsible for them.
3. **Apathy or lukewarmness** is the sin that keeps the heart distant from God. **Rev. 3:15-17**