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v92

Malachi

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Malachi

1 This is a serious message from Yahweh. Yahweh gave
it to Malachi to tell to the Israelite people.
2 Yahweh says to the Israelites, "I have shown that I love
you." They may wonder what I mean and ask, "How have you
shown love to us?" Yahweh would reply, "Esau and Jacob
were brothers. I chose to love Jacob and his descendants.
3 But I did not favor Esau and his descendants. I turned Esau's
hill country into empty land. I let wild dogs live in the places
where Esau's people used to live." 4 The people of Edom, who
are Esau's descendants, might say, "Enemies have destroyed
our towns, but we will rebuild them." But Yahweh, who
commands the heavenly armies, says, "Even if they rebuild,
I will tear down what they build. People will call Edom a
land of evil people. They will say that Yahweh will always
be angry with the people of Edom. 5 You Israelites will see
this happen. Then you will say, 'Even outside the land of
Israel, people know that Yahweh is great!'"
6 Yahweh, who commands the heavenly armies, says, "A
son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. Since
I am like a father to you, you should honor me, but you do
not. Since I am your master, you should respect me, but you
do not. I am saying this to you priests who do not respect
me. You may wonder what I mean and ask, 'How have we
shown disrespect to you?' 7 You show disrespect by offering
unacceptable sacrifices on my altar. You may wonder what I
mean and ask, 'How have we offered unacceptable sacrifices?'
I will tell you. You show disrespect by thinking that you can
treat my altar with contempt. 8 You bring blind animals to
sacrifice to me. That is wrong. You bring animals that cannot
walk or are sick. That is also wrong. If you gave animals like
that to your governor, he would not be pleased with you,
and he would not accept them." This is what Yahweh, who
commands the heavenly armies, says. 9 "But you are asking
me, God, to be kind to you, even though you have done
these wrong things. Do not think that I will accept you!"
This is what Yahweh, who commands the heavenly armies,
says. 10 Yahweh. Who commands the heavenly armies, says,
"I wish one of you would close the temple doors. Then you
would not light useless fires on my altar. I am not happy
with you. I will not accept any offerings from you. 11 People
all over the world will respect me. In every place, people
will burn incense to honor me and bring me pure offerings,
because everyone will know how great I am." This is what
Yahweh, who commands the heavenly armies, says. 12 "But
you dishonor me. You say that my altar is not important,
and you do not value the food you get from it. 13 You even
say, 'We are tired of doing this work!' You show that you do
not care about it." This is what Yahweh, who commands the
heavenly armies, says. "You bring me animals that you stole,
cannot walk, or are sick. If you bring these as offerings, do
not think that I will accept them from you!" says Yahweh.
14 "I will punish anyone who tries to cheat me. If someone
promises to give me a good male animal from his flock but
then gives me one that is not healthy, I will punish that
person. After all, I am the great King. I am Yahweh, who
commands the heavenly armies, and people all over the
world respect me."

2 Yahweh says, "Now, priests, this command is for you. 2 If
you do not obey me and make sure that you honor me, I
will curse you," says Yahweh, who commands the heavenly
armies. "I will even curse the good things I have given you.
In fact, I have already started to curse them, because you
are not taking seriously what I have told you to do. 3 I
am ready to punish you by keeping you from having good
harvests. You will be disgraced, as if I had spread animal
waste on your faces, the waste from the animals you sacrifice
at festivals. People will consider you as worthless as that
waste! 4 Then you will know that I gave you this command so
that my agreement with the priests, the descendants of Levi,
will continue." This is what Yahweh, who commands the
heavenly armies, says. 5 "I made a peaceful and life-giving
agreement with them because they revered me, and they
revered me greatly. 6 They taught the people what was true,
and they did not say things that were wrong. They lived
peacefully and honestly, the way I wanted them to, and
they helped many people stop doing bad things. 7 After
all, a priest should teach people how to know God better.
People should learn from what the priest says, because he
brings messages from me, Yahweh, the commander of the
heavenly armies. 8 But you priests have stopped living the
way I want. Your teaching has caused many people to do
wrong things. You have failed to keep the agreement I made
with the Levite priests," says Yahweh, the commander of
the heavenly armies. 9 "So I have made people disrespect
you and I have humiliated you before all the people. This is
because you have not lived the way I want people to live.
You have also not treated everyone fairly when you have
applied my laws."
10 In a sense, we all have the same father, since the same
God created each of us. So we should not break our promises
to each other. If we do, we dishonor the agreement God made
with our ancestors. 11 The people of Judah have not been
faithful to God. They have done terrible things in Israel and
Jerusalem. They have dishonored the temple that Yahweh
loves. They are worshiping foreign gods instead of Yahweh.
12 I hope Yahweh will remove from among the people of
Israel every single person who does this, even if they bring
offerings to Yahweh, who is the commander of the heavenly
armies. 13 This is another thing you do: When you come to
offer sacrifices at Yahweh's altar, you weep bitterly. You cry
and groan because Yahweh no longer accepts your offerings.
14 You may wonder what I mean and ask, "Why does he not
accept them?" It is because Yahweh knows that you have not
been faithful to the wife you married as a young man. You
did this even though she was your partner and you promised
to be her husband. 15 God has united husbands and wives so
that they are one, and he has made their marriage a spiritual
relationship. God made them one because he wants them to
have children who are faithful to him. So be careful. Do not
break your promise to the wife you married when you were
a young man. 16 Yahweh, the God of Israel, says, "I hate
divorce. I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to
your wife. So be careful. Do not break your promise to be
faithful to your wife." This is what Yahweh, who commands
the heavenly armies, says.
17 Yahweh is tired of hearing what you have been saying.
You may wonder what I mean and ask, "How have we made
him tired?" You have made him tired by saying, "Yahweh
thinks that people who do evil things are actually good. He

is happy with them." Yahweh is also tired of hearing you say, "God is not being fair!"

3 Yahweh, who commands the heavenly armies, says,
"Pay attention! I am about to send my messenger. He
will get things ready for me to come. Then I, the Lord you
are looking for, will suddenly come to my temple. You want
someone to bring you a message about my agreement with
you, and I am going to send someone to do that. 2 But when
he does come, no one will be able to keep living the way
they were living before. When he appears, he will not tell
anyone that he is innocent. But he will purify people *from sin*,
just as fire makes metal pure and soap makes clothes clean.
3 He will help people stop sinning, just as a metalworker
sits patiently near silver he has melted and keeps removing
impurities from it. He will purify the descendants of Levi,
just as a metalworker purifies gold and silver. Then they will
bring proper offerings to Yahweh. 4 After that, Yahweh will
accept the offerings that the people of Judah and Jerusalem
bring him, just as he did in ancient times." 5 Yahweh, who
commands the armies of heaven, says, "I will come to judge
you. I will immediately declare people guilty and punish
them if they have practiced witchcraft, committed adultery,
made false promises, not paid fair wages to their workers,
or taken advantage of widows and orphans and foreigners.
People have done those things because they did not think I
would punish them*, but I will*.

6 I will do this because I am Yahweh, and I *swore to
Abraham that I would bless his descendants*. When I make a
promise, I keep it. That is why you descendants of Jacob are
still living here in Judea, even though you are disobeying me.
7 Ever since the time of your ancestors, you have disobeyed
my laws. You have completely ignored them. Now come
back to me, and I will come back to you," says Yahweh, the
commander of the heavenly armies. "You may wonder what
I mean and ask, 'How can we come back to you?' 8 You might
think that no one would even try to steal from God. But you
are stealing from me! You may wonder what I mean and ask,
'How are we stealing from you?' You are stealing from me
by not giving me the tithes and offerings that you should.
9 Because you are robbing me in this way, I have put a curse
on all of you Israelites. 10 Bring all the tithes to the room
in the temple where the priests keep contributions. Make
sure there is food for the priests who serve in my temple.
Try this and see what I do in response," says Yahweh, the
commander of the heavenly armies. "If you do this, then
I will bless you so much that it will be as if I had opened
windows in the sky and poured out blessings to you. You
will not have enough room to store all of the crops that
grow in your fields. 11 I will prevent pests from eating your
crops. Your grapevines will produce plenty of grapes," says
Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. 12 "Then
people from all nations will say that God has blessed you.
They will say that because your land will be a delightful
place," says Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies.

13 Yahweh says, "You have said terrible things about me.
You may wonder what I mean and ask, 'What have we said
about you?' 14 You have said, 'It is useless to serve God. We
have not gained anything by obeying his commands or by
showing Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies,
that we are sorry for our sins. 15 We have come to think that
proud people become prosperous. Even when people do bad
things, they succeed. They challenge God by doing wicked
things, but God does not punish them.'"

16 Then those who honored Yahweh all spoke with one
another. Yahweh listened carefully to what they said. Those
who honored Yahweh and respected him all wrote their
names down in a book as he watched. 17 Then Yahweh,
the commander of the heavenly armies, said, "These people
especially will belong to me. On the day when I judge
people, I will spare them from punishment. I will treat them
kindly, just as parents treat kindly the children who obey
them. 18 Then once more you will clearly see that righteous
people do prosper while wicked people do not. There is
that difference between those who obey God and those who
disobey him."

4 Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies, says,
"Pay attention! The time is coming when I am going to
judge people. People will feel their guilt intensely, as if they
were standing in front of a hot furnace. At that time, I will
destroy all proud and wicked people as if they were straw
burning in a fire. I will destroy them completely, just as a
fire burns up plants from top to bottom. 2 But those of you
who honor me will experience my power saving you as if
the sun were rising and bringing you warmth and light. By
my power, I will heal you. You will be as happy as calves
are when they leave their stalls to go and play out in the
open fields. 3 At the time when I do this, you will completely
defeat every wicked person. It will be as if you are stomping
them down with your feet." This is what Yahweh, who
commands the heavenly armies, says. 4 "Remember to obey
the laws that I gave to my servant Moses on Mount Sinai.
Obey all the rules and regulations that I gave him for all the
Israelite people to obey. 5 Listen carefully! I will send the
prophet Elijah to you before the grand and frightening day
comes when I, Yahweh, will judge everyone. 6 Because of his
message, parents and children will love each other again.
I am going to make this happen so that I will not have to
come and curse your country."