

REFRESH SERIES (6)

THE FLOODGATES OF HEAVEN

Message Notes

Background to Malachi

The first zeal demonstrated by those who originally returned to the land of Israel had lapsed as the people had settled down.

Malachi has therefore to point out a number of ways in which the lives of the people were displeasing to God:

1. They were marrying wives outside the community, thus introducing ideas that were contradictory to Judaism.
2. They were divorcing their ageing wives so that they could marry younger ones (2.10-11)
3. They were being careless in their offerings (1.6-2.9)
4. They were failing to pay their tithes (3.8-10)
5. They were being neglectful towards the poor (3.5)

Overall things were not good. And so God sends Israel a messenger (Malachi = Messenger) to remind them of His love, grace and expectations (just like any good parent).

Text (1): Malachi 1:8, 12-13

Text (2): Malachi 3:1-12

"In tithes and offerings"

There is a difference between a tithe (tenth) and an offering (presents). The tithe is not a gift but an offering is...

"Curse" addresses behavior rather than the person

A Community Responsibility (vs. 9-10a)

Whole Nation (Israel) / Whole tithe (same Hebrew word)

Storehouse (temple): *"that there may be food in my house"*

Tithing was something the whole community was to do. When they all did this the whole community would be blessed...

A Community Blessing (vs. 10b-12)

"Test (prove) me in this..."

Heb. *Bachan* = to test metals (i.e. test me to see how valuable I will be to you)

Abundance: The floodgates of heaven (10b)

First reference: Genesis 7:11, *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened"* (Cf. Genesis 8:2)

Psalm 78:23-24, *"Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven."*

Protection: Rebuke the devourer (11-12)

1 Peter 5:8-9, *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."*

New Testament Application

Bringing the whole tithe, in addition to offerings, is the responsibility of all believers in order to make sure the Church community that they are part of is fully provided for, healthy & effective in outworking the vision God has given it. In return, God promises to abundantly bless and protect that community to such an extent that even those outside the community will take note.

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