

Do Not Call Evil Good

Rev. Lex DeLong / General

Major Posts from Minor Prophets: Be an Influencer / Malachi 2:17–3:6

Idolatry is to seek and serve evil as if it is the greatest good for you. Join us in person or follow along live online around 10:30 [HERE!](#)

Notes

10/15 Malachi 2:17-3:6 "Do Not Call Evil Good," Subtitle: Be Careful What You Idolize, Scripture: Isa. 5:20-24 (Have the Scripture reader read this alone, not responsive reading)

Be Careful What You Idolize

Haggai, Malachi 4. Situation: Complaints of the Lord's Injustice (2:17)

Judah, unable to recognize its own corruption, saw its current economic and social troubles (cf. Hag 1:6, 9–11; 2:16–19; Neh 9:32–37) as a sign of God's unfairness or unfaithfulness. They deserved divine blessings, they thought, but were receiving divine afflictions instead. Ignoring their own sins and aggravated by the sins of others, either within or around Judah, which they perceived were going unpunished, they were complaining of divine injustice (cf. Mal 1:2).

The Lord had clearly demonstrated His immanence and justice throughout Israel's history and His relationship with them. In Egypt they cried out to God to deliver them from their bondage and He delivered them, "...with a mighty hand and outstretched arm," (Exod. 3:19).

Deuteronomy 4:7–8 "7 "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? 8 "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?" said Moses to Israel, upon receiving God's Law.

Nehemiah reminded Israel that Israel's present hardships shortly before the time of Malachi's writing, was due to their unfaithfulness and the Lord's correction, not God's unfaithfulness. Nehemiah 9:33 "33 "However, You are just in all that has come upon us; For You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly." , Nehemiah 9:37 "37 "Its abundant produce is for the kings Whom You have set over us because of our sins; They also rule over our bodies And over our cattle as they please, So we are in great distress."

At the time of Malachi's prophetic ministry and the writing of this passage, Israel had concluded once again (like we often do) that God was not just in His dealings with them, or was at least not paying attention to them and blessing them when and as he should.

So, once more in the historical narrative of Israel's history, a prophet of God (Malachi) confronted the Nation of Israel in a plea for them to repent of their sin, turn from their wicked and faithless ways, accept God's correction in the course of their lives, and live according to God's wisdom, over their own. Once more they were resisting God's message through His prophet and instead, pursuing their own ways of living, their own morals and values over His.

Is it any wonder why we hear these words from Malachi in chapter 2, verse 17 ...

Delight yourself in God, not evil (Malachi 2:17)

Psalm 94:3–7 "3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, How long shall the wicked exult? 4 They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. 5 They crush Your people, O Lord, And afflict Your heritage. 6 They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the

orphans. 7 They have said, "The Lord does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.""

Jeremiah 12:1 "1 Righteous are You, O Lord, that I would plead my case with You; Indeed I would discuss matters of justice with You: Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?"

Job 9:24 "24 "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?"

Job 12:6 "6 "The tents of the destroyers prosper, And those who provoke God are secure, Whom God brings into their power."

Job 21:7–17 "7 "Why do the wicked still live, Continue on, also become very powerful? 8 "Their descendants are established with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes, 9 Their houses are safe from fear, And the rod of God is not on them. 10 "His ox mates without fail; His cow calves and does not abort. 11 "They send forth their little ones like the flock, And their children skip about. 12 "They sing to the timbrel and harp And rejoice at the sound of the flute. 13 "They spend their days in prosperity, And suddenly they go down to Sheol. 14 "They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways. 15 'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, And what would we gain if we entreat Him?' 16 "Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me. 17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out, Or does their calamity fall on them? Does God apportion destruction in His anger?"

Psalms 73:3–9 "3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. 7 Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. 8

They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. 9
They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades
through the earth."

Habakkuk 1:13 "13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not
look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who
deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those
more righteous than they?"

Like this verse says, don't weary the Lord with your words. Don't convince
yourself - say to yourself that God must not care. Stop idolizing the
perceived success of this world.

Let go of idolizing the things of this life.

Accept God for who He is.

Once and for all, acknowledge God as your God.

Make God the only One you worship and Who's ways you honor in how
you live.

God does not hold back any good thing for those who trust in Him.

Psalm 84:11 "11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace
and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk
uprightly."

Turn to Matt. 6:25-34.

So...

Psalm 37:1–9 "1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. 2 For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday. 7 Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. 9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land."

Do not weary the LORD with your words, your doubts, the lies of this world. When difficulties and hardships come, turn to the LORD and trust Him. All you need will be "added unto you," as Matt. wrote.

To the question of justice, Malachi continued on behalf of those struggling with their perception of the prospering wicked.

Trust God's Purifying Presence (Malachi 3:1-4)

Isa. 40:3 prophecies one who would clear the way for Christ's first advent.

Malachi 4:5 "5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."

Jesus states in Matt. 11:13-14 that John the baptist is that "Elijah" who cleared the way.

John the baptist's ministry was to preach repentance to Israel and baptize them as they did, for an outward testimony to all who would see, that they had turned from their sin and turned back to God and being willing followers of Him.

When this passage says, "...he will clear the way before me," it is speaking of clearing away the obstacles of sin and unbelief. This way, there will be those of God's people who will not be consumed by God's glorious presence and refining fire (we'll get to the end of v. 6 in a moment).

Trust God's Purifying Presence (Malachi 3:1-4)

1. ++God will send one to rescue His people from their sin before He comes (v. 1a)
2. ++God Himself is coming to purify all from sin (vv. 1b-2, "refiner," "fuller")
3. ++God Makes mankind's offering pleasing to the LORD (vv. 3-4)

Fear God's Judgment more than man's (Malachi 3:5-6)

Fear God's Judgment more than man's (Malachi 3:5-6)

1. ++God will judge all who have ever sinned (v. 5)
2. ++God does not change, He will do what He has said (v. 6)

Be careful what you idolize.

Accept that God is who He has said He is and that He is your God.

God is just, trust Him to be so.

++God will judge all sin, trust Him to do so.

++God will preserve His people who repent, trust Him to do so for you.

++God will not change, trust Him to be the same for you as He was, is, and will be for Israel.