

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 01 March.....Nahum 1-3..... Don't Mess with God
- 2) 08 March..... Zephaniah 1-2..... Everyone is Accountable
- 3) 15 March..... Zephaniah 3..... Our Great Salvation
- 4) 22 March..... Obadiah 1..... Compassion for Lost People
- 5) 29 March..... Zechariah 1-12..... The Promised Messiah
- 6) 05 April..... Luke 24:1-12..... The Declaration
- 7) 12 April..... Luke 24:19-35..... The Promise Fulfilled
- 8) 19 April..... Zechariah 13-14..... A Refined People
- 9) 26 April..... Habakkuk 1-2..... Hard Questions, Hard Answers
- 10) 03 May..... Habakkuk 3..... Awestruck
- 11) 10 May..... Haggai 1-2..... Seek God First
- 12) 17 May..... Malachi 1..... **True Hope**
- 13) 24 May..... Malachi 2..... Faithful
- 14) 31 May..... Malachi 3-4..... A Pure People

INTRODUCTION

- Malachi, like most prophets, had a burden to share – IOW, he had a very unpleasant duty to perform → Get it right or die
- From God's perspective, is it better to have a poorly conducted worship hour, or to have no worship hour? Is it better to take up half an offering or no offering? Is it better to teach a half-hearted lesson or to have no lesson?
- What constitutes good worship that pleases God? Do we invoke 3 songs and 3 sermon points? Do we use a 20-piece orchestra and 20 verses of "Just as I Am?" Do we twitch & twirl? Do we empty our wallets?
- We all want God's blessings in our lives (health, wealth, good looks, and able to play golf), but most want it with few strings attached and no hard work involved

Passage	Comments
1:6-10	<p>True Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v6. Sadly, the Priests, who should've known better, were totally ignorant of their sin of contempt • vv7-8. The Priests accommodated sins of the people (Sacrifice whatever you wish, Live however you want) • v9. The Priests, mediators between God & man were in authority, but they failed to take their job seriously • v10. No one had the guts to say, "STOP! Let's fix this" • Can anyone take a stand to STOP a sinful practice; or should a person in authority (e.g., pastor, elder, deacon) be the one to initiate drastic action? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Recall Phinehas who ran an adulterous couple through with a spear to stop a plague ... Num 25:6-9 ♦ How do you discern whether someone is acting biblically or if they are just ranting & raving
How do we show neglect and dishonor towards God?	<p>Bible says: "Be reconciled to your spouse or remain single" (1Cor 7:11) – BUT many rationalize & accommodate divorce & remarriage on par with the world</p> <p>Bible says: "Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25) – BUT many come to church with little to no involvement and commitment</p> <p>Bible says: "Give of your firstfruits" (Proverbs 3:9-10) – BUT many just sponge on the generosity of others</p>
1:11-14	<p>True Greatness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv11-12. God, in essence, tells His people that His name is and will be great among the nations regardless of how neglectful or sinful His people are • vv13-14. The Jews see godly worship and service as tiresome and unprofitable. God's response: "HOW DARE YOU GIVE ME ANYTHING BUT YOUR BEST"

Passage	Comments
Malachi 1:1-5	<p>True Love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v3. God hated Esau. The ancient Hebrew concept of hate does not always carry the overtone we give to it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The words for "love" and "hate" were used in ancient Near East treaties to differentiate between favored and disfavored parties. IOW, it was used as a hyperbole to make a strong distinction ♦ It may not convey that someone is/was unsavable; e.g., we are to hate Mom & Dad (Lk 14:26)
Another Word on Calvinism	<p>If the Truth be Told...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, God has mercy on whom He has mercy; and Yes, God loved Jacob and hated Esau; and Yes, God hardens whom He desires – All hard-core Bible truths • ...and yet God doesn't arbitrarily condemn people to Hell, but He provides substantiating considerations for sealing the fate of the wicked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jer 19:15. God brings calamity on those who willfully harden themselves against obeying Him ♦ Rom 9:32. Many Israelites willfully refused to pursue God by faith (also see Nehemiah 9:17) ♦ Heb 12:16. Esau was willfully immoral and godless <p>God also leaves the door open for ALL to repent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 5:40. Jesus told the non-elect Jews (those who were 'not all Israel') He was willing to give them eternal life IF they were willing to come to Him • Even wicked kings Nebuchadnezzar, Manasseh and Ahab received reprieves from destruction by humbling themselves willingly before God (Daniel 4:37; 2Chron 33:11-13; 1Kings 21:27-29 respectively) • Even Esau was given opportunities to live right, but he preferred to rebel. His brightest moment was when he fully accepted his long-estranged brother home with outstretched arms. To his credit, he acted with more love and honor than Jacob did toward him..... Gen 33

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- From God's perspective, it seems He would prefer we close the church doors than for Him to endure any kind of worship, offering, and teaching that is not whole-heartedly conducted
- In its simplest form, godly worship involves honest praise and prayer, true confession, fellowship, cheerful and sacrificial giving, study of God's word, and commitment to serve and to share
- What can we do to ensure God is receiving the praise and worship He deserves and desires from us individually and corporately?

NEXT WEEK: Malachi 2. God tells the spiritual leaders, the Levitical priests, that the gloves are coming off. God will turn their blessings into cursings, and will rub their faces in excrement. God uses tough analogies to provoke repentance

