
Preparing for Radio Silence

I. Judah has wearied the LORD

A. The priests dishonor His name.

“But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of Hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.” [Mal 2:8–9]

B. The people worship false gods.

“Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?” [Mal. 2:10]

C. Their marriages dishonor God.

“Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.” [Mal. 2:11]

D. They offer remorse instead of repentance.

“And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.” [Mal. 2:13]

E. They have wearied the LORD of Hosts.

“You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, ‘How have we wearied Him?’ By saying, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them.’ Or by asking, ‘Where is the God of justice?’” [Mal 2:17]

The LORD of Heaven's Armies: I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you.

The people: How can we return when we have never gone away?

The LORD of Heaven's Armies: Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!

The people: What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?

The LORD of Heaven's Armies: You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do, I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe. Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight.

The LORD of Heaven's Armies: You have said terrible things about me.

The people: What do you mean? What have we said against you?

The LORD of Heaven's Armies: You have said, 'What's the use of serving God? What have we gained by obeying His commands or by trying to show the Lord of Heaven's Armies that we are sorry for our sins? From now on we will call the arrogant blessed. For those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them suffer no harm.'

II. God affirms who He is.

A. God does not change.

"For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."
[v. 6]

"Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you." [Ps 102:25–28]

"God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?" [Num. 23:19]

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." [Lam. 3:22–23]

B. Man is as changing as the tides.

"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." (Heraclitus)

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." [Acts 7:51]

III. God reminds His people of who they are.

A. They have strayed.

"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Hosts." [v. 7]

"Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem." [Mal. 2:11a]

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” [Gen. 3:6]

B. They have blasphemed His name and His character.

“Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.’” [v. 13–15]

“You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, ‘How have we wearied him?’ By saying, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them’ Or by asking, ‘Where is the God of justice?’” [Mal. 2:17]

“They say to God, ‘Depart from us! We do not desire the knowledge of your ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we get if we pray to Him?’ Behold, is not their prosperity in their hand?” [Job 21:15–16a]

C. They have robbed Him.

“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” [v.8–10a]

“In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.” [Gen 4:3–4a]

“Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.” [1 Sam. 2:17]

D. They are you (Nonprofit source).

1. Tithers make up 10–25% of any congregation.
2. On average, Christians give 2.5% of their income.

IV. God's response to our sin.

A. Return to me.

“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.” [v. 7b]

“Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.” [Zech. 1:3]

B. Test me.

“And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts” [v. 10b]

“Dr. R.C. Sproul has often pointed out that Malachi 3:10 is the only place in Scripture where God commands us to put Him to the test. It is otherwise sinful to test the Lord, but we may test Him with the tithe. When we give to the work of the Lord, He promises to bless us and meet our needs—not necessarily to make us rich materially but to satisfy us and make us content. Let us give to the Lord's work that we might see Him keep His promises.” (Ligonier)

“Just as the Judahite community was heir to earlier prophetic promises of restoration, yet struggles with poverty and the difficulty of rebuilding their lives after the exile, so Christians often struggle with a sense of dissonance between their victory through Christ and the present reality of their lives.” (Ortlund)

V. Our response to God's unchanging, unfailing, unflinching covenantal love.

A. Give!

“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” [v. 10a]

“It's not how much of your money you'll give to God, it's how much of His you'll keep.” (Kooistra)

B. Give...and you will be blessed.

“And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.” [v. 10b–12]

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.” [Prov. 3:9–10]

C. Give of everything.

“Christians are certainly obligated to give to the Lord, but that obligation to give is transformed in key ways with the coming of Christ. For example, Christianity radicalizes the source of the tithe: for Christians, it is not simply our garden produce which is directly under the lordship of God, but the whole of life. Of course, in the Old Testament the tithe was just the beginning: freewill offerings and other taxes were added to the basic ten per cent. Christianity however, personalizes the amount of the tithe: Christian giving should be proportional (1 Cor 16:2), willing and generous (2 Cor. 9:7), even over-generous (2 Cor. 8:2), but a particular proportion is not specified in the New Testament. There is, however, no excuse for giving less under grace than was required of those under the law.” (Duguid)

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not

reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God." [2 Cor. 9:6–11]

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