

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?

Class 4: “You, O
Priests, That
Despise My
Name” and Living
in the Day of
Small Things

WHAT WE HAVE EXPLORED SO FAR

The return home, met with many obstacles and set-backs.

Halted work and spiritual paralysis.

Exhortations to not dwell on day of small things but focus on the vision of Kingdom.

The need for reform and closeness to the Word of God.

The importance of all members contributing to rebuilding.

THE FINAL CHAPTER - MALACHI

The spiritual blindness of the people.

The failure of the leaders.

The resulting sin.

Vision of the redeemed and the coming Sun of Righteousness.

The coming great light.

TIMING OF MALACHI'S PROPHECY

Clearly written well after the physical work had been accomplished.

Temple has been built, city walls repaired, city inhabited now in peace.

With Persian support and minimal local threats, they are relatively “at rest.”

Free to operate as God's people, sacrifice, worship, follow the Law.

SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE

The entire prophecy is an anatomy of a people with broken self-examination.

They were “practicing” a form of religion that was expedient and did not acknowledge God even as highly as they would a human king.

The instruction from the priest leaders had failed, and actually caused the spiritual failure of many.

The behavior of many of the people no longer reflected their stated faith and it was an abomination to God.

A small remnant remained faithful – the “jewels” of God.



SELF

EXAMINATION



CRITICAL SKILL OF SELF-EXAMINATION

“But let a man examine (*dokimazo*) himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” 1 Cor. 11:28

dokimazo – to test, like the proving of metals

“examine (*peirazo* – to scrutinize) yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove (*dokimazo*) your own selves.”

“The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.” Proverbs 17:3



SEES, BUT GOES HIS OWN WAY

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

James 1:23-24

SPIRITUAL SAFETY NET

1. Personal examination.
2. Correction by a loving brother/sister.
3. **Ecclesial leaders – the message of Malachi focused here!**
4. The work of the angels.



2-4 are designed to get #1 working again!

THREE MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY MALACHI

1. Spiritual leadership had failed.
2. Worship had become expedient, on their terms rather than God's.
3. Worship of the Almighty God had become weariness!

**PROBLEM ONE:
FAILURE TO PROVIDE
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**



STANDARD FOR THE PRIESTS

“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the **fear wherewith he feared me**, and was afraid before my name. The **law of truth** was in his mouth, and **iniquity was not found in his lips**: he **walked with me in peace and equity**, and **did turn many away from iniquity**. For the priest's lips should **keep knowledge**, and they should **seek the law at his mouth**: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 2:4-7

WAR AGAINST SIN

“From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into *the service*, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Numbers 4:30

KJV margin – “warfare”

While the rest of the tribes would be conscripted into warfare with nations, the Levites were already engaged in a war against sin.

TAKING ACTION AGAINST SIN

“Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

Numbers 25:11-13



Slaying of Zimri and Cozbi (Moab)

HOLINESS OF PRIEST FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

”Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.”

Leviticus 10:9-11

THE FAILURE OF THE PRIESTS

“And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.”

Jeremiah 2:7-8

RESPECT FOR PERSONS

“But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the LORD Almighty. “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown **partiality** (“respect of persons” – Darby) in matters of the law.”

Malachi 2:8-9 NIV

WARNING OF JAMES

“For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

James 2:2-4

WHAT PRIESTS SHOULD DO

Reflection of a life that shows fear and reverence to God.

Familiar with the Law and ready to speak it and do it.

A man above reproach – iniquity not on his lips.

Living a life in peace and uprightness – an example to the flock.

A haven where a man could go for sound spiritual counsel from the Word and know he will not be discriminated against – one Law for all.

Turn many away from sin through these dimensions.

THE PROMISE OF STRONG SPIRITUAL LEADERS

“For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, **but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.**”

Isaiah 30:19-21

FAILURE

They too had departed from a holy life and no longer knew God.

This failure caused many to fall in sin.

In their hearts, they despised the counsels of God and thought them to be a burden.

The application of the Law was variable and there was “respect of persons.”

When the people needed leaders, they spiritually abandoned the flock.

MESSAGE FOR LEADERS TODAY

Overseers of the flock are critical to effective examination in the ecclesia – serving as a safety net for the flock.

Ensure the Word is being adequately taught, issues being promptly addressed.

Do so willingly, not by compulsion or constraint. (1 Pet. 5:2)

Be leaders that are a haven for the needy, having compassion (Hebrews 5)

Servants for the ecclesia, but accepting our service is first to God.

SOUND FAMILIAR?

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **Feed the flock of God** which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being **examples** to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

1 Peter 5:1-4

PROBLEM TWO — EXPEDIENT WORSHIP



OFFERING OF POLLUTED BREAD

“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.”

Malachi 1:6-7



Clearly, self-examination was also broken for the priests!

BURNT OFFERING REQUIREMENTS

“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 17:1 ESV

“The animal for this sacrifice could be a young bull, lamb, goat, turtledove, or young pigeon; **but it had to be a perfect and complete specimen.** The type of animal chosen for this sacrifice seems to be dependent on the offerer's financial ability.”

Holman Bible Dictionary



JUST WHO ARE WE SERVING?

“And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 1:8



REBELLION TOWARD THE GREAT KING

“But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, **what a weariness is it!** and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; **and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering:** should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the **deceiver,** which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

Malachi 1:12-14

PRIOR POLLUTIONS OF PRIESTS

“Her priests have **violated my law**, and have **profaned mine holy things**: they have put **no difference between the holy and profane**, neither have they shewed difference between the **unclean and the clean**, and have **hid their eyes from my sabbaths**, and I am profaned among them.”

Ezekiel 22:26

OFFAL ON YOUR FACES

“And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.”

Malachi 2:1-3

Likely refers to the dung, skin, intestines and organs that are separated from the animals for sacrifice in sin offering. They were to be carefully gathered and disposed and burned “without the camp.” Suggests that they were not following this command of the sin offering.

DIAGNOSING THEIR FAILURES

The fundamental “fear of God”
is missing.

Operating principle that “God
won’t know”

Religion is for me, not for God!

Cutting corners, expediency.



**PROBLEM 3:
SEEING GOD'S COMMANDS
AS WEARISOME**

THOU SHALT

NOT





THE TRUTH SEEN AS A SERIES OF RESTRICTIONS

“Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and **what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?** And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.”

Malachi 3:13-15

FAILURE TO APPLY HOLY STANDARDS

“Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?”

Malachi 2:17

ROBBING GOD

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”

Malachi 3:8-9



CHALLENGES FOR SHEPHERDS TODAY

Be effective watchmen against sin and expediency.

Know the Word and know God.

Be committed to holiness and define it generationally. Based on new technologies, challenges, what does holiness look like?

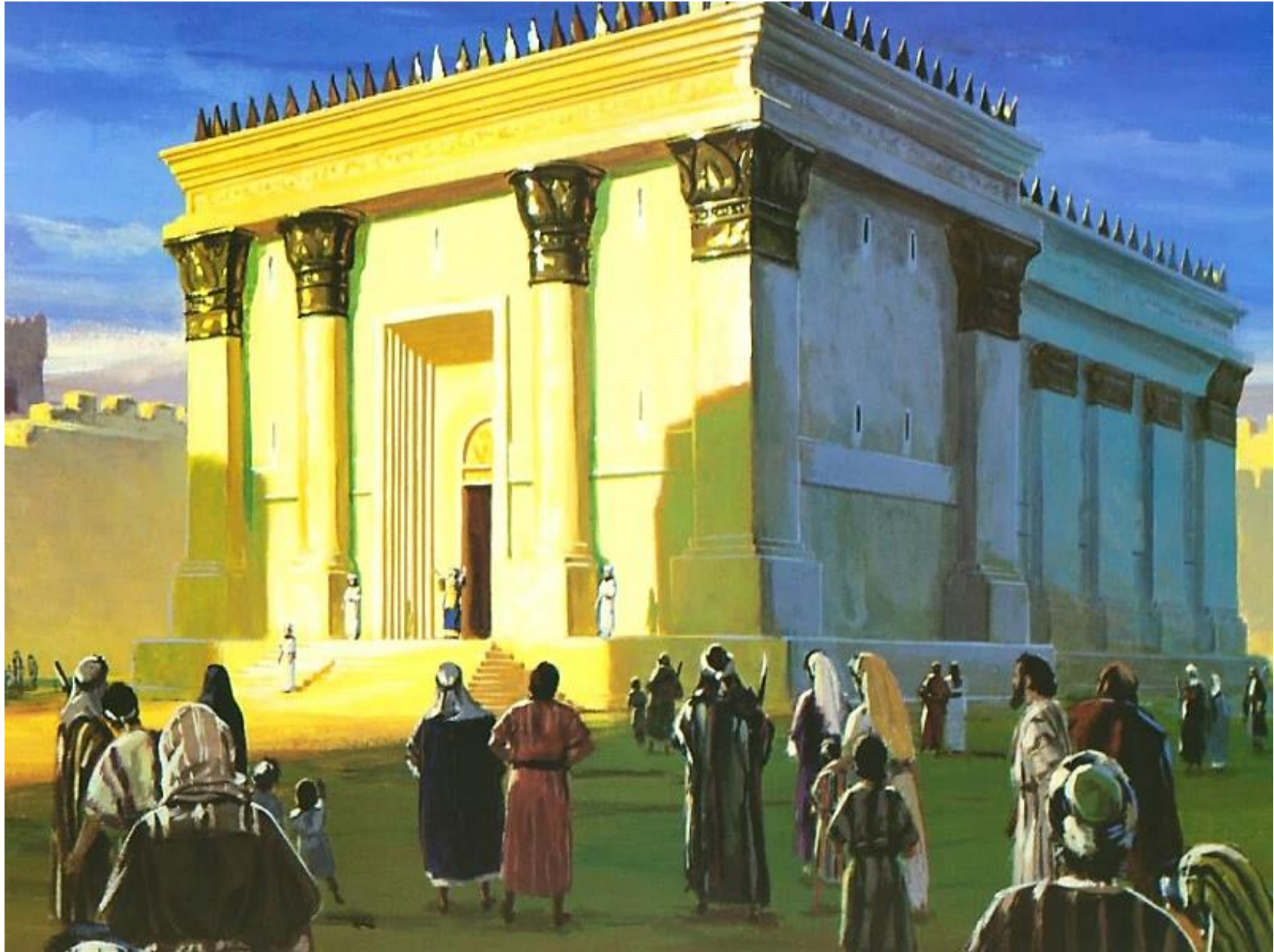
Feed the flock by clarifying Divine principles and expectations.

Be on guard for expediency and casualness toward worship.

Be examples to the flock!

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS





A PEOPLE FOCUSED ON THE DAY OF BIG THINGS

Critical bond for our fellowship is our vision of the success and joys of the Kingdom of God.

We need to ensure that this is a message continually reinforced with our children.

It is what we must remind ourselves of when we suffer and experience set-backs.

It must be top of mind in our pursuits in the world and govern our decisions – today is the day of small things!

It puts into perspective the faults and failings we all experience personally and ecclesially – the best is yet to come. Don't fret over weakness today.

FOR ME PERSONALLY

This message has been powerful for my own reformation needs.

Why is it ecclesial life is so often a struggle?

The Truth is about a certain optimism of how life can be – personally and communally.

The optimism of the Truth comes face to face with the fact that we do not meet the standards.

Here's where understanding the lesson of the “day of small things” applies.

God accepts our imperfections and can be glorified by, even with our imperfections.

When my faith grows weak, I now try to think of this lesson and focus on when the wealth of the nations will be claimed by our Lord.

ECCLESIAL LIFE

Everything we see is temporary and at best a shadow of what will be by the grace of God.

Small, relatively ineffective preaching campaigns will be replaced by the nations streaming to hear the Gospel.

The imperfections of the flesh that burden us will be taken away to allow a fellowship that serves fully in the Spirit.

Our “smallness” will turn into a day of great things, encompassing the whole of the earth.

**LET US,
TOGETHER,
RISE UP AND
BUILD**



THE DAY OF “BIG” THINGS

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
¹³ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Revelation 5:12-13

OUR ROLE IN THE DAY OF “BIG” THINGS

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice. ² Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. ³ Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention.”

Isaiah 32:1-3

THANK YOU!