

Message #8**Malachi 3:13-18**

There used to be a saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” That saying is wrong. Words can and do hurt others and they will hurt you. Words that are wrong about God not only hurt God, they anger God and when that happens we hurt ourselves.

What most people do not realize is that when they shoot off their mouths, God is listening. God does not think lightly or take lightly things people say about Him. Jesus said that one of the things that will be used at judgment will be words.

“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:36-37).

Israel has a history of saying rotten things about God. She has certainly said and continues to say blasphemous things about Jesus Christ, who is the God, Savior, Messiah, and King. When Jesus Christ was here, Israel called Him a drunk, an adulterer and someone who hangs out with sinners. They shot their mouths off against Him and called Him Satanic.

Apparently people think God doesn't hear or care. Well this text shows that God does care. This passage shows Israel why God went silent for the next 450 years and it was because of what she was saying with her big mouth.

GOD REVEALS THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD SPOKEN ARROGANT WORDS AGAINST GOD AND BECAUSE OF THAT, SHE IS NOT EXPERIENCING HIS BLESSINGS AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Verse 13 makes the statement that their words had been arrogant against God. But then notice how the people would respond. They would say what have we said that was arrogant against you.

It is possible to get so used to what we are doing and saying that is not right before God that we are no longer convicted about it. That is a dangerous position to be in and that is exactly where these people were.

There are two parts to this that we want to observe:

PART #1 – The arrogant words God's people were speaking against God. **3:14-15**

They could not even see or sense the truth about themselves and their own speech. So God lists at least six things these people were saying with their mouths that He classified as arrogant words. As we look at them, we need to honestly look at ourselves because we do not want to have God hear this from our mouths because this does anger Him:

Arrogant Statement #1 - God's people were saying it is vain to serve God. **3:14a**

These people of God believed that since they were worshipping God and serving God, they should be receiving immediate remuneration. They were going to worship services and were taking some offerings and felt God should be rewarding them for that.

But since God was not immediately rewarding them with Millennial blessings, they came to the conclusion that serving God was a useless, empty waste of time.

The Hebrew word "vain" means the people were actually saying there is no point or purpose to serving God.

Now they are going to worship services and taking their offerings, but they saw no value in serving God.

They were not only thinking this, but apparently they were saying this.

The great faith chapter in the New Testament is Hebrews 11. In that chapter is a listing of people who faithfully served God. There is a statement in Hebrews 11:6 that says this: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

The key to a faith that pleases God is that it keeps serving believing that in time God will reward. It does not say, "It is vain to serve God." But in time we will reap if we remain faithful.

Arrogant Statement #2 - God's people were saying it is of no profit to keep and obey God's word. **3:14b**

God's people were strictly looking at serving God and obeying God's word as a bottom line profit issue. Their motive for going to the Temple and going through motions of worship was not because the heart was right with God; it was for profit.

They did not see any gain from serving God. That is probably why they were offering God animals they didn't want. They could sell and make a profit off the other animals, but not the lame and injured ones.

We must be careful to not fall into the trap of obeying God's word simply for profit. This is an easy trap in which to fall. The mindset that we will do this if we see results becomes a motive for many. The motive should be we do this because it pleases the Lord.

We are living in a time when many churches are saying there is no profit to carefully preaching and teaching God's word. It does not interest most people and places that bring in the crowds are going a different direction. That angers God.

Arrogant Statement #3 - God's people were saying we are not happy obeying God;
we are people mourning. **3:14c**

They were constantly saying we have a sad life serving God. When a believer starts mumbling and complaining that their life is lousy and the godless people are happy, that is arrogant talk that angers God.

We are admonished in many passages to be joyful people, not a bunch of mourners and whiners. We are to be happy in the Lord and when we are not being that, we do not please God.

Arrogant Statement #4 - God's people were saying the arrogant are blessed. **3:15a**

God will address what will happen to the arrogant people in Malachi 4:1, but before He does this He says to His own people that they were shooting off their mouths and saying things that were arrogant words against Him.

The people were saying we have been going to religious services and rituals and the arrogant people who don't go seem to be better off and blessed more than we who do go. They have a great life and here we are the people of God and we don't.

The arrogant people reject God's word and God's authority in every way and they seem to be doing just fine.

When God's people envy godless people and envy arrogant people, they have really reached a low point in their spirituality.

Be very careful that we don't fall into this trap in this world in which we live. Many of God's people watch the news and say with their own mouths, those arrogant, godless, immoral people are getting away with it and are winners and we who are God's people are losers.

God hears that and it does not please Him.

Arrogant Statement #5 - God's people were saying the wicked are built up. **3:15b**

They were saying that people who were practicing wicked things were being built up and prospering. God's people were suggesting that it is better to be a godless heathen than a child of God. That does not make God happy.

Arrogant Statement #6 - God's people were saying the wicked put God to the test and escape. **3:15c**

It is the wicked who get away unscathed. It does not please God for His people to be constantly shooting off their mouths insinuating that it is better to be godless than godly.

PART #2 – God keeps the eternal records. 3:16-18

God looks for people who love Him, who fear Him, who defend Him, who speak up for Him and who serve Him. He keeps records of people who do that. These people have names and their names are remembered by the Lord.

It may be that some of those who heard Malachi's message truly repented of the list of things he developed. Now Malachi says here that one who fears Him and esteems Him will have some wonderful benefits:

Benefit #1 - He will have his name written in the book of Remembrance. 3:16a

There were a few people who feared the Lord and prompted others to fear the LORD and according to **verse 16**, their names were written in "a book of remembrance."

As we have said before, there are some record books that we know about in the Bible. These are actual written records kept in heaven. We think perhaps there may be as many as six different record books kept in heaven:

- 1) There is the book of Life or Lamb's book of Life that contains the names of all who have believed on Jesus Christ. Ps. 69:28; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27

We suspect that this book contains the legal justification moment for the individual. This record would contain the moment one believed on the Lord and was declared justified in God's legal court.

- 2) There are the condemnatory works books for all those who have not believed in Jesus Christ. Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12; Rom. 2:5

Every failure and every sin is on record in the works books. If one gets before God whose name is not in the book of life, those works will be called up and the person will be guilty and condemned.

- 3) There is a book of rejection of life for all those who have specifically rejected the way of life. Jeremiah 17:13

This book specifically has to do with a person who has specifically known the truth about God and about His salvation and has specifically forsaken it and turns aside from it.

This certainly does have application to Israel and to others as well.

- 4) There is the book of Remembrance for all believers who feared God and were faithful to speak for God and prompted others to do the same. **Mal. 3:16**

This person is one who took God's word seriously and feared the LORD and prompted others to do the same by actual speaking.

5) There is the book of church membership. Heb. 12:23; 13:17

This appears to be some church record of church members. Certainly one who believes in Jesus Christ is part of the church universal, but this does appear to have local church ramifications because in **13:17**, local church leaders will give an account.

6) There are the reward and loss of reward books for believers. Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10

Every believer must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and what will be determined here will be rewards or loss of rewards, based on what the believer did nor did not do. We assume that there is a record of this or else this judgment would be impossible.

What is very clear is that God does keep records. He does keep accurate, eternal, written records.

Benefit #2 - They will belong to God. **3:17a**

God says that eventually those who feared Me and took My word seriously will be seen as My Own Possession. One day God's property will be seen and honored by all.

Benefit #3 - They will be spared. **3:17b**

Contextually that is a sparing that will keep those faithful from wrath judgment. For those in the Church, it means the Rapture. For those in Israel in the Tribulation, it means escape from Satan and the Antichrist.

Benefit #4 - They will have distinguishing judgment ability. **3:18**

One of the things that people who do not fear the Lord lose is their ability to judge right from wrong and their ability to see who serves and who does not serve. God says I will change all of that. In Zechariah 3:7 we learn that those who fear the Lord and obey the Lord will have great government responsibility and great access to the King when He reigns.

1) There will be a great distinguishment between one righteous and one wicked. **3:18a**

2) There will be a great distinguishment between one who serves and one who doesn't serve.
3:18b

One thing is very clear, judgment will precede Kingdom. Blessed will be those who fear God and obey God's word and watch what they say.