

Return of the King **The Danger of Spiritual Apathy: Malachi**

Main Idea:

Despite the spiritual apathy of the priesthood and the people, the Lord remains committed to His plan to send His Messiah and fill the land (and the earth) with His glory through passionate worshippers whose hearts remain committed to Him.

Exposition of 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:8-12: From Exile to Return

Solomon's heart turned away from God and he worshipped idols, so the kingdom was split. Then the northern kingdom was taken over by the Assyrians; then Judah (the southern kingdom) was taken over by the Babylonians, and they were in exile for 70 years.

Then the Babylonians were judged by God and punished. Persia took over Babylon and the temple was allowed to be rebuilt. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23) Thus, the people were restored to their land. However, despite returning to the land and rebuilding the temple, God's people had yet to experience all that the prophets had promised such as the return of God's holy presence to the temple (Zechariah 1:16), the full establishment of the Davidic kingdom (Isaiah 11), and the spiritual circumcision of the hearts of the people (Deuteronomy 10, Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36-37)

Exposition of Malachi: Danger of Spiritual Apathy!

Malachi's Spiritual Diagnosis:

- Apathetic worship from the people

- Apathetic offerings from the priests

- Apathetic morality regarding mixed marriages (a reflection of their hearts)

God's ultimate plan for the promised land (and the rest of the world!) -

Malachi 1:11 *"For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts."*

Malachi's Remedy for Spiritual Apathy:

Malachi 3:1-5

John the Baptist (to prepare the people) and Jesus (to transform the people) were prophesied.

Malachi 3:16-18

The people were sifted and refined.

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**Application - Making the Christ-Connection with Israel's Return:
*How do Christians overcome spiritual apathy? (Jude 1:17-19; 21-23)***

Keep yourself in the love of God by...

Building yourself up in your faith

Show up – be where God wants you to be

(attending church regularly; fellowship with other believers)

Be in the Word and pray

Praying in the Holy Spirit

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you (we are needy and dependent)

Waiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ at His return

What are we anticipating? Jesus' return

He will show up for you. God is faithful.

God is committed to you and will not let you go.

Jude 1:24-25 *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How did Judah return to the promised land? What does their return tell us about God's faithfulness and mercy?
- 2) What was the problem Malachi identified with God's people? What do you think was causing their spiritual apathy? How does Malachi address this problem?
- 3) How does Jude instruct us to "keep ourselves" in the love of God?
- 4) What is one way you can overcome spiritual apathy in your own life by applying Jude's exhortation? What does it look like for you to "keep yourself" in the love of God on a daily basis?