

Malachi passages (Mal. 1:6-14, 2:7-9, 2:10-16, 3:6-12)

There are a lot of do's and don'ts in our lives. We developed the sensitivities to do's and don'ts when we were very small. When I was small, I am especially pay attentions to the don'ts from my parents. The main reason is that bad consequence will happen if I violate the don'ts. God is our Heavenly Father. The don'ts He commanded demand our attention and compliance. Violation of the don'ts leads to bad consequence.

Malachi is the last minor prophet book in the Old Testament. Malachi is a prophet and the book was written near 430BC. Often Christians refer to the period between Malachi prophesy and the beginning of the New Testament is the "400 years of silence" from God.

The people of Judah were exiled from the Promised Land around 605 BC. Then, they returned from Babylon seventy years later. By the time of Malachi, they had been back in the homeland for more than a hundred years. The temple had been rebuilt (see book of Haggai), thus people can worship in the temple at that time. However, as time went by, Israelites began to drift away and disobeyed God. God stated the wrongs of the people and required them to turn back to Him. There were many wrong acts people committed but I outlined four for study today.

1) Don't cheat God (Mal. 1:6-14)

Mal. 1:6-14 is about prophet Malachi warn the people especially priests not to bring defiled food on altar. First, we need to remember we are all priests under New Testament period (I Peter 2:4-10, Rev. 1:6). Thus, this warning applies to us. Verse 7 stated those people cheated God. Those people did not offer what God has commanded them. Today, God commanded us to offer ourselves as living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Are you offering what God asks?

2) Don't cause others to stumble (Mal. 2:7-9)

Priests as messengers for God shall know and obey God's teaching. In addition, they shall help others to know and follow God's teaching. Mal.2:8 stated "But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble..." We need to be very careful on what we do and talk at all time. We need to examine our

thoughts and actions against God's teaching, so that we and others will not stumble by our sinful acts.

3) Don't be unfaithful (Mal. 2:10-16)

The passage in Mal. 2:10-16 is about two types of unfaithfulness: to God and in marriage. This kind of unfaithful action breaks covenant. Malachi accused them unfaithful to God in the following way: God said the Jewish people violated the covenant of marriage which mirrors the covenant that God made with them. God said their way of approach about marriage revealed their hearts toward the covenant of grace between God and them. Because they were unfaithful to the covenant of marriage and everything that God have intended for in the covenant of marriage, thus they broke the covenant of their ancestors.

The second warning is unfaithful in marriage itself. This includes marriage with non-God's people and divorce from the spouse. New Testaments provides more details on this topic (I Cor. 7:39, II Cor. 6:14, Matt. 19:4-9, I Cor. 7:15)

The end of verse 16 concludes this section with "So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful."

4) Don't withhold tithes (Mal. 3:6-12)

Mal. 3:6-12 described the Israelites robbed God in tithes and offerings. God's people at that time gave less than required in their tithes. God was not pleased. God's message is: 1. God is not pleased with this because it's robbing God, but God would welcome them back if they turn around. 2. God told them to have faith in tithes and offering in which God will bless them when they tithe and offer as required.

In conclusion, there are 4 main "**don'ts**" listed in the book of Malachi. We shall not act on those **don'ts**. In fact, there are always "**dos**" that are opposite to those "**don'ts**". The four "**dos**" in this study are 1. Offer to God as a living sacrifice and follow him, 2. Be careful on your actions so that you can bring others closer to God and be more like God, 3. Be faithful to God and faithful in your marriage, and 4. Give proper tithes and offerings that are pleasing to God.