

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 20: THE REVEALED MEANING OF TIME, HISTORY & MATERIALITY, 3:1-7.

#1. TIME, HISTORY & MATERIALITY ARE PART OF A REVEALED RECIPROCAL, v.6,7.

#2. "For I, the Lord do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed", v6,

#3. God is immutable &, therefore, the word of God must be, equally, immutable. Nothing absolute is malleable by HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY, while time, history & materiality are all represented as quite malleable by SUPERNATURAL FORCE-->.

#4. God is good & that persistent character trait of God is the explanation of why we are not immediately consumed by the anger of God.

#5. "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. But you say, 'How shall we return?'" , v.7.

#6. The revealed reciprocal begins with God & His demands upon men & their behavior in time, history & materiality-->. It is complimented by the reciprocal response of men in time & in obedience<--.

#7. Yielding to this REVEALED RECIPROCAL determines the shape & content of time, history & materiality. If the reciprocal is completed, then, things go in one direction, but if not, then expectations should change.

#8. Returning to the Lord & His return to us carries us beyond mere material, social & psychological recovery! The completed reciprocal is measured in this text as a reconstitution of the arrangement between God & men. Once restored, temporal outcomes begin to materialize on that supernatural foundation!

#9. This is beyond natural explanation. The priests had consented to the repudiation of the revealed reciprocal. Their honor, integrity, sanctification, all forfeit!

#10. And for what? Expiring temporal advantages. Professionalism at its worst.

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 21: THE REVEALED PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE, 3:8-12.

#1. History is not cyclical! Alternating fluctuations are an attempt at natural explanations, formed in a vacuum of revelation. The Bible everywhere stipulates that time is RELATIONAL! Historical conditions are dependent upon how it is that men in history choose to relate to God; that means behavior. Malachi wrote in defense of this revealed propositional truth.

#2. History is not self-generating. The "right side of history" philosophy is often heard in the contemporary. It is a false idea; projecting that History is in the driver's seat & it is carrying us along with it, wherever that may be.

#3. Israel had turned to MATERIALISM, POSITIVISM, EMPIRICISM. "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You'? In tithes and offerings", v.8.

#4. The thought of robbing God implies INDEBTEDNESS to the eternal reality; a debt that must be addressed. If it is neglected, then consequences ensue.

#5. "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you", v.9.

#6. There was the cultural, social, pervasive, systemic practice of robbing God; & He had reached into time & cursed them nationally. Materiality was more important than God!

#7. Translating into experience, it tells us that human experience was their real god.

#8. The Almighty issued a challenge to the people as a whole. It was classed as a "test" of the power of the spiritual over that which is material. The Lord wanted to disturb the people's confidence in materialism.

#9. "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this', says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows'", v.10.

#10. THE LORD OF HOSTS WAS ASSERTING THE TRUTH OF THE PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE!

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 22: THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE, 3:8-12.

#1. The people of Israel had given up all spiritual intelligence. Their hearts & minds were guided by material interests.

#2. A misconstrual of terrible proportions had been made. They came to believe that the most important reality was MATERIAL CONDITIONS. Their leaders, the priests, had aided this dangerous obsession.

#3. The prophet Malachi makes the REVEALED CORRECTION. The depiction of THE PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE is given. FIRST: Anything plenary is full, complete, not lacking. SECOND: The PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE greatly surpasses human material conditions. Materiality is not its principle component. The causal agent is the power of God. THIRD: God works within this spiritual framework. The Lord brings power to bear upon all material conditions, changing or altering their nature ("curse" or "blessing until it overflows"). FOURTH: Within the PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE OF MANKIND, people are to exercise trust, faith, belief in the promises of God. Israel was to look to God, not material conditions. Material conditions were the effect & not the cause. FIFTH: The people of God were obliged to abandon HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY. How one represents material conditions can function as a PHILOSOPHY OF COUNTER-AGENCY. "'Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes', says the Lord of hosts", v.11. SIXTH: THE PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE is a world apart! Wherein the causal factor is God & not material conditions. SEVENTH: There are corollary spiritual states of being like, PLENARY REASONING, PLENARY BEHAVIOR & PLENARY UNDERSTANDING. All that is reasoning from within THE PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE. EIGHTH: This is to be regarded as a "test" of the promises of God & the power of God. The Lord intended to prove His character. The reciprocal to this "test" is human trust in it & in Him. In which case the people will cast aside the IDOLATRY OF MATERIALISM! #4. "'All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts", v12.

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 23: AUTONOMOUS MAN, 3:13-15.

#1. The people of Israel, over whatever amount of time, had lost the knowledge of, perhaps even the awareness of their source, their origin in the will of God.

#2. With the help of their spiritual advisors, the priests, the entire nation had rejected revealed truth & in that kind of vacuum they took a very different historical course.

#3. The people of Israel had determined to generate a HUMANISTIC COUNTER-WORLD. "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the Lord of hosts'", v. 14.

#4. Life devoted to the obedience of the word of God, they came to believe, was asking too much. Eventually, the people of Israel, felt repressed, held back from their greater possibilities. Opportunities for what they considered to be "advancement" had been forestalled by the control of God.

#5. "...we have walked in mourning...". AUTONOMOUS MAN, single-mindedly pursues self-generated personal experience. And that is usually the pursuit of personal happiness or personal satisfaction.

#6. The ideology of personal happiness above personal duty & especially set above the word of God is only another form of HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY.

#7. What the people wanted, "...the whole nation of you!" (3:9), was to live disentangled from the PLENARY CIRCUMSTANCE! AUTONOMOUS MAN can only be independent of God outside of that revealed truth.

#8. "'Your words have been arrogant against Me', says the Lord. Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'" , v.13.

#9. An arrogant mindset betrayed their larger motive: their flesh! It was always & only about the flesh. Quite simple.

#10. HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY rewrote the rules for membership in society: "So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape", v.15.

#11. Their enemies, at that point, became anyone who stood up for the Almighty & scripture.

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 24: THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE, 3:16-18.

#1. There were some people in Israel who found themselves between THE SUPERNATURAL FORCE OF GOD ACTING IN THE WORLD & THE HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY OPERATING AMONG MEN.

#2. Every believer stands precisely between the Almighty & historical conditions. In that existential pincer, personal decisions have to be made.

#3. What does one believe? What about one's safety, security & well-being? Can God help us; will He help us? Is spiritual integrity before the Lord worth the personal cost?

#4. In the midst of a society under the judgment of God there were those believers who stood by the Lord, distancing themselves from the moral & spiritual degeneracy around them.

#5. "Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His name", v.16.

#6. The faithful in Israel, at that time, drew together in mutual faith in the Lord & to carry their sense of burden before the Almighty.

#7. Those believers had proven faith, proven their fidelity to the word of God, proven their public courage in the face of a disparaging population.

#8. The Lord was impressed by their obvious display of trust in Him, for all to see. The Lord prepared a "book of remembrance", inscribed with the names of those believers who held the LINE OF DISTINCTION between the word of God & the appetites of men.

#9. The faithful were motivated by AN OVERARCHING IDEA: THE FEAR OF GOD. Because of that adherence, the Lord will act on their behalf. "They will be mine"...My own possession...I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him", v.17.

#10. The behavior of those faithful people served as a chart, a map showing the disposition between "...the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him", v.18.

#11. The Lord was sorting them out! His Excellency is sorting us all out!

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 25: REMEMBER THE LAW OF MOSES: THE AXIS OF EVERYTHING, 4:1-6.

#1. The creation of the universe was occasioned by the delivery of the word of God. Genesis stipulates that & it must be true, inherently, if God is God. Creation & revelation were concomitant (at the same place & at the same time)!

#2. This revealed truth puts the word of God at the axis of everything. "Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel", v.4. The foundation of the universe is not natural nor material; it is spiritual.

#3. The law of Moses, as indeed all of revelation, represents the presence of God. And it situates the temporal downstream from the imposing FIRST REALITY!

#4. The general observations of the temporal world contained in the Book of Malachi are two-fold: THE FIRST REALITY EXERTS SUPERNATURAL FORCE IN & OVER TIME; & HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY ALWAYS OPPOSES IT.

#5. Revealed statutes, ordinances, laws & commandments were not then, nor can they ever be, subject to the created dimension of reality. THE FIRST REALITY DEALS IN FIRST TRUTHS.

#6. The prophet Malachi reports that Israel had come, through whatever influence, to HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY as a people. The preachers, the priests, were part of the problem.

#7. The word of God was, at the insistence of men, consciously placed downstream from human wisdom. MEN ASSUMED THE PLACE OF THE FIRST REALITY!

#8. To "Remember the law of Moses", as well as the completed revelation, is the FIRST CONCERN of the individual believer.

#9. We are living proximate to irresistible eternal will & power that cannot be constrained & therefore must not be ignored, v.1. Every believer is living proximate to a SUPERNATURAL FUTURE generated by the FIRST REALITY, v.2-3.

#10. At the writing of Malachi, a symbolic "Elijah" was just beyond the temporal horizon, v.5. John, the forerunner, was to signal the advent of CULMINATING REALITY.

#11. A spiritual renaissance was needed: "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse", v.6.

#12. The lesson: "REMEMBER", GENERATION AFTER GENERATION! OR ALL IS LOST!

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 26. THE PLEA OF IGNORANCE, reasoning from Malachi.

#1. The prophet, speaking on behalf of the Lord of hosts, made several accusations & or observations about Israel. Then, the people responded with questions that implied ignorance of the foundation for those accusations.

#2. "'I Have loved you, says the Lord'. But you say, 'How have you loved us?'" 1:2. (b)"...where is My honor...where is my respect?' But you say, 'How have we despised Your name'?", 1:6. (c) "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar But you say, 'How have we defiled You'...", 1:7. "...He no longer regards the offerings or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, 'For what reason?'...", 2:13, 14.

#3. And there were other such exchanges: 2:17; 3:7; 3:13. These were PLEAS OF IGNORANCE! The people of Israel were faced with accusations from God that they did not understand & could not answer. The people could not bridge the gulf between God--->& men in time.

#4. The Levitical priests, the preachers, had failed the people! "True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips..." 2:6); "For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (2:7).

#5. Revealed truth was to be incarnated in them. That was the ideal but they "...turned aside from the way...", 2:8. The contemporary church is the chosen vessel that stands between God & the people of the world, the priestly position.

#6. "...and he turned many back from iniquity", 2:6. The prophetic priestly burden is to confront human sin & defy its autonomy (the right to be).

#7. The possibility of conformity to, of compromise with sin, was to be unthinkable. There was an eternal baseline for thought, speech & behavior, an absolute standard of revelation in prescriptive authority.

#8. The Book of Malachi teaches that this is a UNIVERSE UNDER GOD. From the throne,--->SUPERNATURAL FORCE IS CONSTANTLY BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON MEN IN TIME. And therefore HUMANISTIC COUNTER-AGENCY AGAINST IT <--is to be confronted, defied, corrected!

#9. The word of God must be heard, understood, believed & obeyed! The individual believer & the aggregate church are charged, by the Almighty, to force revealed truth into time, circumstance, material conditions & human proclivity for sin.

#10. The PLEA OF IGNORANCE is resolved by PREACHING REVEALED "KNOWLEDGE" & REVEALED "INSTRUCTION". That is our job.

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 27: THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD, 3:6.

#1. "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed", v.6.

#2. Though the "Lord" stands outside of time & materiality, He must be understood as THE CONSTANT of the universe. The Almighty does not change. He is immutable.

#3. This, being the revealed truth about Him, the character of immutability must apply to the nature of the Scripture, as well. There is no breach between the character of God & the nature of the word of God.

#4. The immutability of God allows for human beings, living in a perpetually changing temporal order, to come to know Him. The Lord never changes. He is not liable to time, to world sociologies, to the momentary mores (mo-rays) (the defining customs of any historical period).

#5. OF GREAT IMPORTANCE: The Lord being immutable, allows one to acknowledge His reactions & responses to human behavior across the whole of time. This is true because the Lord never varies, though all temporal elements do.

#6. This knowable factor of the immutability of God, permits the reader of the Bible, to judge the past & the present & to realize how the Lord judges the entire historical continuum.

#7. His refusal to change, means that His immutability precedes the phenomenon of revelation & precedes human lived experience, in whatever temporal historical period.

#8. God is not passive, not indifferent, not absentee. The Lord is patient, waiting for a human change of heart. Which is why we "...are not consumed".

#9. The immutable God stands in direct relation to time, materiality & historical conditions. In consequence, then, all things temporal are thereby categorized as VARIABLES.

#10. The Levitical priests had led or allowed the people of Israel to reverse the revealed truth. God & His word were purposefully preconceived as the VARIABLES, while human will assumed the proportions of A CONSTANT. The immutability of God is a precondition for reading the Bible for meaning. Meaning is not contemporary; it is biblical!

From the Book of Malachi.

THE UNIVERSE UNDER GOD.

PART 28: THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD, 3:6.

#1. The immutability of God precedes His revelation of truth & precedes human lived experience.

#2. The "Lord" does not change. What He thought when the word of God was issued, is precisely what He thinks today or in any contemporary historical setting.

#3. ETERNAL IMMUTABILITY, therefore, is the IMMEDIATE REGULATOR of how the Bible is to be read & understood!

#4. A complex of ideas grouped under the general umbrage of PROGRESSIVISM have consciously omitted the precedential factor of the IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

#5. Scripture is addressed as a humanly derived account of the universe & human behavior within it. Redaction (a kind of human editing) of the biblical text over centuries has rendered the Bible incomprehensible to contemporary readers, is one prong in the anti-Bible campaign.

#6. In other words the Bible cannot be trusted to deliver incontrovertible truth! It is too removed from the present. This development is not new. It represents a concerted effort, by some, who firmly reject the revealed relation stipulated by scripture between the word of God & time.

#7. "'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. But you say, 'How shall we return?'" , 3:7.

#8. Upon what does a meaningful return to God depend? It depends upon the reconsideration of the IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

#9. "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed", 3:6. Technology is rapidly expanding its effects upon daily life & human reasoning. Powerful potentials impose issues, questions & uncertainties. Some believe, that the Bible is hopelessly unable to render relevant guidance in these perilous waters. The Bible is mute. Worse than that, it is a source of division among believers. So, as human ideas change, perceptions of God are mutated.

#10. What the Lord thought about human sexuality in scripture (Romans 1) is exactly what He thinks today. "...For I, the Lord, do not change...".