

Dear Friend,

Sometimes we tend to think of the Old Testament as being obsolete since the New Testament clearly says we, as believers in Christ, have a better covenant than the old one.

Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Thank God for our new covenant, but that does not mean that the Old Testament scriptures are not important for us. Listen to what the apostle Paul said to his protégé Timothy:

2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

"All scripture" is inspired and profitable for doctrine. It does not mean we are still under the dispensation of the law. Far from it.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

With this thinking in mind, I have often read and meditated the book of Malachi. I knew it was the last warning in the Old Testament. God used the prophet Malachi to warn the people to repent. Sadly, they did not and there was not heard another prophet in the land of Israel for about four hundred years. The next prophet would be John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

In the first chapter of Malachi the people are being chastised for not honoring God through their sacrificial offerings of lambs, etc. They were supposed to bring their very best animal, the one that was spotless and without blemish. Why? Because those offerings of the old covenant pointed to the day when the Son of God would bring in the new covenant through Himself being offered for the sin of mankind.

By bringing their very best animal for sacrifice, it would cost them something. God wanted them to understand that the offering of His Son would cost heaven

EVERYTHING! They would honor the coming sacrifice of Jesus by offering the very best animal they owned.

But the people despised having to make those offerings at all. They saw it simply as a religious duty, not something that would honor God and His Son. They brought animals that had little value and would cost them virtually nothing. The animals with a broken leg, or missing an eye. Sometimes they would even offer a stolen lamb, or one found dying along the roadside. There was no honor for God at all in their hearts when they brought such worthless offerings.

For years I could not understand the lesson for us "new covenant" believers in the first chapter of Malachi. After all, the blood of Jesus has already been shed once and for all. We most certainly do not bring animals to the altar for their bodies to be sacrificed. THE LAMB has already been offered and that is sufficient for all eternity:

Heb 10:5-10 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (6) In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. (7) Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (8) Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; (9) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

I was meditating again the first chapter of Malachi one day, wondering how it applied to new testament believers when suddenly the Holy Spirit dropped a verse in me that instantly gave the understanding of how WE are to HONOR the sacrifice of the Son TODAY ... in this new covenant.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

The sacrifice He wants now is our bodies, presented holy unto Him for His use in the kingdom of God. Oh my! It is so simple! In the same way that Jesus kept His

physical body holy for the use of the Father within Him, we are to keep our bodies holy for the use of Christ in us. He has no body on planet earth but ours. He has no voice but ours, no hands but ours, not feet but ours. We are the body of Christ in this covenant:

1Co 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

My body is 76 years old. My hearing and eyesight is not the same as it was in my twenties. He did not say our bodies had to be perfect. He said they had to be holy in order to be acceptable. Think of it ... were the crippled and blind sheep acceptable offerings unto Him? No. Will He accept unholy bodies offered to Him today? No He will not. Only holy bodies are ACCEPTABLE by Him for His use.

By grace, He has empowered us to live Holy. He has given us the power of the "spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that frees us from the dominion of sin. He has given us the Holy Spirit who "also" helps us overcome our infirmities. He has enabled us to present our bodies holy for His use. It will cost us pleasure in this life to present our bodies holy unto Him. But it is our "reasonable service."

Let us honor our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ by bringing our bodies holy and acceptable unto Him for His use in the kingdom of God.

Your co-laborer for Christ,

GARY