

Title: **GOD'S COVENANT WITH LEVI**

Text: Malachi 2:4-7

Subject: *The Covenant of Life and Peace*

Date: Sunday Evening — 2009

Tape: Malachi #8

Readings: *Joe Blakely and James Jordan*

Introduction:

My subject tonight is **GOD'S COVENANT WITH LEVI**. Our text will be Malachi 2:4-7. Nothing in all the world is sweeter to the soul than a realization of covenant grace. It was covenant grace that sustained David on his dying bed (2 Samuel 23:5); and it was covenant grace with which the Lord God braced and fortified His people in Malachi, as He warned them of sure judgment upon a disobedient and rebellious people. Let's read about this covenant, and pray that God the Holy Spirit, whose Word we not read, will teach us the blessedness of God's covenant with Levi.

(Malachi 2:4-7) And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. (5) My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. (6) The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. (7) For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

All that is here said of Levi must be understood only as Levi was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. It could never be said of any other but Christ that "*iniquity was not found in His lips.*" Though everything here is spoken as that which was past, that should not surprise us. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for us to read of the person and work of our Redeemer in the past tense hundreds of years before He came into this world in our flesh. Isaiah spoke of our Savior by the Spirit of prophecy, as a man despised and rejected of men and as our sin-atonement Substitute ages before He was openly crucified for us

(Isaiah 53:3-10) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem

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him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

The Apostle John tells us that our Lord Jesus is “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8). As we read this blessed account of our Great Levi, the Lord Jesus Christ and all that is here revealed of God’s covenant of life and peace with Him, how we ought to rejoice. Like David of old, we ought to leap and dance before the Ark of God, our great Savior, and God’s covenant goodness to our souls in and by Him!

It is with Him that Jehovah declares He made His covenant of life and peace. Indeed, the Lord God tells us that He is the whole of that covenant (Isaiah 49:8). And He with whom the covenant was and is made is the Fulfiller of it; the Messenger of it; the Administrator of it and the Preserver of all the blessings of it! We can never be sufficiently thankful to our God for His covenant and for revealing His gracious purpose to us.

MY COVENANT

Our text opens by the Lord’s own declaration that His covenant is with Levi.

(Malachi 2:4) And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

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“*This commandment*” refers to God’s decree of judgment upon Judah spoken of in verses 2 and 3, His determination to destroy the physical nation of Israel, that he might save His elect out of every nation.

We might have expected Him to say, “My law is with Levi.” The Levitical priesthood was altogether a legal thing. Was it not? Yet, the Lord of hosts abolished the Levitical law and made His covenant with Levi, with Christ, of whom Levi was typical.

(Psalms 89:19) Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

(Romans 8:1-4) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The Urim and Thummim, the Lights and Perfections of God, are with our great, covenant Levi alone, the one spoken of in Deuteronomy 33:8 as Levi’s “*Holy One*.”

(Deuteronomy 33:8) And of Levi he said, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, *and with* whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.

WITH CHRIST

Next, look at verse 5. God’s covenant is for us, His elect; but it is a covenant with Christ. It is altogether between the Triune God and our blessed Covenant Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator. — “*My covenant was with Him*.” — Let’s read about this covenant.

(Isaiah 49:8-12) Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will

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preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; (9) That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places. (10) They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. (11) And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. (12) Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

(Isaiah 49:16) Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me.

(Isaiah 49:22-25) Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders. (23) And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. (24) Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (25) But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

(Jeremiah 31:31-34) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith

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the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

(Jeremiah 32:36-42) And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; (37) Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: (38) And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (41) Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. (42) For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

COVENANT OF LIFE

Third, we are told that this covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ for us is a covenant of life. — “*My covenant was with Him of life.*” Notice that this covenant God has ordained to be with our Levi in the future, he declares was already with Him, because it is an eternal, everlasting covenant, a covenant made with Him before the world was made (Ephesians 1:3-6).

(Ephesians 1:3-6) Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

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This covenant made with Christ from everlasting is called “*a covenant of life,*” because it was made with Christ the Word of life, who was with the Father from all eternity, and in time was made manifest in the flesh.

- He was made flesh that He might save His people from their sins, that He might save God’s elect who were ordained to eternal life.
- Life was promised to us and given to us in Christ before the world began.

(2 Timothy 1:9-11) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

- And the Lord Jesus came into this world to lay down His life in death as our Substitute, that we might enjoy all the blessedness of life in Him and with Him forever.

COVENANT OF PEACE

Fourth, the Lord God speaks of His covenant as a covenant of peace. — “*My covenant was with him of life and peace.*” It is called a “*covenant of peace,*” because God’s terms of peace and reconciliation were set forth in it and agreed to by the Triune God and our blessed Surety, the Lord Jesus. In that covenant ordered in all things and sure, God was in Christ reconciling His elect to Himself.

- The Son of God was appointed to be the Peacemaker in the eternal covenant.
- And in time, in consequence of His covenant engagements, He was sent to procure peace (Hebrews 10:1-14).
- And He made it by the blood of His cross.

This covenant, we are told, was “*with him*” because it was made with him from all eternity, as the Head and Representative of His people. All the blessings and promises of it were put into his hands. And it stands fast with him forever.

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LIFE AND PEACE

Now, watch this fifth thing. — “*And I gave them to Him.*” The Triune God gave life and peace to Christ, our Surety, in eternity that He might give life and peace to us in time. Compare this to what we read in John 17.

(John 17:1-5) These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: (2) As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. (3) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (4) I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. (5) And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Christ had the glory of His Suretyship and Mediatorship from eternity that was given to Him openly in His exaltation! This glory was His as the Lamb slain and accepted before the world was. In other words, everything He did and experienced in time on the earth, He did and experienced in Himself, in His Surety performances for us before the world began. Therefore, because of His eternal obedience as our eternal Surety, life and peace were given to Him to give to us (Psalm 21:4-5; 2 Timothy 1:1, 9-10).

(Psalms 21:4-5) He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days for ever and ever. (5) His glory *is* great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

(2 Timothy 1:1) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Then, the Lord God gives us seven reasons for trusting Christ as our Surety and establishing His covenant with Him.

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1. **The covenant stands with Him who “feared me and was afraid before my name”** (v. 6). — Christ in Gethsemane fell before God the Father and wept in fear (Hebrews 5:7) as He anticipated the cup He must drink. Yet, for the joy of saving us, He went from Gethsemane to Gabbatha and to Golgotha for us! There He was broken and bruised, beaten and slain because of the name of the Lord, to satisfy His justice, fulfil His law and glorify all His perfections.

(John 12:27-28) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (28) Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

2. **“The law of truth was in His mouth”** (v. 6). — The Gospel, the word and doctrine of truth, which comes from the God of truth, is all about Christ the truth. Chosen, redeemed sinners are taught it by the Spirit of truth. It contains and reveals the glorious truth of redemption, grace, salvation and eternal life in Christ. And this Gospel was in Christ’s mouth.

(Psalms 45:1-2) To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves. — My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer. (2) Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

3. **“Iniquity was not found in His lips”** (v. 6). — There was none in His nature, none in His heart, none in His lips and none in His life. Men sought to find iniquity in Him, but none was found. Devils sought to find iniquity in Him, but none was found. There was no falsehood in His doctrines, no deceit in His promises and no dissimulation in His expressions of love to us poor sinners.
4. **“He walked with Me in peace and equity”** (v. 6). — The Lord Jesus walked with God as a Man, in perfect obedience to His law, fulfilling all His will, and walked with Him to death in complete peace, never once quarreling or repining. Thereby, by His willing obedience unto death, our blessed Savior accomplished righteousness and redemption for us.

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— And for His obedience (already accepted in eternity) God put life and peace in His hands to give to us!

(John 10:16-18) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. (17) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

5. **He turned “many away from iniquity”** (v. 6). — Our blessed Savior accomplished for His elect repentance, reconciliation and remission of sins. He turned us from sin, reconciled us to God and remitted our sins by the sacrifice of Himself!
6. **His lips kept knowledge**. “*The priest’s lips should keep knowledge*” (v. 7), and our Great Levi’s lips did! — He kept the knowledge of God and His will in His lips, and poured it forth into the ears and hearts of men; and He still does!
7. “**He is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts!**” — He is the Revealer of God. He is the Angel of God’s presence, the Messenger of the Covenant, that One in Whom and by Whom alone God is made known to men.

This is our Savior, our all-glorious Christ, into Whose hands the Triune God has placed all things, the Surety the Triune God trusted with His Glory, His covenant and His people.

(Ephesians 1:10-14) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

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(14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Amen.