

Prosperity Is “A Murderer” of the Gospel

By Duane A. Linn

Mt 4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

Mt 4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Mt 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

In these 3 verses, we see the final molestation of Our Lord, in the three temptations of the Devil offered to the Lord Jesus Christ.

As such, we, as the Body of Christ, must also suffer the same temptations as Our Lord suffered; for we are as He is in this respect.

For example:

It is written, in *Joh 17:14*, *I have given them* (the disciples) *thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Let me expound a bit here before getting back to the Lord in the wilderness of temptation.

Joh 7:1 ¶ After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Joh 7:2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

Joh 7:3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

Joh 7:4 For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

Joh 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Joh 7:6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

Joh 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Here, The Lord is explaining to his brothers why He isn't going to the feast. His brethren, in this instance, are an illustration of the world of unbelievers. They too, as Satan did, tempt Him to go

to the feast and show those who were public followers, His works; His miracles and what not; to which the Lord responded that it was not His time (He acted only as the Father bade Him to act and only when the Father bade Him). We know also, from John Chapter 2:24-25, that the Lord already knew the hearts of men.

Joh 2:23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

Joh 2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

Joh 2:25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Now read Chapter 7, Verse 7 with the added clarity given from the verses in chapter 2:23-25

Joh 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

This implies quite clearly, that the world hates us because the world hates the Lord Jesus Christ. The world doesn't hate its own. It offers all of the delights it can offer to those who are of it

So much for the excuses offered in defense of criticism with regard to sin in mankind, that "God knows our hearts".

As we return to the scene in the wilderness, we were left with the Lord's response to Satan offering the riches and glory of the world.

We too, as I stated earlier, are susceptible to the same types of temptations that Our Lord suffered. In our case, none other temptation can be greater than social, or material prosperity.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

prosperity

PROSPERITY, n. L. prosperitas. Advance or gain in any thing good or desirable; successful progress in any business or enterprise; success; attainment of the object desired; as the prosperity of arts; agricultural or commercial prosperity; national prosperity. Our disposition to abuse the blessings of providence renders prosperity dangerous.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. Prov.1.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Prosperity

Pros·per'i·ty, n. [F. prospérité, L. prosperitas. See Prosperous.]

The state of being prosperous; advance or gain in anything good or desirable; successful progress in any business or enterprise; attainment of the object desired; good fortune; success; as, commercial prosperity; national prosperity.

Syn. — Prosperousness; thrift; weal; welfare; well being; happiness.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

POPULARITY, n. L. popularitas. Favor of the people; the state of possessing the affections and confidence of the people in general; as the popularity of the ministry; the popularity of a public officer or of a preacher. It is applied also to things; as the popularity of a law or public measure; the popularity of a book or poem. The most valuable trait in a patriot's character is to forbear all improper compliances for gaining popularity.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Popularity

Pop'u·lar'i·ty, n.; pl. Popularities. [L. popularitas an effort to please the people: cf. F. popularité.]

1. The quality or state of being popular; especially, the state of being esteemed by, or of being in favor with, the people at large; good will or favor proceeding from the people; as, the popularity of a law, statesman, or a book.
2. The quality or state of being adapted or pleasing to common, poor, or vulgar people; hence, cheapness; inferiority; vulgarity.
3. Something which obtains, or is intended to obtain, the favor of the vulgar; claptrap.
4. The act of courting the favor of the people.
5. Public sentiment; general passion.

As you can see with these definitions of the words, “prosperity” and “popularity”, aren’t exactly a good thing to be if you’re a preacher of the gospel or on the receiving end of the Gospel.

Prosperity and popularity go together hand in hand and they contradict the terms and conditions set forth in the Gospel for what a “Christian” is either supposed to be, or supposed to seek after.

I will take the next phase of our sermon into Matthew Chapter Six. Starting in verse 19.

Mt 6:19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mt 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Mt 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mt 6:25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Mt 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Mt 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Mt 6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Mt 6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Mt 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Mt 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Mt 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Mt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Mt 6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Right.

We have here a whole array of reasons to consider now with regard to material prosperity and why it is a bad idea to seek after such things.

I will focus only on a few; as it is my desire for you, who are in attendance, to seek these matters out for yourselves as well. Don't just take my word for it; be Bereans and search the Scriptures.

The next definitions I am going to present to you, are two main definitions and then some additional definitions to augment the main definitions. They are to establish the bedrock of what prosperity and popularity are in terms of their foundations; their main progenitors, if you will; their, "forefathers".

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

baal

BA'AL, n. An idol among the ancient Chaldeans and Syrians, representing the sun. The word signifies also lord, or commander; and the character of the idol was varied by different nations, at different times. Thus Baal Berith is supposed to signify the Lord of the Covenant; Baal Peor, or rather Baal Phegor, the Lord of the dead. Ps. cvi, Baal Zebub, the god of flies, &c.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Baal

Ba'al (bā'al), n.; Heb. pl. Baalim (-īm). [Heb. ba'al lord.]

1. (Myth.) The supreme male divinity of the Phoenician and Canaanitish nations.

▀ The name of this god occurs in the Old Testament and elsewhere with qualifying epithets subjoined, answering to the different ideas of his character; as, Baal-berith (the Covenant Baal), Baal-zebub (Baal of the fly).

2. pl. The whole class of divinities to whom the name Baal was applied. Jg 10:6.

Jg 10:6 ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Baalism

Ba'al·ism (-iz'm), n. Worship of Baal; idolatry.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, Ba'al is defined as thus;

Baal, god worshipped in many ancient Middle Eastern communities, especially among the Canaanites, who apparently considered him a fertility deity and one of the most important gods in the pantheon.

As a Semitic common noun baal (Hebrew ba'al) meant "owner" or "lord," although it could be used more generally; for example, a baal of wings was a winged creature, and, in the plural, baalim of arrows indicated archers. Yet such fluidity in the use of the term baal did not prevent it from being attached to a god of distinct character. As such, Baal designated the universal god of fertility, and in that capacity his title was Prince, Lord of the Earth. He was also called the Lord of Rain and Dew, the two forms of moisture that were indispensable for fertile soil in Canaan. In Ugaritic and Hebrew, Baal's epithet as the storm god was He Who Rides on the Clouds. In Phoenician he was called Baal Shamen, Lord of the Heavens.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baal-ancient-deity>

For those of you who are not learned, I will also define the word, "fertility".

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

fertility

FERTIL'ITY, n. L. fertilitas.

1. Fruitfulness; the quality of producing fruit in abundance; as the fertility of land, ground, soil, fields and meadows.
2. Richness; abundant resources; fertile invention; as the fertility of genius, of fancy or imagination.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Fertility

Fer·til'i·ty, n. [L. fertilitas: cf. F. fertilité.]

The state or quality of being fertile or fruitful; fruitfulness; productiveness; fecundity; richness; abundance of resources; fertile invention; quickness; readiness; as, the fertility of soil, or of imagination.

From what I have shown here, I can safely state, that Ba'al is the pagan god of prosperity. Prosperity leading to popularity.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

Mammon

Mam'mon (măm'mün), n. [L. mammona, Gr. μαμμωνᾶς riches, Syr. mamōnā; cf. Heb. matmōn a hiding place, subterranean storehouse, treasury, fr. tāman to hide.]

Riches; wealth; the god of riches; riches, personified.

Ye can not serve God and Mammon. Mt 6:24.

I won't go into anymore definitions on this, as one should clearly see, that Ba'al and Mammon are one and the same person.

(for those who listened to last week's Sabbath sermon, this is generally the "common grace" that is almost always applied to God in the case of the unregenerate sinner")

As we can clearly see, this is what Satan offers to the prospective "Christian" who relies on his or her "decision" as the sole foundation of their "salvation". This, is what is regularly regurgitated on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, DayStar, and almost every radio and television ministry in the country. These are the recipients of "government subsidized religion benefit" known as the 501C3 tax-exempt status.

I will read to you, a portion of the work, "The Dangers of Prosperity" by William Bates; a book I narrated in Sept 2017, and February 2018 (the first two parts in 17; the final two in 18) for the Digital Puritan Press publication. Here is the link to the sermon narrations for those who will download the PDF notes to this sermon;

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?currSection=sermonstopic&keyword=The+Danger+Of+Prosperity&keyworddesc=The+Danger+Of+Prosperity&seriesOnly=true&sourceid=digitalpuritan>

3. *Prosperity inclines sinners to an impious neglect of God*, which is a sin of the highest nature, and prolific of innumerable evils. All sin is an irregularity, either in the excess or the defective extreme, either in overvaluing and loving the creature, or in the disesteem and indifference to the Creator; and prosperity increases the aversion of the carnal heart from God, in the same degrees as it strengthens the propensity to the world. For the opening of this, it will be necessary to consider the essential and eternal respects due from the reasonable creature to God. And they are

four comprehensive of all the rest: a.) a solemn thankful recognition of him as the author of our beings, and all the comforts we enjoy; b.) supreme love to him; c.) an humble fear of his displeasure; d.) entire obedience to his will. As in this regular universe, every kind of being has its proper end; so it cannot be denied, without the most evident absurdity, that God in all these respects is the chief end of man. (a.) A solemn thankful recognition of God, as the author of our beings, and all our comforts, is continually due to him. The neglect of this is so contumelious to the majesty and glory of God, and so contrary to those most binding obligations to his mercy and goodness, that it is an offence infinitely provoking. In every transgression the authority of the Lawgiver is despised; but this immediately reflects dishonour upon the Deity. A common felony is a breach of the king's laws, but treason not only violates his laws, but strikes immediately at his person and dignity. Now prosperity inclines sensual persons to this wretched neglect of God. The world, with all its desirable things, has the dominion and full possession of the understandings, memories, and hearts of men; and serious thoughts, with warm affections towards God, are banished from them. It is the character of a wicked person, but most proper to him in his prosperity, that "God is not in all his thoughts." (Psalm 10:4) Of this impiety there are several degrees: the highest is explicit atheism, a disbelief of God and his providence, of his being and bounty; and this is sometimes occasioned by plentiful prosperity. And the consequences are, pride that blasts the mind, as it were, with lightning, and confidence in the things of this world. Of this we have astonishing instances in the scripture. Nebuchadnezzar, transported in a vain-glorious flush of joy, at the view of his magnificent works, breaks forth in those lofty insolent expressions; "Is not this great Babel that I have built, for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and the honour of my majesty?"—as if he had been raised by his own power, and did not owe his greatness to the King of heaven. (Daniel 4:30) Thus it is charged against the prince of Tyrus, "Thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches; and thou hast said, 'I am a god, and sit in the seat of God,' and thou settest thine heart as the heart of God." (Ezekiel 28:2) He presumed that his throne for glory and stability was like the divine kingdom, that cannot be shaken, and forgot that he was a frail man in a mutable world. Plentiful prosperity is so strong a temptation to atheism, that a wise and holy saint earnestly deprecated it as a pernicious snare: "Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, 'Who is the Lord?'" Proverbs 30:8-9. The carnal heart, in the full fruition of the world, is apt to ascribe all to the course of nature, or to human contrivance and endeavours, without any serious acknowledgement of the divine liberality and beneficence. Prodigious ingratitude, and equal folly! As if one should imagine that a fountain of water had not its original from the sea, but from the marble stones, through which it immediately and visibly springs; or as if it were requisite the hand of the giver should be as visible as his gifts. Now although few arrive to this height of impiety in actual thoughts and open words; yet prosperous sinners are always guilty of an interpretative and virtual denial of God: they have not a solemn grateful remembrance of their benefactor and his benefits, and a due sense of their dependence upon him. It was the wise and holy counsel of Moses to Israel, when they should be possessed of Canaan, a place of delight and profit, "When thou shalt have eaten, and art full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:10-12) The caution so enforced intimates a sinful disposition in the carnal heart, in prosperity, to neglect God. There may be a notional remembrance of him in the mind, a naked ascription of all good things to his providence, a complimentary visit in exterior worship;

yet without an inward cordial sense of our dear obligations for his most free favours. The apostle charges “the rich in this world, not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.” (1 Timothy 6:17) Men are foolishly prone to depend for protection, reputation, and provision of all things upon their estates, as if they were unconsumable, and neglect God their rock, who is the alone sufficient foundation of all our hopes and comfort. (b.) Supreme love to God is an indispensable duty from men upon the account of his most amiable excellencies and benefits. “Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27); this is the first and great commandment, and consequently a coldness and indifference to God—much more a strong aversion from him—is a sin of the most heinous nature. Now prosperity has a special malignity to disincline the heart from God. The supreme love of God includes an act of the understanding, a transcendent esteem of his favour, “thy loving-kindness is better than life;” it inspires the soul with ardent desires after him, “my soul follows hard after thee;” it produces the most joyful satisfaction in communion with him. (Psalm 63:3,8) The thoughts of God are unspeakably precious and sweet (Psalm 119:103, 19:10). The ordinances—the blessed means of conveying his grace—are highly valued, and sin that displeases and separates from God is hated as the greatest evil. Now the soul must be refined to a heavenly temper, to some degrees of angelical purity, before it is capable of light to see his spiritual excellencies, and love to enjoy them. And if the soul does not make the body heavenly and spiritual, the body will make the soul earthly and fleshly. From hence it is that the affluence of things pleasing to the sense fastens the carnal heart to the world as its happiness and heaven; it darkens the mind, and vitiates the affection, that the soul “can neither taste nor see how good the Lord is.” (Psalm 34:8) It is the universal character of men in the carnal state that “they are lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.” (2 Timothy 3:2-5) And a slack degree of love is comparative hatred, and a sin of astonishing guilt, and not less odious to God, and damning in its nature, though little observed and resented by carnal men, for the highest dishonour of God is complicated with disobedience in it. It is a sin that deserves and inflicts the sorest punishment; for God alone (whose goodness is infinite) can make us perfectly and eternally happy, and the spiritual separation from him is such an invaluable loss, that when truly understood, is the foundation of the heaviest sorrow. (c.) The fear of God is a most distant affection from the heart of the foolish sinner in his prosperity. The fear of reverence, and the awful esteem of God that proceeds from the reflection upon his glorious greatness, is a grace that remains in heaven; the angels in all their bright degrees of excellence cover their faces before his throne. (Isaiah 6:1-2) The fear of circumspection that restrains from displeasing him upon the account of his justice and power is a proper affection to men in the present state. The blessed in heaven are above this fear, being confirmed in a state of unchangeable perfection and felicity; the damned in hell are below this fear, in that no change can make their condition worse; but it is most useful and congruous in this middle state. This fear of God is “the beginning of wisdom,” the first and chiefest part of it in respect of order and dignity. (Proverbs 1:7) For the true notion of wisdom consists in the foresight of evils, in the choice and use of effectual means to avoid it, and it is the best wisdom that avoids the greatest danger. This fear is the principle of conversion from sin to holiness; exciting us to make God our friend, who is so dreadful an adversary, so holy and just, that he will not connive at sin, and spare the guilty and impenitent; and so powerful, that with one stroke he can utterly destroy his most stubborn enemies. Carnal security is directly opposite

to this fear of God, and nothing does more to harden and fortify men in security, than a prosperous state. The voluptuous and sensual are without apprehension of danger, till imminent and in their view, “because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.” (Psalm 55:19) Uninterrupted prosperity tempted them to atheistical security: and as none are solicitous and in anxiety, lest the sun—whose presence is the support and beauty of the world—should not arise in the morning, because its regular course is established and constant (and it would be a miracle contravening the order of nature if it should be stopped), thus the long enjoyment of plenty, and ease, and peace, renders men constantly secure and fearless, as if the tenor of their prosperity were invariable, and no evil could disturb it; or at least they will set back the expectation of evil at a great distance, like those profane scorners mentioned by the prophet, “they say, ‘the vision he sees is for many days to come, he prophesies of the times afar off,’” and with a brutish stupidity, slight the divine threatenings. (Ezekiel 12:27) And from hence it follows, that none are so rebelliously and boldly disobedient, as the prosperous sinner; which is the fourth thing to be considered. (d.) Entire obedience is due to the supreme lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy forever; yet he is mercifully inclined to pardon the infirmities of men, and greater sins retracted by repentance. There are sins of ignorance, when a man dashes blindfold against the law; and of sudden surreption, when there is no time to deliberate, or for recollection; and the best are not exempted here from sins of this nature. There are sins of deadly malignity, when men are careless of God’s commands, and indulge their lusts, though not without some remorse. But the prosperous sinner is usually most presumptuous, he sins with a high hand, and incurs a greater guilt, and shall be exposed to greater punishment. When the fear of God is extinguished, luxury takes the reins, and breaks through the hedge of the law, without feeling the wounding thorns, the fearful threatenings in it; and drives on through all degrees of sin. It is the aggravation of the Israelites’ ingratitude, “Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked; and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.” (Deuteronomy 32:15) They were like beasts high fed, that become fierce and intractable, and will endure no yoke upon them. The prosperous sinner securely despises the commands of God, and by an implicit blasphemy dares his offended omnipotence, as if he were stronger than the Lord. He concludes his safety from his present success, “and says in his heart, ‘I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, and add sin to sin,’ the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord shall smoke against that man to his destruction.” (Deuteronomy 29:18-20) (Bates, William. *The Danger of Prosperity*. The Digital Puritan. Kindle Edition.)

As you can now observe, prosperity in the life of a Christian is dangerous, if not deadly.

I will offer one final note from my own personal experience as evidence of the foolishness of pastoral dependence on tithing as a means of income; an eye toward the very thing that the Lord Jesus Christ rejected at the opening of this sermon. It is to serve as a warning to those wicked men who masquerade as ministers of the Gospel; as well as a warning to those who are dependent on such men to feed their souls.

Back in 2012, I came to Wisconsin and sought to join a Presbyterian congregation (the name of the pastor, I will withhold in accordance with the policies of Sermon Audio, and also with the Presbyterian denomination (s) as a whole, so as not to unnecessarily injure the Gospel or the men who do not subscribe to the practice which I am about to expose here).

As such, I was required to make a sound profession of faith and answer questions posed from the Presbytery.

After I passed the queries of the Presbytery, I was given a contract in which I was to affirm my willingness to pay tithes as a prerequisite for church membership. At the time, I didn't know better. I did not know that such a practice is horribly injurious to the Gospel (as characterized in *1Co 9:15*)

¶ But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

1Co 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

1Co 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

1Co 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

The pastor owned his own home. He was very well off monetarily (and is much more so at this writing). Yet, his lust for money affected his preaching and destroyed his congregation. I was affected to the point of having to go into exile for nearly two years because of his abuse of the gospel for personal profit.

The point I am attempting to make, is that money and the Gospel do not mix. They are like oil and water. In it, the minds and affections of men are focused on the benefits of being a Christian and not on the Christian life itself.

Prosperity is the death knell to the professor and preacher alike; and the ones who are injured, are the Gospel (the Word AND The Lord Jesus Christ, who IS THE WORD John 1:1) as well as the souls of those who rely upon it for life (spiritual and physical).

Now we see why the Lord Jesus Christ rejected Satan's offer. Now we see why men who pass themselves as ministers/servants, are truly hirelings, and not shepherds of the flocks.

Joh 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

For here is the Judgement pronounced against such wicked men who do the things for the sake of material prosperity and popularity among men. In this case, this happened to the Levitical priesthood (also which were mingled with Cohenites) in the days of Malachi the Prophet, the San Hedrin in the days of Our Lord; The Roman Catholic Church afterward; and then finally, the Protestant denominations in our day.

Mal 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Now before you listen to the wicked pastors who try and botch this statement in Malachi, let us see to whom this letter, this decree is issued:

Mal 2:1 ¶ And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

Mal 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

Mal 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Mal 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.

Mal 2:5 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.

Mal 2:6 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.

Mal 2:7 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.

Mal 2:8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 2:9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Mal 2:10 ¶ Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Mal 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

Mal 2:12 The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

Mal 2:13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

Mal 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Mal 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Mal 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Mal 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Mal 3:1 ¶ Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

Mal 3:3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Mal 3:4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Mal 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress

the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Mal 3:7 ¶ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Mal 3:9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Mal 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 3:13 ¶ Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

Mal 3:14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

Mal 3:15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

Mal 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Mal 3:17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Mal 3:18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

This entire portion was delivered to the priesthood of Israel, they who also took what Satan had offered the Lord Jesus Christ; for they were offered all the glory of the People and the riches that came with it; and **THEY HAPPILY TOOK IT**; at the expense of their duty.

As history has shown, the Judgement of the LORD did indeed come to pass.

Israel, as a nation, were nearly obliterated from human existence (the destruction of the Temple and the Mosaic economy in 70 A.D. – the Massacre at Masada in 73-74 A.D.).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Masada

The Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant Church still await their day of Judgement.

Beware of prosperity. Beware of popularity.

I want to add one final note before I close the sermon with regard to estates.

The Bible does not outlaw estates. However, what we do in order to get them is where I would urge caution. In our society in this day, many are given to the obtaining of material wealth. Long hours and many days are given by both the man and the woman in maintaining our lifestyles. In this, we are prone to disregard the Commandment to raise up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and to keep our minds and hearts on the things that pertain to the Kingdom of Heaven.

To dad's especially. You dad's out there have the responsibility to manage your families; catechize and instruct your children in the ways of the LORD. You don't have the authority to delegate these responsibilities to others.

The same goes for inheritance. Be very cautious. Abusing prosperity can be fatal if we are not careful.

Jer 35:15a I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers

Jer 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Zec 1:3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 3:7 ¶ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

Let us pray...

Heavenly Father, oh mighty Father,

I thank you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the mercy You have shown us in permitting us to not only preach, but hear Your Word on the matter of prosperity and popularity. We are GRATEFUL that You have allowed us the chance to repent for our ignorance and to return to You, who gave us the Lord Jesus Christ and also the Holy Spirit.

We pray that we will be granted repentance for our folly. We pray, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for more faith; more perseverance; more will to fight against sin and more grace to achieve it.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Amen