

I WILL REBUKE THE DEVOURER FOR YOUR SAKE

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Key Text. Malachi 3:8 – 12

1 INTRODUCTION

Malachi 3:8-12 is often used in teachings about tithe and offerings. The connection is often made between tithing and offering and God pouring a blessing from heaven. That is true.

Today my emphasis is on verses 11 and 12.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the Lord of hosts.

When I was given the topic, I prayed and asked God for understanding and after a while God gave me a dream that begun to open my eyes. I will share the dream shortly.

We will explore:

- a) The reason why Israel’s resources were being devoured.
- b) The clear and unmistakable effect of the devourer on that nation and individuals
- c) There is a promised change when the devourer is rebuked – it is what economists call sustainability.

Let me make a basic statement: THERE IS A DEVOURER

- On Monday morning I heard two radio presenters argue whether or not there is a supernatural. The male presenter claims to be an atheist and he very easily outwitted the female presenter who claimed to be a Christian but had no biblical knowledge or personal experience with the supernatural.
- The bible tells us there are two spiritual kingdoms: the kingdom of light and kingdom of darkness (Col 1: 12-13) – giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
- The bible says there was war in heaven and Satan and his angels were cast to the earth (Rev 12:7-9).
- There is a devourer who is still continuing the war between the kingdom of light and kingdom of darkness. The target of this war are three things: control of souls, control of resources, control of governmental authority.

Let me make a second basic statement. GOD HAS RAISED US AND SEATED US WITH CHRIST JESUS. Eph 2:4-6

The grovelling patient at Mulago eye clinic.

In Christ we are redeemed and through His blood our sins are forgiven. My sin not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross. God raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

UNMASKING THE DEVOURER

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Many Christians and church leaders do not understand or appreciate what the devourer can do as such they willingly walk into the den of the lion and the mouth of the lion.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and kill, and to destroy

Satan does not have any good intention. He is not benign and we should not be ignorant of his tricks and strategies.

2 Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

To keep Satan from getting the advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of his wiles and intentions.

2 WHO/WHAT WAS THE DEVOURER IN MALACHI

2.1 Israel was cursed with a curse

Israel's problem was that they were cursed – Mal. 3:9 You are cursed with a curse for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you.

It is the curse that opened the way for the devourer to come in.

- Israel faced the most potent curse ever – the curse of the Lord which comes upon the house of the wicked.
- Earlier in Mal. 2:2 God said: If you don't listen and if you do not take to heart to give honor to My name, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed I have cursed them already. **Did you see that? God cursed the blessings of Israel!**
- **If you don't listen – if God isn't speaking it is because your phone is either switched off, or in silence or you are plainly ignoring it.**
- **If you don't take to heart; if you don't obey. What do you do with what God tells you?**

- In what way did Israel fail to listen and to honour God?

Israel was faulted for robbing God in the tithe and offering. **THEIR MEANNESS LED TO LEANNESS**

PRAYER: Lord enlighten the eyes of our understanding and give us grace to obey your word.

Eph 1:18

Action: when you are faced with either lack or unexplainable loss be quick to act on the matter of tithe and offering even before you go seeking for prayers.

2.2 What is a curse?

A curse is a **spoken word** charged with spiritual power with intention to harm its victim.

Proverbs 3:33a) The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked.

The **intention of a curse** is to restrict, hinder, restrain from progress.

A curse will only be effective if there is a cause. Israel attracted a curse because of unwillingness to listen to God and honor him. Failure to listen to God and obey him creates a huge hindrance to progress.

2.3 How did the curse affect Israel?

Their fruits were being destroyed - the NIV says their crops were being devoured. The vines were dropping its fruits before getting ripe.

The curse was national – on the whole land of Israel.

It was a persistent curse – season after season.

Judges 6 and Haggai 1 describe what happens when a devourer is at work.

Judges 6: 3-6. Note that:

- a) The Midianites were the primary devourers but they attracted secondary devourers – the Amalekites and the people of the East. Our local devourers have now brought the people of the East to devour Uganda.
- b) The devourer timed their visit – when Israel had sown. **There are problems that only occur when you get money.**
- c) The intention of the Midianites was to impoverish Israel – they left no sustenance for Israel

Haggai 1: 1-6

- a) Consider your ways – reflect on your circumstances, is it well or bad with you?
- b) Israel experienced:
 - i. Unprofitable investments. You have sown much, and bring in little.

- ii. Lack of fulfilment. You eat, but do not have enough. You drink, but you are not filled with drink.
- iii. Exposure to debt and other forms of risk. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm.
- iv. Loss of income and savings. Earn wages to put into a bag with holes.

We need to reflect as individuals, as a church congregation, as part of the wider body of Christ as people living in or coming from particular communities, as Ugandans. Are there things that have brought restrictions to our finances?

A curse is one method through which the devourer attacks resources. Other means of resource restriction include:

- A. **Manipulation** – when a person acts or behaves in a contrary manner due to association with or influence from a wicked person. People and thrones can be manipulated. Ahab and Jezebel or Ugandan governments since 1966 crisis.
- B. **Divination.** Divination is an attempt to contact supernatural powers to determine answers to questions hidden to humans and usually involving the future. Some people have moved around the city or country seeking answers through people they thought were servants of God but who are actually diviners. You need to repent and renounce ties and covenants made with such altars in order to shut the door to the devourer.
- C. **Magic and others.** Casting spells, using charms. Others include enchantment, seeking mediums etc which all tie the practitioner to the kingdom of darkness.

2.4 How the devourer affects resources

The dollar income dream illustration.

The man in the dream faced three resource restrictions

- a) He earned a few dollars – signifying his income was restricted. It is what Haggai says in Hag. 1:6 **You have sown much, and bring little**

Consider your own situation. Are you facing restrictions which you have now accepted as normal?

- You are qualified but have no job after 2 years
- You have worked for 5 or 10 years but earn a very low salary
- Limitation in business – unexplainable losses and chocking debt
- b) He failed to save what he had earned. Again Haggai says: **And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.**
 - A lady had Shs 80m in fixed deposit with Crane Bank but didn't want to retrieve it for fear of losing the interest – a bag with holes
 - You earn money but there is nothing to show for it – you still take a loan to pay fees. You are putting your earnings in a bag with holes.

c) He was faced with two types of robbers – small ones and big ones. Again Haggai says: You looked for much, but indeed it came to little, and when you brought it home, I blew it away.

Note to the Church congregation

The Spirit has been indicating that we are in a season when God wants to cure both individuals and the Cathedral from leanness – to release us from resource restrictions.

There is no fence to sit on.

Isaiah 1:19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel You shall be devoured by the sword.

Prayer: **Lord make to be willing and obedient.**

3 WHEN THE DEVOURER IS REBUKED

Vs 11,12

I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field, Says the Lord of hosts.

And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land, Says the Lord of hosts

Just like the curse is carried by words, so is a rebuke also carried by words. A rebuke ends with an exclamation mark.

In Acholi, the tone with which the word is said is what carries the rebuke:

NYE,

IN,

MENO KONO

In order for God to rebuke the devourer there are remedies we must apply.

3.1 Accept Christ's Redemption

Gal. 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us

3.2 Cry out to God. Judges 6: 1-6.

- When you find yourself under restriction, cry out to God. Forget dignified prayer for a moment. Three things happen when we cry to God.
 - i. God hears when we cry out.

Ps 18:6; In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried out for help. He heard my voice out of his temple and my cry for help before him came into his ears.

Ps 77:1; My voice rises to God and I will cry aloud. My voice rises to God and he will hear me.

Ps 120:1 In my trouble I cried to the Lord and he answered me.

ii. God answers when we cry out. Judges 6:6-7

So Israel was brought very low because of Midian and the sons of Israel cried to the Lord.

God responded to the cry by sending a prophet – God first sent his words before calling Gideon.

Now it came about when the sons of Israel cried to the Lord on account of Midian, that the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel and he said to them: “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, it was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery.”

iii. God stops when we cry. Mark 10:46-49

The cry: **Jesus son of David, have mercy on me!**

Many warned him to be quiet – people who don't know the pain you are going through or the revelation God has given you will try to shut you up but what does Bartimaeus do?

He cried out all the more – Son of David, have mercy on me!

So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

- We are under restriction as a congregation but we don't even put the matter on our weekly prayer list.
 - We need to come together as a congregation and cry out to God
 - Joel 2:17 Let the priests, who minister before the Lord weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”
- Our nation is under restriction – economic hardship is increasing; we are reaping the fruit of negative foundation that the economy has been built on over the years.
 - God is blowing the wealth built through theft.
 - God is requiring accountability for years of persistent lies
 - The eastern peoples are looting billions from our economy
 - An elder in this church told two reverend in my hearing: stop praying general prayers for Uganda, begin saying specific prayer. Let me add that a 2-minute intercession for Uganda once a week is not going to remove the Midianites

3.3 Confess sins and iniquity

Sin and iniquity is what makes a curse to alight.

The effect of iniquity persists to the fourth generation, at which point Satan will make strenuous effort to renew to the curse.

Leviticus 26:40 -

Psalm 51

3.4 Repent. Change Course

God promised to rebuke the devourer if Israel repented. Mal 3:10-11

4 ACTION & PRAYER POINTS

Accept Christ's redemption

Cry out to God: he hears our cry, he answers and he stops to attend to us.

Confess your sins and iniquity – ask for mercy and learn to forgive yourself

Repent, change course. Bring your tithe and offering now, put away wickedness.