KGW44 to Nov. 5

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER

October 30 Su Reading 303 — Nehemiah 12:27-47 — A Joyous Dedication

- ²⁷ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. ²⁸ And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district surrounding Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites; ²⁹ also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. ³⁰ And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.
- ³¹ Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. ³² And after them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, ³³ and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ³⁴ Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, ³⁵ and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets: Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; ³⁶ and his relatives, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. ³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.
- ³⁸ The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, ³⁹ and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah,^[fn] and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. ⁴⁰ So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; ⁴¹ and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; ⁴² and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. ⁴³ And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.
- ⁴⁴ On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. ⁴⁵ And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. ⁴⁶ For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs^[fn] of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁴⁷ And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

ESV Footnotes

(12:39) Or of the old city (12:46) Or leaders

Made to Rejoice — The formal dedication of the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem was a spectacular event. Hundreds of people lined the top of the wall on opposite sides of the city to thank God with loud singing, accompanied by musical instruments. An interesting statement in the description of this celebration is that the people "rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy…" (v. 43). God

gives joy; He is the ultimate source of our joy. Isaiah said of God, "You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy" (Isa. 9:3). Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Paul prayed about the Roman Christians, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy..." (Rom. 15:13). God wants us to be joyful and He provides joy for us. Singing also brings us joy, so let's sing along with this song of praise:

He Has Made Me Glad - YouTube

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart.I will enter His courts with praise.I will say, this is the day that the Lord has made.I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

— Leona Von Brethorst (1976)

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER! If you are up to date in your reading as of October 30, and did not report yesterday, please click here or let me know today at accbibleread@gmail.com.

ACCOUNTABILITY—FINAL DAY

October 31 M Reading 304 — Psalm 126:1-6 — He Has Done Great Things

A Song of Ascents.

- When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
- Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
- The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.
- Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb!
- 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!
- He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Restored — I can imagine that Psalm 126 was one of the songs sung upon the walls of Jerusalem in that great dedication ceremony. God had restored His people to their own land. They had a new temple, surrounded by secure walls. They had sowed tears in Babylon for 70 years; now they were reaping with songs and shouts of joy. God had done great things for them. Even the nations around them were exclaiming, "*The LORD has done great things for them*" (v. 2). Here is a project for you today: Look around you all day, reflecting on all the good things God has given you! Remember the

times when you were struggling financially under debt, then praise God for restoring you! Think about when you were sick or struggling with some physical pain. Have you been restored? If so, then thank and praise Him. When He opens up an unexpected parking spot for you, tell Him that you recognize His help. When someone compliments you for a positive quality they see in your life, give the glory to God. He has done great things.

Great Things - YouTube

Come let us worship our King; Come let us bow at His feet; He has done great things.

— Jonas Myrin, Philip Wickham (2018)

ACCOUNTABILITY FINAL DAY! If you have not reported in the last two days, please let me know today the status of your reading for the month at accbibleread@gmail.com.

November 1 Tu Reading 305 — Malachi 1:1-14 — My Name Will Be Great

¹ The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. [fn]

² "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob ³ but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." ⁴ If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the LORD of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called 'the wicked country,' and 'the people with whom the LORD is angry forever." ⁵ Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the LORD beyond the border of Israel!"

⁶ "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. 8 When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. 9 And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. 10 Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be [fn] great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. 12 But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. 13 But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. 14 Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

ESV Footnotes

(1:1) Malachi means my messenger

Cutting Corners — These challenges came from Malachi almost 100 years after the Jews began returning from Babylon. The temple and the walls had been rebuilt, but the spiritual climate of the people—even the priests—had slipped significantly. The people were taking shortcuts, cutting corners in their worship practices. God had declared that only unmarred animals were acceptable as sacrifices, and the priests were assigned the responsibility for inspecting the animals brought as sacrifices. But the people and the priests had fallen into a "good enough" attitude. Their worship was careless; they were not honoring God. In fact, God said that the priests "despise my name" (v. 6). Then, three times, Malachi prophesied about a future time when "my name will be great among the nations" (vv. 11, 14). That seems to be speaking of our time, after the Messiah's appearance. The name of Yahweh is now known far and wide, and His followers are worshiping Him with "a sacrifice of praise ... the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb. 13:15). We are our own priests, who check the quality of our "sacrifice of praise" that we bring to God. Let's be genuine and wholehearted in our worship. Check yourself when you are singing in church; is your heart really into it? Don't be cutting corners, despising His name!

We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise - YouTube

We bring the sacrifice of praise
Unto the house of Lord;
And we offer up to You
The sacrifices of thanksgiving;
And we offer up to You
The sacrifices of joy.

- Kirk Dearman (1984)

November 2 W Reading 306 — Malachi 2:1-17 — The God of Justice

"And now, O priests, this command is for you. ² If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. ³ Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, ^[fn] and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. ^[fn] ⁴ So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the LORD of hosts. ⁵ My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. ⁶ True instruction^[fn] was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. ⁷ For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people^[fn] should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. ⁸ But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, ⁹ and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction."

¹⁰ Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? ¹¹ Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. ¹² May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

¹³ And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. ¹⁴ But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? ^[fn] And what was the one God^[fn] seeking? ^[fn] Godly offspring. So guard yourselves ^[fn] in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, ^[fn] says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers^[fn] his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

ESV Footnotes

- (2:3) Hebrew seed
- (2:3) Or to it
- (2:6) Or law, also verses 7, 8, 9
- (2:7) Hebrew they
- (2:12) Hebrew any who wakes and answers
- (2:15) Hebrew in it
- (2:15) Hebrew the one
- (2:15) Or And not one has done this who has a portion of the Spirit. And what was that one seeking?
- (2:15) Or So take care; also verse 16
- (2:16) Hebrew who hates and divorces
- (2:16) Probable meaning (compare Septuagint and Deuteronomy 24:1–4); or "The LORD, the God of Israel, says that he hates divorce, and him who covers

Breaking Covenants — God criticized His people through Malachi about two covenants they had broken. God said that His first covenant was "my covenant with Levi" (v. 4). Levi was chosen by God to be the representative and example for worship and understanding of the Law. But this is what God said about the faithless priests of Malachi's day: "You have corrupted the covenant of Levi" (v. 8). They not only "turned aside from the way" themselves, but they also "caused many to stumble by [their] instruction" (v. 8). The spiritual leaders had tripped, and then, had tripped others. Although not many of us are official spiritual leaders of our churches, we are still spiritual leaders among our church friends, our families, our workplace, and our neighborhoods. We represent who God is in our example to others. The second broken covenant was that of marriage, with "your companion and your wife by covenant" (v. 14). Marriage is a three-way covenant, with God as the witness (v. 14), and God hates divorce (see NASB translation of v. 16). Christian marriage is a picture of the relationship of Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:32), so it is also an example to everyone who knows the couple. God is a faithful covenant-keeper and He expects the same from us, whether we are leaders in a church or partners in a marriage.

Promises - YouTube

Great is Your faithfulness to me.
Great is Your faithfulness to me.
From the rising sun to the setting sun,
I will praise Your name.
Great is Your faithfulness to me.

— Joe Barnes, et. al. (1971)

- ¹ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.^[fn] ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.
- ⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.
- ⁶ "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 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?' ⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer^[fn] for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.
- ¹³ "Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape."
- ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

ESV Footnotes

(3:3) Or and they will belong to the LORD, bringers of an offering in righteousness (3:11) Probably a name for some crop-destroying pest or pests

Testing God — The subject of testing God is mentioned twice in this chapter, once in a positive sense and once in a negative sense. First, God challenged His foot-dragging people to "put me to the test" (v. 10) in the area of giving a tithe to the Lord. Since it was a requirement in the Law, God said of their reluctance to give: "you are robbing me" (v. 8). So many Christians today have the same hesitation about giving back to the Lord, claiming that they can't afford to give even a tenth of their income back to God. So, the Lord would encourage both ancient and modern believers to "test God" by letting Him show that He would be generous to those who are generous to Him. The next paragraph mentions the negative side of testing God. The semi-committed Israelites in Malachi's time were looking around at people who were not even trying to serve God (the "arrogant" and the "evildoers"), and yet they seemed to prosper. It was thought that "they put God to the test and they

escape" (v. 15). Those people were testing the patience of God, and because of His long-suffering, it looked like the evildoers were getting away with their sinful ways. But God's justice will eventually apply the promised punishment to them.

Restore, O Lord, the Honor of Your Name - YouTube

Bend us, Oh Lord, where we are hard and cold. In Your refiner's fire, come purify the gold. Though suffering comes and evil crouches near, Still our Living God is reigning, He is reigning here.

— Graham Kendrick (1981)

Meditation: There is a great statement in this chapter about the immutability (unchangeableness) of God: "I the LORD do not change" (v. 6). What this means is that God never changes who He is—His character. The character quality that is in focus here is His faithfulness (His promise-keeping), which is why God's statement is followed immediately by, "...therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed" (v. 6). God had made a covenant with Israel in which He committed that they would always be His people. God does, however, sometimes change His planned actions, depending on the response of people to His warnings. An example follows in the next verse: "Return to me, and I will return to you" (v. 7). God is always the same, but He will bend His actions at times for the benefit of His people.

November 4 F Reading 308 — Malachi 4:1-6 — The Day Is Coming

^{1 [fn]} "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

- ⁴ "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules^[fn] that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.
- ⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
- ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." [fn]

ESV Footnotes

- (4:1) Ch 4:1-6 is ch 3:19-24 in Hebrew
- (4:4) Or and just decrees
- (4:6) The Hebrew term rendered *decree of utter destruction* refers to things devoted (or set apart) to the Lord (or by the Lord) for destruction

Final Judgment — We end our chronological journey through the Old Testament today with Malachi's prophecy of God's final judgment, which will have two sides: a time of punishment for "all the arrogant and all evildoers" (v. 1), and a time of healing and joy for those "who fear my name" (v. 2). It is interesting that Malachi looked both backwards and forward at the conclusion of his prophecy. Looking into the past, we are told to "Remember the law of my servant Moses" (v. 4). Those laws were the standards God laid down at the beginning. The view forward sees John the Baptist representing Elijah, and fulfilling the role that Elijah brought to King Ahab and the northern nation of Israel. Jesus confirmed this connection, saying about John the Baptist, "...if you are willing"

to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matt. 11:14). John rebuked the sinner and introduced the Savior. Jesus brought the final opportunity to face the final Judgment Day with joy. God is a God of justice, but that justice includes mercy for those who are willing to follow Him.

God of Mercy, God of Grace - YouTube

God of mercy, God of grace,
Show the brightness of Your face.
Shine upon us, Savior, shine;
Fill Your Church with light divine,
And Your saving health extend
To the earth's remotest end.

— Henry Francis Lyte (b. 1793)

November 5 Sa Reading 309 — James 1:1-18 — The Father of Lights

- ¹ James, a servant^[fn] of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.
- ² Count it all joy, my brothers,^[fn] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
- ⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass^[fn] he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.
- ¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.
- ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ^[fn] ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

ESV Footnotes

- (1:1) For the contextual rendering of the Greek word doulos, see Preface
- (1:2) Or *brothers and sisters*. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, the plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated "brothers") may refer either to brothers or to brothers and sisters; also verses 16, 19 (1:10) Or *a wild flower*
- (1:17) Some manuscripts variation due to a shadow of turning

Tempted and Tried — The book of James leads us into the New Testament on our search for Bible passages that speak about who God is and what He does. We will skip over the Gospel accounts for now since we plan to cover them next year in our "Knowing Jesus" series. We will now go chronologically through the rest of the New Testament, looking primarily for information about God the Father. In our passage for today, we see God in relation to our trials and temptations. He is involved in our "trials of various kinds" (v. 2), which God uses so "that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (v. 3). God does test us sometimes, just to make us stronger. That means, then, that our attitude during hard times should be turned toward God's good purpose for us. In that way, we can "Count it all joy..." (v. 2). That is hard to accomplish, but it is critical to our understanding and benefiting from trials. We must remember that trials and their results are part of "Every good gift and every perfect gift ... from above" (v. 16). James then shows us God's relationship to our temptations. God is not involved in bringing temptations to sin ("God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one"-v. 13). The same Greek word is used for being "tried" and being "tempted," but the meanings are very different according to the context. That is like the English word "sanction," which can mean a penalty for breaking the law or a positive approval for an action, depending on the context. We are both tempted and tried, but Satan's forces and our own selfishness tempt us, while God tries us.

Farther Along - YouTube

Tempted and tried we're oft' made to wonder, Why it should be thus all the day long; While there are others living about us, Never molested, though in the wrong.

Farther along we'll know more about it.
Farther along we'll understand why.
Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine;
We'll understand it all by and by.

William Stevens (b. 1862)