

July 5, 2011

The Prophet Malachi

“He Is Coming”

Introductory Details

Author: “Malachi” the Prophet- if this is a name and not a title it means “my messenger”

Subject: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me” (Mal. 3:1)

Date: c430 BC

Mission Field: The Nation of Judah (and more specifically the Levites)

Current Kings: Artaxerxes I of Persia (465 – 424 BC); Nehemiah is governor in Jerusalem

Contemporary Prophets: None by name, but written about the same time as 1-2 Chronicles

Style: The six speeches don’t mesh nicely with your English Bible chapter numbering or the bold faced headings. It is based on a dialectical pattern found in reading the Book of Malachi- (1) YHWH states a thesis; (2) the people/priest state an antithesis/challenge/question; (3) YHWH gives his defense

Luther on Malachi: He is a fine prophet, and his book contains beautiful sayings about Christ and the gospel. He calls it “a pure offering in all the world,” for by the gospel the grace of God is praised, and that is the true pure thank-offering. Again he prophesies of the coming of John the Baptist, as Christ himself in Matthew 11[:10, 14] interprets that of which Malachi [3:1; 4:5] writes, calling John his messenger and Elijah.

Structure of the Book- Six Speeches

- I. God Loves Jacob and Hates Esau (1:1-5)
- II. Condemnation of the Priests for Neglecting their Duties (1:6 – 2:9)
- III. Condemnation of the People’s Mixed Marriages (2:10-16)
- IV. YHWH Will Establish Justice through His Messenger (2:17 – 3:5)
- V. A Call to Repentance (3:6-15)
- VI. The Ones who Fear YHWH Are Remembered by Him (3:16 – 4:6)

THE FIRST SPEECH- Read Malachi 1:1-5

2-3 “Jacob I loved but Esau I hated”- the scandal of particularity- cited in Rom 9:13 (cf. Ps 11:4-5)
Is “*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*” a biblically sound statement to make?

THE SECOND SPEECH- Read Malachi 1:6 – 2:9

“The second speech reproves the priests for their neglect of the sacrificial worship, the “covenant with Levi” (2:4, 8). By sacrificing inferior and ritually improper animals, they have shown themselves even worse than the Gentiles (1:11).” –Horace Hummel The Word Becoming Flesh page 383

-List out the grievances that the Lord has with the priests’ conduct (1:7-14).

2:3 “spread dung on your faces”- dung in *Hbr* here is the intestinal remains of sacrificed animals

2:4 “the Covenant of Levi”- read Deut. 10:8; Mal 2:5-6 also describe a properly functioning priesthood

2:7 “for he is the messenger (malach) of YHWH”- Malachi underscores the teaching office of the priest

2:8-9 This stern condemnation should be a warning to all pastors, disinterested ministry is not acceptable
TLSB on 2:1-9- The Lord condemns the priests in Malachi’s day for failing to live up to the expectations He presented in His Word. God has similar requirements for His pastors and teachers today (cf Ti 1:9). How blessed are those who have such servants of the Lord! And how important it is for us to pray that they remain faithful in their calling. For we all need what a devoted Christian leader proclaims: repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ, our Lord.

THE THIRD SPEECH- Read Malachi 2:10-16

Malachi speaks for YHWH in the first part of the dialectical pattern. Here the mixed marriages are condemned, especially when the Jewish wives are divorced and cast off.

2:10 The Covenant of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob is profaned through these mixed marriages

2:11 The Sanctuary of YHWH is profaned by marrying the daughters of idols

2:14 The Covenants to their first wives are even broken, causing YHWH to reject their offerings

2:15 What a powerful verse about God's purpose in Marriage! Ties in nicely with Ephesians 5 – 6

THE FOURTH SPEECH- Read Malachi 2:17 – 3:5

The fourth discourse takes a more eschatological turn. It is the first prophecy of a forerunner to the Messiah. The NT will cite this speech in reference to John the Baptist. "Yahweh's climactic coming to His temple occurred in the Incarnation, the beginning of the final judgment (John 3:19), but also the ultimate implementation of all the potential of Old Testament sacrifice." Hummel, 384.

3:1 "behold I send my messenger (Malachi?)"- is he talking about the prophet or John the Baptist?
"the messenger (Malach) of the covenant... is coming"- This is Jesus, the Malach- Yahweh

THE FIFTH SPEECH- Read Malachi 3:6-15

"Malachi's fifth speech associates the congregation's current social and economic distress to their 'robbing God' by failure to bring 'the full tithes.' The ultimate inseparability of spiritual and material blessing is a standard part of the Bible's 'sacramental' perspective." Hummel, 385

3:10 Though we are told not to test God (Deut 6:16), for tithing, God says "put me to the test"

THE SIXTH SPEECH- Read Malachi 3:16 – 4:6

Those whose names are written in the "book of remembrance" will be God's "treasured possession" on the Day of YHWH.

3:16 "feared YHWH and esteemed his name"- these are found in the Book, what does this mean? (cf Rev)

3:18 "the one who serves (or worships Obad) God"- How does one rightly serve/worship God?

Apology of the Augsburg Confession- Article IV: paragraph 49- "The difference between this faith and the righteousness of the Law can be easily discerned. Faith is the divine service that receives the benefits offered by God. The righteousness of the Law is the divine service that offers to God our merits. God wants to be worshiped through faith so that we receive from Him those things He promises and offers."

4:2 "sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings"- what hymn made this verse famous?

4:5 "I will send you Elijah"- Matthew, Mark, and Luke apply this to John the Baptist

After waiting several generations from Haggai & Zechariah to hear from the prophet Malachi, the people of Judah will wait even longer to hear from a prophet again. This is about 430 BC and the next man to hear the Word of YHWH revealed is a priest named Zechariah. He is greeted by an angel as he is working in the Temple in 4 BC. The Nation of Judah will have to wait till the messenger foretold in Malachi, John the Baptist, begins preaching in the wilderness in 29 AD.

THANK YOU