

Malachi

“My Messenger”

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See also: Malachi Briefing by Tod Kennedy

The Name “Malachi”

- Means “my messenger”
- 1:1; 2:7; 3:1

Theme

- Rebuke, Return, Remember
- The Jewish people are back in their homeland, the temple has been completed and the city walls have been rebuilt
- They have many opportunities for spiritual and social prosperity but even after all God's blessings and warnings they have forsaken God and his will
- Both the priests and the people are guilty

Theme

- The people question God's rebukes
- God gives them final warnings and a promise that a messenger will come followed by the Lord (Messiah)
- God instructs the people to return to him but they refuse
- A future day of judgment is coming but those who fear God's name will be blessed
- "Elijah" will come before the great day of the Lord and will turn the hearts of the people

Background

- In 539 BC Cyrus authorized the Jews to return to their homeland in Judah
- By the time of Malachi's prophecy Jews had been living in Israel for many years
- They had neglected God and God's Word
- Spiritual apostasy was the hallmark of the times

Background

- Malachi wrote his prophecy between 435-430 BC—during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (458-430 BC)
- The Hebrew people were back in their homeland after the Babylonian captivity
 - Zerubbabel led the first group in 536 BC; Cyrus was then king of Persia
 - They completed the temple in 516 BC during the reign of Darius I (Ezra 1-6)

Background

- Ezra led the second group in 458 BC;
Artaxerxes was king of Persia (Ezra 7-10)
- Nehemiah led the third group in 444 BC
(Nehemiah 1-2)

- At the time of Malachi's ministry the temple had been completed and was again in service, the people were apathetic, distracted and rebellious toward God
- They were reaping divine discipline instead of divine blessing

Background

- The activities in Malachi correspond to the problems Ezra and Nehemiah faced
 - The people did not support the temple with tithes and offerings (3:8-10; Neh. 13:10-12)
 - Intermarriage with pagans and also divorce had increased (2:10-16; Ezra 9:1-2; Neh. 13:1-3, 23-27)
 - Social injustice was prominent (3:5; Neh. 5:4-5)

Key Words & Phrases

- **LORD, Yahweh** (~46 times)
 - The personal name of God; always existing
- **LORD of Hosts** (24 times)
 - The primary meaning is army, warfare
 - 1:4, 6, 8-11, 13-14
- **You say**
 - 1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13
 - God raises an issue with the people and they object to what God says

Verses to Remember

- 1:2-3 → Rom. 9:13
- 1:8
- 1:11, 13
- 2:14-16
- 3:1 → Mt. 11:10
- 3:6-8, 10, 14, 16
- 4:2, 5-6 → Mt. 11:14; Mk. 9:11-13; Lk. 1:17

Outline

- God's compassion for Israel (1:1-5)
- God's rebuke of the priests (1:6-2:9)
- God's rebuke of the people (2:10-3:18)
- God's exhortation to Israel (4)

Outline by Chapter

Ch. 1: God's love; Evil people and priests

Ch. 2: Judah acts treacherously

– Marriage & Divorce

Ch. 3: God's messenger, the Messiah,
robbing God, God's book of
remembrance

Ch. 4: The Day of the Lord—Judgment,
Healing, and “Elijah”

Lessons We Can Learn

- The people of Malachi's day had experienced God's blessing, yet they became very apathetic and careless about doing God's work
 - Let's be spiritually enthusiastic (Rom. 12:11)!
- The priests and people observed the sacrifices and offerings contrary to God's will
 - We can allow communion, our singing and our worship degenerate into a meaningless ritual if we are not careful
 - Let's appreciate the privilege to worship and honor God

Lessons We Can Learn

- Marriage was under attack—the beginning of marriage was corrupted because God's people married pagans
- The end of marriage was corrupted because divorce was commonplace
- This is a social sin of our time also
- Christians should not marry unbelievers
- Divorce should be a last resort for a marriage God has joined together (Mt. 19:6)
- Let's work on having good marriages

Memory Verse Review (Nahum—Zechariah)

- Nah. 1:3a—“The Lord is...”
- Hab. 2:4b—“The just...”
- Zeph. 2:3—“Seek the Lord...”
- Hag. 1:7—“Thus says...”
- Zech. 6:12b—“Behold...”

Memory Verse for Malachi

4:2

“To you who fear My name the Sun of
Righteousness will rise with healing in His
wings”