

Minor Prophets: Malachi

Review of Minor Prophets

Hosea God Loves Israel Like a Faithful Covenant Husband. Hosea 2:8, 0:10 and 11:8-9

Joel The Day of the Lord. Joel 2:1, 10

Amos The Righteousness of God. Amos 2:6-12

Obadiah Doom Upon Edom. Obadiah vs.1

Jonah God Loves All Nations. Jonah 4:2

Micah God is Judge and Warrior. Micah 1:2, 4:2

Nahum Judgment on Assyria. Nahum 1:1-2

Habakkuk God Judges Evil. Habakkuk 1:5

Zephaniah The Day of the Lord. Zephaniah 1:2

Haggai Rebuild the Temple. Haggai 1:5

Zechariah Israel's Future Glory. Zechariah 1:14

Malachi Faithfulness Covenant. Malachi 3:1-2a

Large-scale Themes of the Minor Prophets

1. God's Amazing Love and Covenant Commitment to Israel
2. Need for God's People to Reflect His Character
3. Israel's Persistent Sin, Unfaithfulness, Judgment, and Salvation/Restoration
 - a. The Day of the Lord
4. The Coming of the New David (Amos 9:11-15)

Ultimately, through God's faithful covenant with His people, via His Son Jesus, He will extend His glory to the ends of the earth. The Minor Prophets won't let God's people forget it.

The Book of Malachi

Background

- Not much is known concerning the author. There is debate over the name as well. Malachi means "my messenger". This is the same word usually translated as "angel."
- Most likely the prophecy was given in the between 458 and 400 B.C.
 - It references a governor and focuses heavily on the law, which fits with the time period of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - Marriage, tithes, priesthood, and social sins are all addressed.

Historical Context

- The remnant has returned from Babylon under King Cyrus the Great of Persia
- Under Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and Joshua's leadership the temple and walls of Jerusalem have been rebuilt.
- The Law has been read for the people.
- Foreign wives that the men of Israel have taken have been sent away along with the children (see Ezra).
- The priesthood is lax and the people are disobeying God's law (see Nehemiah).
- Following this book, prophets of God cease until the arrival of John the Baptist.

What Does Malachi Say?

Malachi is written as a series of disputes. There are six of them. In each God brings a charge against them, Israel responds with an incredulous, "How can that be..." and then God gives evidence against them.

1. Loving God, Doubtful People (1:1-5)
 - Israel and Edom Compared
2. Covenant Breaking Priests (1:6-2:9)
 - Polluted offerings
 - In the future nations will offer pure offerings
 - Covenant with Levi
3. Covenant Breaking Husbands (2:10-16)
 - Offerings are not accepted
 - Men married foreign women who serve foreign God's
 - Men divorce their wives and send them away unjustly
4. Covenant Breaking People (2:17-3:5)
 - The people question God's justice
 - God reaffirms that He is just, is sending His messenger and "the Lord/messenger of the covenant" who will restore and purify; bringing justice against sorcerers, adulterers, liars, and oppressors.
5. Faithful God, Faithless People (3:6-3:12)
 - The LORD is unchanging and waiting for His people to return to Him
 - They are robbing God
 - He invites them to test His generosity by tithing
6. Evil, Good, The Day of the LORD and Elijah (3:13-4:6)
 - They question God's ability to enact justice
 - A remnant gathers who fears the LORD and God will protect them and bless them
 - This will be evident in the Day of the LORD when evildoers will burn like stubble in a field, while God fearers leap like calves released from a stall
 - They are admonished to remember the Law of the covenant
 - Elijah will come before this day
 - Restore families vs. restore people
 - If this doesn't occur the land will be "devoted" to destruction.

"And he will turn the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers"

What Does It Mean?

- God loves His people and is faithful to His covenant with them.
- He offers blessing when the people return to Him.
- He promises judgment when they break covenant with Him.
- He offers hope of purification and change that is lasting for His people in the coming of messengers. One prepares the way before Him. One is the Lord, the messenger of the covenant.
- Elijah seems to be the messenger who prepares the way. He will turn hearts, lest the LORD comes with “utter destruction”, similar to what Edom experienced.
- In Luke 1:17, the angel says that John does the actions of Elijah as described in Malachi. He will prepare (Hebrew “turn”) the way of the LORD (Luke 1:76). He declared a baptism of repentance (change of mind, reversal of decision/direction). Everyone was coming to Him (Matt 3:5). Matthew 10:10 quotes Malachi 3:1 in reference to John. In 11:14 Jesus says that John is Elijah who is to come.

How Does it Apply?

- The word “covenant” was repeated frequently throughout the book of Malachi. As partakers in the “New Covenant” we enjoy the reality of the Prophet, Priest and King, Jesus, having put His laws on our hearts. Christ is both our Sacrifice and our perfect Priest. He is faithful to us in every way, though we didn’t deserve it.
- Hebrews 10:22 encourages us to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” We have been made God’s children in the likeness of Christ. Let’s live what we are.
- We don’t give a tithe in the same way as the Jews, but we do “give.” We ought to cheerfully give out of the abundance of what God has given to us. After all, it is all His. The Bible seems to indicate that we will receive what we need to do the work He has given us in proportion to what we give to His work. This isn’t just a financial equation. It is time, resources, talents. It isn’t a health and wealth gospel either. When we are willing to give up our agenda for His, He gives us the means to do the works He has laid out before us (2 Corinthians 9:6-15).
- We shouldn’t take our salvation lightly. The prophets yearned to see Jesus day. We get to live what they longed to see, and hoped for in faith. Let us live in faith for the glory of our Covenant God.