

RESOURCES

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi - Eugene H. Merrill

The Message of the Twelve - Richard Alan Fuhr, Jr. & Gary E. Yates

The Minor Prophets- James Montgomery Boice

Haggai, Malachi - Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen

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Calvary Chapel Lynchburg presents

THROUGH THE BIBLE

with Pastor Troy Warner

MY NOTES

MALACHI

The children of Israel had been exiled for seventy years, and then restored by the grace of God. Men like Ezra, Zerubbabel and Zechariah led them back into the land and urged them to serve the Lord as He had commanded. But soon lethargy crept into the Land. While Israel would never struggle with idolatry again, now they worshiped with a spirit of apathy, which was equally unacceptable to God. So he raised up His prophet to rebuke the people for their hard hearts and lack of gratitude. Mercifully, the people listened and repented. The book ends with a promise of the return of Elijah, who would begin to set all things right. Then, for 400 years, no new Scripture was given. The people had stayed their judgment, but now they had to walk in faithfulness as they awaited the Kingdom. Would they walk in obedience or fall again?

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ABOUT MALACHI

Author: Malachi

Date: ca. 435 BC

Genre: Prophecy

Purpose: To correct the Post-Exilic Jews who were doing the right things, but whose hearts were full of hypocrisy and halfheartedness.

Characteristics: Strong accusations from the prophet followed by demands for explanation from the people; emphasis on the heart more than actions.



OUTLINE

- I. God's Love for His Elect Nation (1:1-5)
- II. God is Worthy of Honor in Sacrifice (1:6-2:9)
- III. God Hates Covenant Unfaithfulness (2:10-16)
- IV. God's Justice Vindicated (2:17-3:5)
- V. God's Faithfulness Affirmed (3:6-7)
- VI. God Blesses the Faithful Giver (3:8-12)
- VII. God Remembers the Righteous (3:13-4:3)

adapted from *The Message of the Twelve*

Malachi is one of the three Post-Exilic prophets, along with Haggai and Zechariah

MALACHI: NAME OR TITLE?

"The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi."

Malachi 1:1

In Hebrew, the word *malachi* means "My Messenger". Because there is no other information given, it is possible that the word is not a name, but a title to preserve the author's anonymity. Either way, the name communicates the divine origin of the book.

400 YEARS OF SILENCE

KEY EVENTS AFTER MALACHI AND BEFORE CHRIST...

Alexander the Great conquered Persia, putting the children of Israel under Greek rule. After the collapse of Alexander's Empire, the Jews were ruled by the Ptolemy and Seleucid Greek dynasties.

In 168 BC, Antiochus IV defiled the Temple, leading to the Maccabean revolt. The Jews regained sovereignty for about 100 years under the Hasmonean kings.

In 63 BC, Rome conquered Judea. Despite their resistance, the emperors installed Herod the Great as king of Judea in 37 BC.

"HOW HAVE WE DESPISED YOUR NAME?"

In Worship

"You offer defiled food on my altar."

Malachi 1:6-2:12

"You are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

Matthew 5:23-24

In Marriage

"The wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously."

Malachi 2:10-16

"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Matthew 19:3-12

In Unbelief

"You have said, 'It is useless to serve God.'"

Malachi 2:17-3:6, 3:13-15

"If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20

In Finances

"You have robbed me...in tithes and offerings."

Malachi 3:7-12

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Mark 12:13-17

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1.) The people to whom Malachi prophesied repeatedly asked him to explain his accusations. They didn't see anything wrong with what they were doing. How can you be sure that your heart is in the right place, not just your traditions?
- 2.) Malachi addresses not idolatry but formalism and hypocrisy. Can you see the beginnings of the issues that Jesus would have to address during His time? Which of Malachi's statements remind you of Jesus'?
- 3.) This was the last book of the Bible given before the New Testament. Malachi was followed by 400 years of silence. How does the last book of the Old Testament set the stage for Jesus Christ?

Through the Bible – Malachi

“I Will Send You Elijah The Prophet”

Introduction

The book of Malachi ends with these words: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5-6) This is the last prophecy given in the Old Testament. These words are followed by 400 years of silence; no further Scripture was given before the New Testament. This left the faithful with the expectation that Elijah would come to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. Then, one day, a fiery preacher showed up on the banks of the Jordan announcing, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

John the Baptist

John the Baptist captivated the imaginations of the downtrodden Jewish people. He announced the Kingdom and called the powerful to account. They began to believe that he was the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy. In the book of John, the people asked him who he was, point blank. “Are you Elijah?” they said. But John replied, “I am not.” (John 1:21) This seems to shut the door on this interpretation. But there is more to consider.

First of all, the angel told John’s father before he was born, “He will also go before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’” (Luke 1:17) a direct quotation from Malachi 4. Then there are the words of Jesus. At the death of John the Baptist, He said, “If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.” (Matthew 11:14) Also, when the three disciples witnessed the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared alongside Jesus. As they departed the mountain, there was this exchange:

And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”
(Matthew 17:10-13)

So John said that he was not Elijah, but Jesus said that he was – “If you are willing to receive it.” What are we to make of this? Literally, we understand this to mean that John was not a reincarnation or apparition of the ancient prophet. He was a flesh-and-blood individual named John, not Elijah. But as the angel predicted, John came “in the spirit and power of Elijah.” And he fulfilled the role that had been prophesied in Malachi 4:6, turning

the hearts of the people back to the Lord. So while he was not literally the prophet Elijah, he functioned as Elijah in his day. He was a type of Elijah.

This term, “type” comes from the Greek word *typos*. It describes a pattern, a repeated fulfillment of an idea, a person or events. Consider how John the Baptist was similar to Elijah: (1) He was full of zeal for the Lord like Elijah, (2) he boldly rebuked sin at the highest level like Elijah, (3) he attracted the murderous attention of the king and especially the queen like Elijah, (4) he was hairy and wore leather like Elijah, (5) he spent extended time in the wilderness like Elijah. So he was not the same person, but he came, “in the spirit and power of Elijah.” In this way, John the Baptist was a fulfillment of Malachi 4.

Future Elijah

But Jesus also said that Elijah was still to come, and would restore all things, as Malachi predicted. This means that we ought to expect Elijah to come in the future. Many Old Testament prophecies have repeated, or successive fulfillments, leading to their ultimate conclusion at the end of the age. This is called “near and far fulfillment, and is what we should expect with Elijah.

A very interesting comparison can be made between Elijah and the two witnesses found in the book of Revelation:

I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. (Revelation 11:3-6)

These two last-days witnesses have powers similar to those of Elijah. They call fire down from heaven, they shut up the skies and no rain falls. When you consider the prophecy of Malachi that Elijah would return before the End, combined with the fact that Elijah never died but was carried up to heaven, it becomes likely that Elijah is one of these witnesses. His appearance with Moses at the Transfiguration gives us further assurance.

Conclusion

So of whom was Malachi prophesying? He prophesied about Elijah, who will return at the end of days to turn the hearts of the Jews back to God. He will speak boldly and be killed for his preaching, leading to great destruction, but ultimately the restoration of all things. Understood this way, John the Baptist was also Elijah, in a typological sense. He preached boldly, turned the people’s hearts to Jesus, was killed for his preaching before a great calamity that ultimately led to great restoration: The cross of our Savior.