

A Study Outline of Malachi

Introduction

"Malachi's central message is faithlessness to the Lord. They had been back from Babylonian captivity for about 100 years, and now the second and third generation descendants had begun to lose sight of serving the Lord with wholehearted zeal. Though cured of idolatry, their outward formalism was worthless. Worship was in decay as the priests had been careless about insisting on proper sacrifices and tithing. Indifference and skepticism characterized the nation. Furthermore, divorce and intermarriage with Gentile women was common." Robert Harkrider's commentary on the Minor Prophets.

1:1-5 - God's love for Israel displayed in two ways:

1. He chose Jacob's descendants to be His nation (Gen. 25:19-26).
2. He defeated Israel's enemy, Edom (Jer. 49:7-22).

1:6-14 - The people and priests are rebuked.

1. God deserved more honor than He was receiving (1:6).
2. Their offerings were pathetic (1:7-8).
3. God would rather the gifts not even be offered because He was not receiving the honor that was due Him (1:9-11).
4. Not only were they offering poor sacrifices, but they were "wearied" with doing it (1:12-14)!

2:1-9 - A message directed to the priests.

1. The direction of a nation starts at the top and God's word should be heeded in order to receive blessings (2:1-2).
2. If they were unwilling to obey God then they were not fit for His service (2:3-4).
3. God's intent for the priesthood (2:5-7). Deuteronomy 33:8-11.
4. The actions of the priesthood (2:8-9).

2:10-17 - Treachery in the institution of marriage.

1. Intermarriage with Gentiles (v. 11) and rampant divorce (v. 16).
2. Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 deal with this issue.

3:1-7 - God will send a messenger and come in judgment.

1. The messenger is John the Baptizer (4:5-6; John 1:23).
2. God is going to come as a judge against His own people (3:2-5).
3. God does not change and Israel had not changed (3:6-7).

3:8-12 - Israel had been "robbing" God by withholding their tithes (Lev. 27:30-33). He tells them to "prove" His goodness. Return to God what is already His and He will bless you.

3:13-15 - Harsh words were spoken against God. They had a misunderstanding of the spiritual blessings that come with serving God. *"I don't get anything out of worship anymore."*

3:16-18 - The righteous hear, obey, and belong to God.

4:1-3 - A day of judgment coming for both the proud (v. 1) and the fearful (v. 2) and each group will be rewarded accordingly.

4:4-6 - God's messenger is coming. One more warning to hear and obey the law of Moses (v. 4). The messenger, John, was to turn the hearts of the people back to God. Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:19-34; 3:22-36.