

Malachi

Introduction

Malachi is correctly the last book of the OT because it is the last prophecy and it looks forward to the coming of a greater Elijah, John the Baptist. The time is approximately 450 B.C. with Israel still under Persian rule as a "relatively insignificant province" (IOT 439) and still waiting for the coming day of the Lord and the judgment and restoration it entails.

1A. Literary Analysis

1B. Genre

It is a prophetic disputation, a word from God to his people Israel. The prophecy is a series of disputations between Malachi and the people.

2B. Contents (outline)

Introduction, 1:1-5 God's electing love for Jacob

Rebuke of the priests, 1:6-2:9

Covenant breaking, 2:10-16

Breaking covenant with the wife of your youth is a great evil and typifies broken covenant with God. The implication is that marriage is a covenant of companionship typical of fellowship with the creator of man and woman.

Fellowship with God is this personal and intimate. Here man reflects God's love as his image on earth.

The coming Day of the Lord, 2:17-4:6

God's messenger will come to his temple (preserving knowledge, 2:7). He will be preceded by Elijah (4:5), and all the arrogant evil doers will be like stubble burning in a furnace (4:1-2).

2A. Message

Malachi's Israel is warned, but she is also given hope for the future. A day is coming in which God will "intervene in the affairs of men and women, bringing victory to those who obey God's laws and judgment to those who do not" (IOT 442).

3A. Theme

The appearance of Elijah anticipates the restoration of Jacob instead of Esau; the coming of Elijah paves the way for the coming of the Lord of the covenant to His temple (3:1; 4:5).

4A. Message for us

Again, the day of the Lord is telescoped. Note when Messiah comes inaugurating the fierce day of the Lord (the not yet for us still), the peoples of the earth hear a message of salvation and a call to repentance (this we have now).

The day of the Lord is preceded by Elijah who is identified by Jesus as John the Baptist who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk. 1:16). The day of the Lord is Jesus' day; He is the Lord of the covenant. Who can stand when this messenger comes to His temple, who can endure His refining fire (3:1-2)? Answer:

1) Those who are turned in heart to family renewal (4:6).

2) It is to those who repent at the coming of the kingdom who seize it as a prize (Matt. 11:7-19). Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your house (Acts 16:31).

See Matthew 11:28-30 with Malachi 2:6-7; 3:1. Cling to this prophet/messenger who has true instruction on His lips (2:6) who is also a priest, take His yoke of divine kingship and you will find rest for your soul both now and forevermore in fellowship with our Father and Creator, rest with him in his rest! Cf. the coming of eternal Sabbath rest with the Sabbath King Jesus!

The king/priest of Zechariah is prophet/priest of Malachi. Jesus is our prophet, priest and king. As such, He is Lord of the nations as people from all nations are brought under authority as His disciples.