

The Prophet of Preparation

Malachi

PROPOSITION: Malachi was sent by God to denounce the practices that were dishonoring to God and His worship and to deliver people from abuses. The nature of a day that is coming is determined by the respect for God. Prepare.

INTRODUCTION:

1. For background, read Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah.
2. "Malachi" means, "my messenger."
3. Malachi's unique writing style is known as didactic-dialectic or "that of the scribes."
 - a. An assertion or charge
 - b. A feigned objection
 - c. A refutation of the objection
4. Outline
 - a. Introduction: God loves Israel (1:1-5).
 - b. Discussion:
 - 1) Two oracles against the priests (1:6-2:9)
 - a) Neglect in offering proper sacrifices (1:6-14)
 - b) Neglect in proper instruction (2:1-9)
 - 2) Four oracles against the nation as a whole (2:10-4:3)
 - a) Treachery within marriages (2:10-16)
 - b) Warning of coming judgment (2:17-3:6)
 - c) Withholding of tithes and offerings (3:7-12)
 - d) Divine indictment (3:13-4:3)
 - c. Conclusion: Keep the Law of Moses and watch for the forerunner (4:4-6)
5. Key Verse: 3:1.
6. Theme: God wants true and sincere worship.
7. The fact that the faith of the people was perishing is evident in statements they might have made:
 - a. "In what way have You loved us?" (1:2).
 - b. "In what way have we despised Your name?" (1:6).
 - c. "In what way have we defiled You?" (1:7).
 - d. "In what way have we wearied Him?" (2:17).
 - e. "In what way shall we return?" (3:7).
 - f. "In what way have we robbed You?" (3:8).
 - g. "What have we spoken against You?" (3:13).
8. The people seem to have been most skeptical.
 - a. "I don't think God loves us" (cf. 1:2).
 - b. "I don't think He is the God of judgment" (cf. 2:17).
 - c. "I don't think God will do anything" (cf. 3:14, 15).

DISCUSSION: Effects of Skepticism

I. Spiritless Worship

- A. A casual attitude toward worship was evidenced by...
 1. A lack of respect for God (1:6).
 2. Blemished offerings (1:7).
 3. Blind, lame, and sick animals for sacrifice (1:8).
 4. Robbery of God (3:8).
 5. Arrogance against the Lord (3:13).
- B. A perishing faith that leads to skepticism that leads to hypocrisy is expressed in spiritless, routine, casual worship.

II. Breakdown in the Home

- A. Not only had the people married foreign women; they had also put away their faithful, Hebrew wives.
- B. Result: God no longer accepts their offerings (2:13).
- C. Usual Question: "Why does He not?" (2:14).
- D. Answer: God was Witness to the first marriage and is now Witness to the treacherous conduct of men putting away those wives (2:14).
- E. Not one with a remnant of the spirit of the respect for the law of God and of feeling for his mate would do as they did (cf. Mal. 2:15).
- F. God desires "Godly offspring" (seed, Mal. 2:15), but chances of that are not good in a broken home, therefore, God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16).

III. No Distinction

- A. One grand distinction among men: "one who serves God and one who does not" (Mal. 3:18).
- B. Respecting God is the mark that distinguishes man more than money, rank, or nationality.
- C. Malachi spoke of a day on which the distinction would be made known and forever clear. The nature of that day for each person will be determined by the respect each person has for God (cf. Mal. 1-3).
- D. Prepare!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In this the last warning to Israel from God, a contrast is made to the murmurers who questioned the moral government of God with those who feared Him.
 - a. The concerned conversed among themselves, and God heard them (Mal. 3:16).
 - b. A book of remembrance is ever open before God, and He can see the words, deeds and dispositions of those who belong to Him (cf. Mal. 3:16, 17; Ex. 32:32ff; Psa. 56:8; Ezek. 13:9; Dan. 7:10; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12).
- 2. Is your name in the book of life?

--Andy Kizer
9th Avenue church of Christ
Sunday, November 9, 2008