MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – The name means "my messenger". Nothing else is known about the author except that the Word of the Lord to Israel" came "through Malachi" and that should be good enough. See 1:1.
2. DATE – It seems to have been written several years after the return from the exile. Temple worship had become routine by this time as in 1:7. It was probably written around 450-430 BC and is most likely the latest OT book. Malachi was probably a contemporary of Nehemiah and Ezra.
3. READERS – It was written to the Israelites who had returned from exile. They were also returning to their sins.
4. THEME – God's people must observe their covenant with God in order to know God's blessing on them.
5. KEY VERSES – 1:2, 1:11, 2:15, 3:1, and 4:5-6.

OUTLINE

The book centers around the question, "How have...?"

1. HOW HAVE YOU LOVED US? CH 1:1-5
   Malachi begins with God's covenant of love and proof of it.
2. HOW HAVE WE DESPISED YOUR NAME? CH 1:6-14
   Offerings must be brought accompanied with a proper heart attitude.
3. YOU HAVE NOT SET YOUR HEART TO HONOR ME. CH 2:1-9
   You must honor Me by honoring the covenant.
4. WHY DO WE BREAK FAITH WITH ONE ANOTHER? CH 2:10-16
   Guard your spirit in your family relationships.
5. WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? CH 2:17-3:5
   He will come near to you but in judgment to purify.
6. HOW ARE WE TO RETURN TO YOU? CH 3:6-12
   Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.
7. YOU HAVE SAID THAT IT IS FUTILE TO SERVE GOD. CH 3:13-4:6
   God will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked.
   He will send the prophet Elijah to prepare the way.

IMPORTANCE OF MALACHI

1. All God's actions toward His people are based on His love that is unchanging. God demonstrates His love for us in Christ. See Romans 5:8.
2. Our respect for God must be seen in our actions of worship toward Him, our service for Him, and our obedience to Him.
3. God sees our covenant with our wives as an example of our covenant with Him. Be careful not to break it even in spirit.
4. We must prepare for Christ's coming in judgment as well as for reward. His coming means both.
5. God offers us the privilege of testing Him with our tithing. He promises His rich blessing. Where our treasure is, there our heart also is. See Matthew 6:21.

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1 – The greatness of God is the theme of this chapter. V5. "Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel." This was because they would see that God worked in the land of Edom, although it was to work against them. V14 says, "For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations." Increase our awareness and celebration of your greatness. How different are the thoughts of God from the thoughts of the people. Lord, grant that our thinking more and more may be what yours is.

From this chapter we can ask ourselves two questions for which we already know the answer. 1) Am I confident in the love of God for me? We need to grow more in this. 2) Do we treat God as great as he is? No, and we should desire is to treat him as greater. This would be in our thinking of him and in our faith in him.

2 – Do we want to do better than those priests? Here is a thought. We should want to set our hearts like a cruise control to honor the name of the Lord. Help us do that. We should want our lips to proclaim truth, knowledge that is from God and about God. Help us in the relationship with the wife/husband of our youth. Help us love no matter how hard it gets. Help us know what it means to love him/her. V7 "For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge and people should seek instruction from his mouth for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

3 – V1 "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming?" Are we prepared for the return of the Lord? If he came back and judged us, we would fail the test. Thank you, Lord, that you have provided a substitute to make things right. Our only chance is to trust in him. Help us to represent that to others. Everything we are and have has come from you and is ours only by your grace. Help us to give to you cheerfully. We know that sometimes we do not want to make up back tithes.

4 – Your word says clearly that some day you will clearly distinguish between the wicked and the righteous. We want to be among the righteous. We can only do that by your grace through Jesus. Help us obey your commands and decrees. Help us watch for and prepare for Jesus' return. Let us be doers of your word not just hearers. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. May those prayers come true even more today and in the days ahead until Jesus returns!