

Sermon, November 20, 2011
“The Messiah”, Malachi 4:1-6
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Books of Prophecy

- Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, **Malachi**

- **Overview of Malachi¹** :
- The prophet Malachi is the likely author, “My messenger”.
- The time of the writing is around 433-424 BC and is the last of the Minor Prophets.
- Only 50,000 exiles had returned to Judah from Babylon (538–536 B.C.).
- The temple was rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel (516 B.C.) and the sacrificial system renewed.
- Ezra had returned in 458 B.C., followed by Nehemiah in 445 B.C.
- After being back in the land of Palestine for only a century, hard-heartedness toward God’s great love for them and widespread departure from His law by both people and priest prevailed.
- Malachi rebuked these abuses, forcefully indicting the people and calling them to repentance.
- As over two millennia of OT history since Abraham concluded, none of the glorious promises of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants had been fulfilled in their ultimate sense. Although there had been a few high points in Israel’s history, e.g., Joshua, David, and Josiah, the Jews had seemingly lost all opportunity to receive God’s favor since less than 100 years after returning from captivity, they had already sunk to a depth of sin that exceeded the former iniquities which brought on the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations. Beyond this, the long anticipated Messiah had not arrived and did not seem to be in sight.
- So, Malachi wrote the capstone prophecy of the OT in which he delivered God’s message of judgment on Israel for their continuing sin and God’s promise that one day in the future, when the Jews would repent, Messiah would be revealed and God’s covenant promises would be fulfilled.
- There were over 400 years of divine silence, with only Malachi’s words ringing condemnation in their ears, before another prophet arrived with a message from God. That was John the Baptist preaching, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matt. 3:2). Messiah had come.

Overall Outline of Malachi²:

- I. The Denunciation of Israel’s Sins (1:1–2:16)
 - A. Reminder of God’s Love for Israel (1:1–5)
 - B. Rebuke of the Priests (1:6–2:9)
 - C. Rebuke of the People (2:10–16)
- II. The Declaration of Israel’s Judgment and Blessing (2:17–4:6)
 - A. Coming of a Messenger (2:17–3:5)
 - B. Challenge to Repent (3:6–12)
 - C. Criticism by Israel Against the Lord (3:13–15)
 - D. Consolation to the Faithful Remnant (3:16–4:6)

Major Themes of Malachi:

- God loves His people.
- God is Israel’s father and master.
- God is Israel’s father and creator.
- God is the god of justice.
- God does not change.
- God is honest.
- Future hope of something more glorious.

The message of Malachi is the prophecy of Elijah to come and the Messiah who would restore hearts to the Father.

¹MacArthur, John Jr: *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed. Nashville : Word Pub., 1997, c1997, S. Mal 1:1

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1. **The last book of the Old Testament continues and emphasizes the divine truth of disobedience/judgment and obedience/blessings..**
 - **Malachi 4:1**
 - Those who practice disobedience will suffer God’s judgment.
 - **Malachi 4:2**
 - God’s obedient ones are the “remnant” spoken of in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah... His chosen people.
 - Those who put their faith and trust in the salvation of the Lord shall be comforted by the heat of God’s love, not destroyed.
 - In His divine warmth healing shall take place.

2. **Great joy will abound in the new life of those who turn their face and hearts toward God,**
 - **Malachi 4:2** *...and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.;*
 - Malachi speaks of those whose names are written in the book of remembrance.
 - **Malachi 3:16-18**
 - Those who serve God, fear God in reverence, esteem His name... will live in the joy of the Lord, His own possession, our Father.
 - Likewise the wicked are those who do not serve God, fear God, nor esteem his name, **Malachi 4:3**
 - Your joy in the Lord treads down your prior life before you accepted Christ, **Romans 8:1-2**
 - ...and is no longer bound to those around you whose evil deeds proceed
 - **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
 - Does your Christian walk jump for joy of new life like that of a newborn calf or foal?

3. **The “remnant” is called to remember God’s covenant.**
 - **Malachi 4:4**
 - The people entered into covenant with God
 - **Deuteronomy 5:1-2**
 - Jesus would answer that the greatest commandment is to love God.
 - Jesus would announce that He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.
 - Jesus would be the Messiah who brings salvation to the people, new life and joy in relationship with God...Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

4. **Malachi prophesies that judgment and salvation is coming and you will know when... .**
 - **Malachi 4:5**
 - Messiah would be preceded by the last old testament prophet, **Mark 1:2-3**
 - Jesus ties in Malachi and Isaiah...**Matthew 11:14**
 - There would come a messenger, a herald, who would prepare the way of the Lord. John the Baptist came as the prophesied Elijah, preceding and introducing Jesus earthly ministry.

5. **The Messiah of Malachi was not one who would come to restore the government of the Jews but restore hearts.**
 - **Malachi 4:6**
 - Genesis begins with the relationship of God and mankind in Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.
 - Malachi prophesies of the Messiah who would come to restore that relationship.
 - Jesus the Messiah restores the hearts of the children to the Father, giving us new hearts and Spirit.

The message of Malachi is the prophecy of Elijah to come and the Messiah who would restore hearts to the Father.