

Malachi 1

Review: The Babylonians made three attacks on Jerusalem: 606, 596, 586 B.C.

- 539 – Babylon fell to the Medo/Persian Empire
- 536 – The first group of Jews returned under Zerubbabel
- 520 – Haggai preached his sermons trying to get the people to start back on rebuilding the temple
- 520-516 – Zechariah preached his sermons

Notice: Idol worship is not mentioned/the Babylonian captivity had cured the Jews of that problem

- In fact, the Jews became fanatics on idol worship
- In the First Century, they hated the Roman eagle on the flagpoles, because they considered that to be idolatry (look at Jewish synagogues today – no statues, etc.)
- 516 – Temple completed under Zerubbabel
- 458 – Second group of Jews returned under Ezra
- 444 – Third group of Jews returned under Nehemiah, and they began rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem

Malachi lived during the lifetime of Nehemiah (he was the governor of Jerusalem under Persians)

- approximately date for the book of *Malachi*: about 450 B.C.

What do we know about Malachi as a man?

1. A forceful preacher – he had a very intense love for the nation of Israel; in fact, he loved them enough to tell them the truth

2. A very unusual style of preaching

- All the 12 Minor Prophets had different styles of preaching and writing
- Hosea: love for Gomer
- Habakkuk: argued with God
- Zechariah: eight visions
- Malachi: “dialectic” (dialogue/question and answer style) = would ask a question and then explain the answer

Setting

- About 85 years after the return from Babylonian captivity, crops were not doing well, bugs and parasites; the city was still in a bad state (like New Orleans after Katrina)
- The people had started to intermarry with the pagan people
- The country was still under Persian control
- The people had stopped giving their 10% (tithe) to the Lord’s work
- The priests were sloppy in their worship services
- The walls were not yet rebuilt around Jerusalem

Malachi gave a series of 7 questions that the people asked

- Malachi incorporated these questions into his sermons and answered them on behalf of God

Malachi 1.1

V1 – Any meaning to the words “oracle” or “burden”? The word of God is “heavy” – a lot of respect goes with preaching to the people

Malachi 1.2-5

V2 – What is the message of God to the people? "I love you" (this reminds us of Hosea and Gomer)

-What was the reply of the people? **#1: How have you loved us?**

-In other words, if you love us, we can't tell it; it doesn't show with all of our suffering

-What example did Malachi give to demonstrate the love of God? Jacob and Esau

-Who were Jacob and Esau? Twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca

-Israelites came from Jacob (Jacob's name was changed to Israel) - Edomites came from Esau

Read Hebrews 12.14-17 – Esau did not repent; his descendants were as stubborn as he was

V3 – What would happen to the descendants of Esau? A desolation

-What book in the Old Testament told of that desolation? *Obadiah*

Take pictures of Obadiah/Edomites from standard Bible reference books

-The "Indiana Jones" movies were filmed at Petra (ruins of Edom)

-So God decreed that the descendants of Esau would become extinct

-*Malachi 1.3* is quoted by Paul in *Romans 9.13*, showing the sovereignty of God

V4 – What were the Edomites saying? That they would get their civilization back

-If they tried to rebuild, what would God do? Tear it all down again

-What had Edom done that was so bad? *Psalms 137.7, Lamentations 4.21-22* – they laughed over the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC (also see the book of *Obadiah*)

-So that nation fell due to the anger of God

-Lesson for us today: If God decides to destroy the US (or any other country), nothing will be able to stop him

V5 – What would the fall of Edom prove to the Israelites? That God was in charge (they would be amazed)

Malachi 1.6-10

V6 – What is the general statement that everyone will agree with? A son honors his father and a servant his master

-Which of the Ten Commandments told the Israelites to honor their parents? #5

-In what sense was God the father of the Israelites? He created them (he had called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees)

-Who was abusing God the most? The priests (of all people)

-What was their question? **#2: How have we despised your name?**

V7 – **#3: How have we defiled God?** By offering defiled food on the altar

-They still had trouble trying to understand what Malachi was saying

-How had they defiled God? With their attitude toward the table of the Lord

V 8– What specifically had they been doing? Giving sick animals for sacrifices

-What did Malachi suggest? Give these sick animals to the governor (like serving road kill to the president)

-Would he be happy? No

V 9– A rhetorical question: **If the governor would not be happy, would God?** No

V 10–What did God suggest? That they close the temple doors and just not sacrifice anything to God anymore

Malachi 1.11-14

V 11– What did Malachi say about the worship of God? The people around the world worship him correctly

-Malachi: Even the non-Jews worship God better than you do

-What law were the non-Jews under? Patriarchal Age/the law of the heart (*Romans 2*)

V 12– The Jews were dishonoring God

V 13– What was the attitude of the Jews? Tired of worshiping God

-Where had they gotten their sacrifices? Robbery

-God would not accept such an offering

V 14–A man makes a promise to give the best of his flock to the Lord

-But what happened when the time comes to sacrifice the animal? He gave a crippled animal

Lessons from Malachi 1:

1. God will not accept the second best from his people – Read Matthew 6.24

-we cannot serve God and Mammon

2. Just going through a ceremony will not be pleasing to God

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