

The Book of Malachi

Chapter 1

Introduction

- Malachi means “my messenger”.
- We know almost nothing about this prophet other than he is the last of the writing prophets.
- Reese dates the writing of this book to 441 B.C.
- The problem that Malachi addresses is the poor state of the Jewish religion after resettling the land, rebuilding the Temple, and seeing revival under men like Nehemiah and Ezra.
 - “The message of Malachi concerns the danger of spiritual apathy and indifference. A merely formal religion – going through motions without an accompanying desire to honor and obey the Lord – is unacceptable to him.” Henry Adams, *The AMG Concise Bible Survey*
- One characteristic of Malachi’s message is his use of dialogue.
 - Example from 3:8
 - Statement – “Yet ye have robbed me.”
 - Question – “Wherein have we robbed thee?”
 - Expansion – “In tithes and offerings” and following.
- B.H. Carroll’s Outline:
 - Fundamental Affirmation (1:2-5)
 - Formal Accusations (1:6 to 2:17)
 - Final Annunciations (3:1 to 4:6)

Chapter 1

- vs. 1 – this is all we know about Malachi.
- vs. 2 – Dialogue #1 – Love vs. Hate
- vs. 2-3 – these verses are quoted in Romans 9:13.
- vs. 2-5 – The verses appear difficult on the surface but are readily understandable. The Jews were questioning God’s care towards them. God reinforces His love for them by pointing out the current situations of the descendants of Jacob and Esau. Jacob/Israel was back in their own land and beginning to prosper. Esau/Edom had been driven from their homes and lost practically everything (see Obadiah). Israel turned back to God after He reproved them in judgment, Edom turned further from Him.
- vs. 3 – *dragons* (KJV) – Hebrew *tannin* – an uncertain term that scholars say can mean anything from a whale to a jackal. I like to define it as a “monster” or a “mysterious creature from the dark or depths”.

- vs. 6 – Dialogue #2 – Dishonoring God’s Name
 - A natural progression from Dialogue #1 – if God loves us then we ought to honor Him!
- vs. 7 – Dialogue #3 – Polluted Offerings
- vs. 8 – God deserves the best we have. See Deuteronomy 15:21 and Leviticus 22:21-22 for regulations against offerings that are blind, lame, etc.
- vs. 9 – This question is: why should God listen to you if you do not give Him what He deserves?
- vs. 10 – They might as well close up shop and go home because God is not impressed with their sacrifices.
- vs. 11 – I think this verse points to the *purpose* of Israel (to be a beacon to the world) and a *prophecy* of God’s universal adoration during the Millennial Kingdom.
- vs. 12-13 – Their actions speak louder than their words. They asked in vs. 7 how they corrupted the sacrifices and here God shows that they do so in the attitude and actions.
- vs. 14 – Just ask Ananias and Sapphira about this principle – Acts 5:1-11