

The Minor Prophets

MALACHI

- I. Central Message: The suffering Judah was experiencing was due to their own sinfulness, not a lack of God's goodness. God would bless them if they would follow Him.
- II. Introduction
 - A. About the prophet
 1. name means, "My Messenger"
 2. not mentioned elsewhere in Bible
 - B. About the book
 1. Date is 5th or 4th Century BC, during time of reforms of Judah led by Ezra and Nehemiah (temple had been finished by this time - 3:10)
 2. Judah is waiting on the prosperity which the Lord had told them they would have and they are becoming impatient
 3. unique features
 - a. question/answer method of teaching used seven times (1:2,3; 1:6,7; 2:10-16; 3:7; 3:8; 3:13)
 - b. "Lord of hosts occurs over twenty times
- III. Chapter One
 - A. Verses 1-5
 1. God asserts His love for Judah but they question it
 2. He points out the blessings which they had received over Edom who had oppressed them (see Obadiah) as a reminder of His favor for them
 - B. Verses 6-11
 1. a son would honor his father, but they would not honor God
 2. a servant would fear his master, but they would not fear God
 3. the priests could not understand how they had offended God and polluted the altar
 - a. God responded that it was by their impure sacrifices which they had done this
 - b. He tells them to try to give these blemished gifts to their ruler and see what he thought
 - c. the point is, they would not do this because they wanted to make a good impression on their ruler
 - d. they cared more about the opinions of men than the approval of God
 4. the corruption had spread through the entire priesthood, even to the extent that they served only for money (vs. 10)
 5. God rejected their worship (not all worship acceptable to Him)
 6. the Gentiles were more righteous than they
 - C. Verses 12-14 - they were offering impure sacrifices, even though they had good ones available to give
- IV. Chapter Two
 - A. Verses 1-9
 1. the priests needed to take God's commands to heart and not just superficially obey

2. God's original intentions were that the tribe of Levi fulfill the priesthood
 - a. they were to have been pure and just
 - b. they were to have led people in the path of righteousness
 - c. they were to speak truth and seek God's Word as His messengers
 3. the priests of Malachi's day had instead departed from God's way
 - a. they had led people astray
 - b. they had corrupted the law
 - c. they showed partiality
- B. Verses 10-16
1. they had broken the covenant which forbade foreign marriages
 2. everyone who had committed this abomination would be cut off, both the ones who led them astray and those who followed
 3. verse 13 could have reference to the weeping of the Jewish wives who had been divorced by their husbands
 4. the men were dealing treacherously with their wives
 5. God wanted a pure seed, which could not come from intermarriage with idolatrous wives
 6. the Lord hates divorce
- C. Verse 17
1. God was tired of their hypocritical talk
 2. they were calling good evil and evil good (cf. Isaiah 5:20)
- V. Chapter Three
- A. Verses 1-6
1. though there would be a 400 year period in which no prophecies would be heard, prophecy would once again return
 2. verse 1
 - a. begins with a reference to John the Immerser (see Matthew 11:10)
 - b. the messenger of God's covenant (NEW covenant) would come
 3. the coming One would purify
 - a. He took away the Old and brought in the New
 - b. the corrupt who would obey Him would become pure themselves
 4. verse 6 explains why God did not totally destroy the Jews for their disobedience - God had made a promise to Abraham that of his seed would come the Messiah
- B. Verse 7 - they had gone so far off into sin that they did not even know what to do to return to God
- C. Verses 8-12
1. they were robbing God by not giving
 2. God told them to begin giving and see if He would not provide their material needs in abundance and protect them (verse 10 demonstrates the great extent to which God is able to bless us materially)
- D. Verses 13-15
1. "stout" = "unyielding, insistent, defiant"
 2. they had said that it was a waste of time to serve God
 3. they had said that the wicked were better off
 4. they insisted that one should be wicked in order to have God's deliverance
- E. Verses 16-18
1. the righteous who remained in the land drew closer together in order to seek God's longsuffering and help

2. they spent much time together to strengthen themselves
 - a. they thought on His name, giving complete devotion to Him
 - b. the names of these individuals were recorded and remembered by God
 - c. they were His "jewels" and they would be spared

VI. Chapter Four

- A. The coming destruction (by Rome?) foretold concerning the wicked
- B. Those who fear God would enjoy the healing of the Sun of righteousness (Jesus) and would go forth (no Christians died in the destruction of Jerusalem)
- C. The people reminded to go back to the Word of God
- D. The "Elijah" was coming (see Matthew 17:10-13; Luke 1:17)