

OT-OV

Lesson 141

1. Last week I completed our overview of the book of Zechariah. When time expired we had just begun overviews of the book of Malachi. Malachi closes out the Old Testament in about 440 by urging Judah to return to the Lord or suffer a great period of tribulation. There are many rebukes in the book for Israel's failure and there are specific prophecies about our Lord.

1. Author

1.1 The name Malachi appears nowhere else in Scripture, thereby leading critical scholars to surmise that the term Malaki, which in Hebrew means "my angel or messenger" simply describes God's messenger.

Mal 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

1.2 As an appellative and not a proper name the book might better be simply an anonymous prophecy, i.e., that which is written by an anonymous writer.

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger (Malaki - a messenger), and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

1.3 Malachi's style is direct and concise. A marked characteristic is his frequent use of the rhetorical question and answer (e.g., Mal 1:6-7, 3:7-8).

Mal 1:6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Mal 1:7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

Mal 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

1.4 The unity of the book has never been seriously questioned.

2. Date of Writing:

2.1 On the basis of internal evidence, the book is clearly post-Exilic. The Jews were under a Persian governor (Mal 1:8); the temple had been rebuilt and Levitical worship restored (Mal 2:1 and 3:1);

Mal 1:8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 2:1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

3. Additionally the moral and religious offenses which were condemned, as well as the reforms urged, portray the period of Ezra and Nehemiah.

4. A date between the coming of Ezra (457 B.C.) and before the second visit of Nehemiah (432) is most likely. Best conjecture would be c. 440 B.C.

5. Historical Background

5.1 The Book presupposes the rebuilding of the Temple and the knowledge of the Law communicated by Ezra.

Ezr 7:10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

Ezr 7:14 You are being sent by King Artaxerxes with his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand.

Ezr 7:25 And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates-- all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them.

Ezr 7:26 Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

5.2 Also, there is close affinity between the lax religious conditions of Malachi's day and those with which Nehemiah had to contend when in c. 433 he returned from Persia to take up his duties as governor in Jerusalem. For example:

- the priests' disregard for the sanctity of the Temple and its ceremonies

Neh 13:1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,

Neh 13:2 because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.)

Neh 13:3 When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

Neh 13:4 Before this, Eliashib the High Priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah (an Ammonite),

Neh 13:5 and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

Neh 13:6 But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Sometime later I asked his permission

Neh 13:7 and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God.

Neh 13:8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room.

Neh 13:9 I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

- laxity of the people in bringing tithes and offerings

Neh 13:10 I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields.

Neh 13:11 So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

Neh 13:12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms.

- and the intermarriage of the covenant people with the heathen

Neh 13:23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

6. Message

6.1 What Malachi has to say is based again and again upon the sovereignty of God. God is a father (Mal 1:6), a master (Mal 1:6), a great king (Mal 1:14).

Mal 1:6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

Mal 1:14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the LORD. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

6.2 He gives covenants and commandments (Mal 2:4-5).

Mal 2:4 And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 2:5 "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.

6.3 Because he is a sin-hating God, and his people are careless and indifferent and sinful - having defiled the Temple, failed in their worship responsibilities, and joined themselves in marriage to their uncircumcised neighbors - he must mete out judgment. (Mal 2:2, 3 and 12)

Mal 2:2 If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me.

Mal 2:3 "Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it.

Mal 2:12 As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob--even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

6.4 But because he is a God of infinite grace, he will exercise loving-kindness if only his people will hear his voice and turn from their wicked ways. (Mal 3:7, 10-12)

Mal 3:7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

Mal 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Mal 3:11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 3:12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

6.5 The dreaded Day of the Lord shall come (Mal 3:2; 4:1 and 5), but the righteous need not fear, for God cares for his own (Mal 3:16, 17; 4:2 and 3).

Mal 3:2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

Mal 4:1 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

Mal 4:2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

Mal 4:3 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

6.6 The prophet ever pleads, directly or indirectly, with a people who are rebels against their covenant Head. In loving tones of invitation he urges them to return to the God whom they have forsaken--lest they be destroyed in the Day of Judgment.

7. Outline

I. God's Compassion For Israel > 1:1-5

Mal 1:1 The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

Mal 1:2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob,

Mal 1:3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

Mal 1:4 Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD.

Mal 1:5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD--even beyond the borders of Israel!'

A. Jacob was a believer and Esau, though a good man was an unbeliever. Verses two and three above are quoted by Paul to stress not all Israel is Israel.

Rom 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Rom 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

B. Edom is punished because they did not help Israel but instead helped destroy the city as allies of Nebuchadnezzar in c. 586.

Oba 1:18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.

C. The nation Edom was originally founded by Esau and blessed for a number of years; in time however Edom became an enemy of Judah.

II. God's Complaint Against The Priests > 1:6-2:9

A. Cheating God > 1:6-14

Mal 1:6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

Mal 1:7 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD'S table is contemptible.

Mal 1:8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 1:9 "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"--says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 1:10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.

Mal 1:11 My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

Mal 1:12 "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.'

Mal 1:13 And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty. "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD.

Mal 1:14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the LORD. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

1. The Law prohibited bringing inferior animals to be sacrificed.

Deu 15:21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

Lev 22:20 But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you.

Lev 22:21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.

Lev 22:22 Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as an offering made to the LORD by fire.

Lev 22:23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath anything superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

Lev 22:24 Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land.

Lev 22:25 Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you.

2. It was important for all sacrifices to be perfect in order to teach the perfection of Christ as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.

Joh 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Joh 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

3. The liturgy of first the Tabernacle and then later the Temple were designed to teach that which was to come, mere shadow worship until the reality came.

Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

Heb 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the reality is Christ.

End Lesson Taught