

The Final Word

The Final Word on God's Love – Malachi 1:1-5

October 31, 2010

Overview of Sermon Series

THE FINAL WORD		
An 8-Week Study of Malachi – The Last Book of the Old Testament		
Date	Message Title	Text
Oct 31	The Final Word on God's Love	Malachi 1:1-5
Nov 7	The Final Word on God's Purpose	Malachi 1:6-14
Nov 14	The Final Word on Leadership	Malachi 2:1-9
Nov 21	The Final Word on America	Malachi 2:10-16
Nov 28	The Final Word on Good and Evil	Malachi 2:17-3:5
Dec 5	The Final Word on Tithing	Malachi 3:6-12
Dec 12	The Final Word on the Day of the Lord	Malachi 3:13-4:3
Dec 19	The Final Word on Fatherhood	Malachi 4:4-6

Three Background Pieces on Malachi (1:1)

1. The history of _____
 - 2091 BC – Call of Abram (Genesis 12:1-3)
 - 1876 BC – Jacob moves family (12 sons/tribes) to Egypt (Genesis 46)
 - 1446 BC – Exodus from Egypt under Moses (Exodus 12)
 - (40 years in the wilderness)
 - 1406 BC – Israelites enter Promised Land under Joshua (Joshua 3)
 - 1375-1050 BC – Period of Judges
 - 1050-930 BC – United Kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon
 - 930-586 BC – Divided Kingdom under multiple kings
 - 722 BC – Fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria (2 Kings 17)
 - 586 BC – Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36)
 - (70 years of exile)
 - 538-458 – Zerubbabel/Ezra bring groups of exiles home (Ezra)
 - 515 BC – Temple rebuilt (Ezra 6)
 - 444 – Nehemiah brings group of exiles home & rebuilds Jerusalem's walls
 - 433 BC – Nehemiah returns to Persia to serve King Artaxerxes (Neh 13:6)
 - 430 BC – Prophecy of Malachi
 - (400 years of silence until God speaks through John the Baptist)
2. The person of Malachi
 - Malachi is a prophet through whom God spoke to Israel during the absence of Nehemiah (governor). Nehemiah had been confronting the Israelites regarding disregard for the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15-22), marrying unbelievers (Neh. 13:23-27), not tithing (Neh. 13:10-14), corruption of the priesthood (Neh. 13:7-9), and social injustice (Neh. 5:1-13).

- Malachi's name (Mal'aki) means "My messenger" which brings insight to the wordplay in the prophecy in 3:1 – Malachi is preparing the way for John the Baptist who is preparing the way for Messiah.
3. The meaning of oracle
 - The word "oracle" (massa') literally means "_____."
 - Malachi had a burden because the Israelites were backsliding in the areas that Nehemiah had confronted them about.
 - Application #1 – If Malachi were to prophesy into my life, what burden would he have? Are there any areas of my life where I have backslidden and need to hear Malachi's oracle, repent, and change my ways?
 - Blemished sacrifices** – not giving God my very best (1:6-14)
 - Lack of God honoring leadership** – causing others to stumble (2:1-9)
 - Unfaithfulness** – being unfaithful to God or my spouse (2:10-16)
 - Justifying wrongdoing** – excusing lying, fraud, mistreatment of widows/orphans/immigrants, the use of magic, adultery (2:17-3:5)
 - Robbing God** – not giving God the first 10% (3:6-12)
 - Giving up on God** – saying "It is futile to follow God" (3:13-4:3)
 - Neglecting my role as father** – not giving my heart to my children (4:4-6)
 - This oracle comes in the form of a series of questions and answers. There are 27 questions in the NIV text of Malachi.

The First Q&A in Malachi (1:2-5)

- **God's Opening Statement (1:2a)**
 - God's first last word is "_____!" The first thing God wants to say before He stops talking for 400 years is "I love you!"
 - CS Lewis: "Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not."
 - Jeremiah 31:3** – *I have loved you with an everlasting love.*
 - Zephaniah 3:17** – *The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*
 - AW Tozer: "In Christian experience there is a highly satisfying love content that distinguishes it from all other religions and elevates it to heights far beyond even the purest and noblest philosophy. This love content is more than a thing; it is God Himself in the midst of His Church singing over His people. True Christian joy is the heart's harmonious response to the Lord's song of love."
 - 1917 Hymn: "The Love of God" by F.M. Lehman
 - Application #2 – Receive God's love for you. Truly believe that He loves you unconditionally and completely and receive that love. Say, "Lord, I accept Your acceptance of me." Pray: "Lord, thank You for Your matchless love for me. I receive Your love." Pray the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21 – "Lord, I want to understand Your love even more!"

Give me the power to grasp how wide and how long and how high and how deep is Your love for me, O Christ.”

- AW Tozer: “We do God more honor by believing what He has said about Himself and having the courage to come boldly to the throne of grace than by hiding in self-conscious humility among the trees of the garden.”

• **Israel’s Question (1:2b)**

- The Israelites question God’s love based on their situation and circumstances. They have recently returned from exile and have yet to see the fulfillment of the prophecies of restoration made by Haggai and Zechariah. “God, if you love us, then why are our _____ so bad?”
- Application #3 – In what ways have I been questioning God’s love for me? Am I allowing my short-term (80 year) circumstances to cloud my view of God’s eternal (trillions of years) love for me?

• **God’s Answer (1:2c-5) – My judgment of Edom is proof of my love for you...**

1. *Because it shows that I have _____ you.*
 - The words “I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated” are a reference to Genesis 25:23 where the Lord says to Rebekah: “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”
 - God was choosing to fulfill His promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) through the descendants of Jacob. Jacob’s descendants were to become the chosen nation of Israel – the Jewish people, God’s chosen people.
 - The Apostle Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3 as he explains God’s divine election in Romans 9. God does not love us because of anything that we have done but rather He loves us because He has chosen to.
 - Excursion: The debate between Calvinists and Wesley-Arminians (see message on October 22, 2000 for 60 minutes on this)

<i>Calvinism</i>	<i>Wesley-Arminianism</i>
Total depravity	Total depravity with prevenient grace
Unconditional election of individuals	Corporate election of the Church
Limited atonement	Unlimited atonement
Irresistible grace	Resistible grace
Perseverance of the saints	Apostasy possible

- John Wesley’s observation: All of the Bible passages that talk about predestination, election, and being chosen use plural pronouns such as we, you (plural), us... thus indicating that election is corporate – God elects the corporate body called the church to be saved.
- Eugene Merrill: “In answer to the question of Malachi’s audience – ‘How have You loved us?’ – the answer was plain. He loved them by choosing

their father, a choice that was never annulled and whose benefits extended to them.... Esau, on the other hand, had not only been ‘hated’ (that is rejected, as *sane*’ means in covenant terms), but his nation Edom had known nothing but Yahweh’s disfavor ever since.... Just as Esau had despised his birthright (Gen. 25:34), so the Edomites typify those who despise the overtures of divine grace. The overthrow of Edom, then, both past and future, speaks of the judgment of all wicked nations that arrogantly rise up against Yahweh and His elect people.”

- The Apostle John referred to himself as “the one whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20).
- Children’s Book: “I’d Choose You” by John Trent
- Application #4 – I will begin to see myself as the one whom Jesus has chosen and loved. I have amazing God-esteem!

2. *Because it shows that I _____ you from your greatest enemy.*

- John Goldingay: “Edom may make plans to rebuild, but the Lord will thwart them because Edom has earned the title ‘the Wicked Land’ and the epithet ‘always under the wrath of the Lord.’ Amos charges Edom with buying whole communities as slaves (Amos 1:6) and mercilessly pursuing his brother with a sword (1:11). Edom had taken revenge on Judah (Ezek. 25:12-13) and planned to devour Israel (Ezek 35:1-15). The Edomites had shed innocent blood and done violence to the people of Judah (Joel 3:19). Obadiah (condemns Edom because he cheered on Jacob’s conquerors), rejoiced in Judah’s loss, joined in the looting, and even laid a trap to catch the people who had been able to escape (Obad. 10-14).”
- Just as God communicated His love to Israel (Jacob) through His judgment on Edom, God communicates His love to us by saving us from our 3 greatest enemies: _____, _____, and _____.
- When we ask, “God do You love me?” He answers resoundingly...
- Application #5 – Jesus stands at the door of our hearts knocking and asking if He can come into our lives (Revelation 3:20) and apply the blood of the cross to our lives for the defeat of sin, death, and satan. How will you answer His door knock?
- Mother Teresa: “No, I wouldn’t touch a leper for a thousand pounds; yet I willingly cure him for the love of God.”
- Application #6 – Things that I would not do for a million dollars, but I will gladly do in response to the love of Christ are...
 - _____
 - _____

Questions to Discuss with My Family, Friends, and Small Group

1. What’s the longest period of time you ever went without talking?
2. Read Malachi 1:1-5 aloud and discuss its meaning and applications using these notes. Share your applications with each other and pray for one another.