

1- Malachi is an oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel 1.1

It records seven statements of God to which the people delay by asking "how?"

2 – God's love for Israel and his hatred of Edom 1.2-5

[1] To the question "how have you loved us?" the Lord makes a sharp distinction within the people of God. He says that, even though Esau and Jacob were brothers; yet He has hated Esau and loved Israel.

[2] The evidence of this hatred is to be seen by Israel when they come to see the fate of Edom; those people descended from Esau who live in the mountains where jackals [unclean animals] live.

[3] Even though Edom's people thought they would re-build when their place was devastated, the Lord makes clear that He will destroy it again.

[4] This devastation comes about in concert with the Lord's judgment of the nations, and so people will draw the correct conclusion that Edom is a wicked territory and that the people are suffering the indignation of the Lord.

Lord's love for Israel

3 – His people have failed to honour God in their worship 1.6-14

[1] The Lord makes clear that the priests have defiled his Name; they have failed to honour him as children are to honour their father and mother. The people ask, "How have we despised Your name?"

[2] The Lord states that they are offering defiled food upon his altar.

[3] They as "how is that?" The Lord details for them how they offer blind and sick animals at the sacrifice. They would not offer that to their governors.

[4] And then they go on to ask the Lord for His favour upon them.

[5] The Lord indicates that He wishes that someone would put a halt to this sort of offering.

[6] Because, there is time coming when the nations will count God's Name great – from the east to the west.

[7] Moreover, the people not only offer stolen goods to God, they have become tired of worshipping the Lord; they see it as a burden.

[8] The Lord pronounces a curse upon the man who swindles Him – having a blemished animal brought forward to offer to the Lord, who is a great King, feared among the nations.

Failure to honour Him

4 – The corrupted covenant of Levi: the actions of the priesthood 2.1-9

[1] The Lord declares that he will curse the blessings of the priesthood for they fail take it to heart that they do not honour his Name.

[2] The Lord will defile them with dung and refuse – making them unclean for their task of offering a sacrifice.

[3] The Lord wants his covenant with Levi to continue – where there was peace and life, God's Name was honoured and revered, and the true instruction was to be found in the mouth of the priest. He walked in peace and uprightness and turned away from iniquity.

[4] The present priests have turned away from this and have failed to give instruction, stumbled many and have broken the covenant that God had with Levi. They are partial in whom they give instruction to as well. The Lord has caused them to be despised and abased.

Broken covenants: priests

5 – The broken covenant: demonstrated in the treachery of divorce 2.10-16

[1] The children of the one God and one father [Abraham] have acted treacherously by breaking the covenant under which they live.

[2] Judah has married the daughter of a foreign god, thus profaning the sanctuary of the Lord. This has led to the Judahites being cut off.

[3] The Lord's altar is covered with tears. "How do we do that" they ask.

[4] The Lord points to the way they divorce the wife of their youth, this is to break the covenant and to deal treacherously.

[5] The people are to take heed to their spirit, that they do not deal treacherously like that.

Broken covenants: marriages

The God of Judgment

6 – Where is the God of judgment? 2.17-3.5

- [1] The words of the people have wearied the Lord.” How ?” they ask.
[2] Because they actually say out loud that everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them. This is a total reversal of the Lord’s character. No wonder they are also saying, “Where is the God of justice?”
[3] God will send a messenger. This messenger will:
[a] clear the way before the Lord Himself.
[b] precede the Lord – who will Himself come suddenly to His temple.
[4] The Messenger, in whom God delights, is coming.
[5] Who can abide the day of the Messenger’s coming? Who can stand when He appears? He is like a refining fire and fuller’s soap [bleaching powder] – He refines and cleanses.
[a] He will refine the sons of Levi, so that they will present proper offerings to the Lord – offerings of righteousness.
[6] Then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in the former days of old.
[7] The God will draw near to them for judgment – and He will deal with the sorcerers, the adulterers, false-swearers, oppressors of the poor, the widow and the orphan and those who turn away the alien person.
[8] The Lord does not change, and that is why Jacob is not consumed. [The implication here is that the covenant-keeping of the Lord is the reason that the Jewish people are sustained].

Tithes

7 – Repentance expressed through tithe offerings 3.6-12

- [1] They should return to Him, says the Lord. “How shall we return?” the people ask.
[2] The Lord speaks of the need to obey in the matter of tithes. They have robbed God of what He is due. He wants them to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in God’s house.
[3] If they do this they will see God bless them and then the nations will know that they are blessed; for they shall see the bountiful land.

Arrogance

8 – The judgment of those who thought it vain to serve God 3.13-21

- [1] The arrogant words of the people are brought forward when they say that it is an empty thing to serve God, there is no value/profit in it.
[2] This leads to a reversal, the arrogant are called blessed and those who test God escape his wrath.
[3] The Lord assures them that He has heard this, noted it in a book and also noted those who fear his Name.
[4] On the day when God does prepare his own people as his possession he makes clear that then they will distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, those who serve God and those who don’t.
[5] The day of the Lord will leave the arrogant as chaff and without any foothold in root or branch.
[6] But to those who fear God’s Name the Sun of righteousness will rise in the sky, with healing in its wings. Those who fear God will go out and skip like calves released from the stall; moving out into a space for them to enjoy.
[7] On this day that God is preparing they will also tread down the wicked under their feet.

Return of Elijah

9 – The Return of Elijah before the Day of the Lord 4.3-5

- [1] The people need to remember the law of Moses, God’s servant.
[2] Before the day of the Lord, God will send Elijah the prophet.
[a] He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest God come and smite the land with a curse.