

## Minor Prophets #12 MALACHI

**HOSEA** took a faithless wife And spoke of judgement, love and life  
**JOEL** told of locust plagues The Spirit and the end of the age  
**AMOS** left his flocks and trees To call the nation to its knees  
**OBADIAH** prophesied of Edom and its foolish pride  
**JONAH** tried to run away, but lived to preach another day  
**MICAH** spoke of God's great plan to change the world by changing man.  
**NAHUM** showed that God is great And prophesied Assyria's fate  
**HABAKKUK** thought the Lord unfair But found the truth through faith and prayer  
**ZEPHANIAH** made it clear The great day of the Lord was near  
**HAGGAI** saw the people's need To put God's house before their greed  
**ZECHARIAH** saw the Lord In visions, dreams and spoken word  
**MALACHI** called the people back To set them once again on track.

### Read Malachi

#### Background

- 722 BC – Assyrian exile of northern kingdom of Israel
- 606-586 – BC Babylonian captivity of southern kingdom of Judah
- 536 BC – Return of 50 000 people to Judah – rebuilding begins
- 520 – Temple rebuilt
- Prophecies of Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai to encourage the people
- Promises of glorious days ahead
- Malachi – messenger of God
- Malachi = 'my messenger'
- Date = around 430 BC.
- Things still little better
- City walls not yet repaired
- Nehemiah returns from Babylon
- Malachi's message = to rouse the people from their disappointment and complacency

#### 1. Do not show contempt for the Lord's name (1:6)

- The law required animals sacrifices without blemish
- Lev 22:25; Deut 15:21; 17:1
- To do otherwise was to show contempt (6-8) and to cheat God (14)
- We are to present ourselves as holy and acceptable (Romans 12:1-2)
- Not showing contempt for God (Heb 10:29)
- Not cheating God
- Time, prayer, devotion, resources - we do not give God the leftovers - the best is for Him!

**2. Do not violate the covenant (2:10)**

- Judah had violated God's covenant with them
- A biblical covenant is a serious matter
- Unconditional
- Binding
- Permanent

By mixed marriages (2:11)

- Forbidden to God's people
- See Ex 34:15-16; Deut 7:3-4; 2 Cor 6:14-18
- Usually results in divided loyalties
- Can't change what is done
- God's grace is redemptive
- But we should not *initiate* inequality

By breaking the marriage covenant (2:14-16)

- Marriage is union for life
- Godly children are expected
- Can't change what is done
- God's grace is redemptive
- But we should not *initiate* a breach

By calling evil good (2:17)

- Sin is still sin
- There is moral confusion both in the world and in the church today
- For many, there is no longer a concept of absolute truth and hence no standards
- Even some in the Church call evil good (eg condoning sexual immorality)
- Truth 'has stumbled in the streets' (Is 59:14-15)
- Eight sins are specifically named by Malachi (3:5). They sound very up-to-date!
  - Occultism
  - Adultery
  - Perjury
  - Fraud
  - Oppression
  - Racism
  - Injustice
  - Irreverence
- Holiness means avoiding sin!
- Jesus refines and purifies us (3:1-4)
- Holiness is powerful. It gives no ground for accusation or reproach.
- Question: What if someone were to examine all your books, CDs, videos, computer files, accounts, letters, time usage etc? Would there be anything of which you would be ashamed?

**4. Do not withhold offerings (3:8)**

- Not giving to God is theft
- Giving is more than money
- But tithing is still a model for giving to God (and is less than Government taxation!)
- Never miss a chance to give
- Parents – teach children to start young!

**5. God promises to bless us when we put Him first (3:11, 12)**

- God promises excessive blessing when we put Him first!
- See Matthew 6:33
- Floodgates of heaven = abundant, flooding, pouring out
- Blessing (Mal 3:11) – more than we can accommodate
- Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28) – the Spirit overwhelms us
- Love (Romans 5:5) – God’s love fills out hearts
- Adult visitor: ‘Does it ever stop raining here?’ Child: ‘I don’t know. I’m only six years old.’ What about our church? Our lives? Does the blessing of God ever stop raining upon us?

**6. Freedom from sin is like the sunrise (4:2)**

- The *sun* of righteousness is the *Son* of righteousness
- Through His death and resurrection (‘rise’), He brings freedom from sin!
- John 8:32, 36; Gal 5:1

**CHALLENGE**

- We need to take seriously God’s claims for holiness
- Repent of our sin
- Enjoy His many blessings
- Trust in the Sun of Righteousness
- Rejoice in the freedom He brings
- Obey His Word the rest of our lives!

## SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

**Remember:** You don't have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant at this time.

### Biblical

1. How often do these words/phrases occur in this book? *Lord Almighty (or Lord of Hosts), covenant, offering*. What conclusions might we draw from your findings, if any?
2. What were the primary sins of the priests? (2:7-8) What would be contemporary equivalents of these sins?
3. What do we learn about marriage from 2:15-16?
4. What can you find out about the practices mentioned in 3:2-3?
5. What are the results of putting God first? (3:10-12)
6. Who was the Elijah mentioned in 4:5? See Matt 11:13-14; Luke 1:17; Mark 9:11-13.
7. What do you think 3:17 means?
8. What is the main point of 1:1-5?

### Personal and practical

9. What are some things we can do to strengthen the marriage covenant? (13-16)
10. What has been your experience of God refining your life? (3:2-4)
11. What has been your experience of giving to God? (3:8-12)
12. If you were to write 4:2-3 in contemporary language, how would you do it?
13. Share your own testimony/experience of 4:2-3.

Memorize Malachi 4:2

## About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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