

Rising Prospects

Malachi 4: 1-6

Seasons

- What season will next Sunday be in?

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- Advent!

Babylon

- 590BC Judah beaten up by the Babylonians – many carted off to Babylon
- 540BC initial return from exile

Exiles' vision

- Restore the Nation – Ezekial 1-2
- Rebuild the Temple – Ezekial 3-6

But.....

- The people got weary
- They dishonoured God's name
- They forgot his laws

So God.....

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- to restore the covenant relationship

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- Sent Ezra:
 - to restore the covenant relationship
- Sent Nehemiah:
 - to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

But some

- Continued with improper sacrifices.
- Refused to tithe
- Divorced
- Married unbelievers
- Blamed God for all their woes

Their options:

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- Continue as they were
- Strictly observe the Law of Moses
- Form an alternative community, to prepare for the coming of the Messenger
- Confess their sins and revitalize their stewardship of life before God

Malachi

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- Rebuked the priests (2:1-9)
- Pleaded for the people to confess their sins (3:7-12)
- Told of God's justice and judgement (2:17-3:5 & 3:13-4:3)

Malachi chapter 4

- Looks to the future: 4 prophecies!



Malachi – Prophecy 1

- The arrogant and the evil-doer will.....
- burn like a furnace!

Malachi – Prophecy 2

- The wicked will be.....
- Trampled!

Malachi – Prophecy 2

- The wicked will be.....
- Trampled!
- Turned to ashes!

Malachi – Prophecy 3

- You who revere my name.....
- Will be healed!
- Will leap like calves!

Malachi – Prophecy 4

- I will send you the prophet Elijah!

Challenge of Malachi 1

- God is a great King
- He loves his people
- He deserves our respect
- He deserves to be honoured

Challenge of Malachi 2

- We should:
 - revere God in all our doings
 - revere God in worship
 - revere God in marriage

Challenge of Malachi 3

- Spiritual leaders should:
 - Honour God
 - Instruct the people of God in the ways of God.
 - Accept only quality worship – of the heart

Challenge of Malachi 4

- Wait upon the Lord:
- expect the Messenger of the Covenant
- prepare to be judged!

Wait upon the Lord

- Psalm 31:15
- My times are in thy hands

How long?

- About 470 years to the ministry of Jesus!

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- = independent Church of England
- = longer than the book of common prayer – issue 1, 1549

Disraeli:
October 1867

Change is inevitable in a progressive country.

Change is inevitable.

Analects book 17:3

Tzu yueh wei shang chih yu xia
yu bu l.

Written just before the book of
Malachi.

Analects book 17:3

- Confucius says, it is only the very wisest and the very stupidest who never change.

Change

- Technology changes
- Climate changes
- Universes change
- Society – changes in emphasis
- Society – changes in morals
- Society – changes in acceptable habits

Issues for today

- What changes are acceptable?
- What changes are NOT acceptable?
- To God!

Change

- God calls us to change:
 - Turn to him
 - Repent of our sins
 - Trust in him
 - Look forward in anticipation
 - Accept his timescales

Change

- God does not change!

Change

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 - He always loves us

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 - He speaks to us

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Change

- God does not change!
 - He always loves us
 - He speaks to us
 - He sends healing
 - One day.... We will rest in the hollow of his hand!