

Our God Who Never Changes: Grasping the Eternal Love and Glory of God

Malachi was the last voice of God to the people of Israel before the heavens went silent for about 400 years. With Israel's "glory days" in the past and uncertainty and peril ahead, what was this final message to God's people before the coming of Christ? What do believers today need to learn from it as we face our own challenges and uncertainty? In this session, we will examine Malachi 1:1-14 and be challenged to grasp God's eternal love and infinite glory afresh.

Conrad Mbewe has served as pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Lusaka, Zambia since 1987. He is a graduate of the University of Zambia, the Cape Town Baptist Seminary, and the University of Pretoria in South Africa. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Missions. He is the founding Chancellor of the African Christian University. He is a blogger and an author. His latest book is *God's Design for the Church* (Crossway, 2020). He is also the editor of the *Reformation Zambia* magazine. He is married to Felistas and they have 6 adult children and 6 grandchildren.

I. Introduction

- A. Why study Malachi?
- B. Malachi probably lived around 460 BC, the same time as Nehemiah and Ezra.
- C. The people of God were back in the promised land, but the glory of the past was gone.
- D. Haggai and Zechariah prophesied a superb time (Hag. 2; Zech. 1:16–17; 2:1–13; 8:1–9:17). Yet, Israel had corrupt worship, unethical behaviour, poverty, and was still under foreign rule.
- E. To appreciate Malachi, follow God's accusations (1:2, 6–7, 2:10[13–14], 17, 3:7–8, 13).
- F. It is the same today. When the church is not advancing, we blame God. Are you sure??
- G. Applying the lessons of this book to our hearts for self-examination
- H. "Perilous times" are actually a chastisement of God on his people.

II. Grasping God's Love (Malachi 1:2–5)

- A. To make gospel advance in our day we need to grasp God's eternal love afresh. It is where God began as he confronted the people of Israel about their spiritual malaise.
- B. He contrasted them with their blood brothers born from Ishmael. The contrast is obvious.
- C. From eternity, God had purposed to love Israel for no reason within themselves (Dt. 7:6).
- D. If we are to make gospel advance in our own perilous times, we must grasp God's love.
- E. Let's go to Calvary. See the dying form of the Son of God. Is any love greater than this?
- F. Love responds to love. When we lose sight of God's love for us, we become lukewarm.
- G. What is it that drove the apostle Paul to continue preaching the gospel? See Gal. 2:20.

III. Grasping God's Glory (Malachi 1:6–14)

- A. To make gospel advance in our day we need to grasp something of God's infinite glory. This was the second issue that God confronted the Israelites about through Malachi.
- B. God accused them of not honouring/fearing him. They appeared surprised about it (v.6).
- C. The priests were accepting blind, crippled animals as sacrifices from the people (v.7–8). He appealed to their common sense. Try offering the animals to your governors, let's see!

- D. It is the same today. Contrast how we prepare to meet with governors compared to God.
- E. The Lord says, “If you do not honour my name, why should I honour your prayers?” (v.9)
- F. God expressed his disgust by saying that it would be better if there were no sacrifices (v.10).
- G. God contrasted these sacrifices with his agenda across history to glorify himself (v.11–13).
- H. Finally, due to his greatness, he announced a curse upon those who were doing this (v.14).

IV. Conclusion

- A. Where the church is not advancing, we tend to blame God. Are you sure?
- B. Applying the lessons of this book to our hearts for self-examination.
- C. Remember that our God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- D. Let’s gain a fresh appreciation of God’s love and glory for us to live victoriously for God.
- E. If we find ourselves with Israel’s condition, let’s go to Calvary for cleansing and renewal.