

Malachi 2:17 – 4:6: Why the End Matters

The main theological message of the book of Malachi is:

The Great King (1:14) will come not only to judge his people (3:1-5; 4:1) but also to bless and restore them.

3 Key Themes in 4:1-6

1. The righteous and the wicked (4:1-3)

Doing justice involves punishing the guilty, but the righteous need not fear.

God knows all about them and they can feel utterly secure (2:17, 3:3-6; 3:16; 4:2)

2. The Law (Moses) – COVENANT and obedience (4:4)

God has not failed in his covenant obligations; he has done everything possible to encourage and enable them to fulfil theirs; but their responsibility cannot be ignored.

3. The Prophets (Elijah) – hope and promise (4:5-6)

The prophets call people back to God and remind people of the promises of God.

The Old Testament ends with the biblical focus on obedience and hope – the ‘law and the prophets,’ because of God’s promises.

the story is to be continued ...

The New Testament

- John the Baptist as the promised Elijah

Luke 1:16-17, Mark 1:2-8, Matt 11:13 -14; 17:10-13

- Jesus fulfils the law and the prophets

Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:37-40

The transfiguration: Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

The culmination of the Old Testament in Malachi 4:1-6 is of immense importance for the way in which the early church, in its narrative account of Jesus, was able to claim deep continuity between the Israelite tradition and Jesus.

God gives a future well beyond our imaginations ... & God does not change.

Questions for reflection:

Are you wearying the Lord in any way?

What does obedience and hope mean for you and do you favour one over the other?

Read the accounts of the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). How do they help you reflect on the ministry and continuing role of Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King?