

“The Last Three Old Testament Prophets”

Wednesday Evening Bible Class by Ray Reynolds (January 1, 2014)

Introduction: Over the last couple of weeks we have focused on Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The Bible has much to say about their valuable roles. However, the spiritual welfare of the people was still at risk. God has restored His people. He brought them home, but what now? What happens next? Do they just wait for the Messiah? God uses three great men to prophesy to the people. They are Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Let’s study them together.....

Discussion:

I. The Prophet Haggai

- A. What do we know about him?
 - The name Haggai means "my feast" or "festival" in Hebrew.
 - He was a dynamic motivator (**Ezra 5:1, 6:14, Hebrews 12:6**).
 - He was old enough to remember Solomon's temple (**Haggai 2:3**).
- B. What do we know about his ministry?
 - We know that he was very frustrated with the stagnation of the temple work.
 - He preached four famous messages:
 - MESSAGE #1 = September 24, 520 BC (1:15)
 - MESSAGE #2 = October 24, 520 BC (2:1)
 - MESSAGE #3 = December 24, 520 BC (2:10, 18)
 - MESSAGE #4 = December 24, 520 BC (2:20)
 - Haggai's role is to call the nation back to build (**Ezra 4, 6**).
- C. What do we know about his book?
 - Haggai is written in prose but in a plain, direct, and pointed style.
 - It should be noted that he says "says the Lord" 36 times in 38 verses.
 - Key Verses: **Haggai 1:2, 1:5, 1:7, 1:14, 2:3-4, 2:6, 2:16**

II. The Prophet Zechariah

- A. What do we know about him?
 - Zechariah means "remembered by Yahweh."
 - He is "*Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet*" (1:1).
 - He may be the same man identified in **Nehemiah 12:16** as a priest (2:4).
- B. What do we know about his ministry?
 - It is generally accepted that Zechariah served with Haggai (520 BC).
 - Zechariah's role is focus on the prime directive: restoring the temple.
 - Where Haggai brings the wisdom and experience, Zechariah brings a youthful perspective, expressing his message with zeal and enthusiasm.
- C. What do we know about his book?
 - Zechariah is clearly divided into two parts (possibly written at different times).
 - The first part is meant to comfort the people with visions (chapters 1-8).
 - The second part is meant to comfort the people with prophesy (chapters 9-14).
 - Key Verses: **Zechariah 1:3, 1:13, 3:6-10, 5:4, 7:8-10, 8:11, 9:9, 11:12-13, 13:7**

III. The Prophet Malachi

- A. What do we know about him?
Malachi means "my messenger" or a shortened form of "messenger of God." He is the 17th prophet with a book attributed to him in the Old Testament. His book is the last in Old Testament and he is the final voice before the NT. He is mentioned nowhere in the OT, except in the book that bears his name.
- B. What do we know about his ministry?
Malachi came between 50-100 years after Haggai and Zechariah. It is believed that Malachi was at the height of his ministry around 400 BC. It is obvious that he prophesied after the temple work was finished.
- C. What do we know about his book?
His book records how he challenged them to return to the covenant of God so that they might receive the blessings of God. The prophet commends the faithful but warns of the coming judgment. He urges the people to seek revival because the forerunner for the Messiah was coming quickly.... yet he seems to know they would not be prepared. Malachi is called an "oracle" (**Malachi 1:1**) and his book is written in what is called "lofty prose" or we might call it fancy language. Malachi is often referred to as "The Rhetorical Prophet."
Key Verses: **Malachi 2:17, 3:1, 3:10, 4:5, 6**

Conclusion: Where do we go from here in **The Story**? We will spend time during our classes covering chapters 22-31, but we have only eight weeks to finish up. Therefore, we will follow a carefully planned outline (listed below):

Sunday, January 5 = <i>Review of the Old Testament</i>	Wednesday, January 8 = <i>Between the Testaments</i>
Sunday, January 12 = <i>The Birth of the King (22)</i>	Wednesday, January 15 = <i>The Baptism of Jesus</i>
Sunday, January 19 = <i>Jesus' Ministry Begins (23)</i>	Wednesday, January 22 = <i>No Ordinary Man (24)</i>
Sunday, January 26 = <i>Jesus, The Son of God (25)</i>	Wednesday, January 29 = <i>Harmony of the Gospels</i>
Sunday, February 2 = <i>The Hour of Darkness (26)</i>	Wednesday, February 5 = <i>The Resurrection (27)</i>
Sunday, February 9 = <i>New Beginnings (28)</i>	Wednesday, February 12 = <i>The Letters of the NT</i>
Sunday, February 16 = <i>Paul's Mission (29)</i>	Wednesday, February 19 = <i>Paul's Final Days (30)</i>
Sunday, February 23 = <i>The Hour of Darkness (31)</i>	Wednesday, February 26 = <i>Review of The Story</i>

God used each of these prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) in a different way, but each was effective. Will you allow God to use you to bring revival to His people? Do you need to surrender to the will of God? Also, we cannot forget that God's story is not complete. The best is yet to come! The people needed to get ready for the coming of Jesus. Are you ready for Him to come? The hour draws near.