

Archdeacon's Corner The Book of Malachi CONTINUED

The book consists of six distinct sections, each in the form of a question-and-answer discussion. Through this process, the prophet defends the justice of God to a community that has begun to doubt and turn to idolatry. The author calls for a return to God's covenant, by stressing the need for proper worship, condemns divorce, and announces that the day of judgment is imminent. Faithfulness to these ritual and moral responsibilities will be rewarded; unfaithfulness will bring a curse.

Within this rebellious lot there is a faithful remnant, of whom God declares, names will be written in a scroll of remembrance, and who will be His, "... *treasured possession*" (Malachi 3:17), and will be saved from the day of the coming of the Lord. This ends the question-and-answer discussion in Malachi.

However, there is hope for the future. The final three verses of Malachi are not part of the earlier discussion, and they function like a concluding appendix. God reminds the reader to remember the law (Torah) of Moses, and his story *Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel* (Malachi 4:4) Further God tells the faithful remnant, of the coming of Elijah (Prophets) before the day of the Lord who will restore the hearts of God's people. "*See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.*" (Malachi 4:5)

The Book of Malachi points to a future time and concludes the Old Testament by joining its books to the New Testament and points to a future "Day of the Lord," and the salvation of the faithful remnant.

For Malachi, the purpose for Jesus' coming was as much about the reckoning of God, as it is about saving and sparing the righteous. Jesus has come to save us sinners and the Book of Malachi leads us to the New Testament and assures us that Jesus will save the faithful before the terrible Day of the Lord.

Praying that our Lord finds you and yours well.

Archdeacon,

The Ven. Mark Richardson