



BIBLE IN A YEAR 2020

MALACHI



**MESSENGERS
FROM GOD**

Thursday 31 December: Malachi

Messengers from God Liz Nixon writes:

What did I like about today's reading?

Often with Bible In A Year, this first question is not easy to answer!

I read the people's response to God, and my heart breaks for the way they treat Him, the way they accuse Him, the way they are ignorant of the impact of their own behaviour, as we see throughout this book.

The rebuilding of the temple and Jewish society had high hopes of a fresh start for the people, now returned from exile. But they quickly turned away from Him, and their actions demonstrate how far their hearts were from His heart. They doubted God's deep love and steadfast faithfulness to them by questioning "How have you loved us?".

As usual, God's heart for an undeserving people is the best thing about this book!

What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

God loves His people with an infinite amount of patience! I find it amazing how willing He is to stick by Israel – His love reminds me of the wedding vows we make:

*for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish . . .*

God has certainly stuck by His beloved people and undoubtedly loved them with a 1 Corinthians 13 type love. And we see just how much God loves and values marriage and covenant relationships through His hatred of divorce (2 v16). For God, divorce breaks two covenant relationships – firstly the marriage relationship but also the relationship with Him.

Malachi's name means messenger and as a prophet, his role was to bring messages from God. His was a message consistent throughout the Bible: God longs for His people to respond to His love and then rethink how they live their lives. The sin in our lives blinds us to the goodness of God and repentance (having a changed, transformed heart and mind) is key to living with Him.

Tellingly, repentance is the key message of God's next two messengers, both promised in Malachi, the last book of The Old Testament. These two men are seen early in the first book of the New Testament, Matthew: John the Baptist, who preached repentance and prepared the way for Jesus; and Jesus, who also preached repentance, saying "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near". The good news of the Gospel is that the kingdom of heaven and its' King are near – God, through Jesus, is now "within our reach".

Both spoke of the need to turn around from old patterns of behaviour and thinking, ready to embrace a new reality of living with God as His children through Jesus, God with us, our Immanuel.

What am I going to do differently as a result?

It's easy to forget how good God has been throughout our lives and it only takes some bad news for us to question His love and care towards us. I want to remind myself of God's faithfulness to me and my family to build up a store of riches for when more challenging times come.

Who am I going to share this with?

My husband Greg.