ROUTE 66
Session Number Eleven
Wednesday, March 5, 2014
The Minor Prophets
Tonight: Micah / Nahum / Habakkuk / Zephaniah
Haggai / Zechariah / Malachi

For the past ten weeks, we have traveled the ROUTE through:

- THE TORAH (PENTATEUCH): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
- THE HISTORICAL BOOKS: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther
- THE POETIC BOOKS (OR BOOKS OF WISDOM): Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs
- THE MAJOR PROPHETS: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel
- THE MINOR PROPHETS: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah

What a delight to discover the mountain tops of God’s call to Abraham (Genesis 12), David’s challenging Goliath (I Samuel 17), Isaiah’s description of Calvary 600 years prior to its happening (Isaiah 53) and Jonah’s ministry in Nineveh.

Tonight we take on the final seven books of the “minor prophets.” I will touch only briefly on six of them, taking most of our time in the book of Zechariah (the events of which will most certainly one day see - and perhaps even as early as our lifetime.)

MICAH

There were a few “Micahs” in the Old Testament; this one came from the village of Moresheth-gath (Mic. 1:14) about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. His ministry took place in the southern kingdom of Judah about 740 B.C. He was quite possibly a friend of Isaiah and his little book indicates he was influenced by him.

The theme is wonderful: Though most certainly gloomy judgment was impending, Micah foresaw the glorious day Israel would be redeemed and used of God. The first three chapters foretell of the judgment years while the last four chapters are consoling.

Here is a fabulous verse: Micah 7:18

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever,
because he delighteth in mercy. My friend - that's THE GOSPEL, the good news of Christ's kingdom. It is this that we declare in the ministries of First Assembly of God.

HEROD THE GREAT AND MICAH

700 years later, some astronomers made their way from current day Iraq westward to Judea. They had seen strange lights in the cosmos and believed that perhaps a great future king had been born. They made their way across the sands until they came to the city of Jerusalem:

Matthew 2:1-6 [The Message]

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. [2] They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

[3] When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. [4] Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

[5] They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

[6] 'It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear. From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.' " [Micah 5:2]

Micah closes this short prophetic word with an eternal and glorious truth:

Micah 7:18-19

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. [19] He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Why does our great God show us such mercy? Because we are wonderful? Certainly not. It is because HE IS WONDERFUL.

NAHUM

2
We know little about Nahum other than that he was born in Galilee and prophesied against Nineveh (Nahum 1:1) *The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.*

I find several things of great interest: 1) Nahum lived during the days of the Judean king, Manasseh who reigned for 55 brutal and barbaric years (probably the king who sentenced Isaiah to death by cramming his living body into a hollow log and cutting it in half). 2) He lived about 150 years after Jonah’s successful ministry in Nineveh, then the capital of Assyria where a great revival broke out.

The revival didn’t last. The empire became vicious and cruel. History notes the boasting of the Ninevites gloated that “space failed for corpses of their enemies.” These people made small pyramids of human heads to adorn some of their streets. Pillars were covered with the flayed skins of their rivals. On a stone pillar, found by archeologists, one Assyrian ruler boasted of “nobles I flayed.” He reported, “Three thousand captives I burned with fire. I left not one hostage left alive. I cut off the hands and feet of some. I cut off the noses, ears and fingers of others. The eyes of numerous soldiers I put out. Maidens I burned as a holocaust.’

100 years after Nahum’s warnings, Nineveh fell to the Persians. So great was the destruction of the city of the most ferocious, sensual, diabolically atrocious race of men that ever lived, that Alexander the Great marched by years later and did not know that a great city was actually under his feet.

One of the chief lessons we learn from the prophet Nahum is this: There is a limit to God’s patience. Don’t push it!

Sidebar: Some today have taken this verse and twisted it from Nahum’s original meaning: Nahum 2:4 *The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.* These pundits say Nahum was predicting automobiles. Not true. It was a prediction of the coming battle between the chariots of Assyria and the chariots of the Medes and Persians.

H A B A K K U K

Have you heard of the famed ancient Battle at Carchemish? It’s the war in which the Assyrians (Nineveh as its capital) was crushed by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians around 605 B.C. Habakkuk the prophet lived at that time. In his own country of Judah, the people were ruled by one lousy king after another. Josiah was the
last decent one and after him came Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah - all
leading to the astounding collapse Judah and its capital Jerusalem at the hands of the
Babylonians. So Habakkuk’s question in this short book was: “Where’s God and why
is He permitting all this evil????”

Sound familiar?

Habakkuk 1:2-4

cry, but you do not come to save. [3] Must I forever see this sin and misery all
around me? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by
people who love to argue and fight. [4] The law has become paralyzed and useless,
and there is no justice given in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous,
and justice is perverted with bribes and trickery.

Habakkuk is outraged to God’s seeming indifference. Yet by the time the third chapter
ends he is worshiping God.

Well....God WAS doing something. Habakkuk 1:5 (NLT) The Lord replied, "Look
at the nations and be amazed! Watch and be astounded at what I will do! For I am
doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone
told you about it."

When Habakkuk learned what God was going to do he might have wished he had never
brought up the subject. God told the prophet about the coming Chaldeans - or
Babylonians - and what they would to Jerusalem and Israel in order to cleanse the people
of idolatry:

Habakkuk 1:6-9 (NLT)

I am raising up the Babylonians to be a new power on the world scene. They are a
cruel and violent nation who will march across the world and conquer it. [7] They
are notorious for their cruelty. They do as they like, and no one can stop them. [8]
Their horses are swifter than leopards. They are a fierce people, more fierce than
wolves at dusk. Their horsemen race forward from distant places. Like eagles they
swoop down to pounce on their prey.

[9] "On they come, all of them bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a wind
from the desert, sweeping captives ahead of them like sand.

From both a historical and theological perspective this is an interesting story: 1) God
will use a pagan nation to destroy a heretofore Godly nation; 2) Then God will deal
harshly with those who oppressed and destroyed that very Godly nation. Habakkuk
learned a vital lesson here: God does not always give us the answers we want or expect.
Why was Judah dealt with so harshly with God’s apparent approval? BECAUSE THE
PEOPLE OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM KNEW BETTER THAN TO FLAUNT
THEIR DISMISSAL OF GOD AND HIS LAWS. So does America. Yet we continue
to dismiss our creator out-of-hand.

It is in chapter 2 that Habakkuk writes God’s plan for redemption: Habakkuk 2:4 ..
the just shall live by his faith. It is by FAITH that we live...not by feeling or
experience alone. Without faith it is impossible to please God! This truth was set
aside several hundred years after Christ and was not found and renewed until Martin
Luther’s courageous declaration. He was the courageous monk who in the early 1500’s
declared publicly that we are not saved by doing indulgences (or works or payments).
We are saved by our faith in the Christ of God Who died on the cross to make salvation
possible.

ZEPHANIAH

This prophet lived and ministered in Judah just prior to the Babylonian captivity. He was
the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah. Zephaniah is known perhaps best as “the
prophet of love.” Zeph. 3:17 The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he
will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over
thee with singing. He does not soft-peddle God’s holiness, however: Zeph. 3:1 Woe
to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! It seems to me that
Zephaniah was the master of BALANCE.

A TALE OF BALANCED LOVE

It was late at night in a suburban area of one of our great cities in America. A child lay
restless in her bed. A man, with a severe and stern look, stealthily entered her room and
approached her bed. The moment the little girl saw him, a terrified look came over her
face and she began to scream. Her mother rushed into the room and went over to her.
The trembling child threw her arms around her mother. The man withdrew to the
telephone and called someone, who was evidently an accomplice, and in a soft voice
made some sort of arrangement. Then he reentered the room, tore the child from her
mother’s arms, and rushed out to a waiting car. The child was sobbing and he attempted
to stifle her cries. He drove madly down street after street until he finally pulled up
before a large, sinister building. All was quiet, the building was partially dark, but there
was one room upstairs ablaze with light.
The child was hurriedly taken inside, up to the lighted room, and put into the hands of the man with whom the conversation had been held over the telephone earlier. In turn, the child was handed over to another accomplice - this time a woman - and these two took the child into an inner room. Inside, the man plunged a gleaming, sharp knife into the vitals of the child and she lay as if dead.

You may react, "I hope they catch those criminals!" However, I have not described to you the depraved and degraded action of a debased man. I have described to you a tender act of love. You see, the little girl had awakened in the night with severe abdominal pain. It was her father who had hurried into the room. When he saw the suffering of his daughter he called the family physician and arranged to meet him at the hospital. Once there, he turned the care of his daughter to the family doctor who took her to the operating room. The point is this: that father loved his daughter when he delivered her to the surgeon just as much as when he brought her toys and candy. This is what this little book of Zephaniah is all about – the dark side of love.

I think perhaps that when we stand before God we will thank Him for every test, for every trial, for it was out of the crucible of crisis and pain that we were refined for His use for eternity.

HAGGAI

Somewhere shortly before 500 B.C., the great Persian monarch Cyrus freed all political prisoners - including the Jews who had been conquered by the Babylonians and exiled. When the exiled Jews returned to their war-ravaged land in and around Jerusalem, one of God's men who so powerfully influenced them was Haggai, the prophet. He is mentioned in Ezra 5:1-2 and 6:14. While having to rebuke the people on occasion, he also cheered them on and encouraged them in their reconstruction of their country.

It was Haggai's passion to reconstruct and refurbish the Temple. The key verses to Haggai are: Haggai 1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. And Haggai 1:14 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedeck, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God...

To help you put together some of the Old Testament books, this may help: A group of those writings should be put together in time: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (for the history) and Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi for the prophetic.
The situation in and around Judah was interesting. The Jews had returned from exile - where they had been treated humanely, by the way but they were still prisoners, captives. Upon returning to Judah, they rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem and also build homes for themselves. But God’s house still lay in ruins. And no one was too excited about rebuilding it. Why? Because (1) they were tired and (2) they were discouraged, noting they could not rebuild anything resembling the former Temple built by King Solomon. So - they did nothing.

One commentator wrote that perhaps the people of Judah were “committee’d” to death. A committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing and who collectively decide that nothing can be done. Another fellow wrote, “A committee is a group of incompetents, appointed by the indifferent, to do the unnecessary.” Well, God didn’t use committees to rebuild Judah; He used great individuals whose writings we treasure.

ZECHARIAH

The great Jewish historian and academecian Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder and I were sitting in his kitchen in Jerusalem some years ago discussing this great Old Testament book of Zechariah. (Dr. Wigoder passed away at the age of 76 after a terrible fall.) Zechariah gave one of the most profound prophecies regarding the Messiah’s return to Jerusalem - still in the future - in all archives of humanity. Dr. Wigoder concurred completely with Zechariah, but told me kindly, “Dan, it will be Messiah’s FIRST visit to Jerusalem.” Christians believe, of course, that Jesus came as Messiah, the Christ, the FIRST time 2000 years ago as a babe in Bethlehem. But on this we all agree: The Messiah is coming! Count on it!

Zechariah wrote this prophecy in 520 B.C. This was the time when the Jews started drifting back to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity.

The first six chapters deal with TEN VISIONS that the prophet had, seemingly all in one night:

1. The Riders Under The Myrtle Tree 1:7-17  Zech. 1:8  I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.

Who is this ‘rider?’ Jesus Himself. In verses 11 and 12 He is called “the angel of the Lord” - a synonym in the Bible for Jesus. Understand this is 500 years before Jesus came as a baby in Bethlehem. A speckled horse is usually called a “sorrel.” Think of Jesus appearing in the ruins of Jerusalem and mourning for its plight. Zech. 1:16
Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Jesus declared that better times were now coming to the region.

2. The Vision of the Four Horns  Zech. 1:18-19 Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. [19] And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. This verse defines itself.

3. The Vision of the Four Smiths  Zech. 1:20-21 And the Lord shewed me four carpenters. [21] Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

A “smith” was a carpenter or workman. These “smiths” represented nations that oppressed Israel: 1) Babylon 2) Medo-Persia 3) Greece 4) Rome. This is basically the same as we saw in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of Daniel 2.

4. The Vision of the Man with the Measuring Line  Zech. 2:1-5 I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. [2] Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. [3] And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him. [4] And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: [5] For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

Who holds the line? Jesus. This passage indicates that our Lord intended for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. Our Lord prophesied multitudes living there - which we certainly see today as Jerusalem is the largest city in the land.

5. Joshua and Satan  Zech. 3:1-7
And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. [2] And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? [3] Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. [4] And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And
unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will
clothe thee with change of raiment. [5] And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his
head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And
the angel of the Lord stood by. [6] And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua,
saying, [7] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou
wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my
courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

This “Joshua” was the man who served as high priest among the remnant of Jews who
returned from Babylonian captivity (not the Joshua who led the Israelites into the
Promised Land). In this vision Zechariah saw the high priest appearing before our Lord
Himself - but he also saw Satan there. Doing what? RESISTING JOSHUA. That’s
what Satan does—he resists the people and plan of God. Our Lord rebuked Satan, even as
He does now.

Strange how Joshua the priest stands before the Lord dirty and wearing unclean apparel.
But that’s how we ALL stand before Him. All our righteousness is as filthy rags to our
holy God.

6. The Vision of the Branch  Zech. 3:8-10  Hear now, O Joshua the high priest,
thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold,
I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. [9] For behold the stone that I have laid
before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving
thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one
day. [10] In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour
under the vine and under the fig tree.

The “branch” is usually a depiction of our Lord Jesus. Isaiah 11:1  And there shall
come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

The “branch” is also the stone of verse 9 - Jesus. Ah, remember? Daniel 2:34-35
Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image
upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. [35] Then was the
iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and
became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them
away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became
a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Can you see how the Bible defines itself
- and all of it revolves around the Person and Work of Jesus Himself?

7. The Vision of the Lampstand and Two Olives Trees  Zech. 4:1-6  And the angel
that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakener out of his
sleep, [2] And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold
a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon,
and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: [3] And two
olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side
thereof. [4] So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What
are these, my lord? [5] Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto
me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. [6] Then he answered
and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying,
Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

Zerubbabel was the civil head of Jerusalem while Joshua was the religion leader. The
message to everyone - and one that has been a banner in the Assemblies of God since its
inception in 1914 - was “all our exploits, accomplishments, feats - were not done because
we were strong or bright...but because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives!”
Zerubbabel and Joshua, by the way, are represented in this prophecy as “the two olive
trees.)

8. The Vision of the Flying Roll  Zech. 5:1-3  Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes,
and looked, and behold a flying roll. [2] And he said unto me, What seest thou? And
I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits (30 feet), and the
breadth thereof ten cubits (15 feet). [3] Then said he unto me, This is the curse that
goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut
off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on
that side according to it.

The “roll” or flying scroll here, I believe, represents the Word of God.  The size of it, as
pointed out in verse 2, indicates “largeness” — or that the Word of God should cover
everything.

Verse 3 suggests the scroll was in two parts.  This perhaps represents the Ten
Commandments.  The first four of them deal with mankind’s relationship to God and the
other six mankind’s responsibilities to people.  No nation and no individual is any
stronger for God than his or her knowledge of God’s Word.  Remember here that the
people of Israel had just returned from captivity in Babylon.  Why were they in captivity?
Because of idolatry.  Why had they succumbed to idolatry?  Because God’s Word had
been put aside and forgotten.

9. The Vision Of The Woman In The Ephah  Zech. 5:5-11  Then the angel that talked
with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this
that goeth forth. [6] And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth. [7] And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. [8] And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. [9] Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. [10] Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? [11] And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

An “ephah” is a dry measure equal to about a bushel. It symbolized trade. What was one of the major sins Israel dealt with upon returning from captivity? Idolatry? No, not now. It was materialism. God is telling Israel that even while He blessed them they should not think of money as an indicator of His approval upon them.

10. The Vision of the Four Chariots Zech. 6:1-5 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. [2] In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; [3] And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. [4] Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? [5] And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. They represent four angels or spirits of God who go forth in the world to deal with the sins of nations.

Most of the remaining chapters of Zechariah deal with God’s concerns about Israel. I do not have time in this short period to deal with them; however, I often speak about Israel in my preaching and teaching and have to do with some of this valuable material. But I want to spend some time tonight on chapter 14.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, THE MESSIAH

Zech. 14:1-9 Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. [2] For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. [3] Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as
when he fought in the day of battle.

[4] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. [5] And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. [6] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: [7] But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. [8] And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. [9] And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

I have put text boxes around some of the key passages of this remarkable prophecy. The former sea is the Dead Sea - and the hinder sea is the Mediterranean Sea. When Jesus comes, these two bodies of water will be united (meaning there will be a canal connecting them - no mean feat as the Med Sea is sea level while the Dead Sea is 1300 feet below sea level - so you can imagine the many locks that would have to be erected in that canal).

This passage deals with the Second Coming of Christ. I believe this is the order that stands right in front of us: 1) The Rapture 2) For those raptured the Judgment Seat of Christ to determine rewards and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb 3) For those left behind the Antichrist and the seven years of Tribulation 4) The second coming of Christ.

AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH! HALLELUJAH!

MALACHI

With this short book, the Old Testament closes and God does not speak to mankind again for 400 years! (Next week I will deal with those incredible 400 years. You do not want to miss that study for it culminates in a manger in Bethlehem!)

The word Malachi indicates “Messenger.” (And the next messenger you will hear will
be John the Baptist 400 years from now).

In this short culminating book, Malachi tells of God’s love for Israel in chapter 1, verses 1-5. Then in the rest of chapter 1 through chapter 2, verse 9, God reproves religious leaders for profaning His work - that does not mean swearing in the conventional sense, but making the sacred nothing more than secular. In chapter 2:10-17 the people are rebuked for social sins. And chapter 3 indicates God’s displeasure of people who commit religious sins. And finally in chapter 4, Malachi predicts the Day of the Lord and a golden era for all redeemed humanity.

It should be noted, for sure, that in chapter 2 the prophet dealt with the sanctity of marriage and the sacredness of sex. Malachi 2:14-15 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. [15] And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

This book is perhaps known for Malachi’s teaching on tithing: Malachi 3:8-10 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [9] Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. From nearly 58 years of married life, I can prove to you that we live much better on the 90% God permits us to use than on the 100% people use, stealing God’s 10%. However, it is not a temporary test proving God’s faithfulness, it is rather a lifetime commitment of obedience to Him.

Next Wednesday: THE YEARS BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS. It’s not easy to understand the New Testament unless (1) you know the Old Testament and (2) have some comprehension of the unbelievable four centuries between the Old and New.