

## ***THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For December 31:***

### *Malachi 3:1-4:6:*

The book of Malachi consists of six disputations the prophet takes up with the people, all of which are designed to call them back to faithfulness to the LORD. Today we look at the last three.

In the fourth disputation (2:17-3:5) Malachi chastises the people for thinking that the LORD is not just (2:17). They wonder “Where is the God of justice?” In 3:1-5 an answer is given: The LORD Himself will come to them after his messenger comes before Him (1). Yet, He will not come in a way they expect. He will come to judge (5). He will also come to refine and purify them so that they can be pleasing to the LORD (2-4). Of course, this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the God-man, who came to refine and purify and also to judge those who reject Him. Malachi (My Messenger) clarifies that the Lord would be preceded by “My messenger”. This was John the Baptist. So, Israel would know when the LORD comes and carries out justice.

In the fifth disputation (3:6-12) the prophet chastises the people for robbing God of His tithes and offerings and so calls them to bring the tithes and offerings into the storehouse.

Finally, in the sixth and last disputation (3:13-4:3) Malachi chastises the people for thinking it is vain to serve the LORD. After all, the great Day of the LORD is coming and only those who fear God will experience His reward. The rest will experience His wrath.

The book concludes (4:4-6) with one last call to remember the Law of the LORD, which is at the heart of being faithful to the covenant of God, and also with a promise that Elijah (actually the New Testament clarifies it is one like Elijah) will precede the Day of the LORD which will not only be a time of judgment, but a great time of transformation wherein the hearts of fathers and children will be turned toward each other (a sign of covenant faithfulness to God by covenant faithfulness to each other, cf. Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 3:11-12). When we compare 4:5-6 with 3:1-3 we realize the Day of the LORD is inaugurated with the coming of the LORD Himself after His messenger, an Elijah-like figure precedes Him. As such, the curtain closes in this final act in the Old Testament drama by revealing that the coming Day of the LORD, that time of full reward for the people of God and judgment upon the wicked will dawn with the coming of Jesus Christ. Before the curtains close completely we sit in stunned silence and wonder that He is the fulfillment of all to which the Old Testament has pointed and all for which the Old Testament saint has waited! O, may we see Him as our great treasure!

### *Revelation 22:1-21:*

The final two chapters of Revelation unveil for us what the new heaven and new earth will be like. As you read this portion of Revelation, take note of why this will be such a glorious eternal dwelling for us. First, we will have eternal life which is not just life that last forever, but true existence and vitality marked by the eternal (1-2)! Also, this will be the place where the people of God will experience the full blessings of God that are part

of His covenant promises addressed throughout the Bible (3-5). Finally, as we saw yesterday, the real blessing is that we get our triune God and so we anticipate and await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, longing to continue in our faith and in our faithfulness to Him that we will be ready (6-21)! What a fitting close to the New Testament and to the Bible as a whole. Because Jesus is our hope, we say with John, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

*Psalm 150:1-6:*

The entire collection of Psalms comes to a close with a repetitious and emphatic call for everything that has breath to praise the LORD in all places, in various ways, with great passion for who He is and what He has done. This is a fitting conclusion to the collection wherein over and over again the people of God are called to praise and worship the LORD in spite of whatever they are facing. Truly, the life of the true follower of the true triune God must be a person of praise!

*Proverbs 31:25-31:*

With these seven verses we close out this alphabetical acrostic poem celebrating the excellent wife and what it looks like to live a wise life. We should also understand that since the book of Proverbs is a collection of wisdom sayings preparing primarily young men for future leadership in the court, this poem also becomes a guide for the kind of wife one ought to marry.

Here are the final three stanzas: We discover that the excellent, wise, industrious wife experiences prosperity (25-27); such a woman is positively recognized by her children and husband (28-29); and finally, the poem ends with a summary that praises the excellent woman, i.e. the one who fears the LORD (30-31). Thus, the book of Proverbs ends with the thread which runs throughout: The fear of the LORD is where skill for godliness begins (see 9:10).