**Old Testament Survey – Zephaniah/Malachi**

**Zephaniah**

Author/Prophet: Zephaniah (The Lord hides), active during the reign of king Josiah – Judah’s last good king (640 B.C. – 609 B.C.)

Historical background: Israel had just been under the rule of king Manasseh for over 50 years. He was one of the worst kings in southern kingdom, leading people of massive idolatry. But his grandson Josiah was opposite, he made great religious reforms.

Content: God’s judgment and restoration on the day of the Lord

Outline of the book

* God’s judgment on the day of the Lord 1:1-18
* Repent before the day of the Lord 2:1-3:8
* Restoration and joy on the day of the Lord 3:9-20

Major theme: the day of the Lord

What is the day of the Lord like? (verses 1:8-18; 3:8; 3:9-20) Judgment and restoration

The pivot point in the day of the Lord (2:1-3; 3:7) Repent, seek righteousness, seek humility. (Why is the judgment of the nations in the middle of this section?)

Theological significance of Zephaniah:

* No sinner, no matter what nationality or religion, can avoid the wrath of God’s judgment on the day of the Lord.
* Those who repent and humble themselves will be purified and have the blessing of enjoying God’s presence forever.

**Malachi**

Author/Prophet: Malachi (my messenger), the last writing prophet in OT, most likely during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Historical background: Israel/Judah nation had been conquered for over 100 years, some remnants had been back to Jerusalem, the second temple had been built. But there was still no messianic age, no material wealth, no great migration back to Jerusalem, no political importance. Morales were low, laws were not kept (inwardly), intermarriages occurred often. People doubted God as loving and faithful and just.

Outline of the book: Six disputations between God and the people

1. Disputation about God’s love for Israel 1:1-5

People’s accusation (v 1:2)

God’s evidence: Esau and Jacob

Summary: God loves Israel

1. Disputation about honoring God in worship 1:6-2:9

God’s accusation (v 1:6)

God’s evidence: people offer defiled sacrifices

Summary: God is father and master, he desires honest worship

1. Disputation on marriage and divorce 2:10-16

Prophet’s accusation (v 2:10)

God’s evidence: marriage to pagans and divorcing own wives.

Summary: God is faithful and expects true faithfulness from us.

1. Disputation on God’s justice 2:17-3:6

People’s accusation (v 2:17)

God’s evidence: God will judge.

1. Disputation on turing to God 3:7-12

God’s accusation (v 3:7-8)

God’s evidence: robbing God of tithing.

Summary: God doesn’t change, but we must change

1. Disputation on the value of serving God 3:13-4:6

People’s accusation (v. 3:13-14)

God’s evidence: God has a scroll of remembrance.

Summary: God will distinguish between the righteous and the wicked

Theological significance of Malachi

* God’s love and justice do not change.
* Honoring God is not accomplished through hypocritical worship. God deserves our best.
* God hates divorce and intermarriage with pagans.
* God does distinguish between the righteous and the wicked; it is worthwhile to fear and serve God.
* Prophetic messages about Elijah and the coming Messiah.