

Sunday 10th October 2021
Book of Malachi
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Brightons Parish Church

Today we begin a new teaching series and it's going to see us through to the beginning of Advent. Yes, we are that close to Christmas but please don't let that distract you from the rest of today's service.

Over the last couple of years I've used this autumn time to take us into the Old Testament prophetic books because they're a portion of scripture we often ignore and a portion we often find very difficult to get into or get something from, because we do need to know the context and much about the scriptures and so, probably, it helps to do it as part of a kind of sermon series.

So, today we're beginning to work through the book of Malachi and before we hear our reading today, I want to give you a little context to set the scene for today's reading.

First of all you're going to notice that Malachi uses a particular style and in this style the Lord engages with these people in a dialogue and so he asks them a question and then he hears back their questions and their issues as well. He engages us in this dialogue with them whereas in many prophets it's just God speaking to the people but He's allowing them to respond through what Malachi knows they are questioning themselves, and the context for Malachi's ministry is also important because he is sent to the whole of Israel who have returned from captivity, and they've originally been taken into exile by the Babylonians but they were allowed to then return when the Babylonians were defeated and when they did return they rebuilt the temple and they rebuilt much of what they had lost.

However it's about 60 to 100 years that Malachi comes to minister in the Lord's name and he's meeting a people who, the temple is complete, and yet they are experiencing poverty and foreign domination and corrupt government and a breakdown of worship, and it's into that context that Malachi comes to minister, He comes to minister to the people, the regular person, the leaders, the priests, who comes to minister to the whole nation who are just in a downward spiral, because of what they are experiencing, because of all that is happening in their national and personal lives, and so Malachi speaks into that context. So we're going to hear now God's word read for us by our brother Drew from Blackbraes and Shieldhill.