

A BIT MORE MALACHI

Most of life is not lived in crisis – which is a good thing. Not many of us would be able to sustain a life of perpetual pain or loss or ecstasy or challenge. But crisis has this to say for it: in a time of crisis everything, absolutely everything is important and significant. Life itself is on the line. Now word is casual, no action marginal. And almost always, God and our relationship with God is on the front page.

But during the humdrum times, when things are, as we tend to say, 'normal', our interest in God is crowded to the margins of our lives and we become preoccupied with ourselves. 'Religion' during such times is trivialised into asking 'God questions' - calling God into question, or complaining about Him, treating the worship of Him as a mere hobby or diversion, managing our personal affairs (such as marriage) for our own convenience and disregarding what God has to say about them, going about our usual activities as if God were not involved in such dailiness.

The prophecy of Malachi is made to order for just such conditions. Malachi creates a crisis at a time when we are unaware of crisis. He wakes us up to the crisis of God during the times when the only thing we are concerned with is ourselves. He keeps us on our toes, listening to God, waiting in anticipation for God, ready to respond to God, who is always coming to us.

Malachi gets the last word of Holy Scripture in the Old Testament. The final sentences in his message to us evoke the gigantic figures of Moses and Elijah – Moses to keep us rooted in what God has done and said in the past, Elijah to keep us alert to what God will do in the days ahead. By leaving us in the company of mighty Moses and fiery Elijah, Malachi considerably reduces the danger of our trivialising matters of God and the soul.

Summary from 'The Message' Bible (Eugene H Peterson)