

BOOK REVIEW

The Coming of Zion's Redeemer, by Ronald Hanks. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2014. Pp. xvi + 527. \$45.95 (hardcover) [Reviewed by Rodney G. Miersma]

If you ever wanted a good exposition covering any of the minor prophets, this is the book for you. The last three books of the Old Testament, namely, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, which cover the lives of the Israelites after their return from their captivity in Babylon, are excellently expounded in an easy to read style. These three prophets are prophets of the restoration which makes the three books form a unit. One is assured of a proper interpretation because the rule that "Scripture interprets Scripture" is closely followed. Checking the Scriptural index one finds that there are over twelve hundred and fifty Scriptural references, many of which are used a number of times.

OVERVIEW

The general theme and purpose of these prophecies is the preparation of God's covenant people for the coming of Christ. The authors own words can best give an introduction to this book. "In the days of Haggai and Zechariah that long-awaited event was five hundred years in the future; in Malachi's day it was even closer. While waiting for Christ's coming, the covenant people had to learn to look away from the Old Testament types to the fulfillment of all the types in him who was promised. Each of these prophecies, in its own way, taught them to do that.

"Thus these prophecies continue to be of value to the covenant people of God, for the church is still waiting for the realization of God's promises concerning the coming of Messiah, promises that will not be entirely fulfilled until he returns at the end of the ages. Though the types and shadows of the Old Testament have already vanished, the people of God must still be reminded to lift up their heads and see that their redemption draws near (Luke 21:28). They need to look away from a perishing world and be watchful and waiting for the coming of a kingdom that will never be moved.

"Each of these marvelous prophecies heralds the coming of Christ in a different way. Haggai points to him in the central passage of his prophecy as the great *king* and temple builder, the desire of all nations (2:6-9). Zechariah, in chapter 6:9-15 of his prophecy, shows him to be a *priest* upon the throne, the one in whom the counsel of peace is realized and the glory of God's house guaranteed. Malachi foretells his coming as the messenger of the covenant, the great *prophet*, the one by whom the sons of Levi are purified and healed and made acceptable to the Lord (3:1-4)." (p. xi).

Also included are timelines of the years following the return from captivity in Babylon and of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah during the reign of Darius which help put things in their historical context.

HAGGAI

The word of the Lord through Haggai is addressed especially to Zerubbabel the governor and to Joshua the high priest. Zerubbabel stood in the line of David and was an ancestor of Christ. The people had been neglecting to build the house of the Lord and were more interested in building their own houses. As ruler of the people he represented King Christ and was directed to stir the people up to obey the Lord in rebuilding the temple. Accompanying the command to build was the Lord's assurance that He would be with them and that it would be built. In this way God was manifesting His covenant faithfulness to them. Basically the temple is the same as the church of the New Testament. Therefore the calling to rebuild the temple is our calling to be always busy in building and rebuilding the church indicating that the true church is "reformed and always reforming." Thus one can see that the Scriptural truths expounded are very practically applied to our daily life. This is one of the strengths of the book and is seen in the entire commentary, and also in the exposition of Zechariah and Malachi. That Christ is King of his church is clearly in focus and why we must obey his Word.

ZECHARIAH

This portion of the book is the largest and takes up the greatest share. After the introductory call to repentance Zechariah the priest has seven visions. These visions "show us Christ as the great ruler of the nations (1:7-17), the avenger of the oppressed people of God (1:18-21), the builder of the temple (2:1-13), the justifier of the ungodly (3:1-10), the giver of the Spirit (4:1-14), the executioner of God's curse and the enemy of the unfaithful (5:1-11) and the coming judge (6:1-8). These seven revelations of Christ climax in chapter 6:9-15, where he appears as the enthroned priest, the great priest-king." (p. 107).

MALACHI

This book is written a little later than the previous two and describes the end times of the Old Testament while pointing to the coming of Christ. While it does so it has importance for us who live in the time of the end of all ages and who are waiting for the better things of the everlasting and heavenly kingdom of Christ. Malachi here prophesies against the unfaithfulness of Israel, an unfaithfulness which matches exactly the unfaithfulness of the church of today. This shows up especially in the church's neglect to worship God as he has commanded and in

her complete disregard for God's ordinances concerning marriage. Of the six disputations into which the prophecy is divided I was especially edified by the third which clearly sets forth already in the Old Testament the truth concerning divorce and remarriage.

CONCLUSION

What is so very significant of these three prophecies is that they are so appropriate for the church of today. From that viewpoint they certainly are not simply minor prophecies for us but a major word of God to us. I found this book very enjoyable and profitable and highly recommend it for both young and old for both Bible study in a society and for personal meditation. The book is not a difficult read and can be easily understood by the believer in Christ who eagerly looks for his return.