

Steven Coxhead, review of R. T. Kendall, *Between the Times—Malachi: The Last Prophet before Centuries of Silence*, *Reformed Theological Review* 64 (2005): 167–8 (used with permission, and re-edited to conform with SBL style).

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**BETWEEN THE TIMES—MALACHI: The Last Prophet before Centuries of Silence**

By R. T. Kendall (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2003), 208 pp., £7.99.

R. T. Kendall is a well-known author with a pastoral heart and it is appropriate that he has produced an excellent devotional book on the message of the prophet Malachi. *Between the Times* is basically a series of 32 short homilies based on consecutive passages of the book of Malachi. The passages from Malachi range from anything as small as a single verse up to nine verses long, with topics including: *The Sovereignty of God*; *Cheap Grace*; *Should a Christian Marry a Non-Christian?*; *God's Class System*; and *Why Remember God's Law?*

Kendall pays close attention to the biblical text, gives many helpful illustrations, and is successful in applying the ancient word of the prophet to Christians living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in an easy-to-read, no-nonsense format.

Kendall's theology is Calvinistic on election, although he favourably quotes Spurgeon's provocative prayer: "Lord, send in all thine elect, then elect some more" (p. 11). Following Rom 5:20 and Gal 3:19, he views the Mosaic law as a parenthesis, "as a temporary measure in

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God's plan" (p. 194). Nevertheless, even though Jesus has perfectly fulfilled the law and set us free from the law, this does not mean "that people can live as they please" (p. 195). Rather, Christians are to walk in the Spirit, and as we do so, we paradoxically fulfil the law (p. 195). Kendall understands that "the righteousness of the law is unchanging," that "Everything that is prohibited in the Old Testament is equally prohibited by the Spirit's application of the gospel" (p. 196), leading him to apply the morality of Malachi in a direct way to Christians today, including the law of tithing.

Kendall's warning against "cheap grace" on pp. 36–38 is recommended reading and is particularly relevant for the Christian church today. As Kendall says: grace may be "free" but it certainly isn't "cheap"—it demands a response that "costs you everything." Chapter 25 on *God's Class System* is also highly recommended. In this chapter, Kendall argues on the basis of Mal 3:18 that, contrary to what most people might think, God actually has a class system based on "the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not" (p. 161). No doubt a startling way in which to package biblical truth.

Overall, this is an excellent book for any Christian who would like to understand the message of the book of Malachi and its relevance for us today.

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