

Snapshot of Malachi

The Prophet:

The name Malachi means “my messenger.” Malachi was the last writing prophet to serve as Jehovah’s messenger to the people under the Law of Moses.

His prophecy was followed by four hundred years of divine silence.

We know nothing more of this prophet’s life than what is included in this book.

The Date:

Malachi does not date his book specifically, but by noticing the conditions of the day we can deduce that he prophesied about the time of Nehemiah. This would place the date of writing between 445 and 425 B.C.

The Message:

The people had been back from their captivity for about 100 years. The Temple and wall around the city had been rebuilt. But the people were full of spiritual indifference and lethargy.

Malachi attacked their disloyalty and apathy and reassured them that the Messiah was coming. He then implored for the people to be obedient to God.

Spiritual characteristics of the day, as seen in Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah:

1. Spiritual apathy (Malachi 1:2,13; 4:6)
2. Corruption of the priesthood (Nehemiah 13:4-9,28-31; Malachi 1:6; 2:1-9; 3:3-4)
3. Degeneracy in worship (Malachi 1:7-14)
4. Withholding of tithes and offerings (Nehemiah 10:32-39; 13:10-14; Malachi 3:8-12)
5. Breaking of the Sabbath (Nehemiah 10:31; 13:15-22)
6. Cynicism and lack of moral discrimination (Malachi 2:17; 3:13-15,18)
7. Disregard of God’s marriage law (Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 10:30; 13:23-28; Mal 2:10-16)
8. Social injustice (Nehemiah 5:1-13; Malachi 3:5)

Malachi used a distinctive method of teaching. First he made a charge; then the objections of the accused are raised; these are then answered. (See 1:2-3; 1:6-7; 2:10-16; 2:17; 3:7; 3:8; 3:13-14.)

Outline of Malachi

- I. God's Love for His People (1:1-5)
 - A. Declared (1:1-2)
 - B. Demonstrated (1:3-5)
- II. Condemnation of The Unfaithful Priests (1:6-2:9)
 - A. Their unworthiness (1:6-14)
 - B. God's curse upon them (2:1-9)
- III. People Rebuked For Profaning Marriage (2:10-16)
 - A. Alien marriages (2:10-12)
 - B. The sin of divorce (2:13-16)
- IV. The Coming of The Lord And The Purging Of Israel (2:17-4:6)
 - A. A question concerning God's justice (2:17)
 - B. The Messiah's coming in judgment (3:1-6)
 - C. Neglect of tithes and offerings (3:7-12)
 - D. God's justice defended (3:13-4:3)
 - E. A call to obedience (4:4)
 - F. Elijah and his work (4:5-6)

Lessons for today:

1. Simple indifference toward the worship and service of God is judged a grievous sin. God cannot bless such a person until his attitude changes.
2. God hates divorce! Read Matthew 19:3-9