

MALACHI

"My Messenger"

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INTRODUCTION

A. NAME:

1. The "name Malachi" is not found in this form anywhere else in the Bible.
2. Some have suggested, that it is not really a name of a man.
3. But since none of the prophets wrote anonymously, it is highly reasonable to conclude that this is the name of Jehovah's last literary prophet who is His final Old Testament messenger to the people.

B. DATE:

1. Some have defended an early date, 470 B.C. others have suggested a time just before the Maccabees, or 200 B.C.
 2. In as much as the content of the prophecy fits well into the conditions described by Nehemiah, the most acceptable date for the prophecy is the period of 445 - 432 B.C.
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BACKGROUND

A. First contingent of exiles had returned during 536 B.C., under leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest.

1. Encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple between 520 and 516 B.C.
2. Ezra had returned with a second group of exiles in 458 B.C.
3. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city about 444-443 B.C. Second term as governor 430 - 425 B.C.

B. The conditions of the people as revealed in Nehemiah and the bold and courageous attack of Malachi against the problems which the latter sets forth in his book point clearly to the contemporary dates of the two.

PROBLEMS

A. Serious abuses had crept into Jewish life.

1. The priests had become lax and degenerate.
2. Defective and inferior sacrifices were allowed to be offered upon the Temple altar.
3. The people were neglecting their tithes.
4. Divorce was common and God's covenant was forgotten and ignored.

B. JEHOVAH CONDEMNS THE PRIESTS:

1. They despise God's name (1:6).
2. They offered polluted sacrifices (1:7), the blind, lame and sick (1:6).

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C. THEY CAUSED MANY TO STUMBLE IN THE LAW (2:8).

D. THEY SHOWED RESPECT OF PERSONS (2:9).

E. BUT THE PRIEST OF JEHOVAH IS TO:

1. Fear Jehovah (2:5).
 2. Have truth and righteousness on his lips (2:6a).
 3. Walk in peace and uprightness (2:6b; cf. Eph. 4:1-3).
 4. Turn many away from iniquity (2:6c).
 5. Have knowledge of Jehovah (2:7; 2 Tim. 2:15).
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MESSAGE

1. The exiles had been back in Judea from Babylon for over a hundred years; but instead of becoming better they had become worse. The people had begun to doubt the promises of God. Malachi had to remind them that the promises had been made conditionally, and the people had not lived up to the conditions stipulated. God had fulfilled his part of the promise, but they had failed to keep their part.
 2. Worship was in a state of decay because the priests had allowed it to degenerate to the point where they offered to the Lord what they did not want to keep. They had not brought in the tithes, and this, Malachi declared was the way they were robbing God. Malachi's message is that though the proper ritual is important, it is not an end in itself and does not please God.
 3. Malachi accused the Jews of divorcing their wives so they could marry heathen women; this God despised.
 4. Malachi deals with the dangers, temptations, and sins which was destroying their faith in Jehovah.
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A. **CONDEMNS:**

1. Their doubt of God's love for them.
2. Their despising of Jehovah's name.
3. Their offering of polluted bread.
4. Their sacrificing of blind, lame, and sick animals.
5. Their growing weary with worship. ‘
6. Their failure in bringing the tithe into the storehouse.
7. Their divorcing of the wives of their youth.
8. Their skepticism that it pays to serve God.
9. Their doubting that Jehovah was a righteous God.

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B. MAKES ONE LAST APPEAL TO THE LAW! (4:4).

1. This appeal is the last one to be made in the “old way.” The next appeal to repentance would come through John the immerser, who came to prepare the way for the Christ, in the “Spirit of Elijah.”
2. Malachi points to Elijah to come! (4:5,6).
 - a. Consider Malachi’s words about Elijah (3:1; 4:6,6).
 - b. Consider Isaiah 40:3-5; Matt. 3:1-3; John 1:23; Luke 1:17).
 - c. Jesus’ words Matthew 17:10-13.

B. I Corinthians 10:11; 2 Peter 1:12,13.

Book Preserved Because

A. BECAUSE OF ITS PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE!

1. God loves a pure, clean, and happy home. Divorce is an abomination in God’s sight.
2. Insincerity in worship insults God. One who sins willfully and wantonly cannot please God by an elaborate worship.
3. Giving is a barometer that measures our spiritual temperature.
4. God still holds out the challenge to all His chosen ones to put Him to the test to find the rich supply of blessings that are available.

B. Malachi, the last book in our English version of the Old Bible, was the last word from God until the first Book of the New Testament was written. About 400 years intervened between the time of the close of the Old Testament cannon and the opening events recorded in the Gospels.

C. The Book of Malachi serves as a fitting close to God’s ancient revelation to His people. A final appeal is made to the people to purge out the wickedness from among them and to render to Jehovah an acceptable service. A final warning is given of inevitable judgment upon the wicked. And a final promise is made of Jehovah’s righteousness to be provided in Him who would be the personal bond of unity between Jehovah and His people. There was no more that Jehovah could say or do; therefore no word was heard from Him until the silence was broken by the messenger who would introduce the Messiah. This messengers call to repent was followed by the words of grace spoken by Him in whom God was doing His work and revealing Himself and His will. (Homer Hailey “A Commentary On The Minor Prophets, p