

Post-Exile Prophets
MEET MALACHI
Monday, September 29
Reading: Malachi 1-4

Malachi 1:1 *A prophecy: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD.*

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. It would be 400+ years before another prophet was heard (i.e. John the Baptist). It had been around 100 years since the Jews had returned home from Babylon. The temple had been built and life and worship had been ‘normalized’ under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah (458-444 BC). Some time has passed and the priests and people had become lax in their obedience to God’s Law affecting both their worship in the temple and their lives at home. Malachi reminds them of God’s past, present, and future dealings to renew their faithfulness and renew their hope for the future Messianic Kingdom.

AUTHOR: We know nothing personal about this prophet other than his name. It means “my messenger” which is appropriate since Malachi will be God’s messenger to Israel and will predict the coming of the next messenger of God – John the Baptist. He frames his message with a series of questions, followed by Israel’s response, and God’s correction.

DATE: While the book does not give us a date like Haggai and Zechariah do, we can determine an approximate date from what Malachi wrote. Nehemiah served as governor of Judah twice (444 & 432 BC) with a gap in-between. The reforms he and Ezra the priest instituted are the same as those mentioned by Malachi.¹ Thus it is likely that Malachi wrote around this time period – about 40 to 50 years after Zechariah’s last message.

OUTLINE OF MALACHI:

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| (1) INTRO: God’s Love for His People | Malachi 1:1-5 |
| (2) Questions for the Priests | Malachi 1:6 – 2:9 |
| - Concerning Sacrifices (1:6-14) | |
| - Concerning Duty (2:1-9) | |
| (3) Questions for the People | Malachi 2:10 – 3:15 |
| - Concerning Marriage (2:10-16) | |
| - Concerning Injustice (2:17 – 3:5) | |
| - Concerning Tithes (3:6-12) | |
| - Concerning Unfaithfulness (3:13-16) | |
| (4) Answers for the Faithful Remnant | Malachi 3:16 – 4:3 |
| (5) CONCL: God’s Restoration of His People | Malachi 4:4-6 |

Malachi begins with the same word as Zechariah’s last two messages – “a prophecy” or burden (cf. Zechariah 9:1; 12:1). His message is a warning to Israel to repent. But within the warning is a focus on the majesty of God. Look for the love of God, the fear of God, and the greatness of God in this book.

Malachi is speaking to a people who have become lazy in their worship and godly living. They have forgotten the love and justice of God. And they were oblivious to their own sin. Sadly, this has become true for many churches and Christians today. As we study this ancient prophecy, we need to look at our own hearts and learn the lessons Malachi is teaching.

¹ Compare Malachi 2:11-15 = Nehemiah 13:23-27; Mal.3:8-10 = Neh. 13:10-14; Mal. 2:8-9; 4:4 = Neh. 13:15-22; Mal. 1:6 – 2:9 = Neh. 13:7-9; Mal. 3:5 = Neh. 5:1-13