

Bible Synthesis IV
(Bible Survey)

**INTRODUCTION TO
MALACHI**

1. INTRODUCTION

Malachi is the third of the postexilic prophets. This is the final book of the Old Testament, and it is the bridge between the Old Testament and the New. A silence of approximately 400 years lies between the prophecy of Malachi and the voice of John the Baptist, “one crying in the wilderness.”

The Old Testament ends with the word “curse.” The New Testament ends with blessing: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Malachi is notable for its dialog. Israel had long ago forgotten the excitement of the return from Babylonian exile, the restoration of the offerings, and the rebuilding of the Temple. Many years had passed since Haggai and Zechariah stirred the people to revival. Now the nation is in a sad state of affairs; they were morally lax and spiritually cold. Malachi has been raised up of the LORD to be a reformer. Though he rebukes, he does not fail to encourage also. The LORD had not ignored their words of criticism, and “Ye say” is found 12 times through this little book (1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13, 14). The LORD answers these objections through Malachi.

2. AUTHOR

The Prophet Malachi (“my messenger”) — 1:1. Nothing is known of Him, other than his name here, and this prophecy. He has been called “the unknown prophet with the angel’s name.” A few consider this as not being his name, but rather, they think it is the *title* of a prophet who desires to keep himself in the background. “There is no reason to doubt that this was the real name of a definite person.” (A. C. Gaebelein)

His name, or the meaning of his name, occurs in 2:7, “the messenger of the LORD of hosts.” That is what this prophet was, a messenger of the LORD. He described John the Baptist, “my messenger” (3:1), one who would “prepare the way before me.” And in the same verse Malachi speaks of Christ as “the Messenger of the Covenant.”

Malachi is quoted a number of times in the New Testament, but he is not referred to by name in any of these quotes: Matt. 11:10 (Mal. 3:1); 17:12 (Mal. 4:5) ; Mark 1:2 (Mal. 3:1); 9:11–12 (Mal. 4:5); Luke 1:17 (Mal. 4:5–6); Rom. 9:13 (Mal. 1:2–3).

3. RECIPIENTS

The people of Israel who had returned from the Babylonian captivity — 1:1; 2:11; 3:6–7. The priests are specially addressed (1:6; 2:1), also the faithful group among the people (4:2–3).

4. DATE

No date is given in the book. There are no historical references from which a date may be determined with certainty. This book was written following the return from Babylonian captivity, because the people are seen living under a governor (1:8), the Temple worship is being carried on (1:7–8, 10), and no idolatry is mentioned.

Most scholars date Malachi from between 435 and 415 B.C. A number of years had passed, at least 60, since the end of Zechariah's prophecy. Also, there were 400 silent years between Malachi and the coming of John the Baptist.

5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- (1) A long time had passed since the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah. God's people were again in a sad spiritual condition. This was true of the Priests as well as the people. Malachi was a preacher of repentance to Israel at that time. In his preaching he used a question and answer method. There are no less than 23 questions in this book.
- (2) Malachi also wrote of coming things. He told of the coming of John the Baptist, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of Elijah.

6. THEME

God's people rebuked for neglecting and profaning the worship of the LORD
"The sin of external observance without internal experience" —Eric Hayden
"Remember, Repent, Return, Rehearse" —Robert Lee, London

7. KEY PASSAGES

Malachi 3:9–10

8. KEY TERMS

"Ye say" — 11 times
"Wherein" — 6 times
"Cursed" — 7 times

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**OUTLINE OF
MALACHI**

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. The Sins of the Priests | —1:1 — 2:9 |
| 2. The Sins of the People | —2:10 — 3:15 |
| 3. The Faithful Few | —3:16 — 4:6 |

Outline #2

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| 1. GOD'S OBJECTIONS | — MAL. 1 — 2 |
| (1) A Message of Love | —1:1-5 |
| (2) A Message of Rebuke | —1:6 — 2:17 |
| 2. GOD'S PREDICTIONS | — MAL. 3 — 4 |
| (3) A Message of Hope | —3:1 — 4:6 |

