

Malachi

"A Forerunner is Coming"

Background Information

Both in the order of the Bible and in chronology, Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament prophets.

The name Malachi simply means "my messenger," and has led some to believe that the book is actually anonymous. Likely, though, this is the name of the prophet.

Jewish tradition states that the writer also helped collect and preserve the entire Old Testament.

Time Covered and Outline

Little time passes during the book, but some of the concerns are the same as those found in the book of Nehemiah. Many suggest that the book was written during the "absence" of Nehemiah from Jerusalem (between Nehemiah chapters 12 and 13), which would place the book around 430 BC.

The book falls into two parts:

- I. Condemning Israel's Sins (1:1-2:16)
 - A. A reminder of God's love (1:1-5)
 - B. The priests rebuked (1:6-2:9)
 - C. The people rebuked (2:10-16)
- II. Judgment and Blessing Pronounced (2:17-4:6)
 - A. A messenger is coming (2:17-3:5)
 - B. A challenge to repent (3:6-12)
 - C. Israel's criticism against God (3:13-15)
 - D. The remnant consoled (3:16-4:6)

Major Themes

Covenant keeping

The coming of the Lord

The remnant

God's Character in Malachi

Loving (1:2-3)

Jesus in Malachi

The forerunner, who would be John the Baptist, is prophesied.

There is reference to "the Messenger of the covenant" (3:1).

"Behold, He is coming" (3:1).

Key Words in Malachi

Day (Hebrew *yom*); 3:2; 3:17; 4:1; 4:3; 4:5

Try (Hebrew *bachan*); "to try" or "to put to the test." 3:10

Elsewhere in the World...

The temple of Zeus at Olympia is begun in Greece.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament. Some suggest it stands alone, coming after anything else in the entire Old Testament. Likely, though, it fits between the final two chapters of Nehemiah, as he speaks to many of the problems through prophecy that Nehemiah would return and try to eliminate through his leadership.