

MALACHI, Introduction & Chapters 1-4

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class, January 2004

A. AUTHOR = Malachi

(his name means "my messenger"; he's the last messenger from God until Jesus came—nothing is known of him personally, and his name appears nowhere else in the Old Testament).

B. DATE: 450-400 BC

C. THE TIMES:

1. The book was written about a hundred years after the Jews had returned to Palestine from captivity.
2. Jerusalem and the Temple had been re-built: there had been a period of revival under Nehemiah (Nehemiah 10:28-39), but now, the people had become complacent.
3. The people and priests had backslidden; their worship and service to God was lacking; they had become guilty of such sins as unfaithfulness, adultery, dishonesty, and complacency.

D. PURPOSE: Malachi writes to rebuke the people and call them to repentance.

E. STYLE: Malachi writes in a "question-and-answer" style.

I. GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL & COMPLAINT AGAIN, chapter 1

A. God's great love of Israel is announced, vv. 1-5

B. Yet, Israel was guilty of false worship, vv. 6-14

1. God had been dishonored, and His priests despised His name.
2. They were offering their worst in worship to God: polluted bread, lame sacrifices (Compare Leviticus 22:17; Deuteronomy 15:21).
3. They profaned the table of the Lord!
4. The priests found their work a boring chore -a "weariness." .
5. God curses those who would sacrifice unto him "a corrupt thing."

II. ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS, chapter 2

A. The priests had become unfaithful, vv. 1-9

1. God will send a curse upon them
2. Three specific charges are made against them.
3. They had not kept God's ways!

B. God condemns Israel's mixed marriages, vv. 10-12

Compare Exodus 34:14-16; Deuteronomy 7:3; 1 Kings 11:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23-28

C. God condemns Israel's treachery in marriage, vv. 13-17

1. They were dealing wrongly against their wife: "of thy covenant."
2. God hates divorce!
3. They wearied God with their words.

III. GOD'S MESSENGER & MORE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE PEOPLE, chapter 3

A. God's coming messenger, vv. 1-6

Compare Isaiah 40: 3-5; Malachi 4:5; Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1: 23

B. Robbery, vv. 7-12

1. The people had not kept God's ordinances.
2. They were guilty of robbing God in failing to bring forth their tithes and offerings (see Leviticus 27:30-33).
3. God promises to bless them if they will but obey Him!

C. Harsh words against God, vv.13-15

1. They had said "It is vain to serve God."
2. God calls these words "stout" (meaning hard, harsh, violent),

D. The distinction between good and bad, vv .16-18

IV. GOD'S JUDGMENT, chapter 4

A. The day of God's wrath is coming, vv. 1-4

B. God will send "Elijah the prophet" -*compare Matthew 17:9-13; 11:7-15; Luke 1:17*