

Malachi

The Old Testament Final Message

I. Introduction to Malachi

Malachi is the 39th and final book of the Old Testament. Malachi is the twelfth and last of the Old Testament prophets. The book gets its name from its author. All we know of him is found in Malachi 1:1. His name means 'messenger.' This is an appropriate name for a prophet of God who would deliver the Old Covenant's final message. After Malachi's prophecy, Heaven would go silent for 400 years.

This silence would be broken by:

- 1) The voice of the angel to Mary and Joseph in Luke 1:31-33 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."
Matthew 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."
- 2) The fulfillment of one of Malachi's predictions of the rise of John the Baptist, in Malachi 3:1 and Malachi 4:5-6.
- 3) John's primary message was "Prepare yourself, Christ is coming." John 1:29
John's message was the fulfillment of the unified voice of the Old Testament.

Since the fall, Heaven has been promising One who would come as Messiah to provide atonement for sin and restore man to God. Genesis 3:15 provides the first of these prophecies and Malachi 4:2 provides the final brush stroke of the prophetic picture of the coming Messiah.

Let's take a few minutes to highlight some other prophecies that paint the picture of the coming Messiah.

- Born to a virgin (Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14)
- Born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:6, Micah 5:2)
- Came out of Egypt (Matthew 2:5, Hosea 11:1)
- Came from Nazareth (Matthew 2:23)
- John proceeds Him (Matthew 3:3, Isaiah 40:3)
- In Galilee (Matthew 4:15, Isaiah 9:1-2)
- Heals the sick (Matthew 8:16, Isaiah 53:4)
- Bruised Reed (Matthew 12:17, Isaiah 42:1-4)
- Parables (Matthew 13:14, Isaiah 6:9-10)
- Public reaction Matthew 15:8, Isaiah 29:13)
- Triumphant entry (Matthew 21:5, Zechariah 9:9)
- Rejected (Matthew 21:42, Psalm 118:22)
- Abandoned (Matthew 26:31, Zechariah 13:7)
- Betrayed (Matthew 27:9, Psalm Jeremiah 326-9)
- Soldiers gambled (Matthew 27:35, psalm 22:18)
- Forsaken (Matthew 27:40, Psalm 22:1)

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All of these prophecies are only what Matthew point's out in his account of Christ's life. The Scriptures are filled with dozens even hundreds of further brush strokes that point the way to the portrait of the Messiah. This includes further descriptions of His lineage, ministry, death, resurrection, and His soon return.

The events of Malachi find their place in the closing chapters of Nehemiah. Keep in mind, the Old Testament narrative comes to a close after Esther. The poetic and prophetic books fit somewhere in the pages of the narrative. Malachi was a contemporary of Nehemiah and Ezra! We know this because of the similarity of situation addressed in Nehemiah 13 and Malachi.

In 536 B.C. Zerrubabel led 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Haggai and Zechariah played a key role in assisting in the work. Sixty years later, Ezra, the scribe, arrived to encourage commitment to the Lord. Fourteen years later, Nehemiah arrived to begin rebuilding the city walls. The combined efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra stirred the people to commit themselves to the Lord.

Nehemiah records their commitment in Nehemiah 8. Ezra taught the people the Word of God (Nehemiah 8:8) and in response they:

- Celebrated the Feast of Booths
- Separated themselves from ungodly influences (Nehemiah 10:28)
- Committed to obey the Word of God (Nehemiah 10:29)
- Committed to do marriage right (Nehemiah 10:30)
- Committed to keep the Sabbath (Nehemiah 10:31)
- Committed to give to the work of the Lord (Nehemiah 10:32)

Sadly, their commitments did not last long. Soon they turned back to the ungodly behaviors they once left behind.

- Re-established unhealthy relationships (Nehemiah 13:8)
- Stopped giving to the work of the Lord (Nehemiah 13:10)
- Compromised on God's ideal for marriage (Nehemiah 13:22)
- Broke the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15)

Malachi is written during the closing chapters of Nehemiah and addresses the sinful behaviors of the people of God. As he addresses their conduct, they respond by arguing. Warren Wiersbe says, "It is always a dangerous thing when people argue with God and try to defend their sinful ways."

II. Outline of Malachi

Malachi is divided into four chapters in the English versions. The fifty-five verses which up the book of Malachi all hinge on a series of messages and repose from the people.

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Possible Outline:

Chapter 1

- A. God's love, verses 1-5
- B. Despising God, verses 6-14

Chapter 2

- A. The priests, verses 1-9
- B. Marriage, verses 10-17

Chapter 3

- A. Coming of Christ, verses 1-7
- B. Tithing, verses 8-15
- C. Books, verses 16-18

Chapter 4

- A. Christ is coming

Chapter 1 God's Love

- A. God's love is expressed in both choosing and restoring Israel.

Chapter 2 (Part one) The Priests

- A. "You despise My name . . ." (Malachi 1:6). They despised God by offering blind, sick, and stolen offerings. God desires our best.

Chapter 2 (Part two) Marriage

- A. Marriage was described by God in the garden as the bedrock upon which society would be built.
- B. Marriage is defined in Scripture as one man and one woman for life. (Matthew 19: 4-6)
- C. Marriage was designed to provide a safe and healthy environment to raise godly children.
- D. Marriage was designed to be a testimony, to the unsaved, of the love of God.
- E. However, the people of God profaned marriage:
 - Failed to see it as a covenant
 - Mistreated spouse
 - Divorce
 - Today we also redefine marriage

Chapter 3 Christ is Coming

He will be preceded by a messenger. He will come to purify (Matthew 12:3)

A. Old Testament Tithing

Three key principles are addressed

- Old Testament Law requiring the people to give a tenth to the work of God.
- Offering: included free-will offering above the tithe
- Trusting: giving is an evidence of trust.

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B. New Testament Tithing

The Old Testament Law of the tithe is not taught in the New Testament. The law of giving replaces the tithe. Key principles behind giving that ought to influence your decision.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7 Purpose in your heart; time should be spent praying about how much to give.
- 1 Corinthians 4:7 All we have we received from the Lord
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-3 Giving should be costly, (Mark 12:41-44)
- 2 Corinthians 9:6 Giving should be generous
- 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8:10-11 Giving should be consistent
- Matthew 6:2 Giving is expected
- 2 Corinthians 9:6 Giving should not be manipulated
- 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8:16-21 Giving should be to your local church and reputable ministries

C. Book of Remembrance

The Bible speaks of at least four very important books:

- Book of Works
- Book of the Lamb
- Book of Remembrance
- The Bible

Chapter 4 The Coming Messiah – the Great Day of God

“But to you who fear My name the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. . .” Malachi 4 2

III. Why Study Malachi

In Malachi we learn many lessons on election, marriage, giving.

IV. Christ in Malachi

Throughout the book of Malachi there are references to Christ, but the last two chapters speak pointedly of Christ’s return and what will precede it (Chapter 3:1-1) His arrival.