

Purpose

To confront the people with their sins and to restore their relationship with God

Meaning of Name

“Messenger”

Date Written

Approximately 430 BC

Setting

Malachi, Haggai, and Zechariah were post-exilic prophets to Judah. Haggai and Zechariah rebuked the people for their failure to rebuild the Temple. Malachi confronted them with their neglect of the Temple and their false and profane worship.

Key People

Malachi and the priests

Key Verses

“The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace... But for you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.”
Malachi 4:1, 2

Special Features

Malachi’s literary style employs a dramatic use of questions asked by God and His people (see 3:7, 8).

An Overview (4 Chapters)

- The Sinful Priests (1:1-2:9)
- The Sinful People (2:10-3:15)
- The Faithful Few (3:16-4:6)

Major Themes

- *God’s Love:* Because God loves us so much, He hates hypocrisy and careless living. This kind of living denies Him the relationship that He wants to have with us. What we give and how we live reflects the sincerity of our love for God.
- *The Sin of the Priests:* Malachi singled out the priests for condemnation. They knew what God required, yet their sacrifices were unworthy and their service was insincere; they were lazy, arrogant, and insensitive. They had a casual attitude towards the worship of God and observance of God’s standards. If religious leaders go wrong, how will the people be led?
- *The Sin of the People:* The people had not learned the lesson of the Exile, nor had they listened to the prophets. Men were callously divorcing their faithful wives to marry younger pagan women. This was against God’s law because it disobeyed His commands about marriage and threatened the religious training of the children. But pride had hardened the hearts of the people.
- *The Lord’s Coming:* God’s love for His faithful people is demonstrated by the Messiah’s coming. The Messiah will lead the people to the realization of all their fondest hopes. The day of the Lord’s coming will be a day of comfort and healing for a faithful few, and a day of judgment for those who reject Him.