

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MALACHI

### CONTEXT

“Malachi” in Hebrew means “my messenger.” This book was written about 430 B.C. during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when purifying reforms were needed among God’s people. Zerubbabel’s temple had been rebuilt, urged on by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. However, high hopes faded into disillusionment and poverty. The people began to doubt God’s promises, leading to widespread spiritual and moral corruption. Malachi challenges the post-exile Israelites who grew apathetic and cynical regarding God’s love.

### STRUCTURE

The book consists of six accusations by God, Israel's denial, and God's final word:

1. Doubt of God's Love: God affirms His eternal love for Israel, but the people question it based on their current difficult circumstances.
2. Defiled Worship: The priests are rebuked for showing contempt for God’s name by accepting blind, lame, and sick animals as sacrifices.
3. Treachery in Marriage: Israelite men are condemned for divorcing their wives to marry foreign women who worshipped idols, breaking their marital and spiritual covenants.
4. Doubting God's Justice: The people question why the wicked prosper and demand justice. God responds by promising to send a messenger to purify the nation.
5. Robbing God: God accuses the people of withholding their tithes and offerings. He promises that if they bring the full tithe, He will pour out abundant blessings.
6. Arrogance against God: The people claim it is useless to serve God, but Malachi reminds them that God keeps a "book of remembrance" for those who honor Him.

### MESSIANIC FORESHADOWING

The book concludes with a promise of the "Day of the Lord", which will bring judgment on the wicked and vindication for the righteous. God promises to send "Elijah the prophet" before that great and dreadful day. The New Testament identifies this person as John the Baptist. Malachi prophesied that “suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple” (3:1). This happened in the person of Jesus Christ. The book ends with a warning. This issued in a 400 year period of prophetic silence until the preaching of John the Baptist and the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## APPLICATION

Malachi teaches that God's love for His people is steadfast, but He expects from His people wholehearted reverence and obedience in all areas of life, including worship, finances, and relationships. God promises to pour out blessings on those who revere his Name.