

# Outline of Malachi

We hope this outline of Malachi will help you as you study God's Word. May you discover the riches of His goodness in its pages.

Malachi appears to be a contemporary of Nehemiah, prophesying approximately 70 years after the end of Zechariah's prophecy, and the last prophet in Old Testament Scripture. Malachi apparently prophesied while Nehemiah was in Babylon (Nehemiah 13:6), and addresses some similar sins. The problem with Israel was no longer idolatry, but spiritual indifference. Nothing mattered. Everyone was accepted by God and it was considered vain to be overly religious. God was distant and not immediately involved in the lives of people. This was the prevailing philosophy.

Into this mess marched Malachi with a message. In fact, the name "Malachi" means "my messenger." Malachi may be known as the rhetorical prophet. There is a standard motif: God makes a statement, the hearers contest the truth of the statement, and God demonstrates its truthfulness. This assertion, objection, and defense argument is readily apparent in the book, occurring seven times:

1. God loved Israel (1:2-5)
2. The priests despised God's name (1:6-7a)
3. The priests have offered defiled food (1:7a-14)
4. You have wearied the LORD (2:17)
5. Return to Me (3:7) (partial)
6. You have robbed Me (3:8-12)
7. You have spoken harshly against Me (3:13-14)

The book begins with the statement of God's love and ends with a curse. In response to the people's view of a distant God, God became personally involved in the book. 47 of the 55 verses involved God speaking in the first person to His people. 26 times the phrase "says the LORD of hosts" or a similar phrase appears.

The book is the last prophesy given. The book centers on laxity among the priests. For Christians, the next pronouncement of God after Malachi was to a priest, some 430 years later, by the name of Zechariah. The Old Testament ends and the New Testament picks up with God speaking to a priest(s). For Jews, this is the last Scriptural pronouncement of God for the last 2,400 years. Where is God? It is fitting that the book asks and answers this question. Never, since God spoke to Abraham, had there been a similar period of silence on the part of God. Between Jacob and Moses may have been around 400 years. Thereafter, God spoke to Joshua, to the Judges, to David, to Solomon, to the kings through the prophets, and to Israel after the Captivity through Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and now Malachi. Suddenly, the speaking God grew silent.

There are certain jewels in the book. Malachi 1:11 tells us that God's name will be great among the Gentiles throughout the earth. Malachi 3:1 tells us about the coming of God. Malachi 3:6 tells us about the immutability of God. Malachi 3:7 repeats Zechariah 1:3. Malachi 3:16-17 tells us that God will remember those who fear Him. Malachi 4:5-6 speaks of the coming of Elijah before the day of the LORD.

The book calls us to examine the reality of our relationship with Christ.

**Date:** 432 B.C.

Following a verse of introduction, the book is divided as follows:

- I. God's Love 1:2-5**
- II. The Priests' Contempt 1:6-14**
- III. Instruction for the Priests 2:1-9**
- IV. Instruction on Marital Faithfulness 2:10-16**
- V. The LORD's Return 2:17-4:6**

**Key Idea:** A book of remembrance is being written

**Key Passage:** 2:17

**Key Lesson:** Serve God as if your life depended on it.