

Malachi

Breakdown

- Malachi's name means "my messenger." The book of Malachi is an invaluable source concerning the restored Jewish community in Jerusalem during the Persian period, the fifth century B.C. Two themes are predominant: the sin and apostasy of God's people (see Malachi 1-2); and the coming judgment upon the faithless, with blessings promised for those who seek the Lord and turn away from evil (see Malachi 3-4).

Main Points

- Malachi is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. To understand this, read Malachi 3:1. Who is "my messenger"? Read John 1:23 and Luke 3:3-4. "Malachi" means "my messenger" (that is, "of the Lord").
- Like John the Baptist, about whom he prophesied, Malachi was but a voice. There were 400 years of silence between the voice of Malachi and the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4).

Did you know?

- The Old Testament closes with the word "curse" (Malachi 4:6). The New Testament closes with blessing: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Revelation 22:21).
- By the time of Malachi, a hundred years or more had passed since the Jews had returned to Jerusalem after the captivity in Babylon. Malachi is the last prophet to speak to Israel in her own land. "Israel" here refers to the entire remnant of Israel and Judah who returned after the exile. The initial enthusiasm after the return from Babylon had dissipated. Following a period of revival, described in Nehemiah 10:28-39, the people had become religiously cold and morally lax.
- The prophet Malachi came as a reformer, but he encouraged while he rebuked. He dealt with a confused and discouraged people, whose faith in God seemed to be in danger of collapse. If they had not already become hostile to Jehovah, they were in real danger of becoming thoroughly skeptical.

Further Thought

- From Nehemiah to the beginning of the New Testament, 400 years passed by. During this period, no biblical prophet spoke or wrote. In fact, it is called the period of silence. But as we come to the year when Jesus was born, it is important that we know some of the things that happened during that span of 400 years.