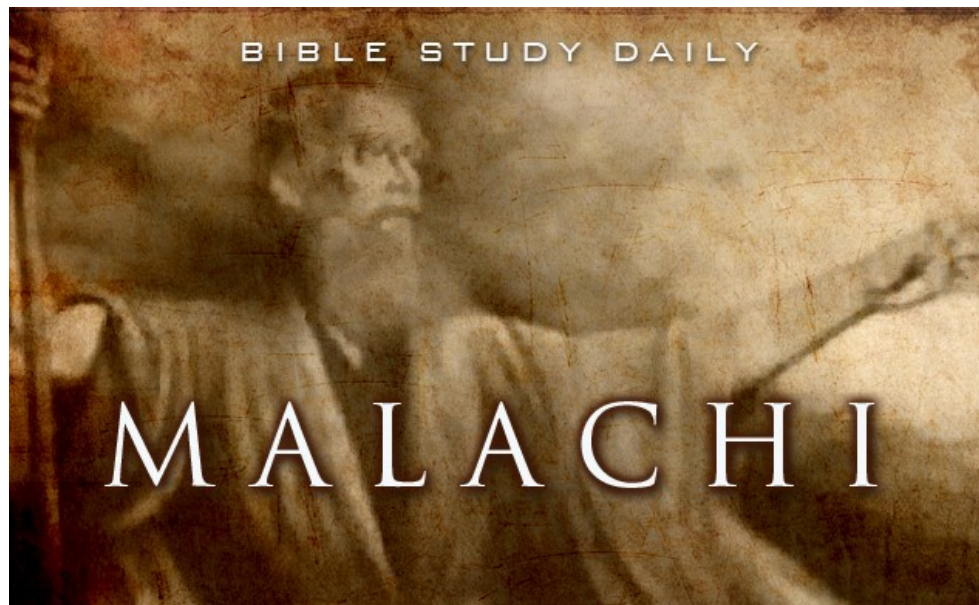




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Malachi as well as my study notes for the book.

## Name

The book of Malachi is named for its author, Malachi. Malachi means “my messenger.”

## Author

Malachi, who received the oracle from the Lord to Israel (v. 1).

## Genre

Prophecy (twelfth of twelve books commonly referred to as the “Minor Prophets”).

## Literary Form

Prophetic prose. Malachi uses an unusual literary form known as “disputational.” He introduces a charge or command to the people, then characterizes the people disputing the charge, and concludes by proving the charge correct. He uses this technique in five of the six oracles he delivers (did not use it in message #3).

Oracle 1. God’s love for Israel.

Oracle 2. Disrespect God.

Oracle 3. Unfaithful to God.

Oracle 4. Speak and act as though there is no God.

Oracle 5. Disobedient to God.

Oracle 6. Blasphemy against God.

## Time Frame

While Malachi does not date the book, he does provide some clues in his writing that allow us to date his ministry sometime after 538 B.C. because Malachi refers to a Persian governor ([Malachi 1:8](#)). It would also have been written after the temple was rebuilt (515 B.C.) and before 430 B.C. (Nehemiah’s second term as governor).


Many scholars believe the book was likely written sometime between 450-430 B.C. because:

Malachi mentioned the priests so the temple had to have been rebuilt, and the sacrificial system re-established.

The moral and spiritual climate was similar to what Ezra described in 458 B.C, and Nehemiah in 444 B.C.

## Emphasis

The emphasis of the book of Malachi is on God’s message to the people (God is speaking [is 47](#) of the 55 verses of the book). If the people expect to receive



the blessings God has promised they must remain faithful to Him (covenant faithfulness will produce covenant blessing). There are four primary sections: 1) Malachi points out the nations sins, 2) God provides instruction for sincere worship, 3) Justice in the form of judgement will occur if they are disobedient, and 4) There will be a day of salvation and blessing in the future for those who are faithful.

## Outline

- 1) The Lord's love for Israel (1:1-1:6)
- 2) The disobedience of the priests (1:6-2:9)
- 3) The disobedience of the people (2:10-2:16)
- 4) The judgement when the Lord returns (2:17-3:6)
- 5) The sins of the people (3:7-12)
- 6) The coming of the Day of the Lord (3:13-4:3)
- 7) Conclusion (4:4-4:6)

# What I Noticed Today (Malachi 1-4)

## Malachi 1

In verse 1 the word of the Lord directed to Israel came to Malachi.

**Oracle 1.** In verses 2-5 God says, “I have loved you.” The people say, “How have you loved us?” It demonstrates Israel’s lack of faith in God despite the covenant He made with them. God says, “I have loved Jacob” and hated Esau. Proof of His love was that He restored Israel but condemned Esau calling them a wicked country with whom the Lord will be angry forever.

**Oracle 2.** In verses 6-14 God charges the priests not honoring Him and of despising His name. They ask how we have despised your name? God answers saying they despised His name by offering polluted sacrifices (blind, sick, lame animals). Therefore, says the Lord, I will not accept your sacrifices.

**Note:** The fifth commandment is to honor your father and mother (Exodus 20:12). The priests are not honoring God the Father by offering impure sacrifices while they keep the best for themselves. The priests especially should have been aware of the proper sacrifices since they were responsible for teaching the people (Leviticus 22:17-30).

## Malachi 2

**Oracle 2 (cont’d).** In verses 1-9 Malachi continues with an admonition from God. The priests must honor God and failure to do so would result in the removal of God’s blessings not only for them but also for the families and future generations.

**Note:** The Mosaic covenant required a curse of hardship against any who disobeyed the Lord. (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

The Lord said true instruction was on Levi’s lips. The people should be able to turn to the priests for true wisdom and instruction. Instead, these priests had corrupted the covenant and made people stumble.

**Note:** The word for “instruction” is Torah which is the Law of God. So when God says the priests are responsible for proper instruction He is referring to His Law.

**Oracle 3.** In verses 10-16 Malachi changes form in this third oracle. Here he begins with three questions: 1) Have we, not all one Father, 2) Has not one Father created us, and 3) Why then are we faithless to one another profaning the covenant of our fathers?

God charges the people with being faithless. Judah had profaned the sanctuary of the Lord. They had intermarried with pagan women who

worshipped false gods. The men who intermarried would be cut off.

**Note:** Intermarriage with pagans was expressly forbidden for precisely this reason (Exodus 34:11-16).

God then charges people with the sin of divorce. The people cry at the altar wondering why the Lord does not bless their offerings without regard to the fact that they had not been faithful to their wives and had divorced them. The Lord's intention was to bless the union with His spirit and they would have Godly children. To divorce your Jewish wife in order to marry a pagan was to break faith with God.

**Oracle 4.** In verse 17 Malachi charges the people with wearying the Lord with their words. The people ask how we have wearied the Lord? Malachi answers by thinking that everyone who does evil is good in the eyes of the Lord, or by asking where God's justice is.

**Note:** There was confusion among the people because they understood adherence to God's Law was a condition of blessing from God (the covenant). However, God also blessed the wicked (Matthew 5:45, the rain falls on the righteous as well as the wicked). This led people to wonder where God's justice in all this was.

### Malachi 3

**Oracle 4 (cont'd).** In verses 1-6 The Lord responds saying He will send a messenger who will come suddenly into His temple. When He comes He will refine and purify the sons of Levi (the priests) and they will bring a righteous offering to the Lord. After the judgment of the Levites, the Lord will come to judge the nation and will be a witness against the sorcerers, adulterers, those who swear falsely, all those who oppress others, and those who do not fear the Lord. However, God has promised a remnant will survive the judgment.


**Oracle 5.** In verses 7-12 Malachi charges the people for generations of with having turned aside from God's statutes. God says if the people will return to me I will return to them. The people ask, how are we to return and how do we rob God? God responds they have robbed Him in their tithes and offerings.

**Note:** In the second oracle the issue with the offerings was they were profaned (Malachi 1:7-14). In this case, the issue was they were not offering everything they should have. The first issue was the quality of the offering. The second issue was the quantity of the offering.

God said the whole nation was robbing Him by not bringing in their whole tithe. Thus, a curse fell upon the whole nation.

God challenges the people to bring their whole tithe into the storehouse (the temple storehouses for the priests). The Lord affirms His covenant with the people saying if they do this they will be blessed with plenty and all the nations will call you blessed.

**Note:** This oracle is often used to encourage people today to tithe



with a promise of blessing from God if they obey. Some caution is needed in applying this verse today. Christians are not living under the Mosaic Law and are not operating under the old covenant. We have a new covenant in Christ Jesus (Romans 10:4, Galatians 5:1-4, Hebrews 8:13).

**Oracle 6.** In verses 13-18 the Lord charges the people with speaking harshly to him. The people ask how they have spoken harshly. God responds saying they said serving God was in vain because it did them no good and evildoers not only prospered but put God to the test and escaped.

Then some of those who feared the Lord spoke with one another and the Lord heard them. He wrote their names in a book of remembrance. The Lord said they were His treasured possession and He will spare them. Then once again the people will see how the Lord judges between the righteous and the wicked.

**Note:** “The day” referenced in verse 17 is the Day of the Lord when the Lord judges the entire earth.

## Malachi 4

**Oracle 6 (cont’d).** In verses 1-3 Malachi describes the day is coming when the Lord will judge the earth. The arrogant and evildoers will be like stubble burned in a fire with no descendants (no root or branch) remaining. Those who fear the Lord and are righteous will survive the day of the Lord’s judgment. The righteous will tread the wicked under the soles of their feet.

**Conclusion.** In verses 4-6 Malachi concludes reminding the people of the Mosaic Covenant, to follow the laws and statutes given to Moses. Elijah will come and minister to the people before the “great and awesome Day of the Lord,” and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children’s hearts to their fathers.

**Note:** Elijah is mentioned often in the New Testament and in several of those there is a connection with John the Baptist. However, John said I am no Elijah (John 1:21, 1:25). John’s ministry was similar to Elijah’s in that he brought father’s and son’s hearts together (Luke 1:16-17).

I believe the two witnesses in the Day of the Lord described in Revelation 11:3-12 will be Moses and Elijah, just as Malachi prophesied.