

MALACHI

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

39

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

4

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

The people of Judah had been living in Jerusalem for more than 100 years after the Babylonian exile. Although the Temple had been rebuilt, there was corruption in the priesthood and the people had become spiritually disinterested. Through Malachi, God calls the priests and people to repentance.



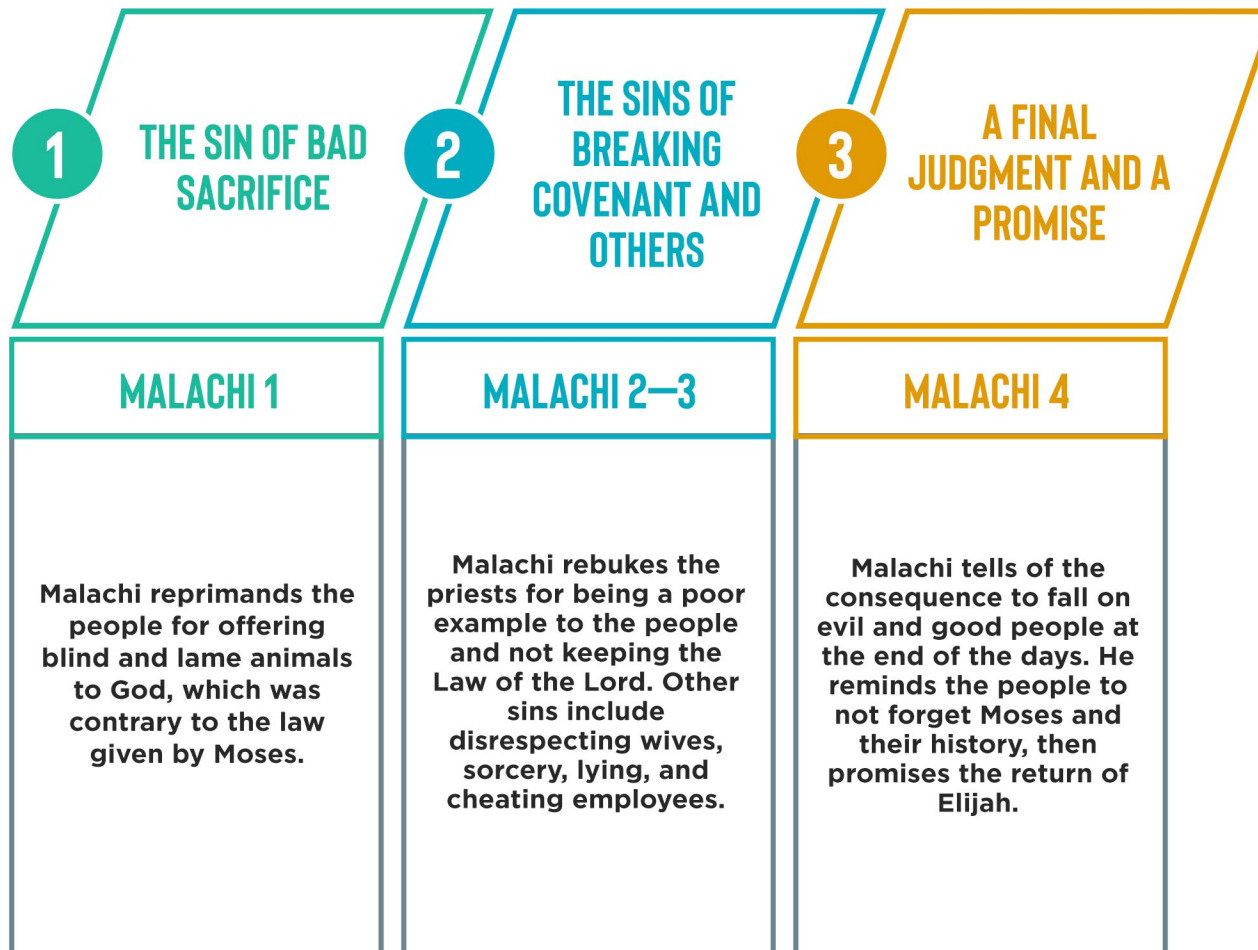
WRITTEN
433-424 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
424 BC-24 AD



AUTHOR
Malachi the Prophet



MALACHI

AT-A-GLANCE

BOOK(S) WRITTEN:

Book of Malachi

TYPE OF BOOK(S):

Minor Prophecy (Malachi is the 12th and final of the 12 Minor Prophets)

PROBABLE DATES OF WRITING:

433-424 BC



AUTHOR BACKGROUND:

Malachi has the privilege of being the last of the Old Testament prophets. The Temple had been completed for nearly 100 years, and Malachi was assessing the people's behavior as well as looking at future events involving the arrival of the Messiah some 300 years later. Already there was corruption in the priesthood and the people had become spiritually disinterested.

Through Malachi, God showed the people where they were falling short and in danger of hurting themselves and others again.



UNUSUAL PLACES THIS AUTHOR WROTE:

None



UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THIS AUTHOR WROTE:

They refer Malachi wrote about a future event that haunted many during the life of Christ. The book closes with the famous passage Malachi 4:5: "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes."

Malachi's prophecy refers to John the Baptist and is a verse most religious leaders knew about when Christ was alive. Jesus confirms the spirit of Elijah was in John the Baptist. But the scholarly Jews were looking for the physical appearance of Elijah. Therefore, they missed the fact that John was God's messenger to announce the Messiah was here.

The Hebrew Scriptures were Written for Christians

*** To instruct and encourage us**

For whatever was written in former days [Old Testament] was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

*** To provide moral and spiritual guidance**

All Scripture [Old & New Testaments] is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*** To warn us with examples of obedience and failure.**

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down [in the Old Testament] for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages [Christian era] has come.

1 Corinthians 10:11

*** To prophesy, pointing to Jesus as the Messiah who claimed:**

“...Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

Luke 24:44-45

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Matthew 5:17

The first time through the Old Testament, you will not understand it all. That's O.K. It's a lifelong learning opportunity. The more you grow to understand it, the more you'll deepen your appreciation of the New Testament. Without it, so much of what Jesus came to do wouldn't have had any context. Without the laws, feasts, & prophecies, Jesus would have shown up & died, but no one would have understood what He was doing. Those thousands of years of preparation, coming through the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac & Jacob/Israel), slavery in & exodus from Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, receiving the Law of Moses, entering the Promised Land, being led by Judges & ruled by Kings, exiled into captivity, & finally being restored—laid the groundwork for the Messiah to appear.

The Time (of God's Silence) Between the Testaments - (431 B.C. – A.D. 28)

Through the nation of Israel, God was revealing Himself and His plan to the world. He established a covenant with them—they were to be faithful to Him and keep His commandments. He would be their God, bless them, and use them to carry out his rescue mission to bring all people back into relationship with Him. But Israel failed miserably, and became just like all the surrounding nations, even worse, because they knew better.

After centuries of patience, God made good on his warnings to let Israel be wiped out by invading nations, and carried away into exile. Most were either killed or dispersed into other nations and lost forever. But a small remnant from the tribe of Judah were temporarily taken captive by Babylon.

In the 6th century B.C. (Before Christ), Daniel records dreams & prophecies of future successive kingdoms after Babylon (Daniel 2:31-49, 7-8). These were fulfilled as recorded by Scripture:

538-330 Persian Rule – Defeated the Babylonian Empire; Permitted Jews to begin returning home to Judah & aided in the re-building of the Temple (completed in 516); Judah is a Persian province becoming known as Judea and/or Palestine; Division between Jews who maintained cultural, religious purity in Judea & those who had intermarried—Samaritans.

334-160 Greek Rule - Alexander the Great takes Macedonian/Greek army through Palestine; showed consideration & spared Jerusalem which submitted in 332; Dies 323; No heir so empire fell to 4 generals who divided empire into 4 regions; 2 generals lead Greek kingdoms which rule over Judea—first, the Ptolemaic based in Egypt until 198 BC, then the Seleucid based in Syria until 160 BC.

In 167 B.C. King Antiochus Epiphanes who hated the Jews, enforced Hellenization, desecrated the Temple with idols & pagan sacrifices (the abomination of desolation prophesied in Dan. 11:31), banned Jewish practices like Sabbath observance, circumcision, & Scripture study; he killed those possessing copies of the Scriptures, tortured them to force renunciation, went through villages destroying copies of Scriptures, & appointed corrupt priests; he plundered Jerusalem & his forces massacred & enslaved thousands of Jews who resisted.

An old man named Mattathias & his sons gathered loyal Jews to heroically rebel through guerilla warfare in 167 B.C.—they were called the Maccabeans; Fought for 3 years. Defeat Syrians; Jerusalem taken back & Temple re-dedicated (Hanukkah begun). By 160 B.C. the revolt is over with semi-autonomous rule. By 142 B.C. they gain full independence.

142-63 Independence – Establishes a family line of priest-rulers (Hasmonean Dynasty, named after one of the early Maccabean leaders), but they become dictatorial, corrupt, immoral, even pagan. They ask Romans come restore order

63 Roman Rule - Palestine ruled by the Roman Republic which became the Roman Empire in 27 B.C. with the first emperor, Caesar Augustus. This includes the Herodian Dynasty (37-3 B.C.) when Herod the Great is appointed King of Judea (he wasn't fully Jewish, but aligned with Rome); Renovated & expanded Temple (20 B.C.–A.D. 64); Ruler when Jesus born, killed the children of Bethlehem; dies sometime soon after Jesus born, & Holy Land is divided between rulers. The Roman Empire's rules throughout all New Testament times (until A.D. 476).

3-5 Jesus born – due to conflicting dating methods & miscalculations, the date of his birth is not precisely known but does come before what it should have been—the year A.D. 1. (Anno Domini = the year of our Lord).

AD 28 John the Baptist