

## Malachi and Messengers

### Commentary for June 1, 2014 – in Malachi's Time, Jesus' Time, and our Time

This month's article is "The Book of Malachi" by Dr. Ernest Martin. The article presents Dr. Martin's analysis of this last book of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Read first the "[June 2014 Newsletter](#)." Malachi means "messenger." In this commentary, I focus on the last portion of Malachi, which mentions all too briefly the next messenger, the Elijah to come. This individual is presented in Malachi 4:4–6:

**<sup>4</sup>Remember the law of Moses, My servant, which I instructed him in Horeb for all Israel, the statutes and ordinances.**

**<sup>5</sup>Behold, I will send to you Elijah,<sup>1</sup> the prophet, before the coming of the great and advent [fearful, KJV] day of YHWH.**

**<sup>6</sup>And he will restore the heart of the fathers to the sons and the heart of the sons to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth to its doom."**

• *Malachi 4:4–6, Concordant Literal Version*

Most people ignore or forget verse 4, which brings the people to remembrance of "**the law of Moses**." This sentence is introductory to verses 5 and 6.<sup>2</sup> As Dr. Martin has written previously, the restoration of "**the heart of the fathers to the sons**" and vice versa, directly refers to the primary subject of all three verses: "**the law of Moses**".<sup>3</sup>

The Elijah will somehow "**restore the heart**" of the fathers to the sons. Who are the fathers? It is the Fathers of Israel who lived in the period from Genesis through Deuteronomy, those who lived the events of the law of Moses. It is not referring to their human fathers. The sons of Israel will finally relate to "**the law of Moses**" with proper understanding and obedience. This will occur before the "**day of YHWH**."

Let me rephrase for clarity. This restoration will bring a proper understanding of "**the Law of Moses**" to the people of Israel ("**the sons**") through the instruction of the Elijah to come. This Elijah was future to Jesus' time, according to Matthew 17:10–13, and he is still future to us today.

The coming Elijah is a different messenger than the one in Malachi 3:1. Note verses 1 and 2:

<sup>1</sup> Termed "Elias" instead of Elijah is used in the New Testament, King James Version.

<sup>2</sup> Note that Malachi 4:4 introduces a completely new subject from Malachi 4:1–3, which deals with "**the Day of YHWH**." Here are verses 1, 3 of Malachi chapter 4:

**"For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says YHWH of hosts, ...**

**And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says YHWH of hosts."**

<sup>3</sup> The discussion of the Day of YHWH in Malachi occurs in context of the verses in Malachi 3:2, 17, and 4:1, besides 4:3, 5.

**"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he** [John the Baptist] **shall prepare the way before me** ["me" = Jesus, from Matthew 17:10–13]: **and YHWH** [Jesus, who has authority to use the name YHWH], **whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even** [the same one who is] **the messenger of the covenant,<sup>4</sup> whom you** [YHWH] **delight in: behold, he shall come, says YHWH of hosts.**

[Verse 2] **But**

- [1] **who may abide** [endure or survive] **the day of his coming?** and
- [2] **who shall stand when he appears?**

[Why will abiding and standing be so difficult?] **for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' [laundrer's] soap."**

• **Malachi 3:1–2**

In other words much cleansing will be done, as explained in the verses following Malachi 3:1–2. Therefore, there is a connection between Malachi 3:1–2 and 4:4–6.

Both refer to an individual who will deliver a message who will announce the coming of YHWH (Jesus Christ, using the personal name of God the Father). Malachi 3:1–2, as Christ explains, refers to John the Baptist. Malachi 4:4–6 refers to a messenger who is still to come in our near future. How can we know this?

John the Baptist did not fulfill Malachi 4:4–6, although it is obvious that he tried hard to do so. Jesus quoted Malachi 3:1 and said John the Baptist did prepare the way, fulfilling that prophecy. Then there is almost a 2,000-year interval between Malachi 3:1 (fulfilled by John the Baptist) and 3:2 (still to occur and be fulfilled). So, Malachi 3:2 (and some following verses) connect with Malachi 4:4–6, as we know today.

The apostles thought Malachi 3:1–2 were connected and only a short time (if any time at all) would separate the two verses. They had no way of knowing there would be a delay between the fulfillments of the two verses. This was one of several reasons why they expected Christ to return within a generation of His ascension into heaven. Only with the disclosure of the Mystery did they understand it would be a very long time before Christ would return.<sup>5</sup>

Truly, we have more information now than the apostles had. Plus, we have almost 2,000 more years of history behind us with analysis of the Scriptures and we know what did not happen in those years — Elijah did not come. Nor did the Jesus the Messiah return.

Malachi says, until the Elijah comes, YHWH, in the person of Jesus Christ, will not return. It will take time for Elijah to turn the hearts of the sons to the fathers, and for them to accept, understand, and obey the law of Moses. Then they will be prepared to accept Jesus as their Messiah and as their Savior.

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<sup>4</sup> Jesus is the messenger of the covenant. He is different from the messenger who was to "prepare the way before me." Both are different from Elijah, who is still to come.

<sup>5</sup> See Dr. Martin's article "[The History of the Revelation of the Mystery](#)." Other material is covered in his "[The Mystery and the New Covenant](#)," and in his book [The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#).