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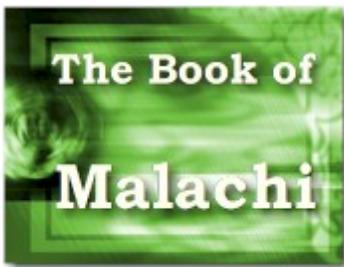
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The Book of Malachi

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Transcribed and edited by David Sielaff, June 2014

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for June 2014](#)



The prophecy of Malachi is the last of the twelve books of “minor” or shorter prophets that the ancient Hebrews placed on a single scroll. All were meant to be read as one book. These twelve prophecies deal with the whole of the nation of Israel, represented by twelve tribes of Israel. You and I figure into this because the end-time scenario of prophetic events, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, deals essentially with Israel and Jerusalem within the environment of the Middle East.

Since we are all part of the world community, the prophetic sequence of events in Scripture prior to the Second Advent of Christ will affect us in the Western world, or wherever we are on earth. This will be true even though most events will happen in the Middle East. The earth is getting smaller all the time.

The last three of the twelve prophecies are Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (see Table 1 on the next page). These three were composed after the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered the city of Jerusalem in the early part of the 6th century BC and both Jerusalem and the Temple of God were destroyed by fire.

The Jews were taken to Babylon where they stayed for almost 70 years. Later, in the time of King Cyrus of Persia, the Jews were allowed to go back to Palestine (see Ezra 1:1–4), about 50,000 of them, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. Zerubbabel is mentioned prominently in the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Zerubbabel himself was given several prophecies that he (or someone wearing his signet ring) would one day establish a Temple on earth that would have an everlasting value.

The Temple rebuilt back in the last part of the 6th century BC by those who came out of the Babylonian captivity was thought by some of them to be the major Temple of the prophecies uttered by Isaiah and others. They found that was not the case. What Haggai said about the establishment of the cornerstone for the Temple (the foundation stone laid on the 9th month and 24th day of the month of the Hebrew calendar, in our winter) was that it will be a very important day. From that day forward Israel was to be blessed beyond compare. God is in charge of all chronology.

Remember what Jesus said to the apostles after His resurrection from the dead just before He went back to heaven, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power”** (Acts 1:7). We are to take the message of God into the world and that is what we are doing. It is not that we

understand the chronological prophecies perfectly, as we do not. However, we are coming closer to the time of the end. Daniel 12:4, 9 say that as we approach the time of the end, knowledge of the prophecies will be increased, which includes chronology, geography, as well as major prophesied events.

The Last Book, and Conclusion to the Twelve

We have in this last book of the Twelve Minor Prophets, a conclusion to that one scroll called the “Minor Prophets.” All of these prophecies concern Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple whether a Temple was destroyed or rebuilt.

In the Book of Malachi the last thing he says is to look for an Elijah to come in the future. Zechariah said to look for a Zerubbabel to come and for a Joshua the High Priest to come. He also said to look for two anointed ones to come that the Book of Revelation calls the “Two Witnesses.”

Jesus, when He was on earth some three or four hundred years later, pointed to John the Baptist and said, “there is your Elijah right there.” He also said in Matthew chapter 17 when He was talking to the apostles that there was yet an Elijah to come. That message about the Elijah to come was the last prophecy of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Looking for an Elijah who will do what? He shall restore all things.¹ That is why Peter said in Acts 3:20–21, “**the times of restitution of all things**” were yet to come. A great refreshment is coming when the full knowledge of the prophecies will be known before they all come to pass. You and I will begin to comprehend chronology better, prophecy better, geography better, doctrine better — everything much better as we get closer to the time of the end. It is up to God to open up all these things. Of ourselves, we cannot understand these prophecies, even though they are written in the Scriptures. God will allow us to understand them.²

Malachi is the concluding book of the Twelve Minor Prophets to the twelve tribes of Israel, because all of these prophecies concern Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple, whether a Temple that was destroyed, a Temple to be rebuilt, or, as in Malachi, an extant rebuilt Temple. In Malachi, the center is Jerusalem.

The last thing Malachi says is to look for an Elijah to come in the future. Zechariah said to look for a Zerubbabel to come or a high priest named Joshua to come. He also said to look for two anointed ones to

Table 1: Structure of the Twelve Prophets

1	<i>Assyrian Period</i>	}	Hosea
2			Joel
3			Amos
4			Obadiah
5			Jonah
6			Micah
7			Nahum
8	<i>Babylonian Period</i>	}	Habakkuk
9			Zephaniah
10	<i>Post-Babylonian Period</i>	}	Haggai
11			Zechariah
12			MALACHI

¹ Malachi chapter 4 tells of the Day of YHWH. Malachi 4:5–6 gives a prophecy of Elijah in a time before that Day. *DWS*

² Some prophecies are separated from one verse to the next by 2,000 years in some cases, as far as fulfillment is concerned. I want to warn all of you about such situations. However, I also want to show you that as we approach the end of the age, knowledge shall be increased. God through His Holy Spirit, through you, me, and others in the world who submit to Him, will give more knowledge of what He intends to do as we approach this end of the age. There is a repetition of events in history. (See Dr. Martin’s last article “[The Great Generation and Modern Prophecy](#)” which goes into this subject in detail.) Many prophecies will be repeated exactly, point by point. For example, the Book of Revelation was written by Jesus Christ, but penned by the apostle John (Revelation 1:1–5). He garnered in all types of prophecies from various ages in which they were given to some 30 different people. John took a scripture from Isaiah and put it into a prophetic context of the period just before the Second Advent of Christ. He did the same by going into the Psalms, the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other places, putting them into a series of events normally associated with the last seven year time span leading to Christ’s return. Then he gives us a type of connected prophetic scheme so you and I would be aware how to interpret the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Olivet prophecies, and those given by the apostle Paul. As time goes on and we approach that period, God says He will open up more knowledge. The Bible was intended for you and for me at this present time. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 that all the events mentioned in the Holy Scriptures were for us: “**Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come**” (1 Corinthians 10:11). *ELM*

come, who are called the two witnesses in Revelation 11:1–14.³ They will restore the knowledge of the truth. We will be able to understand chronology, prophecy, geography, and doctrine much better, as we get closer to the time. We are beginning to grow in grace and in knowledge as never before.

The Book of Malachi told about times in our future. True, the environment in which he wrote was the last part of the 5th century BC, some 430 or perhaps 420 years before the birth of Jesus on this earth.⁴ That was the historical environment, and we find within his writings information concerning that time. I will give that to you because you cannot understand Malachi without knowing the history, the context in which it is written. It centers on Jerusalem, the temple (on the priesthood primarily), and the people of Israel, and what they were doing at the time.

Background

What is described here is a period of great disappointment. As I indicated in my presentation on Haggai, it was a time after the Babylonian captivity, when they were not experiencing what they thought they should experience. They came back to Jerusalem. They thought they obeyed God by doing so. But in Haggai the first chapter he said, **“consider your ways,”** because you have not done what I told you to do. They returned to Jerusalem, they started to build their own houses, but they forgot God’s house. Because God’s house was forgotten, He brought on them drought, mildew, problems, and difficulties.

Haggai said if Israel changed their ways, the very moment that they lay the foundation stone on the temple, which is in the month of Chislev, the 9th month and the 24th day of the month, from that day on God will bless you (Haggai 2:18–19). He left it at that. He also said Zerubbabel would be the one to have a signet and he would finalize the Temple. The Book of Haggai ended with that statement.

Two months later Zechariah comes along. In my presentation on Zechariah, that prophet had to explain what Haggai did not mean. Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaneous and lived about 60–70 years before Malachi. Zechariah came along and said what Haggai said about your blessing is true, but the Jerusalem and the Temple he is talking about is a future Jerusalem, a future Temple, a future High Priest Joshua. He is talking about a future Zerubbabel, a Prince of Israel through David. He is talking about future **“Sons of Oil”** known as the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:1–14. Zechariah came to explain what Haggai said, because after the time of Haggai, instead of being blessed after the 9th month the 24th day of the month, all the problems the people complained about continued.

Sixty years later, we read Malachi and they were still having difficulties. They still had not come to the prosperity they expected. You can imagine how many of the Jews who returned from Babylon would have been upset. They were saying, look, we have done our job, when in fact God said they had not. They had not done things the way that they should have. They should have considered their ways.

Haggai went on to say you are still unclean, and I can prove it. He said, **“If a man touches a dead body is not the man himself unclean and cannot go into the temple?”** And they said, “yes.” He said, “that is the way this nation is.” You are still unclean (Haggai 2:13–14). They were unclean and in the Book of Zechariah they continued to be unclean. Still later Zechariah said, **“I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”** (Zechariah 3:9–10). That sin will be taken away when the Branch came, the one who Zechariah said would come. That Branch was Jesus Christ. That Branch was to have seven eyes, symbolically speaking, that could see all things on the earth.⁵

³ See Dr. Martin’s three powerful presentations [“The Book of Haggai,”](#) [“Book of Haggai, Time Prophecies,”](#) and [“The Book of Zechariah,”](#) which give further information regarding the future Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. Regarding Elijah, Jesus pointed out some 400 years later and identified John the Baptist as the Elijah. He also said to His apostles in Matthew chapter 17 that there is yet an Elijah to come. Malachi is the source of Jesus’ reference. See [“The Elijah to Come.”](#) DWS

⁴ We cannot be sure when Malachi received and wrote his prophecy. DWS

⁵ In the Book of Revelation chapter 5, you find that Jesus was known as the Lamb with 7 eyes, 7 pairs of eyes, which is a symbol, of course. That means He has the seven spirits, able to know everything that is happening on earth. In fact, He is the one who

The prophets were trying to tell Israel that they should depend upon God, who controls chronology (Daniel 2:21).⁶ God did say in the Book of Zechariah that these events Israel thought would take place back there, will take place exactly as prophesied.

Here is what they expected to happen when they returned from Babylon. Read the first chapter of Ezra⁷:

“Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus the King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and he put it also in writing, saying,

‘Thus says Cyrus, King of Persia, YHWH God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth: and he has charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, [to do what?] and build the house of YHWH God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.’”

• *Ezra 1:1–3*

Cyrus, King of Persia, said that and there was a prophecy in the Book of Isaiah that spoke about this prophecy upon which the Jews were depending. Go to Isaiah chapter 44. I give this to show what the Jews were expecting and why Malachi tells them what will happen in the future. They expected it to happen then. Malachi says it will be in the future.⁸

Here is the prophecy that the Jews returning to Jerusalem (under Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest, about 50,000 of them) were relying upon. They were reading this prophecy of Isaiah:

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for you are my servant: I have formed you; you are my servant: O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions.”

• *Isaiah 44:21–22*

This blotting out of their transgressions is a very good thing. Other benefits will then occur:

“... You shall be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, you shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof. ...

That says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd [Cyrus who will let them return], and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, you shall be built; and to the Temple, your foundation shall be laid.’”

• *Isaiah 44:26, 28*

That is the prophecy they depended upon. Read the next section of chapter 45:

“Israel shall be saved in YHWH with an everlasting [age-lasting] salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded [mortified], world without end [for future ages].”

• *Isaiah 45:17*

They were to be blessed. They expected **“much”** blessing but suffered drought instead (Haggai 1:9). They had difficulties. Why? God told them to **“Consider your ways”** (Haggai 1:5, 7). Now Malachi comes along and has to tell them the same thing. They needed to rethink their actions. God has not failed; the

engineers everything that happens on earth, even in the Gentile lands, and certainly, what happens in Israel, Jerusalem, and in the Temple. *ELM*

⁶ The phrase **“times and seasons”** in Daniel 2:21 is also discussed in Acts 1:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1. **“Times and seasons”** are not for us to know, but they are under the control of God who will reveal them to us when He sees fit to do so. *DWS*

⁷ Ezra the Priest lived sometime after Zerubbabel and Joshua, but he records history of what happened. *ELM*

⁸ The prophet Zechariah also told them it would be in the future. It will happen, but not until certain events take place that are necessary for sin to be dealt with and to be taken out of the land, for the Branch to appear to do all these things (Zechariah chapters 12–14). *ELM*

people have gone astray. The Jews expected **“much.”** They received very little. God told them through Malachi they should consider their ways, not God.

God said if they rebuild the temple, if they lay the foundation stone on the 9th month and the 24th day of the month — the very day that you do that, I will begin to bless you. Zerubbabel, the Prince of Israel, will be the finisher of this temple. Zerubbabel and his signet will have some importance to that event (Haggai 2:23). When Haggai gave that prophecy, the Jews automatically began to say, well, from the 24th day of the 9th month (near December) we should be blessed.

Two months later, to the very day, Zechariah commenced his prophecies. He began to interpret and explain what Haggai meant, because in that two-month period the Jews were not experiencing prosperity. It might be asked, did God fail in His prophecies? Zechariah said, no, God did not fail.

Zechariah’s first eight chapters⁹ explain what Haggai actually meant, that there was a future time when a Jerusalem would be built up, when a new Temple would arrive that would have great glory associated with it. There would be a time in the future when there will be in a Jerusalem without walls, and everyone will be happy and joyful. A man by the name of **“The Branch”** would come along and take sin away from Israel and the world. The sin would be removed in one day’s time, which is a most remarkable prediction.

Zechariah goes on (in the last six chapters written by Jeremiah) that there will come a time in the future when God will send a spirit of grace and supplication upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when they will accept the one **“whom they have pierced”** (Zechariah 12:10). The one pierced was Jesus Christ. That prophecy had not yet happened in the time of Zechariah. These prophecies were for the future. Certain events took place when Jesus was here, but most of the events of Zechariah chapters 12, 13, and 14 are yet to take place just prior to His Second Coming.

Zechariah tells of a Jerusalem in the future, a Temple in the future, a Zerubbabel in the future, a Joshua the High Priest in the future, who will be with the Branch in the future who will take away sin and cleanse the land of its idolatry, and purify the people.

Malachi

During this interim period, instead of being blessed the Jews looked around and said, “we are still cursed by God.” Malachi comes along some 60 or 70 years after Haggai and Zechariah, after the foundation stone had been laid, and the people were still in difficulty. In fact, they were getting lackadaisical and having problems with God over the whole matter.

Now Malachi, according to the Jews, is a title, not a man’s name. Malachi means **“my messenger.”** It was applied to John the Baptist later as the **“messenger of God.”** Anyone who is a **“messenger of God”** can be called a *malachi*. It is like an angel is a *“malacha”* or a king in Hebrew is a *melek*. Although they are different words, they still have the basic concept of representation. Anyone who is a messenger from God can be called a *malachi*. So who is this Malachi? Jewish tradition has it, that Malachi was the title for the priest Ezra who compiled the Old Testament. He put it together for us and he had the right to be the last of the prophets of the Old Testament.

Zechariah said to look forward to a Zerubbabel to come, a Joshua the High Priest to come, two witnesses to come. The last thing Malachi says is that they are to look for an Elijah to come in the future. Jesus said John the Baptist was a type of that Elijah, but He also said in Matthew chapter 17 that Elijah yet is to come in the future.¹⁰ This Elijah will come before the great and terrible Day of YHWH. The Book of Malachi

⁹ The first eight chapters deal with the Zecharian prophecies, as I explained earlier, chapters 9 through 14 were written by Jeremiah a hundred or so years before, and tacked on to Zechariah. *ELM*

¹⁰ Matthew 17:10–13:

“And his disciples asked him, saying, ‘Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?’ And Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also

deals with our end time, but it is solidly based within the environment of Jerusalem and Judea in the last part of the 5th century BC, some 60 or 70 years after Haggai and Zechariah. Malachi, or rather Ezra, says:

“The burden of the word of YHWH to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you says YHWH. Yet you [the people] say, wherein have you loved us? [Notice their bad attitude.] Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? says YHWH: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons [jackal] of the wilderness.”

• *Malachi 1:1–3*

The land of Esau, Edom, had been laid waste. It is in southeastern Palestine in the area toward Petra.¹¹

“Whereas Edom [Jacob’s twin brother] said, ‘We are impoverished but we will return and build the desolate places’; thus says YHWH of hosts, ‘They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, the people against whom YHWH has indignation for ever [for the age]. And your eyes shall see [you Israelites], and you shall say, YHWH will be magnified from the border of Israel.’”

• *Malachi 1:4–5*

Edom and Israel border one another. God is saying, I have laid waste the land of Edom and you can go there to see it. The time is coming that your land will be so blessed that once you pass that border from Edom to Israel it will be from desolation into utter prosperity. That is what he means. The time is coming. But they say, “Well it is certainly not happening now.” Malachi agreed. It certainly was not happening then.¹² There will be waste and desolation in Edom, but cross the border into Israel and there will be prosperity and blessing. That time is coming. That is what Malachi starts with. Do you know what the Jews say to Malachi? They say, it is not happening with us:

“A son honors his father, God says, a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Says YHWH of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.”

• *Malachi 1:6*

God is focusing on the leaders of the Jews. Malachi (who was Ezra), was a priest. He said the priests were not leading the common people properly. This teaching is to religious leaders — keep that in mind — religious leaders back at that time, and to religious leaders in our time also.

“You offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and you say, ‘Wherein have we polluted you? In that you say, the table of YHWH is contemptible.’”

• *Malachi 1:7*

The altar was like a dining table at your home. The altar was God’s table in His home, symbolically a table where you sit and eat food. The morning sacrifice is breakfast, the evening sacrifice is supper. The altar was a table and they were offering polluted animals on that table.

“And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? [all sacrificial animals were to be without blemish] If you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto your governor [the Persian governor]; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person? says YHWH of hosts.”

• *Malachi 1:8*

the Son of man suffer of them.’ Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist.” *DWS*

¹¹ See Dr. Martin’s presentation “[The Most Significant Gentile Nation in the Bible](#)” which deals with the people of Esau/Edom. See also his article “[The Book of Obadiah](#)” which deals specifically with this small Minor Prophets book. *DWS*

¹² We have similar circumstances today with the United States’ border with Mexico, prosperity on the United States’ side, and comparative poverty on the Mexican side. This is not to demean Mexico, but they do not have the same economy the United States has. Malachi says the difference will be more profound than my example. *DWS*

You offer it to me, but offer it to the Persian governor and see how far you get.

“And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this has been by your means: will he regard your persons? [simply because you are priests and religious leaders?] says YHWH of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught [for nothing]? Neither do you kindle fire on my altar for naught [they would do nothing unless paid].

I have no pleasure in you, says YHWH of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, says YHWH of hosts.”

• *Malachi 1:9–11*

The heathen will bring “pure offerings” yet you offer me the lame, the blind, and the damaged. They respond to God, saying in effect, “You have not prospered us. If you had prospered us we would give you the best.” That is what it says here. God had not prospered them as they wanted.

“But you have profaned it [the altar of God], in that you say, ‘The table of YHWH is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible [they admitted it].’ You say, ‘Behold, what a weariness is it! [Why do you care about it, God?] And you have snuffed at it,’ says YHWH of hosts.”

• *Malachi 1:12–13*

God comes back on to say, but you have snuffed at my indignation:

“You brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus you brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand?’ Says YHWH. ‘But cursed be the deceiver which has in his flock a male, and vows, and sacrifices unto YHWH a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, says YHWH of hosts and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

• *Malachi 1:13–14*

He says I deserve to be respected and you are not respecting me. The priests though were saying, “Well, you have not brought us blessings. If you bring us blessings, we will give back blessings.” God was saying, “Give me what I deserve, no matter what.” That was God’s attitude on all this.

“And now O you priests, this commandment is for you” (Malachi 2:1). It went specifically to the religious leaders. You might apply it today to some religious leaders. You could apply it to anybody, even me if you want to. I hope I do not put polluted bread on the table. I try not to do so. I try to give the pure truth of God. If I do not give the pure truth, well, I just fit in with these guys. But if people make up their minds, and they will go and do what they want, then this commandment is for them.

“O you priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, says YHWH of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart.”

• *Malachi 2:1–2*

Their blessings were tithes and offerings. That is what the priests wanted, but God says, I will curse them.

Go back to Zechariah chapters 12 and 13 written about 60 to 70 years before. Zechariah said the time will come when a spirit of grace and supplication shall be sent to the people of Israel. They will repent. They will accept Him that they pierced. They will get idolatry out of the land. They will get the false prophet out of the land. The people who lived before that time, who were priests and prophets, and were not telling the truth, they will be so contemptible in the eyes of the people that when asked, “Were not you a priest at one time?” They will answer, “Oh no, I am just a farmer.”

The same thing is being uttered here as far as God is concerned. God will take away their blessings, meaning their tithes and offerings given by the people.

“Behold I will corrupt [I will reprove] your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts.”

• *Malachi 2:3*

They had the feasts of God, but they were doing the wrong thing at the feasts.

“And one shall take you away with it. And you shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi¹³ [I made a covenant], says YHWH of hosts. My covenant was with him [Levi] of life and peace [goodness and prosperity]; and I gave them [life and peace] to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth [Levi’s mouth], and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of YHWH of hosts.”

• *Malachi 2:3–7*

Malachi, Ezra as a priest, was a messenger from God and you find his name right here in Malachi. These names have meaning to them. The significance of the prophecy also has to do with the meaning of the name.

“But you [priests] are departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says YHWH of hosts. Therefore have I made you contemptible and base before all the people.”

• *Malachi 2:8–9*

This is a prophecy for our times. Many priests and ministers today know the truth; they have knowledge. I have talked to them and they told me they have the knowledge and the truth, but they will not teach it. They will soon be held in contempt. The contempt will not only come from God, it will come from ordinary people. The people will turn away from them. This is a prophecy for the end time because He shall cause them to be “contemptible”:

“... according as you have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?”

• *Malachi 2:9–10*

They say, we are all the same. God said, no, you have been partial.

“Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?”

• *Malachi 2:10*

They were having party spirit. The priests felt they were better than anybody else was. In other words, the ministers were better. The time is coming when they will be in contempt because they are not keeping the law and are offering polluted bread on the altar. They are not giving the complete truth of God.

“Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of YHWH which he loved, and has married the daughter of a strange god.”

• *Malachi 2:11*

If you read Nehemiah, many of the Jews at that time married Gentile women who brought their deities and gods right in to the family. Malachi refers to that situation:

“YHWH will cut off the man that does this, the master [the top layman] and the scholar [as in our

¹³ These priests were Levi’s descendants. Levi was one of the twelve tribes of Israel. God made a covenant with Levi that his descendants should be proper priests. Moses was of Levi and his brother Aaron was a Levite. *ELM*

universities], **out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offers an offering** [the priest, all were caught up in this] **unto YHWH of hosts. And this have you done again, covering the altar of YHWH with tears, and with weeping.**"

• *Malachi 2:12–13*

Who was weeping on the altar? The women these men divorced to marry these others. The women of Judah were coming destitute to the altar and crying, saying, "God help me." The men were violating a covenant, in this case the marriage covenant.

"Yet you say, 'Wherefore?' [Why are you upset?] Because YHWH has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously; yet is she your companion, and the wife of your covenant."

• *Malachi 2:14*

Many of these men, as in Nehemiah, had divorced their Jewish wives and taken Gentile wives. The Jewish wives in that society were left destitute.

"Did he not make one? [Adam and Eve, one flesh, when two people marry] Yet had he the residue [or the excellency] of the spirit. And wherefore one? [Why did He make two, a man and a woman, to be one?] That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For YHWH, the God of Israel says that He hates putting away."

• *Malachi 2:15–16*

This is through divorce. That does not mean divorce is wrong on some occasions, but putting away for no reason except flippancy, is wrong.

"For one covers violence with a garment, says YHWH of hosts: Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously. You have wearied YHWH with your words [you masters, priests, scholars]."

Yet you say [they answer], 'Wherein have we wearied him?' When you say, 'Every one that does evil is good in the sight of YHWH, and he delights in them.' Or 'Where is the God of judgment?'

Behold, I will send my messenger [My malachi], and he shall prepare the way before me: and YHWH, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, says YHWH of hosts."

• *Malachi 2:16–3:1*

You have been telling people He will come. YHWH will come and you have been seeking Him out. But He is the messenger of the covenant, this very covenant you are denying. He is that kind of a messenger. Now He will come, as you have wanted Him to come. This was applied in the New Testament to John the Baptist. He was the messenger to come and prepare the way of YHWH. There is also coming a John the Baptist in the future called an Elijah. When he comes, he will come with power.

"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto YHWH an offering in righteousness [with no pollution]."

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto YHWH, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you with judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that will oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and [those who] fear not me, says YHWH of hosts. For I am YHWH, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."

• *Malachi 3:2–6*

The last phrase means the Sons of Jacob will not be “consumed” or oppressed by the priests in the future. I am coming on your favor, God says, to the laity, to the people that need the help.

“Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, says YHWH of hosts. But you said, ‘How do we return?’ [They still do not get the point.] Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, ‘Wherein have we robbed you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation.”

• *Malachi 3:7–9*

The people of Israel were required to pay tithes to those priests. You are not Israelites today, and you are not required to pay tithes they were required to pay. **“This whole nation”** was not giving them. He said, if you start giving your tithes, and offerings, I will start blessing you. But if you do not keep my laws and my ways,¹⁴ he is saying, your works have wearied me. In fact, read verse 13: **“Your words have been stout against me, says YHWH. Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken so much against you?’”** They still do not get the point. So here is what happens. A time is coming when the proud and the wicked will be judged. He says in verse 16 that there will be a small remnant of people who will be remembered by YHWH:

“Then they that feared YHWH spoke often one to another: and YHWH hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared YHWH, and that thought upon his name. They shall be mine, says YHWH of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels [as in a crown]; and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves not.”

• *Malachi 3:16–18*

God concludes, as He speaks through Malachi:

“For, behold, the day [of YHWH] 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, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch [This is a judgment upon Israel for those that do wickedly].

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun [the sun in the sky] of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 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. [Now comes the conclusion]

Remember you the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb [Mount Sinai] for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YHWH. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

• *Malachi 4:1–6*

The children will be teaching the fathers at the end. The fathers will not teach the children, but the children will teach the fathers. Elijah is coming at the end of the age, **“my messenger,”** who will purify Israel, purify the priesthood, and purify the ministry. Though the ministry at the end of the age will be corrupt, and it says **“contemptible”** (Malachi 1:7, 12, 2:9) even in the eyes of the people, God will send this Elijah who will help purify them (**“Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things,”** Matthew 17:11). Until then there will be a remnant of people who will make up the jewels in God’s crown, when the Son of Righteousness is extolled in their hearts.

¹⁴ He is talking to Israel here (not to Christians). He is talking to priests; He is talking about the nation of Israel at the end of the age. *ELM* Tithes are illegal to be given or collected unless there is a sanctuary and sacrifices. Neither exists today. *DWS*

This last verse of Malachi ends the compiled scroll or book of the Minor Prophets. He is also the last prophet chronologically until John the Baptist.¹⁵ He ends it for Israel by saying, “Repent of your ways, look up, because soon Elijah is coming.”

Ernest L. Martin, 1997
David Sielaff, June 2014

Addendum by David Sielaff

In his book *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, Professor David Dorsey presents the outline of the Book of Malachi.¹⁶ His conclusion is, “**The structure of the Book of Obadiah serves to reinforce its message.**”

In the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, the Temple had not yet been built, although God wanted the people of Israel to do so. The Book of Malachi was written years after the rebuilding of the Temple. That is the only chronological indicator. No mention of Malachi’s parentage is indicated. Malachi’s prophecies are not dated. The complaints of the people from the books of Haggai and Zechariah continue. The prosperity prophesied by God still has not come to the people of Israel. Malachi tell us why that is still the case.

Outline of Malachi (by David Dorsey)

The outline of the Book of Malachi is straightforward and easy to follow in a 7-part structure:

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- a **YHWH is just**: He “loves” (the faithful remnant of) Israel but will utterly destroy wicked Edom (1:2–3)
 - b **priests and people have cheated YHWH in their offerings** (1:6–14)
 - c **in the past Levi served in righteousness**, but Levites have turned from YHWH (2:1–9)
 - d **CENTER: stop being faithless!** (2:10–16)
 - c’ **in the future YHWH’s messenger will come** and Levites will be purified (2:17–3:6)
 - b’ **people have robbed YHWH in tithes and offerings**; if they change, God will bless them (3:7–12)
 - a’ **YHWH is just**: he will reward the righteous but will utterly destroy the wicked (3:13–4:3)
- Conclusion:** an Elijah will come before the day of YHWH (4:4–6)
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Dorsey notes that the prophecies of Malachi appear to be arranged to,

“highlight the book’s main points: (1) condemnation of the negligence at the temple, (2) the key leadership role of the priests and Levites in restoring rightful worship of Yahweh, and (3) the truth that Yahweh does indeed reward those who serve him and punish the wicked.”

• **Dorsey, *Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, p. 321.**

Note from the outline (c and c’) the priests and Levites were failing in their calling and became corrupt.

¹⁵ Matthew 11:9–10:

“But what went you out for to see? A prophet? yes, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written [in Malachi 3:1], ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, which shall prepare your way before you.’”

¹⁶ This outline was compiled from the analysis of David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grant Rapids: MI, Baker Books, 1999), pp. 321–324. *DWS*

They were separated to function as caretakers of both the Temple and the Word of God. Put another way, the priests and Levites were to be messengers and teachers of God’s written Word. It was because of this circumstance that God selected a special *malachi* to call the people to repentance, pronounce doom upon Edom, announce an Elijah to come, and give a final message from God in the Old Testament about the future Day of YHWH. Within Malachi the message proceeds from negative to positive.¹⁷

Malachi is the last chronological book of the Old Testament (although it is not the last book in the Hebrew canonical order¹⁸). The last words in Malachi have to do with an Elijah to come, as Dr. Martin discusses above, and a necessary future fulfillment of his prophecies.

The words that end the Hebrew canon give the positive prospect of the rebuilding the Temple of God. The last words, “**let him go up**” mean that God’s anointed messenger, Cyrus the King of Persia (Isaiah 45:1), shall fulfill God’s will to permit God’s people Israel to return to the Promised land and rebuild the Temple. This happened before, it will occur again in the time of the end.

Last Words of the Book of the Twelve (and of the Book of Malachi)	Last Words of the Hebrew Canon (Cyrus, King of Persia to the People of Israel)
<p>“Remember you [Israel] the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.</p> <p>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YHWH: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">• <i>Malachi 4:4–6</i></p>	<p>“To fulfil the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of YHWH spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,</p> <p>’Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has YHWH God of heaven given me; and he has charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? YHWH his God be with him, and LET HIM GO UP.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">• <i>2 Chronicles 36:21–23</i></p>

If you have read Dr. Martin’s commentaries on each of the books of the Twelve Minor Prophets,¹⁹ please reread the article “[The Minor Prophets for Today](#).” It will bring you full circle, back to the beginning, and reinforce both the unity of the Minor Prophets, and their interconnection with each other, as well as their consistent “story arc” starting with Hosea and ending with Malachi. The Temple is one major topic, as is the sin, punishment, and physical salvation of the people of Israel. Finally, the prophetic theme of the Day of YHWH (the Day of the Lord) weaves through each of the Minor Prophets to its fulfillment in our future. These topics purposefully link the books, and as James Nogalski demonstrates in his excellent recent works on the Minor Prophets, they provide powerful evidence that their compilation and connection was intentional and brilliantly achieved by an ancient editor, Ezra the priest.²⁰

David Sielaff

¹⁷ Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, pp. 323–324. DWS

¹⁸ See Dr. Martin’s book, *Restoring the Original Bible: The Design and Development of the Holy Scriptures* (Portland, OR: Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, 1994, online edition 2004). See also a brief description of the proper canonical order in “[The Geographical Design of the Holy Scriptures](#).” See also, “[Diagram: the Symmetry of the Bible](#)” in PDF format. DWS

¹⁹ Check the articles under the “[Prophetic Articles Index](#)” and “[Prophetic Articles Archive](#).” DWS

²⁰ *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea–Jonah* and *The Book of the Twelve: Micah–Malachi* (both published Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011). These books expand on his earlier work *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993). DWS