

MALACHI

His name means, my messenger. Because of its connection with 2:7 and 3:1 some feel that this may have been a title which the prophet took when he entered into his prophetic ministry.

To set a date for his prophecy, we must go mainly by the conditions described in the book. They seem to fit very well into the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Cf. Neh. 3:5; 5:1-13; 13:7 ff. Thus it is generally acknowledged that Malachi wrote "either about 458 or 432 B.C." (Robinson, pp. 158, 159).

The Temple had been dedicated about 516 B.C., so the sacrificial ministry of the priests had been going on for quite some time.

The reasons for his prophecy seems to have been twofold:—

- 1) The people were discouraged because the bright prospects pictured by Haggai and Zechariah had not been fulfilled.
- 2) The people had slipped back into various sins, the more serious being mentioned specifically by Malachi. (There is one general list in 3:5.)

The outline will show how he approaches his subject.

- I. Introduction (1:1). This form, "The burden of the word of the Lord" is used only elsewhere by Zechariah (9:1; 12:1). Its use seems to be a confirmation of Zechariah's prophecy in view of the delay which his discouraged the people.
- II. A Message of Reassurance--concerning God's love for His people (1:2-5). If they compared their circumstances with Edom's, they could see the evidence of God's blessing. Cf. also 3:6.
- III. The Rebuke of the Priests (1:6-2:9). Malachi points out their basic sin, and then the remedy.
 - A. The sin (1:6-14)--the corruption of the Lord's table, i.e., the altar), offering unacceptable sacrifices.
 - B. The remedy (2:1-9). What they should have done is stated in vv. 5-7. What they had done, and the judgment that had ensued, in vv. 8, 9.
- IV. The Rebuke of the People (2:10-~~4:6~~^{3:15}).
 - A. The Trouble the People Were Having with Each Other (2:10-16). It had manifested itself in a disregard for God's laws of marriage. Some of the people had divorced their wives so that they could marry the heathen, a thing hated by God though He had not expressed Himself in the judgment which was coming.
 - B. The Trouble of the People with God (2:17-4:6).
 1. Their words which had wearied God (2:17).
 2. The certainty of the coming judgment of God (3:1-6).
 3. Their failure to tithe--an illustration of their disregard for the Word of God (3:7-15). Note the appeal in 3:7.
- V. The Result (3:16). *This comes after the last self-justifying ques.*
- VI. Conclusion (3:17-4:6). *(See margin)*
 - A. The final separation of the righteous and the wicked (3:17-4:3).
 - B. The appeal with its promise (4:4-6). Note that the people are commanded to "remember the Law of Moses" just as the priests in 2:5-7 are told what they should do.

It is important to see Malachi's style (1:2, 6, 7; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13). It is much like Paul's in Romans--Socratic.)