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MALACHI

WHO WROTE IT?

Malachi 1:1 identifies the author of the book as the Prophet Malachi.

WHEN(ISH) WAS IT WRITTEN?

The book of Malachi was written between 440 and 400 BC.

WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

The book of Malachi is an oracle: “The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi” (Malachi 1:1). This was God’s warning through Malachi to tell the people to turn back to God. As the final book of the Old Testament closes, the pronouncement of God’s justice and the promise of His restoration through the coming Messiah is ringing in the ears of the Israelites. Four hundred years of silence ensues, ending with a similar message from God’s next prophet, John the Baptist, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

SOME KEY VERSES

A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’

MALACHI 1:6

For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

MALACHI 3:6-7

A QUICK SUMMARY

Malachi wrote the words of the Lord to God's chosen people who had gone astray, especially the priests who had turned from the Lord. Priests were not treating the sacrifices they were to make to God seriously. Animals with blemishes were being sacrificed even though the Law demanded animals without defect (Deuteronomy 15:21). The men of Judah were dealing with the wives of their youth treacherously and wondering why God would not accept their sacrifices. Also, people were not tithing as they should have been (Leviticus 27:30, 32). But in spite of the people's sin and turning away from God, Malachi reiterates God's love for His people (Malachi 1:1-5) and His promises of a coming Messenger (Malachi 2:17-3:5).

FORESHADOWINGS

Malachi 3:1-6 is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist. He was the Messenger of the Lord sent to prepare the way (Matthew 11:10) for the Messiah, Jesus Christ. John preached repentance and baptized in the name of the Lord, thus preparing the way for Jesus' first advent. But the Messenger who comes "suddenly to the Temple" is Christ Himself in His second coming when He comes in power and might (Matthew 24). At that time, He will "purify the sons of Levi" (Malachi 3:3), meaning that those who exemplified the Mosaic Law would themselves need purification from sin through the blood of the Savior. Only then will they be able to offer "an offering in righteousness" because it will be the righteousness of Christ imputed to them through faith (2 Corinthians 5:21).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

God isn't pleased when we don't obey His commands. He will repay those who disregard Him. As for God hating divorce (Malachi 2:16), God takes the covenant of marriage seriously and He does not want it broken. We are to stay true to the spouse of our youth for a lifetime. God sees our hearts, so He knows what our intentions are—nothing can be hidden from Him. He will return and He will be the judge. But if we return to Him, He will return to us (Malachi 3:6).

MY NOTES

