

Key to MALACHI

1. STATISTICS:

Writer, Malachi (name means "My Messenger") was a contemporary of Nehemiah; he prophesied against the same abuses Nehemiah described. Time, 435-425 B.C.; key word, a curse; key thought, the love of GOD in spite of the sins of His people; key verses, 3:16, 17. Though linked with Haggai and Zechariah as a post-exilic prophet, he ministered about 100 years later.

2. THEME:

Malachi's prophecy was interwoven with Nehemiah's history. Both labored to rebuild moral life of the people as well as the walls of Jerusalem. When Nehemiah returned to Babylon for a period of time Malachi ministered to the people concerning their sins and moral abuses. He looked beyond to the coming day of the LORD.

The last word in the Old Testament is "curse." It remains for the New Testament to bring blessing.

3. OUTLINE:

Carelessness in things of GOD (1:1-14)
Sinful lives of the priests (2:1-9)
Widespread unfaithfulness to GOD, to others (2:10-16)
Bitter complaint against GOD's dealings (2:17; 3:13-15).

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The great prophecy of John the Baptist is in 3:1, and he actually is the only prophet who is himself the subject of prophecy.

The sin of offering "diseased animals" to the LORD is soundly condemned in 1:8-10. It is treated as an insult to GOD.

5. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

Malachi predicts the coming of Elijah (4:5), partially fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14). Since he did not usher in the "**great and dreadful day of the LORD**" at that time the prediction has a second fulfillment in the future. Possibly, he may be one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11.

The matter of withholding tithes and offerings is treated as robbery (3:8-15). The Mosaic Law pronounced the tithe as "belonging" to the LORD. Here the people were selfishly using it for other things.

The essential message of Malachi is an epitome of the entire Old Testament. GOD rebukes corruption and promises deliverance and blessing on obedience. The viewpoint is that of the authority of the present law, but also of the riches of grace which GOD has in store for the age of blessing.

6. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

Take a broad look at Malachi. It is the same old story of sin and unrighteousness. Mankind has not changed in all these years. But turn around and look the other way. There is coming a day of light when the Sun of Righteousness will arise. Thank GOD there is also a New Testament!

~ end of Malachi ~

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