

Malachi

Lesson 1

Ice Breaker: What was the best part of your summer? What are you looking forward to this fall?

1. Let's do a quick review of the history of the Israelites. See the Timeline of Biblical History chart. Notice the important events in the top line from Adam/Eve until 722 when the northern kingdom is conquered. There is a chart in the back of a more general overview of the covenants and the temples for the Israelites. The second line of the Biblical History is where our study of Malachi begins. (If you would like to see a quick overview of history of Israel on your own, Nehemiah 9 does a good job)
2. Please read the review sheet on how Judah was conquered by the Babylonians
3. Watch the Bible Project Ezra /Nehemiah together
4. So here we are... in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. After this book, there will be 400 years of silence.
5. Watch Bible Project- Malachi (back of Ezra/Nehemiah)

Author and Date

The prophet Malachi (whose name means "my messenger") probably lived at the same time as Ezra and Nehemiah, around 460 B.C.

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Malachi's ministry took place nearly a hundred years after the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C., which ended the Babylonian captivity and allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple (2 Chron. 36:23). This was some 80 years after Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the rebuilding of the temple. Those two earlier prophets had said that the rebuilding of the temple would result in peace, prosperity, the conversion of people from other nations, and the return of God's own glorious presence (see Haggai 2; Zech. 1:16–17; 2:1–13; 8:1–9:17). To the discouraged people of Malachi's day, these predictions must have seemed a cruel mockery. In contrast to the glowing promises, they faced economic difficulties due to drought and crop failure (Mal. 3:11). They remained an insignificant territory, no longer an independent nation and no longer ruled by a Davidic king. Worst of all, despite the promise of God's presence, they experienced only spiritual decline.

6. What themes to watch for: Lee Gatiss

God wants to be **feared and honoured** as a Father and Master, we are encouraged **to listen**, take to heart God's words, and **give honour to his name**, there should **be reverence and awe** in our relationship to God. we're meant to **keep God's ways and walk with him, the faithfulness of His people, giving the full tithe, giving generously to God, remembering the law of my servant Moses, or, in other words, remembering Scripture.**

So in the face of their half-heartedness, God reminds them who he is, and challenges them to respond to his word with great respect for him and greater wholeheartedness in every area of their lives. Finally, one day, God's people will see **the final defeat of their enemies** and say (1:5), "Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!" Indeed, he is so great that (1:11), "from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts." Not just in Israel, but all over the world.

The Setting of Malachi

c. 460 B.C.

Malachi likely prophesied several decades after the first Jewish exiles had returned from Babylon to Judea and had rebuilt the temple. Edomites had migrated northwest from their traditional homeland just south of Moab into the area immediately south of Judea, which was now called Idumea. Territory that once belonged to the northern kingdom of Israel had been divided into several minor provinces, including Samaria.



6. If you have time, read through the whole book together and start observing repeated phrases.