

SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: MALACHI

The Historical Background

'Malachi' means 'my messenger'. This is the last message God has for Old Testament Israel before the 400 years of silence, a silence that will only be broken by the preaching of John the Baptist in the wilderness.

In 586BC, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, the Jews exiled. IN 539/8 BC, the Jews returned to Judah and rebuilt the Temple under Zerubbabel and the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. By the time of Malachi, this is about 100 years after the return, around 440BC.

1:7 & 10 imply that the Temple exists while 1:8 talks about a governor. These would point us to the time after the return, after the rebuilding of the Temple, under the rule of the Persian governor. Chapter 2 discuss the problem of liaison with unbelievers and marrying pagan wives, 3:8-9 highlight the failure to give their tithes. These problems are similar to those that Nehemiah had to address during his time (Nehemiah 13:1-9, 10, 23)

The Book Malachi

The Jews have become cold and cynical towards God and the things of God. They feel that God has not kept His promise to bless them. So in this book, God addressed these cold and cynical Jews.

1:1 From God to Israel via Malachi

1:2-5 God says: *I have loved you!*

1:6-2:16 God says: *I have been despised and defiled by you!*

2:17-3:6 God says: *I have been wearied by you!*

3:6-12 God says: *I have been robbed by you!*

3:13-4:3 God says: *I have been slandered by you!*

4:4-6 Recall Moses! Look for Elijah!!

Message: One of the worst spiritual state we can be in is to be cold and cynical towards God and the things of God. God's answer is to look back, to see God's great love for us, and to look forward, to see God's great act of redemption in Jesus Christ. It is so easy to get lost in the middle, to lose the plot, to miss the flow. We need to constantly embed our story in the bigger story of God's plan of redemption, to look back and to look forward.

And in the meanwhile, we need to look up and look around. Look up, and see God sitting on His throne, and walk in fear of Him today. Look around for believers who similarly fear the Lord and strengthen each other in our walk!