

Malachi – Introduction

4401 [e] mal-'ā·kî. מְלֹאכִי: Malachi	3027 [e] bə·yad בְּיַד by	3478 [e] 413 [e] yiś·rā-'êl; יִשְׂרָאֵל Israel	'el- אֶל- to	3068 [e] Yah·weh יְהוָה of Yahweh	1697 [e] ḏə·bar- דְּבַר- of the word	4853 [e] maś·śā מַשָּׂא The burden
N-proper-ms	Prep-b N-fsc	N-proper-ms	Prep	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-msc

מְלֹאכִי /mal-aw-kee/ = "my messenger"

Malachi (מְלֹאכִי)

- Last book in the collection known as the Minor Prophets (English) or the Book of the Twelve (Hebrew)
- "malachi" means "my messenger"
- This is the name of the prophet, but also the theme of the book:
"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts." – Malachi 3:1

935 [e] ya·bo·w יָבוֹא will come	6597 [e] ū·pîl-'ôm וּפְתָאֵם and suddenly	6440 [e] 1870 [e] lə·pā·nāy; לְפָנַי before Me	de·rek דֶּרֶךְ the way	6437 [e] ū·pin·nāh- וּפְנֵיהֶּ and he will prepare	4397 [e] mal-'a·kî, מְלֹאכִי My messenger	7971 [e] šō·lê·ah שְׁלַח I send	2005 [e] hin·nî הִנְנִי behold
V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Conj-w Adv	Prep-l N-mpc 1cs	N-cs	Conj-w V-Piel-ConjPerf-3ms	N-msc 1cs	V-Qal-PrtcpI-ms	Interjection 1cs

859 [e] 'at·tem אתֶּם you	834 [e] 'ā·šer- אֲשֶׁר- in whom	1285 [e] hab·bə·rît הַבְּרִית of the covenant	4397 [e] ū·mal-'ak וּמְלֹאכִי and Even the Messenger	1245 [e] mə·baq·šîm, מְבַקְשִׁים seek	859 [e] 834 [e] 'at·tem 'ā·šer- אתֶּם אֲשֶׁר- you whom	113 [e] hā·'a·dō·wn הָאֲדֹנָי the Lord	1964 [e] 413 [e] hē·kālōw הֵיכָלוֹ His temple	'el- אֶל- to	
Pro-2mp	Pro-r	Art N-fs	Conj-w N-msc	V-Piel-PrtcpI-mp	Pro-2mp	Pro-r	Art N-ms	N-msc 3ms	Prep

Malachi 3:1

6635 [e] šə·bā·'ō·wṭ. שְׁבָאוֹת: of hosts	3068 [e] Yah·weh יְהוָה Yahweh	559 [e] 'ā·mar אָמַר says	935 [e] bā, בָּא He is coming	2009 [e] hin·nêh- הִנְנֶה- behold	2655 [e] hā·pê·šîm הַפְּעִיזִים delight
N-cp	N-proper-ms	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	V-Qal-PrtcpI-ms	Interjection	Adj-mp

"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people[d] should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." – Malachi 2:7

3588 [e] kî כִּי for	6310 [e] mip·pî·hû; מִפִּיהוּ from his mouth	1245 [e] yə·baq·šū יְבַקְשׁוּ [people] should seek	8451 [e] wə·tō·w·rāh וְתוֹרָה and the law	1847 [e] da·'at, דַּעַת knowledge	8104 [e] yiś·mə·rū- יִשְׁמְרוּ- should keep	3548 [e] 8193 [e] kō·hên כֹּהֵן of a priest	3588 [e] šîp·tê שִׁפְטֵי the lips	7 כִּי For
Conj	Prep-m N-msc 3ms	V-Piel-Imperf-3mp	Conj-w N-fs	N-fs	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	N-ms	N-fdc	Conj

Malachi 2:7

1931 [e] hū. הוּא: he [is]	6635 [e] šə·bā·'ō·wṭ שְׁבָאוֹת of hosts	3068 [e] Yah·weh- יְהוָה- of Yahweh	4397 [e] mal-'ak מְלֹאכִי the messenger
Pro-3ms	N-cp	N-proper-ms	N-msc

- No personal details provided for the man Malachi (family, profession, history, etc.)
- An old Jewish tradition in the Talmud claims that Ezra was the “Messenger” (or, “Malachi”)
 - Sages and scholars reject this since “Malachi” here is a personal name.
 - An Aramaic Targum adds after “Malachi” in 1:1 “whose name is Ezra the Scribe.”
 - Jewish tradition understands the name of the book Malachi is like the name of the books Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk...these writings are named after the men who prophesied and wrote them.
- Jewish tradition holds that Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi helped establish “The Great Synagogue” that was the body of Jewish leaders that helped preserve the Scriptures and hand on the traditions of the religion of the scribes.

Manuscripts

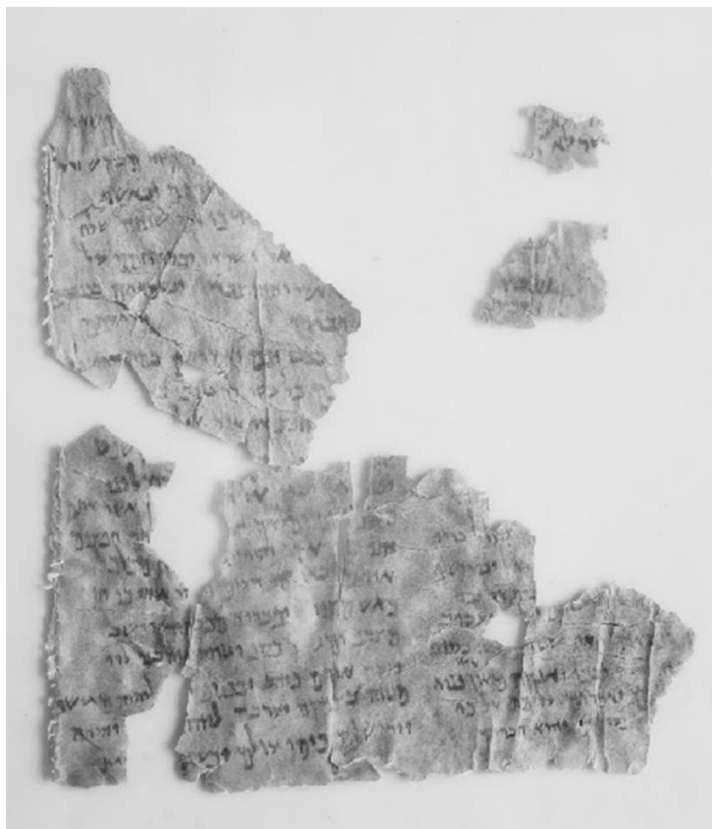
- 150-125 BC - The earliest text of Malachi come from fragments at Qumran in Dead Sea Scrolls called 4QXIIa that have 1:13-14 and 2:10-4:6.
- 75 BC – from Qumran 4QXII with Malachi 3;6-7
- 5QpMal Malachi 1:14
- 50 BC - Damascus Document with Malachi 1:10 and Malachi 3:16-18

Content

- 47 of the 55 verses are personal addresses of the Lord
- Malachi addressed
 - moral deterioration
 - spiritual lethargy
 - failure to bring tithes
 - intermarriage and divorce
 - economic struggle and oppression
 - gifts offered to governor

Date

- The date is unknown, but clearly:
 - Temple is rebuilt
 - Post-exile Judah
 - During the Persian Empire
 - Reference to the “governor” (*peha*)
 - The hope inspired in 520 by Haggai and Zechariah had faded. Their promises seem to have failed? Wealth once temple completed, restoration of Davidic covenant and throne, Jeremiah’s New Covenant...
- Suggestions by scholars include:
 - 460 BC - Prior to the return of Ezra 458 BC
 - 450 BC – Right before Nehemiah arrived in 445 BC
 - 435 BC – Before Nehemiah’s second term as governor around 431-428 BC



- 430 BC – After Nehemiah and Ezra at the end of Artaxerxes reign (425 BC)

Historical Setting

- 459 BC – Greeks from Athens captured Memphis in Egypt
- Mediterranean coast along Israel and Ashdod controlled by Greeks
- 460-454 Persia needed a strong presence in Judah
- 454 BC – Greeks driven from Egypt
- 449 BC – peace between Greece and Persia. Need for Judah faded.
- Ezra 4:9-16 and 17-22 Artaxerxes orders reconstruction of Jerusalem stop
- 445 BC – Arrive Nehemiah to rebuild and restore a collapsed and collapsing Jerusalem
- Sometime in this timeframe 445-425 Malachi writes to continue what Haggai and Zechariah had started in 520 BC

Style of Writing

- Covenant lawsuits and disputation speeches
 - The prophet confronts the people for God in combative dialogue which include:
 - A claim of truth declared by the prophet
 - A hypothetical dialogue response by the people to refute the claim. Usually stated as a question
 - A restatement by the prophet in dialogue form of the original statement of truth
 - The presentation of supporting evidence that the prophet speaking for God is correct. Very often it is God speaking in first person.
- The covenants addressed in Malachi
 - Covenant with Levi - 2:4, 5, 8
 - Covenant of our fathers - 2:10
 - Marriage covenant - 2:14
 - Messenger of the covenant - 3:1
 - These covenants had been broken and there was a curse coming for having broken the covenant
- The use of Quotations in monologue form
 - The Lord makes a statement that is not merely responded to in order to resolve the conflict. The monologue of quotes becomes more complex as quotes and dialogue continue
 - Sometimes the prophet speaks for the Lord, but in most cases the Lord is speaking himself (1st person), but even switching to the Lord speaking for himself in 2nd or 3rd person the Lord is speaking.
 - Quotation formulas:
 - 3x – “says the LORD Almighty”
 - 1x – “the LORD says”
 - 1x – “this is what the LORD Almighty says”
 - 1:9 – *“Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you? Says the LORD Almighty”*
 - 1:10-14 – 4x “says the LORD almighty”, includes
 - it appears Malachi speaks in 1:14, *“Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished.”*
 - but returns to first person, *“For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.”*

- 26x – “says Yahweh of hosts” (NIV: “the LORD Almighty”)
- 4x – “says Yahweh” (NIV: “the LORD”)
- 1 x – “says Yahweh the God of Israel” (NIV: “the LORD God of Israel”)
- 1x – “the declaration of Yahweh” (NIV: “the LORD says”)

Divisions and Sections

- English Bible has 4 chapters; Hebrew text has 3 divisions with 4:1-6 being part of ch. 3)
- Divided by speeches:
 - #1 – 1:2-5
 - #2 – 1:6-2:9
 - #3 – 2:10-16
 - #4 – 2:17-3:5
 - #5 – 3:6-12
 - #6 – 3:13-4:3
 - Additional info #A – 4:4
 - Additional info #B – 4:5-6
- Three Sections
 - Priests instructed to Honor God – 1:2-2:9
 - Judah instructed to be Faithful – 2:10-3:6
 - Judah instructed to Return to God – 3:7-24

Malachi Used in New Testament

- 1:2-3 – Romans 9:13 – “As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”
- 1:6 – Luke 6:46 – “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”
- 1:11 – 2 Thessalonians 1:12 – “so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2:7-8 – Matthew 23:3 – “so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”
- 2:10 – 1 Corinthians 8:6 – “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”
- 3:1 – Matthew 11:10 – “This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
- 3:2 – Revelation 6:17 – “for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”
- 3:3 – 1 Peter 1:7 – “so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
- 3:7 – James 4:8 – “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”
- 4:5 – Matthew 11:14 – “and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.”
- 4:5-6 – Luke 1:17 – “he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”