

## **The Half Hour That Changes the World**

### **Malachi**




### **Book 39**

#### **Basic Questions behind the book:**

*Can people see Jesus in us in our daily lives?*

#### **Summary of book:**

The book of Malachi addresses prosperous people that were getting spiritually complacent. Malachi is concerned with nominal religion. He speaks to God's people, and is rewarded for his effort when some listen to what he has to say. He talks to them at a time when:

-  The priests neglect their duty of teaching the Law
-  The people are faithless to one another
-  There is oppression of the deprived, rejection of travellers, withholding of the tithe, and other things going on that dishonour the covenant they are in with the Lord.

He encourages the nation to take a look back at the giving of the covenant and to look forward to the love that God has for his people. Elijah the prophet is named as the messenger that is to come.

#### **Vital Statistics:**

Purpose: To confront the people with their sins and to restore their relationship with God.

Author: Malachi, although some regard the name as a title rather than a name. It means 'my messenger'.

Recipients: To the chosen people of Israel.

Date: 450 BC is commonly held to be about the right time for this prophetic book.

Setting: Malachi is a post-exilic prophet to Judah, the southern kingdom. He confronted them with their neglect of the temple and their false and profane worship.

#### **Other Reflections:**

Malachi's literary style employs a dramatic use of questions asked by God and his people. Malachi means 'my messenger'. The people had not learnt the lesson of the exile, and they had not listened to the prophets. Also, Malachi singles out the priests, as they have greater knowledge of what God requires of his people. They should know better. He invites people to change their ways and to rebuild their relationship with God. He has hope that this is possible and will lead to great blessing.

The reference to God sending his messenger ahead of him is often taken by Christian commentators as being a reference to the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist.

*"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace...But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall." (4:1-2)*

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