

(97) Adult Sunday School Class
Malachi, chpts. 1-4
Prophets, pp. 421-427



Malachi is the last of the three post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) and is also the last book in the Old Testament. The situation that Malachi addresses is similar to the situation Nehemiah encounters, many scholars believe Malachi was a contemporary with Nehemiah ministering around 430 BC (about 90 years after Haggai and Zechariah).

Malachi, along with Haggai and Zechariah, addresses the Israelites who have returned to Jerusalem and Judea after the Babylonian captivity by reminding them how they are to live and worship God. The Temple has been rebuilt (515 BC) and Malachi speaks strongly against the corrupt forms of worship and living – unacceptable sacrifices, corrupt priests, refusal to tithe and support the Temple, and social injustice. Only one generation or two after their exile and various sins are creeping into their culture once again.

One of Malachi's central concerns is for the Israelites to serve God faithfully and worship Him correctly. Even though Israel had put away idolatry and reinstated the worship of God, the worship had turned into mere ritual, without heart, and degenerated into sacrificing the poorest and weakest of animals (violation of God's law). Another significant concern pertained to tithing... God accuses them of cheating Him (3:6-12) for they had failed to bring their tithes to the Temple. God challenges them to test Him by giving their tithe and seeing if He did not bless them richly in return.

Malachi offers a lot of great applications to us today. We are reminded of how important it is to worship God truthfully, with a sincere heart, not ritually. Also, if we are selfishly keeping money and fail to support our local churches, we are not worshipping God sincerely for we are robbing from Him.

Let us not become careless in our worship and attitude toward God.