

# **MALACHI**

## **"My Messenger"**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*(Sources consulted for this class include particularly James Burton Coffman, Mark Copeland, Homer Hailey, along with numerous others.)*

DATE OF MALACHI (*FOLLOWED IN THIS STUDY*): 445-432 B.C.

THE PROPHET: Nothing is known of Malachi other than what is included in this book.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

- Babylonian Captivity: The exportation of Judah to Babylon encompassed the years of about 605-586 B.C. Jerusalem fell and the Kingdom of Judah ended in 586 B.C.
- Babylon fell to Medo-Persia in 539 B.C. Cyrus was the Medo-Persian ruler at this time. Cyrus issued a decree for the Jews to return to Judah in 536 B.C.
- In 536 B.C. the first group of Jews, led by Zerubbabel, returned to Judah. They were charged to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The temple was finally completed in 516 B.C.
- In 458 B.C. the second group of exiles, under Ezra, returned to Judah. Ezra was to teach the Law and restore it to its proper place.
- In about 444 B.C. a third group of exiles returned to Judah led by Nehemiah. The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. Malachi's message matches well with the conditions in Nehemiah's time.

STYLE OF MALACHI'S WRITING: Referred to as the "didactic-dialectic" method.

- Making a charge → potential objections to the charge are expressed → the prophet gives an answer to the objections.
- Later, this method was commonly used in Jewish schools and synagogues.
- Look for expressions such as "you say," "and you say," etc. as part of this method.
- Malachi also speaks as "God's messenger" frequently in this book. He uses expressions such as "says the LORD" and "says the LORD of hosts" to emphasize the authority behind his message.

### **MESSAGE OF MALACHI:**

Homer Hailey –

- a. "Indifference to both the moral and ceremonial aspects of the divine law now characterized the people of God.
- b. "Worship was in a state of decay...
- c. "The Jews were divorcing their wives and marrying heathen women.
- d. "The book teaches 'that there is eternal discipline in the law' (Robinson)"

James Burton Coffman – "This chapter begins with a statement of the name of the prophet and the identification of his message as the Word of God Himself (Mal. [1:1](#)). The next four verses (Mal. [1:2-5](#)) develop the thought that "God had loved Israel, a truth then denied by the people, but proved by God's citation of what he "had done" for them, illustrating it by a comparison of their state with that of Edom.... This

**MALACHI**  
**"My Messenger"**

prophecy is addressed to Israel, but it is the New Israel that shines in certain of its passages..."