

**SERIES: "LAST...BUT NOT LEAST":**

*An In Depth Study of MALACHI - the Final Prophet of the Old Testament Era-*  
**PART I**

**WEDNESDAY, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

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- I. There are **THREE REASONS** why an understanding of this Book is **PARAMOUNT** for every student of God's Word:
1. It profiles the Religious, Social, and political issues that Judah faced after their return from Babylonian exile;
  2. It reveals Malachi to be the last of the Old Testament prophets to herald God's message of Judgment against sin and of the glorious Kingdom that awaits the Righteous at the Messiah's coming; AND
  3. It was the final authentic VOICE of prophecy until John the BAPTIST shatters the silence 400 years later with the words from Matthew 3:2, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

**BACKGROUND:**

- II. Malachi was penned about 100 years after the Persian King CYRUS decreed that Judah could return to her land.
- III. It was also during this time that the Jewish faith was restored under the leadership of EZRA and Nehemiah.
- IV. Soon after returning to the land, both the priests AND the people became apathetic, indifferent and morally CORRUPT.
- V. Malachi REVEALED their sin and proclaimed that Judgment would be forthcoming UNLESS the people returned to God.

**AUTHOR:**

- V. The name MALACHI actually means "my messenger" OR "my angel"
- VI. Nothing is known about Malachi's PERSONAL background beyond what this Book reveals.

CONTENT:

- VII. In the English translation, the Book is divided into 4 Chapters WHILE the Hebrew Bible has it divided into 3 Chapters.
- VIII. CHAPTER 1 – God's love for Israel is declared BUT the nation is indifferent and questions His love towards them. This spiritual condition is most evident in the priests who pollute the sacrifice, the sanctuary and their service to God with their indifference.
- IX. CHAPTER 2 – Indicates that the priests would be Judged if they did not repent;
- X. CHAPTER 3 – Declares that God will send His messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah, who will come to purify the Temple and the priesthood as well as to judge the wicked. The people are accused of Robbing God and are told that if they pay their tithes AND reform their practices, He would Bless them.
- XI. CHAPTER 4 – This ~~is~~ would be the final warning before the "Day of the Lord", which would include the coming of Elijah and the Messiah, who will judge the wicked and deliver the righteous.

DATE:

- XII. There are several indicators within the Book - including the moral and spiritual decline of the people – which lead to a dating for the writing of Malachi between 433 and 400 B.C..

STYLE:

- XII. This Book was NOT written in poetic language but in pointed, easy-to-understand exalted prose.
- XIII. The technical name for this style is a "running disputational dialogue".
- XIV. This style is made up of three parts: 1) God QUESTIONS Israel about her spiritual condition; 2) Israel counters, claiming innocence, with an inadequate, flippant answer; 3) God refutes their reply.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES: