

Minor Prophets...

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Book of Malachi
Mal. 1:1-5

...Major Message

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Mal. 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.. **Major Message**

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TITLE AND WRITER

The name of the writer is the title of this book. "Malachi" means "my messenger."

Mt. 11:10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Mark 1:2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Lu. 7:27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

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- The Targum did not consider Malachi the writer but ascribed this book to Ezra. The Targum is an ancient Aramaic translation and paraphrase of the Old Testament.
- The Talmud credited Mordecai with writing it. The Talmud is a Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament compiled between 450 B.C. and 500 A.D.
- "Malachi" appears in 3:1 as an anonymous designation meaning "my messenger," so it may mean the same thing in 1:1.
- If Malachi is not the prophet's name, this would be the only prophetic book in the Old Testament that is anonymous, which seems very unlikely.

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DATE

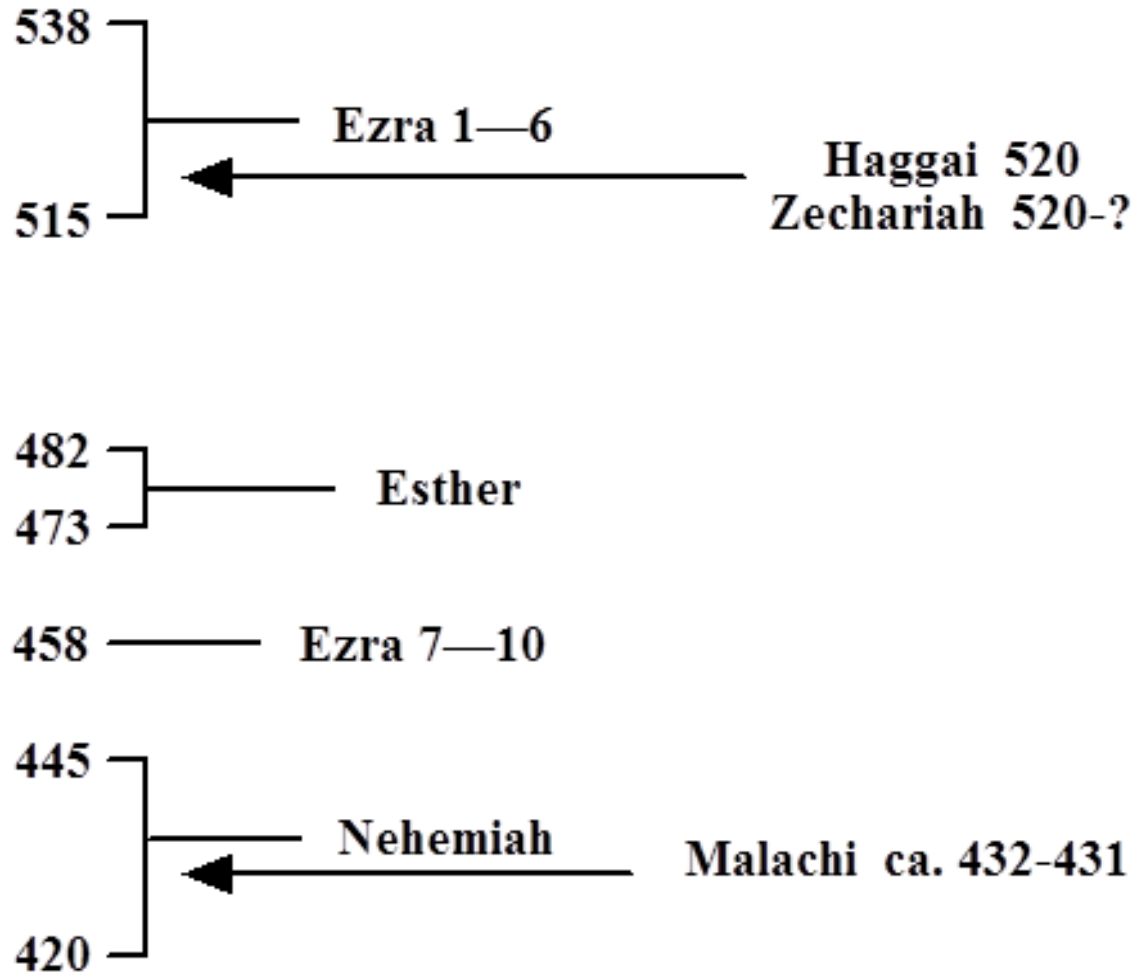
Malachi's reference to "thy governor" (1:8) indicates that he wrote after 538 B.C. This would force a date after 515 B.C., when temple restoration was complete.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Malachi was one of the three postexilic writing prophets along with Haggai and Zechariah, and he was quite certainly the last one chronologically, even though we cannot be dogmatic about an exact date for his writing.

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Chronology of the Restoration Period



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- 537-536 B.C. The first group of almost 50,000 Jewish exiles returned from Babylonian captivity under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel's leadership Ezra 1—6 records their experiences.
- 520 B.C. Haggai and Zechariah ministered to these returnees in 520 B.C. and urged them to rebuild the temple. Zechariah's ministry may have continued beyond that year.
- 516 B.C. The rebuilding of the Temple was finished.
- 482 and 473 B.C. The events recorded in the Book of Esther took place in Persia between
- 458 B.C. A second group of about 5,000 Jews returned in 458 B.C. under Ezra's leadership. Ezra sought to beautify the temple and institute reforms that would purify Israel's worship (Ezra 7—10).

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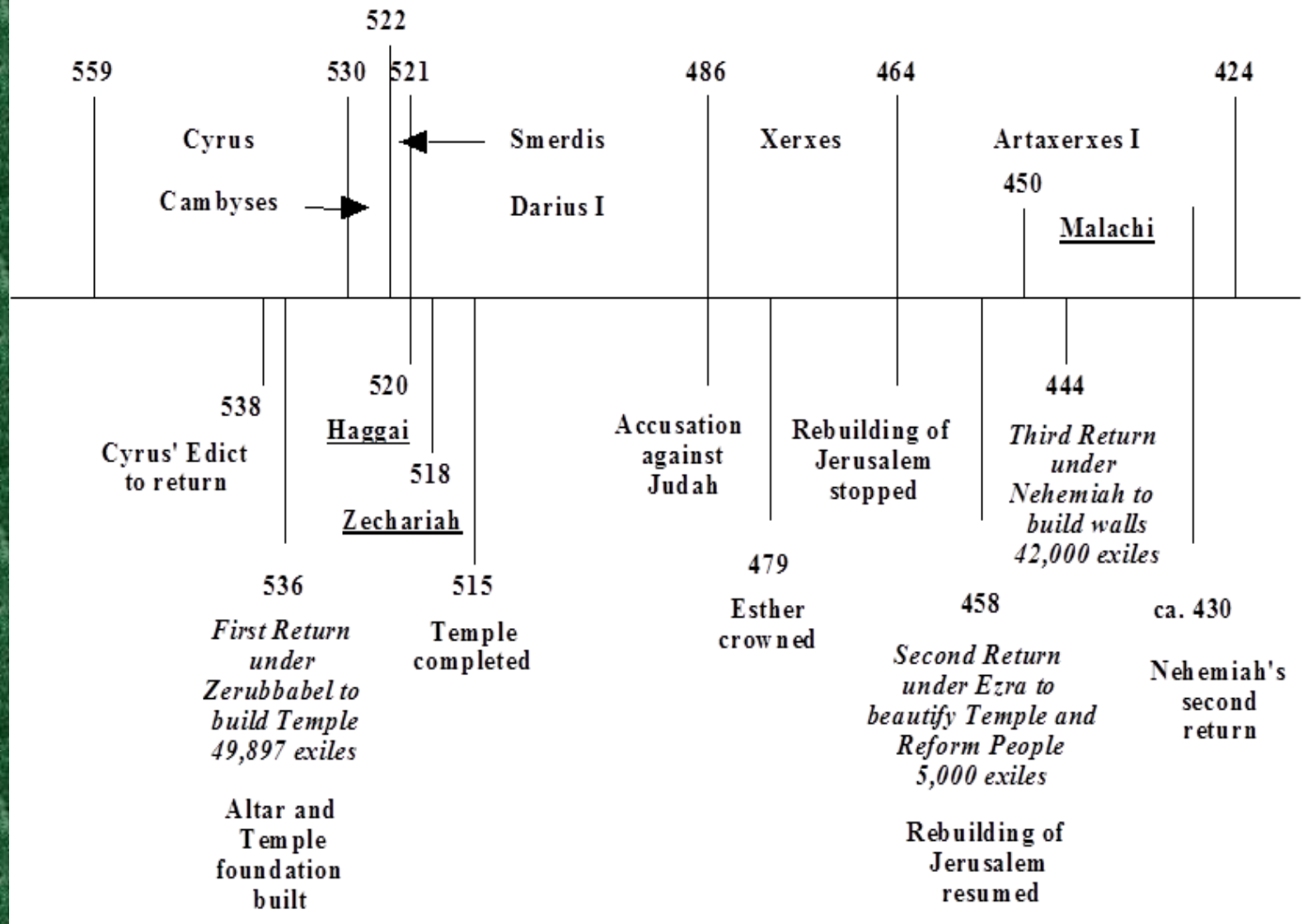
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- 445. B.C. Nehemiah led a third group of about 42,000 back to Jerusalem, and the events recorded in his book describe what happened between 445 and 420 B.C., including the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall.
- 433 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Babylon to report to the king.
- 420 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to attack the religious and moral sins that had become prevalent among the Jews.
- 434-374 B.C. Malachi probably ministered in Jerusalem during that period.
- Malachi probably wrote during the years that Nehemiah served (445-420 B.C.)

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Minor P

The Restoration Period



<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/OT/Malachi/Malachi.htm>

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PLACE OF COMPOSITION

Malachi evidently ministered in Jerusalem, as seems clear from his numerous references to practices that were current in that city and throughout Judah.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

The prophet addressed the restoration community of Israelites that had returned to the land from Babylonian captivity. His purpose was to confront them with their sins and to encourage them to pursue holiness.

THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES

Like all the writing prophets, Malachi's chief revelation was the person and work of Jehovah. He presented Israel's God as sovereign over Israel, and the whole world, and as very patient with His wayward people.

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Malachi's notable messianic prophecy deals with Messiah's forerunner (3:1; 4:5). He would be like Elijah and would call the Israelites to repentance (cf. Matt. 11:14; 17:12-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17).

Mal. 3:1 **Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me:** and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal. 4:5 **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet** before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

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LITERARY FORM AND CHARACTERISTICS

Malachi's style is quite different from that of any other writing prophet. Instead of delivering messages to his audience, he charged them with various sins. He employed a very confrontational style of address.

Mal. 1:2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. **Yet ye say**, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?* saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And **ye say**, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that **ye say**, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.

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2:14 **Yet ye say**, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

17 **Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say**, Wherein have we wearied *him*? **When ye say**, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. **But ye said**, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. ...

13 **Your words have been stout against me**, saith the LORD. **Yet ye say**, What have we spoken *so much* against thee?

14 **Ye have said**, It *is* vain to serve God: and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? **...Major Message**

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- This book consists of several short paragraphs on various themes.
- There are no personal experiences to which the prophet referred, yet his style is straightforward, easy to understand, and beautifully designed.
- The Israelites disputed God's love, His name, and His will concerning the following: marriage and divorce, His justice, His demands regarding stewardship, and His service.

UNITY, CANONICITY, AND TEXT

Most scholars view the book as the product of one writer, and there is no textual support for viewing some verses as later additions. Malachi's canonicity has never been challenged, because it appears in all the authoritative lists of canonical books, and is also quoted in the New Testament. The text is well preserved.

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Minor Prophets... **MESSAGE**

Malachi prophesied during the times of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah deplored the defiled and corrupt priesthood, and Malachi's central charge was that the priesthood had corrupted the covenant (cf. Neh. 13:29 and Mal. 2:8).

Neh. 13:29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

Mal. 2:8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Nehemiah dealt with the mixed marriages and the evil that resulted from this condition, and Malachi spoke against the same evil (cf. Neh. 13:23-25 and Mal. 2:11-12).

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Neh. 13:23 In those days also saw I Jews *that* had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, [and] of Moab:

24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.

25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

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Mal. 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

12 The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

Nehemiah charged the people with neglecting the support of the priests, forcing them to return to farming (and thus plowing, a laborious life for anyone—but especially priests) their fields to support themselves. Malachi addressed the same condition and its underlying spiritual cause (cf. Neh. 13:10-11 and Mal. 3:8-10).

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Neh. 13:10 And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.

11 Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place.

Mal. 3:8-10 KJV - 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

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- Ezra and Nehemiah had sought to correct certain external conditions, as well as certain internal conditions, that characterized the Jews who returned from Babylonian captivity.
- The external conditions that needed correcting were: the rebuilding of the altar of sacrifice, the temple, and the walls of Jerusalem.
- They were successful in changing these external conditions, but they were less successful in changing the internal conditions of the people.
- Malachi addressed the internal, spiritual conditions

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Specifically, Malachi revealed three things to the physically restored Jews to motivate them to spiritual restoration:

- The unfailing love of Jehovah,
- Their failures
- The secrets of strength in an age of failure.

Prov. 18:10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

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I. THE LORD'S COMPLAINTS, 1:1-2:17

A. The Nation's Spiritual Sins, 1:1-2:9

1. Denying God's Love, 1:1-5

a. The Burden Described, 1:1-2a

(1) How It Was Laid on the Prophet, 1:1

Mal. 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

Original Word: **מַסָּא**

Transliteration: **massa'**

Short Definition: **burden**

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/4853.htm>

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(2) How It Was Leveled at the People, 1:2a “I have loved you, saith the LORD...”

b. The Brothers Depicted, 1:2b-4

(1) The One Loved, 1:2b

Mal. 1:2b “...Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

[cf. Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Sam. 1:2, 5; Luke 14:26].

(2) The One Loathed, 1:3-4

(a) Esau Detested, 1:3

Mal. 1:3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

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Read the Book of Obadiah – the Edomites aided Nebuchadnezzar and prevented the Jews from escaping (Obad. 1:11-14)

Deut. 4:37 And because **he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them**, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

Deut. 7:7 The LORD did not **set his love upon you**, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people:

8 But because **the LORD loved you**, and because he would keep the oath which he had **sworn unto your fathers**, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

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(b) Esau Desolated, 1:4

Mal. 1:4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

Jn. 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jn. 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

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c. The Blindness Dispelled, 1:5

Mal. 1:5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

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Conclusion

Mal. 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, **in that day when I make up my jewels**; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

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