

# SESSION 6

## The Book of Malachi

### I. PRAYER/REVIEW

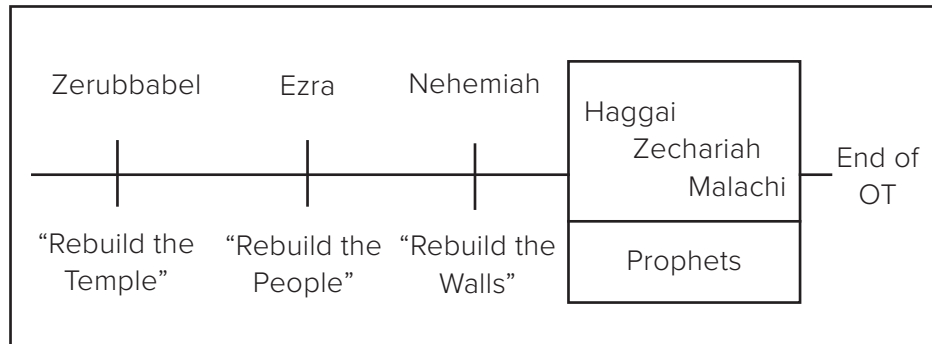
### II. PANORAMA MOVEMENTS 1-9 (OLD TESTAMENT)

PANORAMA: MOVEMENTS 1-9	
Movement	Biblical Books
#1 Prologue	Genesis 1-11
#2 Patriarchs	Genesis 12-50; Job
#3 Redemption and Wanderings	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
#4 Conquest	Joshua
#5 Apostasy	Judges, Ruth
#6 Kingship: United Monarchy	1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11 (Pss, Prov, Eccl, Song of Solomon)
#7 Kingship: Divided Monarchy	1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings (Prophets - selected)
#8 Exile	Ezekiel, Daniel (Jeremiah)
<b>#9 Return from Exile and 400 Silent Years</b>	<b>Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)</b>

**Note:**

Movements 1-9 comprise the Old Testament. Between Movement 9 and Movement 10 (Life of Christ) lie the four hundred years of silence (no revelations from God through angels, prophets, or other means).

### III. PANORAMA MOVEMENT 9 TIMELINE



### IV. CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING

538-515 BC		483-473 BC		457 BC		444-425 BC
Zerubbabel		Esther		Ezra		Nehemiah
Ezra 1-6		Book of Esther		Ezra 7-10		Book of Nehemiah
First Return		In Persia		Second Return		Third Return

Below the table, a bracket connects the "First Return" and "Second Return" columns to the text: Haggai (520 BC) and Zechariah (520<sup>ff</sup> BC). Another bracket connects the "Third Return" column to the text: Malachi (ca 433-31 BC).

### V. THE BOOK OF MALACHI

#### A. Author

The last book of the Old Testament was written by Malachi whose name means "my messenger." Since prophets were commonly seen as messengers of the Lord and given that 3:1 states, "I will send my

messenger...”, some scholars believe that Malachi in 1:1 refers not to a specific person, but to an unnamed prophetic “messenger.” If true, then this is the only prophetic book in the Hebrew Scriptures that is anonymous. This is unlikely and it seems best to ascribe the book to the prophet Malachi.

Of the prophet’s background, there is no Biblical data concerning his home, vocation, lineage, or ancestral roots.

## **B. Theme**

Malachi addressed the returnees from the captivity to Babylon (later Persia). The revival and repentance under Ezra had waned and the people had entered a time of spiritual apathy and sin. Much of the book is structured around a statement by God, a defensive challenge for clarity by the people and a strong refutation by God. Further, in this book of confrontation, the challenge of the prophetic message was to return and be faithful to the Lord as the people await God’s future messenger who would proclaim the coming day of the Lord.

## **C. Dates**

### **1. Date of composition**

Malachi’s prophecy contains no historical markers by which to date with certainty the time of composition. While conservative scholars offer various suggestions, a date of writing around 433-31 seems reasonable.

### **2. Contextual dates (Ez/Neh/Est/Hag/Zech/Mal)**

See IV. “Chronological Setting” on page 138. Note the placement of Malachi.

## D. Structure

1. A suggested “chiasm” (Constable quoting Stuart, 7).

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### Malachi - Chiasm

- A** Superscription (1:1): Yahweh has a message for Israel.
  - B** First Disputation (1:2-5): God distinguishes between the good and the wicked. The proof of His love is His sparing the righteous and condemning the wicked.
  - C** Second Disputation (1:6-2:9): Condemnation of improper, begrudging offerings, promise of reversal of blessing, and the greatness of Yahweh’s name among the nations.
  - D** Third Disputation (2:10-16): The Lord is witness to marital fidelity, and Judah is unfaithful.
  - D’** Fourth Disputation (2:17-3:6): The Lord is witness to marital fidelity, and Judah is unfaithful.
  - C’** Fifth Disputation (3:7-12): Condemnation of improper, begrudging offerings, promise of reversal of blessing, and the greatness of Yahweh’s name among the nations.
  - B’** Sixth Disputation (3:13-4:3): God distinguishes between the good and the wicked. The proof of His love is His sparing the righteous and condemning the wicked.
  - A’** Summary challenge (4:4-6): Yahweh has a message for Israel.
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## 2. Chart

MALACHI						
Chapters 1-3						Chapter 4
Six (6) Oracles						Day of the Lord
#1 LORD's Love for Israel  1:1    1:5	#2 Sins of the Priests  1:6    2:9	#3 Sins of the People  2:10   2:16	#4 Questioning God's Justice  2:17       3:6	#5 Robbing God  3:7    3:12	#6 Arrogance vs Humility  3:13    3:18	Day of the Lord Coming  4:1       4:3  God to Send Elijah  4:4       4:6
Past	Present					Future

### E. Brief Outline: Book of Malachi

The following outline is based upon the previous chart. It also serves as the structure for the "Biblical Development" which follows.

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## Outline of Malachi

### I. SIX (6) ORACLES (Chapters 1-3)

Each of the six distinct oracles in this book consist of an opening “statement” made by the Lord. This is followed by a “challenge” or defensive question of the people then the “refutation” by the Lord.

#### A. Oracle 1: The Lord’s Love of Israel (1:1-5)

#### B. Oracle 2: Sins of the Priests (1:6-2:9)

1. Their corrupted worship (1:6-14)
2. Their corrupted teaching (2:1-9)

#### C. Oracle 3: Sins of the People (2:10-16)

#### D. Oracle 4: Questioning God’s Justice (2:17-3:5)

#### E. Oracle 5: Robbing God (3:6-12)

#### F. Oracle 6: Arrogance vs Humility (3:13-18)

### II. DAY OF THE LORD (Chapter 4)

#### A. Announcement of Its Coming (4:1-3)

#### B. Pronouncement of Elijah’s Coming (4:4-6)

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## VI. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT

### A. Six (6) Oracles (1:1-3:18)

1. Oracle 1: The Lord’s Love for Israel (1:1-5)

Malachi 1:1

*A prophecy: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.*

“Oracle” is the Hebrew word, *massa’*. It is translated as oracle or burden and is found 27 times in the Prophets. It is a threatening pronouncement.

- a. Statement (by the Lord)

Malachi 1:2<sup>a</sup>

*“I have loved you,” says the LORD.*

b. Challenge (by the people)

Malachi 1:<sup>b</sup>

*“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ declares the LORD.*

- (1) The condition of the people after the return from exile was not what they expected. They were still a subjugated people and the promised Messianic age seemed as distant as always.
- (2) The questioning of God’s love demonstrated a general sense of faithlessness, perhaps in God and His promised words.

c. Refutation (by the Lord)

Malachi 1:2<sup>c</sup>-5

*“Yet I have loved Jacob, <sup>3</sup> but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.” <sup>4</sup> Edom may say, “Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.” But this is what the LORD Almighty says: “They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> You will see it with your own eyes and say, ‘Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!’”*

- (1) God’s election (sovereign choice) of Jacob over Esau is in view. The use of “hate/love” is a common OT expression to refer to preferring or selecting one over another (cf. Gen 29:30-33; Deut 21:15-17; Lk 14:26).
- (2) Malachi 1:3-5 describes the destiny of Esau’s descendants (Edomites). While both Jacob (Israelites) and Esau (Edomites) would suffer under the Babylonian invasion and destruction, only Israel as God’s people would one day be blessed according to covenantal promises (see Deut 4:29-31). Why such harsh treatment? The prophet Obadiah catalogs the sins of the Edomites.

Obadiah 8-14

*"In that day," declares the LORD, "will I not destroy the wise men of Edom, those of understanding in the mountains of Esau?"*

*<sup>9</sup> Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in the slaughter. <sup>10</sup> Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. <sup>11</sup> On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. <sup>12</sup> You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble. <sup>13</sup> You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster. <sup>14</sup> You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.*

2. Oracle 2: Sins of the Priests (1:6-2:9)

a. Their corrupted worship (1:6-14)

(1) Statement (by the Lord)

Malachi 1:6<sup>a</sup>

*"A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you priests who show contempt for my name."*

(2) Challenge—part one

Malachi 1:6<sup>b</sup>

*"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'"*



(3) Refutation—part one

Malachi 1:7<sup>a</sup>

*“By offering defiled food on my altar.”*

(4) Challenge—part two

Malachi 1:7<sup>b</sup>

*“But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’*

*“By saying that the LORD’S table is contemptible.”*

(5) Refutation—part two

Malachi 1:8-9

*“When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>9</sup> “Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?”—says the LORD Almighty.”*

- (a) These offerings were grossly inappropriate by Mosaic Law (Lev 22:18; Deut 15:21).
- (b) These offerings were unacceptable as an act of worship before God. Such paltry offerings were not fit for a governor’s table, much less so for God.
- (c) The priests (and the people) wanted God’s favor but such was denied in light of such trashy offerings.

Following the second oracle is a lament by God (10-14). In this section, four important statements are made.

- Under the present conditions, the Lord Almighty is not pleased and will not accept the defiled offerings (10).
- In contrast, the Lord Almighty deserves “pure offerings” commensurate with His great name (11).

- With the present corrupted practices, the Lord Almighty calls out the contemptuous attitude of the priests (12-13).
- Summary charge:

Malachi 1:14<sup>b</sup>

*“For I am a great king,” says the LORD Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.”*

b. Their corrupted teachings (2:1-9)

(1) Admonition: honor my name (or else)

Malachi 2:1-2

*“And now, you priests, this warning is for you. <sup>2</sup> If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,” says the LORD Almighty, “I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me.”*

(2) Appeal: recall the covenant of grant with Levi

Malachi 2:4-5

*“And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>5</sup> “My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.”*

**Insight:**

The grievous signs of the priests with their blatant disregard of Mosaic stipulations led to the Lord's rebuke. What would follow would be judgment (2:3). But the Lord Almighty appealed to the special covenant with Levi, one who "stood in awe" of God's name.

This marks the beginning of four types of "covenants" (binding, contractual agreements) found in Malachi.

- (1) With Levi (2:4-5, 8)
- (2) Mosaic (2:10)
- (3) Marriage (2:14)
- (4) New (3:1)

- (3) Announcement: you despised Me, I despise you

Malachi 2:7-9

*"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. <sup>8</sup> But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty. <sup>9</sup> "So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."*

- 3. Oracle 3: Sins of the People (2:10-16)

Previously, the sins of the priests had been highlighted (1:6-2:9). Now, the prophet addresses the people.

- a. The general charge of unfaithfulness (10)

Malachi 2:10

*Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?*

- (1) Unlike previous oracles the style changes from “statement-challenge-refutation” to three rhetorical questions.
  - (2) “Breaking faith” carries the meaning of acting in an unfaithful manner with respect to an agreement or covenant. It can also mean to act treacherously as in interpersonal conflicts. Thus, note the phrase, “breaking faith with one another.”
- b. The specific charge concerning mixed marriages (11-12)

Malachi 2:11-12

*Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god.<sup>12</sup> As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord remove him from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings an offering to the LORD Almighty.*

- (1) Judah (the people) had “broken faith.”
- (2) Judah had done a “detestable thing.”
- (3) Judah had “desecrated the sanctuary.”
- (4) (Because) Judah had married foreign women who worshiped a “foreign god.”
- (5) (Therefore) Judah would be judged (“cut him off from the tents of Jacob”).

### **Insight: Mixed Marriages**

Note the following quote by E. Merrill in *NOTS*, 838-39.

Mixed marriages were expressly forbidden in the Mosaic Law. Invariably they led to apostasy and ultimately idolatry. (Ex 34:15-16; Deut 7:1-4).

- The prophet Balaam, who was prohibited from cursing Israel (Num 22:12), still brought God's judgment on Israel by encouraging the Moabite and Midianite women to entice Israel into idolatry through sexual immorality (Num 25:1-18). His wicked advice was later called the "teaching of Balaam" (Rev 2:14).
- After the Conquest, Joshua warned Israel not to intermarry with pagans who remained in the land, because it would ultimately bring God's judgment (Josh 23:12-13).
- King Solomon "loved many foreign women," and they "turned his heart after other gods," bringing God's judgment on him and his kingdom (1 Kings 11:1-5, 9-12).
- Ezra rebuked the people for intermarrying with their pagan neighbors. He forced them to "send away" the foreign spouses (Ezra 9:1-10:17).
- Twenty-five years after Ezra's reforms Nehemiah reacted violently to news that the remnant were again intermarrying with their pagan neighbors (Neh 13:23-27).

#### c. The specific charge concerning divorce (13-16<sup>a</sup>)

Within this section of the sins of the people, the prophet returns to the familiar oracular structure seen previously.

(1) Statement (of the prophet for the Lord)

Malachi 2:13

*Another thing you do: You flood the LORD'S altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands.*

(2) Challenge (of the people)

Malachi 2:14

*You ask, "Why?"*

(3) Refutation (by the prophet)

Malachi 2:14-15

*It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. <sup>15</sup> Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.*

Observe these noteworthy points:

- The marriage covenant is sacred.
- The marriage covenant is binding.
- The marriage covenant is a type of contractual agreement.
- The marriage covenant is ideally introduced in Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:24

*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

The strong summary statement from Malachi 2:16<sup>a</sup> concludes the matter. "I hate divorce, says the Lord God of Israel."

**Insight:**

Note the comments of C. Blaising, *BKC:OT*, 1582.

This verse is the most explicit statement in the Old Testament on God's feelings about divorce. Divorce was allowed but actually the instructions in that passage (Deut 24:1-4) were given to protect the wife if a divorce should occur. Jesus taught that those concessions by Moses were given because of the hardness of people's hearts, but He emphasized that God does not approve of divorce (Matt 19:7-9), though some Bible scholars see some bases for exceptions to this ideal.

For further study, see Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24.

4. Oracle 4: Questioning God's Justice (2:17-3:5)

a. Statement

Malachi 2:17<sup>a</sup>

*You have wearied the LORD with your words.*

b. Challenge

Malachi 2:17<sup>b</sup>

*"How have we wearied him?" you ask.*

c. Refutation

Malachi 2:17<sup>c</sup>

*By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"*

d. Warning (3:1-5)

- (1) Coming: A sent messenger for preparation  
(1<sup>a</sup>)

Malachi 3:1<sup>a</sup>

*"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me."*

Isaiah 40:3

*A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

John 1:19-23

*Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup> They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"*

- (2) Coming: the Lord for judgment (1<sup>b</sup>-5)

Malachi 3:1<sup>b</sup>-2

*"Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.*



Note this. The coming messenger (3:1<sup>a</sup>) will precede the coming of the Lord (3:1<sup>b</sup>-2). This was partially fulfilled in the First Coming but will be completely fulfilled in the Second Coming. Note that these descriptions speak of judgment, not explicit when Jesus first appeared but will be so in the Second Coming (cf. Isa 2:12; Joel 3:11-16; Amos 5:18-21; Zech 1:14-18; so forth).

5. Oracle 5: Robbing God (3:6-12)

There is a bridge between the coming judgment of the previous verses and the introduction of the fifth oracle. As often with judgment passages, there follows a basis for hope in God.

Malachi 3:6

*"I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."*

a. Statement—part one

Malachi 3:7<sup>a</sup>

*"Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty."*

b. Challenge—part one

Malachi 3:7<sup>b</sup>

*"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'"*

c. Statement—part two

Malachi 3:8<sup>a</sup>

*"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me."*

d. Challenge—part two

Malachi 3:8<sup>b</sup>

*"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'"*

e. Refutation

Malachi 3:8<sup>c</sup>

*"In tithes and offerings"*

The prophet expands the brief refutation with a discussion of how the people had neglected their responsibilities to the Lord and to His house.

Malachi 3:9-10

*“You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me.<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*

6. Oracle 6: Arrogance vs Humility (3:13-18)

a. Statement (by the Lord)

Malachi 3:13<sup>a</sup>

*“You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the LORD.*

b. Challenge (by the people)

Malachi 3:13<sup>b</sup>

*“Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’”*

c. Refutation

Malachi 3:14

*“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?’”*

This final oracle appears similar to the fourth (2:17-3:6). From questioning God’s justice in that the unrighteous seem to prosper and the righteous to suffer, now in the final oracle certain people were pronouncing the arrogant as blessed since evildoers prosper and the arrogant who challenge God’s goodness escape (14-15).

Apparently, though, some people who heard the Lord's rebuke through Malachi agreed to repent, even to the point of writing down their names and commitment upon "a scroll of remembrance" (16).

d. Judgment ("that day" - the Day of the Lord)

Malachi 3:17-18

*"On the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him." <sup>18</sup> And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."*

Note the key points:

- (1) The Day of the Lord will be a day of judging the wicked and preserving the righteous (believing ones).
- (2) The Day of the Lord is prophetically described by Daniel.

Daniel 12:1-2

*"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. <sup>2</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."*

- (3) The Day of the Lord will precede the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, a day when God will bless His "treasured possession," i.e. Israel.

**Insight:**

On God's original intention and plans for Israel, note Exodus 19.

Exodus 19:5-6

*"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup> you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."*

Also, see Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4.

**B. Day of the Lord**

The final broad section of Malachi highlights the coming of the Lord in judgment. The topic began in 3:17 with the key phrase, "in that day." What day? This obviously points to the Second Coming of Christ and the events leading to His appearance.

1. Announcement: the Day of the Lord (1-3)

- a. It will be a day of judgment (unrighteous).

Malachi 4:1

*“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.”*

- b. It will be a day of joy (righteous).

Malachi 4:2

*“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.”*

- c. It will be a day of vindication.

Malachi 4:3

*“Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty.*

2. Promise: the coming Elijah (4-6)

- a. Present preparation (4-5)

Malachi 4:4-5

*“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.*

- (1) In the mean time, “remember” and therefore obey “the law of my servant Moses.” The basis of blessings for the covenant people was heart felt obedience to the Mosaic covenant (cf. Deut 28:1-2<sup>ff</sup>).
- (2) Also, in the mean time, the obedient were to look for the coming of Elijah before “that great and dreadful day.”

b. Future (Far Future) activity

Malachi 4:6

*“He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”*

3. Fulfillment: Elijah and John the Baptist

This concluding section will attempt to harmonize Malachi 3:1 (“my messenger”) with 4:5-6 (“will send you Elijah”).

Note the following observations:

- a. The messenger of Malachi 3:1 was fulfilled in the forerunner ministry of John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:7-10 (Jesus speaking)

*As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? <sup>8</sup> If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. <sup>9</sup> Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”*

- b. John the Baptist does not strictly fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. The angel revealed to Zechariah (father of John) that John would have a notable ministry.

Luke 1:17

*“And he will go on before the Lord, **in the spirit and power** of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

Note that the angel seems to only indicate likeness to Elijah’s ministry, not fulfillment of

his ministry. Yet, in a sense, John was a type of the Elijah-figure, one who brought to mind the greater, future ministry of the past (now gone) prophet who will miraculously return to fulfill 4:5-6.

- c. John the Baptist denied that he was (literally) the ancient prophet.

John 1:19-23

*Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup> They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"*

However, note that Jesus did connect the two individuals. Again, from Matthew 11 focus on this description of John given by Jesus.

Matthew 11:11-14

*Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. <sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.*

Thus, John was the Elijah-figure to come (certainly, the fulfillment of 3:1) but not the literal Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6. Yet, verse 14 suggests that if the people had repented (in light of

the king and the king's message - "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"), then (theoretically) the kingdom Jesus presented would have been accepted and then John would have been (in a sense) the Elijah of 4:5-6.

- d. After John the Baptist died, Jesus made a remarkable claim. Elijah would indeed come and "restore all things."

Matthew 17:10-13

*The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist."*

Revelation 11:1-13

*I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. <sup>2</sup> But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. <sup>3</sup> And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." <sup>4</sup> They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth." <sup>5</sup> If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. <sup>6</sup> They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*



<sup>7</sup> Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

<sup>8</sup> Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified.

<sup>9</sup> For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. <sup>10</sup> The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

<sup>13</sup> At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Reflect: is one of these witnesses the real Elijah in fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6 or another Elijah-like figure whose life and ministry is reminiscent of the prophet? ... We shall see.

#### **Concluding Thought:**

Constable, 44 quotes the *New Scofield Bible*:

Genesis reveals the entrance of the curse into the human family (Gen 3); the last word of the OT shows the curse still persisting (Mal 4:6); Matthew begins (1:1) with Him who came to remove the curse (Gal 3:13; Rev 21:3-5; 22:3).

## **“FOUR HUNDRED SILENT YEARS”**

Intertestamental Period from  
Old to New Testament

## FOUR HUNDRED (400) SILENT YEARS

With the revelation given through Malachi, the Old Testament era ends. God's inspired communication to His people ceased. Daniel had prophesied that four great kingdoms would dominate the life of the Jewish people (cf. Dan 2—the Imposing Statue and Dan 7—the Four Beasts). These represented the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. By the time of Malachi's writing (ca 433-431 BC), the Babylonians had been defeated and the Jewish exiles found themselves under Medo-Persian rule. For the next 400 years or so, there were no authentic prophets, visions, dreams, or visitations from God. This would end with the coming of the Messiah and the beginning of the New Testament story. God would visit the earth in the incarnation of His Son and birth in Bethlehem (as foretold in Mic 5:2).

These outline notes are taken from Cupp, *Panorama of the Bible*, Rev. Ed., 2015 pp. 169-172. They simply sketch the key historical events between the two testaments. They serve as a bridge to Panorama Plus 10: Life of Christ.

**A. Description:** Also called the “Inter-testamental Period”

**B. Time Frame:** the span from Malachi (OT) to Matthew (NT)

**C. Four Empires** (over the now called “Jews”)

1. **Persian Period** (539-332 BC)
  - a. Defeated the Babylonians (539 BC)
  - b. Cyrus II, a kind benefactor: agreed to “the returns”
  - c. Time of relative peace and prosperity (in exile) and poverty (in the land)
  - d. Judah governed by the High Priest

## 2. **Grecian Period** (332-167 BC)

- a. Philip of Macedon (359-336 BC)
- b. Alexander the Great (336-323 BC)
  - Conquered the Persians
  - Defeated Darius III (331 BC)
  - Took Palestine (332 BC)
  - Died leaving his empire among his four generals:

### FOUR GENERALS

1. Ptolemy Lagos (South or Egypt)
2. Seleucus Nicator (East or Syria/Babylon)
3. Cassander (West or Macedon/Greece)
4. Lysimachus (North or Thrace/Asia Minor)

- c. Palestine after Alexander the Great
  - Caught between the power struggle of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids
  - Initially under the Ptolemies but in 198 BC Antiochus III wrested control from Egypt
  - Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) was very Hellenistic; antagonistic to Jewish religion; after defeat in Egypt, returned to Jerusalem amidst much Jewish derision; offered a sow on the altar in the Holy of Holies; fueled the flames of Jewish revolt

## 3. **Maccabean Period** (Hebrew Independence)

- a. Dates: 167-63 BC
- b. Mattathias: Judean priest; led a revolt against forced Hellenization

- c. Judas Maccabees (“the hammer”): military leader; cleansed and rededicated the Temple on December 25, 165 BC (Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights or Hanukkah)
- d. Simon Maccabees: became High Priest; statesman and gifted administrator; brought prosperity and religious reform; assassinated by brother-in-law
- e. John Hyrcanus: became High Priest at death of his father (Simon Maccabees); advanced the dynastic rule of priest-rulers known as the Hasmoneans; during his time a rivalry developed between the “Hasidim” (conservative, anti-Greeks; forerunners of the Pharisees) and the “Hellenizers” (who embraced some elements of Greek life; forerunners of the Sadducees)
- f. Civil war: 69-63 BC

#### 4. **Roman Period**

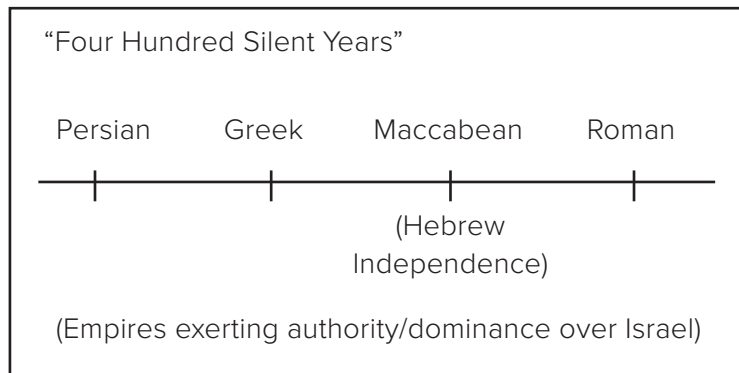
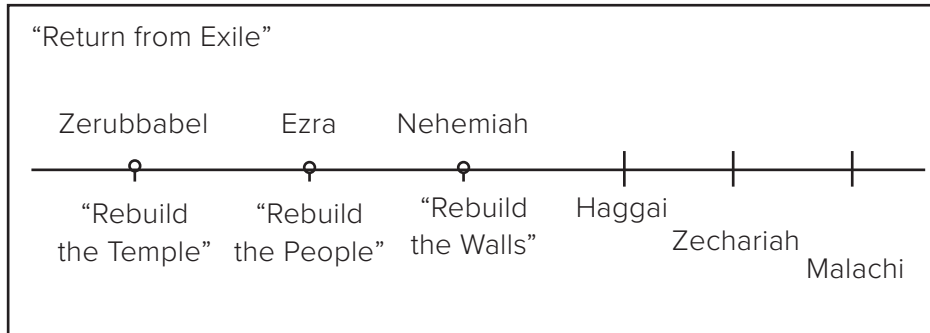
- a. Dates: 63 BC to 70 AD (as it relates to the Jews)
- b. Pompey: invaded Syria in 63 BC; enraged the Jews by entering the Holy of Holies
- c. Julius Caesar: defeated Pompey in 48 BC; not loved by the Jews, but Julius Caesar treated them leniently
- d. Death of Julius Caesar:

##### TRIUMPHATE

1. Octavius
2. Antony
3. Lepidus

- e. Octavian Augustus: defeated Marc Antony; received the “switched” loyalty of Herod the Great
- f. Herod the Great: Edomite; known as a great builder (Herod’s Temple, Masada, amphitheater at Caesarea Philippi); completely unprincipled; led his own private reign of terror (“better to be Herod’s pig than his son”); the Herod of the massacre at Bethlehem

#### D. Panorama Timelines (Movement 9)



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