

**WHY DOES JESUS QUOTE MALACHI?**

The situation in Jesus's day was not that different from Malachi's. Judaism as a whole had lost its way. It was looking for priests and teachers rather than to God. They had stopped looking for Messiah as he had been presented in Scripture and were looking for a Messiah who would give them what they wanted or thought they needed.

In addition, Jesus relies upon Malachi because the book does not look to the coming of just a teacher or king, but of God himself. There was no provision in Malachi for any kind of human Messiah. It was *God* who was coming to cleanse corruption, correct error, and establish justice. The inevitable conclusion you have to reach is that *if Jesus did say these things, he was declaring himself to be the God of Israel.*

# The Book of Malachi

**AUTHOR**

Very little is known about Malachi. It may not even be the author's name, since it means "my messenger" in Hebrew (מַלְאכִי). Even less is known about the date of the book, since there is very little in the text to tell us *when* it was written. It *seems* that it was written sometime in the post-exilic period, perhaps around 450–400 BC, but no one can be sure. It seems likely, however, that it was one of the last books of the Old Testament to be written.

**THEMES**

Overall, Malachi's oracle is aimed at a corrupt priesthood and the way the priest failed to maintain both holiness in the present and an expectation of YHWH's return in the future. These priests had polluted the worship of the Lord. The priests were taking advantage of the people of Israel, something that occurred several times in biblical history, and they had abandoned their God. The best way to read Malachi is to think of it as a series of six disputations or arguments.

1:1–5      *The question of God's love for Israel*

1:6–2:9    *The purity of the priesthood*

2:10–16    *Dealing with idolatrous marriages*

2:16–3:6   *Is God truly Just?*

3:7–12     *Repentance and Faithful Giving*

3:13–4:3   *The Final Judgment of the Wicked and the Righteous*

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