



## Answers

1. He is called a minor prophet because his book is small in size, not because he is less spiritual than the major prophets, who wrote the larger books. He is a post-exilic prophet because he wrote after the Jews came back from their seventy-year captivity.
2. Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament in our English Bible. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible.
3. Our English Bible follows the order of the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
4. It is named after the seventy scholars that supposedly translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the third century B.C. The English Bible follows this order.
5. Right at the end of the Old Testament period.
6. "Backsliding Reviewed." There had been a period of revival at the time of Nehemiah after the wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. but the revival was short-lived, and the people were now in a backslidden state.

## Discuss / Consider

1. God's word to His backslidden people through the prophet Malachi was, "I have loved you." But the people questioned God's love by saying, "In what way have You loved us?" God in His grace, patiently reasoned with them, giving proof of His love for them by His election of Jacob. Consider how God's election of Jacob proved His love for His people.

2. A second proof of God's love was by His destruction of Edom. God had spared His people and in His love and grace brought them back from captivity. The prophet Obadiah had pronounced judgment on Edom, the descendants of Esau. but there was no promise of return or rebuilding.

## Challenge

1. Do you ever question God's love? Do you think that God doesn't love you because He disciplines you? Read Hebrews 12:6.

2. Count the ways that God has shown His great love for you.

**Backslidden Israel is Rebuked**  
**Malachi 1:6-14**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. Defective sacrifices dishonor God.**

**2. Disdainful attitudes dishonor God.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Let's close the door of the church if we are just going through the motions.**

**Questions**

1. What is the meaning of the name Malachi?
2. Who was the last prophet of the Old Testament?
3. Malachi was a contemporary of Nehemiah. What is Nehemiah noted for?
4. When did Malachi write his book and what was his message?
5. Down through the years, God reminded Israel of His covenanted love and His loving kindness toward them. What was the response to this love by the people of Malachi's day?
6. Why were the priests rebuked?
7. Explain, *"From the rising of the sun, My name shall be great among the Gentiles."* (Malachi 1:11)

## Answers

1. Malachi means “my messenger.”
2. Malachi
3. Rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.
4. He wrote about 430 B.C. to rebuke the people for their backslidden ways. This was likely during the time after the rebuilding of the wall.
5. They questioned God’s love and they challenged Him to prove it.
6. For offering defective sacrifices and for despising God’s way of worship.
7. It is a prediction of the future when believing Gentiles would worship the Lord.

## Discuss / Consider

1. God said that the people and priests were dishonoring Him by offering defective sacrifices on the altar. What about your offerings to the Lord? Do you give the Lord the left-overs of your time, for example? How about your talents? Do you use them to serve the Lord? Is your praise on Sunday morning defiled and defective because of what your mind was occupied with the night before? Are you offering defective sacrifices and dishonoring God?

2. It was not only the actions of the people and the priests in offering defective sacrifices, but it was their attitudes as well. Re-read Malachi 1:6, 7, 12-13. Would you possibly have such an attitude? Does your mind wander during a time of worship?

## Challenge

1. Are you worshiping with a right heart? Don’t just put in time or go because it’s a habit. God would rather have the doors of the temple (church) closed than have the people just go through the motions.

## **A Call to Repentance Malachi 2**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

- 1. God is not pleased when His people re ignorant of His word.**
  
- 2. God is not pleased when His people do not separate from this world.**
  
- 3. God is not pleased when His people are unfaithful in their marriages.**

### **Practical Application**

- 1. How blind can you be?**

### **Questions**

1. What is the theme of Malachi?
2. When was Malachi written?
3. Why did God raise up the prophet Malachi at this time?
4. Refer to Malachi Chapter 1. Why were the people rebuked by God?
5. Refer to Malachi Chapter 2. What were the other areas of rebuke?

## Answers

1. Backsliding rebuked.
2. At the end of the Old Testament period.
3. When Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem in 445 B.C., he motivated the people to rebuild the city wall, and at that time there had been a great revival. But after some time, Nehemiah had to return to Persia for a couple of years. It may have been during this time that the backslidden state of Israel, described by Malachi, came about. God raised up Malachi to rebuke the people because of their backsliding.
4. The people were rebuked for bringing defective sacrifices to the Lord, and for despising God's way of worship.
5. The failure of the priests to instruct the people in the law of the Lord; the sin of intermarriage with the surrounding pagan peoples; and the problem of divorce, which the Lord hated.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Read Malachi 2:1-9. The priests were rebuked for failing to teach and instruct God's people in the law (See Deuteronomy 33:10). The Levites of Malachi's day dishonored God by not fulfilling their responsibilities, and therefore they would not be blessed. Servants of the Lord today also have a responsibility to teach the word and instruct God's people in the ways of the Lord. Many of those with this responsibility are not doing their job. What do you see as your responsibility here?

2. In Malachi's day, there was a problem of intermarriage between the people of God and pagans of the surrounding foreign nations. This was a serious sin (Deuteronomy 7:3-4) because God's people were no longer separate from this world. The same is true today when believers live a worldly lifestyle. Are you living a life pleasing to God or are you catering to a worldly lifestyle?

## Challenge

1. The men in Malachi's day were divorcing their wives so that they could marry younger women or pagan women. This was wrong. God hates divorce – both then and today. God loves to see Christian families where children are raised to love and serve the Lord. Be a great Christian example in this area!

1. The people of Malachi's day were saying that God was not just because evil people were getting away with wrong doing. God was getting weary of this kind of talk. They were desensitized to their own sins. Is it possible that you are questioning God and wondering why He is not blessing your life? Have you examined your life in light of Scripture?

**A Prediction; Further Rebukes; Encouragement  
Malachi 3**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Believers commit the sin of robbery when they give sparingly.

2. Believers commit the sin of arrogance when they think selfishly.

**Practical Application**

1. Is your name written in the book of remembrance?

**Questions**

1. When the Jews came back to Jerusalem from their seventy-years captivity in Babylon, there was good news and there was bad news.

a. What was the good news?

b. What was the bad news?

2. Refer to Malachi 3:1-6. What is this portion of scripture about?

3. When will the Lord come in judgment and how will he come?

4. What kind of teaching method does Malachi use predominantly in his book?

5. Why will God refine Israel and ultimately restore them?

## Answers

- The good news was they rebuilt the altar of sacrifice, and then they rebuilt the temple, and finally they rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem.
  - The bad news was that they were not fully committed to the Lord for much of this time.
- This is a parenthesis in the rebukes, predicting the coming of John the Baptist. He is the messenger who precedes the coming of the Lord. See also Matthew 11:10.
- He will come at His second advent. Then he will come and judge Israel like a refiner's fire, burning out the impurities. See Malachi 3:2-5.
- The question-answer method.
- Because of His covenant promises with them. God does not go back on His promises.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Under the law, the Jews were required to tithe from their substance in order to maintain the work of the Lord. But the people of Malachi's day were not tithing. As Christians, we are not commanded to tithe. However, voluntary tithing is a biblical principle. Are you giving freely and generously to God?

2. The backsliders of Malachi's day had the nerve to say that it was futile to serve God. Have you ever had a what's-in-it-for-me attitude when you served the Lord? Have you ever been so arrogant to think that God was unfair and unjust when He passed over you in favor of someone you considered more unworthy than yourself?

## Challenge

1. *"Those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. A book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His Name."* Malachi 3:16. The people spoken of here were and will be the godly remnant. How about you? What is your conversation when you're with other believers? Do you please the Lord with your words? Do you center your conversation on the Lord Jesus? The Lord listens, and He writes in a book of remembrance.



## **Prophecies Concerning the Lord and Elijah Malachi 4**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

- 1. Judgment and blessing are part of the coming day of the Lord.**
  
- 2. Elijah will appear before the coming day of the Lord.**

### **Practical Application**

- 1. Let's pray for more Malachi 4:6 families.**

### **Questions**

1. What is the last book in the Old Testament?
2. Name the three post-exilic prophets.
3. What is the approximate date of Malachi's writing?
4. What happened, biblically, after the time of Malachi?
5. What and when is the day of the Lord?
6. What are the two aspects of the day of the Lord?
7. What will characterize the coming kingdom of our Lord here on this earth?

## Answers

1. Malachi
2. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
3. About 430 B.C., about one hundred years after the return from captivity.
4. There came the so-called 400 silent years, where no prophet of God spoke until the coming of John the Baptist.
5. In general, the day of the Lord could be said to be anytime that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of nations. It could be for judgment or blessing.
6. There is an historical aspect to the day of the Lord. That is, some prophecies of the day of the Lord have already been partially fulfilled in history. There is also an eschatological or future aspect to the day of the Lord.
7. Righteousness will reign.

## Discuss / Consider

1. The day of the Lord is a major theme in the Old Testament, and it is mentioned in the New Testament as well. The future day of the Lord includes both the coming tribulation period and the coming millennial kingdom of Christ here on this earth. There will be universal restoration and healing for all that man has destroyed. There will be no terrorism, for the wicked will be judged and righteousness will reign. Think about this! Do you ever thank the Lord for His righteous judgment and His coming reign of righteousness.

2. When the Jewish people celebrate the Passover today, at one point during the meal a child goes to the door to see if Elijah has arrived. This tradition stems from this Elijah prophecy here in Malachi 4:5. The Elijah prophecy was a contingent prophecy. IF Israel had received her Messiah and His kingdom when He came the first time, then John the Baptist would have completely fulfilled the Elijah prophecy. But because they rejected their Messiah, their king and His kingdom the complete fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy awaits the second coming of Christ. See Revelation 11. The two witnesses will precede the second coming of Christ to this earth. They will come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and indeed, one of them may be Elijah himself. Consider this prophecy.

## Challenge

1. Read the last verse of the Old Testament, Malachi 4:6. God is looking for families where the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children and the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers. That is, families where the biblical faith of the fathers is maintained. These are families in which there is repentance from sin, and the authority structure in the home is honored and respected. God is looking for Malachi 4:6 families. Pray for your own family and for other families. Pray for more Malachi 4:6 families.