

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MALACHI

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The HISTORICAL SETTING

1. Life was not easy for the remnant of Jews who had _____ to Judah from Babylon in the fifth-century BC; they were now under _____ - _____ sovereignty, a governor had been appointed.
2. The second _____ had been _____ by this time, but the worshippers were in a _____ state.

B. The BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

1. Spiritually- even after all of Ezra's reforms and Nehemiah's success in motivating the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem's wall, the people of Judah were _____ and _____ - _____ toward the Lord.
2. Economically- farming was _____, the crops were subject to _____ damage, and the overall economy was barely _____ along.
3. Socially- _____ was on the rise, the Jews were now intermarrying with the _____, there was an oppression of the _____, and morality was declining.

C. The AUTHORSHIP and DATE

1. The name of the prophet is the title of the book, "*Malachi*," which means "*My _____*;" we know nothing of the prophet's _____ roots, upbringing, or _____ life.
2. While Bible scholars differ on the date of this book, the majority agree that it was written about _____ years after Cyrus had issued the decree in 538 BC (which permitted Jews to return from exile to Judah); this would place the date of writing around _____ - _____ BC.

D. LITERARY STYLE and TEXT

1. Malachi's style differs from that of the other writing prophets, rather than proclaiming his message directly, he used an authoritative, confrontational _____ and _____ method extensively.
2. The text is _____ preserved; Malachi's canonicity has _____ been challenged, because it appears in _____ the authoritative lists of canonical books, and it is also quoted in the NT.

E. The intended AUDIENCE

1. Malachi's readers were the _____ community living in post-exilic Judah, they were a _____.
2. The recipients of his messages included the _____, the disillusioned, the cynical, the callous, the _____, the apathetic, the _____, the skeptical and the outright wicked.

F. The THEMES and PURPOSES of the book of Malachi

1. Malachi revealed the unfailing _____ of Yahweh for His people; this is the _____ that reoccurs throughout the book.
2. Malachi's message applied the Word of God to the problems of postexilic Israel—problems of _____, and outright _____, which stemmed from a loss of _____ that the kingdom would be established.
3. Malachi's question and answer prose was intended to stimulate a serious _____ with the Lord and for them to begin to sincerely _____ Him, not merely going through the motions.

* Are any of these issues relevant for us today?