

The Prophets, Book 17

Malachi

Malachi is the last of the 12 Minor Prophets, the last of the 17 prophetic books, and is the closing book of the Old Testament. Malachi was probably a contemporary of Haggai and Zechariah, but much younger--the third member of God's final trio of Old Testament prophets.

The next (and last) Old Testament prophets to appear on the scene will also be a trio, and they will appear at the dawn of the New Testament period; but they left us no books of their prophecies. There will be an elderly man named Simeon and an elderly prophetess named Anna, who will prophesy over the infant Jesus when He is brought to the Temple and presented to the Lord. The third member of this trio will be six-month-old John the Baptist, who will grow up to be a pivotal man in human history, the living link between the Old Covenant and the New. And his cousin, the Messiah, will declare that there had never been a greater prophet than John¹.

The Setting. Malachi seems to have ministered when Nehemiah was rebuilding the city and its walls, about 450-400 BC; and in their preaching and prophesying Malachi and Nehemiah dealt with some of the same problems². The people had become prosperous and indifferent, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. The Temple was rebuilt, temple worship was reestablished, and the city was again becoming an object of pride and security; but worship was indifferent, the priesthood was lethargic, tithes were neglected, and the people were again marrying the pagans around them. In short, they were soft in body, mind, and spirit, neglecting God's laws, just waiting for the Messiah to arrive. The hard, chastening lessons of the captivity were being rapidly forgotten.

The Names and Titles of God. In speaking of God in this final book Malachi, like Zechariah, repeatedly uses the unique, YHWH, form of his name, which seems to be a closing reminder to the Israelites that their God is THE God, and that there is no other³. Also, like Zechariah, Malachi repeatedly refers to God as the "LORD of hosts," the name and title identifying Him not only as the unique YHWH, but also as the unconquerable, irresistible, Commander of the Army of

¹ There may have been other men and women who prophesied at the dawn of the New Testament period; but these three are the only ones recorded in Scripture.

² Compare 2:11-13 with Nehemiah 13:23-30, and 3:8-12 with Nehemiah 13:10-14.

³ Isaiah 45:5-6.

Heaven. In human terms, it is like saying to the people of God, "And don't ever forget that our GOD is the Alexander the Great of the Universe--He always wins⁴."

A. Author. Nothing is known about Malachi, except what may be inferred from his writing; outside his book, there is no known mention of him anywhere in ancient literature. His name means "my angel" or "my messenger" (the Hebrew word for angel or messenger is *malak*), and some ancient writers believed that he was an angelic being. Because no mention of Malachi has yet been found in ancient literature outside of the Bible, critical scholars (predictably) contend that the name is merely symbolic, and reject the thought that there was ever such a person as Malachi the prophet. They also pick the book apart, declaring some portions of it to have been "later additions" or "interpolations" by unknown scribes.

The New Testament refers to the book and quotes from it; and, in these New Testament passages there are never qualifications such as "the various authors of Malachi⁵."

NOTE: The criticism, rejecting the identity and historicity of Malachi, was also made concerning the historicity of King David. Critical scholars denied that such a person had ever lived, for until 1993 no mention of him had been found in ancient literature outside of the Bible. Between 1993 and 1994 fragments of a stela (engraved stone), dating from the 9th Century BC, were discovered at Tel Dan in northern Israel. The stone fragments are part of an inscription which boasts of the victory of an Aramean king over his two southern neighbors, the "king of Israel [Northern Kingdom]" and the "king of the House of David [Southern Kingdom]." The Aramean king boasts that he, under the divine guidance of the (pagan) god Hadad, vanquished several thousand Israelite and Judahite horsemen and charioteers, before personally killing the two defeated kings. Unfortunately, the three fragments thus far discovered do not identify the names of the kings involved; but most scholars believe that the stela refers to a campaign of King Hazael of Damascus, against the armies of King Jehoram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah.

B. Place and Date. The book was almost certainly written in Jerusalem, between 450 and 400 BC.

C. Theme. The theme of the book is rebuke of the priesthood and the people, interspersed with promises of blessing for the faithful, and prophecies of future glory. As Dr. Herbert Lockyer expresses it, the rebukes and warnings of coming judgment are interspersed with "promises and assurances...like pearls gleaming

⁴ Alexander is a decidedly pale and inadequate simile here, but there is no adequate one among mortals.

⁵ See in this regard Matthew 11:9-10,14 and 17:11-12; Mk 1:1-3, 9:11-13; Lk 1:17; Rom 9:13.

against a dark background⁶." A secondary theme (or perhaps the underlying theme) is the unchangeable nature of God, the setting against which occur the cycles of his people's faithfulness and rebellion, periods of righteousness and periods of wickedness. The Constant, above and behind all this human inconstancy, is God, saying, "I am the LORD, I change not."

D. Significance. In addition to the nature of Malachi's prophecies pointed out in the "Theme" above, this small book, which closes out the canon of the Old Testament, also tolls the death knell on the Old Testament priesthood and its system of animal and material sacrifices, established by God in Aaron at the time of the Exodus. Through Malachi, God emphatically slams the door on the Aaronic priesthood, and its system of sacrificial offerings. Malachi might as well have concluded his book with, "The End."

And yet Malachi's book is also a beginning, and not simply the end. He also speaks of a future priesthood, all over the World, a multitude of believers offering spiritual sacrifices. There is also a fascinating look into the future, concerning John the Baptist and Elijah. Malachi prophesies of the one who will come to prepare the way for the Messiah; this man, John, may be thought of as both the last of the Old Testament prophets and the first of the New Testaments prophets--a human bridge between the two eras. Symbolically, according to Jesus, he will also be the Elijah spoken of by Malachi in 4:5-6⁷. And Elijah, who has not yet experienced death, will very probably be one of the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11⁸. If this is true, he will thus complete the connection in Malachi's final leap to "the great and terrible Day of the LORD," the culmination of the Kingdom Age in the Book of Revelation, final book of the Bible. Thus, if we follow carefully, Malachi not only connects the gap from the closing of the Old Covenant to the coming of the New Covenant; it seems that he then spans the gap from the coming of the Messiah with the New Covenant, to the end of the Church Age, final judgment, and the coming of the New Heaven and New Earth. You will see the richness of the significance of this small book reflected in the number of cross references and explanatory notes.

For the work of an unknown prophet, with only four small chapters, I can only say, **"What a book!"**

E. Highlights. Highlights of Malachi include the following:

⁶ Lockyer, Herbert: "All the Men of the Bible," 1st Edition: Grand Rapids, Zondervan, p 225.

⁷ See in this regard Matthew 11:9-14.

⁸ The other of the two witnesses will probably be Enoch. He and Elijah are the only two in human history who have yet to experience physical death. Hebrews 9:27 states that everyone will experience physical death, and the two witnesses in Rev 11 will be martyred, and raised from the dead, apparently fulfilling the truth of Hebr 9:27 by removing its only two exceptions.

1. Final Judgment on Edom. (1:1-5)

Malachi opens with a pronouncement of final judgment on Edom and the descendants of Esau. Edom, for many centuries, has been known for its abundant water and lush pastures, and for the nearly impregnable nature of its high terrain for defending against an invader. No matter what the Edomites may do, says the LORD, Edom will be destroyed and will become a desolation, inhabited by "the dragons of the wilderness⁹."

NOTE: Is the expression, "dragons of the wilderness" in v3 a reference to literal dragons? Or is it simply a metaphor, meaning wild, dangerous animals in general? It may be both. For some fascinating evidence concerning this interesting possibility, see "Dinosaurs and Dragons" in Part IV (Selected Topical Summaries).

2. The End of the Aaronic Priesthood. (1:6-14)

With a negligent and indifferent priesthood offering corrupt sacrifices, God slams the door on the Old Covenant priesthood. They are offering animals that are sick, lame, blind or otherwise undesirable, and of little commercial value, when they should be offering the very best--and those without blemish. Not only that, but they consider service in the Temple a drudgery--not a privilege, calling what they do "a weariness." To make his point, the LORD reminds the priests that if they had a human dignitary as a guest, they would not dare serve him less than the best; and yet they dare to treat Him in this disrespectful way. In what I would call extremely strong words, whose meaning the corrupt priests cannot fail to understand, He addresses them as "Oh priests that despise my name [everything that I am and represent]."

3. A Glimpse of a New Priesthood. (1:11)

This is an unusual (in fact unique) way to structure a highlight in this study guide to the Bible, but we must go back into the previous highlight to fully examine one verse. Verse 11 in Highlight 2 above deserves separate treatment.

Again bridging the gap between the end of the Old Covenant with its Aaronic priesthood, and the New Covenant, Malachi speaks of a new priesthood made up of all peoples, Jew and Gentile, functioning as priests all day long, and all over the World ("from the rising of the Sun even unto the going down of the same"). And this New Covenant priesthood will not offer animal sacrifices, or sacrifices of food and drink; they will, instead, offer "a pure offering," the sacrifice of the pure

⁹ Concerning the permanent desolation of Edom, see "The Remarkable City of Petra" in the introduction to the study guide to Obadiah.

incense of praise, “the fruit of their lips.” In that day, says the LORD, “my name will be great [honored] among the heathen [Gentiles].”

NOTES:

a. David wrote prophetically of this new, spiritual, system of sacrifice that would someday replace the animal, food and incense sacrifices. See in this regard Psalms 40:5-8, 51:15-17 and 141:2. It is also revealed in Psalms 116:17 and 107:22. And, in Hebrews, it is beautifully expressed in one verse: 13:15.

b. The phrase "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same," used here, can mean from sunrise to sunset, thus all day long. It can also mean from east to west, thus all over the World. One can travel from the South Pole, going northward, and eventually reach the North Pole; one cannot go any farther to the north. Continuing the journey, he then begins to travel southward and, reaching the South Pole, he cannot go any farther to the south. But this is not true of travel from east to west, for one can travel in this direction forever and never reach an end-point.

And so, what does Malachi mean by saying that these spiritual sacrifices will be offered up “from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same”? Does he mean all day, every day? Or does he mean all over the World? He probably means both.

4. From Levi to a Corrupted Priesthood. (2:1-10)

Chapter 2 begins with an indictment of the current, corrupted, priesthood, compared with the purity of the sons of Levi when the priesthood was first established. In case the priests didn't get the message in Chapter 1, the LORD harks back to the early days of the priesthood, what we might call "the good old days." Back then, He says, Levi (and, by extension, all the priests and Levites) walked in close fellowship with Him, in righteousness, "in peace and equity." And, by their good example, they led the people in paths of righteousness, “and did turn many away from iniquity.” Now, however, the attitudes and behavior of the priests are so bad that they “have caused many to stumble” and have corrupted the covenant with the sons of Levi. He will not only refuse to accept any more sacrifices at their hands, but will curse both them and their offerings. Thus, they are not only fired; but, if they continue, trying to carry on as before, they will be accursed!

NOTE: *There has been no Aaronic priesthood for the Jewish people since the Romans destroyed the Temple and its genealogical records, and drove the Jews from Jerusalem in 71 AD. Today there is, among some religious Jews, a movement to reestablish the priesthood and temple worship. Of course, there is no Temple, and hostile Muslims occupy and control the Temple Mount; yet these hopeful people dream of the day when Israelis will again occupy the Temple*

Mount, the Mosque of Omar and the Dome of the Rock will be removed, and the Temple rebuilt. Meanwhile, they are building a data base of Jews with names like Levy and Cohen, that they associate with the Tribe of Levi, as a beginning in reestablishing the priests and Levites for the Temple of which they dream. Their hopes and dreams are probably vain, however, for the Temple Mount will probably remain in Muslim hands until Jesus returns in the Second Advent, and makes all things right for eternity.

5. "He Hateth Putting Away." (2:11-16)

The priests are apparently divorcing their wives, and doing it capriciously. They are reminded that the LORD has made the priest and his wife one, in a permanent covenant, in order that the two will produce "godly seed," i.e. children reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The implication here is that the corrupt priests are even abandoning their Israelite wives and marrying pagan women, thus producing corrupt offspring. This implies (with the witness of the Israelites' history since they entered the Promised Land to confirm the implication) that such children will not only be ineligible for the priesthood, but will probably be reared in the pagan religion of their mothers. Verse 16 of Chapter 2 includes an interesting and somewhat mysterious clause concerning the way priests were treating the wives of their youth. Following the statement that "the LORD God hateth putting away," Malachi writes, "for one covereth violence with his garment." This probably means that such a priest is using his exalted priestly position, as represented by his priestly garment (ephod), to justify violence to his unwanted wife. But what kind of violence does Malachi mean? The Koran provides for a Muslim husband to beat his wife if he wishes; but the Bible contains no such provision. This strange clause probably refers to the emotional and social violence that the rejected wife unavoidably suffers.

NOTE: *The matter of divorce and re-marriage is a sensitive issue among Christians, and one that is divisive. For a summary of teachings concerning the issue and what the Scriptures have to say on the subject, see "The Painful Issue of Divorce and Remarriage" in Part IV (Selected Topical Summaries).*

6. Calling Evil Good. (2:17)

The Lord is wearied with corrupt priests who call the evil doings of powerful people good--who pronounce, in some way, wicked behavior to be righteous. They are saying, literally, and by their behavior, that the LORD will not take notice, or care, when those in authority commit terrible, sinful acts. They are pretending that "the God of judgment" doesn't exist.

NOTE: *As this is being written, in the second decade of the 21st Century, this same sin exists, especially in the increasing acceptance (and, in some cases, promotion) of homosexual behavior, including the ordination of openly*

homosexual ministers, priests and bishops, and the performance of homosexual "weddings." The liberal clergy is now, as it was then, in the name of "tolerance" or political expedience, calling evil good. Meanwhile, those priests, ministers and bishops faithful to the clear teachings of Scripture, who stand against homosexual sin are maligned as "intolerant and un-loving." If such behavior brought an end to the Aaronic priesthood in the day of Malachi, can judgment for the 21st Century Church be far away?

7. The Messenger of the LORD and Coming Judgment. (3:1-6; 4:5-6)

There is coming a Day of Judgment (with the Second Advent of Christ), and in that day the sins of the priests and people will be exposed and dealt with like dross that is skimmed off and removed from molten, refined silver. Before that second coming, however, He will send his messenger to prepare the way. This is, pretty obviously, is a double reference: to John the Baptist, who will prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus in his First Advent; and a reference to Elijah, who will re-appear on Earth to prepare the way for the Second Advent of Christ and the Day of Judgment.

Remember that when Malachi wrote this book there were no chapter breaks; the announcement of judgment to come, that begins in Chapter 3, cannot be separated from the last verse (v 17) of Chapter 2. Calling evil good, and good evil, will be high on the LORD's list of things to be dealt with when He comes to purify the Church. Notice also that in 3:6 is the great revelation that God never changes (after all, why should He?). It is only because of this, and because part of his unchanging nature is mercy, that the Israelites are not already vaporized for their sins.

In verse 7 the history of the Israelites since leaving Egypt, with their repeated unfaithfulness, and the constant readiness of God to forgive and restore them, is expressed in only 33 words. Yet, in what seems like their pride and arrogance, the people insult God by asking "what do we need to do differently? By implication, they are suggesting that they have done no wrong.

8. Will a Man Rob God? (3:8-9)

In reply to the arrogant question as to what they have done wrong, The LORD begins to answer them with a rhetorical question: "Will a man rob God?"--i.e. "Do you think you can rob the God of the Universe and suffer no consequences? And yet you corrupt priests have been robbing me." In arrogance that is difficult to believe, the corrupt priests demand an explanation; and the LORD graciously replies that they have been robbing Him by failing to cause the people to bring tithes into the Temple storehouse to make possible proper Temple functioning. Because of this, the LORD says, they have brought a curse upon themselves.

NOTE: *The wording of this passage (3:8-12) can sound as if it was the priests who were to produce the tithes and bring them into the Temple storehouse; however, this was never the case. From the beginning of the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial worship, first in the Tabernacle, and then in the Temple, it was the people who were to bring the offerings of crops and livestock to the priests and Levites, who then laid them up in the storehouse to provide for sacrifices in the functioning of Temple worship. The tithes of the people were also intended to feed and supply the needs of the priests and Levites.*

It seems that, by the time of Malachi, proper sacrifices were not being maintained, and the priests and Levites were not requiring it of the people. It may also mean that the priests and Levites were taking more than they should have taken for their own support. It may also mean that they were taking the best for themselves and offering inferior crops and animals to the Lord. The clear wording of Chapt 1 suggests this latter meaning, although the meaning could also include failing to have sufficient tithes given by the people.

9. Prove Me Now. (3: 10-12)

Yet the LORD's mighty-but-merciful hand is stretched forth still, to forgive and bless, if only the corrupt priests will repent and obey Him. He even invites them to put Him to a test; "Prove me now," He says; if they will bring the tithes again into the storehouse as they should, He will open the windows of Heaven and pour out upon them a blessing that they will not be able to contain¹⁰. He promises that if they repent He will "rebuke the devourer" for their sakes, and he ("the devourer") will not be able to destroy their crops or cause their grapes to abort on the vine¹¹. If they will obey Him, generalized blessings will result, and they will be admired by the nations around them.

NOTES:

a. *When our relationship with God is impaired by sin, He is always ready to be reconciled; but the reconciliation is--always--up to us. He doesn't change; and, for the relationship to be restored, it is we who must do the changing, in our attitudes and behavior. We must repent and abandon our sin, and then we can again enjoy that close and wonderful relationship with our Heavenly Father¹².*

b. *In this passage, "the devourer" is not identified. It may be a reference to Satan, who is constantly "seeking those whom he may devour¹³." It may also*

¹⁰ Here the LORD'S challenge, "Prove me now..." is a stern, corrective, counterpoint to the his loving invitation to experience his blessings in Ps 34:8: "Oh taste and see that the LORD is good."

¹¹ For reasons unknown to me, the translators of the New International Version (NIV) omit "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes"; the vast majority of the other modern versions of the Bible--if not all--retain this promise.

¹² Isaiah 59:1-2.

¹³ I Peter 5:8.

refer to destructive insects and other plagues which destroy food crops. It probably refers to both.

c. Is tithing a requirement today? Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and most other liturgical churches usually see tithing as an Old Testament legal requirement that does not apply to the New Testament Church. The same is true of some non-liturgical, evangelical groups. Many non-liturgical, evangelical churches, however, consider it an obligation, and most people in those churches hear enough sermons on the subject of tithing that they can quote Mal 3:10.

A third interpretation is to view Mal 3:10-12, not as a legalistic requirement, but as a promise with a condition. These believers set aside at least 10% of their income to support the church and other Christian endeavors. Some who tithe in this way set up a separate bank account (“storehouse account”), and from it give to their churches and other worthy Christian endeavors, as led by the Lord.

10. When the LORD Makes Up His Jewels. (3:13-18)

The LORD rebukes the people for the way they have been speaking (and, of course, He has heard, and remembered, every word). Again the people foolishly and arrogantly challenge the LORD about his rebuke; and He replies. He reminds them that they have been saying that it is vain to serve Him, and that the wicked are prospering, are exalted and admired, and are not being punished for their sins; in fact, He says, the wicked are even admired for their wickedness¹⁴.

Ah, but there are also faithful ones among the people, those who fear the LORD and often gather to speak of Him; and the LORD is keeping a record of them in “a book of remembrance.” In due time, He says, “when I make up my jewels” (when He separates out his precious ones from the unfaithful and rebellious), the faithful ones “will be mine”; and those three words are wonderfully rich with meaning for the faithful.

This passage speaks of the contemporary situation to which Malachi wrote; but it also speaks clearly of the Second Advent and final judgment, when Christ the King will separate the sheep on his right hand, from the goats on his left. Today there are those who appear to be righteous but are not; and there are those who are righteous, but don't have every appearance of it, and you and I are capable of making wrong assumptions as to a person's true relationship with God. In that final day, however, when the LORD makes up his jewels, as a diamond miner who separates out the diamonds, washing them from the surrounding dirt, mud and gravel in which they exist in nature, the redeemed and the unredeemed will be clearly and obviously recognizable for what they are. And, in that day, the

¹⁴ Psalm 12:8

redeemed will glitter in the Heavenly Light, which will burn through all concealment and facades.

11. "The Sun of Righteousness". (4:1-3)

Continuing to speak of End Times and the final judgment, Malachi closes his prophecy with a final pronouncement of destruction for the wicked, and a beautiful promise for the faithful: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall (protected, and well fed)." Then there follows a promise that we shall tread down the wicked "in the day that I shall do this" and they shall be like ashes under the soles of our feet (v 3). The meaning of this verse is unclear (at least it is to me); but here God again speaks of Himself as "the LORD of Hosts," his invincible military identity; so it seems to say that in the final battle, the triumph of the Army of God over Satan and his kingdom, the forces of Satan will not even have a chance, and in that battle we will play a part. And, as we participate in that final battle, we will conquer the army of Satan as easily and conclusively as when we step on ashes, and they disappear into the grass under our feet. This is a powerful, poetic, metaphor.

***NOTE:** Most of the modern translations of the Bible render the closing clause of v 2a as, "...shall the sun [lower case 's'] of righteousness arise with healing in **its** [not 'his'] wings." It is predictable, I suppose, because the critical scholars tend to interpret the supernatural as being natural when they can. The presence of the phrase, "of righteousness," and reference to the power of healing (both of which the critical scholars retain), however, would require, it seems to me, the interpretation of the clause as a reference to the divine Christ, the Light of the World ("Sun of righteousness") and the Great Physician, returning in Earth's very darkest night, to meet our every need. Young's translation even puts the natural interpretation in the **past tense**, thus denying that the verse is prophetic, and severing all connection with the New Covenant.*

*The New International Version (NIV), however, goes a step beyond the other modern versions, and renders this clause, "the sun of righteousness will arise with healing in **its rays**." This seems to reduce a beautiful, poetic, promise of Jesus the Christ, who will come with light, protection (under his wings), and provision for our complete healing--spiritual, emotional, and physical--to an endorsement for sunbathing.*

In all cases, it seems to me, the critical translators not only teeter on the brink of blasphemy, but they also grossly violate the context; because the entire second half of the book speaks of the First and Second Advents, with judgment and rewards when the Messiah comes, the second and final time, to make all things right. So how, with any intellectual honesty, at the eschatological (end-times) climax of

Malachi's book, can the critical translators replace a beautiful (if somewhat cryptic) prophecy of the coming Messiah, with an endorsement for the healthy effects of sunlight? It would appear, as usual, that their minds were already made up. And, incidentally, we know today that there are unhealthy and destructive factors in sunlight, as well as the beneficial ones.

12. Remember the Law of Moses. (4:4)

In Latin, verse 4 is what is called a “non sequitur,” i.e. a statement that does not logically follow what has just been said. You and I might think of it as an abrupt change of subject, or an interruption of the flow of thought, for it neither flows from the verses above it, nor does it lead into the verses that follow. It stands alone, and seemingly out of place. However, if we think back to the Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets, which leads into the study guide to Isaiah, the Prince of the Old Testament prophets, we will be neither surprised nor confused by this; it was the way of the Old Testament prophets (which I call “mixed prophecy”).¹⁵ And so, perhaps it is fitting that Malachi subjects us to one final example of this as he closes out the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

But what is he saying to us in this final, prophet-like, non sequitur?

He is making the final statement concerning the necessity of observance of the Law of Moses, which would be in force for about 500 more years, but without a living prophet to steer the Israelite people when they drift off course and slip into error. Without the Holy Spirit, Who will not come to Earth, and remain, until the completion of the earthly ministry of Jesus and the coming of the New Covenant, the written Law will now be the people's only guide. Malachi is reminding them to follow and obey it.

13. The Return of Elijah. Malachi closes his book with the prophecy that Elijah will return to Earth to bring reconciliation between parents and children, before the coming of “the great and dreadful day of the LORD,” the time of final judgment (Revelation 19-20). Otherwise, he says, if these things do not come to pass, the Earth will be smitten with a curse. (4:5-6)

NOTES:

a. Jesus has told us that the spirit of Elijah came to Earth in the person of John the Baptist, as the one who came to prepare the way for the Messiah (Matt 11:14); and the angel Gabriel revealed this to Zachariah (Lk 1:13-17). It is also probable that Elijah will return physically to the Earth as one of the two witnesses of Rev 11.

¹⁵ To refresh your memory concerning this sometimes-confusing way of the OT prophets, see “The Writing Style of the Prophets: a Note of Caution” in “Introduction to Part II, the Poetry and the Prophets,” which precedes the study guide to Job.

b. It is fitting that the Old Testament close with Malachi's prophecies concerning the future coming of John the Baptist, for Malachi is the last of the Old Testament prophets, both chronologically and in terms of the Canon; and John the Baptist will be the first of the New Testament Prophets. John will appear on the biblical scene about 500 years after Malachi ends his book, bridging the gap between the Old Testament and the New.

A Final Thought Concerning the Old Testament and the New

If there were no New Testament, God's last word to the human race would be "curse"; and his last statement to the human race would be the threat of a curse. This is definitely a point worth pondering.

Thus end the 17 Books of Prophecy

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Thus ends Part II: the Poetry and the Prophets

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And thus ends the Old Testament

Include, between Malachi and Matthew: photos of the broken street and the piled stones; the close-up of the inscription stone ("to the place of the trumpet"); and the photo of the section of the Arch of Titus with soldiers carrying away the menorah and other treasures from the Temple. The captions must be explanatory.