

"THE TEACHING PROPHET"
(Malachi - My Messenger)

It takes a lot of courage to stand up to people who appear to be in strong standings with the people. Malachi found himself face to face with the religious leaders of Jerusalem.

I. THE TIMES:

1. Little is known of the little community at Jerusalem from the dedication of the rebuilt temple until some 60 years later.
2. The Roman Republic had been founded in 509 B.C.
3. The promises and dreams had failed to materialize. The people had become indifferent to spiritual matters.
4. Nehemiah had come to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and was able to effect some good reforms.
5. There was economic depression. Crops were poor, the priests were corrupt and immoral. Everyone was skeptical.
6. The people complained. Divorce was common. God's covenant had been forgotten. Worship had degenerated into empty formalism.
7. The situation called for a fearless man of God.

II. THE MAN:

1. Malachi was a fearless reformer who spoke directly to the people without hesitation or embarrassment.
2. He was strong, vigorous and was strongly opposed to anybody who treated God, or His Temple, with indifference.
3. Malachi was on fire to bring the people back to worship God.
4. He probably was influenced by Nehemiah.
5. He was more of a teacher than an evangelist.

III. THE BOOK:

1. Malachi's book differs greatly from all the other books of the prophets. His book is not independent sermons but is mostly an argument with his opposition.
2. He debates and answers each objection before moving on to another.
3. To those who doubted God's love, he points out their numerous special privileges they enjoy.
4. When the people complained their offerings were not accepted by God, he reminded them that God would not accept offerings from such sinful and wicked people.
5. He reminded them they had robbed God. They must support God's houses and God's worship.

IV. LESSONS OF VALUE:

1. God loves a pure, clean, and happy home.
2. Divorce is an abomination in God's sight.
3. Insincerity in worship is an insult to God.
4. God's people should be anxious to be in God's house.
5. One who lives in willful sin cannot hope to please God.
6. Carelessness in worship and looseness in living dull man's moral senses.
7. Spiritual temperature can be judged by one's response to God's requirements on giving.
8. The ideas of God's preachers affect the people in the pew.
9. Each person may determine for himself whether the Day of the Lord will be a day of terror or of joy.
10. Instead of broadcasting our doubts to others, we should speak to God in secret those doubts, so He may guide us into faith and peace.