

Recap of 7/10/16 (Malachi 1:1-2):

- 1. Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament (though not the last prophet of the Old Testament era-John the Baptist holds that distinction, Matt. 11:10-15; Luke 1:17) wrote somewhere between 450 and 400 B.C. probably around 430 B.C. He addressed the declining spiritual life of the Israelites back from the exile. They had lost their sense of chosenness and the love of God. They stopped honoring God. They abandoned God's ethical teachings and shed purity. They were unfaithful to God and to each other. Malachi 3:5 lists a catalogue of sins of the people.**
- 2. Malachi ministered during the time of Nehemiah. Little is known of him, save for this book. Mal. 1:1 is the only mention of him in the Bible. "He lived after the exile in a world filled with shattered hopes...The religious enthusiasm characteristic of the returning exiles [from Babylon]...had waned. The restoration of which the prophets had spoken had not yet come." "A minority remained faithful regardless how bad the times were (3:16). God raised up Malachi to address the problems of cynicism, formalism, unfaithfulness, and questions about the benefits of godliness." (Robert Alden)**
- 3. Malachi uses a question and answer format to advance the argument of the book. The pattern is this: an accusation or statement is made; followed by a question; followed by a refutation of the people's sinful attitude. Examples are: 1:2; 1:6; 2:17; and 3:13.**
- 4. "Through a series of sharp rhetorical questions Malachi challenges his generation to shrug off its spiritual lethargy, and stir up the fires of complete commitment to the Lord. Malachi serves this same function for believers today. We too need to examine our hearts and our practices, and maintain that enthusiasm which is appropriate to a people of the living God." (Richards)**