

The Prophet Malachi

**"But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise."
Malachi 4:2**



How it started: The book of Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament, and rightly so, as it was written later than all the other books. Around 100 years before – in 536BC – the first Jews had returned from Babylonian captivity. In the meantime the temple had been rebuilt, since 516BC. At that time the Persians were ruling Palestine.

Malachi's name is interesting. It means "messenger of the Lord". Malachi allows himself to be used as "mouthpiece of God", i.e. God

speaks through His prophet directly to the people. Malachi was for a long time the last prophet. After him God was silent for more than 400 years until John the Baptist appeared, as forerunner of the Lord Jesus.

What it is all about: After the return of the Jews from Babylon, they first of all showed great zeal in the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. At the dedication of the temple they wept and shouted for joy at the same time; at a great gathering of the people they read from the Law of Moses and with much joy and seriousness reintroduced the feasts of the Lord as well as the temple worship. There were some things that had been wrong, but these were cleared up before God after mutual sorrow and humiliation.

But only a few decades later this initial fire had gone out. The Jews had slowly moved away from God. They themselves had no consciousness of this!

God now wants to open their eyes through Malachi and call them to repentance. But He makes it plain that only a few will pay attention to the words of Malachi.

How about today? The book has lost nothing of the power of its message. The generation living today is also one that has to ponder the question whether they take God's demands seriously, as was often the case in earlier generations. Those who **don't** do this are on the wrong path!

During the history of Christendom there were often times when men and women took a stand for God, as a result of which God could also bless many, for example at the time of the Reformation. But afterwards things always went downhill again, because the good commands of God were forgotten again – just as at the time of Malachi.