

The Old Testament book of Malachi

The book of Malachi is the final book of the 39 books Old Testament, otherwise known as the Hebrew Scriptures. (There is another version of the Old Testament however, which also includes books accepted as sacred scripture by the Greek Jews, known as Deuterocanonical or the Apocrypha. I will refer to this in my magazine article next month together with details of the period of some 400 years between the Old and New Testaments.)

Malachi prophesied after the completion of the temple in 515BC. His messages highlighted, as recorded in Ch 1 v 2 to Ch 2 v 16, the hardships endured by the people at that time, their failings and lack of national pride and religious commitment, and God's concern, through Malachi, to renew their faithfulness to the covenant given to their ancestors, the Sinai covenant, see Deuteronomy 7: 7/9. However the key passages of his prophecy describe the future coming of the messenger (the name Malachi means messenger) and Christ, the Lord: '*so I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me and the Lord you seek will come to his temple*' 3: 1 NRSV. This foretells the coming of John the Baptist followed by Christ's visit to the Jerusalem temple and also in 4 : 2 the rising of the sun of righteousness, and a further prophecy in verse 5 '*... of the coming of the prophet Elijah*'; in the New testament account of John the Baptist, he was considered to fulfil this role as in ways he was reminiscent, by his dress and lifestyle, as Elijah

I hope that you have found my series of articles on the Old Testament interesting and helpful as it is an integral part of the Christian faith as it has come down to us through scripture.

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