

PROPHECY IN THE LATTER PROPHETS

The chronological order followed here is approximately that of Unger in his *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*.

Obadiah (ca. 840 BC)

Joel (ca. 800 BC)

Jonah (ca. 763 BC [or 800 BC])

Amos (ca. 760 BC)

Hosea (ca. 750-715 BC)

Micah (ca. 740-700 BC)

Isaiah (ca. 740-695 BC)

Nahum (ca. 660-650 BC)

Habakkuk (ca. 609-605 BC)

Zephaniah ca. 640-612 BC

Jeremiah (ca. 626-585 BC)

Ezekiel (ca. 593-571 BC)

Daniel (ca. 603-538 BC)

Haggai (ca. 520 BC)

Zechariah (ca. 520-480 BC)

Today: **Malachi and Chronicles**

The Post-Exilic Prophets

Haggai	Both Haggai and Zechariah have an immediate concern: the
Zechariah	rebuilding of the temple
Malachi	Malachi has a spiritual concern: the rebuilding of the people

VI. The Latter Prophets

P. Malachi (ca. 432-430 BC)

1. The name means “my messenger”
2. Malachi 3.1-3
 - a. The Lord will send his messenger who will prepare his way (1)
 - 1) The reference is to the first advent of the Messiah
 - 2) Note that Yahweh is the speaker: the Messenger will clear the way for Me (a passages supporting the deity of Christ)
 - 3) The NT teaches us that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy (Mt 11.10)
 - b. The Lord will come suddenly to his own temple, even the messenger of the covenant (1)
 - c. The reference here is to the second advent in glory.

- d. This is the second messenger in the passage
 - a) Translated Angel in many other passages
 - b) A reference to the Angel of the Lord
 - 2) The sudden coming will be hard to endure (2)
 - a) He is like refiner's fire
 - b) He is like the fuller's soap
 - 3) This coming will purify the sons of Levi (the priests) to qualify them for renewing the worship of God.
 - e. The intent of the passage is to assure the doubters, though there was no king, though the promises remained unfulfilled, the promised Messiah would come
3. Malachi 4.1-3
- a. A day is coming, a day of fire (1)
 - 1) The day is a day of judgement
 - 2) The "arrogant and every evil doer" will blaze like dry chaff before an inferno
 - 3) The day will purge the land of evildoers
 - b. That same day, for those who fear God, will see the sun of righteousness rise with healing in its wings (2)
 - 1) The righteous will rejoice because of their deliverance
 - 2) The wicked will no longer trouble them, they will be ashes under their feet (3)

"Some expositors have understood 'the sun of righteousness' to be a messianic title, but it seems best to view it as a description of the day of blessing that Messiah will bring, the Millennium."¹

¹ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Mal 4.2.

4. Malachi 4.5-6

- a. God will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord (5)
- b. Elijah will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers lest judgement fall on all (6)
- c. John the Baptist specifically disowned this role (Jn 1.21)
 - 1) Before John was born, Gabriel told his father that he would minister in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mt 1.17)
 - 2) Jesus qualified his description of John as Elijah with the words “if you are willing to accept it” (Mt 11.14)
 - 3) After the Transfiguration, Jesus spoke of Elijah as still coming (Mt 17.11)
- d. Some identify the Elijah of this prophecy as one of the two witnesses (Rev 11.3-12)

“The most likely New Testament reference to this future Elijah-like ministry is Revelation 11:1–13, which speaks of the two witnesses in the Tribulation. Possibly the Apostle John was expanding the Elijah expectation into an Elijah-Elisha ministry (cf. comments on Rev. 11:3–6.) As a result of the ministry of the two witnesses many people will repent, thus uniting **the hearts of ... fathers with their children.**”²

Q. Chronicles (ca. 400-350 BC)

1. Note: Some question as to the dating of this book
 - a. It is the last book of the Hebrew Bible
 - b. Some think Ezra wrote it, which would make it more likely to be around 530 BC
2. Chronicles presents David as the ideal ruler

² Craig Blaising, “Malachi,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 1588.

3. David's sins and defeats, mentioned in Samuel, receive no mention in Chronicles
4. The emphasis of the book is the endurance of the nation, led by the Davidic rulers and the Levitical priests – it concludes with these words, "Go up!"
 - a. The message to Israel is this: All is not lost
 - b. The nation must look to their Messiah and all the promises, for God plans to fulfill them all
5. 1 Chronicles 17.7-27
 - a. Here we see a restatement of the Davidic covenant – five centuries after its first appearance
 - 1) David and Solomon are long dead at this point
 - 2) The kingdom of Israel divided after the death of Solomon
 - 3) Both kingdoms suffered captivity, Israel to Assyria and Judah to Babylon (Israel never seen again)
 - 4) Before the writing of Chronicles, the Jews returned to the land under Ezra
 - b. Without any doubt, neither David nor his immediate successors saw the fulfilment of the Covenant, nor could they
 - c. Yet again, God leads the writer of Chronicles to reiterate the eternal nature of the Covenant: 17.12-14; 23-24
 - d. God still declares the Covenant unilaterally and unconditionally
 - 1) The house, the Kingdom, and the throne of David remain integral to the Covenant promise (14)
 - 2) Thus the OT revelation concludes with the enduring assurance of the coming Kingdom of the Lord

VII. Intertestamental Preparation for NT Eschatology

A. The Apocalyptic literature of the Intertestamental Period

1. Apocalyptic literature often features bold eschatological visions (e.g. Daniel's vision of the Four Great Beasts)
 - a. An *apocalypse* is the revelation of divine mysteries
 - b. A *prophecy* is the revelation of the divine message
2. Most of the intertestamental apocalypses are in the *Pseudepigrapha*
 - a. *Pseudepigrapha* means "the false writings"
 - b. These books were forgeries, generally claiming to be the product of a long-dead famous Bible character
 - c. These books were not even included in the *Apocrypha* ("hidden, obscure writings")
3. Some examples of these apocalypses:
 - a. I Enoch (200-75 BC) supposedly gives the vision of Enoch
 - 1) This is the longest and best known of these books
 - 2) One statement in it contains an authentic statement of Enoch
 - 3) Jude quotes it in his epistle, vv. 14-15 (Enoch 1, 9; 60, 8)
 - 4) However, Jude's quotation does not mean God approved the entire book
 - b. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (109-106 BC) give prophetic utterances supposed to come from Jacob's twelve sons
 - c. II Enoch ("The Secrets of Enoch" – dated AD 1) supposedly gives more visions of Enoch
 - d. The Sibylline Oracles (160 BC – AD 400) puts both Jewish and Christian words in the mouth of the prophetess
4. All these books contain obvious errors and much doctrinal heresy
5. However, they did prepare a vocabular and style of writing that John uses in the book of Revelation

6. They are examples of the intense Messianic speculation and expectation that the Jews had at the time of Christ
 7. All this literature used the true Scriptural apocalyptic literature as its basis (Daniel, Zechariah, Isa 24-27, Joel)
- B. The sects represented by the Dead Sea Scrolls also prepared for the NT
1. The Qumran community near the Dead Sea was likely the center of the Jewish sect called the Essenes
 2. The Dead Sea Scrolls are not apocalyptic literature, but are full of references to the last days and other eschatological topics
 - a. The “War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness” refers to an eschatological war
 - b. They emphasized a coming judgement and an eternal state of glory
 - c. They taught a highly developed system of good and bad angels
 - d. They also taught a dual Messiah
 - 1) The Messiah of Aaron had a priestly role
 - 2) The Messiah of Israel had a kingly role
 3. They held many wrong ideas, but also prepared a terminology and helped keep the coming of the Messiah a topic of prominent interest

Further reading, Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*

Summary of Key Points: Old Testament Prophecy

1. The sin problem’s ultimate solution would be the seed of the woman, the first promise of the Bible (Gen 3.15)
2. The blessing of the nations would come through the seed of Abraham when God made an everlasting covenant promising Abraham
 - a. A posterity (seed)
 - b. A land (kingdom)
 - c. A blessing (salvation for all nations)

3. The Man who should come would fulfill three offices
 - a. A priest after the order of Melchisedec
 - b. A prophet like Moses
 - c. A King, the Son of David
4. The way in which this Man would come would be two-fold
 - a. As a Suffering Servant, to take away sins
 - b. As a Conquering King, to destroy Israel's enemies, to establish an earthly kingdom, and to usher his saints into eternity

All of these themes are expressed in the various prophetic passages we discussed throughout this study.