

Introduction

Malachi in the Canon

Christian tradition conceives Malachi as part of the “Old Testament,” that is, the fundamental part of the Bible to which the “New Testament” was added. As a result the “Old Testament” has been perceived within a particular salvation-historical framing: both testaments acknowledge the same God, while the words, destiny, and confession of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of Israel and all creation reveal the nature of God in a privileged way. The present commentary will therefore dedicate a separate section to the New Testament reception of the relevant portion of Malachi in each chapter.

The Writing of
Malachi in the
Christian
Canon

Within the Old Testament the Malachi document belongs to the prophetic writings, and in particular it is one of the Twelve.¹ It is placed last in this collection, both in the Masoretic text and in the Greek version.² This commentary will also consider the location of the writing within the Book of the Twelve.

The Text of the Malachi Document

While the surviving manuscripts differ among themselves, the various versions were nevertheless regarded as authoritative in different communities at different times. This poses the question: which version of the text should be taken as the basis for the commentary? As far as the Malachi document is concerned, the classic concept of the “original text” may suffice: it means that all surviving textual variants can be traced to a single text type. This original text is the one regarded as canonical in the Protestant tradition, even though the New Testament authors, beginning with Paul (Rom 9:13), preferred to use the Greek translation.

The Original
Text

The original text has not survived, but with the exception of only a few passages it can be reconstructed. The starting point for the text-critical task is the so-called Masoretic text type, as attested by the earliest complete surviving manuscript of the Tanakh, *Codex Leningradensis* from the year 1008 CE. That codex is likewise the basis for the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (ed. Anthony Gelston,

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- 1 The title “Malachi document,” as opposed to the usual name “book of Malachi,” is intended to show that this writing represents only one part of a larger redacted work and therefore may not be interpreted in isolation. In this regard the present commentary derives from Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*.
 - 2 The only exception is ms. 4QXII^a in which, after the end of the Malachi text, one can still make out a few more letters, indicating that another writing must have followed. The first editor, Russell E. Fuller (“The Twelve”), identifies it with Jonah. Philippe Guillaume (“Unlikely”) and Mika Pajunen and Hanne von Weissenberg (“Book of Malachi”) are of a different opinion.

2010). The consonantal text of this type was probably regarded as standard among leading circles of Palestinian Judaism ca. 100 CE. Among the scrolls containing the Twelve Prophets from Cave 4 at Qumran only Scroll 4QXII^a preserves some text from the Malachi document, namely, some very fragmentary passages from Mal 2:10–3:24 [2:10–4:6 ET].³ Those contain only a very few deviations from *Codex Leningradensis*.

The Septuagint's *Vorlage* We can also see from the Septuagint translation of the Book of the Twelve Prophets that its Hebrew *Vorlage* was largely identical with the Masoretic text type.⁴

It is true that *Codex Leningradensis* contains a few passages in which the original text can no longer be reconstructed; for example, Mal 2:3b and 2:15 are altogether incomprehensible. The Septuagint already presupposed the faulty text, which means that it must have been created inadvertently quite soon after the completion of the Book of the Twelve. The faulty text cannot be corrected because meaningful conjectures have to deviate sharply from the consonantal text as it stands; such a situation makes it difficult to monitor or evaluate the conjectures.

The Greek Translation

From a Christian point of view the translation of the Malachi document into Greek is very significant since the New Testament authors used Malachi in Greek translation. In fact, the first Christian Bible contained the whole Old Testament in a Greek version. Regrettably, the fragmentary *Dodekapropheton* scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8HevXII) contains no text from the Malachi document; as a result we have only the so-called Septuagint version at our disposal. It was very probably created by a single translator in the context of a translation of the whole Book of the Twelve.⁵

To maintain consistent clarity in distinguishing the Greek translation from the Hebrew version I use the phrase “Book of the Twelve” solely for the Hebrew version, referring to the Greek translation as the “*Dodekapropheton*” and its translator as the “*Dodekapropheton* translator”.⁶

3 Photos of 4QXII^a are accessible on the Internet in the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library: <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/manuscript/4Q76-1>.

4 Gelston, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, 7*.

5 Schart, “Dodekapropheton: Einleitung.”

6 References to the Greek version will be indicated by “LXX,” e.g., Mal 1:1 LXX, while references without the “LXX” are to the Hebrew version. When it is important to distinguish the Masoretic version of a passage from the original Hebrew text I will append “MT,” e.g., Mal 1:1 MT. The same applies to the distinct versification in English, marked with “ET.”

The Greek translation is very literal: with few exceptions every morpheme in the Hebrew *Vorlage* is represented by its precise Greek equivalent. Even the sequence of words and syntax are strictly retained, to the point of occasional imitations of the Hebrew nominal clause.⁷

Septuagintal
Translation
Style

One measure of the great fidelity of the LXX to its Hebrew original is provided by passages that are incomprehensible in Hebrew: in such cases the *Dodekapropheton* translator renders the text mechanically, word for word, and leaves it to the reader to make sense of it. At MT-Mal 2:3b, for example, the phrase “and he shall lift you up to him” makes no sense in Hebrew. The Septuagint accommodates the predicate to the preceding subject, “ΥΗΩΗ,” but otherwise translates word for word without producing any sense: “and I will bring you to the same.” It is notoriously difficult to decide whether a deviation from the MT represents a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, a different understanding of the Hebrew (especially of the meaning of rare lexemes), an inadvertent mistake, or a deliberate alteration.

There are probably only three passages in which the *Dodekapropheton* translator had a consonantal text in his *Vorlage* that differed from that of *Codex Leningradensis*: The *Vorlage* for LXX-Mal 1:13 had צבאות [= “of hosts”]. In Mal 3:15 *zedîm* was incorrectly written as *zarîm*. In Mal 2:16 the verse began with כי אם שנאת *kî ’im šâne’tā*, attested also in 4QXII^a.

Passages in which the *Dodekapropheton* translator inserted additional words not attested in the Hebrew *Vorlage* occur six times (Mal 1:1; 1:7; 2:2; 3:3; 3:6a; 3:19 [4:1 ET]). In most cases the translator took the additional words from the immediate context in order to smooth the text.

It is important that the *Dodekapropheton* translator understood the Hebrew expression מלאכי in Mal 1:1 not as a proper name but as a title, “messenger of the Lord”. He identified this “messenger of the Lord” with Haggai, as we can infer from the borrowing of the injunction “do place it upon your hearts” from LXX-Hag 2:15.

“Malachi” as
Title:
“Messenger of
the Lord”

The *Dodekapropheton* translator avoided (evidently on purpose) some anthropomorphic divine statements (e.g., in Mal 1:7b; 1:13a; 2:3a), including the idea that a human can “tempt” or “test” (בחן) God (Mal 3:10, 15).

Anthropomor-
phism

It should be pointed out, from a Christian perspective, that the *Dodekapropheton* was adopted into the Christian canon of the Bible as part of the Greek version of Israel’s scriptures, which Christians refer to as the “Old Testament.” In the course of that editing project it appears that a single change was made to the documents of the *Dodekapropheton*, namely, a new way of writing the *nomina sacra*; that is, particular words that are connected directly with God (such as *Kyrios*, God, Christ, and Jesus) were written using only the first and last letters of the word, with a single horizontal line extended above them. This was meant to express the belief that both the Old Testament and the New Testament speak of the same God, self-revealed in Jesus Christ. The *Dodekapropheton* version of the Malachi document is preserved only in its Christian form. The perhaps oldest surviving, but unfortunately only fragmentary manuscript of the Christian version is represented

Writing the
nomina sacra

7 Thus, e.g., in Mal 1:8 the phrase אין רע (“not wrong/evil”) is quite literally translated as οὐ κακόν, “not wrong/evil,” without creating a complete sentence by the addition of a predicate such as ἔστιν.

by *Codex Washingtonensis* (third c. CE).⁸ The oldest complete versions are in *Codex Vaticanus* (fourth c. CE) and *Codex Sinaiticus* (fourth c. CE).⁹

Poetic Analysis of the Malachi Document

Poetic Analysis There is dispute over the question whether the text of the Malachi document represents poetry or “exalted prose.” Since poetic lines are more identifiable when they represent bicola, it seems best to focus on those within the framework of our analysis. A bicolon is certainly present when two cola of equal length in one line are semantically parallel to one another in synonymous, antithetical, or synthetic manner (*parallelismus membrorum*). Grammatical and phonetic parallelism regularly accompany this feature.

Judged according to these criteria the Malachi document contains some poetic lines, e.g., in Mal 1:2bβ//3a ; 1:3b; 1:4ay; 4b; 1:6; 2:10a; 2:17b; 3:1a; 3:2a; 3:2b; 3:5a; 3:6; 3:7aβ; 3:8aα; 3:9; 3:11aβ//bα; 3:12a//bα; 3:14a//bα; 3:18aβ//b; 3:24a [4:6a ET]. Malachi 1:14b can serve as an example because it also reveals how the poetic structure was misread by a later redactor:

Truly, a great king am I [—Y^{HWH} of hosts has said—] //
and my name is revered among the nations.

These lines express a self-predication by Y^{HWH}. If we ignore the formula “Y^{HWH} of hosts has said”, the bicolon contains two nominal clauses that are semantic synonyms. The first ends with “I” and the second begins with the synonymous phrase “my name.” The number of consonants is nearly identical in the two cola (12 + 13); the first contains one additional word, “truly,” י at the beginning of the line, introducing the statement. The statement itself consists of three words, each with its own accent (3 + 3). Within the caesura between the two cola stands the formula “Y^{HWH} of hosts has said”. That formula usually concludes preceding divine speech, yet here the words of God continue uninterruptedly in the second colon. Thus, the formula breaks the flow of thought and the poetic coherence of the line. For that reason it is probable that the quotation formula was secondarily inserted. The example shows that the basic stratum was poetic in form, but a redactor ignored the poetic shaping. We find this kind of reworking again and again, which suggests that the whole of the basic stratum was poetic in form. It is true that, despite intensive literary-critical efforts at reconstruction, some lines are left over; these are not as beautiful and balanced in form as is Mal 1:14b*, but they also have been and can be regarded as poetry.¹⁰

8 Sanders and Schmidt, *Minor Prophets and Facsimile*.

9 The codices have been published on the Internet. *Vaticanus* = https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209; *Sinaiticus* = www.codexsinaiticus.org.

10 In the translation the colometric structure of the text will be represented by a double solidus: //.

Disputation Speech (Contentious Refutation)

From the point of view of form criticism, the Malachi document, apart from the superscription and the appendix in Mal 3:22–24 [4:4–6 ET], is a collection of so-called “disputation sequences” made up of “disputation speeches.” This form, moreover, exists here in a variant found only in the book of Malachi. In essence a *disputation speech* is an argumentative rejection of contrary opinions.¹¹ In order to simplify the presentation we will speak of the “prophet” as the one who utters the disputation speech; this person summarizes in his own words and from his own point of view the results of a disputation conducted in the name of YHWH with some other group.

The basic form of the disputation speech was defined by Egon Pfeiffer (1959).¹² According to him a disputation speech always contains three formal elements: first, a thesis containing a predicate about the nature of YHWH; second, a counter-arguing question from the opponents that is quoted word for word; third, the prophet’s rebuttal.

The basic form of the disputation speech

It is not the purpose of the disputation sequence or speech to record the real course of a disputation or to quote the opponents’ exact words. Instead, it is about sketching the content of a disputation in such a way as to depict it from the prophet’s point of view. That is, in the prophet’s eyes, the disputation has already been decided by YHWH: the opponents’ positions contradict YHWH’s will. Thus the disputation speech looks back at the real disputation in which the prophet’s divine claims were still in dispute. This also explains why the prophet knows the opponents’ counterquestions and introduces them in *qatal*, as something that has already happened in the past (“You have said ...”), because they were addressed to him in personal confrontation. The fact that such disputations on the oral level were problematic and, among other things, extended over longer periods of time may have formed the background for the talk of “wearying YHWH with words” (Mal 2:17).

The logic of the disputation speech

Although the prophet lays claim to YHWH’s authority for his presentation of the results of the disputation, we may suppose that, even so, not all of the prophet’s opponents would have accepted the prophet’s opinion. The very fact that it appeared necessary to describe the disputation and thus to supply readers with divinely-legitimated strategies for argumentation against particular counterquestions favors the supposition that, despite their refutation by the prophet, those opposing questions had not been silenced but had even become more virulent. Since the prophet occasionally argues in terms of the future (e.g., Mal 3:5; 3:19 [4:1 ET]), it seems that the content of such arguments is still a matter for debate, something to be settled in the future. Hence the description of the disputation also serves the purpose of assigning to God’s future action the answer to the question of which party to the disputation is right. The unfulfilled nature of future hopes has been further emphasized by the redaction’s insertion of clear references

11 For a general description of the genre of disputation speeches see Schart, “Disputation-swort.” One often sees the less-accurate term “discussion speech” as well. “Contentious refutation” is descriptive of the content of such speeches.

12 Pfeiffer, “Disputationsworte.”

to the “day of YHWH” (e.g., Mal 3:23 [4:5 ET]). The community that transmitted the Malachi document lived in this condition, between present controversy and a longing for affirmation.

The pattern of the disputation sequence Within the Malachi document the disputation sequences follow a pattern that is not found elsewhere and therefore should be regarded as the creative achievement of the author.¹³

Thesis The disputation sequence begins with a thesis, thus formulating the starting point. Formally, this is either a divine self-proclamation (1:2; 1:6; 3:6; 3:13) or a prophetic speech (2:10; 2:17).

Quotation of the counter-position In a second step the prophet describes the opponents’ position. This takes the form of a counterquestion; the prophet introduces it with “but you have said ...” in the form of a quotation.¹⁴ The counterquestions are directed to YHWH when the thesis was formulated as divine speech. If, on the other hand, it took the form of prophetic speech the opponents’ answer is directed to the prophet.¹⁵ It is repeatedly made clear that the prophet is not quoting the opponents in their original words but instead lets his own evaluation enter into his formulation of the opponents’ words, for example by polemically distorting their position.

Refutation of the opponents’ position A third step produces a refutation of the counterquestion by means of a stacking of “arguments.” In this, the “disputation speech” proper, the prophet exhibits everything that could bring the opponents to insight: reproaches, references to the Torah and other traditional norms, examples and references to YHWH’s future intervention. Once the prophet has presented his “arguments” the matter has been clarified in the name of YHWH.

The Speaker The Malachi document produces the impression that all six disputation speeches are uttered by the same speaker, though on different occasions. The speaker’s words are, obviously, spoken in the name of YHWH, a fact that is certified by the generic designation of the superscription, “word of YHWH” (Mal 1:1, the use of the prophetic messenger formula, “thus says YHWH” (Mal 1:4, and the formulae “says YHWH of hosts” (20x) and “says YHWH” (Mal 1:2bα; 3:13a).

Although in general the prophet relates to his conversation partners as one who speaks for YHWH, there are three passages in which the prophet associates himself with the addressees as “we”: Mal 1:9a; 2:10; 2:17.¹⁶

The Addressees The superscription of the Malachi document suggests the idea that the prophet addresses all six disputation speeches “to Israel,” but in the text the hearers are, in part, more closely defined. In Mal 1:2, they are associated with Jacob and separated from Edom; in Mal 1:6b and 2:1 the hearers are addressed as “priests”; and in Mal 3:6 as “children” [lit. ‘sons’] of Jacob.” We may conclude from this that at least two different groups are addressed: on the one hand laypeople who identify with Jacob, and priests on the other hand. It is possible, though, that the words addressed to the laity are also intended for various groups. In particular, Mal 2:17 and 3:5 seem to address the victims of various forms of oppression, and Mal 3:13–21 [3:13–4:3 ET] is addressed to those who revere (or fear) YHWH.

13 Kessler, *Maleachi*, 45.

14 In Mal 1:7aβ the prophet quotes a second objection by the hearers. That doubling is the result of redactional reworking.

15 Kessler, *Maleachi*, 48.

16 Kessler, *Maleachi*, 49.

In his basic premise, the prophet offers a logical argumentation. But he mixes it with polemically biased “quotations” from the opponents, accuses them of having inferior motivations, and claims to have knowledge of the future consequences of an incriminated attitude. He frequently makes use of quotations and allusions to other writings that, to him, represent authority. These may also serve the purpose of achieving mutual understanding with the opponents: if the prophet can derive his position from authoritative texts his opponents may be more inclined to agree with him.

Authority of
Scripture

The search for texts the prophet presupposes has intensified in recent decades.¹⁷ In the process it has become clearer and clearer that, for the prophet, the Torah—that is, the collections of laws, including later parts of the Holiness Code—was normative. However, narrative materials such as the story of Jacob and Esau were also used. Besides these, the prophet adopts ideas from his prophetic predecessors. In Mal 3:23 [4:5 ET] the “prophet Elijah” is even referred to by name.

Structure of the Writing

There is no argument about the structure of the Malachi document. It contains six disputation sequences plus a superscription and a concluding admonition attached to a prediction about the future. The superscription is in 1:1; the disputation sequences are in 1:2–5; 1:6–2:9; 2:10–16; 2:17–3:5; 3:6–12; 3:13–21 [3:13–4:3 ET]; the conclusion is in 3:22–24 [4:4–6 ET].

The disputation sequences are self-contained arguments. They neither build on any preceding saying nor demand continuation through what follows. At the same time there are linkages, and it is probable that the six sayings were, from the very beginning, embedded in a meaningful structure. There are overlaps in content between various sayings, keyword links, and analogous structures.

The very first saying (Mal 1:2–5) establishes the theme of the fundamental relationship to God that shapes everything to follow, and does so through Y_{HWH}'s declaration of love for the “you-group” identified with the patriarch Jacob. The second saying (Mal 1:6–2:9) is evidently concerned with the cult centered on the representative forms for Y_{HWH}'s כבוד: “honor, glory” and שם. The third saying (Mal 2:10–16) focuses on interpersonal relationships within the family. The fourth saying (Mal 2:17–3:5) refers to interpersonal misbehavior outside the family (Mal 3:5). In the fifth saying (Mal 3:6–12), the subject is the agricultural yield, while the sixth (Mal 3:13–21 [3:13–4:3 ET]) is about just punishment for the wicked and reward for those who revere Y_{HWH}. The order roughly follows that of the structure underlying the Decalogue: God—cult—family—community—possessions; in the Decalogue the idea of the God who punishes and rewards (sixth saying) is treated within the second commandment (Exod 20:5–6).

17 Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?*; Berry, “Malachi’s Dual Design”; Krieg, *Mutmaßungen*; Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*; Noetzel, *Maleachi, ein Hermeneut*.

The Document's Origins

The disputation speeches contain some twenty-six “arguments.” These differ sharply in formal and semantic aspects and are often brought together in ways that create strong tensions. It is improbable, therefore, that they all stem from the same author.¹⁸ The later additions acknowledged by most commentators include Mal 1:1, 1:11–14, 3:1b–4, and 3:22–24 [4:4–6 ET], but in fact we should reckon with substantially more editing.¹⁹ Here I will briefly summarize the hypothesis of the work’s redaction history worked out in this commentary. Before the Malachi document was incorporated into the Book of the Twelve Prophets, it existed as an independent document. Over the course of its reworking to make it part of the Book of the Twelve, some additions were inserted into the Malachi document to interlock it within the whole. Good examples are the appeal to repentance in Mal 3:7, probably stemming from the same hand as the almost identical call to repentance in Zech 1:3 and the quotation from Joel 3:4b in Mal 3:23b.

Primary stratum

Primary stratum The transmission of the Malachi document began with the collection and publication of six disputation speeches stemming from a single author. This primary stratum would probably have consisted of the text as follows: Mal 1:2–3; 1:6, 7b, 9b, 10b, 13aα–14a; 2:9a; 2:10, 11a*, 11b, 12a, 14–15, 16a*, 16b; 2:17–3:1a, 5; 3:6, 8–12; 3:13–15, 18, 19* [4:1* ET], 20a* [4:2a* ET], 20b [4:2b ET].²⁰

Oral stratum The question whether the earliest literary stratum is based on orally transmitted arguments is occasionally answered in the negative,²¹ but two arguments commend affirming oral disputations. First, there must have been a reason why the author developed a variant of the genre “disputation sequence” at all. What is the point of creating a literary simulation of a vivid disputation if the readers were utterly unfamiliar with anything of the sort? Second, the quotations of the opponents (quite extensive for a prophetic context), no matter how much they have been reformulated and polemically skewed by the prophet, do express real contrary positions. It makes no sense to suppose that an author would have taken the trouble, after the fact, to shape his convictions in a form that makes room for the opponents’ independent utterances, then leaving it to the readers to judge whether those opponents have been convincingly refuted.

The oral disputations, to the extent they touched on cultic matters, may have taken place within the milieu of the temple and the priesthood. Moral and socio-

18 Some recent commentaries (e.g., Willi-Plein, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*; Kessler, *Maleachi*; Snyman, *Malachi*) regard the Malachi document as a literary unity, with a few exceptions.

19 The present commentary primarily adopts the analyses of Wöhrle, *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*.

20 It is possible that the sixth disputation speech was added later.

21 Kessler, *Maleachi*, 54, lists some authors involved in the controversy.

ethical questions could have been debated in the public assembly in Jerusalem (cf., e.g., Ezra 10:8–9; Neh 5:13; 8:1–2; 8:13; 9:1; 13:1, 11).

The Malachi document was redactionally revised while it was still an independent work. In particular the second disputation speech was edited in such a way that a critique originally directed at the laity was now applied to the priests and Levites. That editing is also connected with the addition in Mal 2:12b–13, which refers to an unacceptable weeping and groaning during service at the altar, and with the insertion of Mal 3:3–4, which expects a purification of the Levitical priesthood.

Reworkings of the independent Malachi document

The Malachi document uses the formula *אמר יהוה צבאות*, *ʾamar YHWH šəbāʾôt*, “says YHWH of hosts” twenty times.²² The high number of occurrences are in themselves striking: the repetition is completely unmotivated and seems to provide exaggerated emphasis. This formula in particular is used to show that the disputation speeches are the direct word of God. The formula is inserted in very different ways: In Mal 1:8, for example, it provides a very solemn and emphatic assertion of guilt. It is also appropriate as reinforcement for an accusation or the announcement of punishment inasmuch as it points out that it is up to YHWH—and not to human beings—to carry out the declarations of punishment. But in most cases the formula is superfluous because the context clearly identifies YHWH as the speaker. The formula is out of place in passages that simply attest to a factual situation (Mal 1:9b; 1:11b, 12a; 1:13aα). Likewise, the formula is altogether disruptive when it is placed in the middle of the caesura of a bicolon (Mal 1:10b; 1:11b, 12a; 1:14b). One passage in which the *ʾamar YHWH šəbāʾôt* formula is completely out of place is Mal 1:13, a discourse explicitly marked as a quotation of the opponents, so that the speech is additionally and falsely marked as the word of YHWH.

The “word of God” formula

“What a weariness this is,” you say, and you sniff at me, says the LORD of hosts.

The simplest explanation is that in these cases the formulae were secondarily inserted. Only in Mal 1:6bα3 is the formula such a necessary syntactical component of the sentence that it can scarcely be excluded from the oldest stratum.

The multiple insertions of the formula probably occurred because the genre of the disputation speech provides an unusually large space for the words of the opponents. When the counter-questions of the opponents are inserted as quotations the readers themselves can judge whether the prophet’s arguments are persuasive. In order to debase any doubts about the prophet’s arguments the redactors frequently refer to their divine origin.

Incorporation into the Book of the Twelve Prophets

The collection of disputation speeches was then included in the Book of the Twelve Prophets. Some of the redactional additions reveal that they are related to comparable redactional insertions in other writings among the Twelve. From this, we may conclude that those additions were included in the course of the

22 In addition, the formula *koh ʾamar YHWH* is used once (Mal 1:4aβ), linking with the preexilic prophecies in the Book of the Twelve.

integration of the Malachi document into the Book of the Twelve, or that they presuppose that incorporation and are intended to strengthen it. Additions that belong to the context of the Book of the Twelve Prophets are:

- The transfer of the genre designation מִשָּׁע from Zech 9:1 and 12:1 to Mal 1:1.
- The genre designation דְּבַר יְהוָה, which links to the superscriptions of the pre-exilic writings (Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1) and is probably associated with the 'āmar YHWH formulae. This indicates the effort to depict the disputation speeches as direct words of God.
- Mal 1:4–5 follows the terminology of the Obadiah document.
- Mal 1:11 links to Zech 14:9 inasmuch as the verse describes YHWH's royal rule over the nations.
- The references to the day of YHWH (Mal 3:2; 3:23b [4:5b ET]) take up the words of Joel (Joel 3:4b).
- The insertion of מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה, “messenger of YHWH” (in Mal 2:7; cf. also “messenger of the covenant” in 3:1bβ) may well be associated with the similar additions in Zech 1:11α, 12α1; 3:1αβ, 5bβ, 6; Hag 1:13.
- The call to repentance in Mal 3:7 belongs with the same expression in Zech 1:3.
- The judgment of purification in Mal 3:2–3 extends Zech 13:9.
- The fearers of YHWH in Mal 3:16, 20a [4:2a ET] are connected with the Jonah document (Jon 1:16).

The Malachi Document as the Final Section of the Book of the Twelve Prophets

It is true that the Malachi document did not originate as the conclusion to the Book of the Twelve,²³ but it was placed secondarily at the close of that book, and that action was deliberate. Some of the redactors who worked on the Malachi document followed that prompting and fashioned purposeful links to the preceding documents in the Book of the Twelve Prophets. The result was that readers were tasked with interpreting the Malachi document as the last link in the prophetic chain.

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

First we should note that the last three prophets in the Book of the Twelve were regarded by the redactors as representatives of a new epoch. The dating contained in the Haggai and Zechariah documents assigned them to a time in which Israel, after the Babylonian exile, was being ruled by Persian kings and experiencing a restoration.²⁴ In Zech 1:4 the break is clearly marked: the phase of

²³ Kessler, *Maleachi*, 71.

²⁴ This revolves exclusively around the dating presented by the composition of the Book of the Twelve Prophets. Modern historical-critical study likewise dates further documents, e.g., Joel and Jonah, to the postexilic period. Pierce, “Literary Connectors,” and Kessler, *Maleachi*, 69 also favor the idea that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi belong together as a single corpus.