

The form of Malachi is prophetic declaration, rebuttal by (hypothetical) auditors, and the prophet's refutation. Andrew Hill's rhetorical outline displays the back and forth argument between the confrontational prophet and his contentious auditors.<sup>1</sup>

## RHETORICAL OUTLINE OF MALACHI

### Superscription (1:1)

- A. Thesis Disputation: Yahweh's Covenant Love for Israel (1:2-5)
  - Declaration—*I loved you...* (1:2)
  - Refutation—*How have you loved us?* (1:2)
  - Rebuttal—*but Esau I hated!* (1:3)
- B. Disputation Indicting Faithless Priests (1:6-2:9)
  - Declaration—*If I am [your] father, where is my honor? If I am [your] master, where is my respect?* (1:6ab)
  - Refutation—*How have we despised your name? How have we defiled you?* (1:6c-7a)
  - Rebuttal—*And when you present a blind [animal] for sacrifice, there is no evil! Or when you present crippled or diseased [animal], there is no evil!* (1:8)
- C. Disputation Indicating Faithless People (2:10-16)
  - Declaration—*Yehud has broken faith...* (2:11)
  - Refutation—*But you say, Why?* (2:14)
  - Rebuttal—*Indeed [The One] hates divorce!* (2:16)
- D. Disputation Averting Yahweh's Judgment (2:17-3:5)
  - Declaration—*You have wearied Yahweh with your talk.* (2:17a)
  - Refutation—*How have we wearied [him]?* (2:17b)
  - Rebuttal—*See! I am sending my messenger...* (3:1)
- C'. Disputation Indicting Faithless People (3:6-12)
  - Declaration—*Return to me, so that I may return to you.* (3:6-7ab)
  - Refutation—*How can we return?* (3:7c)
  - Rebuttal—*Surely you are robbing me!* (3:8a)
  - 2nd Refutation—*How have we robbed you?* (3:8b)
  - 2nd Rebuttal—*bring the full tithe into the [Temple] storehouse!* (3:10a)
- B'. Final Disputation Indicting the Faithless and Acquitting the Faithful (3:13-21 [4:3])
  - Declaration—*Your words against me have been harsh.* (3:13a)
  - Refutation—*How have we spoken against you?* (3:13b)
  - Rebuttal—*It is futile to serve God!* (3:14a)
  - 2nd Refutation—*What profit [is there] that we have kept his charge?* (3:14-15)
  - 2nd Rebuttal—*Once again you will see the difference between a righteous and a wicked one ...* (3:18-19 [4:1])
- E. Appendixes: Concluding Exhortations (3:22-24 [4:4-6])
  - 1. Remember the Law of Moses ... (3:22 [4:4])
  - 2. See! I am sending Elijah ... (3:23-24 [4:5-6])

---

<sup>1</sup> Hill, Anchor Bible, xxxvi; also see 26; cf. 34-37