

Lesson 8: Reckoning



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

Malachi is one of the
Minor Prophets in the
Old Testament.

The Old Testament: Prophets

The prophets spoke God's Word in many places and under many circumstances, even to leaders and kings among the unbelievers. God stood firm on his promise that he would never forsake his people and would one day send a Savior to deliver them from their enemies.

Biblical Genre: Prophecy

Prophecy is more than just a prediction of the future; it is a direct message from God. The words of the prophets challenge us and call us to repentance, and they give us a promise from God in which we can trust to give us hope and purpose in life.

The prophetic books are often broken down into the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. This designation is not a reflection of their importance in Scripture, but simply refers to the relative size of the books. Malachi is one of the Minor Prophets.

Introduction

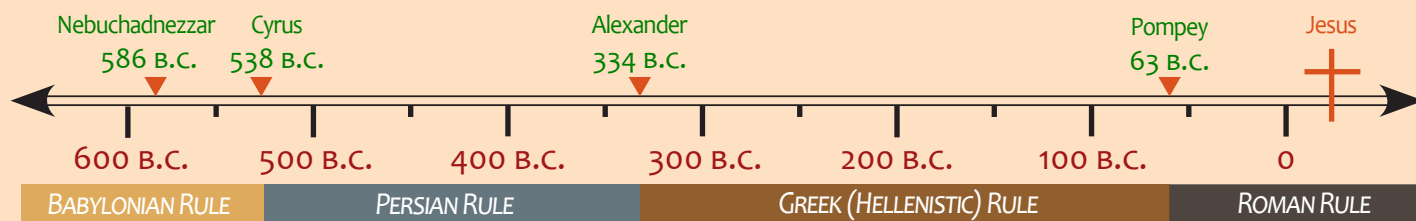
The Old Testament prophets were people who were called to deliver God's message. One of these was the prophet Malachi, who spoke of the coming Day of the Lord. God not only let Malachi know about what would happen at the end of the time, God also let him know about coming of Jesus.

Read: Malachi 4:1-6

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

Nebuchadnezzar was the Babylonian king who conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In 538 B.C., Persia's King Cyrus wrote an edict that allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. But that would not be the last time the Jews were conquered. In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great led his Greek army east and conquered the lands that had belonged to Persia. Later, in 63 B.C., the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem just prior to the New Testament Era.



Discuss: Malachi 4:1-6

- Chapter 4 of Malachi is the last chapter of the Old Testament. In what ways does it serve as a good lead-in to the story of the New Testament?
- "The Day of the Lord" is a phrase used many times in the Old Testament to refer to the great day when God would finally bring in his kingdom. What do you think Malachi's first readers were thinking of? What did they expect God to do?
- Who or what do you think is being referred to when Malachi says, "the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings" (v.2)? Explain why you think this.
- From our perspective as Christians, the Day of the Lord brings to mind Jesus' coming to live among us. How do these words of Malachi apply both to Jesus' first coming and his second coming?
- What two great prophets does Malachi mention by name? Do you think it is a coincidence that these same two figures appear in the story of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)? How does this support the fact that Jesus is "the Lord"?
- Read Matthew 17:9-13. The disciples ask about Elijah coming to prepare the way for the Messiah. Did this happen? Who does Jesus say this was? What fate did he share with Jesus?
- Can the same passage in Scripture mean more than one thing, yet still not contradict itself? Explain. How might this shape our understanding of the Day of the Lord?
- Do you think the prophets always knew the meaning of the message revealed to them? Explain.

Where in the World?

The area we call the Middle East is where the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe meet.

There were a number of major Iron Age empires that ruled this region. The most important were:

- The B _____
- The P _____
- The G _____
- The R _____



► On the map above, mark with an X and circle the area where Jesus was born and lived his earthly life.