

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

It's been a few weeks since we've studied the PTTB sessions. I hope you enjoyed the two session interlude where we showed **Israel Indivisible** which is a DVD recounting the promises and judgments of God toward Israel and her relationship to the "Land".

We saw the promises of God regarding the Land, playing out over history and the movement of the Jewish Nation from just a cold ember, to a white-hot flame. We saw the events unfold as they were promised in the Old Testament regarding the dispersions, the returning, the inhabiting of the Land, and the blossoming and prospering of the Land when her people were back there.

If you look at modern Israel today, it is an incredible and breathtaking miracle of God to see her in her land, in her place, following God's plan through the ages...**even without comprehending all of His promises to her.**

All of this proves several important things to remember.

- God's Word is true and is literally Truth being fulfilled in front of our eyes.
- The Land of Israel is promised to the Jews by God and treaties of man.
- God's plan for Israel Future is also true and important to God and us. He has not abandoned Israel, the Jews, or His promises to them.
- Judgment on her enemies will continue to take place as foretold in scripture.
- The Old Testament is not past its promise, and not useful for us today. It is rather the Word of God Eternal and is part of the revelation of His plan through the ages.

Today we return to the Minor Prophets to finish the OT section of our study together. I hope you viewed the video I sent out from Christ in Prophecy on the Minor Prophets. If not, go back to the email and click on the link.

I want to go back to last week's written notes and begin where we left off in Zechariah.

Zechariah is a powerful book and has much to teach us about prophecy and future events.

In **Zechariah Ch 9**, we see the ***coming deliverance of the Messiah***

In **Zechariah Ch 10** we see the ***promise of deliverance and restoration of Judah (Southern Kingdom) and Ephraim (Northern Kingdom)***. We also see the regathering of Israel (vv 9-12), and rejection of Israel's Messiah (Zech 11:1-17) and its consequences.

Zech Ch 12 speaks to the ***repentance of Israel in that day***, and **Ch 13 speaks to the cleansing of the Remnant of Israel**. There are purging judgments in Ch 13 as well.

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Zech Ch 14 speaks to the *triumphant coming of the Messiah (Second Coming)* as the final drama of the Tribulation period comes to a close. *Ch 14 also tells us about the physical changes to the Holy Land and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.*

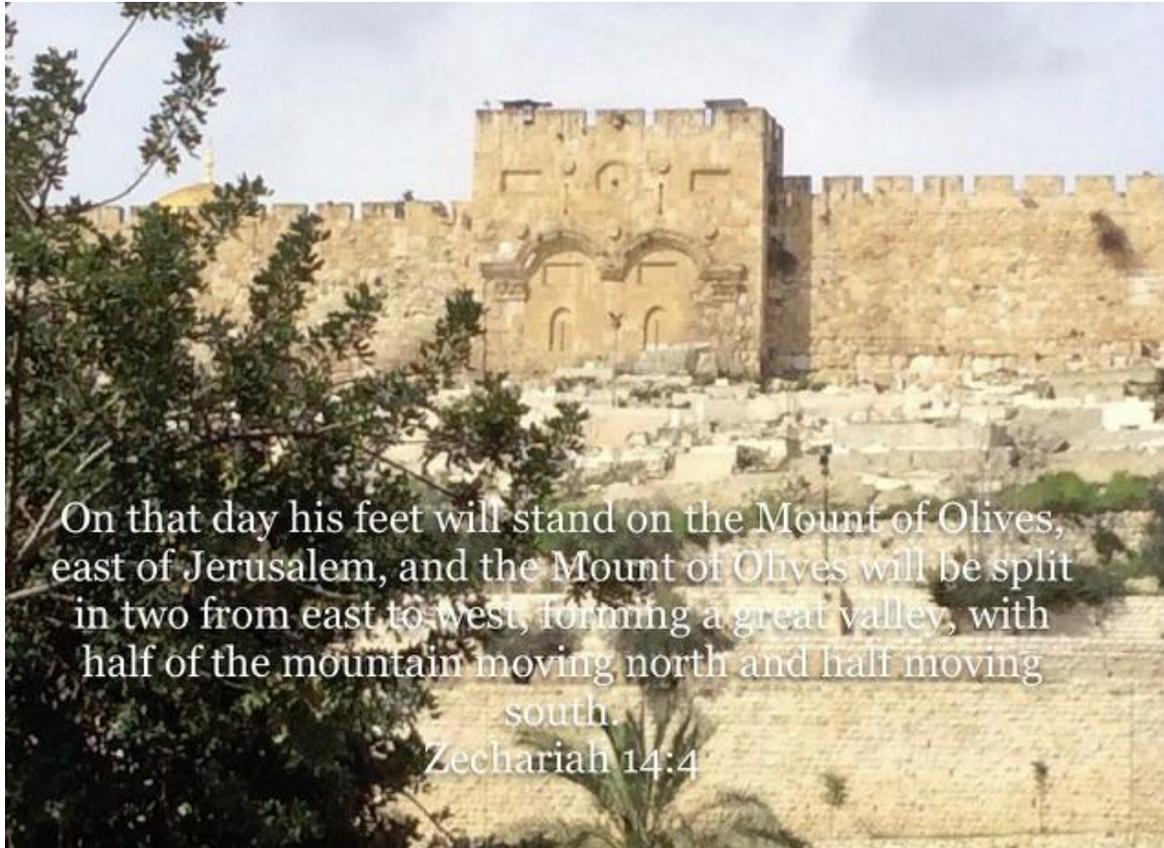
14 A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls.

² I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. ⁵ You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

*⁶ On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. ⁷ It will be a unique day—a day known only to the LORD—with no distinction between day and night. **When evening comes, there will be light.***

There is so much here. In the Temple, the Eastern Gate is where Jesus entered the temple while he was on earth. It is also called **Messiah's Gate**. This gate was sealed up by Suleiman, one of the Moslem rulers of Jerusalem, to prevent the Messiah from entering there again. The prophecy in **Psalms 24:7-10**

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"Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, invincible in battle. Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Heaven's Armies - He is the King of glory"

In these verses in both Zechariah and Psalms we see that when the Lord returns to earth for the Second Coming, his feet will touchdown on the Mount of Olives, and a violent earthquake will happen and split the Mt of Olives in two pieces with a rift valley that extends from this Messiahs Gate to the area near Petra in modern Jordan. Interestingly the Muslims have placed their graveyards on the hillside rising to the Temple Mount because they know no Jew (or Messiah) will cross them. Fortunately the Lord is not bound by these rules for men, and he splits the valley apart and walks through the rift straight to the Eastern Gate and goes in. (recount the story with the Arab Guide in Jerusalem)

We also see that when the Lord dwells here there is no more darkness and the light at night is provided by His Glory.

Maranatha...come Lord Jesus

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There is so much to understand in the book of Zechariah that we have passed over, I encourage you to go to the website and listen to the lessons there on this wonderful and prophetic book.

Prophecy in the book of Malachi

Malachi is arguably the last book written in the OT and is placed at the end of the covenant. There is some discussion that Joel is the last book but those are arguments for academicians, not Bible study disciples, since it really does not matter to us. We will go with tradition and view this as the last book in the OT.

The name Malachi, means My Messenger. Some translations view this name as not a real name but a title of the author. Again, this is not material to us since either way, the book is a prophetic scripture written on behalf of a messenger of God. We will use the conventional name as the name of the author.

Malachi was written about 433BC, about the time Nehemiah went back to Persia and the governor mentioned is not Nehemiah (v 1:8). This was before the future prophecy of exalting the nation and returning Glory to His City and Temple has come true. The mood in Israel was doubting God's Covenant Love for His People, no longer trusting in His Justice, and loss of Hope. They did their worship as mere listless perpetuation of form. They no longer took the Law seriously. Malachi was written to combat these beliefs and was both a promise of His coming, but also pronounced He would come like a "refiners fire".

Even today the Jews and much of the Christian world has degenerated into a form of religion without its fire and purpose. Is it any wonder that Apostasy is rampant in the "Christian" world today with leaders denying the way to God is only through Jesus, His atonement is sufficient, or Grace and not Works is what He promises. Today there is a renewal of "works" based theologies that deny Him and focus on us. Prosperity Gospel, Justice Gospel, Social Gospel, Happiness Gospel just to name a few, are increasingly invading the pulpits. It is all part of the prophetic Word playing out in front of us if we open our eyes to see it.

Malachi is an interesting Question and Answer format, with questions asked by both God and the people. Vivid word pictures are throughout the book and it is written in what are called Oracles which the word only appears in Zechariah and Malachi in the OT and several times in the plural in the NT.

An Oracle is something or someone who is a conduit from God to Man. In the sense of Malachi, he is the one through which the message of God comes to the people. In the NT it is more commonly used to represent the Scriptures.

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Malachi comes to us in 6 Oracles

1. Respond to God's Love (1:2-5)
2. Honor God (1:6-2:9)
3. Be faithful as God's covenant people (2:10-16)
4. Hope in God (2:17-3:6)
5. Obey God (3:7-12)
6. Fear God (3:13-4:3)

Conclusion: Be Prepared for God's Coming (4:4-6)

Remember, this book was written and is the last word from God for more than 400 years until Gabriel appears to Zechariah the priest in the temple announcing the birth of a son, John the Baptist to him and Elizabeth. ***See Luke Chapter 1***

The six Oracles speak plainly to them and to us today. They were about to go on a period of life where God was not speaking to them as He did in the past. They had to rely on the Oracle of the written Word and His Spirit to guide them. For 400 plus years what were they to do?

They were to **respond to God's Love**

Israel Doubts God's Love

² *"I have loved you," says the LORD.*

"But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob, ³ but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

⁴ *Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins."*

But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. ⁵ You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!'

They were to **Honor God**

"A son honors his father and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty.

"It is you priests who show contempt for my name."

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Are we honoring God as our Father and Master? How are our “priests” honoring Him or dishonoring Him? Do we respect Him, His Word, His commands...or do we do what we want in life and not pay attention to Him?

They were to be **faithful as God’s covenant people**

Mal 2:13-16

¹³ *Another thing you do: You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage **covenant**.*

¹⁵ *Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.*

¹⁶ *“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty.*

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

They were to **Hope in God**

They pleaded for God to come, and were to be hopeful, but were they ready?

³ *“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.*

² *But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? **For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.** ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.*

⁵ *“So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.*

They were to **Obey God**

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Mal 3:1 *Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. **Return to me, and I will return to you,***” says the LORD Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

⁸ *“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.*

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, *“and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,”* says the LORD Almighty. ¹² ***“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,”*** says the LORD Almighty.

They were to Fear God

¹³ *“You have spoken arrogantly against me,”* says the LORD.

“Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’

¹⁴ *“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?’ ¹⁵ **But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.’”***

The Faithful Remnant

¹⁶ *Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. **A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.***

¹⁷ *“On the day when I act,”* says the LORD Almighty, *“they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ **And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.***

What are WE to make of this for ourselves?

The final words of Malachi echo in our thoughts. Are we ready for His Coming? Are we ready to meet Him and atone for our sin?

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Mal 4:4-6 *“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.*

⁵“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

Elijah has come and gone. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah has come and gone. The OT has been written. The NT has been written. God speaks to us through His Scriptures today as He did in the time of Malachi.

Are we following the plan?

Responding to His Love, Honoring Him, Being Faithful, Hoping in Him, Obeying Him, Fearing Him and are we ready and prepared for His Second Coming?

It is my Prayer for You, your family, and me and my family.

The time between the Testaments

While this period of time is silent with respect to God speaking in written form it was a time of great change to the world in terms of realignment of power, social structure, and cultural power which would shape the period of the NT.

As the Persian Empire gave way to the Greek empire of Alexander the Great, and Alexander’s early death in 323BC, many changes were taking place. Successors to Alexander were cruel and powerful. Four kingdoms came from Alexander’s Empire and two of them became dynasties in the area around Israel. The Ptolemy’s in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria and Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) fought over the Holy Land for over a hundred years. Israel was no longer a country but in the early period, both the Ptolemy’s and the Seleucids were tolerant of Jewish tradition and did not interfere too much. As time moved on Antiochus Epiphanies (God made Manifest) saw a FAILING Kingdom and responded by trying to totally Hellenize and eradicate Jewish tradition and religious practice. Most Jews spoke Greek and the language of the land (Aramaic) as well as Hebrew...so the language was not a problem but eradication of Jewishness and religion WAS a huge problem.

This period gave rise to a very heroic time in Jewish history, called the **Maccabean Revolt** and the **Hasmonean** period. This was led by Judas Maccabee and resulted in a 24 year rule which slowly devolved into an Establishment Culture and not revolutionary culture.

During this period of time, Jewish writers produced a large volume of literature that recorded and addressed this era. Three main bodies of work came from this era.

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Septuagint – The Greek translation of the Jewish Old Testament. 72 scholars created this work on the island of Pharos, near Alexandria. Its name comes from the Latin word for 70...**Septuagint or LXX**.

This translation quickly became the defacto standard Bible for Jews living outside the Middle East. In addition to the OT scripture, several deuterocanonical (2nd canon) books were added as extensions to the original OT scripture. We call these the **Apocrypha**. Some of the early Christians also used these books as scripture and likely this is why this section is separate but included in Catholic Bibles and some other modern Bibles.

Apocrypha - The term "apocrypha" comes from the Greek word meaning "hidden" or "secret". Originally, the term was applied to sacred books whose contents were "too exalted to be made available to the general public". Gradually, the term "apocrypha" took on a disparaging connotation, since the orthodoxy of these hidden books was often questionable.

"The Apocrypha" includes 15 books, all but one of which are Jewish in origin and found in the Septuagint (parts of 2 Esdras are possibly Christian and Latin in origin). Influenced by the Jewish canon of the OT, the custom arose of making the Apocrypha a separate section in the Protestant Bible, or sometimes even of omitting them entirely.

The Catholic view, expressed as a doctrine of faith at the Council of Trent, is that 12 of these 15 works (in a different enumeration, however) are canonical Scripture; they are called the Deuterocanonical Books. The three books of the Protestant Apocrypha that are not accepted by Catholics are 1-2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh

-excerpted from [Bible Study Tools](#)

The English-language King James Version (KJV) of 1611 followed the lead of the Luther Bible in using an inter-testamental section labeled "Books called Apocrypha", or just "Apocrypha" at the running page header. The KJV followed the Geneva Bible of 1560 almost exactly (variations are marked below). 1 Esdras (Vulgate 3 Esdras) (Wikipedia)

- 2 Esdras (Vulgate 4 Esdras)
- Tobit
- Judith ("*Judeth*" in Geneva)
- Rest of Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4 – 16:24)
- Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus - Also known as Sirach)
- Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy ("*Jeremiah*" in Geneva) (all part of Vulgate Baruch)
- Song of the Three Children (Vulgate Daniel 3:24–90)
- Story of Susanna (Vulgate Daniel 13)
- The Idol Bel and the Dragon (Vulgate Daniel 14)
- Prayer of Manasseh (Daniel)
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees

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We do not list these in our Bible because we believe they are historical but not Inspired scripture and therefore do not belong in the Bible. Almost without exception they are listed as Intertestamental writings. There are other books considered by some written after the close of the NT canon that are viewed similarly. Books like the Gospel of Thomas, and the Shepherd of Hermas are not considered inspired or Historical, but flawed writings in the 200-300 ad timeframe.

With this session we end the PTTB series covering the OT and Intertestamental Period.

We will take a break from Prophecy for a few weeks and pick up with PTTB in the NT

- Prophecy in the Gospels
- Prophecy in the Book of Acts
- Prophecy in the Letters of Paul
- Prophecy in the General Letters
- Prophecy concerning the Church in Revelation
- Prophecy of John's Vision of Heaven and the End Time
- Prophecy of the Second Coming, the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State
- Final Discussions