**Malachi: Bible Study Preview**

**Introduction to Prophets & Prophecy**

**One must never lose sight of the intimate relationship between Israel's prophets and the politics of the day. The prophets were "religious," but they were anything but monks or ascetics who were hidden away from public life. They were fully engaged in the power politics of the day. They functioned as a type of checks-and-balances system between the people and Israel's kings. The prophetic books are grouped together in the Hebrew canon in a collection called Nebi' im, the second part of the threefold Hebrew canon. Eight books comprise the prophetic canon;**

**The Former Prophets [Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) and the**

**Latter (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Book of the Twelve).**

**Malachi takes its place as the final book of the Old Testament in the Christian canon.  
Malachi serves as a perfect and proper conclusion to the book of the Twelve. It looks ahead to a day of judgment for the arrogant and evildoers and to a day of hope and vindication for those who worship and revere the true God.**

**Interpreting the prophets well involves several aspects.**

1. **Place the prophets historically in context The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Jewish people, went through what must have seemed a never-ending cycle of national tragedy between the 8th-5th centuries B.C. It was precisely at these times, when the people most needed a word from God, that God spoke through the prophets.**

**8th Century [The Assyrian Crisis): Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah**

**7th Century [The Babylonian Crisis): Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk**

**5/6th Century [Babylonian Exile and return): Jer, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi**

1. **Understand the function of a prophet. The prophets are not predictors of the future [foretellers) but rather proclaimers of God's Word [forthtellers). They are not providing events and timelines for the future; they are hoping to change the future**

**(see Jer18)**

**III. Note the basic message:**

* 1. **You have broken the covenant: idolatry, social injustice, and religious ritualism.**
  2. **Repent! But if there is no repentance...then there will be judgment!**
  3. **The ultimate hope was that God would restore and renew his people.**