

The Big Picture:
The Covenant Takes on Flesh (*Various NT texts*)

From Babylon to Malachi

- After the Babylonian Empire fell, the Persian king Cyrus allowed Israelites to return to the land (c. 538 BC)
 - Some did, while others stayed dispersed throughout the ANE
- Ezra led the rebuilding of the Temple (c. 515 BC)
- The events of Esther took place (479 BC)
- Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (c. 444 BC)
- The prophets Joel, Haggai, & Malachi minister in the post-exilic era (ending c. 430 BC)
 - Ends the writings of the Old Testament

From Malachi to Messiah

- The Persian Empire ruled over the region of Israel from 539 to 333 BC
- The Greeks took over Israel in 333 BC
 - It changed hands between the Ptolemy & Seleucid Empires multiply times
 - In 167 BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Temple leading to the Maccabean revolt
- The Hasmoneans, a Levite family, ruled over Israel from 167-63 BC
 - Often serving as both high priests and kings
 - A semi-independent Israel
- In 63 BC Roman general Pompey conquers Jerusalem, desecrating the Temple
 - The Roman Empire takes control of Israel/Judea until 313 AD
- Between 6-2 BC, Jesus is born in Bethlehem, under Roman rule
 - Governed by the Idumean dynasty of Herod
- During this entire time (500+ years), God's people eagerly waited for God to fulfill His covenant promises

Jesus, the Fulfiller

- In the person of work of Jesus, we see all of God's covenantal promises find their fulfillment
- Adam: An offspring of Eve will defeat the power of the serpent (Heb 2:14-15; see Luke 3:38)
 - Jesus takes the place of Adam
 - Defeating sin and death
 - Replacing it with righteousness and life (Rom 5:19, 21)
- Noah: God will deal with sin through both judgment & mercy
 - Jesus is the rightful judge of humanity (Acts 10:42)
 - And He is the merciful high priest who understands our struggles because of His incarnation (Heb 2:17; 4:15)
- Abraham: God has chosen a family through which to bring the Redeemer who will bless all of humanity
 - Jesus, a descendant of Abraham came as that Redeemer (Gal 3:14; Matt. 1:1)
- Moses: God specifies a people to bring His blessing through, and gives them the job of representing Him
 - Jesus is the perfect representative of God (Heb 1:3; Col 1:15)

- He perfectly fulfilled the requirements of the Mosaic Law, thus ending that aspect of the covenant (Matt 5:17-18)
- David: God indicates that this promised Redeemer will be a king from David's line
 - Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Davidic descendant promised to be the eternal king (Matt 1:1, 6, 17, 20; 9:27; 12:3, 23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42-45; Mark 2:25; 10:47-48; 11:10; 12:35-37; Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11; 3:31; 6:3; 18:38-39; 20:41-44; John 7:42)
- A Promise of Something New: God promised to establish a new covenant where He would dwell within His people
 - Jesus establishes a new covenant through His sacrificial death and resurrection (Heb 9:15; Luke 22:20)
 - And with the establishment of the New Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant was finished (Heb 8:6, 8, 13)

So What?

- Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises
 - He is the perfect covenant maker and keeper
- Do we trust Him to be all that God promised?
- Are we telling others of our faithful God?

Meditation Verse: *Galatians 4:4-5*