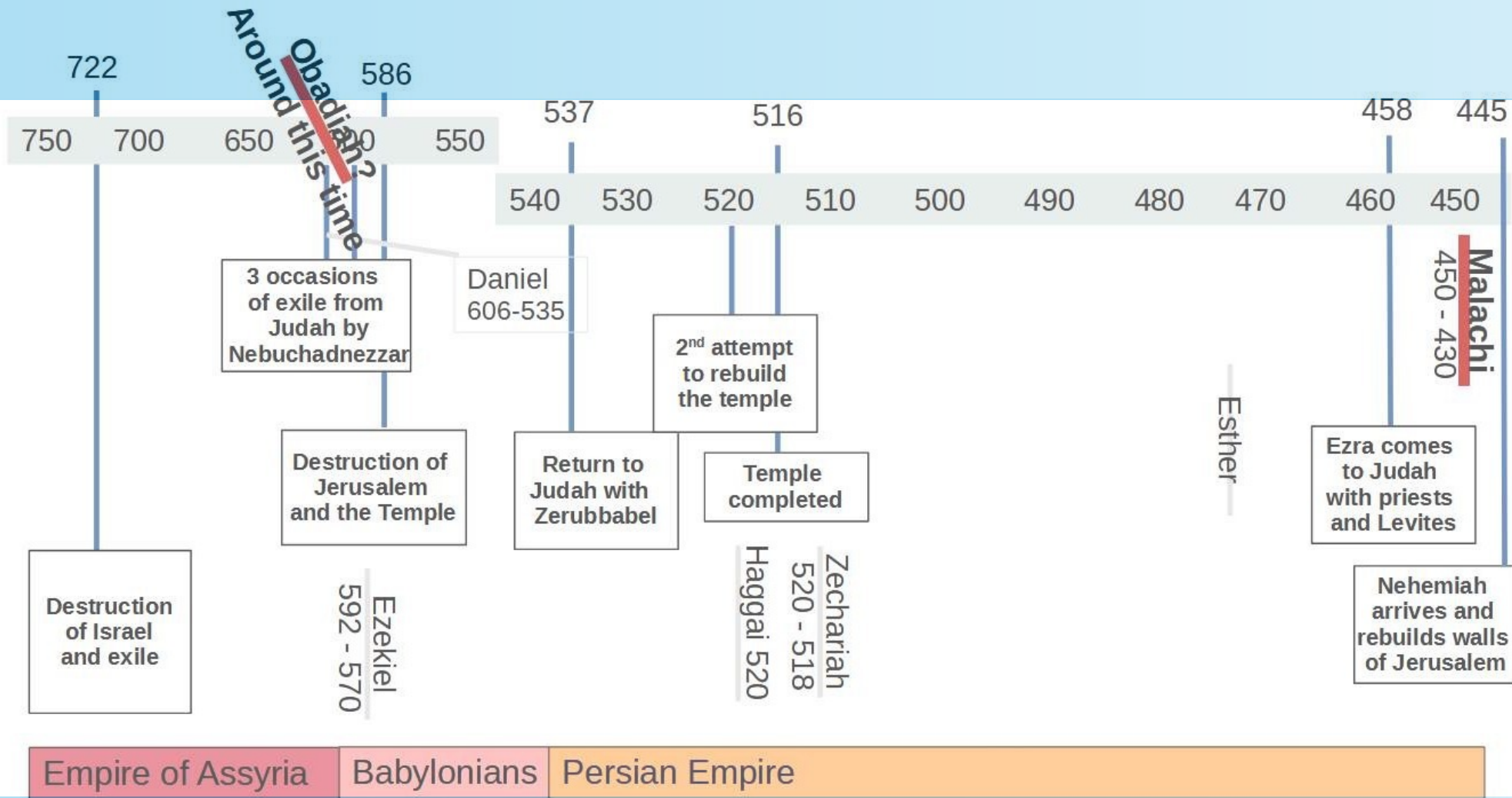


Welcome to St Mark's Church Bible Teaching Stream

The Books of Malachi and Obadiah



Obadiah?
Around this time

- God says - I love you...
- The people say - how can God love us?

- They are struggling to grow crops;
- They are harassed by enemies around them;
- They have little sense of being a nation;
- There is no glory as promised by previous prophecy;
- No sense that the Glory of the Lord was in the temple, as before

Malachi Chapter 1 Vv 2 to 5 - Look at Edom...

"I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals." 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. You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD - even beyond the borders of Israel!'

- Example of Edom – a neighbouring nation, descendants of Esau
- Prophesied against by Obadiah

Malachi

Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated... Mal. 1.2,3



- EDOM
- Adjacent to Judah
- A mountainous country

(2) "See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, "Who can bring me down to the ground?"

(10) Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever.

- Edom should have been a friend of Judah, but it was not.
- Numbers 20 – account of Edom refusing Israel passage on way to Canaan

On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.

You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble.

You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster.

You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.

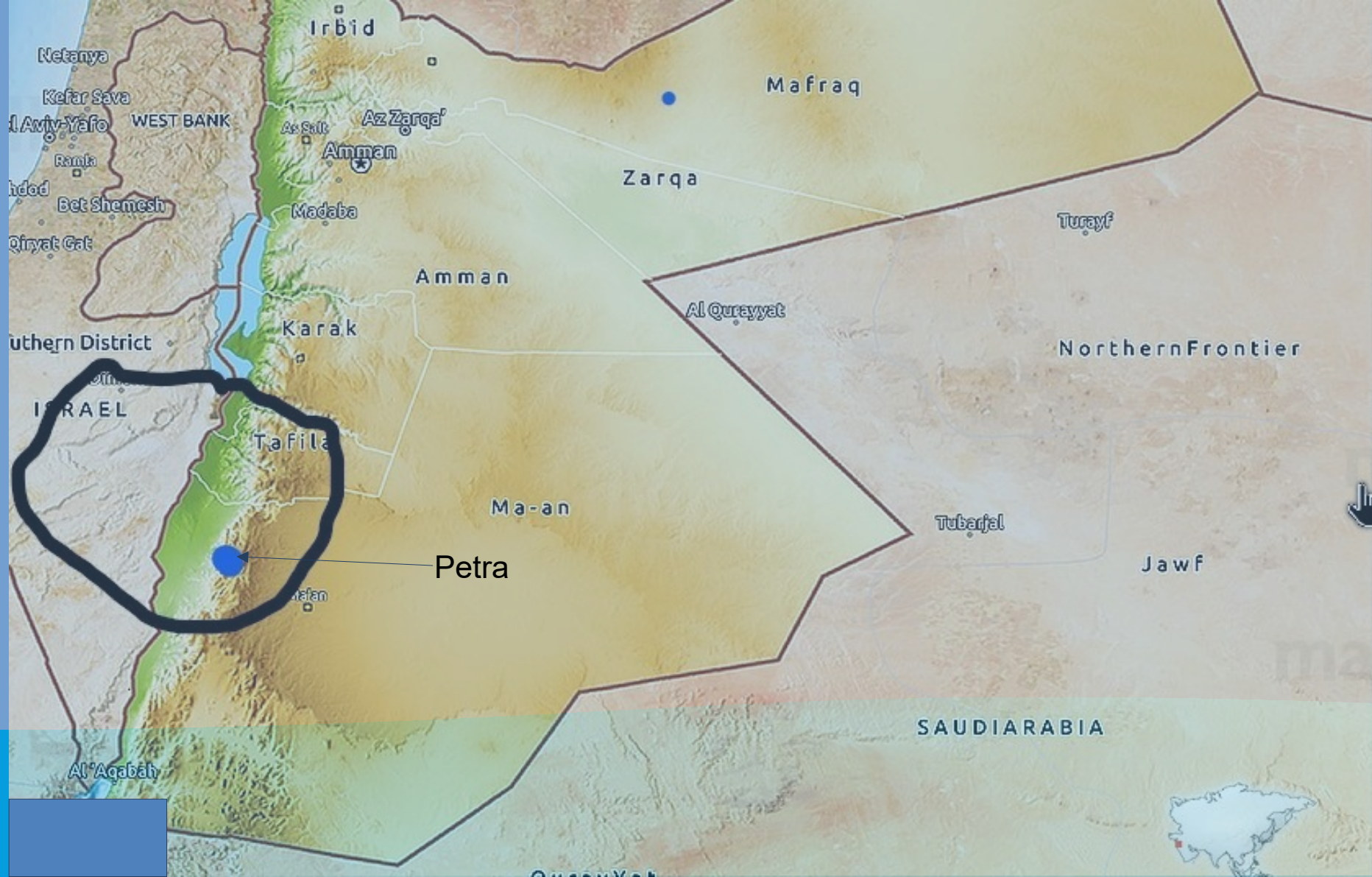
- Edom doesn't support Judah against the Babylonians, but takes advantage (see also Lamentations 4.21,22)

The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. Just as you drank on my holy hill, so all the nations will drink continually; they will drink and drink and be as if they had never been. But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance. The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau. The LORD has spoken.

- There is no future for Edom; no deliverance, no return.
- Edom initially drank in celebration of Jerusalem's fall along with her allies. But it will be Edom, along with the nations who have participated in Jerusalem's destruction, who will fall.

People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev. Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the LORD's.

- Edom will cease to exist, and the Jewish exiles will possess land from their enemies
- This detail of exiles from Judah reinforces the idea that Obadiah was prophesying around 600BC



Malachi is full of Questions, questions and answers from God, Questions and answers from the priests and the people.

We've covered the first one -

"I have loved you," says the LORD

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

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says.

"Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated..."

A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due me?

If I am a master, where is the respect due me? " says the LORD Almighty.

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

"But you ask, '*How have we shown contempt for your name?*'

"You place defiled food on my altar.

"But you ask, '*How have we defiled you?*'

"By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong?

When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong?

"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.

My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

"When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands? " says the LORD.

"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

"And now this admonition is for you, O priests. If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honour my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings.

Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honour me. "Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it."

"(Levi) walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction--because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble...

So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

*"Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?
Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking
faith with one another?"*

Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob, even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

...You weep and wail because (God) no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "*Why?*"

It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Has not the LORD made them one?
In flesh and spirit they are his.

And why one?

Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel...

You have wearied the LORD with your words.
"How have we wearied him?" you ask.

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD,
and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

- The people have become cynical and lost faith

"See, 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.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?

Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. " But you ask, '*How are we to return?*' "

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, '*How do we rob you?*' "

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this ...

"You have said harsh things against me," says the LORD.
Yet you ask, '*What have we said against you?*'

"You have said, '*It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?* But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'"

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 honoured his name.

"They will be mine... in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them... And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not"

But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall...

"Remember the law of my servant Moses... I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

The Books of Malachi and Obadiah

- what can we learn from them?

Maybe God has questions for us...

When everything seems to be going wrong, do we blame God?

How impatient are we for things to get better?

Do we separate the everyday from spiritual battles?

Do we rob God? A tithe is an expectation, are we generous?

Do we live as though Jesus will not return in our lifetime?

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