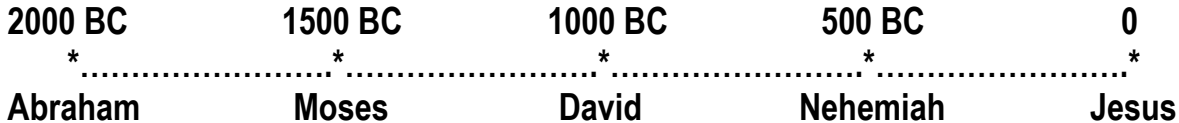




Jeremy White, Lead Pastor
August 10 & 11, 2019

Valley Church
Week 24 – When God Goes Dark

Introduction:



Four “Major” Prophets

Isaiah (740-700 BC), Jeremiah (626-587 BC), Ezekiel (582-570 BC) and Daniel (604-535 BC).

Twelve “Minor” Prophets

Hosea (760-722 BC), Joel (810-750 BC), Amos (760 BC), Obadiah (587 BC), Jonah (760 BC), Micah (740-687 BC), Nahum (630-612 BC), Habakkuk (600 BC), Zephaniah (640-610 BC), Haggai (520 BC), Zechariah (520 BC), Malachi (450 BC).

Malachi → John the Baptist = “The Silent Years”

During this time, the *Pharisees* emerge...

Malachi 4:4

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave Him at Horeb for all Israel.

Matthew 23:1-4; 13-15

Religion = from Latin **re** (to return to) and **ligare** (to bind up)

A Case Study in Legalism:

→ Malachi 3:10 (Old Covenant mind-set, words to manipulate)

→ 2 Corinthians 9:7 (New Covenant mind-set, words to motivate)

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Obedience (in this case study, generosity) comes through...

- ...the grace that God has given... (vs. 1)
- and “act of grace...” (vs. 6)
- “excelling” in grace (vs. 7)
- knowing “the grace of our Lord Jesus..” (vs. 9)

Questions for Life Groups and Personal Reflection:

Personal Life:

1. As we have concluded our 24-week survey of the Old Testament, we have discovered how every page ultimately points us to Jesus. Try to share, discuss or remind each other of some of the ways this is true...
2. Have you ever gone through long seasons when it feels like God has "gone dark?" Share your thoughts about what we can do when it feels like God isn't speaking to us...

Ponderings:

3. For more than 400 years following Malachi, God did not send a prophet, and during this time the Pharisees emerged. Do you think there is any connection between a lack of hearing God's voice and becoming legalistic like the Pharisees? Discuss...
4. How and why is the written Word (the Bible) so central and critical to hearing God speak to us today?
5. What role does the Holy Spirit play in allowing us to hear and discern the "voice" of God?
6. Read Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in the following verses and discuss... (Matthew 23:1-4; 13-15; 27-28)
 - What, if anything, surprises you the most about Jesus' words or demeanor in this passage?
 - What Pharisaical characteristics in your life have you allowed to hurt others? What Pharisaical characteristics about others have hurt you?
7. Why is the case study of financial giving such a clear example for the ineffectiveness of legalistic, manipulative religion? Discuss...

Promptings:

8. Is there an area of your life right now in which true obedience from the heart has been lacking due to legalism or the presence of Pharisaical religion? How do the New Covenant commands of Christ (*believe* and *love* – 1 John 3:23) set us free from legalistic thinking and living? Will you believe God for the power to live obediently from the heart?