

# Who is the King?

## The Way Prepared

### Foundation

#### Bible passage : Mal 4.5-6 & Lk 1.16-17

God had promised that the House of David would rule over Israel forever. But the kingdom collapsed with the defeat of Judah. In this module so far we have seen how the people eventually returned and rebuilt the city and Temple. But, despite the accusations against Nehemiah, the restored Israel had no king. In these last 3 units we will look at some of the things God said about the promised king and what happened over four hundred years later.

The last book in our Old Testament is the prophecies of Malachi. (The order of books in Hebrew Bibles is slightly different.) God spoke to the people through the prophet and one of the last things in the book, and therefore one of the last things we read in the Old Testament is:

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4.5-6)*

Over four centuries later we read in the New Testament about a couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth, who had been unable to have a child. Zechariah was a priest and one day whilst he was in the Temple an angel sent by God spoke to him. He was told that though they were too old for children nevertheless they would have a son and they were to call his name John. The angel said

*And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to*



*Eli Cohen as John the Baptist in the Film "Jesus" by the Jesus Film Project, 1979.*

*the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared. (Luke 1.16-17)*

At first Zechariah did not believe what he had been told, and as a result he was struck dumb until after the birth. But eventually he realised it was true and that something amazing was about to happen. The time God had promised hundreds of years before was coming and their child, John, was going to have a part to play.

After the baby was born, Zechariah was able to speak again and said to his son John:

**“you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways”**

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways (Lk 1.76)*

When the child grew up he was an unusual character but people recognised that he was special and crowds flocked to hear him teach. We know him as John the Baptist and he said that He had come to prepare the way of the Lord and pointed people, including some of the first disciples, Peter and Andrew, to Jesus.



**John the Baptist was sent to prepare people for the Lord and pointed people to Jesus.**