

The Minor Prophets



by Dan Melhus

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INTRODUCTION

The true prophets in the Old Testament were loyal servants of God and convinced foes of idolatry. They often risked their lives by confronting wicked kings, princes or ruler with the Word of God. They poured their souls into their pleas that sinners repent and turn back to God.

In Israel, there was a long history of individuals who served as the Lord's messengers to the nation and to the world. Abraham functioned as a prophet when he interceded for a sinner, but it was Moses whom the Lord first called and instructed in the ministerial role of a prophet (Exo. 3:1). Moses in fact was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets (Num. 12:6) and his experience as a prophet became a paradigm for later prophets as the vocabulary and relationships of the divine communication through Moses became standard for God's revelations to other true prophets (Deut. 18:15). Such terms as "send," "go," "speak," and "I will" were commonly used by the Lord to prophets, and they themselves frequently admonished their audiences to "hear" because "thus says the Lord."

Several elements often characterize the relationships between the Lord, the prophets and their hearers:

1. the authority of the Lord over both the prophets and their audiences;
2. the obedience of the prophets, though sometimes with initial protest;
3. the authority of the prophets as representatives of the sovereign God;
4. the requirement of the audience to choose covenant obedience or disobedience;
5. the report of the prophet back to the Lord in the form of prayer

The prophetic books are largely written in the style of Hebrew poetry. Although the prophets do not explain their choice of the poetic genre, it is likely they did so for at least three reasons;

1. Poetry can speak powerfully to the will and emotions; the prophets did not wish simply to inform their audiences, but to move them to action as well.
2. Poetry, with its stress on symbolism and imagery is sometimes better suited than prose to convey the wonders of God and His character which are at the heart of the prophets' messages.

3. Poetry can speak about the meaning of future events without necessarily having to describe all details literally.

The Hebrew Bible is arranged in three groups, **The Law**, **The Prophets** and **The Writings** (see chart below). In the second group in the Hebrew Bible, that section known as **The Prophets**, we have two sub-groups. The first called *Former Prophets* and the second called *Latter Prophets*. The *Former* and *Latter Prophets* are further divided into four books each for a total of eight. If you were to go to the Hebrew Bible looking for the “Minor Prophets”, you would go to the second section **The Prophets**, the second sub-group called *Latter Prophets*, and finally go to book four entitled “*The Twelve*”. In the third group in the Hebrew Bible, that section known as **The Writings**, we have three sub-groups. The first called *Poetical Books*, the second called *Five Rolls*, and the third called *Historical Books*. Daniel was placed in the third section of **The Writings** in the sub-group *Historical Books*.

The Hebrew Old Testament Arrangement (Masoretic Text)		
The Law (Torah)	The Prophets (Nevi'im)	The Writings (Kethuvim)
Genesis	A. Former Prophets	A. Poetical Books
Exodus	1. Joshua	1. Psalms
Leviticus	2. Judges	2. Job
Numbers	3. Samuel	3. Proverbs
Deuteronomy	4. Kings	B. Five Rolls
	B. Latter Prophets	1. Ruth
	1. Isaiah	2. Song of Songs
	2. Jeremiah	3. Ecclesiastes
	3. Ezekiel	4. Lamentations
	4. The Twelve	5. Esther
		C. Historical Books
		1. Daniel
		2. Ezra-Nehemiah
		3. Chronicles

The so-called “writing prophets” have left us sixteen books. Four of these prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel – we call “Major”. Major being a reference to the length of their writing, not to their quality or importance. The remaining twelve prophets from Augustine’s time (4th

century), the Latin church employed the term “Minor” because of their brevity as compared with the “Major Prophets”.

A correct study of the prophets will first seek to understand the conditions existing at the time the prophet lived. We should read the message as though we were living in that day and could make the primary applications according to the political and spiritual conditions that existed. After we understand what the meaning would have been to the prophet’s hearers, we are then able to make applications to our own day. History does have a way of repeating itself, and rich and powerful lessons can be gleaned for today as parallels are developed. Faith in God is increased by having this inspired insight into the immutability of God’s word. Wisdom will be gained by understanding the choices God would have us make when conditions are similar to those of ages past.

It is a mistake to think of the biblical prophets primarily as predictors of the future. To be sure, prediction was an essential part of their preaching, but their primary function was to call people to obedience and dependence upon God. The contents of prophetic messages were shaped by God’s covenant with His people and by the particular historical circumstance of the individual prophet. The covenant was established to make Israel a holy nation that worshiped only the one true God. But the history of Israel was characterized by persistent rebellion against God, and these rebellions had a marked impact on how the prophetic messages were framed and presented. These messages often took the form of “lawsuits” initiated by God against His people for breach of covenant. The prophetic lawsuit typically included:

1. arraignment in the divine court;
2. accusations
3. pronouncement of judicial sentence
4. description of coming punishment
5. promise of restoration

WHO ARE THE PROPHETS?

- A. Five Classes Of Instructors Under The Old Covenant
1. Moses - Neh. 8:1,14; 9:13-14; Jn. 1:17; 7:19
 2. Wise Men - 2 Sam. 14:1; 20:16
 3. Priest - Lev. 10:8; Hos. 4:6; Eze. 22:26; Mal. 2:7
 4. Prophets
 5. Psalmists
- B. A “Prophet” Was A Spokesman For Another
1. Literally “to boil up like a fountain.”
Under the influence of the Holy Spirit a prophet was the spokesman of God. – Ex. 3:1; Heb. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:21; Deut. 18:9
 2. Other names for a prophet:
 - a. Seer – 1 Sam. 9:9
 - b. Man of God – 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kgs. 17:18
 - c. Servant of God – 1 Chr. 6:49; 1 Kgs. 18:36
 - d. Messenger – Isa. 42:19
 - e. Watchman – Eze. 3:17; 33:7
 3. The prophet was an individual who had something to say and had to say it - Jer. 20:7
 4. When a prophet spoke by God’s direction, the words came to pass!
– Deut. 18:15; Isa. 46:9
 5. They did often foretell events, and this is one of the strongest proofs of inspiration. - Isa. 42:9; 44:6
- C. Numerous Figures Are Called Prophets
1. Abraham – Gen. 20:7
 2. Moses – Deut. 18:15; 34:10
 3. Deborah – Jdg. 4:4
 4. Miriam – Exo. 15:20
 5. “sons of the prophets” – 1 Sam. 10:5; 19:18; 1 Kgs. 18:13; 22:6
 6. Samuel – Acts 3:24

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS?

A. Three Truths To Keep In Mind.

1. Understand the political, moral, social, and religious conditions at the time the prophet lived.
 - a. How is the message relevant for the people of that day.
 - b. Secondary fulfillment of prophecy is often found in the New Testament.
This can be understood only when applied by inspired writers of the New Testament.
 - c. All applications to modern day occurrences must be carefully harmonized in light of New Testament revelation.
2. Understand God's relation to the heathen nations.
 - a. The prophets often reveal how God directs their destiny.
 - b. The prophets often reveal how God judges them
3. Understand the teaching of the coming king and kingdom, the true hope of the future. - Acts 26:6; 28:20
 - a. The purpose of the prophets was to save God's people from idolatry and wickedness.
 - b. The purpose of the prophets was to pronounce the judgment from God and destruction of the nation.
 - c. The purpose of the prophets was to remind God's people of the remnant from the seed of David.

B. Some Of The Themes Developed By The Prophets.

1. Holiness of God. - He is absolutely pure, righteous, just, merciful, tender, loving and longsuffering.
2. Sovereignty of God. - He rules the universe and is above all, through all, and in all
3. Immutability of God's Word. - He carries out His promise. One can depend on Him to act consistently with His word.
4. Sin. - God abhors iniquity and will not tolerate, overlook, nor excuse it, but He will forgive the penitent.

5. Repentance and Righteousness. - This is the call of the prophets. Though severe is God's punishment upon the wicked, yet great in mercy His loving kindness upon the righteous who are of broken spirit and contrite heart.
6. Worship. - The proper reverence, awe, and respect for God will cause one always to have praise and thanksgiving on his lips.

In our study of the "Minor Prophets", we will consider a few basic elements.

1. We will first get background information (who, what, when, where, why).
2. We will spend time developing the theme of the book. The theme will entail reoccurring thoughts, words or ideas within that book. By understanding the theme, we understand the main purpose.
3. We will have an outline for helping us as we read each paragraph.
4. We will then have questions pertaining directly to that particular book or section.
5. We will have a whole class on application of the book to our time, taking the things of that day and applying them to ourselves, our nation and / or the church.

TO EDOM (845 BC)

OBADIAH

“Servant of Jehovah”

BACKGROUND

The hatred Edom held for their blood brothers, Israel, goes back to the time when their father Esau was born. (Gen. 25:22; 27; 32; 33)

The Edomites dwelt in Mt. Seir at the south end of the Dead Sea. This territory is also referred to as Idumea. They constantly showed indignation against Israel, even refusing simple passages through their land when Israel first came from Egyptian captivity (Num. 20:14).

The pride of Edom and the perpetual hatred for God’s people brought the wrath of the Lord against this land. Even in later years Edom stood ready to rejoice over every setback endured by Israel and Judah, never helping but always gloating.

The history of the Edomites continued through the period of the Herods. The father of Herod the Great was Antipater from Idumea. However, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Idumeans disappeared from history – a certain fulfillment of the prophecies of Obadiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others.

DATE

The book is undated. The principal clue to the date of its writing is in verses 11, 14. “In the day that you stood on the other side” alludes to the events of 2 Kings 8:20, 2 Chr. 21:16, when the Edomites and others rebelled against King Jehoram early in the ninth century.

If the reference is to Psalm 137:7; 2 Chr. 36:20; Eze. 25:13, the prophecy would be later than 586 BC.

The more likely view is that 2 Chr. 28:16 is the reference and that the time was mid eighth century, during the reign of Ahaz of Judah. This would be the time when Edom and the Philistines were associated in warfare against Judah. Internal evidences supporting this idea for both nations are listed in Obadiah 19.

The date supported by this author is 845 BC.

AUTHOR

The name of several Old Testament characters:

1. The governor of Ahab's household who "feared Jehovah greatly" but who seemed to fear Ahab even more.
1 Kings 18:3
2. Head of a household of David's descendants
1 Chr. 3:21
3. A chief man of Issachar in David's time
1 Chr. 7:3
4. One of the six sons of Azel, a Benjamite
1 Chr. 8:38
5. A Levite who returned early from captivity.
1 Chr. 9:16
6. One of the marital Gadites who joined David in the wilderness.
1 Chr. 12:9
7. Father of Ishmaiah, a prince of Zebulun in the days of David
1 Chr. 27:19
8. One of the five princes of Judah whom Jehoshaphat sent out to teach the people of Judah the law of the Lord
2 Chr. 17:7
9. A Levite of the Merarite family, whom Josiah made an overseer of repairing the temple
2 Chr. 34:12
10. A Jew who led back 218 men in Ezra's return from captivity.
Ezra 8:9
11. A priestly covenanter with Nehemiah
Neh. 10:5
12. A gate-keeper of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time
Neh. 12:25
13. The prophet who wrote the book of Obadiah

THEME

The message of Obadiah is twofold; 1) the fall of Edom because of its pride and cruelty against Israel, and 2) the exaltation of Zion when Seir, the Edomite counterpart of Zion, would be cast down. The rescued of both Israel and Edom will be in Zion, for in it the redeemed will be found.

THEME OF OBADIAH

A Lesson Against Pride And Indifference

Woe to all

Who consider only the present and not the future

➔ You have had your “day”
(11²; 12²; 13³; 14)

- a.) a day of pride (3-4; 12-13)
- b.) a day of prosperity (3-9)
- c.) A day of security (3-5)
- d.) a day of indifference to the plight of others (10-14)

➔ Behold, the “day of the Lord” is near!
(8; 15)

- a.) a day of destruction (5-10)
- b.) a day of repayment (15)
- c.) a day of justice (16-18)
- d.) a day of salvation for the faithful (17-21)

**“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head.”**

Vs. 15

OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

I. Utter destruction of Edom decreed

Vs. 1-16

- A. Announcement of the judgment
vs. 1-9
- B. Cause of the judgment against Edom
- C. vs. 10-14
- D. Terrors of the judgment: the day of Jehovah
vs. 15-16

II. Exaltation of Israel: The Kingdom of Jehovah to be Established

Vs. 17-21

- A. A remnant to escape in Mount Zion
vs. 17
- B. Conquest of Edom and surrounding nations
vs. 18-20
- C. Jehovah's universal sway from Mt. Zion
vs. 21

QUESTIONS FROM OBADIAH

1. To whom is the oracle concerning?
2. What has deceived them?
3. What boastful statement does Edom make about her security?
4. What is going to happen to Esau? His treasures?
5. What these three groups of “friends” going to do?
 - a. Allies
 - b. Men at peace
 - c. Those who eat bread
6. What is going to happen to Edom’s wise men? Might men?
7. What is the reason Edom will be “covered with shame?”
8. Identify several things Edom did that is associated with the “day” of Israel’s distress.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
9. What was Edom doing to the Jewish fugitives?
10. What were they doing to the Jewish survivors?
11. What will happen on “the day of the Lord.”
12. What did Edom do on God’s holy mountain?
13. What will happen on Mt. Zion?
14. What is it that the house of Jacob will then possess?
15. What will the house of Esau become? What will happen?
16. What are those of the Negev going to possess?
17. When the delivers ascent Mt. Zion what will they do?
18. In the end, to whom will the kingdom belong?
19. How many times does “possess” or “possession” occur?

LESSONS FROM OBADIAH

- Pride goes before a fall
- Pride blinds one to his own mistakes
- Mistreatment of others may reap temporary victories, but it will eventually be repaid
- Improper attitudes toward your brother will bring destruction
- One cannot passively stand by while another is being oppressed
- God will accept the penitent
- As one sows, so will he also reap

TO JUDAH (830 BC)

JOEL

“Jehovah is God”

BACKGROUND

The prophecy was occasioned by a calamity that befell the land from locusts and drought and from fires that followed in their wake. Some think the locusts were an invading army, and that the prophet used the terror of swarms of locusts, followed by drought and fire, as a figurative description of the devastation left by the invaders. The stronger possibility is that these were literal locusts from which the prophet draws his lesson and his strong call to repentance. Unless there is repentance and righteousness of life on the part of the nation, the locusts will be followed by a stronger and more severe judgment, and invasion by the nations.

A plague of locusts devastates the land of Judah, and Joel describes the locusts as an "army" of the Lord. This terrible judgment of the Lord should bring them to repentance, and if it does a promise of blessing will be forthcoming.

The theme of the book of Joel is a call to repentance. "The day of the Lord" (1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14) represents both a day of terror and blessings. Joel is perhaps best remembered because of Peter's affirmation on Pentecost that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21).

DATE

The date for the book of Joel is uncertain. Scholars give varying reasons for dates ranging from as early as 900 BC to as late as 400 BC.

Earlier date argument - No reference is made to Assyria (760 BC) nor to Babylon which followed. The enemies mentioned are Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Edomites rather than those of the exile period.

Later date argument - Only Judah is mentioned and not Israel. No king is mentioned, neither the high places nor the idolatry which are all conditions of an earlier period.

AUTHOR

The name Joel means "Jehovah is God." This was a common name among the Jews. There are at least a dozen other men so named in the Bible. (Samuel's oldest son, 1 Sam. 8:2; one of David's valiant men, I Chr. 11:38). However, like Obadiah, no information exists about the man who wrote this book which bears his name. We are simply told he was "the son of Pethuel." (1:1)

THEME

The message of the book is the doom of the nations and the ultimate glory of Jehovah's cause. The invading locust army is to be looked upon by the people of God as a warning to them, out of which came the urgent call from God for repentance. The locusts, drought, and fires heralded the "day of Jehovah," which could be averted only by genuine repentance. If they would repent, the "day of Jehovah" would be one of destruction upon the enemies of God and deliverance for those who trust in Him.

Whether an army of locusts or a literal army, it was led by Jehovah; He was directing the campaign. The book is an appeal from Jehovah to the people to seek Him through repentance. Out of this repentance there would come material blessings followed by an outpouring of spiritual blessings. Although other prophets may have intimated or indicated the coming of the Holy Spirit, Joel is the one who makes a clear prediction of His coming. Because of this prophecy, Joel is sometimes referred to as "the prophet of Pentecost."

Though the book begins in gloom, it closes with the a bright and glorious day to come.

THEME OF JOEL

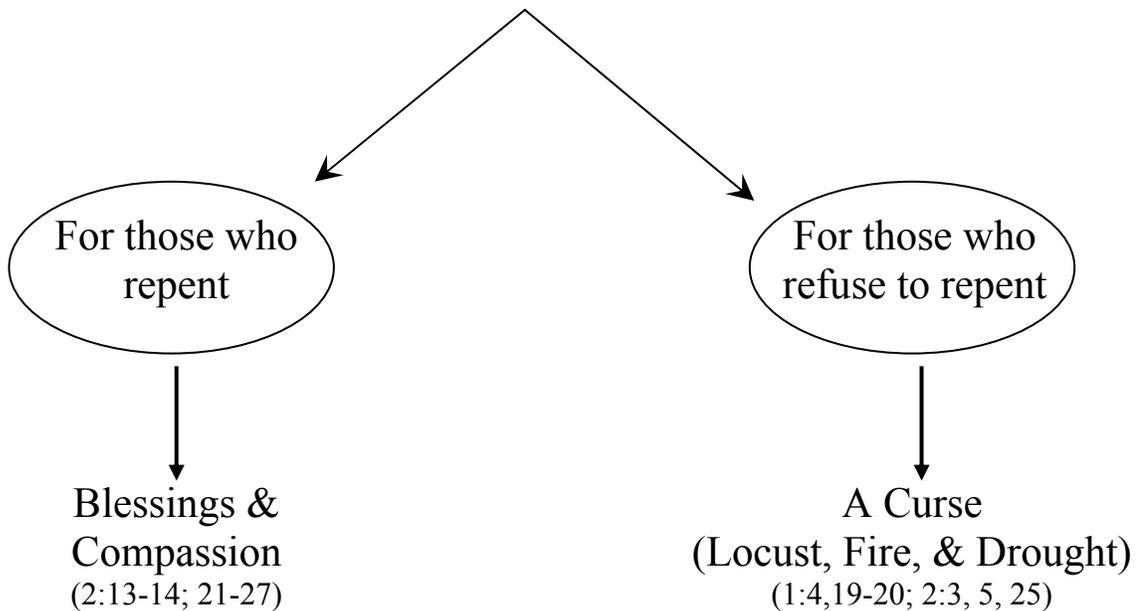
REPENT!

(1:5-7; 12-14; 2:12-15; 2:17; 3:4-7)

For “The Day Of The Lord”

(1:2, 15; 2:1-2, 11, 31, 3:14, 18)

is coming and will bring



**Yet even now, declares the Lord,
'return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping,
and mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments'
now return to the Lord your God,
for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger,
abounding in lovingkindness, and relenting of evil**

OUTLINE OF JOEL

- I. The Locust Plague Is Coming
 - 1:1- 2:17
 - A. Devastation of Judah
 - 1:2-20
 - B. Summons to repentance and prayer
 - 2:1-17

- II. The Day Of Jehovah
 - 2:18-3:21
 - A. Blessing promised to Israel
 - 2:18-32
 - B. Judgment on the Nations
 - 3:1-16

- III. Judah shall Dwell Forever
 - 3:16-21

16. What will God do after this?
Where in the NT is this quoted?
What is happening there?
17. What will happen to those who call on the name of the Lord?
18. What is to be done with the plowshares?
Pruning hooks?
19. What does the name "Jehoshaphat" mean?
20. What two "valley's" are mentioned?
 - a.
 - b.
21. What will happen to Egypt in that day?
Edom?
Why will this happen to them?
22. What will happen to Judah? Why?

LESSONS FROM JOEL

- The externals of religion are not to be regarded lightly
- God desires a broken heart
- Calamity tends to turn men and make them more willing to hear
- Those who live in sinful rebellion to God should tremble at the judgment coming
- God is merciful to all
- God will render just and severe judgment to those who refuse to obey
- The outpouring of the Spirit confirmed on Pentecost the Messianic age spoken of by the prophets
- God's people are under His protection and need not fear even in times of persecution

TO NINEVEH (790 - 780 BC)

JONAH

“Dove”

BACKGROUND

Jonah was told to go to the Gentile city of Nineveh which was approximately 500 miles northeast of Palestine. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria a rising world power which was feared by all because of its ruthlessness. Eventually this brutal nation conquered Israel, and led Samaria captive in 722 BC.

Jonah explained why he did not want to go to Nineveh in chapter 4:3. It was not the distance because he caught a ship headed for Tarshish 2,000 miles in the opposite direction. Jonah wished to leave these enemies of God's people to their own doom.

Modern theologians have long acclaimed the book of Jonah as a myth, allegory, or parable. Unbelievers discredit the book because it reveals that which is miraculous. But when they mock the possibility of the story of Jonah and the whale as though it were a fairy tale, they reveal their own unbelief in the power of God and the integrity of the scriptures as a whole.

Three basic reasons argue for its authenticity.

1. An unprejudiced reading of the book reveals nothing to suggest anything other than the narrative was intended as an historical record of an actual fact.
2. The Jews who first received the book accepted its historicity and included it without doubt as belonging in the canon of Hebrew scriptures. Why would they accept a story that stressed mercy to the Gentiles, especially so, if it were based on a myth?
3. Jesus Christ confirmed the story of Jonah and regarded it as much an historical fact as His own resurrection. To accept one is to accept the other, and vice versa, Mt. 12:39; Lk. 11:29; Mt. 16:4.

DATE

In 2 Kings 14:23-27 fixes the time of Jonah during the later years of Amaziah, king of Judah, and during the earlier years of Jeroboam II, probably from 790 - 780 BC. This would also place him at the time near the end of Elisha's ministry.

AUTHOR

The opening verse describes Jonah as "the son of Amittai." According to 2 Kings 14:25 this places him during the reign of Jeroboam II who reigned over the northern ten tribes of Israel for forty-one years.

THEME

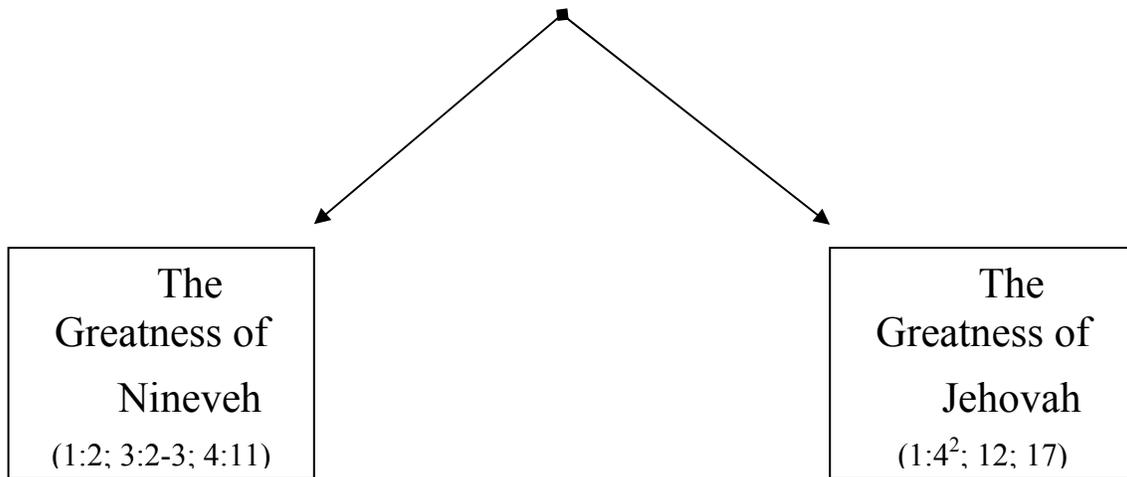
The message of the book is twofold: 1. God is willing and anxious to save even the heathen nations if they repent. His love is infinite and universal; therefore, His concern is for all. 2. Jehovah is the one universal God, the God of the whole earth. As the one and only God, He is the God to whom the heathen must turn.

In the book one sees a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ and the manifestation of God's love and desire to save all men. The death and resurrection of Christ are typified in the three days spent by Jonah in the belly of the great fish.

The book is sometimes referred to as the forerunner of the universal gospel message which would be carried to all the heathen world.

THEME OF JONAH

An Exposition on the GREATNESS of God



True Greatness – 15X
Belongs to the Lord – 24X
The God – 13X – of the universe

His Greatness is seen in:
His treatment of the pagan city,
His control over nature, and
His compassion toward the prophet

OUTLINE OF JONAH

I. Running Away From God

1:1-16

A. Jehovah's charge, prophets disobedience

1:1-3

B. Jonah's confession

1:4-10

C. Jonah cast into the sea

1:11-16

II. Running To God

1:17-2:10

A. The fish

1:17

B. Jonah's prayer

2:1-9

C. Jonah's deliverance

2:10

III. Running With God

3:1-10

A. The call

3:1-4

B. Repentance

3:5-10

IV. Running Ahead Of God

4:1-11

A. Jonah's anger

4:1-5

B. The vine and the worm

4:6-8

C. Jehovah's rebuke

4:9-11

QUESTIONS FROM JONAH

1. What city is Jonah sent to?
2. Why is he told to "cry against it"?
3. What does the text say Jonah was fleeing from?
How many times does it do this?
4. What two things did the sailors do when they became fearful because of the storm?
 - a.
 - b.
5. What was Jonah doing during all this?
6. What does the captain say to Jonah?
7. For what reason did the men cast lots?
8. What 2 things does Jonah say about himself?
 - a.
 - b.
9. What does Jonah tell them to do to make the sea calm?
10. What happened when they did this? What did this cause them to do?
11. From where does the text say Jonah prayed and cried to the Lord?
 - a.
 - b.
12. What did Jonah do just before fainting?
13. What does the text say about Nineveh to illustrate its greatness?
14. Exactly, what is the message Jonah preached?

15. What 2 main things did the people do to show their repentance?
 - a.
 - b.
16. They were willing to do this because, "Who knows ..."
17. What caused God not to send his calamity?
18. How did Jonah respond to God's decision?
19. What reason does Jonah give for his fleeing to Tarshish?
20. What does Jonah ask the Lord to take?
Why?
21. Find the three things God "appointed."
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
22. For what reason did Jonah make for himself a shelter?
23. What lesson did God teach Jonah by the event with the plant?
24. How many people does the text say lived in Nineveh?

LESSONS FROM JONAH

- Plants or people? The importance of proper priorities and perspectives
- God's divine purpose will be accomplished regardless of the activities of man
- It is necessary for one to obey every command of God whether we agree with it or not or even if we do not completely understand it
- Failure in duty is rebellious disobedience
- It is possible for nationalism to be a sin
- God's prophet must preach God's message
- God's people must develop a love for all peoples
- You can not run from God
- God desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth

TO ISRAEL (750-725 BC)

HOSEA

“Salvation”

BACKGROUND

Read 1 Kings 14-17 and 2 Chr. 26-29 as a background to the book.

Hosea summed up the indictments against Israel in the one word "whoredom." Israel had done worse than adultery; as a harlot she had prostituted herself before the baalim of the land for hire (2:12-13). The people were without knowledge (4:6; 5:4), and as a result they were ignorant of God and His laws (8:12). Nominally they paid homage to Jehovah, but in reality they honored the baalim. This sin brought Hosea's most severe rebukes. The people were victims of two systems of false religion: the calf worship introduced by Jeroboam I, and Baal worship stressed by Ahab and Jezebel. Each was completely foreign to the revealed religion of the Lord Jehovah. Each was the fruit of apostasy.

The key to understanding the book of Hosea is the analogy between Hosea's experience with Gomer and the Lord's experience with Israel. Hosea was a living example of the lesson intended. The tender loving God was offering one last chance of restoration to Israel which had committed spiritual adultery. Out of his own experience Hosea came to understand as none other could the feelings of the Lord for Israel.

The righteousness of God is portrayed in Hosea. Although doom of the wicked nation of Israel is announced, Hosea often speaks of the lovingkindness of the Lord. God loved His people, but Israel had sown to the wind and deserved to reap the whirlwind (8:7).

Their conduct was the very opposite to that which God desired and demanded. The people were guilty of swearing, breaking faith, murder, stealing, committing adultery, deceit, lying, drunkenness, dishonesty in business, and other crimes equally abominable before Jehovah. The picture painted in the Book of Hosea is truly that of a nation in decay.

Hosea is quoted several times in the N.T.: (1:10; 2:23) Rom. 9:25; 1 Pet. 2:10; (6:6) Matt. 9:13; 12:7; (11:1) Matt. 2:15; and (10:8) Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16.

DATE

The date for Hosea's prophecy is probably from 750-725 BC. This time period is derived from the kings listed in 1:1. If he began his ministry in the last days of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and continued his work until the early days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, these dates would fit.

AUTHOR

The name Hosea means "salvation." The names Joshua (Num. 13:16) and Jesus (Mt. 1:21) are derived from the same Hebrew word. Hosea's father was named Beerli (1:1), but we know nothing more about his personal family or background.

THEME

Hosea's message emphasizes the righteousness of Jehovah: God is love. This great principle is emphasized throughout his prophecy. A favorite expression of the prophet is "lovingkindness." He has been called the prophet of love (Knudson), as well as the prophet of the broken heart (Sampey). God loved His people, and time upon time He had demonstrated this love. Love is the mainspring of God's actions. Hosea had come to grasp this aspect of the character of the divine Father which motivated Him in His actions toward His wayward children. Hosea expressed it as none before him had done.

The doom of the nation is inevitable. Although his message is that of the righteousness of Jehovah, it is also a message of the doom of Israel. Hosea stressed the imminence of danger and divine judgment. Hosea's appeal to the threat of this danger was intended to arouse the nation to a religious consciousness. "A religion which makes no appeal to the sense of danger has no edge to it. It has no power to grip the basal impulses of life. It is simply a meaningless sentiment, a worthless survival of some vital religious movement of the past." (Knudson, p. 109). "I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease" (1:4) was Jehovah's threat of doom to the nation in spiritual and moral dissolution.

THEME OF HOSEA

**An Illustration Of God's Love For
His Disobedient People**

The People Of God
(Israel – 44X; Ephraim – 37X; Judah – 15X)
Must Make A Choice:

Live in Harlotry
19X

**This represents an
open defiance of the
“marriage” covenant
between God and His
people.**

Love – 15X
Jehovah – 57X and
Know His Will – 19X

**This represents a
determination to be
totally committed to Him
and Him alone.**

OUTLINE OF HOSEA

- I. Israel's Adultery ch. 1-3
 - A. Hosea and Gomer
1:2-2:1
 - B. Though cast off, a return is promised
2:2-2:23
 - C. Hosea's second Marriage
ch. 3
- II. The Lord's Controversy with Israel ch. 4-6
 - A. The controversy over national guilt
ch. 4
 - B. Corruption in all phases of life
ch. 5
 - C. Insincerity – an abomination before Jehovah
ch. 6
- III. Israel's Corrupted Condition ch. 7-8
 - A. The King is made glad by their wickedness
7:1-7
 - B. Israel turns to Egypt and Assyria
7:8-16
 - C. Israel has sown to the wind
8:1-14
- IV. Israel's Religious and Moral Apostasy ch. 9-11
 - A. Israel forsook God and would be taken
9:1-17
 - B. Assyria will be the Instrument
10:1-15
 - C. Jehovah's love for prodigal Israel
ch. 11
- V. Israel's Apostasy and God's Fidelity ch. 12-13
 - A. Israel's degeneracy
11:12-12:14
 - B. Israel's deep fall
ch. 13
- VI. Israel's Conversion and Pardon ch. 14
 - A. God's grace to those who turn to Him
14:1-8
 - B. Epilogue
14:9

QUESTIONS FROM HOSEA

Chapter 1-7

1. What kind of wife was Hosea to take?
Children to have? Why?
2. Know the names and meanings of each of the 3 children.
3. What was to be said to the brothers and sisters, and what did these words mean?
4. Why does the harlot say "I will go after my lovers"?
5. How many times does the word "lovers" occur in ch. 2?
6. What does God want to be called? Rather than what?
7. What 4 things does God say he will betroth Israel in?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
8. What is the key word in the last part of ch. 2?
9. What is Hosea now told to do? What is the parallel with God?
10. The Lord has a case against Israel, because there is no
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
11. Why does God say his people are destroyed?
12. Why will God reject them from bring priest?
Why will He forget their children?
13. What will be said, "like _____ like _____
_____."
14. Although Israel plays the harlot, what are they not to do?
What does ch. 5 have to say about how successful they were?

15. What is not going to allow Israel to return to God?
16. God says He will go away until what?
17. Hosea encourages the people to press on to....
18. What does God say he delights in?
19. What is it that Israel does not consider?
20. The kings are consistent in one area. What is it?
21. Why is Ephraim (Israel) like a "silly dove"?
22. Who do they call on and go to?
23. God would redeem them except for what?
24. How did Israel respond to God's training and strengthening?

QUESTIONS FROM HOSEA
Chapters 8 - 14

25. What do the people cry out to God?
26. How do we know the calf (idol) is not from God?
27. What does Hosea now say has happened to Israel?
28. What is regarded as a strange thing?
29. What kind of days have come upon Israel?
30. What does God call the prophet? the inspired man?
31. What did Israel "devote" themselves to?
32. Because of their obvious wickedness, what will Israel now say?
33. What will the seized Israel say to the mountains? the hills?
34. How should one sow? reap?
35. How long should one seek the Lord?
36. What is going to make God's sons come trembling?
37. What 3 things are the people to do who return to God?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
38. There is no _____ besides Me.
39. When one is satisfied, what happens to their heart?
What do they also do?
40. How did God give them a king? Take him away?

41. From where will God ransom his people?
42. A penitent Israel will no longer do what? Say what?
43. In view of this repentance, what 3 things does God say "I will "?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
44. In what way is God like the luxuriant cypress?
45. What will the wise and discerning finally figure out?
46. How will the righteous respond to this?
The transgressors?

LESSONS FROM HOSEA

- It is vital that God's people have a knowledge of Him and His Word
- Marriage is a relationship that is to be honored and kept pure
- Sin destroys one's ability to think and act morally
- Poor leadership can destroy a people
- Unfaithfulness is the starting point for all other sinful behavior
- God's love for mankind is great – but it can be refused
- Internal corruption is more dangerous than external enemies
- Righteousness, Justice, Lovingkindness, Compassion, Faithfulness describe the proper characteristics of our spiritual relationship with God
- Outward form of worship is not of itself sufficient to please God

TO ISRAEL (760 - 750 BC)

AMOS

“Burden Bearer”

BACKGROUND

Israel was at the zenith of power economically and politically. Business was booming, and the material prosperity of the age led to a spirit of self-sufficiency and smug complacency (6:1). Consequently, Israel had become a nation which ruled God out.

Hosea was a younger contemporary of Amos as was Isaiah who was even younger.

The message of Amos is directed primarily to Israel, the northern kingdom. However, the opening words include a condemnation of the neighboring heathen nations.

The central theme of the book is "woe" unto those who rule God out. Amos preached doom because of the sinfulness both of the heathen nations as well as God's covenant people (5:27; 9:8).

Amos is quoted twice in the New Testament: Acts 7:42-43 (5:22-27) and Acts 15:16-17 (9:11-12).

Background reading for this period: 2 Kings 14:23-29; 15:1-7; 2 Chr. 26.

DATE

Amos wrote this prophecy near the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, around 760 BC. He dates his activity (1:1) as being during the reigns of Uzziah (called Azariah in 2 Kings 15:1), King of Judah (787-735 BC) and Jeroboam II, King of Israel (790-749 BC).

AUTHOR

"Amos," means "burden-bearer." He was a native of Tekoa a small village which is twelve miles south of Jerusalem and six miles south of Bethlehem. Amos was a herdsman of sheep and a grower of sycamore figs (1:1; 7:14).

THEME

The Lord had brought the people out of Egypt by His hand and had given them the land. He had driven out the inhabitants of Canaan before

them. He had sent the blessings, the rain and the harvests, upon them. But in spite of all this, they had failed Him. Instead of worship, adoration and righteousness, and instead of love and concern for one another, they had become cruel, selfish, and rebellious.

Israel had been deceived by the things God had done for them. Israel had concluded that since He was their God and they His people, and since they had been so extravagant in their offering and worship, surely He would favor them.

Now they must be taught. Israel must learn that Jehovah is a God of righteousness, and holiness, and that insulting such righteousness and holiness must result in a stern expression of justice. The doom of national exile was not the only remedy for their complete and flagrant apostasy. The full import of this judgment cannot be realized until one understands two important facts; 1. To the Jew, the nation overshadowed the individual. It was through the nation and its relation to God that the individual entered into fellowship with Jehovah. 2. To the Jew every nation outside his own was unclean. In a foreign land he could not worship Jehovah acceptably.

THEME OF AMOS

Thus Says The Lord (44X)

**“I know your transgressions (12X)
are many and your sins (8X) are great”**

Therefore,

“Prepare To Meet Your God!”

because of the sins of:

The Nations,

God will not revoke
His punishment on:

Damascus
Gaza
Tyre
Edom
Ammon
Moab

His People,

God will not revoke
His punishment

Israel
6:8
Judah
2:5

All the sinner of My people will die by the sword, those who say,

‘the calamity will not overtake or confront us.’

(Amos 9:10)

BUT AMOS HAS HOPE:

Behold days are coming, declares the Lord,

‘I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel’

OUTLINE OF AMOS

I. Judgement Against The Nations

1:1-2:16

A. Punishment of the Nations

1:3-2:3

B. Punishment of Judah

2:4-5

C. Punishment of Israel

2:6-16

II. Israel's Crimes And Her Condemnations

3-6

A. Price of Privilege

3

B. Penalty of Pride

4

C. Peril of Procrastination

5:1-17

1. "Woe" unto those who desire the Day of the Lord

5:18-27

2. "Woe" those who feel more secure in their luxury

6:1-14

III. Five Visions

7:1-9:10

A. Locust swarm

7:1-3

B. Fire as an element in Judgment

7:4-6

C. Plumline makes straight

7:7-13

D. Basket of summer fruit

8:1-14

E. Smitten sanctuary

9:1-10

IV. Promise Of Bright Future

9:11-15

QUESTIONS FROM AMOS**Chapters 1 - 4**

1. What recurring phrase occurs with each condemned nation?
How many times does this happen?
2. What covenant did Tyre forget?
3. What was the sin of Edom?
4. What did the Ammonites do to enlarge their borders?
5. What are the 3 sins of Judah?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. What does Israel "pant after"?
7. What did Israel make the Nazirites do?
What did they say to the prophets?
8. What will happen to the bravest on the day of God's wrath?
9. Whom has God spoken against in the past?
10. God does nothing unless what?
11. What is it that Ashdod does not know how to do?
What is it they "hoard up"?
12. What will happen to their precious citadels?
13. What is the point being made when God is compared to a shepherd who battles a lion?
14. What 4 houses are going to fall to the wealthy Israel?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

15. Who are the "cows of Bashan."
16. What is said to the men?
17. How will these be taken away?
18. What 4 things does Israel "love to do"?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
19. How has God given Israel "cleanness of teeth"?
(hint: he did not give them Crest)
20. What key phrase occurs in the last part of ch. 4?
How many times does it occur?
21. For what should Israel prepare?
22. What is the awesome name of Israel's God?

QUESTIONS FROM AMOS

Chapters 5 - 9

23. What will happen to the city which is a thousand strong?
24. Why should Israel seek the Lord?
25. What does God say he knows?
26. What does the prudent person do? Why?
27. What should one seek for? Why?
28. What should one hate? love? establish?
What will be the result if they do these things?
29. What were the people longing for?
What will they get?
30. What does God hate and reject?
What will he not even look at?
31. What does He want them to take away?
32. What has the Lord sworn?
33. What is God going to command be done?
34. What did God show Amos?
35. What had happened that brought a response from Amos?
What was this response?
36. What other 2 illustrations are shown to Amos?
 - a.
 - b.
37. What does Amaziah say to Amos? Why?
What did Amos do?

38. What is going to happen to Amaziah's wife? Children? land? himself?
39. What is the point of the basket of summer fruit?
40. What unique type of famine is God going to bring?
41. God says He is going to "set My eyes." What is meant by this?
42. What else is said about the Lord's eyes?
43. What is God going to rebuild?

LESSONS FROM AMOS

- Justice between man and man is one of the foundations of society
- Nations and individuals that have been favored are laden with corresponding responsibility
- Ease, luxury and idleness lead to open sin
- We are bound to live up to the light and knowledge granted us
- The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commandments
- The child of God must be motivated by personal conviction
- It does matter what we do as well as why we do it
- Agreement with God will have the effect of obedience in our lives
- When one rejects the love of the truth, time may come when he will seek it but cannot find it

TO JUDAH (735- 700 BC)

MICAH

“Who is like Jehovah”

BACKGROUND

Read 2 Kings 15:17-20:21 and 2 Chronicles 26-30 to learn about the political setting for the book.

Through unusual leadership in successful wars and in the revival of commerce and the development of agriculture, Uzziah had brought a degree of prosperity to the people of Judah that had not been enjoyed since the days of Solomon. This prosperity brought with it the usual attendant social evils and spiritual falling away from Jehovah. Uzziah was succeeded by his son Jotham, a good man who followed the policies of his father.

Socially and morally Judah presented a dark picture during the latter part of the eighth century. Rulers sold the rights of men and vested interests gained control of the lands, taking away the privileges of the people. The wealthy coveted the lands and robbed the poor, casting women out of their possessions. Corrupt business ethics were practiced. The people were under the powerful control of false prophets who prophesied for reward and priests who taught for hire. Rulers in their greed were as cannibals, and judges judged for a bribe. The corrupt concept of Jehovah held by the people was little different from the heathen concept of their gods; they kept the statues of Omri and walked in the counsels of Omri and Ahab.

Religion had become a matter of form with the people; ceremonial observances were thought to meet all religious requirements. The reform of Hezekiah (2 Chr. 29) was not from the deep recesses of the heart. There was widespread misapprehension that as long as the external acts of worship were scrupulously performed the people were entitled to the divine favor and protection. Religious fervor was too superficial to bring permanent results.

The book of Micah is perhaps best remembered because of the prophecies about the birthplace of Christ (5:2 - Mt. 2:6) and of the beginning place of the new kingdom (4:1-2 - Acts 2).

Two passages from Micah are quoted in the New Testament: (5:2) Mt. 2:5; Jn. 7:42; and (7:6) Mt. 10:35; Lk. 12:53. Micah is quoted once in the Old Testament (3:12) Jer. 26:18.

DATE

Micah began prophesying before the fall of Samaria (1:5) and continued into the reign of Hezekiah (1:1). The most probable date for his work is 735-700 BC.

AUTHOR

The name "Micah" means "Who is like unto Jehovah"? Nothing is known about his family or occupation. We are told that he was from Moresheth-gath (1:1,14) which was a small village some twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem on the border between Judah and Philistia. Perhaps these roots made him keenly aware of the needs of the poor and downtrodden, and he fearlessly attacked those who had obtained their affluence through unjust dealings with the poor.

Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, and there may have been a close personal relationship between the two. We remember Isaiah as a "city" prophet who was in contact with world affairs and was the associate of kings and princes. However, Micah spoke to the "country" people and took special interest in the spiritual and moral affairs which directly affected them.

Micah was a prophet mainly to Judah though his messages did involve Israel also (1:1; 3:8).

THEME

The main theme of the book of Micah is that God will send judgment because of Judah's sin. The call to "hearken" or "hear" begins three chapters (1, 3, 6).

Micah's message was one mainly for his own day as indicated by his name, "Who is like unto Jehovah?" (7:18). The message of the book is directed against various evils: moral corruption (2:1-2; 3:1-2); idolatry (1:7; 5:12-15; 6:16); form-only religion (6:6-8); false prophets (3:5-7); and covetous priests (3:11).

THEME OF MICAH

**The Lord Makes His Loving BUT
Final Appeal To His People:**

HEAR (the Word of the Lord)

“Hear now what the Lord is asking ...”

(6:1; cf. 1:2; 3:1,9; 5:15; 6:9; 7:7)

WALK (according to His Word)

“though all the people walk ...”

(4:5; cf. 4:2; 6:8, 16)

If This Is Done One Will Become

Part Of The REMNANT

“I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.”

(2:12; cf. 4:7; 5:3, 7, 8; 7:18)

Micah 6:8

**He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

OUTLINE OF MICAH

- I. Judgment of Samaria and Judah
ch. 1-2
 - A. Destruction of Samaria
1:2-7
 - B. Destruction of Judah
1:8-16
 - C. Eventual restoration of Remnant
2:12-13

- II. Contrast between present Destruction and Future Exaltation
ch. 3-5
 - A. Sins and Crimes of the Heads
ch. 3
 - B. Messianic hope in contrast to present Destruction
ch. 4-5

- III. Jehovah and Israel in Controversy
ch. 6-7
 - A. Case against Israel
ch. 6
 - B. Penitent prayer and Divine Promise
ch. 7

QUESTIONS FROM MICAH

1. What does Micah say is incurable?
2. What were the people doing "on their beds"?
3. The people will not be able to remove their necks from what?
4. Who is God apportioning their fields?
5. Complete: "Do not my words do good ..."
6. What did a man have to say to become their spokesman?
7. What was this one "walking" after?
8. What do the prophets cry when they have food to eat?
9. Who will "cover their mouths"?
Why?
10. What is the reason the preacher is "filled with power"?
11. What were the following doing:
 - a. leaders -
 - b. priests -
 - c. prophets -What was each of them saying?
12. Why do the people come to mountain of the Lord?
13. How do all the peoples walk?
As for us, we will walk - how?
14. What is God going to do to the lame "in that day"?
15. What does Micah say these people do not know? Understand?
16. What does the text say will go forth from Bethlehem?

17. What 5 things does God say He is going to "cut off" in that day?
18. What does God want them to remember from Balaam & Balak?
19. What does the Lord require of you? 3 things:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
20. What does Micah say has perished from the land?
21. Things are so bad that Micah says that a man's enemies are
22. Micah says, "but as for me, I will..."
What 4 things will he do?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
23. What did the one say that will be covered with shame?
24. What will God do with all Israel's sins?

LESSONS FROM MICAH

- The roots of pure religion are found in one's attitude and in his service
- A pure nation can only be obtained when we have pure religion within the individuals
- The God we serve is Holy and Righteous
- The Lord will not tolerate continual rebellion
- The Lord is merciful and willing to forgive the penitent
- God's Word is intended to work "good" whether it be in the form of chastening to bring about repentance or in the form of exhortation to encourage
- The Lord will reject any and all who ignore His Word

TO NINEVEH (630-612 B. C.)

NAHUM

“Consolation”

BACKGROUND

An understanding of how God used Assyria to punish sinful Israel and of Assyria's arrogant attitude can be seen in Isaiah 10:5-19 and chapters 36 and 37.

"The book of Nahum demonstrates how false is the view that, 'might makes right.' The great Assyrian Empire, of which Nineveh was the capital, boasted its might and wealth, but it did not acknowledge its sin, nor would it listen to God. The fall of such a nation was inevitable..." (Minor Prophets of Judah, by Irving L. Jensen, pg. 64, Moody Press)

The prophet does not touch upon the internal conditions in Judah and Jerusalem, but deals with Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Assyria was expanded and exhausted by long and extensive wars. The people of her cities were never homogenous. With nothing more than trade and commerce to hold them together, the nation was bound to break up. The character of the Assyrian rulers and people in general was that of excessive cruelty.

DATE

The date assigned for Nahum falls between 663 BC and 612 BC. This time is based on his mention of the fall of Thebes (3:8-10) which had taken place in 663 BC, and on his foretelling the fall of Nineveh (2:8-10) which occurred in 612 BC. Most scholars place the date of Nahum between 630 and 612 BC.

AUTHOR

The name "Nahum" means "consolation" or "comforter." Nothing is known of his personal life except that Nahum was from a town called Elkosh (1:1), the location of which is uncertain.

THEME

The theme of the book of Nahum is the downfall of Nineveh. Jonah had preached to Nineveh over a hundred years earlier, and the city was spared because it repented. God now sends another prophet who pronounces doom on the city.

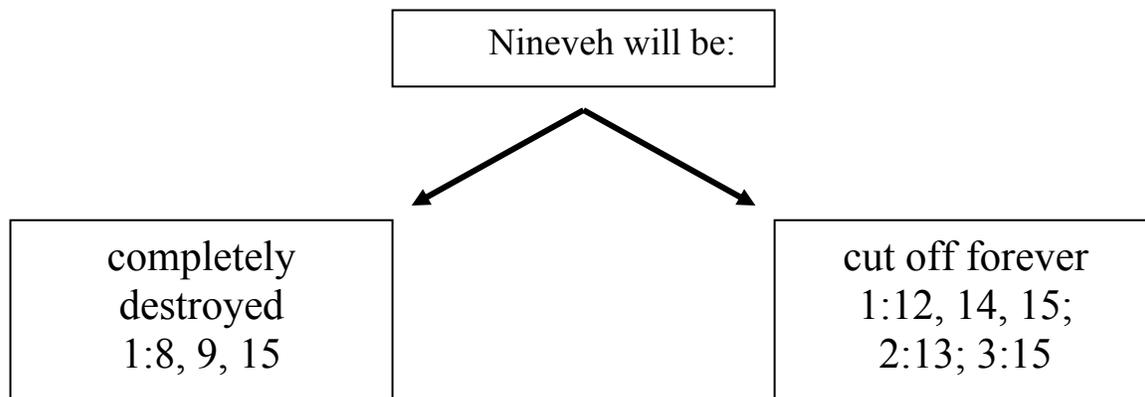
THEME OF NAHUM

Nineveh is receiving her final Message:

“behold, I am against you,”

declares the Lord of Hosts.

(2:13; 3:5)



To Nineveh the Lord Says:

The LORD has issued a command concerning you:

“Your name will no longer be perpetuated.

I will cut off idol and image From the house of your gods.

I will prepare your grave, For you are contemptible.”

(Nahum 1:14)

To Judah the Lord Says:

Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news,
Who announces peace!

Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; Pay your vows.

For never again will the wicked one pass through you;

He is cut off completely.

(Nahum 1:15)

OUTLINE OF NAHUM

- I. Nineveh's Doom
 - ch. 1
 - A. Goodness and Severity of Jehovah
1:2-8
 - B. Complete overthrow of Nineveh
1:9-15

- II. Destruction of Nineveh
 - ch. 2
 - A. Doom of the City
2:1-7
 - B. Flight of the People
2:8-13

- III. Nineveh's Sin and Inevitable Doom
 - ch. 3
 - A. Nineveh's fate brought upon herself
3:1-7
 - B. Fate of No-amon is to be the fate of Nineveh
3:8-11
 - C. Inability of Nineveh's resources to save Her
3:12-19

QUESTIONS FROM NAHUM

1. To what city is Nahum's prophecies directed?
2. How is the Lord introduced in this book?
3. Who is it that the Lord knows, according to Nahum?
4. What happens to that which one devises, against the Lord?
5. What is the good news that causes Judah to rejoice?
6. How is the army attacking Nineveh characterized?
7. What is there no limit of in Nineveh?
8. "Behold, ... declares the Lord of hosts."
9. What is Nineveh completely full of?
10. What never departs from Nineveh?
11. What is it the horsemen stumble over?
12. What is the reason for Nineveh's destruction?
13. What are the people who see Nineveh going to say?
14. What city is cited as an example of the Lord's destruction?
15. What are some things that happened to this city?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
16. What are the shepherds and nobles portrayed as doing?
17. What is described as "incurable" concerning Nineveh?
18. Why will people "clap their hands" over Nineveh?

LESSONS FROM NAHUM

- The Lord rules in the kingdoms of men
- The Lord is a stronghold in time of trouble for those who turn to Him
- A correct view of the Lord is essential
- There is no place of safety when the Lord determines to punish the wicked
- There is an end to the patience of the Lord
- The wages of sin is death

TO JUDAH (630-625 BC)

ZEPHANIAH

“Jehovah Hides”

BACKGROUND

Read 2 Chronicles 33, 34, 35 and 2 Kings 21, 22, 23 for the historical background for the period of Zephaniah.

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh, a lad of twelve. It is doubtful that at any period of its history Judah had a more wicked ruler than Manasseh. He sought to undo all the good his father had done. He rebuilt the high places, reared altars to Baal and Ashtoreth, and built altars to the host of heaven. He committed the abomination of making his son pass through the fire. To all this he added the sin of bloodshed, filling Jerusalem with innocent blood. Under his reign the heathen party gained control of the government. Later Manasseh tried to correct the wickedness of his earlier years, but apparently without success. Ammon succeeded Manasseh who followed in the steps of his father.

Josiah was the last good king to reign over Judah. At the age of sixteen he began to seek after Jehovah, the God of his fathers. At the age of twenty he began to purge Judah. His reforms were among the most sweeping of any that were attempted by the kings who reigned over the southern kingdom. The sweeping reforms undertaken by Josiah reached their peak in the eighteenth year of his reign. The king was under prophetic influence most of his life. Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk prophesied during his reign.

In spite of Josiah's reforms and his own good life, the people appear at this time to be nervous, cruel, and corrupt. Social injustice and moral corruption appear to be widespread; luxury and extravagance are seen on every hand. The baalim were still worshipped, and what worship was offered to Jehovah was little other than idolatry.

Jack P. Lewis states in his workbook on the prophets: "The most crucial question in the study of Zephaniah is that of the identity of the unnamed threatening power which is on the horizon. The prophet is quite emphatic that a nation threatens Judah, which threat he connects with the Day of the Lord." (Minor Prophets, p. 36).

DATE

He prophesied during the days of Josiah who reigned from 639 to 608 BC. It is impossible to pinpoint the exact years of Zephaniah's work, but most conservative scholars place his work within the years of 630-625 BC. This would make him contemporary with Jeremiah who began his work in 626 BC (Jer. 1:2). Also, Nahum and Habakkuk probably did their work within twenty years of the time of Zephaniah, but whether any of these prophets knew each other or worked together is not revealed within the scriptures.

AUTHOR

The name Zephaniah means "Jehovah hides." The opening verse traces his ancestry through four generations (Cushi – Gedaliah – Amariah - Hizkiah, i.e., Hezekiah), which would make him the great, great grandson of Hezekiah who was the good king of Judah during the days of Isaiah and Micah.

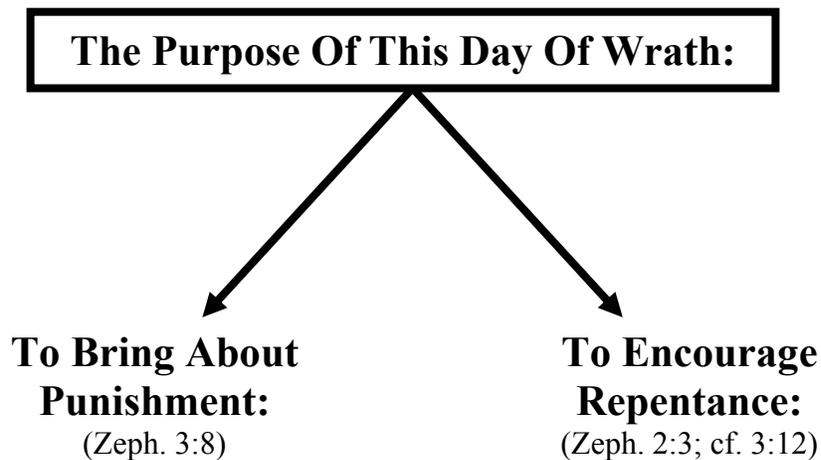
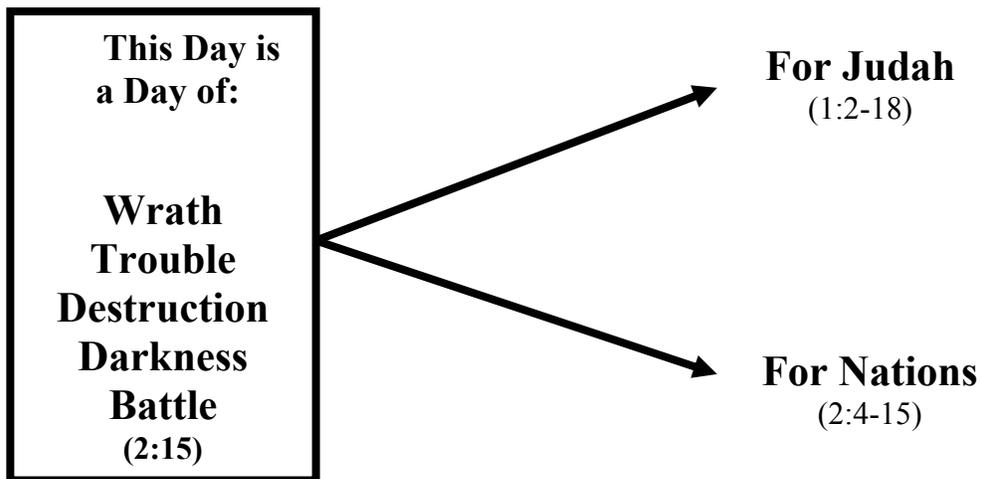
THEME

The theme of Zephaniah is the approaching doom which will occur at the "day of the Lord." Other prophets often used this term to describe a time of God's judgment within history as contrasted to a day at the end of history (cf. Amos 5:18; Obadiah 15; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11; 2:14). Zephaniah uses it to describe God's judgment for sin and sees it falling upon both Hebrew and Gentile nations (cf. 1:7-8,14,16,18; 2:2-3).

THEME OF ZEPHANIAH

Beware!
For the “Day of the Lord” is Coming!

(1:7, 8, 14², 18; 2:2, 3)



OUTLINE OF ZEPHANIAH

- I. Judgment upon Judah
1:2-18
 - A. World Judgment
1:2-6
 - B. Judgment on every Sinner
1:7-13
 - C. Imminent and terrible nature of Judgment
1:14-18

- II. Exhortation to Repentance and Perseverance
2:1-3:8
 - A. Call to Repentance and Seek the Lord
2:1-3
 - B. God will Judge
2:4-15
 - C. Since God will Punish heathens, He will not spare Judah
3:1-8

- III. Salvation and Glorification
3:9-20
 - A. Remnant from among the Heathen
3:9-10
 - B. Cleansed and Sanctified Israel
3:11-13
 - C. Israel Comforted and Exalted
3:14-20

QUESTIONS FROM ZEPHANIAH

1. What king was on the throne when Zephaniah worked?
2. What three things does God say he is going to "remove"?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Against whom is God going to stretch out His hand?
4. Who is He going to cut off?
5. Why should one be silent before the Lord God?
6. What will happen on the day of the Lord's sacrifice?
7. What types of people does God intend to punish?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
8. Why are the inhabitants of the Mortar to wail?
9. With what is God going to search out Jerusalem?
10. What kind of men is He going to punish?
11. What have these men been saying in their hearts?
12. What will happen to their wealth? Their houses?
13. What is near and coming very quickly?
14. List the items that describe this as "a day of"
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.

15. Why are the men going to walk like blind men?
16. What will not be able to deliver them?
17. What will happen to all the inhabitants of the earth?
18. How does God describe the nation to be gathered?
19. What should they do before the Lord's anger arrives?
20. What two things should they seek for?
 - a.
 - b.
21. What might be the result if they seek these things?
22. What four Philistine cities are going to be punished?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
23. What will the remnant of the house of Judah do on this land?
24. What will they do in these Philistine houses? Why?
25. What disturbing sound has God heard?
26. To whom has this been directed?
27. What is God going to do to Moab and Ammon?
28. This is their punishment because of what sin?
29. What did this sinful attribute cause them to do?
30. What will the Lord do to the gods of the earth?
31. What northern nation is God also going to punish?
32. What is going to happen to her chief city?

33. Name several things the text reveals that demonstrate what a great city this was:
34. What arrogant statement did this city make?
35. What will those who pass by do?
36. A woe is issued to Jerusalem because she is:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
37. There are four things she did not do, what were they?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
38. What does Zephaniah say about:
- a. Her princes?
 - b. Her judges?
 - c. Her prophets?
 - d. Her priests?
39. In contrast, what describes the righteous Lord?
40. What does the unjust not know?
41. What has God done to the cities of the nations?
42. What has God said to them so that her dwelling will not be cut off?
43. What, instead, were they eager to do?
44. What is God's decision to do? Why?
45. After that what will God give them? Why?
46. God says "you will never again be ..."
47. How will God leave them?
48. In what will they take refuge?

49. Name several things the remnant of Israel will do:

- a.
- b.
- c.

50. Why should the daughter of Zion shout for joy?

51. Why will it be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid"?

52. What is God going to restore before their eyes?

LESSONS FROM ZEPHANIAH

- The consequences of sin must never be neglected in preaching nor forgotten in daily living
- We must constantly stay in tune with God's Word
- While life is present, repentance is a possibility
- We must never forget that despite world events, God is in complete control
- The only true safety in life is found in "taking refuge in the name of the Lord"
- When we appease men of all religions, we show unbelief in the distinct Lordship of Jesus Christ
- Our goods will do us no good in the day of judgment
- The Lord is not far from us unless we put up barriers of indifference and sin
- The attitude of wait on the Lord has two ideas: obey the Lord's will and be patient

TO JUDAH (612-606 B. C.)

HABAKKUK

“Embrace”

BACKGROUND

The reading of 2 Chr. 36:11-21 and Jeremiah 6:9-30 will give the student a description of the conditions at the time of Habakkuk and his contemporary, Jeremiah

The spiritual condition at that time was one of wickedness, injustice, and disregard for God. Habakkuk asks, "how long" will God allow this to continue? (1:2-4). The answer given is that the Lord will send the Chaldeans against Judah (1:6). But this causes the prophet to question the justice of God. How could the Lord punish Judah by using a nation more wicked? (1:3) The answer to that question should give consolation to the people who were facing a long period of exile.

Habakkuk is written in the unique style of dialogue between God and Habakkuk. This is in contrast to other books where the prophets spoke to the people. In this conversation with God Habakkuk seeks to understand why the Lord would use an evil nation to punish His people.

See also the Introduction to Zephaniah.

DATE

The most probable date for Habakkuk's work is 612-606 BC, shortly before the Chaldeans took the first captives from Jerusalem.

AUTHOR

The name Habakkuk literally means "embrace." He describes himself as "the prophet" (1:1), but actually nothing else is known about where he lived or his background.

THEME

The theme of the book is to explain the justice of God as He rules over His people, punishing the wicked and sustaining those who "live by faith."

Jehovah was using Chaldea against wicked Judah, but Chaldea would be destroyed because of its own wickedness. God may tolerate wickedness for a season, but ultimately it must reap its just recompense.

Evil is self-destructive is stressed by Habakkuk. The Lord points out this great principle to His prophet in the five woes pronounced upon a character such as the Babylon. If the righteous will be but patient, he will survive.

Divine discipline is the key. In Job it is the suffering of the individual that is shown; in Habakkuk, it is the suffering of a nation. In both, suffering is disciplinary.

THEME OF HABAKKUK

The prophet of God wrestles with the message of doom
on Judah at the hands of the Chaldeans

Habakkuk's
Questions

**“Why dost thou make me see iniquity
and cause me to look on wickedness?”**

1:2-4

**“Why dost thou look with favor on
those who deal treacherously?”**

1:12-17

Jehovah's
Answer

**Chaldea will soon receive
their just punishment.**

**“Will not all of these take up a taunt-
song against him ... And say, ‘Woe to
him who increases what is not his ...**

**Indeed, you will become
plunder for them.**

2:6-7

Habakkuk's
Response

**“I heard and my inward parts
trembled ... because I must wait
quietly for the day of distress, for the
people to arise who will invade us ...**

**yet I will exult in the Lord, I will
rejoice in the God of my salvation.”**

3:16-19

OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

- I. God's Judgment Upon Judah
1:2-2:3
 - A. First question and Jehovah's Reply
1:2-11
 - B. Second question and Jehovah's Reply
1:12-2:3

- II. God's Judgment Upon Chaldeans
2:4-20
 - A. Principles in World Government
2:4-5
 - B. Woes upon the Chaldeans
2:6-20

- III. Prayer for Compassion
ch. 3
 - A. Petition
3:1-2
 - B. Mighty works of Jehovah
3:3-15
 - C. Implicit confidence in Jehovah
3:16-19

QUESTIONS FROM HABAKKUK

1. What is the main complaint Habakkuk has?
2. Who is it that God is going to raise up against Judah?
3. What is the general feeling toward these people during this time?
4. Who do these people mock and laugh at?
5. God's eyes are too pure to approve (look at) what?
6. Habakkuk asks why God has looked with favor upon what type of people?
7. What metaphor does Habakkuk use to describe this invading army and the people to whom they capture?
8. What does Habakkuk do to prepare himself for God's reply?
9. What does God tell Habakkuk to do with the vision?
10. What will be the response to the one who reads this?
11. What is wrong with one who is proud?
12. The righteous live by what?
13. Find 2 places in the New Testament that quote this verse.
14. What betrays the haughty man?
15. This power-hungry man is like death.
What does Habakkuk say this means?
16. What is the gist of the taunt-song taken up against this man?
17. Woe to him who builds a city with ...

18. What is the answer to Habakkuk's question "What profit is the idol ?"
19. What should be the response when the Lord is in His Holy Temple?
20. When the Lord comes to destroy, what goes before Him?
What follows after Him?
21. Whom did God "strike and lay open?"
22. When all was heard, what was Habakkuk's response physically?
23. Despite this destruction, what did Habakkuk say he would do?

LESSONS FROM HABAKKUK

- It is ok to question God when things happen
- It is **not** for us to doubt that God did or is doing the right thing
- There are no guarantees that bad things will not happen to good people
- We need to never forget that God is in total control
- We may be called upon to serve Him alone
- The righteous will live by their faith

*TO THE RETURNED REMNANT (520 BC)***HAGGAI**
“Festival”**BACKGROUND**

Read Ezra 1-6 for the historical setting of the work of Haggai.

Sixteen years earlier (536 BC), about 50,000 Jews had returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Their first act was to re-erect the altar and to offer burnt offerings thereon (Ezra 3:2-6). They also gathered materials for the rebuilding of the temple, which they began in the second year (Ezra 4:1-24).

God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people from their spiritual indifference and to encourage them to complete the work which had stopped (Ezra 5:1-2). Under their preaching the work prospered, and the temple was finished "on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius" (Ezra 6:15). This would be 516 BC.

A review of important events and their dates would also be of help. (See chart at the front of this book.)

- a. 605 BC - The first captives are taken by Nebuchadnezzar,
Dan. 1:1-2
- b. 597 BC - The second group (10,000) are taken to Babylon,
2 Kings 24:10-16; Ezek. 1:1-3
- c. 586 BC - Jerusalem falls; the temple destroyed,
2 Kings 25:1-21
- d. 539 BC - Babylon falls to the Medes and Persians,
Dan. 5; Isa. 45:1-4
- e. 536 BC - Cyrus issues a decree for the Jews to go back to
Jerusalem; after 70 years (Jer. 25:11; 29:10-14), 49,897 return
under the leadership of Zerubbabel
2 Chr. 36:21; Ezra 1
- f. 516 BC – The temple is completed,
Ezra 6:15
- g. 457 BC – Ezra led a second remnant of 2,058 Jews to Jerusalem
Ezra 8:1
- h. 444 BC – Nehemiah led a third remnant back
Neh. 2

A review of important events and their dates would also be of help.

Cyrus – 559 – 529 BC – Conquered Babylon 539 BC with Darius the Mede

Dan. 5:30

Cambyzes – 529 – 522 BC – “Artaxerxes”; commanded work on temple to cease

Ezra 4:7

Darius I – 522 – 486 BC – Authorized completion of the temple

Ezra 4:24

Xerxes – 485 – 465 BC – “Ahasuerus”; Esther was his queen

Book of Esther

Artaxerxes – 465 – 425 BC – Authorized Nehemiah to rebuild

Jerusalem

Ezra 7; Book of Nehemiah

These rulers cover the period during the Books of: Ezra; Nehemiah; Esther; Haggai; Zechariah; and Malachi

DATE

Haggai dates his work as "the second year of Darius the king" (1:1) which would be 520 BC. Four oracles are dated in this book which cover a period of four months (1:1; 2:1; 2:10; 2:20).

AUTHOR

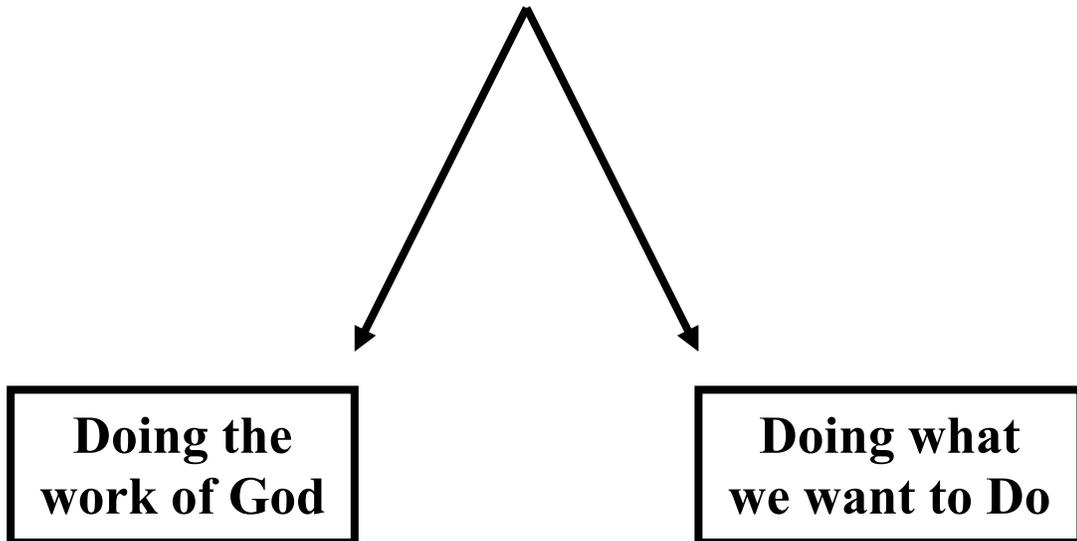
The literal meaning of the name Haggai is "festival" or "the joyous one." Nothing is known about his family or early background. He is simply called "the prophet" (Hag. 1:1). The book of Ezra confirms that he was among the first remnant of Jews to return from Babylonian captivity in 536 BC. Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries who together motivated the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-16).

THEME

The theme of the book of Haggai is: "build the temple!"

THEME OF HAGGAI

The Choices:



“thus says the Lord of Hosts”

1:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13;
2:4³, 6, 7, 8, 9², 10, 14, 17, 23²

“consider your ways”

1:5, 7; 2:15, 8²

“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?”

**Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways!”
Haggai 1:4-5**

OUTLINE OF HAGGAI

- I. First Message - Rebuke
ch. 1
 - A. Consider your Selfish Ways and Spiritual Indifference
1:1-11
 - B. People respond by going to Work on Temple
1:12-15

- II. Second Message – Consolation
2:1-9
 - A. Jehovah’s will be with the Builders
2:1-5
 - B. Temple’s future Glory
2:6-9

- III. Third Message – Completion
2:10-19
 - A. People’s uncleanness
2:10-14
 - B. Indifference has caused Calamity
2:15-19

- IV. Fourth Message - Renewal
2:20-23
 - A. Overthrow of the Nations
2:20-22
 - B. Messianic Hope
2:23

13. Obeying the voice of the Lord was the same as listening to the words of what man?
14. What two things does verse 13 say about the authority of this man?
 - a.
 - b.
15. What did the Lord stir these men to do?
16. What was Zerubbabel's position?
17. What was Joshua's position?
18. What did they think about the new temple in comparison with the old one?
19. What does God tell these men and all the people?
20. On what basis should they go ahead and work?
21. Why should they not fear?
22. What is God going to do one more time?
23. What will the nations do once they are "shaken"?
24. What is God going to put into this new house?
25. What two metals does God claim are His?
26. What does God say about the glory of this latter house?
27. Whom does God want to be approached for a legal ruling?
28. Will holy meat make other things clean when they are touched?
29. What happens to that which an unclean person touches?
30. What is the application of these two rulings?

31. What happened to the one who came looking for larger portions?
32. In what elements did God use to smite their work?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
33. What was their response to these punishing elements?
34. What does God promise to do from this point onward?
35. The phrase "the word of the Lord came" occurs for the 4th time. This is the beginning of another oracle. Where were the others?
36. What does God promise Zerubbabel that he will do to the kingdoms?
37. What will God do for Zerubbabel? Why?

LESSONS FROM HAGGAI

- Prosperity often distracts one from being faithful
- The cure for discouragement is hard work
- The successful individual listens to ‘thus saith the lord’
- The successful individual often considers the direction his life is going
- The time to do great work is now
- Put first things first

*TO THE RETURNED REMNANT (520-518 BC)***ZECHARIAH****“Whom Jehovah Remembers”****BACKGROUND**

One should read Ezra 1-6 for the historical setting of the work of Zechariah. See also the introduction to the book of Haggai

Zechariah is linked with Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation as being the four books of the Bible which are apocalyptic in style. This means that much of their message was written with symbolic or figurative language.

Zechariah is highly Messianic. Many compare this book to Isaiah because these two prophets gave the most specific forecasts of the coming Messiah.

DATE

Zechariah dates his work as "the second year of Darius the king (1:1), which would be 520 BC. The final date given to his series of visions was "in the fourth year of king Darius" (7:1), which would be 518 BC.

AUTHOR

The literal meaning of the name Zechariah is "whom the Lord remembers." Twenty-nine men in the Bible bear this name. The Zechariah of our study is distinguished as being a prophet contemporary with Haggai who together encouraged the returned remnant to complete the rebuilding of the temple. He referred to himself as "the prophet" (1:1,7), the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo. He was of a priestly family like Jeremiah (1:1) and Ezekiel (1:3). In fact, Iddo was the chief of one of the priestly families listed among the group returning to Jerusalem from Babylon in 536 BC under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:4,16).

THEME

Jerusalem is represented as the dwelling place of God's people. Although He rejected them in the past, He will now again accept them and live in the midst of them once more.

Jerusalem is used in two senses: 1. The city that was rebuilt after the exiles returned from captivity . "so I have again proposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem" (8:15). 2. The city that will be the dwelling place for the

Lord's people who will accept the coming King in that day. "and it will come about in that day I will pour out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace" (12:10)

The Messiah is presented as "the Branch" or "Sprout" of David, a servant of Jehovah. He comes as a king, lowly in spirit, providing salvation for the people. He comes as a shepherd rejected, sold for the price of a wounded slave, and finally pierced for the sheep who would then be scattered. He redeems a remnant, and through Him the divine sovereignty of Jehovah is restored. The kingdom will be one of glory, with everything pertaining to it consecrated to the Lord. The heathen forces who oppose Jehovah's work will be ingloriously defeated.

THEME OF ZECHARIAH

**And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion
in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.
Zechariah 2:12**

**Jerusalem – 41X – Zion – 8X
Is represented as the dwelling place of God’s people.
Although He has rejected them in the past,
He will now again
accept them and live in the midst of them once more
1:14,16,17; 2:10,12; 3:2; 8:2,3,8**

Jerusalem is used in two senses:

**The city that was rebuilt after the exiles
returned from captivity (ch. 1-8)**

**# 1 “so I have again proposed in these days
to do good to Jerusalem”
Zech. 8:15**

**The city that will be the dwelling place for the
Lord’s people who will accept the coming Christ
 (“in that day” ch. 9-14)**

**# 2 “And it will come about in that day... I will pour
out...on the inhabitants of Jerusalem
the spirit of grace”
Zech. 8:15**

OUTLINE OF ZECHARIAH

- I. Visions of Exhortation and Encouragement
ch. 1-6
 - A. Call to Repentance
1:1-6
 - B. Eight Night Visions
1:7-6:8

- II. Question of Fasting and Jehovah's Answer
ch. 7-8
 - A. Should we continue to Fast
7:1-7
 - B. First half of the Lord's Answer
7:8-14
 - C. Second half of the Lord's Answer – Promise of Restoration
ch. 8

- III. World Powers and The Kingdom of God
ch. 9-14
 - A. Judgment of the Heathen Enemies of Israel
9:1-8
 - B. Coming Messiah
9:9-17
 - C. Lord shall Redeem His People
10:1-12
 - D. Allegories which illustrate the future of Physical Israel
11:1-17
 - E. "in that day" Spiritual Jerusalem shall be Delivered
12:1-9
 - F. "in that day" The Spirit of Grace and A fountain for Salvation
12:10-13:6
 - G. "in that day" The People of God will be refined and purified
13:7-14:21

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH

Chapter 1

1. Who was king during Zechariah's writing?
2. How did God feel about the fathers?
3. What was it going to take to get God to return to the people?
4. What were they to do different than their fathers did?
5. What did the fathers say about the Lord's purpose?
6. What, in Zechariah's first vision, did he see?
7. What was the answer to Zechariah's question?
8. What did they tell the angel of the Lord?
9. What did the angel then say to the Lord?
10. How did the Lord respond to this question?
11. Who is God jealous for?
12. Who is He angry with? Why?
13. With what is God going to return to Jerusalem?
14. What will happen to the Jewish cities?
15. What two things will God do "again"?
 - a.
 - b.
16. What did Zechariah see in this second vision?
17. What was the answer to his question: What are these?
18. What else did the Lord show him?
19. What were these coming to do?

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH
Chapters 2 - 3

20. What did Zechariah see in this third vision?
21. Where was this man going?
22. What was to be the physical state of Jerusalem? Why?
23. What will surround Jerusalem? Dwell in her?
24. What were those in the north to do?
25. What were those in Babylon to do?
26. What is God going to do to these captive nations?
27. How does God feel about those who hurt His people?
28. What will happen when God waves His hand over them?
29. What is to be the response of the daughter of Zion? Why?
30. What will the nations do in that day?
31. In the fourth vision who was standing before the 'Lord'?
32. Who was at his right hand? For what purpose?
33. What did the Lord say to Satan?
34. What was the physical state of Joshua?
35. What command was given concerning that state?
36. What did they do to Joshua while the angel of the Lord was standing by?
37. God gives him two charges beginning with "If you..." Name them:
 - a.
 - b.If he does these then what will he have?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
38. What are Joshua's friends a symbol of?
39. What two things will God do "in that day"?

**QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH
Chapters 4 & 5**

40. Describe what Zechariah sees in this fifth vision
41. What is the answer to Zechariah's question:
What are these?
42. What is a great mountain before Zerubbabel?
43. What will be shouted when the top stone is brought forth?
44. What two things are said about the "hands" of Zerubbabel?
 - a.
 - b.
45. Who will be glad to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand?
46. What part of the vision still puzzles Zechariah?
47. What is the answer to this question?
48. In the sixth vision, what does Zechariah see?
49. What was the size of this object?
50. What does this object represent?
51. What two sins will be dealt with, and in what way?
 - a.
 - b.
52. What will happen to these sinners houses?
53. In the seventh vision, what does Zechariah see?
54. What was inside this object? What was its name?
55. What happened to her?
56. What happened to the ephah next?
57. What is the answer to Zechariah's question:
Where are they taking the ephah?
58. Look on a map and find the land of "Shinar." Where is it?
59. What will happen to the woman once the temple (house) is built?

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH
Chapters 6 & 7

60. In this last (eighth) vision, what came forth from between the mountains?
61. What were the colors of the horses?
62. Who are these horses?
63. What direction did each group of horses go?
64. What color is not mentioned here? These horses are called the "strong ones."
What command was given them?
65. What did those going to the north accomplish for God?
66. What was to be set on the head of Joshua?
67. Who will build the temple of the Lord?
68. What position will the builder occupy?
69. What additional position will he occupy?
70. Who is going to come and build the temple of the Lord?
71. This will take place only if what happens?
72. Why did Bethel send Sharezer and Regemmelech?
73. What question do they ask the priests and prophets?
74. What did they do for 70 years?
75. Why was God not pleased with this?
76. What had the Lord of hosts already taught (5 things)
 - a. d.
 - b. e.
 - c.
77. What did the people do instead of obeying?
78. What then did God do to them?
79. What happened to the "pleasant land"?

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH

Chapter 8

80. Go through this chapter and see how many times the phrase "The Lord of Hosts" occurs
81. How does God say He feels about Zion?
82. What new name will Jerusalem wear? The mountain of the Lord?
83. What two things will take place in the streets of Jerusalem?
a. b.
84. What three things does the Lord say He is going to do?
a. b.
c.
85. During the days of the rebuilding there was "no ..." (2 things)
a. b.
86. What three material blessings will God now give them?
a. b.
c.
87. How did the nations feel about Judah and Israel in the past, and how will they feel now?
88. What are the (positive) things the people should do?
a. b.
- What are the (negative) things they should not do?
a. b.
89. What will be the feelings concerning the various fasts?
90. What will the inhabitants say to one another?
91. What will the many peoples of mighty nations do?
92. Who will the "ten men" grab hold of?
93. What will they say to them?

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH
Chapters 9 - 10

94. Who is this oracle directed against?
95. Where are the eyes of men said to be looking?
96. What two things has Tyre done for herself?
a. b.
97. What will the Lord do to her?
98. What is God going to do to the pride of the Philistines.
99. What will he remove from: a. their mouth - b. their teeth -
100. What will they then become?
101. What reason is given for Zion to rejoice?
102. What are the attributes this one will have?
103. How widespread will His dominion be?
104. What use is God going to make of Judah and Ephraim?
105. What two things will the "Lord of Hosts" do for them?
a. b.
106. What (who) are misleading the people with iniquity and lies?
107. Who is God angry with?
108. What three things does God say He shall do?
a. b.
c.
109. What does God want to give them? Why?
110. What will Ephraim be like?
111. What will happen to those who remember God in a far country?
112. In what will they walk from this day forward?

QUESTIONS FROM ZECHARIAH
Chapters 13 - 14

132. What is the purpose of the foundation?
133. What, in that day will the Lord -
 - a. Cut off?
 - b. Remove?
134. What will happen to the one who still prophecies?
135. What will these prophets say about themselves?
136. Against whom does the Lord awaken the sword?
137. What will happen to two-thirds of the land?
138. What will happen to the other third?
139. What will be some characteristics of this third?
140. When the nations are gathered against Jerusalem what will happen? (5 things)
141. What will the Lord then do to those nations?
142. What will God stand on, and with what result?
143. Where are the people to then flee?
144. What is going to happen to:
 - a. The luminaries?
 - b. The evening time?
 - c. The living waters?
145. Who is going to be king in that day?
146. What is going to happen to all the land?
147. What are some of the gruesome results of God's plague against those who have warred against Jerusalem?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
148. What will those who are left of all the nations do after this?
149. What inscription will be inscribed on the bells of the horses?

LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH

- Dynamic preaching restores drooping faith
- God will grant blessings to those who try to restore true religion
- The true glory of a people is found only in their devotion to God
- Acts of devotion are useless unless one's heart is poured out to God
- True religion is designed to become universal
- The Lord's followers should have an optimistic outlook
- The Lord wants Jerusalem to be called the "city of truth"

*TO THE RETURNED REMNANT (445-432 BC)***MALACHI**
“My Messenger”**BACKGROUND**

For a full picture of the conditions in Judea during this period one should read Ezra chapters 7-10 and the complete book of Nehemiah.

The first contingent of exiles had returned during 536 BC, under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. Encouraged by the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple between 520 – 516 BC. Ezra had returned with a second group of exiles in 458 and it is thought that Zechariah had encouraged the remnant with the message of Zechariah 9-14.

The style of the book is unique to the Bible in that a didactic-dialectic method is followed. An affirmation is made followed by an interrogative objection offered by the people addressed. Then a refutation of the objection is given. There are seven such sections (1:2-3; 1:6-7; 2:10-16; 2:17; 3:7; 3:8; 3:13-14).

DATE

The exact date of Malachi is not given, but judging by the conditions with which he dealt, the time period seems to be contemporary with Nehemiah, probably about 445-432 BC.

AUTHOR

The name Malachi literally means "My Messenger." Nothing is known about the personal life of the prophet. The authenticity of his work is confirmed by many New Testament references (Mt. 11:10; 17:12; Mk. 1:2; 9:11-12; Lk. 1:17; Rom. 9:13).

THEME

Malachi's central message is faithfulness to the Lord. They had been back from Babylonian captivity for about a hundred years, and now the second and third generation descendants had begun to lose sight of serving the Lord with wholehearted zeal. Though cured of idolatry, their outward formalism was worthless. Worship was in decay as the priests had been careless about insisting on proper sacrifices (1:6-8,13; 2:9) and tithing

(3:8-10). Indifference and skepticism characterized the nation (3:14; 2:17). Furthermore, divorce and intermarriage with Gentile women was common (2:11-16).

THEME OF MALACHI

COMMITMENT

VS.

CONTENTMENT

**Every child of God will make an offering to God
17,8²,9,10,11,13; 2:12,13; 3:3,4,8**

**God says
follow My
Commands!
4:4**

**BUT
YOU
SAY**

**God cares
not how we
serve!
3:14**

**So you will again distinguish between
the righteous and the wicked, between
one who serves God and the one who
does not serve Him.
Malachi 3:18**

OUTLINE OF MALACHI

- I. Condemnation of Priests' Faithlessness
1:2-2:9
 - A. Jehovah's Love for Israel
1:2-5
 - B. Rebuke of the Faithless Priests and People
1:6-14
 - C. Curse pronounced upon the faithless Priests
2:1-9

- II. Condemnation of Divorce
2:10-16

- III. Specific Sins of Judah
2:17-4:6
 - A. Spirit of Skepticism
2:17-3:6
 - B. Departed from following God's Ordinances
3:7
 - C. Robbed God
3:8-12
 - D. Spoken arrogant Words against the Lord
3:13-4:3

- IV. Closing Admonitions
4:4-6

QUESTIONS FROM MALACHI

Chapter 1

1. To whom is this oracle directed?
2. What is the response to the Lord's statement: "I have loved you"?
3. What did God do to Esau?
 - a.
 - b.
4. What is the Lord's response to their intent to rebuild?
5. What is the point of God calling Himself a father or master?
6. What have the priests been doing to God's name?
7. How have they been doing this?
8. What kind of sacrifices are being presented to the Lord?
9. What return were they expecting from the Lord as a result of these sacrifices?
10. What does God wish someone would do? Why?
11. What kind of offerings will the nations offer?
12. How will that influence the Name of the Lord?
13. What were the Jews saying that profaned the Lord's sacrifice?
14. What are three characteristics of the offerings the people are bringing to the Lord?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
15. What question does God ask in response to those offerings?
16. Who does God then curse?
17. How do the nations respond to the name of the Lord?

QUESTIONS FROM MALACHI

Chapter 2

18. Who is this commandment directed to?
19. What two things will happen if the priests do not listen?
 - a.
 - b.
20. Why has God said He cursed their blessings already?
21. What is God going to do to:
 - a. Their offspring?
 - b. Their faces?
 - c. Their feasts?
 - d. To the priests themselves?
22. God's covenant with Levi had what two elements?
23. What two ways did Levi respond to this?
 - a.
 - b.
24. What four things characterized the life of these priests?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
25. What should the lips of the priest preserve?
26. What should men seek from the priest? Why?
27. What, instead, were these priests doing?
28. How does God say they were "profaning the covenant"?
29. How were they profaning the sanctuary?
30. What three things were they "covering" the altar with?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
31. Why were they covering the altar with these?
32. God claims that He was a witness to what sinful act?
33. What two things does God hate?

QUESTIONS FROM MALACHI
Chapters 3 & 4

34. What will God's messenger do for Him?
35. It will be hard to endure his coming because he is like:
36. He will purify the sons of Levi so that they may do what?
37. What will be God's attitude toward Judah's sacrifice?
38. God's swift judgment will be against what groups?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
39. Why are the sons of Jacob not consumed (brought to an end)?
40. What will it take for God to return to these people?
41. How had these people robbed God?
42. If they will bring the whole tithe, what will God do in return?
43. What have these people spoken against God?
44. Who was the book of remembrance written for?
45. What does God promise to do for them?
46. What two areas does He want them to distinguish between?
 - a.
 - b.
47. What two groups will be like "chaff" in the coming day?
 - a.
 - b.
48. What will be in store for those who fear God's name?
49. What does He encourage them to remember?

50. Who is going to be coming, and what type of day will follow him?
51. What three things will he do when he comes?

LESSONS FROM MALACHI

- Many offer to the Lord only what is convenient
- Outward form is of no value unless it is motivated by inward obedience
- Elders will be blessed of the Lord only as they fulfill their God given responsibility
- Marriage is not only a covenant with our spouses but with God
- To rob a fellow man is a sin, to rob God is unthinkable
- When Christians minimize the importance of “purposing” and giving “bountifully” we too become guilty of sin

CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS

Dates	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel	Prophets
925	Rehoboam – 17 yrs 1 Kgs 12; 2 Chr. 10	Jeroboam – 22yrs 1 Kgs. 11; 2 Chr. 10	Ahijah Shemaiah Man of God (Judah)
	Abijam (Abijah) – 3 yrs 1 Kgs. 14 Asa – 41 yrs 1 Kgs. 15	Nadab – 2 yrs 1 Kgs. 15 * Baasha – 24 yrs 1 Kgs. 15 2 Chr. 16	Azariah
900		Elah – 2 yrs 1 Kgs. 16 * Zimri – 1 week 1 Kgs. 16 * Omri – 12 yrs 1 Kgs. 16 * Ahab – 22 yrs 1 Kgs 16 2 Chr. 18	Hanani Jehu
	Jehoshaphat – 25 yrs 1 Kgs. 15 2 Chr. 17		
875		Ahaziah – 2 yrs 1 Kgs. 22 2 Chr. 20	Elijah 1 Kgs. 17 Elisha “Son of the Prophets” Micaiah Hanani
	Jehoram (Joram) – 8 yrs. 2 Kgs. 8 2 Chr. 21	Jehoram (Joram) – 12 yrs. 2 Kgs. 3	Eliezer
850	Ahaziah (Jehoahaz, Azariah) – 1 yr 2 Kgs. 8 2 Chr. 22		Obadiah
	Athaliah – 6 yrs 2 Kgs. 11 2 Chr. 22	* Jehu – 28 yrs 2 Kgs. 9 2 Chr. 22	“Son of the Prophets”

Dates	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel	Prophets
825	Joash (Jehoash) – 40 yrs. 2 Kgs. 11 2 Chr. 22	Jehoahaz – 17 yrs. 2 Kgs. 13	Joel
800	Amaziah – 29 yrs. 2 Kgs. 14 2 Chr. 25	Jehoash (Joash) – 16 yrs.	Zechariah
775	Uzziah (Azariah) – 52 yrs.	Jeroboam II – 41 yrs. 2 Kgs. 14	Jonah
750	Jotham – 16 yrs. 2 Kgs. 15	Zechariah – 6 months 2 Kgs. 15 * Shallum – 1 month 2 Kgs. 15 * Menahem – 10 yrs. 2 Kgs. 15	Zechariah (Judah) Amos Hosea Isaiah
725	Ahaz – 16 yrs. 2 Kgs. 16 2 Chr. 28 Isa. 7	Pekahiah – 2 yrs. 2 Kgs. 15 * Pekah – 20 yrs. 2 Kgs. 15 2 Chr. 28	Micah
721	Hezekiah – 29 yrs. 2 Kgs. 18 2 Chr. 28 Isa. 36-39	* Hoshea – 9 yrs. 2 Kgs. 15	Obed
700	Manasseh – 55 yrs. 2 Kgs. 21	Israel To Assyria	

Dates	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel	Prophets
675			
650	<p>Amon – 2 yrs. 2 Kgs. 21 2 Chr. 33</p> <p>Josiah – 31 yrs. 2 Kgs. 21 2 Chr. 33</p>		<p>Huldah</p> <p>Zephaniah</p> <p>Nahum</p>
625	<p>Jehoahaz (Shallum) – 3 months 2 Kgs. 23 2 Chr. 36 Jer. 22</p> <p>Jehoiakim (Eliakim) – 11 yrs. 2 Kgs. 23 2 Chr. 36 Jer. 22; 36</p>		<p>Habakkuk</p> <p>Jeremiah</p>
606	<p>Jehoiachin (Coniah) 3 months 2 Kgs. 24 2 Chr. 36 Jer. 22; 52</p>		<p>Daniel</p>
597	<p>Zedekiah (Mattaniah) – 11 yrs. 2 Kgs. 24 2 Chr. 36 Jer. 34; 37; 52</p>		<p>Ezekiel</p>
586	<p>Gedaliah – 2 months 2 Kgs. 25 Jer. 40</p> <p>Judah To Babylon</p>		

The History and Geography of the Bible Story; Bob and Sandra Waldron

