

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS

### •A. FIVE CLASSES OF SPEAKERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Homer Hailey) (Ezek. 7:26; Jer. 18:18).

- 1. Moses the lawgiver.
- 2. Wise men (elders) who gave counsel.
- 3. Priests who taught the law.
- 4. Prophets through whom God spoke His word.
- 5. Psalmists who were the singers or poets in Israel.

### •B. THE MEANING OF THE WORD PROPHET.

- 1. The word prophet comes from the Hebrew word Nabi = a spokesman; an inspired person.
- 2. The definition of the word has come to mean one who under the influence of the Holy Spirit speaks the word of God.
- 3. Scripture helps us understand the meaning of the word... [READ EXODUS 4:16](#)... "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him." [READ ALSO EXODUS 7:1](#)... "Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet."
- 4. Therefore we can conclude that a prophet is as a mouth to the one in whose authority he speaks.
- 5. There were prophets who spoke who have not written books. These are referred to as "pre-literary" prophets.
  - a. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
  - b. Nathan who rebuked David (2 Sam 12:1ff), who prophesied of the Messiah (2 Sam 7:1-17) and who anointed Solomon (1 Kings 1).
  - c. Elijah, Elisha, "sons of the prophets," Micaiah, who stood against the false prophet Zedekiah (1 Kings 22:1-36)....
  - d. And many others....
- 6. Then there are the literary prophets like Isaiah - Malachi.
  - a. Minor prophets are not lesser prophets.... their books are just shorter than the four major prophets' books.

- b. There were even prophets to other countries like Balaam.
- 7. In the New Testament there were prophets who spoke the word of God such as the apostles and men like James, Mark or Luke.

•C. **FALSE PROPHETS.**

- 1. Along with the true there arose also false prophets (see Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 28).
  - a. These flourished from a very early period in the nation's history to the time of the close of the Old Testament writings.
  - b. The false prophets fall into two general classes, mercenary and political; some prophesied for money, others for political favor (see Mic. 3:5, 11).
  - c. Often-times the false prophets were nationalistic ---that is, they defended the national practices and rulers through ignorance; but whether false through ignorance or self-will, they and their messages were no less severely denounced by the true prophets.
- 2. Albert C. Knudson has well said: "An ignorant conscientiousness may be quite as dangerous to a community as deliberate wickedness."
- 3. When opposed by false prophets, the true prophets rise to their greatest heights of zeal and fearlessness.

•D. **CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER FOR THE PROPHETS** (as by Homer Hailey)....

- 1. Ninth Century - Early Assyrian Period.
  - a. Obadiah, 845 B.C.
  - b. Joel, 830 B.C.
  - c. Jonah, 790-750 B.C.
- 2. Eight Century - Assyrian Period.
  - a. Amos, 755 B.C.
  - b. Hosea, 750-725 B.C.
  - c. Isaiah, 740-700 B.C.
  - d. Micah, 735-700 B.C.
- 3. Seventh Century - Chaldean Period.
  - a. Jeremiah 626-586 B.C.
  - b. Zephaniah, 630-625 B.C.
  - c. Nahum, 625-612 B.C.
  - d. Habakkuk, 625-605 B.C.
- 4. Sixth Century - The Exile.
  - a. Ezekiel, 593-570 B.C.

- b. Daniel, 605-536 B.C.
- 5. Sixth & Fifth Centuries - Post Exilic Period.
  - a. Haggai, 520 B.C.
  - b. Zechariah, 520-518 B.C.
  - c. Malachi, 440 B.C.

**•E. THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND FROM THE TIME OF ELISHA TO THE TIME OF AMOS.** Shortly after the death of Solomon (932/131 B.C.), the empire built by David divided into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. The years that followed were filled with bitterness, war, and the introduction of idolatry. Solomon had opened the door for idolatry to enter the national life by building altars for the gods of his foreign wives (I Kings 11:4-8; Neh. 13:26). After his death idolatry eventually became more and more a part of the religious life of the people of Judah. In the northern kingdom Jeroboam introduced calf worship, making it the national religion of Israel (I Kings 12:25-33). Added to this system of perversion of Jehovah worship, Ahab and Jezebel introduced pure idolatry into Israel in the form of Baal worship. This departure from Jehovah by both nations led to all manner of political, social, and moral corruption. In His intense desire to turn the people back to Himself, Jehovah raised up prophets with the special mission of pointing out to the people the contrast between their sins and His own holiness and the righteousness of His law. Although the prophetic era seems to have begun with Samuel (Acts 3:24), Elijah and Elisha stand out as the beginning of Jehovah's accelerated use of prophets in His effort to save His people from complete apostasy. Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on The Minor Prophets*, pp24-25. (2 Kings 8:1-15:7 and 2 Chronicles 21-26)

- 1. Israel during this time....
  - a. Jehu, 841-814/13 B.C. (2 Kings 9:1-10:28; Athaliah and Joash, rulers in Judah).
    - 1) Jehu was anointed at RamothCilcad by a son of the prophets who was sent by Elisha for this purpose (9:1-10).
      - a) The house of Ahab was smitten and Jezebel was slain by Jehu as had been predicted by Elijah (9:11.36).
      - b) Ahab's seven sons were subsequently slain (10:1-17); the priests and worshippers of Baal were also put to death (10:18-28).
    - 2) The sin of Jehu was his worship of the calves set up by Jeroboam.
  - b. Jehoahaz, 814/13-798 B.C. (II Kings 13:1-9; twenty third year of Joash, king of Judah).
    - 1) Jehovah began to deliver Israel into the hand of Syria; Jehoahaz called for help from Jehovah, who hearkened to him because of His pity for Israel.
    - 2) However, Jehoahaz and Israel "departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam," leading ultimately to the downfall of the nation.
  - c. Jehoash, 798-782/81 B.C. (2 Kings 13:10-25; Joash, king of Judah).
    - 1) Jehoash came to Elisha as he lay upon his deathbed and was told to take arrows and shoot them from an open window.

- a) The prophet made no explanation except that the arrows were Jehovah's arrows of victory over Syria's arrow.
- b) Jehoash obeyed the instruction.
- 2) He was then told to take arrows and smite upon the ground; he did this three times.
  - a) The prophet was displeased because he had smitten the ground no more than three times, and he announced that there would be only three victories over the Syrians.
  - b) After the death of Elisha, Jehoash smote Syria three times, according to the prophecy of Elisha.
- d. Jeroboam II, 793-753 B.C. (overlapping reign, 793/92-782/81 B.C.; 2 Kings 14:23-29; Amaziah, king of Judah).
  - 1) Jeroboam II restored the borders of Israel to the largest extent since the reign of Solomon.
  - 2) Jonah was the prophet of the period of his reign.
  - 3) Great prosperity was enjoyed under his leadership; but prosperity brought with it greed, corruption, and vices of many kinds.
  - 4) Toward the close of Jeroboam's reign, Amos began to prophesy.
- 2. Judah during this time....
  - a. Jehoram, 853-841 B.C., co-regent with Jehoshaphat, 853-848 B.C.; his independent reign, 848-841 B.C. (2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chron. 21).
    - 1) As could be expected, Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat and husband of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, was a wicked king.
      - a) In his days Edom revolted.
      - b) Jehoram made high places of idolatrous worship which led the people further into sin; for this he was rebuked by a letter from Elijah (2 Chron. 21:11-15).
      - c) The Philistines, Arabians, and Ethiopians were stirred up against him.
      - d) According to the word of the prophet, he died of a terrible bowel disease.
    - 2) His character and the nature of his reign had been so revolting that the people were glad when he died.
  - b. Ahaziah, 841 B.C. (2 Kings 8:25-29; 11 Chron. 22:1-9). Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram and Athaliah, walked in the way of Ahab, the idolatrous king of Israel. Death came within a year and cut short his reign.
  - c. Athaliah, 841-835 B.C. (2 Kings 11; 2 Chron. 22:10-23:21). Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and usurper of the throne, slew all the royal seed except Joash.
    - 1) He was rescued from the hands of Athaliah by a daughter of Jehoram and daughter of Ahaziah, the infant Joash escaped.

- 2) After reigning six years, Atbaliab was slain by the people in an insurrection led by Jehoiada the priest.
- 3) Under Jehoiada worship of Jehovah was restored.
- 4) These were stirring times!
- d. Joash, 835-796 B.C. (2 Kings 12; 2 Chron. 24).
  - 1) Joash was seven years old when he began to reign.
  - 2) He did that which was right while Jehoiada the priest lived, but upon the death of Jehoiada he became evil.
  - 3) He forsook Jehovah, restored the worship of the Asherim, and slew Zechariah, the son of Jehojada.
  - 4) During his reign the Syrians took away the treasures of the house of God.
  - 5) Joash was slain by his own servants.
- e. Amaziah, 796-767 B.C. (II Kings 14; 11 Chron. 25).
  - 1) It is said that this king did right, but not with a perfect heart.
  - 2) He put down Edom and brought their gods to Jerusalem "and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them" (2 Chron. 25:14, 15).
  - 3) He warred against Joash, king of Israel, but was defeated.
    - a) Joash broke down the walls of Jerusalem and took the gold, silver, and other valuables to Samaria.
    - b) Amaziah reigned fifteen years after that.
- f. Uzziah, 767-740/39 B.C. (II Kings 15:1-7; II Chron. 26).
  - 1) Uzziah is also called Azariah.
  - 2) He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for fifty-one years.
  - 3) He is named as one of the good kings of Judah; he did that which was right.
    - a) He put down the enemies of Judah, promoted husbandry, and brought great prosperity to the people.
    - b) But in the midst of success he became proud and offered incense to Jehovah (a responsibility of the priests only); for this he was smitten with leprosy and lived a leper until the end of his life.

**•F. IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER.**

- 1. 721 B.C. The destruction of Samaria and Israel carried into captivity by Assyria.
- 2. 606 B.C. The first captives taken into captivity from Judah.
- 3. 597 B.C. The second captives taken from Jerusalem.

- 4. 586 B.C. Jerusalem destroyed and everyone but the aged and crippled taken into captivity.

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON TWO

### Obadiah - The Pride and Judgment of Edom

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

##### **•A. GENERAL:**

- 1. The first of "**the Minor Prophets**" we shall consider is Obadiah, whose book is the shortest of all books in the Old Testament.
- 2. The book of Obadiah is not well known but it contains some powerful lessons for our day.
  - a. It is the only one-chapter book in the Old Testament and contains only 21 verses.
  - b. The occasion of the book is some recent sack of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in which Edom had aided and abetted.
    - 1) She had encouraged Judah's foes, enjoyed Judah's fall, and enslaved Judah's fugitives.
    - 2) The book warns Edom of her own coming destruction for her sins against her brother.

##### **•B. NAME:**

- 1. His name means "**Servant of Yahweh (Jehovah)**," and this name was quite common...
- 2. Thirteen different people are called by this name in the Old Testament.
- 3. One Jewish tradition identifies him as the one who was Ahab's steward....
  - a. Who hid 100 prophets from Jezebel, King Ahab's wife (1 Kings 18:3-4).
  - b. Who feared the Lord from his youth (1 Kings 18:12).
- 4. He may also have been...
  - a. The Obadiah sent by Jehoshaphat to teach the law in Judah (2 Chron. 17:70).
  - b. The Obadiah who was one of the overseers in repairing the temple under Josiah's reign as king of Judah (2 Chron. 34:12).

#### **SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

##### **•A. THE DATE...**

- 1. Two dates are often proposed: 845 B.C. and 586 B.C.
- 2. The prophet refers to an attack on Jerusalem; commentators offer these two possibilities:
  - a. The days of Jehoram (848-844 B.C.), when Philistines and Arabians attacked the city - 2 Chr 21:8-10,16-17
  - b. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.)
- 3. The internal evidence appears to support the early date of 845 B.C. (Keil, Hailey)
  - a. The language of Obadiah is much different from Jeremiah
  - b. There is no mention of the destruction of the temple, the deportation to Babylon, or the remnant who went to Egypt.
- 4. We will accept the early date, that it was around 845 B.C. for the following reasons...
  - c. Edom is free - 1 Kings 8:20-24; 2 Chron. 21:8-10.
  - d. Jerusalem is invaded and sacked - 2 Chron. 21:16-17.
  - e. Jerusalem is invaded by strangers - 2 Chron. 21:16.
  - f. Captives are taken - 2 Chron 21:17.
  - g. Judah will again subjugate Edom - 2 Chron. 25:5-14.
- 5. There are six characteristics of 586 B.C. (The Babylonian Destruction) not found in Obadiah....
  - a. The razing of the walls (2 Kings 25:10; Jeremiah 52:14; Nehemiah 2:15-17).
  - b. The burning of the Royal Palace (2 Kings 25:9; Jeremiah 52:13).
  - c. The burning of the Temple (2 Kings 25:9; Jeremiah 52:13).
  - d. The capture and deportation of the King to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7).
  - e. The deportation to Babylon of the entire nation with but few exceptions (2 Kings 25:11-12).
  - f. The emigration of the Jews to Egypt (2 Kings 25:26; Jeremiah 41:16; 43:22).

## •B. THE MESSAGE...

- 1. The fall of Edom...because of Edom's sin...
  - g. Edom is condemned for her pride and her cruelty. Her crimes are described in progressive stages:
    - 1) Edom stood by while Jerusalem was invaded v.11;
    - 2) She rejoiced over the captivity of sons of Judah v.12;

- 3) She actively participated in looting Jerusalem v.13; and
- 4) Edom set up road blocks to prevent the citizens from escaping v.14 and sold them into slavery.
- h. She is condemned for her cruelty and unbrotherliness....
  - 1) cruelty of the feet, v.11 "she stood afar off";
  - 2) cruelty of the eyes, v.13 "looked on in his disaster";
  - 3) cruelty of the heart, v.12 she rejoiced in Jeru.'s destruction;
  - 4) cruelty of the tongue, v.12; she spoke proudly;
  - 5) cruelty of the hands, v.13, laid hands on Judah's substance and cut off escape.
- 2. The exaltation of Zion...
  - a. When Seir, the Edomite counterpart of Zion, will be cast down.
  - b. The rescued of Israel will be in Zion, for in it the redeemed shall be found.
- 3. From this we get our title for this lesson: "The Pride and Judgment of Edom."

## •C. THE HISTORY OF EDOM...

- 1. The people of Edom descended from Esau, Jacob's twin brother.
- 2. There was sibling rivalry between Edom and Israel, found first in Esau and Jacob.
  - a. The twins struggled in their mother's womb - Gen 25:22-26.
  - b. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob - Gen 25:27-34.
  - c. Jacob stole Esau's blessing as the firstborn - Gen 27.
- 3. While Jacob and Esau eventually reconciled (Gen 32-33), their descendants were often at odds with one another.
  - a. In the Exodus, Edom refused Israel passage through their land - Num 20:14-21.
  - b. Edom was finally subjected by David - 2 Sam 8:13-14.
  - c. During the reign of Jehoram, Edom revolted - 2 Kin 8:20-22.
- 4. Located south of the Dead Sea, they built their cities in the cliffs and thought themselves impregnable.
  - a. The Edomites were a rough and tough group of mountain people.
  - b. They lived in the desert-mountain region of Mt. Seir, reaching from south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Arabah.
    - 1) They carved great protective fortresses in the rock mountains and canyons.

- 2) One of their principle cities was Sela (Hebrew), or Petra (Greek), which simply meant "The Rock" and was carved out of the side of the mountains.
- 3) The rose-red, orange and yellow mountain wall made Petra a colorful stronghold.
- 5. After the prophecy of Obadiah...
  - a. The Edomites were overcome by the Nabataeans, forced to settle south of Judah.
  - b. Around 100 B.C., they were conquered by John Hyrcanus of the Maccabees.
    - 1) Hyrcanus forced many of them to be circumcised and accept the Law.
    - 2) As such, many became nominal Jewish proselytes (Herod the Great was one such proselyte).
  - c. By 100 A.D., Edom as a race and nation had become lost to history.

[With this background, let's now read through the prophecy of Obadiah, with the aid of the following...]

### THE TEXT OF THE BOOK:

#### **I. A COMING JUDGMENT IS PREDICTED TO FALL ON EDMOM (READ vs.1-9).**

- A. The decree has gone forth to the nations, "The vision of Obadiah. 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom-- We have heard a report from the LORD, And an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, 'Arise and let us go against her for battle....'" (v.1).
  - 1. What does this say to us about world affairs and wars and judgments by reason of them?
  - 2. Was the war in Vietnam ordered by God? What do you suppose it accomplished for God?
- B. Deceived by pride in her location, Edom will be brought down the text declares, "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised. The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?' Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,' declares the LORD" (vs.2-4).
  - 1. Destruction will be complete, "If thieves came to you, If robbers by night-- O how you will be ruined!-- Would they not steal only until they had enough? If grape gatherers came to you, Would they not leave some gleanings? O how Esau will be ransacked, And his hidden treasures searched out!" (vs.5-6).
  - 2. Edom will be betrayed by her allies, "All the men allied with you Will send you forth to the border, And the men at peace with you Will deceive you and overpower you. They who eat your bread Will set an ambush for you. (There is no understanding in him.)" (v.7).

- 3. Not even wisdom and might can save them because God is against them! "'Will I not on that day,' declares the LORD, 'Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau? Then your mighty men will be dismayed, O Teman, So that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.'" (8-9)

## II. THE REASON FOR JUDGMENT ON EDOM (vs.10-16).

- A. Notice carefully that Edom is being judged for her violence and unbrotherly conduct toward Jacob. "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, On the day that strangers carried off his wealth, And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem-- You too were as one of them" (vs.10-11).
  - 1. Wow! There are lessons here for the people of our day....
  - 2. A German wrote living in Nazi Germany....
    - a. I said nothing when they carried away the Russians...
    - b. I said nothing when they came and took away the Jews....
    - c. Today no one is saying anything as I am being taken away....
  - 3. Today in America political correctness demands and even pressures us to stand aside saying nothing about homosexuals...tomorrow will it be petafelia...
    - a. To say and do nothing...is that to be one of them?
    - b. Because Television has deteriorated, must a Christian watch it anyway?
- B. A rebuke against their conduct, "Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress. Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster. Do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives; And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress" (vs.12-14).
- C. Therefore the "Day of the Lord" for them will mean receiving the same sort of treatment! "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. Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never **existed**" (vs.15-16).

## III. THE EXALTATION OF ISRAEL OVER EDOM (17-21).

- A. Deliverance and holiness will be found on Mt. Zion, not Mt. Seir (the prominent mountain in Edom with its beautiful orange red glow)! "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape. And it will be holy." (v.17a).
  - 1. The Tabernacle (or the Temple) sat on Zion.

- a. God sat enthroned in the Most Holy Place within that holy place. It was He and not the people who made Zion superior to Mt Seir.
- b. The saved assembled upon that mountain....Israel sinned because they did not come before the Lord at Zion!
- 2. The church comes from the Greek word ekklesia = the called out assembly.
  - a. God still sits on His throne in the new Jerusalem on Mt. Zion ([READ HEB. 12:22-24](#)).
  - b. We come to Him....He is not on the high places, but on Zion! God attracts the saved like light attracts moths. We assemble!
- B. The house of Jacob shall consume the house of Esau, "And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. Then the house of Jacob will be a fire And the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau will be as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,' For the LORD has spoken" (vs.17b-18).
  - 1. Again, Judah's people were not any better than Edom's.
  - 2. It was the fact that Jehovah sat on Zion, not Seir.
  - 3. That's why our strength is our submission to the Lord today. If He is our Lord....we will overcome, but if we ignore His lordship, we will fail.
- C. The children of Israel will possess Edom and surrounding nations is the prophecy of Obadiah in verses 19-20, "Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And Benjamin will possess Gilead. And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad Will possess the cities of the Negev" (vs.19-20).
- D. The ultimate rule will be that of the Lord's, "The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion To judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD'S" (v.21).

[With this brief survey of Obadiah's "vision" concerning Edom (1), here are some thoughts regarding...]

### III. THE FULFILLED PROPHECY.

#### •A. ITS IMMEDIATE FULFILLMENT...

- 1. Edom's destruction began with the Babylonian invasion under Nebuchadnezzar (ca. 600 B.C.).
- 2. It continued into the fourth century B.C. with the invasion of the Arabs known as the Nabataeans, forcing them to a region south of Judah.
- 3. In the second century B.C., the Maccabees brought them under subjection when Judas Maccabeus slew twenty thousand of them.
- 4. John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) forced the remnant to accept circumcision and the Law.

•B. ITS ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT...

- 1. May likely have been with the coming of the Messiah (Jesus Christ)!
- 2. For with His coming, and the establishment of the spiritual kingdom beginning in Jerusalem...
  - a. Deliverance and holiness did come from Mt. Zion (i.e. Jerusalem)! - [Lk 24:47](#).
  - b. The kingdom (rule) is the Lord's! - cf. [Lk 1:31-34](#); [Mt 28:18](#); [1 Pe 3:22](#); [Re 1:5](#).
  - c. The house of Jacob (i.e., the true spiritual Israel) did possess Edom as the Gentiles among them became Christians! --- cf. [Ro 11:13-18](#) (where faithful Gentiles are spoken as being grafted into the stock of Israel).
- 3. As support for this interpretation, consider:
  - a. The prophecy of Balaam - [Num 24:15-19](#).
    - 1) Which foretells how "A Star shall come out of Jacob, A Scepter shall rise out of Israel" (the Messiah?)
      - a) 2) And how Edom will be come a possession
  - b. The prophecy of Amos - [Amos 9:11-12](#).
  - c. The application by James at the council in Jerusalem - [Acts 15:13-17](#).
    - 1) Who understood the conversion of the Gentiles to be a fulfillment of Amos.
    - 2) Therefore the fulfillment is figurative, not literal, as Gentiles become Christians.

[Finally, a few thoughts about some...]

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. With this brief look at "The Book Of Obadiah", we have seen that...
  - 1. The prophets were not limited in their prophecies to just the nation of Israel.
  - 2. God held the heathen nations accountable for their actions.
  - 3. While it was written primarily to comfort the Israelites in Obadiah's day, there are lessons to be gleaned for us as well...
  - 4. The message of hope may have had its ultimate fulfillment in what we can enjoy ourselves today, in the person and work of Jesus!
- B. In verse 15, we find the expression "the day of the Lord"...
  - 1. An expression often used by the prophets referring to God's judgment upon the nations.

- 2. The particular "day of the Lord" of which Obadiah wrote was "near", and was fulfilled with the destruction of Edom!
- 3. But there is another "day of the Lord" yet to come...!
  - a. Of which God's judgments upon the nations were only a shadow, a type....
  - b. Peter writes of that day, in which the whole world will be judged - "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pe 3:7-13).
- C. Obadiah said to the Edomites in verse 3, "The pride of your heart has deceived you!" (NIV). Are we ready for that "day of the Lord"? Or do we in our arrogance take pride in our wisdom, might, or position in life? If so, Obadiah was also speaking to us....
  - 1. How much better to humbly recognize that... "...on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy" (Obadiah 1:17).
  - 2. Have you come to Mount Zion, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant?

### LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF OBADIAH:

- A. **"PRIDE GOES BEFORE DESTRUCTION..." - Pro 16:18.**
  - 1. Pride leads to vanity and a sense of independence from God.
  - 2. Just as Edom took pride in their geographical location, allies, wisdom and might.
  - 3. Such arrogance God will punish - cf. [READ Isaiah 13:9-11](#)... "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless."
  - 4. Are we on guard against such pride?
- B. **DO NOT MISTREAT YOUR BRETHREN...**
  - 1. This was Edom's guilt also.... "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever" (v.10).

•2. How we treat our brethren affects our relationship with the Lord. Paul says, "For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8:10-12).

•a. We hold influence over one another.

•b. It is God's desire that we encourage one another to live more holy and reverent lives for Christ.

•c. It is a grave sin to cause the destruction of another brother's faith....causing him to be lost again!

•3. Are we careful about our dealings with our brethren?

•C. **"DO NOT REJOICE WHEN YOUR ENEMY FALLS..." - Pro 24:17-18.**

•1. This Edom did when Judah was plundered.... "Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress" (v.12).

•2. This sort of gloating is displeasing to God!

•a. God does not delight in unrighteousness.

•b. We know this because "Love....does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6), and God is love (1 John 4:8, 16).

•3. Do we sometimes inwardly rejoice when something bad befalls someone we are opposed to?

•D. **IN TIME OF DIVINE JUDGMENT, GOD PROVIDES A MEANS AND PLACE OF ESCAPE FOR THOSE WHO TURN TO HIM...**

•1. Note again verse 17, where Mount Zion would become a place of deliverance: "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy."

•2. Today, spiritual Mount Zion is a place to which we can turn cf. [READ He 12:22-24](#).

•3. It is a place where we can find:

•a. "the city of the living God"

•b. "the heavenly Jerusalem"

•c. "an innumerable company of angels"

•d. "general assembly and church of the firstborn"

•e. "the firstborn registered in heaven"

•f. "God the Judge of all"

•g. "the spirits of just men made perfect"

•h. "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant"

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON THREE

### Joel - The Day of the Lord

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#### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK:

#### •A. THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL AND THE PROPHETS OF THEIR TIME:

## •B. THE AUTHOR...

- 1. "The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel." We know little about him.
- 2. The name "Joel" means "Jehovah is God."
  - a. The name appears frequently , with at least a dozen men sharing the name in the O.T.
  - b. Described as "the son of Penthuel," there is no reason to associate him with any other Joel mentioned in the Bible.
    - 1) We can be reasonably certain that he was a native of Jerusalem. He would have been aware of all the priestly corruption.
    - 2) He was a pious, godly, courageous preacher who followed the locust plague to cry for the nation's repentance.
    - 3) As a preacher...we must rank Joel highly.

#### •C. THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP OF JOEL TO THE OTHER PROPHETS..

Joel 1:5... *"Awake, drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you wine drinkers, On account of the sweet wine That is cut off from your mouth."*

Joel 2:2... *"A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations."*

Joel 2:3... *"A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them."*

Joel 2:10... *"Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness."*

Joel 2:32... *"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls."*

Joel 3:10... *"Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man.'"*

Joel 3:16... *"The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel."*

Joel 3:17... *"Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem*

*will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no more."*

Joel 3:18... *"And in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim."*

Isaiah 13:16... *"Their little ones also will be dashed to pieces Before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered And their wives ravished."*

Zeph. 1:15... *"A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness."*

Isaiah 51:3... *"Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody."*

Ezekiel 36:35... *"They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.'"*

Isaiah 13:10... *"For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light."*

Obadiah v.17... *"But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions."*

Isaiah 2:4... *"And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war."*

Micah 4:3... *"And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war."*

See also Amos 1:2; Isaiah 13:13; Ezekiel 36:11; Isaiah 52:1 and Amos 9:13.

#### •D. DATE OF THE WRITING OF THE BOOK...

- 1. The date of the book is uncertain....
- 2. Some place it as one of the earliest of the "literary prophets" (ca. 900 B.C.).
- 3. Others believe it was written after the exile (ca. 400 B.C.).
- 4. Hailey, Young, and other scholars defend the early date. Richard Rogers gives the following reasons for the early date...
  - a. The enemies of Israel are the Philistines, Phoenecians, Egyptians and Edomites.
  - b. No reference is made of Assyria which emerged by 760 B.C.
  - c. No reference to Babylon which soon followed but perished by 536 B.C.
  - d. Amos, who undoubtedly wrote in the eight century B.C., seems to quote Joel....
    - 1) Amos 1:2... *"He said, 'The LORD roars from Zion And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.'"*
    - 2) Joel 3:16... *"The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel."*

- e. The place assigned this book in the Hebrew bible shows their belief in the books earlier date.
- 5. This date places Joel prophesying during the reign of Joash.
  - a. As you recall, Joash was made king when he was only seven years old. He remained a good king till the priest Jehoiada died. Then he turned so wicked he was eventually assassinated by his own servants.
  - b. This was a pivotal time in Judah's history.
    - 1) Jehosaphat a righteous man had befriended Ahab the king of Israel a wicked man. Their families intermarried as a matter of fact Jehosaphat's two sons had the same names as Ahab'
    - 2) The result of this befriending of Israel is that the idolatry in Israel became transplanted (our should I say more solidly entrenched) in Judah.
    - 3) Athaliah, Joash's grandmother, had ruled for six years before Joash and she held sway over Judah for longer than that being the queen grandmother to Joash. She like her mother Jezebel actively supported and like a missionary tried to convert Judah to the worship of Baal.
  - c. So we can see that Joel preached during a time of political, social, religious as well as economic (remember the locust plague) turmoil.

#### •E. THE OCCASION OF THE WRITING....

- 1. Joel uses a recent locust plague as an object lesson.
  - a. The greatest fear of Asians of this day and time was a locust plague.
  - b. It was feared for the following reasons:
    - 1) For its immediate judgment... the devastation of the land.
    - 2) For its future judgment... the eggs laid by the swarming locust.
      - a) From the first of the plague when the locust first swarm till the last of the eggs hatched and the locust left was 5 months.
      - b) The long term effects of a locust plague lasted 7 years.
  - c. Locust plagues were more feared than invading armies.
- 2. Joel tells Judah as this plague is being endured that the coming judgment of Jehovah is going to make this locust plague pale in comparison.
- 3. All of Joel's preaching is done in the shadow of this recent locust plague.

#### •F. MESSAGES TO WATCH FOR....

- 1. The Day of the Lord. The Day of Jehovah.
  - a. It is a day of judgment (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14).
  - b. It is a day of salvation (Joel 2:28-32; See also Isaiah 63:4; Malachi 4:1-5).

- 2. God's use of natural calamity as a call to repentance (Joel 2:12-13).
- 3. The goodness of God (Joel 2:19, 20, 23, 25-27).
- 4. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh [thus making Himself available to all men] (Joel 2:28-32).

**•G. THE BOOK OF JOEL FALLS NATURALLY INTO TWO PARTS.**

- 1. In 1:1-2:27 we read about a terrible locust plague that came over Israel as a judgment from God and how the people repented and God restored their fortunes.
- 2. Then in 2:28 to the end of the book we read about how God is going to pour out his Spirit far and wide to bless his people and how he is going to gather for judgment the nations which have rejected him and his people.
- 3. Or to put it another way, the first half of the book describes how God fought against his own people to make them honor him alone. And the second half of the book describes how he will fight against the nations who refuse to honor him alone.
- 4. What I would like to do is guide you through the whole book in a summary way, then go back and focus on the main messages of the two halves as they apply to us today.

**THE TEXT OF THE BOOK OF JOEL:**

**I. THE LOCUST PLAGUE AND DROUGHT CALL THE PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE (1:1-2:27).**

**•A. THE LAND IS LAID WASTE BY THE PLAGUE (1:1-12).**

- 1. Let's begin with Joel 1:1.... "The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel."
  - a. We know almost nothing about this prophet.
  - b. And that does not matter too much in the end, because his intention is to be a mouthpiece for God, not himself.
- 2. In verses 2 and 3 he says that his message should be passed on from generation to generation.
- 3. Then in verse 4 he describes the catastrophe of the locust plague: "What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten."
- 4. The results of this locust plague were utterly devastating. In verses 5-12 the people are called upon to weep and wail.
  - a. Verse 5: all the wine is cut off from the drunkard's mouth.
  - b. Verse 7: the fig trees have splintered.
  - c. Verse 9: there is not even enough grain for the cereal offerings in the temple. The people can't even worship God on the lowest level of sacrifice.

**•B. SO, STARTING IN VERSE 13 JOEL CALLS FOR ISRAEL TO CRY OUT TO THE LORD BECAUSE HE SEES IN THIS CATASTROPHE THE JUDGMENT OF GOD LEADING UP TO THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD (1:13-20)!**

- 1. The priests are called to lead the lament and proclaim a fast ([READ 1:13-14](#)).
- 2. The locust plague, says Joel, only heralds the coming of The Day of the Lord ([READ 1:15-18](#)).
- 3. Joel and even the animals lead this lament ([READ 1:19-20](#)).

•C. **CHAPTER TWO BEGINS WITH ANOTHER WARNING THAT THE TERRIBLE DAY OF JUDGMENT CALLED "THE DAY OF THE LORD" IS COMING AND THAT THIS LOCUST HORDE IS THE DAWN OF THIS DAY (2:1-11).**

- 1. In verse 1 he says, "Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near!"
- 2. Then in verses 3-11 Joel describes the locust horde again as a raging army with horses and chariots and warriors.
  - a. Verse 3, "A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them."
  - b. Verse 9, "They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief."
  - c. And in verse 11 they are said to be the army of the Lord. "The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?"

•D. **A CALL FOR REPENTANCE (2:12-17).**

- 1. So far, then, we learn that God is fighting his people for some reason.
  - a. We're not told why. Which probably means that Joel intended for us to learn more about God here than about ourselves.
  - b. God has sent his army of locust against Israel and threatened that the end is near.
  - c. He is fighting against his people.
- 2. But is only destruction in his mind? No. Verses 12-14 tell us more about this warrior God: "'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. Who knows whether He will not turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?"
  - a. Even though God has threatened destruction of his own people (since he can raise up from stones children to Abraham! Matt. 3:9) yet he holds out the opportunity of repentance and salvation at the eleventh hour.
  - b. If they will repent, he will repent.
  - c. If they will rend their hearts, he will cease to rend their land.
    - 1) This principle of repentance Jesus tries to explain to us over and over again.

- 2) We are inexorably linked to God being created in His image....
  - a) If we forgive others He will forgive us.
  - b) If we hold grudges against others He will hold our sins against us.
  - c) By the measure we are hard on others He will be hard on us.
- 3) Repentance is humbling ourselves before our creator and coming back to Him, and our treatment of others created by God is an indicator of our relationship with God.
- 3. So in verses 15-17 Joel calls for fasting and for the priests to pray for God not to make his heritage a byword among the nations [It is a call to national repentance]! ([READ 2:15-17](#)).

**•E. THE LORD'S PROMISE TO A REPENTANT NATION (2:18-20).**

- 1. The judgment of the Lord is to urge His people back to Himself.
- 2. These verses tell what He longs to do if His people will only repent: [READ 2:18-20](#).

**•F. A CALL TO COURAGE AND GLADNESS TO A REPENTANT NATION AFTER ENDURING THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD (2:21-24).**

- 1. God does not want to break our spirit with His judgments.
  - a. An unbroken horse is useless to his owner.
  - b. But a horse that can be controlled while maintaining its spirit is of more value to his owner.
- 2. In these verses He calls His people to courage and gladness: [READ 2:21-24](#).

**•G. THE LORD'S ASSURANCE TO THE REPENTANT (2:25-27).**

- 1. These verses show what God was really after in fighting with His people.... "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame."
  - a. The ultimate aim of God in sending the locust horde against his people is to secure their undivided allegiance: "You shall know that I, Yahweh, am your God and there is no one else."
  - b. Evidently, the cause of the locust plague had been the people's half-hearted allegiance.
    - 1) Some of their affections had gone after things other than God.
      - a) We've already seen by the date of the writing that idolatry was being tried.
      - b) It had it's worldly appeal.
        - 1] Kind of like today when people say: "Worship at the church of your choice!" People were saying...even the ruling class: "Worship the god of your choice!"

•2] Others were saying, "You can worship Yahweh too!" "Just because you worship Baal doesn't mean you have to stop worshipping Jehovah."

- 2) He was not their all-consuming love.
  - 3) So he fought against his own people.
  - 4) For few things are more dishonoring to God and dangerous for us than love to God which is only half-hearted.
- 2. God wanted to bless Judah, but He knows that He cannot bless a people he has given the ability to reject Him and who reject Him.
- a. He was trying to persuade His people to return to the source of their blessings.
  - b. He was trying to call His people back.

#### •H. SUMMARY SO FAR....

- 1. That is the first half of Joel's book.
  - a. He had said that the day of the Lord was near (in 1:15; 2:1,11).
  - b. (We will look at what "The Day of the Lord" is in the application and lessons drawn from this book)
  - c. God's call to repentance (vs. 12-17).
  - d. And He has promised to bless the people if they repent (vs. 18-27).
- 2. Here are some lessons we have been introduced so far....
  - a. The value of natural calamities (they can serve to turn men back to God).
  - b. The nature of true repentance, "'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" (2:12-13).
  - c. The character of the Lord is stated: "He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil."
  - d. "The Day of the Lord," when referring to God's judgment on a city or nation, can be averted (cf. Jer. 18:7-8; Jonah 3:1-10).
- 3. Now we will look at Joel's prophetic predictions concerning the future...

## II. THE DAY OF JEHOVAH, HERALDED BY THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT (2:28-3:17).

### •A. "AFTERWARD" YET PRECEDING THE DAY OF THE LORD, GOD'S SPIRIT WILL BE OUTPOURED (READ 2:28-29).

- 1. When is "afterward?"
  - a. I think this answers the conditions stated in verse 27, "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other...."

- 1) Before God's people could ever "**never be put to shame!**" (2:27), God had to make His presence established beyond a shadow of a doubt....at least in God's own eyes, and in the eyes of every believer.

- 2) I think Jesus referred to this very thing when He said of the Jews, "**If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'**" (John 15:22-25).

- b. It is a time when God will have fully established that it was by His power and His choice that His people will be saved....

- 1) Verse 27 tells us "**Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed**" (NIV).

- a) God knew what was in store for Israel...

- 1] He was going to send prophets to warn the people.

- 2] He was going to carry the people into captivity and scatter them throughout the world.

- 3] He was going to bring back a remnant to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple

- 4] And He was going to send His Son to die on a cross.

- b) The Day of Jehovah is not relished by Jehovah, because of its devastation and destruction of sinners, yet it will hold the salvation of His people...those He has chosen.

- 2) Later verse 32 will tell us, "**...it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered...**"

- 3) The last part of verse 32 describes those who will survive as "**the survivors whom the LORD calls.**"

- a) It is not because Israel was special that men will be saved....

- b) It is because Israel was chosen. This is the crux of Romans 9-11.

- c) The Day of the Lord will destroy most, but it will save those who heed God's call to Himself. Those who call upon the Lord. Even today the saved are referred to as the elect or the called out, and the church is the assembly of those who are called out (**ekklyasia**).

- c. Salvation is always linked with destruction. When the gospel is preached men are either saved or lost depending on how they heed the good news.

- 2. Of course, from Acts 2:16-21, Peter tells us that this prophecy in Joel refers to what happened on the day of Pentecost when the promised Kingdom of Heaven was established.

## •B. THE WONDERS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMING OF THE "**DAY OF THE LORD**" (READ 2:30-31).

- 1. This is in heavy apocalyptic voice.

- 2. It is never to be interpreted literally, but symbolically.
- 3. This is a recurring theme and image depicting coming judgment used over and over by the prophets of God.

•C. **THERE WILL BE DELIVERANCE IN MOUNT ZION AND JERUSALEM (READ 2-32).**

- 1. The word sarid (סָרִיד, NÜ) = survivors; it can also be translated remnant.
- 2. A similar word sheerith (שְׂרִיטָה, ÅLÔ) = remnant as is found in Jeremiah 31:7 where he says, "...give praise and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel.'"
- 3. The word sarid comes from a root meaning survivor, and sheerith comes from a root word meaning to escape. Both hold the idea of a remnant or those who remain.
- 4. The saved are those who remain after the judgment of the Lord passes!

•D. **THINGS THAT SHALL OCCUR "IN THOSE DAYS" (3:1-17).**

- 1. (READ 3:1-3) God proposes to judge the nations "in those days and at that time".
  - a. What time does "in those days and at that time" refer to?
    - 1) Obviously it refers to the same time as is mentioned as "afterwards" in 2:28-32. It is the days before the Day of the Lord.
    - 2) When the Day of the Lord was at hand. Prophets spoke of these days as

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON FOUR

### Amos – The Country Prophet

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#### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Amos was a herdsman from the southern nation of Judah that was called by God to go up and preach against the sins of the northern kingdom, Israel.
- B. Jeroboam, the first northern king, had established the worship of the golden calves at Dan and at Bethel.
  - 1. Amos appeared at one of their services at Bethel and spoke out.
  - 2. The herdsman-prophet went up to Bethel and by inspiration announced God's coming judgment upon the nations surrounding Israel for all their sins and crimes.
  - 3. He got the ear of the people as they probably uttered "Amen" to his sermon, and "Preach on brother!"
  - 4. But then the prophet stopped "preaching" and started "meddling" talking about the sins of Israel.
- C. Israel was at the peak of its prosperity but had reached bottom spiritually, and was morally corrupt and decadent.
- D. The Theme of the Book: Jehovah is the God of Righteousness and Judgment.
- E. The Message of the Book: **D – O – O – M !!**
- F. Or lesson on Amos will discuss:
  - 1. Who Was Amos?
  - 2. When Was Amos Written?
  - 3. The Times When Amos Lived.
  - 4. The Message.
  - 5. An Outline of Amos
  - 6. Applications and Lessons from Amos to our times.

## **I. WHO WAS AMOS THE PROPHET?**

### **A. Name Amos comes from a Hebrew word which means "burden bearer."**

1. Word Amos is a derivative of Hebrew word "Amas", meaning "to carry."
2. It seems to fit Amos because his profession was not that of being a prophet.
  - a. He was a shepherd of mountain sheep.
  - b. He was a fruit picker.
  - c. But God gave to him the burden of a message to bring from God to Israel.
3. Frequently called "The Prophet of Righteousness" because of his bold outcries against the moral decay around him.
4. No reference to anyone in his family - not even his father's name.
5. He came from the village of Tekoa in Judah (the southern kingdom).
  - a. It is a small village 12 miles southwest of Jerusalem, 5 to 6 miles south of Bethlehem.
  - b. Located in the mountainous region of Judea.
  - c. Indicates that Amos was a resident of Judah sent to Israel to inform them of God's pending judgment against them.
  - d. By profession Amos was a herdsman and cultivator of sycamore or wild fig trees (seqmim, HEBREW).
    - 1) The word translated "shepherd" comes from a root word "nakads" which indicates a type of sheep herded (it was smaller and spotted with superior wool). Amos was not just a shepherd, he was a mountain shepherd.
    - 2) He also harvested the fruit of the sycamore tree. This fruit (wild figs) was somewhat woody in nature. It was eaten by the poorer people and had to be pinched or bruised before it would ripen (George Adam Smith quoted by Homer Hailey).
  - e. From these humble circumstances God sent Amos to Bethel in Israel where wine flowed, honey dripped and where excesses of every kind abounded.
    - 1) Amos was truly a country bumpkin in the big city.
    - 2) He was not impressed with Israel's excesses and wasted no time in preaching God's message of pending condemnation for their sins if they did not repent.

### **B. Amos' message was directly from God.**

1. He was obviously a country preacher who was good at his job...his message was easy to understand...his method was effective....
2. He got the people's attention by prophesying the destruction of Israel's enemies: Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab then Judah....
3. After getting their attention....he prophesied concerning Israel's sin.
4. It was not popular...in 7:10-17 he will be rebuked by Amaziah a false priest and Jeroboam II the king who tell him to leave Israel and stop prophesying.

5. Though he was called from humble occupations to serve God as a bold preacher of reform he fulfilled his mission.

**C. A Character Sketch of Amos.**

1. Amos was humble – he did not try to hide his station in life.
2. Amos was wise – he did not preach over the heads of the people.
3. Amos was clever – he caught the people’s fancy by judging their enemies first.
4. Amos was fearless – he did not tickle his listener’s ears, he told the truth.
5. Amos was faithful – fourteen times he will say “thus says the Lord!”

**II. THE DATE WHEN AMOS PREACHED.**

**A. (1:1) Called to prophecy in the “in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.”**

1. The earthquake doesn't help us much, as there were several during this time period in the history of Israel.
2. Most commonly agreed between 760 and 750 BC.

**B. Amos lived during the time of Hosea, and probably during the times of Jonah and Joel.**

1. He followed Obadiah but his message is very similar... Amos 1:11-12 reads, “Thus says the LORD, ‘For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever. So I will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.’” Now look at Obadiah vs. 10-14, “Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, On the day that strangers carried off his wealth, And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem-- You too were as one of them. Do not gloat over your brother's day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast In the day of their distress. Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster. Do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives; And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress.”

2. He also followed Joel but uses some of the very same phrases.... Look at Amos 1:2, “He said, ‘The LORD roars from Zion And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.’” Compare this with Joel 3:16, “The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble.”

### III. LIFE IN ISRAEL DURING THE TIMES OF AMOS.

#### A. Amos prophesied during a time when the national prosperity was great.

1. Great prosperity, commercial advantages, and material wealth were at their peak.
  - a. Israel would never have this level of prosperity again!
  - b. Rich getting richer - Poorer getting poorer.
2. Luxury, ease, and idleness brought decay to the nation.
  - a. In Amos 5:11 we read, "Therefore because you impose heavy rent on the poor And exact a tribute of grain from them, Though you have built houses of well-hewn stone, Yet you will not live in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine."
  - b. And in Amos 6:4 –6 tells gives us a description of the these times: "Those who recline on beds of ivory And sprawl on their couches, And eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall, Who improvise to the sound of the harp, And like David have composed songs for themselves, Who drink wine from sacrificial bowls While they anoint themselves with the finest of oils, Yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph."
  - c. Does this sound familiar?

#### B. Amos writes like Jonah during a time for Israel when there were two great problems....

1. The nation had become corrupt in its relationship with God.
2. Assyria as a nation was conquering the entire world, and she was breathing down the back of Israel.
3. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah all preached during this time and their messages were all similar....
  - a. God's rule is universal...
    - 1) All the prophets will advise Israel to trust in the Lord who rules the nations.
    - 2) Instead if you read Israel's history she will turn to the king of Assyria for protection rejecting God and refusing to trust Him.
    - 3) In the end Assyria will destroy Israel.
  - b. God's character is holy and righteous...
    - 1) Israel will rebel against God and seek Him in unrighteous ways...they will try to create Jehovah in the image of the idols of the nations around them resulting in insult to Jehovah.
    - 2) They will try to appease God with worship rituals while pursuing a way of life which is abhorrent to God.

#### C. The Moral condition of the people is spelled out clearly in 6:1-6 (READ TEXT).

1. They laughed at the day of doom: thought of it as foolishness.
2. Thought they were indestructible.

- a. For ever prophets of God, there were many false prophets telling the people that everything was as God wanted it to be...
- b. [READ 1 KINGS 22:1-9...](#)

**D. Religion had evolved into a mere formality and mere token adherence to God's laws.**

1. Notice God's response to their worship: "I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps" (Amos 5:21-23).
  - a. God hates worship that is not from the heart.
  - b. That which is not sincere is a waste of time.
2. Jeroboam I the first king of Israel after the split with Judah instituted worship to God at Bethel and at Gad ([READ 1 KINGS 12:26-33](#)).
  - a. The people were trying to worship Jehovah the way the nations around them worshipped their idols resorting to sinful practices on the high places that Jeroboam I had built... high places were shady resort type places where idolaters reveled in sinful sexual practices.
  - b. Idolatry was very popular in the nations around Israel and Judah.
  - c. Israel from the start tried to worship Jehovah the way the nations around them worshipped their idols...it appealed to men but angered and insulted God.
3. Notice what God says about this worship, "These who pant after the very dust of the earth on the head of the helpless also turn aside the way of the humble; And a man and his father resort to the same girl In order to profane my holy name. On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined" (Amos 2:7-8).
4. Amos 4:4 states that it was sinful, "Enter Bethel and transgress; In Gilgal multiply transgression! Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days." It was a place of transgression instead of a place of worship to Jehovah.
5. In Amos 5:26 Amos says, "You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves."
  - a. The worst insult against Jehovah is that they had misrepresented Him as no more than an idol.
  - b. In our worship today...we need to be very careful that we are not trying to please ourselves in our worship of God which insults His desire to be praised.
    - 1) We need to be innovative in our worship to keep our praise a sacrifice and offering to God and to guard against becoming ritualistic and unfeeling.
    - 2) But we must be very careful to guard against forgetting why we worship....to please God.
      - a) Worship was meant to exhort one another....in our common spiritual pursuit of praising God.
      - b) But it was not meant to entertain and please man.

- c) When we make worship an entertainment and we forget God's will, we run the risk of doing what Israel did....worship in a way that insults God's righteousness and even results in open rebellion and sin.

**E. It was in this atmosphere that Amos was given his commission.**

## **IV. THE MESSAGE OF AMOS.**

### **A. Israel's Strongholds were not strong!**

1. They were saying to themselves: God is our God and we are His people! And they thought that privilege demanded continued blessing instead of implying and involving responsibility.

a. Israel felt spiritually secure for three reasons:

- 1) They were God's chosen people (which we are dealing with now).
- 2) They had been delivered out of Egypt, and they believed He would never forsake them now.
- 3) They worshipped regularly, and believed that would appease Jehovah.

b. They felt sure that God would never forsake them!

c. The mission of Amos was to challenge their false trust in God and make them aware that God would not overlook their sins or fail to punish them. They had chosen to forget that God is righteous and just.

1) Amos tells them that judgment was coming. In 5:18-20 he comments on the day of the Lord saying, "Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?"

2) He shows them that it is not something to look forward to because of their present spiritual condition.

2. Their second stronghold also had to be exposed as weak: Because God brought Israel out of Egypt as Amos states in 2:10, the people felt that God would not forsake them now.

a. Amos exposes this as a false argument.

- 1) They had forsaken God.
- 2) He was about to forsake them.

b. Look at Amos 9:7-10, "Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?' declares the LORD. 'Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, And the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,' Declares the LORD. 'For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations As grain is shaken in a

sieve, But not a kernel will fall to the ground. All the sinners of My people will die by the sword, Those who say, 'The calamity will not overtake or confront us.'”

3. Their third stronghold was the fact that they worshipped God regularly thinking God was appeased by it.

a. Amos tells Israel that God demands right rather than rites!

b. He exposes their worship as a sham: “Enter Bethel and transgress; In Gilgal multiply transgression! Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days. Offer a thank offering also from that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, make them known. For so you love to do, you sons of Israel,’ Declares the Lord GOD” (Amos 4:4-5).

c. And he exhorts Israel to seek God righteously exposing the worship at Bethel and Gad as vain: “For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, ‘Seek Me that you may live. But do not resort to Bethel And do not come to Gilgal, Nor cross over to Beersheba; For Gilgal will certainly go into captivity And Bethel will come to trouble” (Amos 5:4-5).

d. Amos shows Israel that heartless worship does not appease God: “I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps” (Amos 5:21-23).

1) It angers Him.

2) God cannot be bought with our worship.

## **B. Amos’ view of Israel...**

1. They are indeed the people of Jehovah (2:9-10; 3:1-2).

2. Amos point out God’s ideal for Israel: “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities....But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream...” (3:2; 5:24).

3. Israel’s sins are exposed:

a. Oppression of the poor (5:7, 11).

b. Judges taking bribes (5:12).

c. Businessmen were dishonest (8:5-6).

d. They sold the righteous into slavery (2:6-7).

e. Sexual immorality was rampant (2:7).

f. They opposed the truth and told the prophets of God not to preach (2:12; 5:10).

g. The people were obsessed with materialism...

1) Their women (4:1).

2) All the people (3:15; 6:1-6).

h. Their religion and worship was corrupted (4:4-5; 5:21-23).

## **C. Amos’ message was a message of DOOM!**

1. At this point, Israel was all ready doomed.

2. The nation was going to be carried into exile and all of its glory would perish.
3. Within 30 years from the times of these prophecies, Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians - 722 BC.

**D. Amos's message: Jehovah is a God of Justice and Righteousness (5:6-9, 24), yet He is also a God of mercy (7:2, 5; 5:15).**

## **V. AN OUTLINE OF AMOS.**

### **A. Judgments of God against the nations for their sins (1:1- 2:16).**

1. "For three transgressions....and for four..." = means this was not isolated transgressions, but a pattern of transgressions.
2. Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah and Israel all prophesied against.

### **B. Details of Israel's sins and the coming judgment (3:1- 6:14).**

1. (3:1-15) God had established a special relationship with Israel, but because of iniquity and oppression, they would be punished.
2. The list of sins against Israel (4:1-13).
  - a. (4:1-3) Pompous women.
  - b. (4:4-5) Vain and Insincere worship.
  - c. (4:6-11) They ignored the other signs of God to try to steer them back to obedience.
    - 1) Not only did they dishonor God in their worship.
    - 2) They insulted Him further by ignoring His work to bring them to repentance.

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON FIVE

### Hosea - God's Redeeming Love

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. At about the same time that old Amos was preaching to the northern kingdom of Israel, another prophet came on to the scene...
  - 1. His name was Hosea.
  - 2. The name means "salvation" or "deliverance."
    - a. Joshua's name was the same as this prophet before Moses changed it (Numbers 13:8, 16).
    - b. Joshua = savior and comes from the root word meaning salvation. Jesus is the Greek word for savior or Joshua.
- B. While the audience was the same, there were some differences...
  - 1. Amos was a country prophet from Judah (Tekoa) to the south; Hosea appears to have been from Israel.
  - 2. While Amos showed little patience with his northern relatives, Hosea displayed a large degree of sympathetic understanding toward his own people.
  - 3. Some might say that Amos was reminiscent of John the Baptist in his approach, and Hosea is reminiscent of how Jesus approached people.
    - a. As we get into this lesson we'll see why Hosea was more sympathetic.
    - b. Ezekiel maybe closer to Hosea in his style than any other prophet, but Hosea's message stands alone in its uniqueness.
- C. Hosea preached in Israel during a long period of time. According to the references of the kings listed in the first chapter, there is a 65 year span of time between them.
  - 1. He preached in Israel northern kingdom after the land was divided by God.
    - a. Its capital was the city of Samaria.
    - b. And its religious centers were Gad and Bethel.
  - 2. Not only was Amos a contemporary with Hosea, he also preached at the same time as Jonah in the northern kingdom Israel.
  - 3. Hosea preached in Israel as Isaiah and Micah preached in Judah maybe at the same time.

- D. It was a time of great prosperity and great sin and great rebellion against God in Israel, and finally of great tragedy as Israel faced certain destruction in judgment by God's hand.
  - 1. During this time Israel had given itself over to the foreign idol worship of the nations around them.
    - a. They had even turned worship to Jehovah into the same type of idolatry worshipping on altars built on the "high places." This dishonored God's will and His laws just as it degraded the Most High to be reckoned as no more than an idol.
    - b. Judah also was doing the same things, but they were just starting what Israel had long been doing.
  - 2. In America today we have honky-tonk bars and night places where unrestrained pleasure is advocated, and many enter into this type of revelry...this is portrayed on television as every day activities of most people as traditional values are down played and rarely ever advocated.... (and this is our problem)....
  - 3. But in Hosea's day the places of revelry were the religious places where the idols were worshipped.
    - a. It is no wonder that the Israelites were so drawn to them....it was the in thing to do...it was fun!
    - b. Idolatry offered an easy religion which did not restrain passions and lusts....they actually fulfilled them...there was absolutely no restraint to a person's pursuit of pleasure...as a matter of fact idolatry was base and hedonistic in nature...
    - c. As we saw in our study of Amos, the people of Israel traded a relationship with Jehovah with the seeming restraints of His laws and regulations for a relationship with self-created idols which offered no physical restraints at all.
- E. Hosea will show us that God viewed idolatry as an act of unfaithfulness or an act of adultery on Israel's part.
  - 1. Jehovah was like a husband to Israel just as Jesus is like a bride groom to the church today...
  - 2. And they were acting like an unfaithful wife.

## **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.**

### **•A. HOSEA THE MAN...**

- 1. His father was named as Beerli (Hosea 1:1), but nothing more is known of him or his ancestors.

- 2. Some think he may have been a priest, in view of his high regard for the duties and responsibilities of the priesthood.
- 3. In the book we learn of his wife, Gomer (Hosea 1:3) and his children...
  - a. Jezreel, a son (Hosea 1:4).
  - b. Lo-Ruhamah, a daughter (Hosea 1:6).
  - c. Lo-Ammi, another son (Hosea 1:8-9).

•B. **THE DATE OF THE BOOK... 753-725 B.C....**

- 1. The date could be from before 753 B.C. which was at the end of Jeroboam's reign in Israel to as late as 725 which was at start of Hezekiah's reign in Judah. It could not have gone beyond 722 B.C. which marked the destruction of Samaria and Israel by Assyria.
- 2. Hosea preached during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. And Jeroboam II is also mentioned as ruling in Israel (Hosea 1:1).
- 3. Most place the date at 750-725 B.C.
- 4. Hosea was probably a young man when Amos was finished with his ministry.

•C. **A LITTLE MORE BACKGROUND OF THE TIMES.**

- 1. For a historical background to the times of Hosea the prophet read 2 Kings cps. 14 - 17 and 2 Chronicles 26-29.
- 2. The northern kingdom of Israel was on its last legs....
  - a. Sin was even more rampant than seen in the book of Amos.
  - b. Religious, moral and political corruption was rampant.
- 3. One word sums up the condition of the nation of Israel: Harlotry (whoredom, KJV). The word is used thirteen times throughout the book.

•D. **THEME:** Jehovah is a God of righteousness, justice and love.

•E. **MESSAGE:** The nation that forgets or does not know God's nature is doomed.

### **III. ISRAEL'S CONDITION AT THE TIME OF HOSEA'S PREACHING.**

•A. **ISRAEL'S BLACKLIST OF SINS...**

- 1. Falsehood (4:1-2). "Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: 'There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.'" (NIV).
- 2. Licentiousness (4:11). "Harlotry, wine and new wine take away the understanding."
  - a. The NIV uses the word "prostitution."

- b. The word used in the Hebrew is "**zenuth**" = fornication, adultery, infidelity, unfaithfulness, or whoredom as used in the KJV.
- c. In other words just another Saturday night watching television....
- 3. Murder (5:2). "**The rebels are deep in slaughter.**" (NIV).
  - a. The word for "**depravity**" in the NASV and "**slaughter**" in the NIV comes from the Hebrew word "**shachat**."
  - b. It comes from a primitive root meaning "to slaughter (in sacrifice or to massacre); to kill, to offer, to shoot out, to slay, to slaughter."
- 4. Robbery (7:1-2). "**When I would heal Israel, The iniquity of Ephraim is uncovered, And the evil deeds of Samaria, For they deal falsely; The thief enters in, Bandits raid outside, And they do not consider in their hearts That I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; They are before My face.**"
- 5. Oppression (12:7). "**A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, He loves to oppress.**"

#### •B. GOD'S FIGURES FOR THE SINNERS...

- 1. An adulterous wife (3:1).
- 2. A wine - inflamed drunkard (4:11). "**Harlotry, wine and new wine take away the understanding.**"
- 3. A backsliding heifer (4:16).
- 4. As troops of robbers (6:9).
- 5. Hot as an oven (7:7). "
- 6. A cake not turned (half-baked) (7:8).
- 7. Like a silly dove (7:11).
- 8. Like a deceitful bow (7:16).
- 9. Swallowed up (8:8).
- 10. A vessel wherein is no delight (8:8).
- 11. A wild ass (8:9).

#### •C. THOSE THINGS ISRAEL LACKS...

- 1. A lack of knowledge.... "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children**" (4:6). In 6:3 & 6 it reads: "**So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth....For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**" In 8:12 God says, "**Though I wrote for him ten thousand precepts of My law, They are regarded as a strange thing.**"

- 2. A lack of trust in God....
  - a. Israel trusted the king of Assyria instead of trusting God, "When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah his wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb. But he is unable to heal you, Or to cure you of your wound" (5:13).
  - b. They trust anyone but God, "So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense; They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria" (7:11).
  - c. Though they worship God, they do not exalt nor trust Him: "They will not return to the land of Egypt; But Assyria--he will be their king Because they refused to return to Me. The sword will whirl against their cities, And will demolish their gate bars And consume them because of their counsels. So My people are bent on turning from Me. Though they call them to the One on high, None at all exalts Him" (11:5-7).
- 3. A lack of leadership....
  - a. The leaders who should have been teaching the people did not know any more than they did who God was...listen: "Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; For your people are like those who contend with the priest. So you will stumble by day, And the prophet also will stumble with you by night; And I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (4:4-6).
  - b. The priests are describes as a band of robbers and murders: "Gilead is a city of wrongdoers, Tracked with bloody footprints. And as raiders wait for a man, So a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem; Surely they have committed crime." (8:8-9).
  - c. In 9:7 the prophet is described as a "fool" and the inspired man as "demented," and these are Israel's leaders.
    - 1) As go the leaders so goes the nation.
    - 2) That is why the requirements for shepherds in the Lord's church are so exacting.
- 4. Look at (7:5-7), "On the day of our king, the princes became sick with the heat of wine; He stretched out his hand with scoffers, For their hearts are like an oven As they approach their plotting; Their anger smolders all night, In the morning it burns like a flaming fire. All of them are hot like an oven, And they consume their rulers; All their kings have fallen. None of them calls on Me."
- 5. A lack of love for God....
- 6. As Gomer did not love Hosea, so Israel did not love God (cps. 1-3).
  - a. Look again at (11:1-4), "When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. The more they called them, The more they went from them; They kept sacrificing to the Baals And burning incense to idols. Yet it is I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms; But they did not know that I healed

them. I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, And I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws; And I bent down and fed them."

- 1) God loved Israel.
- 2) Yet Israel despised God in the end.

#### **IV. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK...**

- A. The book of Hosea contains the story of the prophet's broken home and his broken heart.
  - 1. Some scholars think this story is only an allegory to impart the lesson of Israel's unfaithfulness.
  - 2. Some think Hosea married a woman who was a temple prostitute at God's command.
  - 3. Others think Gomer was just a woman Hosea married who got caught up in the events of the time and became unfaithful.
  - 4. We may never know for sure which of these is true, but we know that God's word contains only truth and imparts instruction for our learning (Rom. 15:4).
- B. An analogy is made between Hosea's experience with Gomer, and the Lord's experience with Israel.
  - 1. This analogy is described in chapters 1-3...
  - 2. And it serves as the backdrop to the rest of the book.

#### **V. THE STORY OF HOSEA AND GOMER.**

- A. God said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord" (Hosea 1:2).
  - 1. Personally I would like to think that Gomer and Hosea were two young people who loved each other.
  - 2. Unfortunately they lived in a time of "flagrant harlotry" and "forsaking" of the Lord.
- B. Hosea was a prophet of God. Maybe his and Gomer's marital problems began because they did not share the same commitment to Jehovah.
  - 1. It could be that marriage problems began because Hosea refused to go to the popular parties because it involved worship of an idol (I know these are "maybe's" and not facts, but the Bible does tell us that Gomer and Hosea's marriage broke up).
  - 2. I can hear the criticism of a person like Gomer...
    - a. "Jehovah is not the only god in the world you know!"
      - 1) I have friends who worship Baal, and they say he's the only god.
      - 2) We say Jehovah is the only god. It's time for both of us to loosen up a little bit? (It's hard to argue with this kind of worldly logic...especially if it comes from your husband or your wife).
    - b. Listen, Hosea, we can still worship Jehovah, but why do we have to be so disrespectful of all the other gods.

- c. Hosea, you are bigoted and narrow-minded. You think your god is the only right god.
  - d. You bore me...all you ever do is preach doom and destruction, doom and destruction....all I hear is 'you can't do this and you can't do that!' You can't do anything if you follow Jehovah like you do!
  - e. Come on honey, why can't we bow down to Baal and enjoy ourselves a little?"
- C. Hosea must have lived in an unhappy house, but, then, Gomer becomes pregnant. I wonder if maybe this might have brought hope back into their marriage for a while. She gives him a son. God tells Hosea to name him **"Jezreel!"**
- 1. Jezreel is a valley from Mt. Carmel to Mt. Tabor and Gilboa. It is the valley known as Armageddon in the book of Revelation.
  - 2. It is a place where God made the Children of Israel victorious in battle...maybe Hosea thinks: at last a "victory."
  - 3. Then God speaks...Jezreel will not be the sight of victory this time, but of defeat where Israel will be judged and scattered because of their sin.
    - a. In the text God mentions the punishment of the house of Jehu for all those he killed coming to power.
    - b. Hosea began preaching during the life of the last king of the house of Jehu, Jeroboam III (22 years of civil unrest followed his death).
- D. Years later, we must assume Hosea has been preaching all this time, Gomer is no longer faithful to Hosea at all...she is becoming a harlot...and a daughter is born.
- 1. This child may not be Hosea's child.
  - 2. God calls her **"Lo-ruhamah"** = no love, no pity.
  - 3. Surely, this is how Hosea feels in his own household.
- E. Later another son is born...God calls him **"Lo-ammi"** = not my people.
- 1. Now Hosea knows the child is not his own. The child is the son of one of Gomer's lovers.
  - 2. Still, Hosea loves his wife...he does not divorce her even though by law he had the right.
    - a. No doubt he was scorned by his enemies.
    - b. I wonder if people called him a fool.
    - c. No doubt they say, "Here is a prophet teaching against what his own wife practices." "Hosea, you are a joke!"
- F. One day Hosea returns to an empty house...Gomer leaves him for years before she returns...
- 1. His children are deserted...
  - 2. The Text does not tell us how long Gomer was gone...probably for years and years especially since Hosea was a prophet for so long a time span.

•3. Through Hosea's tears for his lost wife he saw deeper into the heart of God than any man before him...

•G. The things Hosea saw are the lessons this book teaches us....

## VI. AN OUTLINE OF HOSEA.

### I. ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS PICTURED (1:1-3:5).

•A. (1:1-11) **GOMER'S UNFAITHFULNESS SYMBOLIZED ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS.** The names God tells Hosea to give to Gomer's three children express God's judgment upon the nation....

- 1. Jezreel = Scattered by God.
- 2. Lo-Ruhama = Not pitied (loved).
- 3. Lo-Ammi = Not My people.

•B. (2:1-13) **DETAILS OF GOMER'S AND ISRAEL'S ADULTRY.** "I will punish her for the days of the Baals When she used to offer sacrifices to them And adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me,' declares the LORD" (2:13).

•C. (2:14-3:5) **DETAILS OF GOMER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HOSEA.**

- 1. God will woo Israel back because of His love (2:14-23).
- 2. Hosea is instructed to buy Gomer back ((3:1-5).

## •D. **SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION...**

- 1. In these first three chapters, God used Hosea to teach Israel an object lesson....
  - a. Through Hosea's experience with Gomer, God provided Israel a concrete illustration of what His relationship with Israel had been like.
  - b. Israel had played the harlot; but God would take her back, following a period of punishment and probation.
- 2. Keeping this analogy in mind will assist us in our understanding of the remaining chapters of this book!
- 3. A lesson to be learned for us from this analogy is how God views apostasy....He views it as spiritual harlotry!
  - a. Christians, we are "betrothed to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2).
  - b. But we too can become spiritual harlots if we are not careful! Paul warns, "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).

### II. ISRAEL'S SINS PROCLAIMED (4:1-7:16).

•A. **GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL'S GUILT (4:1-19).**

- 1. (4:1-5) Israel's Moral Corruption in Everyday Life.

- 2. (4:6-10) Israel's Lack of Knowledge - The Failure of the Priests.
- 3. (4:11-14) Israel's Immoral Religious Practices.
- 4. (4:15-19) Israel is Joined to Her Idols - Let Judah take Warning.

•B. **GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL'S CORRUPT LIFE STYLE (5:1-15).**

- 1. (5:1-7) The Guilt of the Priests, the People and the Princes (everyone).
- 2. (5:8-15) Judgment must follow - Everyone will suffer the consequences...the destruction will be slow but sure.

•C. **GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL'S INSINCERITY - AN ABOMINATION BEFORE THE LORD (6:1-11).**

- 1. (6:1-3) Israel's return without heartfelt repentance.
- 2. (6:4-11) God is not deceived - Israel has no sorrow for her sins.

•D. **GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL'S POLITICS (7:1-16).**

- 1. (7:1-7) Israel's internal government - Moral degradation and anarchy.
- 2. (7:8-16) Israel's foreign policy - Israel appealed to foreign nations instead of trusting God. In the end this will be her destruction.

III. **ISRAEL'S JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED (8:1-10:13).**

•A. **JUDGMENT - NATIONAL CORRUPTIONS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (8:1-14).**

- 1. (8:1-7) Judgment has become inevitable - idolatry is an abomination - Israel will reap what she has sown.
- 2. (8:8-10) Israel's appeals to the nations will not save her.
- 3. (8:11-14) Multiplied idolatry - Its harvest: Condemnation and Judgment.

•B. **THE DEGENERACY OF ISRAEL AND THE RUIN OF ITS KINGDOM (9:1-10:15).**

- 1. (9:1-9) The Apostasy and its Punishment is Pronounced: EXILE!
- 2. (9:10-17) God will leave Israel as He found Her - In need of Jehovah (parched and dry).
- 3. The Guilt of Israel and Her Eminent Destruction (10:1-8).
  - a. (10:1-3) Puppet kings and puppet gods.
  - b. (10:4-5) Their Righteousness has now become poison.
  - c. (10:6-8) Assyria is named as the instrument of God's Judgment.
- 4. (10:9-15) Israel's Persistence in Rebellion.

IV. **ISRAEL'S RESTORATION PROMISED (11:1-14:9).**

•A. **JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR PRODIGAL ISRAEL (11:1-11).**

- 1. (11:1-7) Israel's Ingratitude (This takes us back to Israel's history a third time; see also 9:10; 10:9; 11:1).

- 2. (11:8-11) Israel deserved utter destruction - but God's love tempers judgment with mercy.

**•B. ISRAEL'S APOSTASY AND GOD'S FIDELITY (11:12-13:16).**

- 1. Israel's degeneracy into Canaanitish ways (11:12-12:14).
  - a. (11:12-12:6) Worldliness - Israel is deceitful and Judah unsteadfast.
  - b. (12:7-14) Israel has become Canaan.
- 2. Israel's deep fall (13:1-16).
  - a. (13:1-8) Idolatry is the basis of Israel's destruction.
  - b. (13:9-16) Distrust of Jehovah is the basis of Israel's destruction.

**•C. ISRAEL'S CONVERSION AND PARDON (14:1-9).**

- 1. (14:1-8) God's grace once more to those who turn to Him!
- 2. (14:9) Epilogue of the Book - In the end Israel cries unto Jehovah, and He hears their cry and responds by an outpouring of rich blessings upon them.

**VII. WHAT HOSEA SAW AND LEARNED ABOUT GOD.**

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON SIX

### Jonah - Messenger to Nineveh

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **•A. JONAH THE PROPHET...**

- 1. The book of Jonah is a humiliating confession by its author that shows his growth in the Lord as he becomes the great prophet of 2 Kings 14.
  - a. Jonah had to learn some important lessons: namely, that God is everywhere and one can't run away from Him....
  - b. And secondly that God is concerned about every nation and the citizens, the children and even the animals in every nation.
- 2. The book is often accused of being myth by modernist and religious liberals because of the miracle of the great fish.
  - a. But Jonah was a real person (2 Kings 14:24) and Jesus credited the story of the great sea creature as factual (Matt. 12:39-41).
- 3. The Lord also represents the story as true that Nineveh repented (Luke 11:29-32).
- 4. There is no way to doubt the historicity of Jonah and have regard for the integrity of Jesus.

#### **•B. BACKGROUND....**

- 1. Jonah was a well known prophet of God associated with the royal court of Jeroboam II (ca 790-749 BC).
- 2. Jonah was a states-man prophet like Isaiah and Jeremiah, not a 'backwoods' prophet like Elijah or John the Baptist.
- 3. He was called to cry against that "great city" Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and long time enemy of Israel. Nineveh was surrounded by a complex of suburbs with a heavy population of about 600,000 at this time.
  - a. It was fortified with several walls, the greatest defense being a wall 8 miles long and 100 feet high and wide enough for three chariots to drive abreast, with 1500 towers which were 200 feet high.
  - b. Jonah's experience was a "sign" to the people of Nineveh and they repented upon hearing his message of destruction for their city.
- 4. In sack cloth and ashes they showed remorse for their evil and God spared them from destruction to the regret and pouting of Jonah.
- 5. Jonah is probably the most well known of "**The Minor Prophets**": **Jonah**, whose name means "**Dove**".
- 6. His book does not contain prophecy per se, rather it contains the history of a prophet...

- a. A prophet reluctant to fulfill the mission God assigned him.
- b. A prophet who complained when his mission proved successful -
- 7. This short book of "Jonah" easily falls into four sections...
  - a. **"Running Away From God"** (chapter one).
  - b. **"Running To God"** (chapter two).
  - c. **"Running With God"** (chapter three).
  - d. **"Running Ahead of God"** (chapter four).
- 8. It is the story of a man who tried to set himself up as the judge to determine who is worthy to receive God's pardon.
  - a. In many respects, you and I are a lot like Jonah.
  - b. So, the story of Jonah and the lessons to be learned are very applicable to us today.
- 9. In response to God's call Jonah began by running.....

[With the first chapter then, we soon find Jonah...]

## I. RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD (1:1-17).

### •A. AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER...

- 1. God commissions Jonah to preach in Nineveh (1:1-2).
- 2. Jonah rebels against God's plan (1:3).
- 3. God has a plan for Jonah (1:4-17).
  - a. He sends "a great wind on the sea" (1:4-16).
  - b. He prepares "a great fish" (1:17).

### •B. OBSERVATIONS IN READING THE TEXT...

- 1. Jonah is also mentioned in 2 Kin 14:23-25.
  - a. He prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 793-753 B.C.).
  - b. He was from Gath Hopher (4 miles NE of what was later Nazareth in Galilee).
- 2. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria.
  - a. It was located about 220 NNW of the present city of Baghdad.
  - b. The Assyrians were noted for their cruelty, especially to prisoners.
- 3. The city of Tarshish...

- a. A Phoenician outpost in SW Spain.
  - b. On the edge of the Mediterranean world, Jonah was running in the opposite direction of Nineveh.
- 4. In retrieving Jonah, God gained some converts (the sailors) - cf. 1:14-16.

•C. **LESSONS FROM CHAPTER ONE...**

•1. **Failure to do God's will is sin:** Jonah's disobedience was a sin of omission.

- a. We can speculate as to why Jonah did not want to do God's will....
  - 1) The Assyrians were dreaded enemies of the Hebrews.
  - 2) It would be the Assyrians who would devastate and destroy Samaria.
  - 3) Some think old Jonah knew these things by prophesy, therefore; he did not want to comply with God's instructions, but whatever the reason....
- b. It was willful refusal to answer God's call.
  - 1) James tells us in James 4:17, "**Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.**"
    - a) In the context of James cp. 4, James is talking about the person who makes his plans and lives his life ignoring the will or desire of God.
    - b) Or the person who lives seemingly independent of God....knowing God and living this way is sin says James.
  - 2) Jonah's sin was even worse that James describes.
  - 3) He knew God's command, and refused to do it.
- c. True obedience often involves more than what we avoid doing. It also involves our positive response to God's call to service.

•2. **God held Jonah accountable for his refusal to answer His call.**

- a. Jonah's attempt to defy God was futile.
  - 1) Where does one run in an attempt to get away from God?
  - 2) David said it this way, "**Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me**" (Psalm 139:7-10).
  - 3) What David knew by faith, Jonah found out in fact!
- b. God's judgment of Jonah was appropriate to his sin.
  - 1) The one fleeing is trapped.
  - 2) The means of his attempted escape (the sea) becomes the instrument of his punishment.

- 3. God concerns Himself with the wickedness of heathen nations (1:2).
- 4. One cannot run away from God! (Look at Ps 139:7-11).
- 5. God is able to use incidents in the lives of His servants for His glory (Look again at 1:5 with 1:14-16).

[With the end of chapter one, Jonah is now in the belly of the great fish. Having run away from God, we now find him...]

## II. RUNNING TO GOD (2:1-10).

### •A. AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER...

- 1. Jonah's prayer (2:1-9).
- 2. Jonah's deliverance (2:10).

### •B. OBSERVATIONS IN READING THE TEXT...

- 1. The prayer is written like a psalm; its present form may have been composed after the fact, looking back.
- 2. Jonah realized that what happened was God's doing (1:3).
- 3. It is interesting to note that his prayer is more of a THANKSGIVING, than a petition...

### •C. LESSONS FROM CHAPTER TWO...

#### •1. Jonah's repentance was motivated by God's judgment.

- a. The consequences of his sin forced him to reconsider the error of his ways.
  - 1) "Someone has observed that there are times when we must be made to go into the lowest depths that we may regain a living faith" (Hailey).
  - 2) It was not till Jonah found himself in the belly of that fish that he began to consider doing the Lord's will.
  - 3) Sometimes we, like Jonah, must suffer the consequences of our sin before we are ready to repent.
- b. But notice this fact....God worked with Jonah....
  - 1) Satan tries to get us to thinking: "Oh, God cannot use me. I'm doomed."
  - 2) That's hogwash. God used Jonah, and He can use you if you'll just wake up! After all, He is your creator, and He loves you.

#### •2. Jonah's repentance was motivated by God's mercy.

- a. Notice that Jonah's prayer thanks God for a deliverance already begun.

- 1) The creature which the Lord "provided" had saved Jonah from drowning and, Jonah anticipated a greater deliverance to come.
- 2) Jonah was maybe a bit more perceptive than we are sometimes.
- b. Likewise, God delivers us from the full consequences of our sin as an invitation to seek his even greater pardon.
  - 1) Paul states one of the most powerful and comforting statements when he says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).
  - 2) Notice how God demonstrates this fact: Jesus was set upon by Satanic forces becoming the object of everything that is unfair, cruel, unkind and sinful....yet by it salvation was provided for all who will accept it!
    - a) If you and I will just get with God....we will have become victorious....
      - 1] ....regardless of what happens to us!
      - 2] ....regardless of the forces that oppose us!
      - 3] ....regardless of the failures in us!
      - 4] ....regardless...because of the power that will be in us comes from God who channels it through us!
- c. God may run to our aid, but it is we who need to run....we need to run with all our might toward God...
  - 1) The church is almost destroyed because of a "take Him or leave Him" attitude towards Jesus and His church which exists among many today.
  - 2) This kind of attitude will get you swallowed up by the world every time!
  - 3) "If you are not with Me," says Jesus, "You are against me!"
- d. The reason we need to be running toward God is so we can run with Him!
- 3. **Prayers in time of need should be made with an attitude of thanksgiving as well as petition (Read Phil. 4:6).**

[Having learned his lesson, Jonah is now ready to do God's will; so we next see him...]

### III. RUNNING WITH GOD (3:1-10).

#### •A. AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER...

- 1. The Lord again commissions Jonah to preach in Nineveh (3:1-2).
- 2. Jonah obeys and proclaims God's message (3:3-4).
- 3. The people of Nineveh are moved to repent, including the king (3:5-9).

- 4. The Lord takes notice, and relents of the disaster He had intended to bring (3:10).

**•B. OBSERVATIONS IN READING THE TEXT...**

- 1. Jonah's message was brief, yet clear (3:4).
- 2. An unusual fast is proclaimed (3:5-7).
  - a. Three days without food AND water...
  - b. For both man AND beast...
- 3. With sackcloth for both man and beast, the king calls for a true change of behavior (3:8-9).
- 4. The king of Assyria reasons like the prophet Joel who says, "Who knows whether He will not turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?" (Joel 2:14).
- 5. Nineveh's example of repentance is a rebuke of Israel...
  - a. Israel in Jonah's own day is described (Read 2 Kings 17:13-14,18; 2 Chron. 36:15-16).
  - b. Israel in the days of Jesus is described (Matt. 12:41).

**•C. LESSONS FROM CHAPTER THREE...**

**•1. Jonah received a second chance to obey God's calling.**

- a. God is a God of "second chances."
  - 1) Was not David a king after God's own heart? God gave David several second chances.
  - 2) Was not Peter an apostle Jesus loved? Jesus gave Peter several second chances.
  - 3) And somehow....we delude ourselves into thinking that God cannot use us!? Will He not also give us another chance?
- b. He does not quickly give up on his children.
  - 1) Peter says, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
  - 2) We must learn that God is watching us intently because He loves us and wants us to be saved.
- c. Therefore, He is responsive to our repentance.
  - 1) When we seek his mercy, he does not begrudge it.
  - 2) That's what He has been waiting for!

**•2. When Jonah obeyed God's call and cooperated with His will, his ministry was blessed with power and success.**

- a. At the preaching of a Hebrew prophet a hostile, pagan nation was led to repentance.
- b. Never has there been recorded in scripture a more successful result from the preaching of repentance.
  - 1) From the king on down the people submitted before the Lord.
  - 2) Brethren, can you see the power of God's word to change lives that is released through a life that has fully submitted to His will.
    - a) When Jonah bowed before the Lord's will instead of trying to run away from it....look what happened!
    - b) God blessed Jonah's preaching with results....it was a blessing to God too...He wanted the people to repent.
- c. Remember God's words through Paul recorded in Eph. 3:20-21, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."
  - 1) There is a power within which we can tap...
  - 2) If we will run with God!
- 3. **Such preaching of condemnation is often conditional (Read Jer. 18:7-10).**
- 4. **The least likely prospects might be the ones who will convert (e.g., 1 Co 6:9-11).**
- 5. **We see the place of fasting and prayer, as one seeks to petition God (e.g., Ezr 8:21-23).**

[Jonah's mission was a success! Souls headed for destruction were saved! You would think that Jonah would have been elated. But in the final chapter we are surprised to see this prophet...]

#### IV. RUNNING AHEAD OF GOD (4:1-11).

##### •A. AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER...

- 1. Jonah vents his anger (4:1-4).
  - a. Angry because he knew that God would relent (4:1-2).
  - b. So angry that he desires to die (4:3-4).
- 2. God uses a plant, a worm, and a hot east wind to teach Jonah (4:5-8).
  - a. A plant to provide shade for Jonah (4:5-6).
  - b. A worm to destroy the plant (4:7).
  - c. A vehement east wind that with the sun exhausts Jonah (4:8).

- 3. God uses the plant to teach Jonah an object lesson (4:9-11).
  - a. Jonah is angry about the plant (4:9).
  - b. Shouldn't he have similar pity on Nineveh? (4:10-11).

•B. **OBSERVATIONS IN READING THE TEXT...**

- 1. We find Jonah manifesting a sectarian spirit...
  - a. Perhaps there was an underlying racism in Jonah's heart...
  - b. This may explain why he fled to Tarshish in the beginning.
- 2. He possessed the same spirit as:
  - a. The elder brother of the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-32).
  - b. The Pharisees toward Jesus eating with sinners (Matt 9:10-11).
- 3. Jonah is shown to have more compassion for a plant, than for innocent children!

•C. **LESSONS FROM CHAPTER FOUR...**

•1. **Jonah second-guesses God.**

- a. He resents God's offer of grace to Israel's enemies.
- b. Jonah is an intolerant nationalist who wishes to see his nation's enemies destroyed, not saved.
  - 1) Like me and like you sometimes, he did not trust what God was doing.
  - 2) In what amounts to an insult he thought God was making a mistake....at any rate he didn't like it.
- c. The Ninevites or Assyrians have been brutally do

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON SEVEN

Micah - Judgment Now, Blessings Later

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### INTRODUCTION:

# •A. TIME LINE INCLUDING JUDAH, ISRAEL AND ASSYRIA...

## JUDAH

- Amaziah 796-767

Co-regency: Amaziah & Uzziah 790-767

- Uzziah 767-739

Co-regency: Uzziah & Jotham 750-739

### (Isaiah 740-700)

- Jotham 750-735

Co-regency: Jotham & Ahaz 744-735

### (Micah 742-687)

- Ahaz 732-715

Co-regency: Ahaz & Hezekiah 725-715

722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

- Hezekiah 715-686

710 B.C. Sennacherib wastes most of Judah but his troops which surround Jerusalem are destroyed by God's angel.

Co-regency: Hezekiah & Manasseh 797-686

- Manasseh 697-642

### **(Nahum 664-612)**

- Amon 642-640

### **(Jeremiah 621-580)**

- Josiah 640-609

### **(Zephaniah 640)**

614 B.C. Assyrians defeated by Medes at Asher

612 B.C. Nineveh falls to Babylonians & Medes

- Jehoahaz 609

609 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar takes Haran from Assyrians; Judah made vassal to Babylon. Jehoiakim made king.

- Jehoiakim 609-598

### **(Habakkuk 605)**

605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Assyrians and Egyptians at Carchemish marking an end of the Assyrian empire.

605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar carries captives from Judah to Babylon.

- Jehoiachin 598/7
- Zedekiah 597-586

586 B.C. Jerusalem destroyed and Judah taken captive.

## **ISRAEL**

- Jehoash 798-782

Co-regency: Jehoash & Jeroboam II 793-782

- Jeroboam II 793-753

### **(Jonah 760)**

### **(Amos 760)**

### **(Hosea 755-722)**

- Zechariah 753-752
- Shallum 752
- Menahem 752-742

Menahem & Pekah with rule in dispute 752-742

- Pekahiah 742-740

Peka & Pekahiah with rule in dispute 742-740

- Peka 752-732
- Hosea 732-722

722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

## ASSYRIA

- Shalmaneser III 859-824

(seventy-five years of instability)

### (Jonah 760)

- Tiglath-pileser III 745-727
- Shalmaneser V 727-722

722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

- Sargon II 722-705

710 B.C. Sennacherib wastes most of Judah but his troops which surround Jerusalem are destroyed by God's angel.

- Sennacherib 705-681
- Esarhaddeon 681-669
- Ashurbanipal 669-627

(little is known after 627 of Assyrian kings)

- Asher-uballit 612-609

614 B.C. Ashur taken by the Medes

612 B.C. Nineveh captured by Babylonians and Medes

609 B.C. Haran taken.

605 B.C. Nebchadnezzar defeats the Assyrians and Egyptians at Carchemish marking an end of the Assyrian empire.

### •B. MAP OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE...

### •C. THE PROPHET...

- 1. He refers to himself as a native of Moresheth, near Gath in northern Philistia. It is about twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem.
- 2. Many scholars think he was probably a peasant farmer.
- 3. His activity as a prophet covers the reign of three kings from about 735 to as late as 687 B.C.
- 4. He preached in Judah at the same time Isaiah preached in Judah.
- 5. Because he doesn't mention his father's name it is concluded that his family was of insignificant and humble status.
- 6. Though he lived in Judah his message was "**concerning Samaria and Jerusalem**" (1:1).

## **I. DATE OF THE WRITING OF THE BOOK.**

- A. He preached during the "**days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.**"
- B. This gives him a span of from 20 to 55 years.
- C. We've set the date at 735 - 687.

## **II. BACKGROUND.**

- A. **BIBLICAL BACKGROUND (2 Kings 15:32-20:21; 2 Chronicles 27:1-32:33; Entire book of Isaiah).**
- B. **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS.**
  - 1. It was the golden age of prophecy and the black age of Judah.
    - a. It was a period of turmoil, strife, change and growth around the world.
    - b. It was a time when Assyria was changing into a world power.
    - c. Assyria had existed for years, but all of a sudden she changed and began to conquer instead of co-exist with the nations around her.
    - d. It spelled the end of nations who were swallowed up by others.
      - 1) Syria will be swallowed up by Assyria.
      - 2) Israel will also be swallowed up ceasing to exist.
  - 2. In 745 B.C. Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria began his conquest of the West. By 738 B.C. his army was in Syria and at the gates of Samaria, the capital of Israel to the north.
  - 3. Tired of Assyria's taxes Israel and Syria pled to Egypt for help.
    - a. Jotham the king of Judah and his son Ahaz refuse to join Israel and Syria.

- b. Rezin, the King of Syria, and Pekah, the King of Israel, war with Ahaz and defeat him sacking the city of Jerusalem.
  - c. It was a dark hour in Judah's history.
- 4. Ahaz King of Judah calls for help from Tiglath-pileser the King of Assyria.
    - a. It was foolish, and ultimately made Judah subject to Assyria.
    - b. Ahaz should have depended upon the Lord.
  - 5. Tiglath-pileser defeated both Syria and Israel making them vassals to Assyria.
    - a. Ahaz of Judah is forced to go to Damascus and pay allegiance to Assyria and accept his place as a vassel and puppet King.
    - b. God's people have now become a play thing for the powerful nations around them.
  - 6. After Tiglath-pileser's rule Israel is finally defeated in 722 B.C. by Shalmaneser V, Tiglath-pileser's son, after a three year siege when Hosea the King of Israel tried to revolt against Assyria.
  - 7. Sargon, Shalmaneser's son and the new king of Assyria, came upon the West after 722 B.C.
    - a. During his rule Assyria will rise to dominance in the world.
    - b. He afflicted terrible judgment upon nearly all of Philistia and Judah.
      - 1) Some how Hezekiah and Jerusalem are spared.
      - 2) Archeology has recorded Sargon's cruelty to those he captured. He would fix fish hooks into both sides of a defeated king's nose and mouth to hold him still. He would then approach with his knife and put the king's eyes out.
  - 8. At the death of Sargon in 705 B.C., the young Sennacherib came to power in Assyria.
    - a. In the west Egypt, Phoenecia, Philistia, Judah and some to the smaller kingdoms revolted.
    - b. Sennacherib defeated every rebel and only the direct intervention of God saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem (2 Kings 19).
      - 1) It was during these times that Hezekia the king of Judah rebelled against Assyria, and Shalmaneser the king of Assyria came and captured all the fortified cities of Judah.
      - 2) Archeological atrifacts found in Nineveh confirm the Biblical record.
      - 3) The Bible records that Hezekiah humbled himself before Shalmaneser and paid a high ransom to appease the king of Assyria, but the king sent 185,000 men to surround Jerusalem with an arrogance that even defied God, but God destroyed the force with an avenging angel and saved Jerusalem from sure destruction.

- 9. It was during these times that Micah preached.
  - a. They were stirring times.
  - b. God was leading His followers and gradually working out His own great purpose in the world.

**•10. HERE ARE SOME DATES OF IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL AND JUDAH DURING AND AFTER THE TIME OF MICAH THE PROPHET....**

- a. 722 B.C. when Samaria was destroyed and Israel ceased to exist as a nation.
- b. 614 B.C. when the Assyrians were defeated by the Medes at Asher.
- c. 612 B.C. Nineveh fell to Babylon and the Medes.
- d. 609 B.C. Haran fell to Nebuchadnezzar.
- e. 609 B.C. Jerusalem is sacked by Pharaoh Neco after King Josiah is killed. His son Jehoahaz rules for only three months till Neco took him to Egypt, and Jehoakim, brother to Jehoahaz and son of Josiah, is set up as a vassal king to Egypt.
- f. 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar put Babylon on top as the world power by defeating the remnants of the once mighty Assyrian army at Carcamesh. Egypt was also defeated with the Assyrians. Jehokim the king of Judah becomes a vassal to Babylon as Judah by this time is just a pawn in the hands of the powerful nations. She will remain as such till the time of Christ.
- g. 605 B.C. The first captives are carried to Babylonian captivity.
- h. 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar finally destroyed Jerusalem because of Judah's rebellion against him.
- i. It was during these dark and dismal times that God's prophets preached repentance to God's people.
  - 1) During this time Israel, Syria, Assyria and Judah all were defeated and ceased to be nations.
  - 2) However God's people because of God's grace maintained their identity even in captivity to bring Jesus our Lord into the world.

**•C. SOCIAL CONDITIONS...**

- 1. The nations of Judah and Israel were corrupt in administering justice...
  - a. 2:2 reads, "They covet fields and then seize them, And houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, A man and his inheritance."
  - b. 3:2, "You who hate good and love evil, Who tear off their skin from them And their flesh from their bones."
- 2. The religious leaders were full of greed, "Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And twist everything that is

straight, Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice. Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, 'Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us'" (3:9-11).

•3. The people were cruel and avaricious, "Recently My people have arisen as an enemy-- You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war. The women of My people you evict, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever" (2:8-9).

#### •D. RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS...

•1. False teachers abound. In 2:11 listen to Micah describe them, "If a man walking after wind and falsehood Had told lies and said, 'I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor,' He would be spokesman to this people."

•2. The false prophets say what people pay them to say and condemn those who don't. "Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets Who lead my people astray; When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry, 'Peace,' But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war" (3:5).

•3. Religion has taken on the activities of the nations around them involving, soothsaying, witchcraft, superstitions and idolatry. The result is that everyday life had deteriorated to become oppressive to everyone. The environment they had created was cursed.

•a. 7:2, "The godly person has perished from the land, And there is no upright person among men. All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; Each of them hunts the other with a net."

•b. 7:4-6, "The best of them is like a briar, The most upright like a thorn hedge. The day when you post your watchmen, Your punishment will come. Then their confusion will occur. Do not trust in a neighbor; Do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom Guard your lips. For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household."

#### •E. THE SINS OF THE TIMES...

•1. The poor were oppressed.

•a. 2:2, 8,9 reads, "They covet fields and then seize them, And houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, A man and his inheritance....Recently My people have arisen as an enemy-- You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war. The women of My people you evict, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever."

•b. 3:1-4, "And I said, 'Hear now, heads of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil, Who tear off their skin from them And their flesh from their bones, Who eat the flesh of my people, Strip off their skin from them, Break their bones And chop them up as for the pot And as meat in a kettle. Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not

answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds."

- 2. Unscrupulous use of power.
  - a. 2:1, "Woe to those who scheme iniquity, Who work out evil on their beds! When morning comes, they do it, For it is in the power of their hands."
  - b. 3:9-10, "Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And twist everything that is straight, Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice."
- 3. A lack of integrity.
  - a. 6:12, "For the rich men of the city are full of violence, Her residents speak lies, And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."
  - b. 7:2-6, "The godly person has perished from the land, And there is no upright person among men. All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; Each of them hunts the other with a net. Concerning evil, both hands do it well. The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe, And a great man speaks the desire of his soul; So they weave it together. The best of them is like a briar, The most upright like a thorn hedge. The day when you post your watchmen, Your punishment will come. Then their confusion will occur. Do not trust in a neighbor; Do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom Guard your lips. For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household."
- 4. A reckless scorn of religion.
  - a. 3:5-8, "Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets Who lead my people astray; When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry, "Peace," But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war. Therefore it will be night for you--without vision, And darkness for you--without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them. The seers will be ashamed And the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover their mouths Because there is no answer from God. On the other hand I am filled with power-- With the Spirit of the LORD-- And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin."
  - b. 5:12-14, "I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you will have fortune-tellers no more. I will cut off your carved images And your sacred pillars from among you, So that you will no longer bow down To the work of your hands. I will root out your Asherim from among you And destroy your cities."
- 5. False prophets.
  - a. (3:5) The prophets speak what the people want to hear and say what they are paid to say with no regard for the truth.
  - b. 3:7, "The seers will be ashamed And the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover their mouths Because there is no answer from God."

- c. 3:11, "Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, 'Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us.'"
- 6. There was a greedy corruption in "church" and in "state."

### **III. AN OUTLINE OF MICAH.**

#### **I. JUDGMENT UPON SAMARIA AND JUDAH - SALVATION OF A REMNANT (1:1-2:13).**

##### **•A. JUDGMENT UPON SAMARIA AND JUDAH (1:2-16).**

- 1. (1:2-7) Samaria -- her destruction.
  - a. General announcement of judgment (1:2-4).
  - b. Destruction of Samaria (1:5-7).
- 2. (1:8-16) Lament over the destruction of Judah.

##### **•B. CAUSES WHICH MAKE THE JUDGMENT INEVITABLE (2:1-11).**

- 1. (2:1-5) Arrogance and violence of the nobles.
- 2. (2:6-11) False prophets who would silence the true prophet.

##### **•C. EVENTUAL RESTORATION OF A REMNANT (READ 2:12-13).**

#### **II. CONTRAST BETWEEN DEVASTATION AND FUTURE EXALTATION (3:1-5:15).**

##### **•A. THE SINS AND CRIMES OF THE HEADS OF THE NATION (3:1-12).**

- 1. (3:1-4) Civil rulers -- outrages committed by them.
- 2. (3:5-8) False prophets -- condemnation of their mercenary practices.
- 3. (3:9-12) Rulers, prophets, and priests -- Renewed condemnation.
  - a. The accusation against them (3:1-11).
  - b. Consequence: Jerusalem to be plowed as a field (3:12).

##### **•B. THE MESSIANIC HOPE (4:1-5:15).**

- 1. (4:1-8) The glory of the latter days.
  - a. The glorification of Zion -- the center of universal religion of Jehovah (4:1-5).
  - b. The restoration of "the former dominion" -- healing of the dispersed (4:6-8).

- 2. (4:9-5:1) Distress and captivity before restoration, "now."
  - a. Distress -- Babylon before restoration (4:8-10).
  - b. Deliverance of Zion and destruction of the enemy -- Jehovah's purpose (4:11-5:1).
- 3. (5:2-15) The Messiah and the Messianic era.
  - a. The Messiah to arise out of Bethlehem, who shall feed the flock (5:2-4).
  - b. The Messiah to be the peace of His people (5:5-6).
  - c. The Messiah provides power to His people (5:7-9).
    - 1) The remnant to be as dew among the peoples (v.7).
    - 2) To be as a lion (v.8).
    - 3) To triumph over their enemies (v.9).
  - d. In this strength and power Israel is to triumph (5:10-15).

### **III. JEHOVAH AND ISRAEL IN CONTROVERSY (JUDICIAL CONTEST) - THE WAY TO SALVATION (6:1-7:20).**

#### **•A. THE CASE AGAINST ISRAEL (6:1-14).**

- 1. (6:1-5) Israel's ingratitude for blessings bestowed.
- 2. (6:6-8) Not outward sacrifice, but righteous conduct, is God's requirement.
- 3. (6:9-14) Jehovah's threat of judgment -- denunciation of prevalent crimes.

#### **•B. PENITENT PRAYER AND THE DIVINE PROMISE (7:1-20).**

- 1. (7:1-6) Confession of the nation's guilt (people or prophet).
- 2. (7:7-13) Confession of faith -- prayer of the penitent.
- 3. (7:14) Prayer for renewal of grace, (7:15-17) and the Lord's answer.
- 4. (7:18-20) Doxology: praise to Jehovah who alone is God!

### **IV. TEACHING FROM THE BOOK OF MICAH.**

# •A. MICAH INTRODUCES US TO A QUARTET OF EVIL DOERS...

- 1. The avaricious (greedy) land-grabber (2:1,2,9; 7:5-7).
  - a. He lay awake at night planning how to steal from poor widows.
  - b. Terrell and the Terrelites in Bangs....
  - c. The young talented preacher who told the old widow how much he loved her ranch...and would love to live on it.
    - 1) When she died she willed it to him.
    - 2) He promptly sold it. Now all the church knew why he wanted it.
- 2. The rulers who hated good and loved evil (3:1-4).
  - a. They took bribes (7:3).
  - b. They are described as being cannibalistic (3:1-3).
- 3. The false prophets who divined for money (3:11).
  - a. If they were not given money, they made war on those who held back...they extorted the people in the name of religion.
  - b. In chapter three verses 6,7 & 11 the words "diviner" or "divination" is used. This world is always associated with witchcraft and sorcery in the Bible. Micah is using a play on words. The NIV uses the word "telling fortunes" in verse 11.
- 4. The Priests who taught for hire (3:11).
  - a. In chapter six vs.6-7 Micah asks for the people, "With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
    - 1) The answer to this question which asks, "What does God want?" launches us into one of the richest sections of the entire O.T.
    - 2) But the very question shows that the priests of this time didn't know what God wanted.
  - b. The priests had lost contact with the law...and when they taught it was not to impart knowledge but to gain money.

## •B. MICAH GIVES US A CLEAR PICTURE OF GOD.

- 1. He is the judge...
  - a. In 1:3 God tells Israel that He is coming...

- b. If you read on through verse 6 and 3:12 you will see that when He comes destruction follows...even the mountains are melted...
  - c. He is the judge.
- 2. He is Righteous and the God of ethics: "He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds" (3:4). See also 6:8; 2:1-2; 3:2-3,10,11; 7:2.

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON EIGHT

### Nahum - The Consoler: Nineveh Will Be Destroyed

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

#### INTRODUCTION:

# KINGS OF JUDAH, ISRAEL AND ASSYRIAN ON A TIME LINE...

## JUDAH

- Amaziah 796-767

Co-regency: Amaziah & Uzziah 790-767

- Uzziah 767-739

Co-regency: Uzziah & Jotham 750-739

#### **(Isaiah 740-700)**

- Jotham 750-735

Co-regency: Jotham & Ahaz 744-735

#### **(Micah 742-687)**

- Ahaz 732-715

Co-regency: Ahaz & Hezekiah 725-715

722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

- Hezekiah 715-686

710 B.C. Sennacherib wastes most of Judah but his troops which surround Jerusalem are destroyed by God's angel.

Co-regency: Hezekiah & Manasseh 797-686

- Manasseh 697-642

#### **(Nahum 663-612)**

- Amon 642-640

#### **(Jeremiah 621-580)**

- Josiah 640-609

#### **(Zephaniah 640)**

614 B.C. Assyrians defeated by Medes at Asher

612 B.C. Nineveh falls to Babylonians & Medes

- Jehoahaz 609

609 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar takes Haran from Assyrians; Judah made vassel to Babylon. Jehoiakim made king.

- Jehoiakim 609-598

### **(Habakkuk 605)**

605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Assyrians and Egyptians at Carchemish marking an end of the Assyrian empire.

605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar carries captives from Judah to Babylon.

- Jehoiachin 598/7
- Zedekiah 597-586

586 B.C. Jerusalem destroyed and Judah taken captive.

## **ISRAEL**

- Jehoash 798-782

Co-regency: Jehoash & Jeroboam II 793-782

- Jeroboam II 793-753

### **(Jonah 760)**

### **(Amos 760)**

### **(Hosea 755-722)**

- Zechariah 753-752
- Shallum 752
- Menahem 752-742

Menahem & Pekah with rule in dispute 752-742

- Pekahiah 742-740

Peka & Pekahiah with rule in dispute 742-740

- Peka 752-732
- Hosea 732-722

722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

## **ASSYRIA**

- Shalmaneser III 859-824

(seventy-five years of instability)

### **(Jonah 760)**

- Tiglath-pileser III 745-727. He began a program of world conquest. He invaded the West and deported some of the inhabitants of northern Israel, removing them to an area north of Nineveh.
- Shalmaneser V 727-722. He began the siege of Samaria, but died before the city fell.

### 722 B.C. Samaria destroyed by Shalmaneser and Israel taken into captivity.

- Sargon II 722-705. He completed the siege of Samaria (722 or 721). He was murdered in 705 B.C.
- Sennacherib 705-681. He boasted on his monuments that he had shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "as a bird in a cage." He was murdered by two of his sons in 681 B.C., who were then driven out by a younger son, Esarhaddon, who became king.
- Esarhaddeon 681-669
- Ashurbanipal 669-627. His campaign in Egypt resulted in the fall of No-amon (Thebes) (3:8). Much booty was carried away by him into Assyria. According to the records he was a very cruel king.
- Assur-etil-ilani 625-620.'
- Sin-shar-ishkeen (Esarhaddon II) 620-612. When Nineveh was being besieged by the Medes and Chaldeans, Esarhadon II gathered his wives and children and his wealth into the palace and set fire to it. He perished in the fire.

### 614 B.C. The city of Ashur is taken by the Medes

### 612 B.C. Nineveh captured by Babylonians and Medes

- Asher-uballit 612-609

609 B.C. Haran taken.

605 B.C. Nebchadnezzar defeats the Assyrians and Egyptians at Carchemish marking an end of the Assyrian empire.

## •A. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE BOOK.

1. Many students and scholars acclaim Nahum's writing to be one of the most poetic of all the Minor Prophets.
  - a. His book can be described as a poem, "stately and impressive."
  - b. George Smith describes it, "His language is strong and brilliant; his rhythm rumbles and rolls, leaps and flashes, like the horsemen and chariots he describes" (Vol. II., p.91).
2. Nahum says nothing of the internal conditions of Judah and Jerusalem as he writes.
  - a. He leaves this to Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah who were his contemporaries.
  - b. Nahum's emphasis is concerning the destruction of Nineveh.

## •B. THE MAN NAHUM.

1. His name means "Consolation" or "consoler."
  - a. The name "is in a sense symbolical of the message of the book, which was intended to comfort the oppressed and afflicted people of Judah." (Eiselen, I.S.B.E., p. 2109).

- b. He prophesied at the same time as Jeremiah and Zephaniah who were pronouncing judgment upon Judah, however; Nahum prophesied against Nineveh.
- 2. The book says that Nahum is an "Elkoshite."
  - a. We don't know where Elkosh is located.
  - b. Some think it may be a city located north of Nineveh called "El-kosh." But this city was unknown in these early times.
  - c. Others think Elkosh is another name for Capernaum which means "village of Nahum." Capernaum is located by the Sea of Galilee of N.T. fame which would have made Nahum of the Northern tribes, but he or his family could have migrated to Judah (remember that northern Israel was destroyed in 722 B.C. which would make this city under Assyrian domination).
  - d. Still others think Elkosh was "Elkesie" which is located beyond the Jordan which is another area dominated by Assyrian control.
  - e. In short we just do not know where Elkosh was located.
- C. **THE DATE OF THE BOOK 664-612 B.C.**
  - 1. Because the book records the fall of No-amon (Egyptian Thebes) in chapter 3:8 which occurred as early as 663 B.C., and because it predicts the fall of Nineveh which occurred in 612 B.C.; we can place the date of writing somewhere in between.
  - 2. Most scholars place the date between 630 - 612 B.C.

## **I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.**

- A. **SEE CHART OF FIRST PAGE (TIME LINE OF KINGS OF JUDAH, ISRAEL AND ASSYRIA).**
- B. **ASSYRIA WAS ON THE WAY OUT...THE DAY OF THE LORD WAS NEAR TO ASSYRIA.**
  - 1. Brother Homer Hailey writes: "The native forces of Assyria were expended and exhausted by long and extensive wars.
    - a. The population of her cities was never homogenous, but they were made up of foreigners who were drawn to them by trade and the desire for wealth.
    - b. With nothing more than trade and commerce to hold them together, the nation was bound to break up eventually.
    - c. The character of the Assyrian rulers and people in general was that of excessive cruelty.
  - 2. Farrar gives a vivid and clear description of their general character: Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed

on the way to ruin. The kings of Assyria tormented the miserable world. They exult to record how 'space failed for corpses'; how unsparing a destroyer is their goddess Ishtar; how they flung away the bodies of soldiers like so much clay; how they made pyramids of human heads; how they burned cities; how they filled populous lands with dead and devastation; how they reddened broad deserts with carnage of warriors; how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders as with chaff; how they impaled 'heaps of men' on stakes, and strewed the mountains and choked rivers with dead bones; how they cut off the hands of kings and nailed them on the walls, and left their bodies to rot with bears and dogs on the entrance gates of cities; how they employed nations of captives in making brick in fetters; how they cut down warriors like weeds, or smote them like wild beasts in the forests, and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs."

- 3. Assyria was ripe for judgment, and Nahum's message is simple: "The Fall of Nineveh."
  - a. Nahum's message complements Jonah's message.
  - b. But by this time no mercy would be shown, judgment would be final.

## **II. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.**

- A. There is a limit to God's patience. Compare Jonah to Nahum.
- B. God still rules the world.
- C. A nation built on pride, cruelty, force and selfishness cannot hope to have friends in the day of its fall.
- D. God hates brutality, violence and wrong..
- E. When God's lifts His finger in judgment, the mightiest of nations fall.

## **III. OUTLINE AND STUDY OF THE TEXT.**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh and they repented, now over a hundred years later Nahum warns, and the Assyrians will be destroyed.
  - 1. There's a message here for us.
  - 2. The warnings of God are for our salvation.

- 3. To ignore the word of God is as Jesus said like being a "foolish man" who builds his house upon the sand.
- B. The book of Nahum can be easily divided by its three chapters:
  - 1. Her Doom Declared.
  - 2. Her Doom Described.
  - 3. Her Doom Deserved.

## **I. NINEVEH'S DOOM DECLARED (CP.1).**

- A. **THE CHARACTER AND THE POWER OF THE LORD (1:1-8).**
  - 1. (**READ 1:1-3a**) God's vengeance, even though He is slow to anger is described.
  - 2. (**READ 1:3b-6**) The fierceness of God's anger described.
    - a. There's a bit of apocalyptic voice here...
    - b. To put it in more modern terms we could say: "God controls the temperature of our sun. One minor nova eruption would vaporize the earth and everything in it. It is not wise to provoke such an all powerful one to anger."
  - 3. Let's make a bit of application to our times:
    - a. There are many enemies about these days...even members of the Lord's church are beginning to wonder if they are on the right side.
      - 1) Is God really with us?
      - 2) Why do the wicked seem to be so prosperous...isn't God with us?
      - 3) Does God really care?
    - b. What Nahum was up against in his day is not so different from what we face today.
      - 1) In Nahum's day it was the Assyrians.
      - 2) In our day it could be the Soviet Union.
      - 3) Both have been brought down by God in judgment.
      - 4) To us today as in Nahum's day there is a lesson: God is our only hope...not the power of any nation.
  - 4. (1:7) God is A Stronghold to the Faithful. "**The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him**" (v.7).
    - a. God is Good...that and not evil is the power of victory in the world.
      - 1) Satan wants us to think that evil and unrighteous men and politicians are in control.

- 2) Satan's lie is that he and not God will win the victory.
  - 3) A righteous person needs to be reminded that the wicked will be brought to judgment and the righteous will be victorious.
  - 4) It is God and not Satan who will win the battle for the world.
- b. God is Our Only Refuge in the Day of Trouble...not a fortified city, not the stock market, not our army and navy.
- a) The temptation is to give in to Satan...to surrender especially as we see judgment coming...but even in the judgment coming to Nineveh, God was the only way a righteous person could escape.
  - b) In the judgment coming to Jerusalem, God was working His eternal purpose...and He provides the only refuge from judgment.
- 2) In God there is power to endure. Listen to Isaiah, "Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary" (Isaiah 40:30-31).
- a) There is...
    - 1] Ecstasy...
    - 2] Energy...
    - 3] Endurance...
  - b) ...to all who wait on the Lord.
- c. God Knows Those Who Take Refuge in Him....
- a) God has not forsaken the righteous when he judges the wicked.
  - b) He knows and protects His own.
- 5. (1:8) God Puts an End to Those who Continue to Oppose Him. "But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, And will pursue His enemies into darkness" (1:8).
- a. Christians ride behind this awesome judge...they are wise not to face Him: "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (Rev. 19:11-16).

- b. The message is there will be pay day some day.
  - 1) It appeared that Assyria had everything going its way for hundreds of years.
  - 2) But look at them now!
  - 3) As went Assyria, so go the wicked. No one escapes judgment!
- 6. Here's the point: The awfulness of man represented by Assyria in Nahum, is no match for the awesomeness of God.
  - a. The purpose of God is inevitable.
  - b. God brings the wicked to punishment and provides for His own till that day, and He protects His own when the day comes.

**•B. THE COMPLETE OVERTHROW OF NINEVEH (1:9-15).**

- 1. **(READ 1:9-11)** Nineveh will not afflict the nations again, despite what they have plotted against the Lord.
- 2. **(READ 1:12-13)** Judah will be delivered from Nineveh's affliction.
- 3. **(READ 1:14-15)** There shall be good tidings in Judah; now she can keep her feasts.

**II. NINEVEH'S DOOM DESCRIBED (CP.2).**

**•A. THE SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF THE CITY (2:1-7).**

- 1. Pause to reflect on prophets of the past.
  - a. Reading Amos' message to Israel, we know that the prophets, the priests and even the royal family was corrupt and led the people into idolatry.
  - b. Yet there were common folks who still trusted in the Lord.
    - 1) Because of the sins of the people God sent these same Assyrians to destroy and defeat Samaria.
    - 2) Surely there were faithful soldiers and faithful wives of soldiers and faithful children of soldiers who died and were carried captive because of God's judgment on Samaria in 722 B.C.
  - c. Do you suppose God remembers and knows when the faithful die?
    - 1) That soldier who's dying thoughts was his faith in His God...surely God remembered.
    - 2) That soldier who's last breath wheezed out "**Emanuel?!**" God remembered as we will see in Nahum.
  - d. When the Jewish city of Lachish was later destroyed by Shalmaneser, artifacts in Nineveh depict heaps of dead Jewish soldiers with the city surrounded by

impaled bodies. Surely there were men and women who died who trusted the Lord. God remembers.

- 2. **(READ 2:1-4)** A bit of tongue in cheek here tells the masters of destruction to get ready for it themselves!
  - a. God allowed the Jews to stone his servant, Stephen.
  - b. But God remembers....they will not go free who persecute God's people.
  - c. Speaking of the church Paul said of us, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17).
  - d. Even though the Assyrians were sent by God to judge God's people for their sins, God is holding Assyria accountable for her detestable deeds.
- 3. **(READ 2:5-7)** Nineveh is told that resistance is futile because God has decreed Nineveh's destruction.
  - a. In verse 6 it states, "The gates of the rivers are opened And the palace is dissolved."
  - b. The Believers' Study Bible states, "The Babylonian Chronicle tell that Nineveh fell because the flooding rivers made breaches in the city's defenses."

**•B. THE FLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE AND THE SACK OF THE CITY (2:8-13).**

- 1. **(READ 2:8-10)** The inhabitants of the city flee and the city will be plundered.
  - a. Brother Homer Hailey points out that there was no love for the Assyrian people by anyone else. Most who lived among the Assyrians were captives from conquered countries.
  - b. Commerce kept many near to the Assyrians. When the commerce was removed, the allies of Nineveh fled like rats from a sinking ship.
  - c. The Assyrians were reaping what they had sowed.
- 2. **(READ 2:11-13)** The Assyrians are here depicted as a pride of lions...but they are being attacked this time.
  - a. A lion does not fear many other animals on the African plains.
  - b. But when God comes into the picture, the most secure nation does not have a chance.
    - 1) Nations exist because of the will of God.
    - 2) They may deny God, but it does not change the fact.
    - 3) Like lions who think themselves invincible, sometimes a sober lesson must be learned by the unbelieving.
- 3. Nineveh's doom has been "declared" and "described" by Nahum. Now we see him saying....

### III. NINEVEH'S DOOM DESERVED (CP.3).

#### •A. NINEVEH DESERVES HER DESTRUCTION BECAUSE OF HER SINS (3:1-7).

- 1. (READ 3:1-4) Look at the devastation and misery Assyria has been spreading around.
  - a. She enslaved whole races.
  - b. She cruelly treated her captives.
  - c. The references to "harlotry" could refer to her idolatry or the rape (literal in most cases) of those conquered by her.
- 2. (READ 3:5-7) Assyria is about to get what she gave...she is about to reap what she sowed.
  - a. It was a custom in these days to shave the face of a conquered enemy so that his face was naked to shame the enemy.
  - b. It was also a custom to cut the back of the robe off the conquered enemy to publicly expose their nakedness to shame them (READ 2 SAMUEL 10:4-6 of David's account with the Ammonites...you'll see that because the Ammonites did this to David it caused their destruction).
  - c. This same shame was about to befall Assyria.

#### •B. NINEVEH IS NO BETTER THAN NO-AMON (OTHER CITIES THAT HAVE BEEN JUDGED) (3:8-11).

- 1. (READ 3:8) Nineveh is no better than No-amon (the city of Thebes in Egypt).
- 2. (READ 3:9-10) No-amon was carried into captivity in spite of here allies and natural protection.
- 3. (READ 3:11) The same fate will befall Nineveh.

#### •C. NINEVEH'S STRENGTH AND HER WEALTH WILL NOT SAVE HER (3:12-17).

- 1. (READ 3:12-13) If anyone knew about how to batter down a city's walls it was the Assyrians. Yet all their knowledge and all their preparations will be for nothing.
- 2. (READ 3:14-17) Do what they may....there will b

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON NINE

Habakkuk - From a Pain to Praise.

*Those who trust in the Lord are trustworthy*

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

### INTRODUCTION:

#### •A. SETTING....

- 1. This book takes place in a period of O.T. history know as "Judah Alone"... Israel is gone....carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.
  - a. The people of Judah were probably saying, "That's what Israel gets. They broke off from us and rebelled against Jehovah." They were the old mother congregation.
  - b. It was also a time of great prosperity...much like life is today in America....two chariots in every garage...
  - c. But like today, it was also a time of great wickedness.
- 2. Zephaniah was prophesying to Judah about it.
- 3. Nahum was pronouncing God's judgment upon Nineveh and the Assyrians.

#### •B. AND THEN COMES HABAKKUK, A PROPHET FILLED WITH TROUBLING QUESTIONS...

- 1. Concerning his **NAME**....
  - a. There is some debate as to what it means...most think it means "**Embrace**."
  - b. "His name, as Luther well puts it, speaks as one who took his nation to his heart, comforted it and held it up, as one embraces and pressed to his bosom a poor weeping child, calming and consoling it with good hope."(Cunningham Geikie, Hours With the Bible, Vol. V., p.253-4).
- 2. Concerning the **DATE**....
  - a. It is believed to be written around 612-606 B.C.
  - b. It was a time just as Babylon was making her move from obscurity westward toward world conquest.
    - 1) In 612 B.C. a young upstart general named Nebuchadnezzar led an coalition of nations against Assyria and destroyed her power at the city of Nineveh fulfilling Nahum's prophesy. Esarhaddon the king of Assyria seeing that he was defeated at Nineveh gathered all his wealth and wives and children into the palace and set it on fire before the walls were breached.

- 2) In 609 B.C. he besieged and destroyed the city of Haran.
  - 3) And in about 606 B.C. he completely eliminated the last vestiges of Assyrian resistance defeating Assyria and her allies at the city of Carchemish.
    - a) In this fray good king Josiah of Judah was killed in battle trying to delay the Egyptian army from aiding Assyria.
    - b) Egypt in turn subjugated Jerusalem to Egypt which was a short lived exercise because Egypt was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar together with Assyria at Carchemish.
  - 4) From there Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem and left with all her gold and carried away thousands of captives including Daniel as Judah became a pawn piece for more powerful nations.
- 3. Concerning the **MESSAGE**: the book easily falls into three sections...one from God's point of view, and the other from Habakkuk's point of view...

- a. Habakkuk to God:
  - 1) A "burden" cp.1.
  - 2) A "vision" cp.2.
  - 3) A "prayer" cp.3.
- b. God to Habakkuk (and Judah):
  - 1) "Watch and see" cp 1.
  - 2) "Stand and see" cp 2.
  - 3) "Kneel and see" cp 3.

**•C. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HABAKKUK AND OTHER PROPHETS.**

- 1. Other prophets carried the message of God to the people.
- 2. Habakkuk seems to be carrying the message of the righteous (God's people) to God, and then carries God's answer back to the people.
  - a. In all the other prophets' writings God sends his message to His people including the righteous and the wicked.
    - 1) To the wicked He says, "Repent for judgment is coming."
    - 2) To the righteous He says, "Trust me as judgment comes."
  - b. But in Habakkuk there seems to be a dialogue between God and Habakkuk who represents the righteous who still trust in God.
  - c. The wicked are talked about, but the message from this book is to the righteous.
- 3. He does this in the form of a complaint....and in doing so his book goes from pain to praise as God reveals Himself in this book.

•4. As we study this book, let's remember what Paul said, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"(Romans 15:4).

•D. **HABAKKUK LIVED IN A TIME NOT VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY THINGS ARE TODAY...**

- 1. It was a time when everything was going wrong.
- 2. Like today in America...even Disney was making pornographic movies which advocate violence, immorality and godlessness.
- 3. The land was filled with violence, hatred, and outbreaks of evil. Every hill top was a place of sin in Judah.

**I. LESSONS FROM AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.**

**I. HABAKKUK'S BURDEN: FAITH GRAPPLING WITH A PROBLEM ---- GOD'S ANSWER: WATCH AND SEE (1:1-2:1).**

•A. **HABAKKUK BRINGS THIS QUESTION TO GOD...** "The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, "Violence!" Yet You do not save. Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted" (1:1-4).

- 1. Habakkuk raises a lament over the apparent rule of wickedness and violence.
  - a. Doesn't this sound like today?
  - b. Why, says the prophet, do I have to cry "Violence" and hear no answer?
    - 1) He's disturbed with the state of his nation.
    - 2) The leaders are corrupt, and they are not doing anything about it.
    - 3) Even the courts are corrupt.
    - 4) Even his prayer seems to be unanswered!
- 2. But Habakkuk is a man of God. So he brings the whole problem before God.
- 3. Do you ever feel like the prophet here?
  - a. Look around at the nation today and you'll see everything breaking up, the shaking of long-standing foundations, people turning away from the faith and questioning things they never questioned before.
  - b. People are expressing doubts, even outright unbelief, in circles where doubts have never been expressed before.
  - c. Are you praying for loved ones, wanting to see God change them and reach their eternal lives, and nothing happens?
  - d. Maybe...like Habakkuk, we need to take the whole matter before God.

**•B. GOD'S ANSWER....** "Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days-- You would not believe if you were told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs. They are dreaded and feared; Their justice and authority originate with themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards And keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, Their horsemen come from afar; They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour. All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. They mock at kings And rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress And heap up rubble to capture it. Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty, They whose strength is their god" (1:5-11).

- 1. Brethren this book is unique. It is a message for the people, but it is sent as a message between man and God.
- 2. We are Habakkuk!
- 3. God is quick to answer Habakkuk...to assure him that He is not indifferent!
  - a. God is, as a matter of fact, hard at work on the problem even as He speaks.
  - b. The only problem is....Habakkuk will not understand it.
- 4. God is doing something that is hard to fathom.
  - a. Here is a tiny insignificant nation called Chaldeans in our text, who became a world power almost by accident, but will raise to prominence in a very short time...and God says, "It is Me that is behind this!"
  - b. Old Habakkuk stands there with his mouth flung open....these people are bitter, hostile, ruthless and cold-blooded.
    - 1) And they are going to become as powerful as any nation on earth has ever been, and they will sweep through the lands conquering everything, and it will look as though nothing on earth can stop them.
    - 2) And there's nothing holy about them...they are going to trust in their own strength and glory in their own might...kind of like humanists do today!
- 5. This is hard for the prophet to take....so he poses a second question...

**•C. THE PROPHET'S SECOND QUESTION....** "Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they? Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, Like creeping things without a ruler over them? The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net; Because through these things their catch is large, And their food is plentiful. Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without sparing? I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep

watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved" (1:12-2:1).

•1. The way Habakkuk deals with this second problem and the way he asks for an answer can be helpful to all of us...he passes through four phases in a gentle and respectful way of asking "Why, God, Why?"....

•a. **HE STARTS OUT THINKING ABOUT GOD, AND REMINDS HIMSELF THAT GOD IS EVERLASTING**(v.12).

•1) Jehovah is an everlasting God.

•a) The Chaldeans will come trusting in their gods and in their own power and in their own strength.

•b) But the prophet reminds himself that our God is not like that. He is not one of these localized tribal deities.

•2) He is the God who covers history.

•3) He is the God who governs history.

•4) He is an everlasting God who when the Chaldeans are gone will still be God.

•b. **SECOND HE REMINDS HIMSELF THAT GOD IS SELF-EXISTANT** (v.12b).

•1) He uses the word which we translate "Lord" which God gave for himself to Moses....Jehovah which translated means "I am who I am!"

•2) Maybe people were saying that "God is dead." But Habakkuk goes right back to what he knows about God. He is self-existent and He cannot be defeated!

•c. **THIRD HE REMINDS HIMSELF OF GOD'S HOLINESS, "My Holy One!"**

•1) Holiness here means wholeness, completeness; it is being a whole person.

•a) It means essentially that God is consistent with Himself.

•b) He is always what He is. He is never anything different, never a phony.

•c) He never pretends or puts on. He is holy!

•d) The Hebrew writer put it this way, "And, 'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are of Your hands; they will perish, but you remain....and your years will not come to an end'" (Heb. 1:10-12).

•2) Because God is everlasting, self-existent and holy; and because He is our God the prophet says, "We will not die!"

•3) But He still does not understand it.

•a) How can a holy God employ such an impure and godless agent?

•b) Have you ever heard anyone say, "This country may not be perfect, but it is better than any other country on the face of the earth"?

•4) That's what Habakkuk is thinking.

- a) He's thinking...these Chaldeans are like fishermen who catch a bunch of fish and instead of praising God, they worship the hook or the net which they used to catch the fish.
- b) What he's really thinking is God....are you out of your mind?
- 5) Could God use a Nazi Germany to judge a people who were really better morally than those who punished them? We know He can because He did! But He punished the German's too!
- 6) Can He use Arab nations or Communist Chinese to punish us today?
- d. **SO THE FORTH THING HE DOES IS JUST LEAVE THE PROBLEM WITH GOD AND WAITS FOR HIS ANSWER (2:1).**
  - 1) Habakkuk does the wise thing. He gets away from the problem for a while, and let's God handle it.
  - 2) He leaves the matter with God and waits for His next step.
- 2. How about you?
  - a. Do you worry about your problems?
  - b. Or do you explain your fears and problems to God and leave it with Him and wait for His answer.

## **II. HABAKKUK'S VISION: FAITH GRASPING THE SOLUTION ---- GOD'S REVELATION: STAND AND SEE (2:2-20).**

### **•A. GOD'S ANSWER: FIRST, THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH....**

- 1. As Habakkuk waits for God we read, "Then the LORD answered me and said, 'Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run'" (2:2).
  - a. In other words, "Habakkuk, I'm going to tell you the answer.
  - b. Now, I want you to write it down and I want you to write it plainly so that anyone who reads it will be able to immediately understand its portent.
- 2. Then God adds these significant words, "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay" (2:3).
  - a. God is saying, "**Habakkuk, this isn't going to happen right away.**"
  - b. **There's going to be a lapse of time, but it is coming as a sure thing.**
  - c. This is the character of God's revelation.
    - 1) First God says that an event will happen.
    - 2) Then He says, "Don't worry about what happens in between. Even though it looks like everything is going wrong, what I have said will happen is going to happen, and if it seem to delay, wait for it."
    - 3) It will come....and the victory will ultimately be the Lord's.

•3.

Those who depend upon the Lord are dependable!

Then God goes to a principle that is quoted three times in the NT and forms the basis for the greatest movements that God has ever had among human beings. He says, "**Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith**" (2:4).

•a. This verse is quoted in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. The people of God...the righteous shall live and survive and continue living regardless of what happens...by faith.

- 1) Not by circumstances.
- 2) Not by what they observe.
- 3) Not by the wisdom of their own reasoning.
- 4) But by faith in what God has said will happen.

•b. When you boil it all down there are only two possible outlooks on life, and there are only two attitudes by which we can face life.

- 1) Either we face what ever comes with faith depending on God and relying on His promises.
- 2) Or we face them depending on our own ability to reason out everything.
  - a) The sad message that we must receive here is that all those who live life reasoning without God's participation in life will be destroyed in God's ultimate judgment.
  - b) Only those who take what God has said and believe that when He says something it will happen and live depending on that fact will be saved in the day of judgment.

•c. One reason churches are not doing what God intended for them to do...is because leaderships and memberships have been converted by the world into trusting in budgets and human reasoning and the cleverness of the human rational processes in the name of Christianity.

•d. Only those who learn to live by faith in God will survive judgment and prosper till then.

- 1) A people who think they are serving God will picket abortion clinics, and strive with human reasoning to create clever gimmicks to do God's will...but they will all fail.
- 2) But a people who trust in God will alter history, topple tyranny, depose despots and eliminate unrighteousness.

•e. As a matter of fact...in all the church only the righteous will live (that means survive) by their faith in God. You see He is actively involved in life because He is the creator of it.

•4. Throughout the rest of this second chapter, then, there is a very interesting analysis of the Chaldeans and what God plans to do with them.

•5. To summarize, God says to the prophet, "**Now Habakkuk, don't you worry about the Chaldeans; it is true that I have purer eyes than to behold evil and it also true that I am**

**raising up this people to judge the nation of Israel, but in turn I will judge the Chaldeans."**

- a. The very thing they trust in will prove to be their downfall.
- b. Their very gods will overthrow them...

**•B. GOD'S ANSWER: SECOND, GOD WILL INDEED JUDGE THE PROUD....LET ME WORRY ABOUT THE WICKEDNESS OF THE CALDEANS....**

•1. Woe to the proud possessed with the lust of conquest and plunder.... "Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples. Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him And say, 'Woe to him who increases what is not his-- For how long-- And makes himself rich with loans?' Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them. Because you have looted many nations, All the remainder of the peoples will loot you-- Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants" (2:5-8).

•2. Woe to their efforts to build a permanent empire through cruelty and godless gain.... "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the hand of calamity! You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself. Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework" (2:9-11).

- a. There are lessons here to us all...
- b. Don't just invest your life to yourself...for if you do when you grow old; your investments will rot and crumble away before your eyes.
- c. Therefore, don't just put away for a nest egg in this life...
- d. Invest in a better life by dying to selfish desires and serve the needs of others around you. The God of creation will take care of you! (But I digress)

•3. Woe to those who build cities with bloodshed.... "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence! Is it not indeed from the LORD of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing? For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea" (2:12-14).

- a. To those who will not listen to the gospel of Jesus.
- b. They will be forced to know God in the day of judgment.
- c. But one thing is sure....everyone will know of the glory of the Lord one day!

•4. Woe to those with cruelty in their treatment of those they have conquered.... "Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness! You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you (this is where we get: "What goes around comes around), And utter disgrace will come upon your glory. For the violence done to

Lebanon will overwhelm you, And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants" (2:15-17).

•5. Woe to the man who trusts in a false god, who thinks that the forces around him are able to control him, give him life and fulfill his desires.... "What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols. Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it. But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him" (2:18-20).

•a. The greatest folly of the Babylonians was that as God sat in His holy temple...they trusted in their idols and ignored him.

•b. Just as people today ignore the God who still sets in His holy temple...as they trust in their money, or their wisdom, or themselves.

•C. **SUMMARY....**

•1. The answer to Habakkuk's second question appears to be this: While God may use a wicked nation like Babylon to punish the wickedness of Judah, He will not let Babylon's wickedness go unpunished either!

•2. In the meantime, the righteous person will live (survive) by his faith in God, which Habakkuk illustrates with his prayer...

**III. HABAkkUK'S PRAYER: FAITH GLORyING IN ASSURANCE ---- GOD'S LESSON: KNEEL AND**

**SEE (3:1-19).**

•A. **HIS PETITION FOR GOD'S ACTION AND GOD'S MERCY...**

•1. Before Habakkuk begins his prayer he shows us what he has learned.

•a. God is the God of history and He alone is moving; He has everything under control.

•b. The thing we need to remember is that these forces and the problems created by them are not solved by trying to come to grips with only the immediate problem.

•1) That is like taking aspirin to try to cure cancer.

•2) It will never work.

•c. No, these problems which faced Habakkuk and the problems which face us today are only solved by the relationship of man to God.

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON TEN

Haggai - Building the Temple.

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **•A. IN OUR SURVEY OF "THE MINOR PROPHETS", WE NOW JUMP AHEAD ABOUT 100 YEARS...**

- 1. Prophets like Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk prophesied shortly before the seventy years of Babylonian captivity (i.e. before 606-536 B.C.).
- 2. Following the return under the leadership of Zerubbabel (536 B.C.), it was not long before two more prophets were sent to the people of Israel.
  - a. These prophets were Haggai and Zechariah...
  - b. We will look at Haggai's message in this lesson.

#### **•B. ABOUT THE MAN...**

- 1. His name means "Festival" or "Festive."
- 2. What we know of Haggai is limited to his book and references in Ezra.
- 3. Together with Zechariah he motivated the Jews in rebuilding the temple.

### **I. THE DATE AND SETTING TO THE BOOK.**

#### **•A. THE DATE IS GIVEN IN THE BOOK: 520 B.C.**

- 1. It was in the second year of Darius king of Persia.
- 2. The day the prophesy began can be translated into modern dates as somewhere between the first week of August to the 24 day of Demember.

#### **•B. Persian Kings...**

- 1. Cyrus 559-529.
- 2. Cambyses 529-522.
- 3. Darius 521-486.
- 4. Xerxes 485-466.
- 5. Artaxerxes 465-425.

## **.C. Important events leading to the writing of this book...**

- 1. About 606 BC, the Babylonians invaded Judah and carried Jewish captives to Assyria in what was the 1st of 3 great "carrying aways." Among those taken were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
- 2. About 597 BC in the second "carrying away", Ezekiel was taken.
- 3. Both Daniel and Ezekiel preached hope to the people because of the prophecies of Jeremiah which said the captivity would only last 70 years (Jeremiah 25:9-12; Daniel 9:2).
- 4. About 536 BC, after the 70 years, God spoke through the Medo-Persian King Cyrus and declared the temple would be rebuilt (2 Chronicles 36:22-23). Zerubbabel leads the people.
  - a. Ezra 1:1-11 -- Cyrus sent the captives back to Jerusalem with all the goods formerly taken by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:5-8; Daniel 1:1-2).
  - b. Ezra 3:3-6 -- An altar is built and sacrifices are made, but the foundation of the temple of Jehovah is not yet laid.
  - c. Ezra 3:8-13 -- The foundation of the temple was laid, but the people quit working.
  - d. Sixteen year later, God summons Haggai to exhort the people to get back to rebuilding the house of the Lord - the temple. Haggai delivers 4 exhortations over the next 4 months, using "thus saith the Lord" (or some variation) 26 times in 38 verses.
  - e. The Israelites were caught in an undertow of indifference. Undertow - an underlying current, force, or tendency that is in opposition to what is apparent.
- 5. About 516 BC the temple is completed.
- 6. About 458 BC Ezra returns to restore worship.
- 7. About 445 BC Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- 8. About 430 BC Malachi's prophecy closes the Old Testament Canon.

## **II. OUTLINE AND TEACHING FROM THE BOOK.**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **•A. BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE.**

- 1. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-17.**
  - a. The temple Haggai and the Jews were building recorded in this book are a shadow of the temple you and I are a part of today.

- b. Only God builds his house (the church today), but Christians as the Jews of old are used by God to build His house.
- c. Indeed we have become a part of it...we are that house!
- 2. That's why this book is so important to us as builders today.

•B. **SETTING:**

- 1. In about 536 BC King Cyrus of Persia ordered that Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of Jehovah.
- 2. The temple was finally dedicated in about 516 BC twenty years later.
- 3. It was during this time that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were written.
- 4. After 16 years the temple of Jehovah still lay in ruins. It was at this time that Haggai began to preach.
  - a. For 23 days he preached his first lesson recorded in chapter one until he got a response, then he stopped. I call this first lesson: BUILD OR ELSE!
  - b. Then about a month later, he preached his second lesson recorded in chapter two. I'll call this lesson: GOD BLESSES HIS BUILDERS!
- 5. Haggai was a very successful preacher because he got quick results from his preaching.

**I. HAGGAI'S FIRST LESSON - BUILD OR ELSE (CP 1)!**

•A. **GOD'S REBUKE (HAGGAI 1:1-6).**

- 1. Haggai starts by going to the leaders ([READ HAGGAI 1:1](#)).
  - a. Notice that Haggai's first message is not to the people (his second one will be).
  - b. It is addressed to the two leaders of the people.
  - c. The caboose cannot move if the engines are idle!
    - 1) There's no sense talking to the people if the leaders are not convinced, so old Haggai goes to the leaders.
    - 2) There is not a person in this congregation that does not honor, love and esteem our elders (amen?).
    - 3) I believe we have great leaders!
    - 4) The qualifications for elders are exacting because their responsibility is heavy.
    - 5) They lead God's people.

- 6) God knew that we need daily leadership, that is why the Holy Spirit who lives in us choose for us leaders to keep us from standing still. Thank God for leaders in the church!
- d. You see, the Jews in Jerusalem were not building the temple. That is why Haggai went to the leaders.
  - 1) He went to the source of the problem.
  - 2) Haggai goes to the governor and the high priest...the political and religious leaders of the Jews.
- 2. In the 2nd verse of the book Haggai gets to the heart of the people's problem - Procrastination ([READ HAGGAI 1:2](#)).
  - a. These people were sent 16 years ago to do one thing: To build the temple.
  - b. God wanted them to do one thing: To build the temple.
  - c. The people were saying something else.
    - 1) If you would have asked them, what are you doing.
    - 2) They would have said, "We've come to build the temple!"
    - 3) WELL, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO BUILD IT? They say, "Later!"
      - a) The time is not right!
      - b) Maybe they said, "We do not have enough money!"
  - d. We do know that they were discouraged.
    - 1) The old men were complaining that the new temple was not as grand as the temple of Solomon.
    - 2) For sixteen years they have allowed the criticism from the old men and the threats from the nations around them to keep them from finishing what they had started.
    - 3) As a result, the temple of God was a shabby mess only partially completed.
  - e. Oh, they were busy, and because they were busy they had begun to feel good even though God's house was in ruins.
    - 1) Brethren, we need to learn that busyness is not a proof of faithfulness.
    - 2) These people were busy...
      - a) They were busy building up their own houses.
      - b) But they were not busy doing what God wanted them to do.
- 3. Haggai in the next verse reveals the people's sin - they considered their ways more important than God's ways! ([READ HAGGAI 1:3-4](#)).

- a. There is a danger in living in opulence if we are stingy when it concerns God.
- b. There is a danger if we live in paneled homes and God's house is in shambles.
- c. There is a danger if we set the temporary before the eternal!
- d. There is nothing wrong with enjoying with thanksgiving God's physical blessings on our lives.
  - 1) We should praise God for His blessings.
  - 2) For our rich homes and God's bountiful blessings.
- e. But, is it a reflection on our faith if we are willing to pamper the needs of the flesh while we are also willing to neglect the needs of the body of Christ?
- 4. Look at the result of the Jews' sin - they were cursed ([READ HAGGAI 1:5-6](#)).
  - a. God said to them...
    - 1) Have you invested much, but got little from it?
    - 2) Do you eat, but never really get satisfied?
    - 3) Do you drink, but never get filled?
    - 4) Do you buy nice clothes, but still feel cold and left out?
    - 5) Do you put your money away, and it seems like there is a hole in the bag you are putting it into?
  - b. God as the giver of all that we have Haggai says, **"If you do not have what you think you ought to have, have you ever considered that it might be because you are not doing what I want you to be doing?"**
    - 1) In Matt. 6:19-34 Jesus promises to give us everything we need if we seek God's ways before our own ways!
    - 2) And any people who do not do this are cursed instead of being blessed!
  - c. The people are rebuked for living in their nice homes while the temple of God goes to pot.
  - d. They and we need the attitude of David when he had finished building his nice new home. This is the attitude of a man after God's own heart: **"Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains'"** (2 Sam. 7:1-2).
    - 1) God will go on to answer David request to build a temple with the fact that God does not need either a tent or a building of cedar.
    - 2) But it pleased God that David wanted to build him a house anyway!

- a) And God allowed him to do it through Solomon his son.
- b) When it was finished....was it ever something to behold!
- 3) David's attitude was the opposite of these people in our text. He sought God's ways above his own ways!

•B. **GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PEOPLE (HAGGAI 1:7-11).**

- 1. God says: You'd better get busy and build my house ([READ HAGGAI 1:7-8](#)).
  - a. He says, You want to sow and get much?
    - 1) You want to eat and get full?
    - 2) You want to drink and get full?
    - 3) You want to have warm clothes?
    - 4) You want enough wages to make ends meet?...get up, get the wood and build my house!
  - b. Is our prosperity related to our faithfulness? God seems to think so.
  - c. When I say prosperity I'm talking about Biblical prosperity: Enough to serve God without doing without!
- 2. God goes on to say, **"I've cursed everything you have touched because you have not put me first"** ([READ HAGGAI 1:9-11](#)).
  - a. You want to know what will help our economy in Texas? When God's people start acting like God's people.
  - b. When God looks down from Heaven, he is not interested in the Oil business or General motors.
    - 1) That may be hard for us to fathom, but it is true.
    - 2) God is just not all that interested in AT&T or IBM.
    - 3) He is interested in His kingdom and His people and the rule of His Son: Jesus Christ.
    - 4) Our faithfulness blesses the entire world...
      - a) Not only with saved souls to populate heaven...
      - b) But also with blessings upon the face of the earth in the physical realm.
      - c) Haggai teaches us this!
  - c. Here is old Haggai who stands up and says, Build or be cursed!
    - 1) You'd think that the people would pick up stones and stone him.
    - 2) But they don't. You have to give credit to the leaders Zerubbabel and Joshua.

- 3) Plus these people have been through the fire of God's furnace in Babylonian captivity...they've changed!

•C. **THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO HAGGAI'S MESSAGE (HAGGAI 1:12).**

- 1. The text states that Zerubbabel and Joshua and the remnant of all the people obeyed the word of Jehovah ([READ HAGGAI 1:12](#))!
  - a. Again notice where the obedience started: It started with the leadership!
    - 1) Do you think leadership is important?
    - 2) Do you think family leadership is important?
    - 3) We would all do well to heed God's word for blessings untold in our lives.
    - 4) We have so much to offer the world. We have the leadership of our maker and our God if we will only heed it!
  - b. Since they have obeyed the message of Haggai which said: Build or be cursed.
  - c. Guess what they are doing now just 23 days after Haggai started his preaching?
  - d. They are building!
    - 1) They are not waiting any longer.
    - 2) They found that better time to do God's will!
    - 3) That better time is today....right now!
      - a) In Isaiah 49:8 (quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:1-2) God tells us the only time he promises for sure to give us: The only time we have for sure is right now!
      - b) If that is the case, and it must be if God said it, brethren, we do not have the luxury of procrastination!
- 2. You want to know why they started building when before they had been content to wait for a better season to build?
  - a. Because, now, they are afraid not to build!
  - b. They feared the Lord!
    - 1) Sometimes we do not build because we fear the devil or men more than we do the Lord.
    - 2) The Jews here finally realized that God was more to be feared than was their enemies.
  - c. Maybe they realized that it would be a lot better to be on God's side than it would to be on the side against God.
  - d. Their fear of God caused their repentance.

- D. **THE AGELESS RESULT WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND TO GOD'S WILL (HAGGAI 1:13-15).**
  - 1. God's message to His people who are trying to honor God's Lordship is very simple: "I am with you." (READ HAGGAI 1:13).
    - a. Verse 13 goes to great lengths to show the power behind every good preacher:
      - 1) He says, "I am the Lord's messenger."
        - a) He was not preaching for selfish reasons.
        - b) He probably was not getting rich preaching.
        - c) He was serving God as he spoke.
      - 2) He says, "Here is God's message."
        - a) His message was from the word of God, not from himself.
        - b) It may have been a lot more popular to have preached on something else to the people, but Haggai gave the people God wanted them to hear, and what they needed to hear.
    - b. But now he has good news since the people have started building the house of Jehovah. It is very simple: "God is with you!"
      - 1) Jesus told us to go into all the world and make disciples.
        - a) That is a very difficult task.
        - b) But Jesus also gave us the secret of our success when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."
      - 2) When we go with God, there is nothing we cannot do if we are doing it for Him!
        - a) Paul said in Romans 8:31-32, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"
        - b) We are God's people. If we build God's house, can we fail?
        - c) Not as far as God is concerned!
  - 2. Notice what God does now (READ HAGGAI 1:14-15).
    - a. First he "stirred up the spirit" of the leadership. I guess that means that they got excited.
    - b. When the leadership got stirred up and started building that stirred up the rest of the congregation, and now everybody is excited.
    - c. And finally, where they were content before to procrastinate and look busy doing a lot of unnecessary things, now, they are working and building and are happy to be doing it!

- 1) Guess who else was happy?
  - 2) That's right...God was happy!
  - 3) When God is happy God's people are happy. And God's people are happiest when they are doing the things that make God happy!
  - 4) Isn't that what praise is all about?
- 3. Just 23 days before God's people had been seeking their own ways.
- a. Maybe they were wondering why they seemed so cursed.
  - b. Now just a few days later after the preaching of Haggai, they are seeking the ways of God first!
  - c. And now they are blessed!

**•E. A SHORT MONTH LATER, HAGGAI WILL STAND UP AND PREACH A SECOND LESSON TO THESE WORKING FOLLOWERS OF GOD. IT BEGINS IN CHAPTER TWO...**

- 1. Haggai came to a discouraged, doubting, uncertain, confused group of people with a message from God.
  - a. These Jews had been sent by king Cyrus to rebuild God's temple.
  - b. For sixteen years they had procrastinated. The old men complained that the foundation laid was going to make this an inferior temple when compared with Solomon's temple. So, they did nothing with it.
- 2. Haggai's First Lesson Was Simple: "BUILD MY HOUSE OR SUFFER!"
  - a. God's Rebuke: "You live in your fine paneled houses while my house is in ruins...I'll curse you!" (1:1-6).
  - b. God's Advice: "You'd better get you some wood and build...I am fixing to curse you more!" (1:7-11).
  - c. The People's Response: "This response was from the leaders down.
    - 1) They repented and obeyed the voice of the Lord.
    - 2) In other words, they began to build." (1:12).
  - d. The Result: "God told them that He was with them!" (1:13-15).
- 3. Now just 28 days after the Children of Israel had begun to build the temple, Haggai comes to the people with his Second Message: "GOD BLESSES HIS BUILDERS!"
  - a. God Promises Spiritual Blessings (2:1-9).
  - b. God Promises Physical Blessings (2:10-19).
  - c. God Renews His Promise To Save His People.. MESSIANIC.. (2:20-23).

## II. GOD BLESSES HIS BUILDERS (CP. 2)

### •A. GOD PROMISES SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS UPON HIS BUILDERS (HAGGAI 2:1-9).

- 1. Now Haggai will come to the people with a message of comfort, courage and consolation.
  - a. He doesn't want these have been reluctant in the past to give up and stop building...
  - b. So in less than a month after they start back to building, here is old Haggai saying,
    - 1) "Keep on Building!"
    - 2) "God is with You!"
    - 3) "Everything is going to get better now!"
  - c. It can become very easy to be critical all the time, but when God's people are trying, encouragement works wonders!
    - 1) Haggai could not encourage in chapter 1 because the people were not trying.
    - 2) Now in chapter 2 he can encourage.
- 2. [READ 2:1-2](#). Notice that the first message of Haggai from God was to the leaders, but this one is to the leaders and the people. So the formula found in Haggai for getting God's people to do what they ought to be doing is this:
  - a. First, stir up the leaders, and you will get the job done.
  - b. Then, comfort all the workers till the task is complete.
- 3. Haggai gives a sure fire cure for indifference (2:3-5).
  - a. Here he anticipates the opposition the builders will get ([READ 2:3](#)).
    - 1) As the walls start up the old men are going to discourage the builders because this temple will only be a shadow of Solomon's temple.
    - 2) They will say, "If you had only been here in the 'good old days.'"
    - 3) Have you ever heard the old timers talk about the old 'brush arbor meetings for two weeks when 50 people were baptized? What they didn't tell you was when the same preacher came back the next year only one or two would still be faithful.
    - 4) These older people in Haggai's day were depressed and depressed others because they were looking to the earthly glory of the temple saying, "Look at this little old thing! If you could have only seen Solomon's temple!"

- b. In the next two verses Haggai will give the solution to the doldrums (READ 2:4-5). You want to know what cures indifference and discouragement?
  - 1) Being strong instead of being weak.
  - 2) Remembering that God is with us.
  - 3) Getting busy and going to work.
  - 4) And remembering what we are here for!
- c. Sometimes we need someone to grab us by the shoulders and shake till our teeth rattle saying, "Quit being lazy! Quit being indifferent! Pick up your hammers and start building my house!!"
- d. Now the people need encouraging-anytime you tell people to get with it, you had better give them a reason to do it, and that is what Haggai does in verses 6-9.
  - 1) Jesus never told anyone to do anything or give anything up without also telling them what they would get for their doing or their giving.
  - 2) You and I need to be that smart too.
- 4. In verses 6-9 God will give them a reason to build.
  - a. READ 2:6-7. God says, "I'll fill this house with glory. You think Solomon's temple was glorious, just wait till you see what I'm going to do with this one!"
    - 1) When God says that he is going to shake a nation, it means that he is going to destroy or judge it. Just get your Old Testament out read all the prophets, and see if this is not true.
      - a) We know what Haggai is talking about because this passage is quoted in Heb. 12:26-28.
        - 1] God will shake all nations...they are going to be destroyed.
        - 2] They are not going to last.
        - 3] The only thing that will survive God's shaking is the unshakable kingdom which Hebrews chapter twelve is describing, in which you and I dwell: The "church of the firstborn", "Mt. Zion", "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22-23).
        - 4] And this is what these Jews were building when they built that temple!
      - b) It is spiritual glory, not a visible or "seen" glory that we have.
        - 1] We know of it only by faith.
        - 2] Paul says in 2 Cor. 4:18, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."



# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON SEVEN

### Zephaniah - Through Judgment to Blessing

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

- 1. In this survey of "The Minor Prophets" we come to Zephaniah, the first of three prophets who preached to Judah alone, following the downfall of the northern kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC.
- 2. Zephaniah's name means "Jehovah Hides."
  - a. King Hezekiah was his great-great-grandfather according to 1:1.
  - b. This has prompted some to call him "the royal prophet."

#### **I. THE DATE OF THE BOOK.**

- A. (1:1) He prophesied in the days of Josiah, King of Judah.
  - 1. Josiah ruled from 640-609 B.C.
  - 2. So we could put the date at about 625 B.C.
- B. He probably prophesied after Josiah's reforms (or his attempts to reform the people).
  - 1. Zephaniah calls the people "The remnant of Baal" (1:4). What do you suppose this means?
  - 2. When he speaks for the Lord of punishing "the King's sons" do you suppose they who are dressed in foreign clothes are also the "remnant of Baal?" If so it does not look too good for Judah!

#### **II. BACKGROUND TO ZEPHANIAH'S MESSAGE.**

- A. **WORLD POLITICS IN ZEPHANIAH'S DAY.**
  - 1. Back in 722 B.C. Assyria had destroyed Samaria.
  - 2. Now it was about a hundred years later, and Assyria is on the way out...
    - a. From 627 little is known about the kings of Assyria because it was a time of turmoil and unrest for the nation.
    - b. In 625 Nabopolassar established Babylon as a separate nation and began to battle against Assyria.

- c. About 13 years later in 612 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's son, defeated the Assyrians effectively ending their power among the nations when Nineveh was conquered.

- 1) In 609 Assyria will be defeated at the city of Haran.

- a) It was during this time that King Josiah of Judah was killed when he got involved in the world politics of the day.

- b) He was killed when he went to prevent Pharaoh Neco from assisting Assyria against Babylon.

- c) Judah had become a small pawn in the hands of the more powerful kings of the land.

- 1] Briefly Judah became servants of Egypt, but Egypt was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar with the Assyrians.

- 2] So Judah became servants to Babylon for the rest of her existence before captivity.

- 2) In 605 Assyria will cease to exist when they and Egypt are defeated by Babylon at the city of Carchemish.

- 3. No doubt it was this rise of Babylon to power that gave occasion for Zephaniah's prophesy.

#### •B. NATIONAL POLITICS OF JUDAH IN ZEPHANIAH'S DAY.

- 1. After the good king Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh, a boy of twelve, things went bad.

- a. Manasseh undid all the good Hezekiah his father had done (READ 2 CHRONICLES 33:1-9; see also 2 Kings 21:10-16). The nation was once again led to rebel against God.

- b. The Chronicles account tells us that later in life after being carried off by the Assyrians to Babylon, Manasseh repented so God reinstated him as king (2 Chronicles 33:10-13).

- 2. Amon, who followed Manasseh, was also wicked (2 Chronicles 33:21-25).

- 3. Josiah was the last good king of Judah. He came to the throne at the age of eight and sought God at age 15. He began to reform the land at age 20, and completed the reform at age 26.

- 4. It was after Josiah's reforms that Zephaniah prophesied. [READ 2 KINGS 23:26-28](#) for a summary of the situation from God's point of view.

#### •C. RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CLIMATE IN JUDAH IN ZEPHANIAH'S DAY.

- 1. 2 Chronicles 34 & 35 contain the account of Josiah's sweeping reforms.

- 2. However, even though Josiah's reform restored the rituals of worship; the people's devotion was only external.

- 3. Social and moral corruption were widespread.

- 4. Luxury and extravagance were seen on every hand.

- a. **QUESTION:** Why is it that prosperity and extravagance almost always brings about apostasy?
- b. **QUESTION:** What is the lesson to us?
- 5. Zephaniah proclaimed the coming "day of the Lord" (1:7,14-16).
  - a. So vivid are his descriptions that George Adam Smith wrote: "No hotter book lies in all the Old Testament."
  - b. And yet it ends on an encouraging note about the future....Therefore its overall message is: Through Judgment to Blessing."

### III. OUTLINE AND EXPOSITION FROM THE TEXT.

#### I. LOOK WITHIN - GOD'S WRATH IS COMING UPON JUDAH (1:1-2:3)!

##### •A. **THE LORD IS BRINGING JUDGMENT (1:1-6)!**

- 1. The prophet announces a universal and all-consuming judgment. "The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah: I will completely remove all things From the face of the earth," declares the LORD. I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked; And I will cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD" (1:1-3).
- 2. With special mention and attention given Judah. "So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests. And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven, And those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom, And those who have turned back from following the LORD, And those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him" (1:4-6).
  - a. This judgment will span many, many years and will culminate in the establishment of Christ's kingdom.
  - b. Looking back at the "Day of the Lord" did this occur in 587 B.C.? In A.D. 70? When Christ returns and judges the world?

##### •B. **THE "DAY OF THE LORD" IS AT HAND (1:7-18)!**

- 1. This "day" as it will affect Judah and Jerusalem. "Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests. Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice That I will punish the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments. And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold, Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit. On that day," declares the LORD, "There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, A wail from the Second Quarter, And a loud crash from the hills. Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off. It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!' Moreover, their wealth will become plunder And their houses desolate; Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them, And plant vineyards but not drink their wine" (1:7-13).
  - a. Notice the judgment of sinners of every rank...
    - 1) On princes and the king's children (note, the king himself is not mentioned) (vs.7-8).

- a) **QUESTION:** Why do you suppose the princes are singled out for judgment?
- b) **QUESTION:** What is the significance of those **who "clothe themselves with foreign garments?"**
- 2) On thieves (or idolaters) (v.9).
- 3) On traders (vs.10-11).
- 4) On the indifferent and the wealthy (vs.12-13).
- b. There will wailing and mourning in the city of Jerusalem
- c. The Lord will search out and punish the complacent.
- 2. This great **"day"** described (1:14-18).
  - a. A day that is near and hastens quickly.
  - b. A day of devastation, desolation, darkness, and distress.
    - 1) Zephaniah uses a bit of high Hebrew poetry in verse 15.
    - 2) The words combined with a conjunction in this verse many rhyme in Hebrew: **"A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness."** The similarity in sounds is a trick of Hebrew poetry to convey the idea of the monotony of destruction being predicted.
  - c. A day in which silver and gold cannot deliver one from the Lord's wrath.
    - 1) The Hebrews are being told that they cannot buy their way out of trouble. They cannot spend their way to happiness.
    - 2) This is a malady of present day life in America. For years we have been trying to solve our problems by throwing money at our problems, and it is not working. It will not work in the future.
      - a) Public school education in America...is not educating our children...is the answer more money for the schools?
      - b) No, the answer is more discipline, more God, more morality which allows teachers to teach.
      - c) Israel learned that you cannot spend your way to success.
        - 1] Just before Israel (the northern kingdom) fell (722 B.C.) never were the people more prosperous.
        - 2] Now in Judah (the southern kingdom) as the end nears, never have the people been more prosperous.
      - d) Under the leadership of president Clinton the U.S. has sank lower morally than in its history, but we also are enjoying some of the most prosperous times of our existence.
      - e) Is there not a lesson for us in the Minor Prophets?
    - 3) The Lord in our lives is the answer...not money.
- C. **AND SO - IT IS A CALL FOR THE NATION TO REPENT (2:1-3)!**
  - 1. Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon them they are told: **"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, Before the decree takes effect-- The day passes like the chaff-- Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you"** (2:1-2).
  - 2. Chapter 2:3 exhorts: **"Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the LORD'S anger."**
    - a. In the midst of judgment there is always a remnant. They are described as **"you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances."**
    - b. God knows that they are the only ones who will listen to Him, but to everyone He gives this three fold exhortation...
      - 1) To seek the Lord...
      - 2) To seek righteousness...
      - 3) To seek humility.

- c. In every judgment there will always be a remnant who will avoid disaster by their meekness.

[Having encouraged the people to "look within" and see the need for their own repentance, Zephaniah now prompts the people to "look around" to see...]

## II. LOOK AROUND - GOD'S WRATH IS COMING UPON THE SURROUNDING NATIONS (2:4-3:7).

### •A. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON NATIONS EAST AND WEST...(2:4-11)...

•1. Philistia - "For Gaza will be abandoned And Ashkelon a desolation; Ashdod will be driven out at noon And Ekron will be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, The nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines; And I will destroy you So that there will be no inhabitant. So the seacoast will be pastures, With caves for shepherds and folds for flocks. And the coast will be For the remnant of the house of Judah, They will pasture on it. In the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down at evening; For the LORD their God will care for them And restore their fortune" (2:4-7).

•a. It's cities will be made desolate, the inhabitants destroyed.

- 1) Gaza is to be destroyed and unoccupied.
- 2) Ashkelon (of "Indiana Jones" fame) is to be ruined. There is a city called Ashkelon in Palestine, but it is not built on the site of the original city...the original city is desolate as Zephaniah prophesied.

•b. The land will be for the remnant of Judah, whose captivity God will restore.

- 1) From the days of Joshua the Philistines were a thorn in Israel's side.
- 2) At about the same time Babylon destroyed Judah the Philistines were also destroyed.
- 3) God brought a remnant of the Jews back...the Philistines ceased to exist.
- 4) Even today the sea coast of the Philistines is a vacation spot for Israelis.

•2. Moab & Ammon - "I have heard the taunting of Moab And the revilings of the sons of Ammon, With which they have taunted My people And become arrogant against their territory. 'Therefore, as I live,' declares the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, 'Surely Moab will be like Sodom And the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah-- A place possessed by nettles and salt pits, And a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them And the remainder of My nation will inherit them. This they will have in return for their pride, because they have taunted and become arrogant against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth; and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him, everyone from his own place'" (2:8-11).

•a. They shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah.

•b. Because of their pride, and for their mocking reproach of God's people.

•c. And God will one day be worshipped by people from all nations.

### •B. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON NATIONS SOUTH AND NORTH...(2:12-15)...

•1. Ethiopia will be slain by the sword - "You also, O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword" (2:12).

•2. Assyria with its capital Nineveh will become desolate - "And He will stretch out His hand against the north And destroy Assyria, And He will make Nineveh a desolation, Parched like the wilderness. Flocks will lie down in her midst, All beasts which range in herds; Both the pelican and the hedgehog Will lodge in the tops of her pillars; Birds will sing in the window, Desolation will be on the threshold; For He has laid bare the cedar work. This is the exultant city Which dwells securely, Who says in her heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me.' How she has become a

desolation, A resting place for beasts! Everyone who passes by her will hiss And wave his hand in contempt" (2:13-15).

- a. Jerusalem also will become uninhabited like Nineveh, but God will bring back a remnant to rebuild the city and rebuild the Temple in which Jehovah was present.
  - b. All this is shadows of our present Spiritual reality within God's Holy temple, not made with hands, and constructed of living stones built upon Jesus Christ.
  - c. Apocalyptic voice is heavily used by the prophets as by the apostle John in the book of Revelation. It is never to be interpreted as literal, but symbolic of spiritual truths which refer to spiritual realities which the Christian knows by faith.
- C. **AND SO - WOE TO JERUSALEM...(3:1-7)...**
- 1. She has rebelled against the Lord - "Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, The tyrannical city! She heeded no voice, She accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD, She did not draw near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions, Her judges are wolves at evening; They leave nothing for the morning. Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law. The LORD is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame" (3:1-5).
    - a. She has not obeyed His voice nor drawn near to Him.
    - b. Her civil and religious leaders are like lions and wolves, insolent and doing violence to the Law.
    - c. The unjust knows no shame; the Lord, however, is righteous and never fails in His justice.
  - 2. She has ignored God's judgment upon other nations - "I have cut off nations; Their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate, With no one passing by; Their cities are laid waste, Without a man, without an inhabitant. I said, 'Surely you will revere Me, Accept instruction.' So her dwelling will not be cut off According to all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds" (3:4-7).
    - a. Which should have prompted her to receive God's instruction.
    - b. But instead the people corrupted all their deeds.

[Finally, lest the faithful remnant despair, Zephaniah ends his message with a "**look beyond**"...]

### III. LOOK BEYOND - THROUGH JUDGMENT TO BLESSING (3:8-20).

## •A. **WAIT UPON THE LORD...(3:8)...**

- 1. The faithful are told to wait for Lord to carry out His judgment - "Therefore wait for Me,' declares the LORD, 'For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal."
  - a. We live in a "spit on the griddle" society today...
    - 1) Instant potatoes.
    - 2) Instant coffee.
    - 3) Instant tea.

- 4) Microwave ovens.
  - 5) Instant gratification.
- b. We don't like waiting...after all physical life only lasts 70 or 80 years....God's is eternal.
  - c. One of the things we must learn having been born again into eternal life is that we are on God's time schedule now...not our own...it might involve some waiting.
  - d. God's faithful are told to wait for His judgment.
- 2. Listen to Micah's commentary on this same subject in Micah 7:7-9... "But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; Though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, And I will see His righteousness."
- a. Do you notice that Micah admits that he is a part of the problem: "I have sinned against Him!"
  - b. What we see here is Micah's humility and his repentance and his faith as the judgment which will surely come overtakes him.
  - c. As judgment comes we much wait in trust for the Lord to save us....we cannot remove faith from our salvation.
  - d. Habakkuk said it this way concerning those who will survive God's judgment: "But the righteous will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).
- 3. Waiting on the Lord means trusting in the Lord's working...even in our sinful lives to work out righteousness...we become righteous by trusting in God's ability to make us what we have not been able to do for ourselves.
- 4. This is one of the ceaseless lessons from the Minor Prophets.

## **•B. GOD WILL RESTORE HIS PEOPLE... (3:9-13)...**

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON TWELVE

Zechariah - I am Zealous for Zion.

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

### INTRODUCTION:

#### •A. THE PROPHET...

- 1. Zechariah came up to Jerusalem from Babylon under Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:4, 16).
  - a. His name means "**Whom Jehovah Remembers.**"
  - b. At least 27 men bear his name in the Old Testament.
- 2. He was both a priest and a prophet, prophesying contemporarily with Haggai.
  - a. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, and the grandson of Iddo (Zec 1:1, 7).
    - 1) The same Iddo seems to be mentioned among the priests who returned from exile under Zerubbabel and Joshua in the year 536 BC (Neh 12:4; Ezc 2:2).
    - 2) If so, Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet.
  - b. "When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them supporting them" (Ezra 5:1-2).
  - c. "And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (Ezra 6:14).
- 3. He was called to be a prophet to stir up the people in building the temple.

#### •B. THE SETTING TO THE BOOK...

- 1. Following 70 years of Babylonian exile, Israel was allowed to return back home...at least a remnant.
  - a. Precipitated by the decree of Cyrus, they returned to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-5).
  - b. The first group of exiles were led by Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:1-2).
  - c. While they were quick to build the altar and the foundation of the temple, resistance by adversaries soon resulted in a long delay (Ezra 4:1-5).
- 2. To encourage Zerubbabel and the others, God sent two prophets: Haggai we've already studied, and at the same time Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-15).

#### •C. CONCERNING HIS MESSAGE...

- 1. He prophesied about 520 - 518 B.C. (1:1,7; 7:1).

- a. Remember that Haggai is dated at 520 B.C.
  - b. Therefore, this book is a sequel to Haggai's book.
- 2. About the controversy concerning the date of the writing of the book.
- a. Several scholars have differing views as to the dates of the book's writing which are pure conjecture.
    - 1) The long and the short of it is that some believe that part of the book was written by the Zechariah who lived during Isaiah's time, part of the book was written by another who lived during Jeremiah's time at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last part of the book was either written by the Zechariah who returned from the exile or maybe even from someone who lived as late as the second century B.C.
    - 2) These same type of liberal scholars who do this also taught that Isaiah was written by three completely different people. One was Isaiah who was perceptive and figured out what was coming for Israel. Another was a person who lived in Jeremiah's day which answered the reason Isaiah could so accurately predict the destruction of Jerusalem, and lastly the book was written by someone one who was a contemporary with Christ which would explain why Isaiah could so vividly predict Christ's crucifixion.
    - 3) These liberal scholars were prevalent in higher education prior to our modern day humanists. They were called religious deists. Their belief was based solely on reason. To them God who created the universe then abandoned it, assuming no control over life, exerting no influence on natural phenomena, and giving no supernatural revelation.[1] Large universities for years taught their theories which such as the one that Zechariah was written by three different people because of respect for their high standing in education circles.
      - a) Of course their teaching had no basis in fact.
      - b) It was impossible to refute them because it was pure conjecture.
      - c) At one time it was becoming politically incorrect to oppose their views and they were always given as an alternative view.
      - d) They were simply explaining away anything miraculous...they were actually petty thugs much like those who insist today that evolution is fact and to oppose such a view marks a person as being uneducated.
  - b. In 1947 something occurred in Palestine which erased many of the theories of the deists, and put egg on their faces and exposed them for what they are.
    - 1) A little shepherd boy stumbled into a cave discovering a cash of manuscripts of the Old Testament now know as the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the jars contained the entire book of Isaiah which can be scientifically dated as being copied as far back as 100 B.C.
    - 2) The theory stated that the book of Isaiah was not written till the time of Christ, yet we have in our hands a copy of Isaiah which is word for word the same as our present day copies which was written 100 years before Christ.
      - a) Their theory was exposed as being biased and false.
      - b) It and other archaeological discoveries pushed back the teachings of the deists for many years.

- c. Yet when we study books like Zechariah we still see a hold over of these deistic teachings which are still honored by higher education even today.
  - d. That's why you see these theories that the book was written by more than just one man.
- 3. Zechariah's book is the longest and most obscure of "The Minor Prophets."
- a. It is considered by some as the most difficult in the Old Testament.
  - b. It is apocalyptic in nature; filled with symbolic visions, and it is very much like Ezekiel and Daniel.
  - c. It is also very messianic in nature; it is comparable to Isaiah.
  - d. It should be approached with humility.
- 4. The theme of the book come from 1:14, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.'"

(The following notes are adapted from Mark A. Copeland's notes)

## **I. THE CHOSEN PEOPLE AND GOD'S TEMPLE (1:1-8:23)**

### **•A. A CALL TO REPENTANCE (1:1-6).**

#### **•1. ZECHARIAH'S FIRST MESSAGE...**

- a. Dated in the 8th month of the second year of Darius (520 B.C.), [READ 1:1](#).
- b. This places his prophecy between Haggai's 2nd and 3rd prophecies - Hag 2:1,10.
- c. Comparing this prophecy with Haggai's third suggests that while the temple was being rebuilt, some repentance was still necessary - cf. Hag 2:14, "Then Haggai said, 'So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,' declares the LORD, and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.'"

#### **•2. KEY THOUGHTS IN THIS CALL TO REPENTANCE...**

- a. The Lord has been angry with their fathers (e.g., Babylonian captivity) - [READ 1:2](#).
- b. 2. The people need to return to the Lord to gain His favor - [READ 1:3](#); cf. James 4:8, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
- c. Don't be like their fathers, who ignored the prophets - [READ 1:4](#); cf. 2 Chr 36:15-18, "The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon."

- d. Learn from their fathers, who learned things the hard way, [READ 1:5-6](#).

[The first message is certainly clear enough, and seems to complement Haggai's third message. Then three months later, Zechariah had a series of eight visions that occurred in one night...]

•B. **VISIONS IN THE NIGHT (1:7-6:9).**

•1. **THE ANGELIC HORSEMEN (1:7-17)... GOD'S EYES ARE ON THE WICKED!**

- a. Zechariah sees a man riding on a red horse among myrtle trees in a hollow, followed by red, sorrel, and white horses - [READ 1:7-9](#).
- b. The horses are explained as sent by the Lord to walk throughout the earth, who report (or perhaps those on them) that the earth is resting quietly - [1:10-11](#).
- c. The "**Angel of the Lord**" asks how long will God not show mercy on Jerusalem and Judah - [1:12](#).
- d. The Lord responds with comforting words, which Zechariah is told to proclaim - [1:13-17](#)...
  - 1) Words describing the Lord's zeal for Jerusalem and Zion.
  - 2) Words conveying God's anger at the nations.
- e. So while the nations may appear "at ease", their judgment is forthcoming and God will show mercy to Jerusalem.
- f. The purpose of this vision (and the one to follow) appear to confirm the promise made to Zerubbabel by Haggai - cf. Hag 2:20-22, "**Then the word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 'Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.'**"

•2. **THE FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CRAFTSMEN (1:18-21)... GOD'S HAND WILL BE ON THE WICKED.**

- a. Zechariah sees four horns that are identified as that which scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem -[1:18-19](#).
- b. He is then shown four craftsmen, who will cast out the horns (nations) that scattered Judah - [1:20-21](#).
  - 1) This vision appears to confirm the promise made in the first vision...
  - 2) Both visions are designed to comfort the people who were building the temple!

•3. **THE MEASURING LINE (2:1-13)... GOD'S LOVING PROTECTION IS AVAILABLE FOR HIS PEOPLE.**

- a. This vision appears to develop further the thought expressed in Zechariah [1:16c](#).
- b. The **FIRST PART** of the vision indicates that Jerusalem would be inhabited to overflowing, and protected by the Lord - [2:1-5](#).

- c. The SECOND PART calls for the dispersed Jews to return - [2:6-9](#).
  - 1) To flee from Babylon.
  - 2) For the Lord is against such nations.
- d. The THIRD PART proclaims the future joy of Zion and many nations - [2:10-12](#).
  - 1) Fulfilled in part soon after the completion of the temple?
  - 2) Fulfilled in part with the coming of the Messiah?
- e. Finally, a call to all to be silent, for God is aroused (i.e., is about to act!) - [READ 2:13](#).
- f. This vision also appears designed to encourage the building of the temple!

**•4. THE CLEANSING OF JOSHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST (3:1-10)... GOD WILL CLEANSE AND EXALT HIS SERVANTS!**

- a. In the first part of the vision... [3:1-5](#).
  - 1) Joshua, the high priest (cf. Hag 1:1), stands in filthy garments before Satan and "the Angel of the Lord."
  - 2) Satan is rebuked, while Joshua is forgiven and clothed with rich robes, as "the Angel of the Lord" stands by...
- b. In the second part of the vision... - [3:6-10](#).
  - 1) Joshua is admonished by "the Angel of the Lord."
  - 2) He is given conditions for serving as priest before God.
  - 3) Joshua and his companions (the restored priesthood?) are a sign...
    - a) Of the coming Servant, the "Branch."
    - b) I.e., the coming Messiah - cf. Isaiah 11:1-2; Matt 2:23
  - 4) A stone is laid before Joshua.
    - a) Upon which are seven eyes.
    - b) Upon which the Lord will engrave its inscription.
  - 5) The Lord promises the removal of iniquity, describing prosperity "in that day."
- c. This vision seems designed to encourage the re-establishment of the priestly service in the temple, and it certainly has Messianic overtones.
  - 1) Remember that the context of these visions is the work of Zechariah and Haggai, who were sent to stir up the people to complete building the temple.
  - 2) This is not to discount the fact that their messages and visions often had Messianic connotations...
    - a) As so much of what happened in the Old Testament was a type of what was to come.

- b) Even these prophecies of Zechariah often appear to have a double fulfillment.
  - 1] A fulfillment pertaining to the people of that day.
  - 2] And a fulfillment that was realized with the coming of the Messiah, Our Jesus!
  - 3] 3:8b, "...they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch."
- 3) .But we must be careful in seeking to understand these visions...
  - a) Unless we have an inspired interpretation provided for us in the New Testament...
  - b) We should use caution and humility in interpreting them outside of their context.

**•5. THE GOLD LAMPSTAND AND TWO OLIVE TREES (4:1-14)... GOD WILL GIVE HIS LEADERS AUTHORITY EQUAL TO THE TASK.**

- a. Awakened from a deep sleep, Zechariah is shown a golden lampstand with seven lamps and seven pipes, with olive trees on both sides - [READ 4:1-3](#).
- b. Asking the angel what they represent, he is told...
  - 1) That it is a message to Zerubbabel (the governor) - [4:6a](#).
  - 2) That by God's Spirit, not man's might or power, Zerubbabel shall bring forth the capstone (finishing stone) of the temple - 4:6b-7.
  - 3) Thus Zerubbabel will finish the temple - [4:8-9](#).
  - 4) For the eyes of the Lord (represented by the seven lamps) which scan the whole earth, rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel - [4:10](#).
    - a) God asks, "For who has despised the day of small things?"
    - b) Who is going to have to answer... "It was me?"
    - c) Here's the lesson: "But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel--these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."
      - 1] Men may dispise the feeble efforts of a simple service to the Lord.
      - 2] But not the all seeing eyes of the Lord! He knows where our power lies!
      - 3] Any effort of faith is looked upon with favor from the Lord.
      - 4] That which is looked upon with displeasure is faithless disciples.
    - d) No task of faith is insignificant...as Jesus says, "Even to the giving of a cup of water in His name..."
  - 5) And that the olive trees represent "two anointed ones" (Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor?) who stand beside the Lord - [4:11-14](#).

- c. With such encouragement, who can "**despise the day of small things?**" (as the temple looked when its foundation was first laid - cf. Ezra 3:11-12; Hag 2:2-3).

**•6. THE FLYING SCROLL (5:1-4)... THE WICKED PEOPLE REMOVED FROM THE GLORIFIED LAND.**

- a. Turning and raising his eyes, Zechariah sees a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and 10 cubits wide (approx. 30 feet by 15 feet) - [5:1-2](#).
- b. The scroll is explained as being the curse going out on the whole earth - [5:3-4](#).
  - 1) According to what is written on one side, every thief will be expelled.
  - 2) According to what is written on the other side, every perjurer will be expelled.
  - 3) Thus it will enter and consume the houses of thieves and those who swear falsely.
- c. Such people were responsible for the downfall of Israel and Judah (cf. Hos 4:2-3; Mic 2:2-3); this vision ensures such will be removed from God's people.

**•7. THE WOMAN IN THE BASKET (EPHAH) (5:5-11)... WICKEDNESS IS CARRIED AWAY ON DIVINE WINGS.**

- a. Zechariah is directed to see a large basket, in which sits a woman - [READ 5:5-7](#).
- b. As the woman is explained to represent wickedness...
  - 1) She is thrust down into the basket with a lead cover over the top - [5:8](#).
  - 2) Two women with wings like those of a stork lift the basket to take it a house in the land of Shinar (Babylon) - [5:9-11](#).
- c. This vision symbolizes that wickedness will be removed from the land.

**•8. THE FOUR CHARIOTS (6:1-8)... GOD'S ADMINISTRATIVE FORCES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

- a. Zechariah sees four chariots coming between two bronze mountains - [6:1-3](#).
  - 1) The first chariot had red horses.
  - 2) The second chariot had black horses.
  - 3) The third chariot had white horses.
  - 4) The fourth chariot had dappled horses.
- b. He is told what the chariots represent - [6:4-8](#)....
  - 1) They represent the four spirits of heaven.
  - 2) The chariot with the black horses is going to the north country, followed by the chariot with the white horses.
  - 3) The chariot with the dappled horses is going to the south country.
  - 4) The chariots go throughout the earth, with those going to the north giving rest to God's Spirit in the north country (north country = where the enemy dwells).

- c. This final vision appears to correspond with the first (cf. 1:7-11).
  - 1) In the first vision, the four horses report that the earth was at peace, while the temple lay uncompleted.
  - 2) Now, it is God's Spirit which is given rest in the north country (Babylon?).
- d. Perhaps this vision reflects that God would be at ease once His purposes concerning Jerusalem (restoration of its temple) and Babylon (judgment for its sins) were completed.

[With these eight visions in one night, Zechariah had a message to encourage Zerubbabel and Joshua in their efforts to rebuild the temple. The message would be reinforced with yet another given to Zechariah...]

•C. **THE COMMAND TO CROWN JOSHUA (6:9-15)... A REPRESENTATION OF JESUS THE KING-PRIEST.**

•1. **THE INSTRUCTIONS TO ZECHARIAH...**

- a. Take the gift from the captives and make an elaborate crown - "Take silver and gold, make an ornate crown..." (6:9-11a).
- b. Set the crown on the head of Joshua the high priest - "...and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest" (6:11b).
- c. Speak the following words to Joshua - 6:12-13.
  - 1) Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!
  - 2) From His place He shall branch out.
  - 3) He shall build the temple of the LORD.
  - 4) He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and reign on the His throne.
  - 5) He shall be a priest on His throne, with the counsel of peace.
- d. The elaborate crown to be a memorial in the temple - 6:14.
- e. Those from far away will help build the temple - 6:15.

•2. **THE MESSIANIC ELEMENTS OF THIS SYMBOLIC CROWNING...**

- a. Certainly this symbolic crowning was intended to encourage Joshua and those captives who had returned to build the temple.
- b. But Joshua appears to be a type of the coming Messiah., i.e., Jesus...
  - 1) Jesus was called "a Nazarene" (branch) - Mt 2:23; cf. Zech 3:8.
  - 2) He would "branch out" - cf. Isa 11:1-2; 53:2.
  - 3) He would build the "temple of the Lord" (i.e., His church) Matt 16:18; Eph 2:21-22.
  - 4) He would "rule on His throne" - 1 Cor 15:25; Rev 1:5; 2:27-28.
  - 5) He would be "a priest on His throne" - Heb 8:1-2; Re 3:21.
  - 6) He would provide the "counsel of peace" - Eph 2:14-17.

- c. And so this symbolic crowning was not only to encourage Joshua, but those who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, whom Joshua represented!
- d. Through the use of such visions and symbolic representations...

# A STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## LESSON THIRTEEN

Zechariah - I am Zealous for Zion.

Milt Langston

Southgate church of Christ

### INTRODUCTION:

#### •A. SETTING...

- 1. With the aid of the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah...
  - a. The temple was rebuilt according to Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-16.
  - b. What had begun in 536 B.C. was finally finished in 516 B.C.
- 2. In 458 B.C., another group of exiles returned to Jerusalem, led by Ezra...
  - a. A priest
  - b. His work was to teach the people the word of God as is recorded in Ezra 7:10.
- 3. About 444 B.C., a third group of exiles returned led by Nehemiah...
  - a. Who became governor.
  - b. Under his leadership, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt (Neh 1-6).
  - c. Together with Ezra, he led the people to a great revival (Neh 7-13).
- 4. Contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah was another prophet, Malachi...
  - a. His name means "My Messenger."
    - 1) Certainly Malachi was a messenger of God.
    - 2) But he also spoke of God's messengers to come, "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts" ( Mal 3:1).
  - b. Like Ezra the priest...
    - 1) Malachi attacked the spiritual and moral decay that was prevalent.
    - 2) Among both priests and people.
  - c. In so doing, he resorted to a new style of teaching.
    - 1) Known as the didactic-dialectic method of speaking.
    - 2) I.e., making a charge, raising potential objections, and then refuting them.
    - 3) Which later became common in Jewish schools and synagogues

#### •B. DATE OF THE WRITING OF MALACHI.

- 1. The book was written between the first and second visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem.
- 2. Date: 445-432 B.C.
- 3. Biblical background: Ezra 7-10 and the book of Nehemiah.

## **I. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.**

- A. **GOD LOVES A PURE, CLEAN, HAPPY HOME.**
- B. **DIVORCE IS AN ABOMINATION IN GOD'S SIGHT.**
- C. **INSINCERITY IN WORSHIP INSULTS GOD.**
- D. **ONE WHO SINS WILLFULLY AND WANTONLY CANNOT PLEASE GOD BY AN ELABORATE WORSHIP.**
- E. **OUR GIVING IS A BAROMETER THAT MEASURES OUR SPIRITUAL TEMPERATURE.**
- F. **THE PEOPLE SUFFER WHEN THE PREACHER FAILS TO STUDY AND TEACH ALL THE TRUTH.**
- G. **GOD STILL HOLDS OUT THE CHALLENGE TO ALL HIS CHOSEN ONES TO PUT HIM TO THE TEST TO FIND THE RICH SUPPLY OF BLESSING THAT ARE AVAILABLE.**

## **II. OUTLINE AND OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TEXT.**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. **IN THIS STUDY, WE SHALL CONSIDER SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF MALACHI'S DIDACTIC STYLE OF TEACHING.**
  - 1. The book is one of the most interesting books of the Bible.
  - 2. Its message is presented in a very unique way.
    - a. As you read through the book of Malachi it comes across as an interview.
    - b. Almost a debate between GOD and Israel, with Malachi as the moderator.
  - 3. A question is posed and GOD gives an answer, then the Israelites are given a chance to respond, this dialogue consists of some 24 total questions, each one centering around the theme of "Is GOD Faithful"?
- B. **WITH THIS METHOD WE FIND MALACHI ADDRESSING SEVERAL PROBLEMS...**

### **I. ISRAEL WAS DOUBTING GOD'S LOVE (1:1-5).**

- A. **EVIDENTLY THEY WERE QUESTIONING GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM (1:1)...**

- 1. After years of captivity, one might understand why they felt this way.
- 2. Their return from Babylonian captivity was not without difficulty.
- B. GOD REASSERTS HIS LOVE FOR ISRAEL (1:2-5)...**
  - 1. Note the didactic-dialectic style in vs.2 & 3a...
    - a. "'I have loved you,' says the LORD."
    - b. "'But you say, 'How have You loved us?;'"
    - c. "'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau'"
  - 2. God is speaking of Jacob and Esau as the representative of their descendant nations...
    - a. God did not hate Esau personally.
    - b. But He did hate what Edom as a nation had become.
  - 3. He goes on to illustrate what He means...
    - a. Edom (the descendants of Esau) had become desolate; despite their claims to the country, it would remain desolate ([READ 1:3-4](#)).
    - b. But Israel would one day see the Lord magnified beyond its border ([READ 1:5](#)).

[If the people only observed how Israel was being restored while Edom remained desolate, they would know God still loved them as a nation.]

[But perhaps their doubting of God's love had led to another problem that was prevalent at that time...]

## II. ISRAEL WAS DISHONORING GOD'S NAME (1:6-2:9).

- A. By Offering Blemished Sacrifices ([READ 1:6-11](#)).**
  - 1. Sons honor their fathers, and servants their masters; but they were despising God.
  - 2. When asked in what way, they are told of their defiled sacrifices.
  - 3. They were offering to God what they would be embarrassed to offer men.
  - 4. The Lord would even wish that someone shut the doors so they could not sacrifice.
  - 5. Despite their dishonor, God's name will be honored even among the Gentiles.
    - a. When God predicts a coming event...it is a sure thing.
    - b. The sure thing is: God will be honored!
    - c. To be included in that day we need to be a people who honor God even in the days when men are dishonoring Him!

- d. This is what Jesus did which Paul speaks of in Philippians 2:5-11, and in response God will give Jesus a name of honor and humble the proud before Him.
- 6. SOME APPLICATIONS...
  - a. There are some who put work before church; others put recreation before church. Today school activities come before church activities.
  - b. When church (the body of Christ; the rule of God) begins not to matter to us...
    - 1) God will not ask us: "Why doesn't church matter to you?"
    - 2) Instead He will say, "Why don't I matter to you?"
    - 3) Or as Malachi puts it, "**where is My honor?**" or "**where is My respect?**"
      - a) This present day culture of our has tried to force God into an existentialistic mold...or worse to deny Him altogether.
        - 1] Really if the modern American society cannot deny God and are forced to at least admit that others believe in Him.
        - 2] When he is talked about at all he is viewed with an existential definition.
        - 3] That's why the God of the Christians and the God of the Muslims or the God of the Hindu to them is all the same far away god who does not interfere in the affairs of man.
      - b) Our study of the Minor Prophets shows us that God is not only very interested in His creation...his eyes are constantly upon His creation because His plan is to save all who will turn to Him for His own righteousness.
      - c) The wonderful addition the New Testament makes to the Old Testament is that God does this in a righteous and just way through Jesus the man God.
      - d) This should cause you and me to guard against having a casual attitude about God's kingdom because we have learned that it is the only kingdom that will endure the earth's destruction.
        - 1] If you are in it you have secured salvation. That's how important it is.
        - 2] If you miss God's kingdom...you are lost.
        - 3] And if we have a casual attitude toward our worship of God ...we stand the chance of angering God who created it for us, and we stand the chance of mission out on its salvation!
      - e) Malachi is exhorting us with Israel to take God seriously!
        - 1] He will be exalted (v.11).
        - 2] If we want to get in on the exaltation after this life is over, we had better pay closer attention to God rule, to God's kingdom, to God's righteousness (cf. Matthew 6:33).
- c. Jewish religion demanded the first fruits and best for sacrifice...to offer less displeased God to the extent that He despised what was given.

- d. Jesus told us that we can build upon the sand, or we can build upon a rock. How do we build upon a solid foundation?

•B. **By Offering Half-Hearted Worship (READ 1:12-14).**

- 1. They also were profaning God's name by saying His service is contemptible and a weariness.
  - a. The people and priests profaned GOD'S name (v.12).
    - 1) Not through cursing or sinful living (this was the sin of their fathers, but they had a different problem).
    - 2) But through improper and meaningless worship.
      - a) They would simply go through the motions.
      - b) Singing songs with no joy.
      - c) Bringing offering and then cursing the table.
  - b. Our faith shows in what we do...
    - 1) A cry for shorter sermons, and a desire for an earlier dismissal time can be signs of a deeper problem.
    - 2) The Children of Israel were bored with their worship, and their praise was from the lips out, not from the heart where God desired it to come.
- 2. Those who continued to bring blemished sacrifices would fall under God's curse, for He is "a great King."
  - a. Because God is a "great King"...
    - 1) You can bow before Him and praise Him and honor Him...even this is only possible because of the grace of God in sending Christ who will accept our faith and devotion.
    - 2) You can even rebel against Him in opposition.
    - 3) But you cannot remain indifferent to Him.
  - b. Some try...but their life becomes a curse.

•C. **SUCH CORRUPTION WOULD NOT GO UNANSWERED (2:1-9).**

- 1. Addressing the priests directly, the nature of God's curse is graphically depicted (READ 2:1-6).
- 2. Because they had failed to live up to what was expected of God's priests, He will make them base and contemptible (READ 2:7-9).
- 3. SOME APPLICATIONS...
  - a. The Israelites now had wonderful places of worship.
  - b. They had many educated and noble people to serve them and lead them in worship.
  - c. They even had a book of scripture that came straight from the mouth of GOD.

- d. The Israelites could look upon the broad expanse of history and say GOD has provided.
  - 1) They loved to talk of how GOD had delivered them from times of harm and times of need.
  - 2) When it came to the things of GOD, they, like us, had it all.
- e. So why when we read the book of Malachi, do we find it so harsh and critical?
  - 1) I believe the answer is because the Israelites took what GOD gave them for granted.
  - 2) They began to worship out of habit and sacrifice was just a word they heard on the Sabbath.
  - 3) They began to let the influences of the world compromise their worship, and they stood in a precarious position with GOD.
- f. Malachi wrote to prepare the people for the eminent coming of Jesus Christ.
  - 1) He sought to expose their casual attitudes.
  - 2) He wanted to revive their reverence and worship of GOD.
- g. There is a great application to us today.
  - 1) As Malachi prepared the children of Israel for the coming of Jesus.
  - 2) He can help us become prepared for His second coming.
  - 3) We should not view this as just another commentary on the weak, non-committal faith of the Israelites.
  - 4) It is given as a mirror for us today.
  - 5) Paul said it this way, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

[As Malachi continues, we also learn...]

### III. ISRAEL WAS PROFANING THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD (2:10-16).

#### •A. BY MARRYING HEATHEN WOMEN (READ 2:10-12).

- 1. They were dealing treacherously and profaning the covenant made with their fathers by marrying pagan women ("the daughter of a foreign God"), (vs.10-11).
  - a. Read Nehemiah 13:23-28.
  - b. God through Moses in Deut. 7:2-4 told Israel, "You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them (speaking of the idolatrous nations around them). Furthermore,

you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you."

- 2. For more background on this problem you can study Ezra chapters 9 & 10.
- 3. Malachi prays that the Lord will cut off from Jacob those who do this (v.12).
  - a. Why do you suppose Israel's men were drawn to pagan women (this is not a racial issue, but a religious issue)?
  - b. A substandard view of marriage reveals a substandard view of God who created man and woman and joins them in covenant together.
- B. **BY DIVORCING THEIR JEWISH WIVES (READ 2:13-16).**
  - 1. Despite their weeping, God was no longer regarding their sacrifices (v.13).
    - a. The altar became a witness against these men.
    - b. Peter tells Xian men to honor their wives "...so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).
    - c. The altar was already wet from the tears of their wives!
      - 1) And now they are crying because things are not going well with them?!
      - 2) Truly we reap what we sow!
      - 3) And then when things are not going well, we blame God...who is already displeased...look out!, we're about to make Him angry.
  - 2. Israel's problem was that they had dealt treacherously with the wives of their youth (i.e., Jewish wives) by divorcing them (vs. 14-15).
    - a. Even though they had entered into a covenant (e.g., "Till death do us part").
    - b. Even though God had made them one (cf. Gen 2:24).
    - c. They had "broken faith" with their wives.
  - 3. Therefore God hates divorce, "'For I hate divorce,' says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'and him who covers his garment with wrong,' says the LORD of hosts. 'So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously'"(v.16).
    - a. For it covers one's garment with wrong (violence); *chaòmaòs chaòmaòs* (kha-w-mawce') = "violence; by implication wrong; by metonymy unjust gain:- cruel (-ty), damage, false, injustice, X oppressor, unrighteous, violence (against, done), violent (dealing), wrong."
      - 1) Divorce wrongs a man's wife that he has promised to care for and protect...what started out in love and mutual respect ends in violence!
      - 2) It wrongs a man's children leaving them without leadership, love and support. Divorce devastates children, then and now.

- b. It is treacherous (bagad [bagad] in Hebrew) = "to act treacherously, deceitfully, deal treacherously."
  - 1) This type of divorce causes a person to deceive with his promises.
  - 2) It is to act with treachery with one's spouse!
- c. In Christ's day some (as in the book of Malachi, and as some do today) were trying to use divorce to avoid adultery...
  - 1) Adultery is breaking faith concerning your vows of faithfulness and having sexual relations with someone other than your spouse.
  - 2) This type of divorce just to change marriage companions is the same as adultery Jesus taught (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-8).
    - a) The same lust motivates both.
    - b) The same breaking of faith occurs in both.
    - c) They are the same.
  - 3) The union of a man and a woman is a holy thing....it is sanctified in marriage.
    - a) To hold deprived view of marriage is to hold a deprived view of God.
    - b) God's will is not evil, but best for His creation.
    - c) We as God's people need desperately to demonstrate God's wisdom to a world gone crazy by the way we live together in our marriages.

**•C. SUMMARY TO THIS POINT....MALACHI HAS INTRODUCED THREE COMPLAINTS FROM GOD AGAINST ISRAEL...**

- 1. They were doubting God's love (1:1-5).
- 2. They were dishonoring God's name (1:6-2:9).
  - a. By offering blemished sacrifices in a vain and empty devotion to God.
  - b. By offering half-hearted worship born of unbelief instead of trusting and believing in God.
- 3. They were profaning God's covenant (2:10-16).
  - a. By marrying heathen women which was forbidden by the law.
  - b. By divorcing their Jewish wives (the wives of their youth...breaking faith).

[Looking at the last verse in chapter two, not that...]

**IV. ISRAEL WAS TRYING GOD'S PATIENCE (2:17-3:5).**

•A. BY QUESTIONING THE JUSTICE OF GOD (READ 2:17).

- 1. They had wearied God with their words (this sounds like a whine-ie type of griping).
- 2. Especially regarding His justice:
  - a. For they said that those who do evil is good in God's sight, that He even delights in them.
    - 1) They were complaining that their obedience to God's laws was more of a detriment than a blessing.
    - 2) To their way of thinking the unrighteous had an advantage over them.
    - 3) It seemed that God was blessing the unrighteous over them.
    - 4) Do we ever get to feeling that way?
  - b. For they asked, "Where is the God of justice?"

•B. THE LORD'S RESPONSE WILL BE TO SEND HIS MESSENGER (3:1-5).

- 1. My "messenger," "The Lord you seek," and the "messenger of the covenant." (READ 3:1).