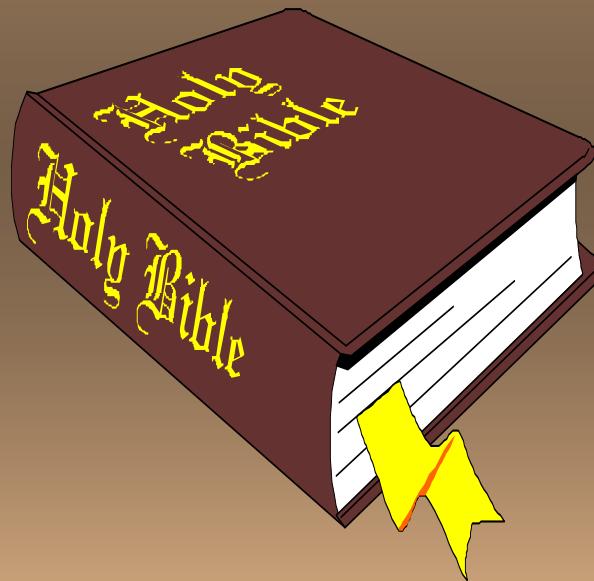


*A Year's Spiritual Journey through a Study of
Old Testament Books*

Part #4

Important Lessons To be learned From

**OLD TESTAMENT
MINOR PROPHET BOOKS**



13 Lessons

**Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2005

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To be Learned
From a Study of

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(Part #4)

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Lesson One

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

We will be studying the 12 Minor Prophet books and look for important lessons we can learn from them. It is important that you read the book assigned and answer the questions at the end of the lesson. We will study the prophets by the Century in which they lived. The dates are gathered from: (1) The books of prophecy; (2) Bible history; and (3) Secular history. Look over the information at the end of this lesson to help to see how these prophets fit into an historical background.

GENERAL BACKGROUND TO STUDY

A. Israel & Judah divided about 930 B.C.

- 1) Judah (South)---King Rehoboam (Son of Solomon)
- 2) Israel (North)----King Jeroboam
- 3) Idolatry plagued northern Israel most of the time.
- 4) Judah was back & forth with idols.

B. Countries that affected Judah & Israel:

- 1) Those close by (Syria, Bashan, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia).
- 2) Those further away (Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medes & Persians).
- 3) Discuss Kings of: Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persians

THE PROPHET & HIS MESSAGE

The books that are called Minor Prophets are called such because they are shorter than the larger Books. But these books are among the most interesting of Old Testament books. They are rich source for study and inspiration (Romans 15:4). These messages are given through some of the most SPIRITUAL & COURAGEOUS men of the Old Testament, and usually during times of great peril, disaster, and sin.

The Mission of these men:

- 1) To speak the “Word of the Lord” to whomever they were sent.
 - a) They were not crowd-pleasers—they offered no compromise with sin.
 - b) They were men of strong conviction and strong passion.
 - c) Their words came thundering down upon injustices.
- 2) They were to expose the sins of people by teaching of Law of God.
- 3) Yet, they upheld the Love of God for His people.
- 4) They made it clear that judgment would come to the disobedient and blessings to the righteous.
- 5) They foretold the destruction of nations around Israel & Judah.
- 6) They also foretold of Israel & Judah’s fall & captivity because of sin.

- 7) The righteous were given hope for the future blessings for the people of God during the Messianic age.
 - a) Despair and discouragement was often a problem with the righteous.
 - b) They were mistreated, put down, in the minority, and continually persecuted in one form or another.
 - c) They needed hope, encouragement, and strength to endure.
 - d) God assures them of His punishment of evil, justice will be done, and the righteous will be upheld.
- 8) They were both “Forth” tellers as well as “Fore” tellers.

The Lives of these Men:

- 1) They were great examples to follow.
- 2) They spoke courageously & uncompromisingly.
- 3) They could not be bound or stopped from speaking their message by public opinion, kings, princes, false prophets, or persecution.
- 4) Their lives matched their message that gave force to God’s message.
- 5) They were mostly REFORMERS, disturbing the status-quo of a sinful people.

The Work of these Men:

- 1) They began their preaching shortly after the dividing of kingdom (930 BC) down to (400 B.C.) (Span of about 500 years)
- 2) During this time 3 major kingdoms had an impact on them: Assyria, Babylonia, and Media-Persia
- 3) The prophets also spoke to & about these and other nations around Israel and Judah.
- 4) Their work was done during four crucial periods:
 - a) Crisis of Idolatry—Assyrian Crisis (Amos, Hosea, (Isaiah), and Micah).
 - b) Crisis with Babylon (Zephaniah, (Jeremiah), Nahum, and Habakkuk).
 - c) Crisis during the Exile (Obadiah, (Daniel, Ezekiel)).
 - d) Crisis during the Restoration & rebuilding period (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

The Value of their Work:

- 1) Mankind hasn’t changed, we still need the same warnings & teachings.
- 2) They trusted in material strength, wealth, and not God.
- 3) The people lied, stole, committed murder, committed sexual immoralities, etc.
- 4) They were oppressive and unjust, prejudice and full of hatred, anger and wrath without a cause.
- 5) They preferred to listen to a message of re-assurance rather than one that rebuked.
- 6) From these writings we can judge our own spirituality, faithfulness, and motives.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

While these books are shorter in length than the Major Prophets, they are certainly not without plenty of good lessons for us today. Put your heart into the reading and studying of these books. You will not find a greater source of spiritual food than in these writings.

DATES & SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND**TO THE****MINOR PROPHETS**

1. Joel (830 B.C.)-----II Kings 10-13
2. Jonah (780 B.C.)-----II Kings 14
3. Amos (770 B.C.)-----II Kings 15
4. Hosea (760-725 B.C.)-----II Kings 16
5. Micah (740 B.C.)-----II Kings 16
6. Nahum (640 B.C.)-----II Kings 21-22
7. Habakkuk (625-600 B.C.)-----II Kings 23-25
8. Zephaniah (630 B.C.)-----II Kings 23-25
9. Obadiah (580 B.C.)-----II Kings 25
10. Haggai (519 B.C.)-----Ezra 1-5
11. Zechariah (519 B.C.)-----Ezra 1-5
12. Malachi (440-400 B.C.)-----Ezra 6-10; Nehemiah 1-13

CHRONOLOGY OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY BOOKS

BEGINNING	1500	1400	1200	1000	900	800	700	586	536	434
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Genesis	Exodus	I & II	I Kings-----II Kings	Ezra Neh
	Leviticus		Samuel	Esther
	Numbers			
	Deuteronomy			
	Joshua			
	Judges			
	(Ruth)			
I Chronicles-----			II Chronicles	

BOOKS OF MINOR PROPHETS

9TH Century-----Joel

8th Century-----Jonah
Amos
Hosea
Micah

7th Century-----Nahum
Zephaniah
Habakkuk

6th Century-----Obadiah
Haggai
Zechariah

5th Century-----Malachi

KINGS OF ASSYRIA **(883-610 BC)**

AFFECT ON ISRAEL

Ashurnasirpal II.....	883-859	
Shalmaneser III ***.....	859-823	He defeated 12 kings at Qarqar Israel also (Jehu paid tribute)
Shamshiadad IV.....	823-810	
Adadnirari III ***.....	810-781	Took Syria (took pressure off of Israel)
Shalmaneser IV.....	781-771	
Ashurdan III.....	771-753	
Ashurnirari V.....	753-745	
Tiglathpileses III ***.....	745-726	Meneham paid tribute to keep power. Ahaz (Judah) paid tribute also. Put seige against Samaria
Shalmaneser V ***.....	726-721	
Sargon II ***.....	721-705	Overthrew Samaria
Sennacherib ***.....	705-681	Took many cities of Judah Hezekiah & Isaiah led people God intervenes (185,000 soldiers slain mysteriously) Made Manasah tributary
Esarhaddon ***.....	681-669	
Ashurbanipal.....	669-630	Conquered Thebes—Empire begins to crumble
Ashoretililani.....	630-620	Overthrown by Medes
Sinshariskun.....	620-612	Overthrown again by Medes & Babylonians
Ashuruballit II.....	612-610	Final overthrow...end of Assyria

*****Mentioned in Scripture by name**

KINGS OF BABYLON **(626-539 BC)**

Nabopolassar.....	626-606-----	Fall of Nineveh (612)
		Fall of Haran (610)
Nebuchadnessar.....	606-562-----	Judah made tributary (606)
		Judah rebels & is subdued (597)
		Temple destroyed (586)
Evil-Merodach.....	562-560	
Neriglissar.....	560-556	
Labashi-Marduk.....	556	
Nardonidus.....	556-539-----	Overthrow of Babylon
		(Belshazzar---Co-regent)

- Daniel lived during reign of all of the above kings.

KINGS OF THE MEDO-PERSIANS

(538-331 BC)

Darius, The Mede.....	538-536-----	Beginning of Medo- Persian Empire
Cyrus II (the Great).....	536-530-----	Jews allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple (536) under Zerubbabel
Cambyses.....	530-522	
Smerdis Artaxerxes.....	522	
Darius I (Hystaspis).....	521-486-----	Temple restarted (520) Temple finished (515)
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus).....	486-465-----	Time of book of Esther
Artaxerxes I (Longimanus)....	465-423-----	Ezra returns with group (457) Nehemiah arrives (445)
Xerxes II.....	423	
Sekydianos (Sogdianos).....	423	
Darius II (Nothos).....	423-404	
Artaxerxes II (Mnemon).....	404-359	
Artaxerxes III (Ochos).....	359-338	
Arses.....	338-336	
Darius III (Codomannus)....	336-331-----	Greeks conquered the Medo-Persian Empire

Lesson Two

“Behold, the Goodness and Severity of God” ***(Joel)***

Joel spoke at a time (about 830 B.C.) that both Judah & Israel were on a sharp decline as a nation and as a people desirous of serving God. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had gone into Idolatry. Jezebel had pushed Baal worship to an extreme. Upon her death, Jehu tried to rid the land of Baal worship, but did not gain the hearts of people back to God. Judah was also having problems with idolatry. They had just gotten rid of the daughter of Jezebel from being Queen over Judah, and appointed 7-year old Joash to be king. Both King Joash & Jehu started off good....but the hearts of the people were not turned to God. Thus, the purpose of Joel was:

- a) To threaten punishment upon a disobedient people.
- b) To call for repentance or else.
- c) Mercy to be shown if they truly repented.
- d) God will judge their enemies.

GOD’S WARNING OF DESTRUCTION! (1:1-2:11)

A. A terrible destruction is threatened. (1:2-3)

- 1) So severe that old men cannot recall a similar one.
- 2) Will be told from generation to generation. (1:2)

B. The extent of the destruction. (1:4-12, 16-20)

- 1) Luxuries as well as essentials to life will be cut off.
- 2) Nothing left to bring as an offering unto God.

C. This destruction comes from the Lord. (1:15, 2:1-11)

- 1) Day of the Lord. (2:3, 11)
- 2) Come from the Almighty.
- 3) Blow the trumpets....sound of warning of extreme danger.
- 4) It is a day of darkness and gloom.
- 5) Day of helplessness, sinking heart, anguish, ruin.
- 6) It will come like a mighty army with horses & chariots.
- 7) Fire & destruction will be in its wake.
- 8) Like an earthquake....heavens trembling, sun & moon darkened, stars not shining is God’s way of expressing judgment upon a nation and its fall.
(2:10; 3:15)
- 9) Describing God’s righteous indignation against a people who apparently had turned to ungodliness & wickedness.

GOD CALLS FOR REPENTANCE (1:13-2:27)

A. In spite of destruction to come, it is not too late to repent. (1:13-14; 2:12-14)

- 1) God can still bless if he sees sincere repentance.
- 2) Sincerely fast, weep, and mourn.
- 3) Rend your hearts, not your garments.

- 4) Ps. 51:17--- "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart."

B. God calls for a solemn assembly of the people. (2:15-17)

- 1) Led by priests...followed by all...youngest to oldest.
- 2) Call upon Jehovah to spare his people.
- 3) For if true repentance does not take place, God will deliver them into the hands of heathen nations to rule over them.

C. The results of repentance. (2:18-27)

- 1) Cause the destroying army to leave a blessing behind.
- 2) He does not want them in derision of the heathen either, but sin will cause it.
- 3) He will show pity, compassion:
 - a) By giving them food sorely needed.
 - b) Remove the reproach brought on by their destruction.
 - c) Bless the fruit of their labors abundantly.
 - d) Restore an abundance to them again...like Garden of Eden.
 - e) Completely destroy the invaders.
- 4) God's people will praise name of the Lord for what He has done
 - a) Will not be ashamed because they serve God.
 - b) Will know the Lord is God Almighty.

FUTURE PROMISES ABOUT HIS PEOPLE (2:28-3:17)

A. The outpouring of His Spirit upon all flesh. (2:28-32)

- 1) Messianic. (Acts 2:17-21)
- 2) Peter said, "**This is that which the prophet Joel said**".
- 3) This would be upon all flesh....both Jew & Gentile.
- 4) Great signs will be shown at this time.
- 5) God's great judgment will come upon the people....Sun, Moon, Stars.
- 6) Deliverance is promised to those who turn to Jehovah.
- 7) Deliverance will come from Jerusalem. (I Pet. 2:5-6)

B. He will recompense Judah & Jerusalem for sins committed against them. (3:1-8)

- 1) Heathen had taken them captive & scattered them among the nations.
- 2) Parted their land up for themselves.
- 3) Did not favor human life, cast lots for.
- 4) Used Tyre & Sidon to illustrate his point.
- 5) God will bring judgment to bear upon their enemies.

C. God calls upon the nations to do battle with Him. (3:8-17)

- 1) Get all the men you can....weapons, turn garden tools into spears, etc.
- 2) God will sit in judgment upon all nations (in Valley of Jehoshaphat). (3:12)
- 3) Their wickedness is full and ready to be punished.
- 4) Will know that Jerusalem is holy, the Lord's dwelling place for His people....no strangers to pass through.

GREAT BLESSINGS TO COME IN THAT DAY. (3:18-21)

- A. *Great blessings to come to God's people and all who seek Him and His refuge.*
(3:21) (Rev. 22:17)
- B. *Uses Egypt & Edom to illustrate God's punishment to those who would not turn to Him for refuge.*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Prophet gives Hope in midst of great destruction....physically. He also offers hope in midst of great injustices that have not fully been avenged. Such will be avenged in the day of the judgment of Jehovah. God's people will be exonerated...held up....exalted...justified. God would prove who were His true people by dwelling with them! Judah was spared for another 200 years from the time of this threat from God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS**True or False**

- 1. God uses nations to illustrate the good and the bad and the outcome of such.
- 2. Hope gives purpose for keeping on living and striving to do right.
- 3. Joel's message was primary to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- 4. Joel promised the outpouring of God's Spirit upon "all flesh."
- 5. Joel calls upon the people to fast, weep, and mourn.
- 6. God called upon the nations to gather together to do battle with Him.
- 7. When God's destruction came it would leave neither luxuries nor necessities.
- 8. The daughter of Jezebel ruled over Judah for a period of time.
- 9. Joash was 17 years old when appointed king over Judah.
- 10. Joel's promise of the outpouring of the Spirit was fulfilled when the Spirit came upon the Apostles in Acts 2 and on Cornelius and his house in Acts 10.

Lesson Three

“A God of Forgiveness” **(Jonah)**

The last outstanding prophet to Israel was Elisha (854-800?). At his death he indicated that Israel would prosper again. Idolatry had been curbed somewhat in Israel. Syria had suffered 3 defeats that gave Israel relief. And in 805 BC, Assyria crushed Syria. For some reason Israel & Judah were left alone for 50 years. Assyria may have been too occupied to be a threat to Israel. The northern tribes above Assyria were creeping down within 100 miles of Nineveh. She turned her interest to protect herself. So, both Israel & Judah began to prosper again. Land control & countries ruled over were as large as at the time of Solomon. The period of prosperity was a time of testing of Israel in particular. For 20-30 years, no prophet is mentioned. Then, Jonah appears on the scene. (II Kings 14:23-29). But this book is not about Israel, but Assyria (Nineveh).

JONAH RESISTED GOD’S CALLED TO GO TO NINEVEH. (1:1-3)

A. Go to Nineveh and cry out against the city.

- 1) Nineveh was a great city itself for its day.
- 2) And was growing larger in land & countries conquered.
- 3) The reason for sending Jonah....the city was wicked!
 - a) She had treated nations & cities with great contempt and cruelty.
 - b) Burned city after city that they conquered.
 - c) Piles of mangled bodies were left to rot when they conquered a city.
 - d) She was hated, despised by all....but feared even more.

B. Jonah’s Rejection.

- 1) Why would God send a prophet to save a people like this?
- 2) Jonah’s reaction was quite natural for that time.
 - a) Nineveh needed to be punished.
 - b) She needs to fall.
 - c) Why send someone to save her?
 - d) If saved....she would only come down & destroy more.
- 3) Jonah was unable to see reason for God’s plan.
 - a) Or...maybe he saw too much!
 - b) May have also realized that God would use this people later in punishing his own rebellious people.
 - c) As a prophet...these insights could have been possible.

C. Jonah’s Rebellion & refusal to go.

- 1) Often many do as Jonah:
 - a) Can’t see God’s purposes;
 - b) Or, what they do see, don’t agree with.
- 2) So, he turned from serving God...left his own people.
 - a) He found a boat at Joppa going for Tarshish. (Spain)
 - b) He thought he could flee from God’s presence.

GOD'S PERSUASION OF JONAH TO DO HIS BIDDING. (1:4-17)

A. God caused a great wind to arise to threaten the boat.

- 1) People became desperate.
- 2) Cast lots to see who was guilty of bringing this terrible thing upon them....it fell upon Jonah.
- 3) Jonah's statement...Vs. 9
- 4) "What shall we do with thee?"
- 5) Vs. 12
- 6) They were reluctant at first....but finally threw him overboard.
- 7) Vs. 14-17

B. Jonah swallowed by a large fish prepared by God.

- 1) This was not unusual....had happened before many times.
- 2) Story of a man who actually survived such.
- 3) Jonah was in belly of great fish 3 days & nights.

JONAH'S CRY UNTO THE LORD FROM THE FISH'S BELLY. (2:1-10)

A. His affliction caused him to cry out to God.

- 1) Out of the belly of hell (Sheol).
- 2) He was alive in the fish's stomach....can you imagine such?
- 3) Condition described in Vs. 5-6.
- 4) Jonah changed His mind about serving God. Vs. 7

B. Jonah brought to repentance.

- 1) Vs. 8-9
- 2) God spoke to the fish that it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

GOD'S SECOND CALL TO JONAH HEDED. (3:1-4)

A. Jonah goes to Nineveh.

- 1) "3 days journey"---To get to city from where God called him a 2nd time.
- 2) Or, 3 days journey across the city?

B. Jonah's message.

- 1) "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."
- 2) It was a message of doom for a nation that deserved it.

NINEVEH BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE. (3:5-10)

A. The people believed God's message of doom.

- 1) They proclaimed a fast
- 2) Put on sackcloth from greatest to least.
- 3) King also clothed in sackcloth & sat in ashes.
- 4) He made a proclamation. Vs. 7-9

B. God changed his mind about destroying Nineveh.

- 1) He saw how they turned from their evil way

- 2) God repented (changed his mind) about destroying them.

JONAH'S DISPLEASURE AT NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE. (4:1-3)

A. *The extent of his displeasure....*

- 1) Exceedingly
- 2) He was very angry.

B. *Jonah prays to God about it.*

- 1) Vs. 2
- 2) Since you are going to save this people.....
- 3) Then, just take my life from me.
- 4) "It is better to die, than to live."

THE LORD JUSTIFIES HIS ACTIONS & REBUKES JONAH. (4:4-11)

A. *God helps Jonah to understand.*

- 1) He acknowledged that Jonah was angry.
- 2) Jonah builds a booth to sit under to wait and see what would happen to the city. (40 days???)
- 3) So God prepares a "gourd" (Vine to shade him even better).
- 4) Jonah was exceeding glad.
- 5) God caused a worm to destroy the Vine the next day.
- 6) Then God caused a strong east wind to blow and the sun to beat down upon Jonah's head that he fainted.
- 7) Wished himself dead again.

B. *The lesson.*

- 1) Jonah, are you angry for the gourd?
- 2) Yes
- 3) "You have pitied the gourd, which came up in a night and perished in a night."
- 4) "Should not I have spare Nineveh that has 120,000 children and much cattle?"
- 5) And the book ends!!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

How long did the repentance last? It did not stop Assyria from Empire-building for very long. They seem to have changed from their cruelty approach. Why did God send Jonah? To help Nineveh to become the chastening hand of God and not the annihilating hand of God. To show God's willingness to bless all nations who will repent. To show that His love and mercy can be

extended to all peoples. Jonah has no Messianic prophecy, but has an event that Jesus used. He foretold of his resurrection in relation to Jonah's experience (Matt. 12:40-41). The effects of this book is still quite powerful & edifying. God sent prophet after prophet to the Jewish nation, and they would not repent. He sends one prophet to a Gentile nation, and they all repented! Jesus said: "***The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it:***

because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.”
What do we do about the preaching of Jesus?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

- 1. Jesus identified himself with Jonah upon one occasion as an indication of what will happen to Himself.
- 2. Assyria was a cruel nation and had conquered or made several nations tributary to them.
- 3. Jonah was only sent by God to preach to Nineveh.
- 4. Jonah actually fled from his homeland to escape carrying out God's command.
- 5. God prepared a large fish to swallow Jonah.
- 6. God said that Nineveh had 150,000 children in it.
- 7. God's threat of punishment is conditional.
- 8. Jonah was a prophet who did not want any responses to his preaching.
- 9. He felt it would be better for him to die than see God spare Nineveh.
- 10. Jonah's anger against Nineveh was justified.

Lesson Four

“Prepare to Meet Your God!”

(Amos)

The threat of Assyria had lessened for Israel & Judah. She had subdued Syria....which helped Israel. Assyria was busily occupied with other nations. Israel & Judah had a period of expansion, peace, & prosperity. In Israel, Jeroboam II reigned for about 40 prosperous years. He initiated a vigorous building & expansion program. They were able to regain many of the cities that had been lost. Prosperity, wealth, and peace rule of the day.

Wealth, luxury, self-indulgence, oppression, and slavery of the poor showed the extremes in their society. They had their winter and summer houses of hewn stone. They had their ivory paneling and couches with rich furnishings. They enjoyed their delicacies and stirring music for feasts and banquets. Ease and extravagance contrasted with misery and suffering of the slave population. Officials were dishonest & corrupt. Usury, extortion, riot, and class hatred were common. The rich gained their wealth by injustice & oppression.

Outwardly, they were very religious. Great numbers made journeys to shrines at Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba. Elaborate ceremonies & religious observances were in abundance. They were very pious in their claims to be God's chosen people. But inwardly, they were unchanged. Immorality was abundant. The righteous were hated and oppressed by the wicked. Insincerity and superstition and idolatry abounded.

God sent different Prophets to warn them of the coming dangers. Four were sent in a row to warn them that fatal days lay ahead if they did not repent. Amos laid stress on the righteousness of Jehovah. Hosea laid stress on the love of Jehovah for his people and of his willingness to take them back upon repentance. Isaiah stressed God's Holiness and Majesty. Micah stressed the Divine judgments of God.

Amos was sent about 40-50 years before Israel's overthrow by the Assyrians. He lived a few miles south of Jerusalem. He was not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but God called this rough herdsman to speak for Him to a rich, wealthy, sophisticated people. They were at the height of greatness---on brink of a golden career. But it was one of building up of their sins to the fullest.

Amos was sent to show God's judgment upon Israel for the same sins that the Amorites before them had been guilty of....and had been driven out of the land because of such.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON NATIONS ABOUT ISRAEL. (1:1-2:3)

A. Nations:

- 1) Damascus (Syria) (Northeast of Israel).
- 2) Gaza (Philistines) (Plans to the South West)
- 3) Tyrus (Phoenicia) (Plans to the North West)
- 4) Edom (Esau's descendants) (South of Judea)
- 5) Ammon (Lot's descendants) (East)

- 6) Moab (Lot's descendants) (South East)

B. Reasons for God's judgment:

- 1) Their cruelty, breaking of brotherly covenants, selling people into captivity.
- 2) General miscellaneous wickedness.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH. (2:4-5)

A. Southern Kingdom....(Due South of Israel)

B. Reasons for God's judgments:

- 1) Despised the law of the Lord
- 2) Have not kept his commandments
- 3) Their lies (Teaching of false prophets) caused them to err.
- 4) Their fathers walked after this way.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL. (2:6-4:13)

A. For their Social & Civil Injustices: (3:2)

- 1) The rich were getting richer off injustices to poor, needy, and the righteous.
- 2) They were constantly after the poor.
- 3) They tried to corrupt the meek, to turn him aside.
- 4) Oppress the poor, crush the needy, and take away the results of their labor.
- 5) They forced the poor to sell themselves as slaves for silver or even a pair of shoes.
- 6) They encouraged bribery.
- 7) They discouraged just judges....encouraged dishonest ones.
- 8) They used false balances & weights.
- 9) Gross immorality.

B. For their Religious sins:

- 1) They had elaborate worship at Bethel & Gilgal.
 - a) Sacrifices every morning.
 - b) Tithes constantly
 - c) Thanksgiving & freewill offerings.
- 2) Their worship was corrupted:
 - a) Wrong places
 - b) Wrong objects (idols)
 - c) Wrong attitudes
- 3) God despised their:
 - a) Feast days
 - b) Solemn assemblies not acceptable.
 - c) Offerings of burnt offering & meat offering...not acceptable.
 - d) Songs not acceptable.
- 4) They couldn't wait for the Sabbath, or New Moon Festival to be over to do their evil again.
- 5) They corrupted the Nazarite sent to them.
- 6) They forbade the prophets to speak.

- 7) Their religion pleased them, not God.
- 8) Their worship was abundant, loud, open....But...
 - a) It was quantity, but not quality.
 - b) It was from a rebellious heart....self-willed worship.

C. For their material indulgence:

- 1) The rich were at ease, living in luxury, feasting and over-eating to high-heaven.
- 2) All the time:
 - a) Poor were oppressed and wronged.
 - b) Righteous were beaten & wrongly treated.
 - c) While the nation rotted from within in its injustices.

D. For their lack of repentance.

- 1) God had been merciful twice & spared Israel (Locust & Fire)
- 2) Because of prayer & the few righteous people left.
- 3) 4:12---“***Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.***”

GOD'S LAMENT OVER ISRAEL. (5:1-3)

A. Israel is fallen (past tense)!!

- 1) She shall no more rise
- 2) She is forsaken upon her land
- 3) There is none to raise her up

B. The outcome:

- 1) Cities that had a 1000 will be left with 100.
- 2) Cities that had a 100 will be left with 10.

THE CALL TO SEEK AFTER GOD AND HIS WAYS. (5:4-20)

A. “Seek me, and ye shall live” (5:4)

- 1) Seek not after your idols at Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba.
- 2) Seek the Lord, who is creator of all things & the Almighty.

B. “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live.” (5:14)

- 1) He then will be with you as you now claim.
- 2) Hate the evil, love the good.
- 3) Establish judgment in the gate.

C. “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord” (5:18)

- 1) It will not be what you expect.
- 2) It will be darkness, not light.

GOD'S REJECTION OF THEIR INSINCERE SERVICES. (5:21-27)

A. God hated their Worship.

- 1) Because they came from an insincere heart.
- 2) A heart filled with wickedness.

- 3) His challenge: "***But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.***" (5:24)
- 4) Rebukes their idolatry.

B. I will cause you to go into captivity.

- 1) It will be beyond Damascus. (5:27)
- 2) Obvious that he was talking about Assyria.

ISRAEL'S INDULGENCE CONDEMNED. (6:1-6)

A. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion"

- 1) You trust in yourselves.
- 2) You practice ungodliness.
- 3) Indulge in luxuries & are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. (6:5)

GOD'S PROMISE OF PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL. (6:7-14)

A. These will go into captivity first.

- 1) He will deliver up the city (Samaria) of all that is in it.
- 2) Reason: "***for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.***" (6:12)
- 3) God promises to raise up a nation against them. (6:14)

THE PROPHET AVERTS WORST PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL. (7:1-9)

A. God was merciful twice because of the prophet.

- 1) Locust
- 2) Fire

B. The plumb line is stretched over Israel.

- 1) Shows how far off from righteousness she had gone.
- 2) God will not pass by them a third time.
- 3) Little hope is held out.

AMAZIAH'S INTERFERENCE AND GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON HIM. (7:10-17)

A. His effort.

- 1) He warns the king (Jeroboam II) of the words of Amos.
 - a) That the king will die by the sword.
 - b) Israel will be led away captive out of their own land.
- 2) He urges Amos to go back to Judah and prophesy there.
- 3) 7:12-13

B. Amos' reply to Amaziah. (7:17)

- 1) Told of his background.
- 2) How the Lord called him to speak to Israel.
- 3) Prophecy against Amaziah:
 - a) Your wife will be a harlot in the city.
 - b) Your children will die by the sword.

- c) Your land divided.
- d) You will die in a polluted land.
- e) And Israel shall surely go into captivity.

THE PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL VIVIDLY DESCRIBED. (8:1-9:10)

A. Israel's fall compared to ripe summer fruit! (8:2)

- 1) She is ripe for destruction.
- 2) God said he would not pass by them again.
- 3) Also said He would never forget any of their works.
- 4) Their fall will be terrible.
- 5) There will be a famine of the word of the Lord. (8:11)
- 6) They would be wanderers on the earth. (8:12)

B. But God promises He would not utterly destroy Israel.

- 1) He will sift the house of Israel among all nations. (9:9)
- 2) All sinners will die by the sword. (9:10)
- 3) Can't hide from God's Wrath. (9:2-3)

RESTORATION OF TABERNACLE OF DAVID. (9:11-15)

A. Hope is held out to Israel in the future.

- 1) Believed to be a Messianic hope.
- 2) Expressed in desirable, physical terms....but spiritual in nature.

B. A remnant would be raised up to bring glory to God. (9:14)

- 1) Under new kingdom....
 - a) All nations would come under His reign.
 - b) All will be called by name of Jehovah.
 - c) There will be spiritual fullness to those in the kingdom.
 - d) Their homeland would be forever (heaven).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The conditions were so terrible that God could offer little hope for Israel....primarily that He would not utterly destroy them. The only hope was in the new Messianic Kingdom that was to come in which many of their descendants would be able to enter into.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What six peoples did Amos speak against besides Judah & Israel?
2. What proverbial saying does Amos use to show why God could no longer walk with Israel?
3. Who was the priest that spoke against Amos?
4. What kind of work did Amos do?

5. What kind of famine did God say he would send among the people?

6. How will the Lord sift Israel?

TRUE OR FALSE

- 1. Amos prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II.
- 2. Amos offered no condemnation of Judah.
- 3. Bethel had an altar for worship located with it.
- 4. God named the place of Israel's captivity.

Lesson Five

“Unrequited Love” **(Hosea)**

Hosea is a book of Eloquence, Beauty, Stark and Naked Truth. With great appeal, with pathos, and with love. It has great imagery and vivid illustrations of great concepts, of great sadness, hopelessness, and rejection. Hosea lived and worked towards the end of the peaceful reign of Jeroboam II in Israel. Amos had been sent to warn them of God's judgment to come because of their sinful ways. It seems to have been to no avail. God then sent Hosea to deliver one of the most GRAPHIC and TOUCHING revelations of God's love up to this time. He pleads, exhorts, and woos in the name of a loving God, while still presenting the punishment of God. He appeals for repentance on the basis of: (1) Pain to God; and (2) The anger of God.

Upon Jeroboam's death anarchy sets in: assassination, murder, gross idolatry, general chaos. This lasted for 20-30 years—until Israel's overthrow. Six kings followed in succession—each murdering to get to the throne. Hosea tried to appeal to his people, but to no avail. It was a time of decay, death, feuds, and broken covenants. Wild adventurers arose at almost any time to seize the throne. Foolish and godless rulers sought their own selfish ends, while a nation suffered and collapsed. Judges, kings, princes, were corrupt, selfish and arrogant. Assyria came down and subjugated Samaria during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser. In spite of this, the people would not change. The end came in 722-21 B.C., when Sargon II completed the siege and transported the people elsewhere.

THE PROPHET HOSEA

We are not sure where he lived. God encouraged and used his marital experiences to great advantage. He was encouraged by God to marry a young woman of idolatrous background. She yielded to her former influences, and became untrue to him. She had 3 children during their time together, BUT HE WAS NOT SURE THEY WERE HIS. She later went into Whoredom altogether....hiring herself out. As she lost her beauty and charm of youth...she was sold as a slave. Hosea bought her back....out of love for her in spite of what she had done.

This condition was used to envision Israel's bleak, sinful condition. God called her out of Idolatrous background in Egypt. He married her and she became His chosen. He gave her all she needed, but instead of returning His love, she turned back to her former influences (idolatry). Finally, in her desperation she turned wholly from God to others. She no longer depended upon God. She gave money to other nations to deliver her. Which nations later turned upon her and sold her. In her sinful, degraded, idolatrous condition....GOD OFFERS TO TAKE HER BACK! But, there had to be true repentance. The only real hope held out was a Messianic Hope. It is this Messianic Remnant (Spiritual Israel---Church) that God brought back to himself. Hosea prophesied about 760-725 B.C.

ISRAEL'S CONDITION AS PRESENTED BY HOSEA

A. Religious:

- 1) Worse than what Amos had said!
- 2) One word stands out.... “WHOREDOM”
- 3) It was worse than Adultery....She sold herself for hire.
- 4) People did not know God.... Ignorant of Him & His Laws.
- 5) Two systems of false religion that they engaged in: Calf Worship and Baal Worship—Both of which were apostate!

B. Moral:

- 1) Guilty of swearing, breaking faith, murder, stealing, committing adultery, deceit, lying, drunkenness, dishonesty in business, and other crimes.
- 2) A nation in decay....ready for a fall.

C. Political:

- 1) If upheaval had not started yet, it would soon.
- 2) Upon the death of Jeroboam II, his son Zechariah reigned 6 months.
- 3) Slain by Shallum....And he reigned only one month.
- 4) He was slain by Menahem....He reigned for 10 years.
- 5) He paid heavy tribute to Assyria.
- 6) Pekahiah, his son, succeeded him for 2 years.
- 7) He was slain by Pekah.
- 8) It was during Pekah's reign that the conquest of Northern Israel began. Many were carried away then.
- 9) Hoshea slew Pekah and reigned. He rebelled against Assyria and he sent to Egypt for help.
- 10) Samaria fell in 722-21 BC & carried away captive.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Four things characterized the nation:

- a) Rebellion against all constituted authority....assassination of kings & princes.
 - b) Dependence upon human defenses & foreign alliances, not the power of God.
 - c) Corruption of priests in league with false prophets.
 - d) Corruption of worship (Calf & Baal Worship), which led to immorality & faithlessness.
2. God's message:
 - a) Your sins are great....God has been patient & kind long enough.
 - b) Your doom as a people must come....it is inevitable.
 - c) You have broken the covenant that God made with you as a people.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. Who was king in Israel during the time that Hosea prophesied?**
- 2. Give the significance of the name of each of Hosea's children: Jazreel, Lerohamah, Loammi.**
- 3. How much did Hosea pay for the woman he took unto himself that was an adulteress?**
- 4. To what is Israel's backsliding compared?**
- 5. What did God desire more than sacrifice and burnt offerings?**
- 6. To what two nations did Israel turn for help, but found none?**
- 7. What will Israel reap because she has shown the wind?**
- 8. What shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to King Jarbe?**
- 9. What did the Lord do for Israel when a child?**

TRUE OR FALSE

- 1. Ephraim is used to signify Israel.**
- 2. Hosea said, "Ephraim is a cake not turned."**
- 3. Hosea said the Assyrian would be Israel's king.**
- 4. Hosea said God gave Israel a king in his anger.**
- 5. Gomer was Hosea's godly mother.**

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES--3:5; 1:10-11 (I Pet. 1:1; 2:10; Rom. 9:26); 2:14-23 (I Pet. 2:10; Rom 9:25-26); 11:1.

Lesson Six

“Things that Make Me Right With God”

(Micah)

God's true prophets spoke in perilous & dangerous times with great courage. They were not backslapping, hale & hearty fellows....as just one of the gang. Neither were they fearful, timid, afraid-of-his-shadow type of fellow. They warned of impending dangers. They advised the king & his counselors what courses to take. They called for deep & true repentance—drastic changes in the lives of the people. And with seemingly little success, but they did postpone the disaster for a little longer.

Micah was one of 4 prophets sent during this crucial time for both Judah and Israel. Amos and Hosea were primarily sent to speak to Israel. Micah & Isaiah were primarily sent to Judah.

BACKGROUND

A. The Prophet:

- 1) Lived 20-25 miles SW of Jerusalem.
- 2) Micah spoke to the common people out in the countryside.
- 3) While Isaiah worked with the rulers in Jerusalem.
- 4) Micah prophesied from about 740-700 BC.

B. Political Conditions:

- 1) Kings who reigned: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.
- 2) During time of Uzziah (and Jeroboam II) there was prosperity and enlarging of land holdings.
- 3) Jotham was a good king who followed policies of his father.
- 4) However, Ahaz was wicked and brought on much of the problems religiously.
 - a) Israel & Syria wanted to rebel against Assyria and called for Judah to help them. (735 BC).
 - b) Ahaz refused.
 - c) Israel & Syria conquered Judah in battle & made her tributary.
 - d) Ahaz called for Assyrian help against advice of God's prophet.
 - e) Assyria came down & conquered Syrians in 732 BC.
 - f) Most of Israel's cities fell, except for Samaria.
 - g) Samaria made to pay a heavy tribute.
 - h) Further rebellion led to the Assyrian overthrow of Samaria in 722-21 BC.
- 5) In 711 BC, Judah, Ashdod, Edom, Moab & Egypt rebelled against Assyria.
 - a) Severe punishment was inflicted on all but Jerusalem.
 - b) 46 cities of Judah were taken.
 - c) But Hezekiah listened to God and put his trust in God.
 - d) 185,000 soldiers mysterious slain during night.
 - e) Judah escaped for time being.

Religious Conditions:

- 1) King Ahaz brought in Idolatry--altars, images, pagan worship from Assyrians.
- 2) Even the worship of their god, Asshur.
- 3) These things were later cleansed by King Hezekiah.
- 4) But the hearts of the people were not in the change.
- 5) Justice, righteousness, honesty was almost forgotten.
- 6) Immorality was prominent.
- 7) They made slaves of the people.
- 8) They stole and robbed from the poor.
- 9) People preferred to follow false prophets.
- 10) Concept of God was like heathen nations.

STUDY OF THE BOOK OF MICAH***A. God's judgment is coming upon them. Ch. 1***

- 1) 1:1---Time when he prophesied (740-700)
- 2) 1:6-7---Fall of Samaria predicted.
- 3) Important city after city described as having fallen in Judah.
- 4) Their children will be taken away captive. 1:16

B. Their refusal to listen will bring captivity. Chs. 2-3

- 1) Injustices:
 - a) Oppress the poor. 2:2
 - b) Oppress women & children. 2:9
 - c) They hate the good & love the evil. 3:2
 - d) Abhor judgment & pervert all equity. 3:9
 - e) Build up Zion with blood & Jerusalem with iniquity. 3:10
- 2) Their leaders:
 - a) Judge for reward
 - b) Priests teach for hire
 - c) Prophets divine for money (2:11)
 - d) And then have the audacity to say: "***Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us.***" 3:11
- 3) Their punishment to come:
 - a) God will not hear them. 3:4
 - b) God will send no message through false prophets. 3:7
 - c) Zion will be overthrown. 3:12

C. Their restoration and future glory. Chs. 4-5

- 1) 4:1-8---Messianic promises.
- 2) Zion will be where the Lord will reign over His people. 4:8
- 3) 4:9-13---Judah will be taken captive to Babylon, but later return.
- 4) This Messianic ruler will come out of Bethlehem. 5:2
 - a) Emphasis upon His Deity.
 - b) God will give His people up until time of new Kingdom. 5:3
- 5) Assyria will be punished. 5:6
- 6) God's people scattered among Gentiles will be a blessing to them. 5:7-9

- 7) At that time Jacob will no longer have Witches, Soothsayers, Graven images, or worship of such. 5:12-14

D. Sins of the people. Chs. 6-7

- 1) God calls for his people to tell him why they have forsaken him. 6:2-4
- 2) What can the people do to be right with God. 6:6-8
- 3) Sins listed:
 - a) Treasures gained by wickedness.
 - b) Wicked balances.
 - c) Full of violence, lies, tongue is deceitful
 - d) You walk in the ways of Omni & Ahab. 6:10-11, 16
 - e) Good men perished from earth....none upright. 7:2
 - f) Lie in wait for blood to kill their brother. 7:2
 - g) All leaders are corrupt. 7:3
 - h) Even the best of them are like a sharp thorn. 7:4
 - i) Can't trust in anyone, but God. 7:5-7
- 4) Just punishment is coming:
 - a) Make you desolate. 6:13
 - b) All efforts to reverse punishment are vain. 6:13-15
 - c) Day of visitation is coming. 7:4
- 5) The prophets were giving recognition to the just punishment of God upon the people. 7:8-10
- 6) The land will be made desolate because of sins of the people. 7:13
- 7) But God will show marvelous things in the future. 7:15
- 8) Ends with emphasis upon God's mercy. 7:18-20

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Lessons to be learned:

- 1) Worship and Morality cannot be separated.
- 2) Wrong use of power will not go unpunished.
- 3) Acts of cruelty towards men is an insult to God in whose image they were made.
- 4) Religion that does not affect the heart and lead to submission to God is worthless.
- 5) Preachers who mold their message to please sinful men are the enemies of God and traitors to their calling.
- 6) They need to be bold and courageous in preaching the message of God.
- 7) Unworthy leaders will lead a nation into destruction.
- 8) True peace can only be found in the Messiah's kingdom.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did Micah see his visions concerning Samaria and Jerusalem?
2. What two cities represented the two nations?
3. What kind of prophet will this people have unto themselves?

- 4. Why were the Seers to be ashamed?**
- 5. Where does Micah say the Lord's house will be established in the last days.**
- 6. From where will the Law go forth?**
- 7. Out of what city will the ruler of Israel come?**
- 8. What had God shown His people that He required of them?**

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES---4:1-2; 5:2

Lesson Seven

“The Justness of Punishment” **(Nahum)**

At the close of the 8th century, the northern Kingdom of Israel was taken away captive by the Assyrians (722-21 BC). Judah stood alone, greatly reduced in size and power. Judah was at the mercy of the nations around her, unless God protected her. God did just that by killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Judah survived for almost a hundred more years. The prophets helped, but could not get out the cancerous idolatry in the people's heart. Judah's overthrow came in three phases:

- a) 606 BC....Main leaders taken....Daniel, 3 young men.
- b) 597 BC....Main leaders again taken....Ezekiel.
- c) 586 BC....Complete destruction of city, Temple, captivity for most of people--few left.

Following are the kings during this hundred years:

- a) Hezekiah---721-696---Good king.
- b) Manasseh---696-641---Evil king up until last years of life.
- c) Amon---641-639---Turned people back to idolatry.
- d) Josiah---639-609---Very good king....restoration of Law.

The Kings of Assyria:

- a) 681-669---Esarhaddon made Manasseh tributary.
- b) 669-630---Ashurbanipal conquered Thebes, but Empire begins to crumble.
- c) 630-620---Ashuretililani overthrown by the Medes.
---Nabopolassar won independence of Assyria in 626.
- d) 620-612---Medes overthrew sacred city of Asshur in 614.
---Babylonians & Medes overthrew Nineveh in 612.
- e) 612-610---The Assyrian State lingered a while longer because of Egyptian support.
---Ashur-uballit held out at Harran for 2 years.
---He tried to recapture Harran with aid of Neccho II of Egypt, but failed.

The Prophet Nahum:

- a) Dated about 640 B.C.
- b) His message was primarily about the complete overthrow of Nineveh.
- c) The message moves swiftly and forcefully to its great conclusion....Nineveh will utterly fall.
- d) Emphasizes the justness of God's punishment upon Nineveh.

Assyrian brutality described:

- a) Skinned some prisoners alive.
- b) Cut off hands, feet, noses, ears, put out eyes, pull out tongues, made mounds of human skulls.
- c) They continued to subjugate nation after nation.

Decades had been spent in fortifying the city.

- a) Nimrod founded the city early after flood...famous for centuries.
- b) Walls as high as 100 feet in places.
- c) 7 ½ miles across city.
- d) 3 chariots could drive side by side on walls.

- e) Had 1200 defense towers and a moat outside (140 wide and 60 feet deep in places).
- f) Seemed almost impossible to overthrow.
- g) But, God had decreed its fall....it fell....never to rise again.
 - 1—Pomp, pride, and glory of mighty power was brought low.
 - 2—A new world power arose to dominate in its stead.
 - 3—So complete was its destruction that by 331, Alexander the Great didn't see a trace of it.

**GOD'S GOODNESS TO THE RIGHTEOUS,
BUT JUDGMENT UPON THE WICKED. (1:1-15)**

- 1) **Contrast of God's goodness & wrath. (Vs. 2-3, 6-7)**
- 2) **Nineveh's overthrow. (Vs. 15)**

GOD'S VICTORY OVER NINEVEH. (2:1-13)

- 1) **Jacob & Israel's punishment will be complete. (Vs. 2)**
- 2) **Nineveh's overthrow will be complete. (Vs. 13)**

THE ULTIMATE RUIN OF NINEVEH BECAUSE OF SIN. (3:1-19)

- 1) **Woe pronounced upon Nineveh. (Vs. 1)**
- 2) **The multitude of slain that they have left behind. (Vs. 3)**
- 3) **God is against Nineveh. (Vs. 5)**
- 4) **Nineveh is laid waste! (Vs. 7)**
- 5) **No, in Egypt, fell even though well-fortified.....so will Nineveh, no matter how well fortified. (Vs. 8-10)**
- 6) **You will fall like a ripe fig when shaken. (Vs. 12)**
- 7) **There is no healing of your wounds...you will die because of your wickedness. (Vs. 19)**

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God rules in the affairs of men. He uses Nations to His end. And Nations will reap what they sow. There is an end to God's patience and long suffering. Those who will put their trust in God will find a stronghold in times of trouble. There is no place to go to escape the punishment of God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. Of what city did Nahum prophecy against?**
- 2. Who is a stronghold in the day of trouble?**
- 3. What is Judah told to do because the Assyrians will be cut off?**
- 4. Name 3 sins of Nineveh.**
- 5. To what are her strongholds to be likened?**

Lesson Eight

The Just Shall Survive on Faith **(Habakkuk)**

The time of writing of Habakkuk is believed to have been just before the Babylonian (Chaldean) overthrow of Jerusalem in about 625-610 BC. The background of this time:

- a) 625---Time of Reforms of Josiah.
 - Successful outwardly, but not inwardly with people.
 - Still many righteous people, but in minority.
- b) 609---Josiah killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho
 - One of his sons, Eliakim or Jehoiakim, put on throne by Pharaoh Necho.
- c) 612-606---Babylonians, Medes, Scythians joined together to overthrow Assyria.
- d) 606---The subjugation of Jerusalem to Babylonians.
 - Princes, Nobles, Leading people taken away.
 - Daniel and 3 Hebrew boys taken then.
 - Not sure about Ezekiel....now or next carrying away.

Conditions during this time in Jerusalem:

- a) Strife & contention.
- b) Righteous were oppressed.
- c) People lived in open sin.
- d) God's law was being openly turned from again.
- e) Lack of trust in God's promises.

Reason for writing:

- a) He asked the question about God's actions that have perplexed mankind thru the centuries.
 - 1—"Why does God allow such terrible devastation to go unchecked?"
 - 2—"Why does God allow the innocent and just to suffer while the ungodly criminals plunge us deeper into the abyss?"
- b) If there is a consistency of God with himself:
 - 1—"How can he permit evil."
 - 2—"Why doesn't he exact punishment?"
 - 3—"When will God lift His hand to change the tide and cause justice to be done on the earth?"
- c) The purpose...to show why God would use a wicked nation to punish His people.
- d) Also...to show the great value of faith at such a time.

THE PROPHET'S PROBLEM STATED. (1:1-4)

A. The Questions:

- 1) "How long will God allow violence & destruction to go unchecked?"
- 2) "How long will he allow wickedness among his people to continue?"
- 3) "How long will my prayers go unanswered?"

GOD'S ANSWER TO HIS QUESTIONS. (1:5-11)

A. I am not idle, but am busy working out my plans. (Vs. 5-6)

- 1) God will punish Judah's sins.
- 2) But it takes time to develop the right means of punishment within the framework of man's free will.

THE PROPHET'S SECOND PROBLEM. (1:12-17)

A. But why will God use a wicked nation to punish Judah? (Vs. 12-13)

- 1) The prophet knows that evil must be punished.
- 2) But how can God use such a cruel instrument to punish Judah?
- 3) How can a righteous and holy God use such a cruel people?

THE PROPHET PATIENTLY WAITS FOR GOD'S ANSWER. (2:1)

A. He waited to see what God would answer.

B. But also for the reproof that he expected to come.

GOD'S SECOND REPLY TO HABAKKUK. (2:2-4)

A. Prophet told to write down God's answer plainly so can be easily read, even by a runner.

GOD'S WOES ARE PRONOUNCED UPON THE WICKED. (2:5-20)

A. God's answer:

- 1) God moves slowly for man....his justice will become evident in the future.
- 2) Cruelty and pride will be destroyed....righteousness will triumph.
- 3) But now....Patience is greatly required on man's part.
- 4) Chaldeans may prosper in their wickedness for a season....and seem to triumph...over a people more righteous than they.
- 5) Yet....they carry within themselves the seed of ruin.
- 6) They are self-centered, and are therefore doomed.
- 7) The righteous will survive all of this because of their faith in God.
- 8) The Righteous are God-centered, and are therefore permanent.
- 9) The glory of the Lord will be magnify on the earth through them. V. 14
- 10) God's will will be done in the earth...believe in it...rest in it.
- 11) Stand in awe of God as he carries out his majesty plans for his people. V. 20

THE PROPHET'S PRAYER, PRAISE, AND FAITH IN GOD. (3:1-19)

A. His realization....God is not dead, but living.

- 1) He is working his plan, and wicked will be punished.
- 2) Problems and events are now seen within the sovereignty of God/
- 3) His soul is at peace in midst of a world of turmoil.

B. His prayer.

- 1) V. 2
- 2) Descriptive praises of God's work in time's past. (Vs. 3, 6, 10-13)
- 3) Reaction of the prophet. (V. 16)

C. His faith in God expressed.

- 1) He closes his book with one of the greatest declarations of faith to be found in the Bible. Vs. 18-19

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God is supreme over the Nations. He disciplines His people for their own good. Evil is self-destructive, it will reap what it sows. Justice is slow, but sure and certain. The stress on the absolute necessity of faith in God to survive in life is Habakkuk's main thrust..

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was going to be God's avenger for wickedness among Judah?
2. Where did Habakkuk, stand to wait for his answer?
3. By what shall the just live?
4. In what sense is this conquering nation compared unto hell (grave) and death?
5. To what extent shall the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the earth?
6. What reason is given for all the earth keeping silence before the Lord?
7. How strong was the Prophet's faith in God?

Lesson Nine

“The Day of Darkness and Gloom” **(Zephaniah)**

Three prophets, at least, were prophesying at this time. Jeremiah was called to prophecy about 627 BC to Judah. Nahum was called to prophecy against Nineveh among the people of Judah, possibly about the same time. Zephaniah also prophesied during the reign of Josiah.

Hezekiah's reign had been basically a good one (727-698 BC). Judah was saved from total Assyrian destruction by the hand of God. As long as Judah remained dormant....Assyria did not punish her.

Manasseh's reign basically bad (698-641 BC). He was 12 years old when he began to reign. Ezar-Haddon, King of Assyria, came against Jerusalem. He took Manasseh captive to Nineveh. Manasseh repents, humbles himself, and prays for forgiveness. He was allowed to return to Jerusalem. He tried to undo all his evil. Before this, his evil was terrible. He had built high places and altars to Baal, Asherah, and the Host of Heaven. He brought them into house of God. He had made his son to pass thru fire to Molech. He had practiced Augury and Enchantment. He sought after familiar spirits and wizardry. On top of all of this he turned a deaf ear to God's true prophets. He had seduced people to become more wicked than nations they had been driven out. He had shed much innocent blood. His efforts to undo wasn't very effective.

Amon's Reign was bad (641-639 BC). He was 22 years old when he began to reign. He tried to undo his father's reforms. He became ridiculous in his extremes. His servants killed him after 2 years.

Josiah's reign was very good (639-609 BC). He was only 8 year's old when he began to reign. He had spiritually-minded men to help him. About 621 BC, he set about to restore the true worship of God. We don't know how much effect these prophets had on Josiah. Certainly they could have encouraged him & backed him up. He was killed in battle against Egyptians in 609 BC.

Purpose of book of Zephaniah:

- a) Manasseh's evil work had been done well.
- b) Even his attempts to undo his evil in his later years did not avail in the hearts and lives of the people.
- c) His son merely opened the door again to practice them openly.
- d) The reforms of Josiah show clearly that Manasseh had very little effect at reforming the people's hearts.
- e) Zephaniah is speaking to a calloused, unteachable people.
- f) Their courts were without mercy.
- g) Their prophets were treated like traitors.
- h) Their priests were profane.
- i) His job was to warn Judah and Jerusalem of their coming judgment and to urge them to speedily repent.

THE LORD'S WARNING THAT HE WILL CUT OFF ALL THINGS. (1:1-6)

1. He will utterly cut off all things from the land—man, beast, fowls, fish, shrines—all will be cut off. (v. 2)
2. He will cut off all the remnant of Baal.
3. He will cut off those that have combined worship of Jehovah with idols.

THE DAY OF THE LORD'S JUDGMENT IS AT HAND. (1:7-18)

1. It will be like a man giving a banquet and inviting guest.
2. They will come and feast on his disobedient people.
3. He will punish Princes.
4. He will punish all those who wear strange clothing.
5. He will punish those who fill houses with violence and deceit.
6. The cry will go up for the destruction that will come.
7. Jerusalem will be punished.
8. When the day of the Lord comes in punishment—mighty men will cry bitterly.
9. It will be a day of wrath, trouble, distress, wasteness, and desolation.
10. It will be a day of darkness and gloominess.
11. Nothing can deliver them.

ONLY THE RIGHTEOUS WILL HAVE HOPE IN THAT DAY. (2:1-3)

1. God calls for them to seek Him in meekness and righteousness.
2. It may be that you can be hid when the day of wrath comes.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON NATIONS ABOUT JUDAH. (2:4-15)

1. The punishment will extend to the nations around Judah also.
2. Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, Cherethites, Philstines, Moab, and Ammon.
3. They had reproached God's people and Him as well.
4. Punishment will extend as far as Ethiopia to the South and Nineveh to the North.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS AND HOPES FOR ISRAEL. (3:1-4)

1. Jerusalem had become a filthy, polluted city—full of sin and oppression.
2. No true justice done....and Jeremiah, the Prophet, sought for ONE righteous man.
3. Judah was in rebellion and would not listen.
4. She would not put her trust in God, but in idols and other nations.
5. Princes, Judges, Prophets, and Priests—all were deceitful and vile.

GOD'S INTENTIONS OF DESTROYING ALL NATIONS ABOUT JUDAH. (3:5-8)

1. God acts justly towards those who so sin against Him.
2. His punishments are calling for repentance, so that He can forgive.
3. But the unjust know no shame in their deeds of rebellion.

4. The destruction of the Nations around them should have helped them to see their need for repentance, but it didn't!
5. Judah will now see God's full judgment.

ISRAEL'S HOPE IN MIDST OF THIS. (3:9-13)

1. A remnant will turn to serve the Lord.
2. The remnant will be afflicted and poor.
3. But they will not speak lies and have deceitful tongues.

ISRAEL'S RETURN AND TIME FOR JOY. (3:14-20)

1. The remnant is called upon to rejoice because their enemies have been put away.
2. God is in their midst again.
3. His name will be praised in every land
4. They will be brought back from captivity.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

These events should help us to see the Longsuffering and patience of God with sinful mankind. His wrath is finally poured out upon the impenitent and rebellious. May God help us to see our sinfulness and turn and confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness. And then, we need to work righteousness again.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. What king was reigning when Zephaniah spoke his prophecies?**
- 2. What gods were the people of Judah worshipping when Zephaniah spoke?**
- 3. What does Zephaniah say would not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath?**
- 4. To what cities is Moab's destruction compared by Zephaniah?**
- 5. What does Zephaniah say will happen to Ethiopia and Assyria?**
- 6. With what kind of language will the people call upon God's name?**
- 7. What will be the result among the nations when God turns back the captivity of Israel?**

Lesson Ten

“Judgment Long Overdue” **(Obadiah)**

The dating of Obadiah is not sure. Some place this prophet as early as 700-650 BC. Others place him after the Fall of Jerusalem....580 BC. We will be looking at the possibility of the 2nd dating. Jerusalem fell in 3 stages:

- 1—606---Captives (Daniel, 3 young men), etc.
- 2—597---Captives (Jehoiachin, Ezekiel)
- 3—586---Final....destruction of temple, city, wealth, people.

It was richly deserved because of sin. Two prophets were sent to pronounce woes upon other nations: Habakkuk to speak against Babylon and Obadiah to speak against Edom. The purpose of Obadiah---To show that Edom's actions toward Judah will be punished, but Judah will be again glorified.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON EDOM. (Vs. 1-9)

A. *Edom must fall. (1-4)*

- 1) Different nations and people will be aroused against Edom.
- 2) Cause her to be despised in eyes of others...own friends.
- 3) Her pride and arrogance will be her downfall.
 - a) Edom was located south of Dead Sea.
 - b) 100 miles long....20 miles wide.
 - c) Mostly mountainous range...plenty of natural protection.
 - d) Plenty of water and pasture.
 - e) Capital city dwelt high overlooking beautiful valley.
 - f) Thought couldn't be taken.
 - g) Had exalted herself like a soaring eagle.
 - h) Lord said, "*Yet will I bring thee down.*"

B. *Destruction will be complete. (5)*

- 1) Thieves steal only what they need, leave some remnant.
- 2) Grape-gatherers leave some in field.
- 3) When God gets through...nothing left in Edom.

C. *As she was treacherous, so shall she be treated. (6-7)*

- 1) Had hiding places for treasures.
- 2) Go out on raiding expeditions, retreat to their impregnable strongholds.
- 3) But it will not be Edom's enemies, but whom she thought were friends that shall overthrow her.

D. *In that day, all past strength & wisdom will fail. (8-9)*

- 1) Counselors will not know which way to turn.
- 2) Confusion...even strong men will fall-- Will be cut off by slaughter.

REASONS FOR THIS JUDGMENT. (1:10-14)

A. Because of the violence against Jacob.

- 1) Had always been enmity between Jacob & Esau's descendants.
- 2) Edom refused Israel passage when coming to Canaan. Num. 20:14-21
- 3) Always ready to aid an attacking army against Judah.
- 4) Also, four times Edom help do violence against Judah in 200 years.
- 5) Time was coming when Edom would be cut off forever.

B. Because of indifference to Judah's condition.

- 1) They watched with no feeling of brotherly concern.
- 2) Arrogantly gloated and spoke against Judah in her captivity & destruction.

C. Because you took of her spoils.

- 1) Like vultures to the spoil and loot.
- 2) Did very little in hard fighting, but took advantage at the end.

D. Because you cut off the escape of the remnant.

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON NATIONS IS SURE. (1:15-16)

A. As they have conquered, so shall they be conquered.

B. As they have celebrated over their conquest...so will they be celebrated over.

C. Assyria, Babylon, Edom will no longer remain as nations.

JUDAH'S RESTORATION TO COME. (1:17-21)

A. Shall possess their possessions again.

B. Judah shall remain, Edom will be destroyed.

C. Others will possess Edom.

D. Judah's repossession of her lands.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Edom's final destruction came. Jerusalem fell finally in 586 to the Babylonians. Edom fell in 582...left desolate-- Nabathaeans took over Edom. In 126 B.C., the few left in area were subdued by John Hyrcanus. He compelled them to be circumcised. They were absorbed into the Jewish state. Lessons we can gain:

- a) God brings about rise and fall of nations.
- b) Pride will bring its fall...trust in self, wisdom, power, possessions, but not in God...will bring your fall.
- c) Not to be indifferent of wrong done to neighbor.
- d) Not to rejoice at another's calamity.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. About whom was Obadiah's vision?**
- 2. How had Edom thought of herself as being impossible to be conquered?**
- 3. Who was the beginner (father) of the Edomites?**
- 4. Who will overthrow Edom?**
- 5. What had Edom done to Judah that she will be punished for?**
- 6. Where shall be deliverance?**
- 7. Who will occupy their land?**
- 8. Who will come to judge the mount of Esau?**

Lesson Eleven

“Finish the Job” **(Haggai)**

The date of Haggai's messages is 520-519 BC. The background of his book is as follows:

- a) 586---Jerusalem fell and destroyed.
 - Most of people either killed or carried away captive.
 - Small remnant fled to Egypt.
 - God decreed captivity would last 70 years. Isa. 44:21-45:4; Jere. 25:8-11
 - Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jeremiah prophesied during this time.
 - Offered hope to the captives.
 - b) 539---Cyrus & Darius overthrow the city of Babylon.
 - c) 538---Decree went out from Cyrus for Jews to return. Ezra. 1:1-4
 - d) 536---First group return...about 50,000.
 - Big Job---Houses, lands, cities, temple.
 - Zerubbabel & Joshua leading them.
 - In 7th month....repaired altar, offered sacrifices.
 - In 2nd month of 2nd year....foundation of temple laid....Great rejoicing.
 -Great tears when compared with former temple.
 - Neighbors offered to help.
 - Jews refused...angered them...hindered them. Ezra. 4:1-6
 - They successfully discouraged the people.
 - Even got Artaxerxes (Smerdis) to order halt of building.Ezra 4:7-24
 - Nothing done until 2nd year of Darius.
 - e) 520---Two prophets sent (Haggai, Zechariah).
 - Encouraged people to finish temple.
 - Tatnai, Governor heard and went down to see about it.
 - Jews encouraged him to seek in house of records where Cyrus had commanded this to be done.
 - Darius had it checked, found the decree.
 - Sent a decree of his own to strengthen their efforts.
 - Let no one hinder...punishable by death.
 - Financial help given again.
3. The prophet:
- a) Very little known about him.
 - b) He was devoted to God and to His people.
 - c) He was a person that God could use to inspire His people to get busy again.
 - d) Within 4 weeks the people started building again.
 - e) They did not fear men, kings, or governors.
 - f) Haggai began prophesying in hard times...food was scarce...lots of troubles.
 - g) He received four messages at different times.

IT IS TIME TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE. (1:1-15)

A. Given to him in 2nd year, 6th month, 1st day of month.

- 1) When people say..."It is not time to build". (1-2)
- 2) God's prophet says..."It is time." (3-11)
- 3) The people began to build. (12)
- 4) God's blessings upon them. (13-15)

ENCOURAGEMENT & ASSURANCE GIVEN TO DO THE WORK. (2:1-9)

A. 2nd Message given: 7th month, 21st day.

- 1) Speak to the people. (v. 2)
- 2) Who is old enough to compare? (v. 3)
- 3) Cheer up, be strong, greater glory to come (Messianic)? Vs. 13-15)

REASONS FOR CALAMITIES UP TO NOW, BUT PROMISE OF BLESSINGS TO COME IMMEDIATELY. (2:10-19)

A. 3rd Message: 9th month, 24th day.

- 1) Illustrations of uncleanness. (11-13)
- 2) God's promise of blessings. (14-19)

BLESSINGS TO ZERUBBABEL. (2:20-23)

A. 4th Message: 9th month, 24th day.

- 1) Encouragement to Zerubbabel.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Four years after they began to build, the Temple was finished (516 BC). God's Word through His prophets had been successfully heard and obeyed. They had put proper priority upon doing what God commanded about the Temple. They were also blessed because they put first things first. It takes work to get a job done. It takes time, work, and money. We need to be strong in doing the Lord's work.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who were the two leaders of God's people when Haggai prophesied?
2. When was the time set to begin rebuilding the Temple?
3. What had these people done about their houses?
4. What results did the words of the prophet have on the people?

- 5. What promise is given concerning the new temple in comparison to old?**
- 6. Does holiness make that which it contacts holy also?**
- 7. Does that which is unclean make that which it contacts unclean?**
- 8. What will God make Zerubbabel?**

MESSIANIC PROPHECY---2:7

Lesson Twelve

“Type and Anti-Type” (Zechariah)

Both Haggai & Zechariah began their work about 520-519 BC. Haggai prophesied for about 3 months, 24 days. Zechariah prophesied for about 3 years. Haggai began his work, and then Zechariah joined in with him.

Zechariah is the longest and most obscure of the Minor Prophets. It is possibly the most difficult to understand. His Book must be approached with humility, realizing our limitations. It is strongly Messianic. He is presented as: The branch or sprout of David, The Servant of Jehovah, Shepherd, King, and Priest. The book is divided into 4 sections. Three separate times are given. Chs. 9-14 seems to be a separate time, but no date given.

THE PROPHET’S CALL TO REPENTANCE. (1:1-6)

A. 1st vision: 520 BC, 8th month.

- 1) Haggai has already begun speaking to people himself about 2 months earlier.
- 2) The people had already begun to rebuild temple.
- 3) Zechariah reminded them not to be like their fathers who rejected God’s prophets and what happened. (v. 4)

VISIONS TO EMPHASIZE THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.

(1:7-6:15)

A. Introductory. (1:7-17)

- 1) Rider & horsemen among myrtle trees.
- 2) God’s displeasure with heathen.
- 3) His plan to exalt Jerusalem again.

B. God’s judgment upon nations that scattered Judah. (1:18-21)

- 1) 4 horns & 4 carpenters (Smiths).
- 2) Horns...powers who scattered Jews.
- 3) Carpenters (Smiths)...those who cast out horns...powers.

C. Israel’s great growth. (2:1-13)

- 1) Man with measuring line.
- 2) Jerusalem will be greatly inhabited again.
- 3) God will protect her.
- 4) Calls for his people to return to Jerusalem.
- 5) Lord will dwell in midst of Zion again.

D. Cleansing of the priesthood. (3:1-10)

- 1) Trial & acquittal of high priest, Joshua.
- 2) Satan rebuked.
- 3) Joshua, in filthy clothes, is cleansed and given clean clothes.
- 4) Now people can approach unto God thru High priest.
- 5) Messiah....as our High Priest...will cleanse all in one day.

E. Zerubbabel's rebuilding of the Temple. (4:1-14)

- 1) Golden Lampstand & 2 olive trees.
- 2) Assurance to Zerubbabel of God's power with him.
- 3) He started temple...he will finish it.
- 4) 7 lamps...eyes of God to and fro in earth.
- 5) 2 olive trees...2 anointed of God who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.
(King & priest of people).

F. Divine Judgments & removal of sin. (5:1-11)

- 1) Flying roll (10-20 cubits). (1-4)
- 2) Woman in ephod. (5-11)
- 3) Curse that goes forth over earth against those who steal and curse.
- 4) Woman represented wickedness.
- 5) Being carried away from Jerusalem...wickedness removed from land.

G. God's messengers that do his bidding. (6:1-8)

- 1) 4 chariots between 2 mountains.
- 2) 4 spirits of Lord that go forth from his presence.
- 3) They go to North and South.
- 4) They quiet God's spirit concerning the north country.

H. Restoration under the Messiah. (6:9-15)

- 1) Symbolic crowning of the high priest.
- 2) Make crowns of silver & gold and place on Joshua (both king and priest).
- 3) He is symbolic of the Messiah (the Branch) to come...crowned king and Priest).

INQUIRY ABOUT FASTING. (7:1-8:23)**A. 3rd Vision: 518, 9th month, 4th day.**

- 1) God rebuked them that their fasting was self-centered, and not to honor Him.
- 2) It is not fasting that God wants.
- 3) He wants true judgment, mercy, compassion.
- 4) God's jealousy and desire to return to Jerusalem:
 - a) City to be called a "city of truth".
 - b) To be happy and joyous again.
 - c) God will bring his people back to bless them.
- 5) Fasting to be changed into rejoicing.

RESTORTION OF ISRAEL AND THE MESSIAH. (9:1-14:21)**A. World powers and the Kingdom of God.**

- 1) Most of this has reference to church, Messianic age...kingdom of God.
- 2) The terminology is in physical terms, but its explanation has to be figurative or spiritual in application.
- 3) Several quotations from Zechariah are to be found in the N.T. with reference to the Messianic age.
 - a) 9:9-10

- b) 11:12-13
 - c) 12:10
 - d) 13:7; 14:8-9; 16:12-13
- 4) Seems to depict God's final overthrow of the Jews as a special people.
- 5) The New People of God will be made up of all nations.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Zechariah seems to have more Messianic insights and prophecies than any other of the Minor Prophets. Most of the last section of his book seems to have a strong Messianic impact. One great lesson to be emphasized—God had warn their fathers of the coming calamity if they didn't repent. They turned a deaf ear and would not listen. Now, will you learn this lesson or will you have to learn the hard way also?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did Zechariah begin his ministry?
2. What were the horses?
3. What were the four horns?
4. Who is referred to as the apple of God's eye?
5. Whose hands laid the foundation of the Temple, and whose shall complete it?
6. Who were the two olive branches?
7. What was the flying roll?
8. What were the four chariots with horses?
9. What shall Jerusalem be called, a city of _____?
10. What things does God prefer to fasting?
11. For how many pieces of silver was the Messiah's price and what was to be done with the money?
12. What unusual event happened in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah?

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES---6:12-13; 9:9; 11:12-13; 13:7, etc.

Lesson Thirteen

“Does it Pay to Serve God?” **(Malachi)**

Malachi is believed to have been the last book of prophecy of the Old Testament. God did not speak through prophets again until the time of John the Baptizer and Jesus that we know of. Approximate date of writing: 445-432 BC. The following important dates will help give an historical background to book

1. 536---1st return of Jews from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Joshua.
2. 520---Two prophets sent to encourage them to finish the Temple (Haggai, Zechariah).
3. 516---Temple completed sufficiently to be used.
4. 485-480---Queen Esther save Jews from annihilation.
5. 457---2nd return of Jews from Babylon with Ezra leading.
6. 444---Nehemiah comes to help rebuild walls around city.
7. Conditions discussed in Malachi seem to be the same as during time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Religious conditions:

1. Temple rebuilt, worship started....things looked good at first.
2. People & Priests became discouraged over a period of time.
3. Reforms attempted among people by Ezra & Nehemiah.
4. Malachi sent to help encourage these reforms.
5. A revival was needed among them.

LOVE OF GOD FOR ISRAEL IS EXONERATED. (1:1-5)

A. Their comparison to Edom.

- 1) God reminds them that He chose Jacob over Esau.
- 2) The reason is apparent in looking back why He did so.
- 3) Edom had been carried away....not return.

B. Judah has returned!

- 1) Proof of God's love.
- 2) Promise. 1:5

ISRAEL HAS DESPISED GOD'S NAME. (1:6-14)

A. He illustrates the people's ingratitude to God.

- 1) They were not acting like righteous sons to a Father.
- 2) Nor a righteous servant to his master.

B. Priests were a primary problem in misleading people, or allowing conditions to deteriorate.

- 1) Despised God's name by offering polluted bread on His Altar.
- 2) By offering sick, blind, lame, torn sacrifices.
- 3) They were saying by such... “Table of Lord is contemptible.”
- 4) God refused to accept what even their governor would not. (V. 80)

C. Contrasts of offerings by Gentiles vs. Jews.

- 1) Gentiles will offer a pure offering. (V. 11)
- 2) Jews looked upon worship as a weariness, meaningless, worthless service.
 - a) Made a mockery and a scandal of their responsibility.
 - b) It was a burden to people and priests.
 - c) Instead of joy, they found it a boresome chore.
 - d) Would vow a vow, offer blemished animals.
 - e) God reminds them who He is. (1:14)

THE CORRUPTION OF THE PRIEST. (2:1-10)**A. Because priest derelict in duty, they are cursed of God.**

- 1) They had insulted name of Jehovah and brought it into disrepute.
- 2) They must now give glory to it or suffer consequence.
- 3) They will be treated as people not fit to serve God in His temple, if they do not.
- 4) They will lose respect of people, rather than esteem & honor.
- 5) God's peace will not be upon them...they have broken His Law.

PROBLEM OF INTER-MARRIAGE & DIVORCE. (2:11-16)**A. Wrong spiritual marriages.**

- 1) Judah has committed abomination.
- 2) She has profaned the holiness of God.
- 3) Has married the daughter of a strange god.
- 4) God's rejection of them and their offerings.

B. Wrong physical marriages.

- 1) Have put away wife of youth.
- 2) Broken covenant. (2:14)

PROBLEM OF SKEPTICISM. (2:17-3:6)**A. He rebukes them for such.**

- 1) They expected God to bless them in their disobedience.
- 2) They believed that God was blessing their enemies & cursing them.

B. God's messenger would come in Judgment upon the wicked.

- 1) Messianic concept as well. (3:1)
- 2) When God comes in judgment, who can abide it? (3:4) (Hope).
- 3) 3:5 (Who He will judge)
- 4) 3:6 (God hates all evil and will punish).

BECAUSE OF SIN, HE CALLS FOR REPENTANCE. (3:7-4:3)**A. God accuses them of robbing Him.**

- 1) They had turned away from Him, His ordinances (3:7).

- 2) You have robbed me--whole nation by tithes & offerings not being brought in.
- Giving to God is an acknowledgment of His Ownership & man's stewardship.
 - Saying, God is supreme, I owe allegiance.
 - Blessings had been withheld, because they rejected God's law.
 - Calls upon them to bring ALL of the tithe, not part of it.
 - Blessings of God would be poured out (V. 12)

B. Contrast between faithful few and impious.

- Impious:
 - Spoke stout words against God.
 - Vain to serve God.
 - No profit to keep ordinances.
 - No point to go mournfully before Lord.
 - For the proud are happy ones, the wicked are uplifted, they that tempt God are delivered.
 - THEY HAD WRONGFULLY JUDGED GOD & HIS ACTIONS.
- Faithful:
 - Feared the Lord
 - Spake often to one another.
 - God heard and hearkened.
 - Put in book of remembrance for them.
 - They shall be God's Jewels in day of deliverance.
 - Then will be obvious who righteous are.
- Wicked to be punished.
 - Will burn as an oven.
 - No root or branch left.
- Those who fear Jehovah:
 - Will be with the "Sun of Righteousness".
 - Grow up as special ones of His.
 - Tread down the wicked.

MESSIANIC PROMISE---ELIJAH TO COME. (4:4-6)

A. The prophet Elijah is to come:

- He is to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
- Come in the "Spirit of Elijah"....not Him personally.
- To turn people back to God and His law.
- Restore right relationship between parents & children.
- They were to hear this messenger or would destroy them.
 - John the Baptist was Elijah. Matt. 11:12-14
 - Destroyed nation in AD 70.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Service to God must come from the heart, willing, and according to His Law. Not to do so is to despise the name of God & His Law. Our doubting of God is destructive & leads only to eternal death. We must give God time, His way will always be best. Faith in Him will be exonerated.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. In what way had the Priest despised the name of the Lord?**
- 2. What did God say about their offerings?**
- 3. What had the priests done with the Law?**
- 4. What did God say about putting away?**
- 5. How had Israel robbed God?**
- 6. What blessing did God promise if they would bring in their tithes?**
- 7. Who is to be sent before the dreadful day of the Lord come?**

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES---4:5-6

