

# THE BOOK OF AMOS: AN OVERVIEW

*Derrick Coble*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Amos has been called "the first great reformer" and "the troubler from Tekoa."
2. He was the prophet of justice who was a "country preacher in a city church."
3. He was a man of outstanding character.
  - A. His manner was meek and lowly (Mat. 5:5).
  - B. He was not high minded, nor did he trust in riches (1 Tim. 6:17).
  - C. He was not full of pride (Pro. 16:18).
4. "From the obscurity of a shepherd's role Amos stepped out for a few brief moments upon the stage of history, to go down in its annals as one of its first and greatest reformers" (Hailey, p. 81).

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE PROPHET: LIFE AND BACKGROUND**

- A. Amos means "to bear or place a load upon—burden bearer."
  1. This name is appropriate because God laid upon him the task of confronting the erring nation of Israel with her sins.
  2. He is not to be confused with Amoz, the father of Isaiah (Young, p. 273).
  3. Unlike other prophets such as: Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, he was not formally trained in the school of the prophets but God knew that he would be the perfect preacher for his unruly nation (Amos 7:14, 15).
- B. Amos lived in small mountain village named Tekoa, eighteen miles west of the Dead Sea (Amos 1:1).
  1. It was a rugged country filled with rocks, steep valleys, and difficult canyons.
  2. It was the same place where David kept his sheep and later hid from Saul.
  3. It was barely populated and "there was no village beyond Tekoa in the direction of the wilderness" (ISBE).
  4. "It is the type of terrain that develops hardy manhood" (Hailey, p. 82).
  5. Tekoa is uninhabited today.
- C. Amos' occupation was that of a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees (Amos 1:1; 7:14).
  1. The sheep which he tended were called "noked" or "nakad" (ugly stunted sheep with wool of great value) (Butler, p. 273).
  2. The sycamore tree was found at a lower altitude than Tekoa which suggests Amos travelled to work part of the year.
  3. The fruit of the sycamore tree is fig-like, slightly sweet, and watery. It was eaten by the poorer people and had to be pinched or bruised before it would ripen (Hailey, p. 83). It has also been observed that the fruit was infested with insects and had to be punctured so they could escape.
- D. The mission of Amos was to go to Bethel (the religious center of the Northern Kingdom) and proclaim the doom of that nation.
  1. Since he was an outsider coming from Judah, he could look at the situation more objectively with a greater sense of justice and right (Hailey, p. 83).

2. His message was blunt and straight to the point which caused Amaziah (an idolatrous priest) to complain to the king and Amos was forbidden to preach any more in Israel (Amos 7:10-17).
3. His background is clearly seen in his preaching (Amos 3:4, 5, 12; 5:8, 19; 9:5, 9).

## II. THE PROPHECY: TIME PERIOD AND MESSAGE

- A. Amos prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah (783-742 B.C.), and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (786-746 B.C.).
  1. Most scholars agree that Amos' ministry is to be dated between 760 and 755 B.C. during the Golden Age of materialism, self indulgence, pride, and oppression.
  2. For 60 years the nation was prosperous and their religious fervor was high, but it had no influence on their moral behavior.
  3. He was contemporary with Hosea in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah in Judah.
  4. Amos stated that his preaching began two years before the earthquake (Amos 1:1).
    - a. The date of the earthquake is uncertain, but Josephus records that it happened in connection with Uzziah's sin of burning incense (2 Chr. 26:18-21).
    - b. It has also been said that there was a total eclipse of the sun which accompanied this earthquake which astronomers have calculated taking place on June 15, 763 B.C., placing his prophecy around 760 B.C. (Butler, p. 274).
    - c. The earthquake was a major one, because more than 200 years later people were still talking about it (Zec. 14:5).
- B. The message Amos proclaimed was one which America needs today.
  1. About Luxury (2-9).
    - a. Very little of Samaria would be left.
    - b. They lived a careless and extravagant lifestyle.
    - c. God was coming in judgment.
      - (1) The mighty would fall (2:13-16).
      - (2) Their lands and houses would be taken ( 5:11).
      - (3) Their banquets would cease (6:7, 8).
      - (4) Their idols and altars would come crashing down (9:1).
      - (5) They would not escape (5:18, 19; 9:2-4).
  2. About Keeping the Truth (7:10-13).
    - a. They were God's chosen people and should have been willing to keep the truth and not sell it (Pro. 23:23).
    - b. They did not want to hear the truth or keep it (cf. Mic. 2:6).
  3. About Ritualistic Hypocritical Worship (Amos 5:21-24).
    - a. They had multiplied their religious activity but they lacked sincerity by having their hearts set on idols.
    - b. All things (including worship) must be done by the authority of God (Col. 3:17), to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and in the fear of God (Col. 3:22).

## III. THE PURPOSE: LESSONS AND KEYS TO THE BOOK

A. Lessons from the book of Amos

1. It shows God's hatred for evil and His demand for justice and keeping the law (Amos 2:7; Deut. 23:17; Exo. 22:26; Num. 6:1-21).
2. It shows that God is good, but also severe (Rom. 11:22).
3. It shows that God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
4. It shows that our purpose is to please and honor God - not ourselves (2 Cor. 5:9).
5. It shows that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5).
6. It shows that dishonoring the poor is a sin (James 2:6-9).

B. Keys to the book of Amos

1. Key verses

- a. (3:3) "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
- b. (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."
- c. (5:14,15) "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."
- d. (5:24) "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."
- e. (6:1) "Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!"
- f. (7:14) "Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit."
- g. (8:2) "And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more."

2. Key words: punishment, judgment, and restoration.

3. Key phrase: "Thus saith the Lord."

4. Key people: Amos (the shepherd of Judah) and Amaziah (the corrupt priest of Bethel).

#### IV. THE PLAN: SIMPLE OUTLINE AND EXPANDED OUTLINE

SIMPLE OUTLINE - The book naturally falls into three divisions (Highers, p. 338).

- A. The judgments of God against neighboring nations and against Israel (Chapters 1-2).
- B. God's case against Israel and the impending doom as a consequence of Israel's impenitence (Chapters 3-6).
- C. Five visions pointing to the end, and an epilogue of hope (Chapters 7-9).

EXPANDED OUTLINE

- A. The Declarations of Sin and Judgment (1-2) – Eight Burdens.
  1. Against Damascus (1:1-5).
  2. Against Gaza (1:6-8).
  3. Against Tyrus (1:9-10).

4. Against Edom (1:11-12).
  5. Against Ammon (1:13-15).
  6. Against Moab (2:1-3).
  7. Against Judah (2:4-5).
  8. Against Israel (2:6-8).
- B. The Exhortations About Sin and Judgment (3-5) – Three Sermons.
1. First sermon (3:1-15).
    - a. Present sins (3:1-10).
    - b. Expected punishment (3:11-15).
  2. Second sermon (4:1-13).
    - a. Israel deserves judgment for past sins (4:1-11).
    - b. Israel shall be punished (4:12-13).
  3. Third sermon (5:1-6:14).
    - a. Israel deserves judgment for mighty sins (5:1-15).
    - b. Israel shall be punished (5:16-6:14).
- C. The Visions of Judgment and Restoration (7-9) – Five Visions.
1. A vision of grasshoppers (7:1-3) – Judgment averted.
  2. A vision of fire (7:4-5) – Judgment restrained.
  3. A vision of a plumbline (7:8-9) – Judgment determined.
  4. A vision of a basket of fruit (8:1-14) – Judgment near.
  5. A vision of God on the altar (9:1-10) – Judgment executed.

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# AN OVERVIEW OF THE INTERTESTAMENT PERIOD

*Wayne Rodgers*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Most Christians and Bible students are acquainted with the Old and New Testaments of God's Word.
2. Most understand that there is a need to study the Old Testament in order to have a better understanding of the New Testament teachings.
  - A. However, there is one area in which very little studying is done by the average member of the church, and that is the Inter-Testament period.
  - B. It is this period of history that had the most profound effect upon the Jews of Jesus' day and the church of the first century.
  - C. Many events that took place in the Intertestament Period had their roots or beginning much earlier in history.
3. The study of the Intertestament Period serves as a great summary from the period of Israel's history known as the United Kingdom up to the opening of the New Testament and the birth of Jesus Christ.
4. Without studying this period, one has no background within his mind's eye to frame the events of the Gospel Accounts, the Acts of the Apostles, or any other New Testament writings.
  - A. Without this knowledge there is no real appreciation of the politics of the period, the Jewish sects which Jesus and His church would face, or the way that God had prepared for the Christ and His kingdom through the nations that ruled the world from the last days of the Old Testament.
  - B. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5, all verses are from the KJV, unless otherwise stated).
  - C. Studying the Intertestament Period will give the Bible student an even greater appreciation for God and His plan to save mankind.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. OVERVIEW OF TIME PERIOD OF THE PROPHETS**

- A. It is important to have an understanding of this period of both the United Kingdom, as well as the Divided Kingdoms of the Israelites.
  1. This was the period of time, during the kingdoms, when we find the prophets of God.
  2. During the time of the Divided Kingdoms, we find more of the prophets, some referred to as Major Prophets and some, Minor Prophets.
- B. Notice a brief summary of this time period of prophets:
  1. During what is known as the United Kingdom of Israel, there were three kings, each serving for a span of 40 years. (Acts 13:21, 1 Kings 2:11; 11:42).
  2. Kings Saul, David, and Solomon had great strengths and weaknesses as they ruled the kingdom of Israel.

- a. But at the end of Solomon’s life, God promised to “rend the kingdom” from him (1 Kings 11:11).
  - b. The kingdom would actually be rent from Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, (1 Kings 11:12, 13).
3. The kingdom would be divided and Rehoboam would be left in Jerusalem ruling over Judah, while Jeroboam was appointed by the other ten tribes as leader and king over Israel.
- a. Notice the following charts of both kingdoms for dates and which kings we listed as “good” or “bad.”
  - b. The division of the kingdoms began in 931 B.C.
  - c. The Northern kingdom, known as Israel, was characterized as idolatrous with all her kings being evil and would fall to Assyria in 721 B.C. (2 Kings 17).
  - d. The Southern kingdom, known as Judah, would be characterized by her nine “good” kings, who listened to the prophets of God and helped turn Judah back unto God as a nation.

<b>Israel Kings (19)</b>	<b>Yrs. Reigned</b>	<b>Good / Bad</b>	<b>Scriptures</b>
Jereboam	22	Bad	1 Ki. 12:20; 14:20, 16
Nadab	2	Bad	1 Ki. 14:20; 15:25, 26
Baasha	24	Bad	1 Ki. 15:33, 34
Elah	2	Bad	1 Ki. 16:13, 18, 9
Zimri	7 days	Bad	1 Ki. 16:10, 15, 9-10
Omri	12	Bad	1 Ki. 16:16, 23, 25
Ahab	22	Bad	1 Ki. 16:28, 29, 30
Ahaziah	2	Bad	1 Ki. 22:40, 51, 52
Jehoram	12	Bad	2 Ki. 3:1, 2
Jehu	28	Bad	2 Ki. 9:1-3; 10:36, 31
Jehoahaz	17.5	Bad	2 Ki. 13:1, 2
Jehoash	16	Bad	2 Ki. 13:9, 10, 11
Jeroboam II	41	Bad	2 Ki. 13:13; 14:23, 24
Zachariah	6 months	Bad	2 Ki. 14:29; 15:7-9
Shallum	1 month	Bad	2 Ki. 15:10, 13
Menahem	10	Bad	2 Ki. 15:14, 17, 18
Pekahiah	2	Bad	2 Ki. 15:23, 24
Pekah	20	Bad	2 Ki. 15:25, 27, 28
Hoshea	9	Bad	2 Ki. 15:30; 17:1, 2

<b>Judah Kings (20)</b>	<b>Yrs. Reigned</b>	<b>Good / Bad</b>	<b>Scriptures</b>
Rehoboam	17	Bad	1 Ki. 11:43; 14:21; 12:11
Abijah	3	Bad	1 Ki. 14:31; 2 Chr. 13:2; 1 Ki. 15:3
Asa	41	Good	1 Ki. 15:8, 10, 11
Jehoshaphat	25	Good	1 Ki. 15:24; 22:42, 43
Jehoram	8	Bad	1 Ki. 22:50; 2 Ki. 8:17, 18
Ahaziah	1	Bad	2 Ki. 8:24, 28, 26, 27
Athaliah	6	Bad	2 Ki. 11:1, 3
Jehoash	40	Good	2 Ki. 12:1, 2
Amaziah	29	Good	2 Ki. 12:21; 14:2, 3
Uzziah	52	Good	2 Ki. 14:21; 15:2, 3
Jotham	16	Good	2 Ki. 15:7, 33, 34
Ahaz	16	Bad	2 Ki. 15:38; 16:2, 3
Hezekiah	29	Good	2 Ki. 16:20; 18:2, 3
Manasseh	55	Bad / Good	2 Ki. 20:21; 21:1, 2
Amon	2	Bad	2 Ki. 21:18-20
Josiah	31	Good	2 Ki. 21:26; 2 Ki. 22:1, 2
Jehoahaz	3 months	Bad	2 Ki. 23:30-32
Jehoiakim	11	Bad	2 Ki. 23:34, 36-37
Jehoiachin	3 months	Bad	2 Ki. 24:6, 8-9
Zedekiah	11	Bad	2 Ki. 24:17-19

- e. Judah would eventually be taken captive by the Chaldeans, who had in 612 taken Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria.
  - f. This captivity would come in three stages: 1) in 606 B.C., Babylon overcomes Judah carrying away Judah's royal seed. 2) in 597 B.C., Babylon carries away Judah's skilled artisans. 3) in 586 B.C., Babylon destroys Judah's Jerusalem and the temple and carries away all but the poorest of the land.
4. The time period of the captivity would only last 70 years, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11).
- a. During this captivity (606-536 B.C.), Daniel and Ezekiel who were also carried away to Babylon in the first and second carrying away, respectively, would prophesy to the remnant of Judah.

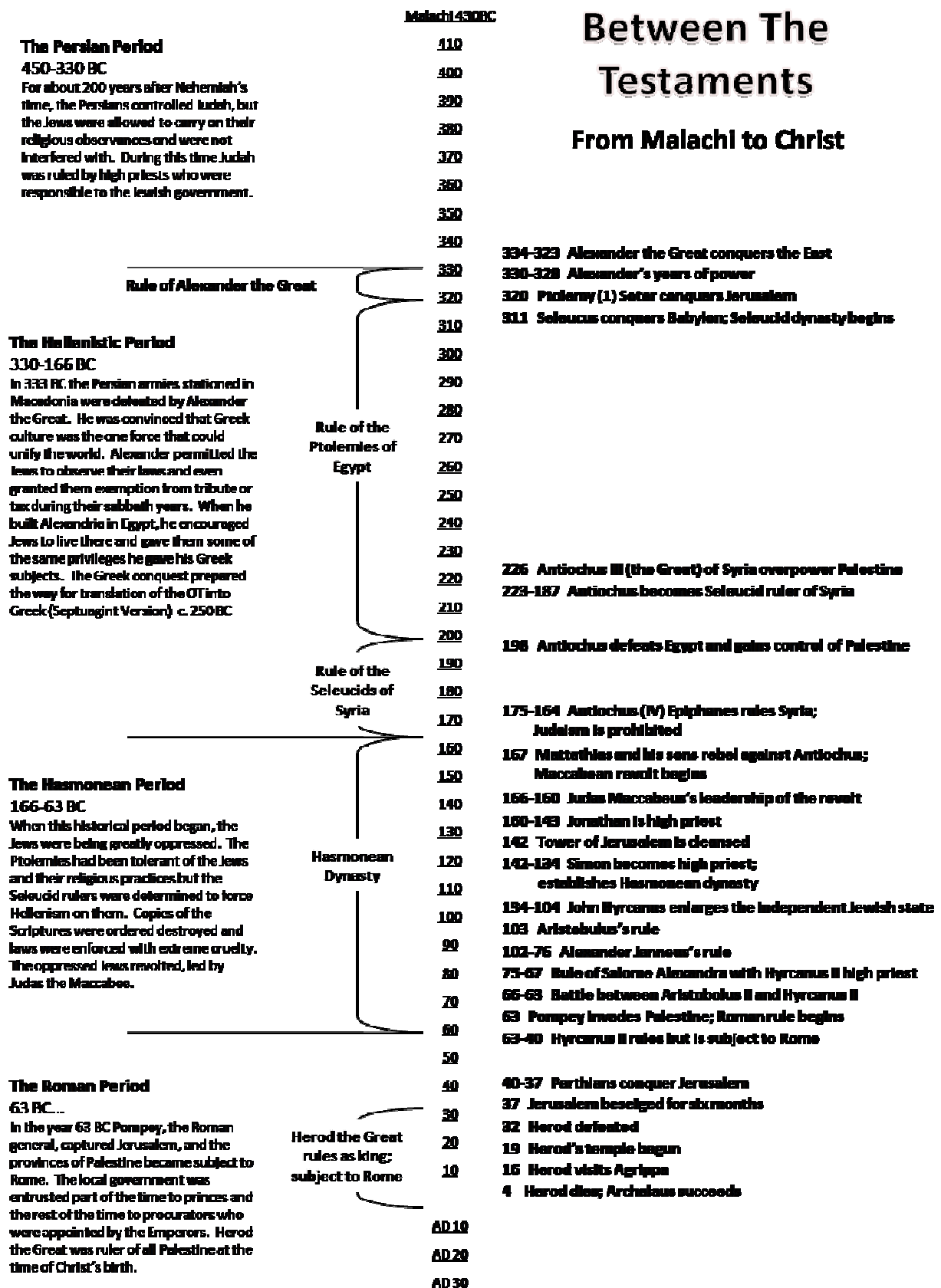


- b. After seventy years in the land of Babylon, God, true to His Word, would allow the remnant to go back into Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple and the walls and restore the worship of God.
- c. They did so under the leadership of men like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah (536-432 B.C.) and encouraged by prophets like Haggai (520 B.C.), Zechariah (520-518 B.C.), and finally Malachi (432 B.C.) to complete the work set before them.
- d. The prophets' messages were to finish the work and look forward to the Messiah and his forerunner.

## II. PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN THE INTERTESTAMENT PERIOD

- A. This period of nearly four hundred years has been referred to as "The Silent 400 Years," but this is actually a misnomer.
- B. Though the sacred writings ceased until the birth of the Christ, there were great events being played out in history, including fulfillment of prophecy.
- C. There are reliable sources of this period of history, such as: Daniel's prophecies, Herodotus, Josephus, Apocryphal books like First and Second Maccabees, and many other historians of the day.
- D. Considering Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the "great image," the Bible student will notice that each colored section of the body represents a world empire or kingdom (Dan. 2).
  - 1. Gold would represent the Babylonian Empire.
  - 2. Silver would represent the Medo-Persian Empire.
  - 3. Brass would represent the Grecian Empire.
  - 4. Iron would represent the Roman Empire.
  - 5. Iron and Clay mix would represent the later Roman Empire.
- E. Daniel 7 includes prophetic visions of four beasts:
  - 1. These four beasts represent again the same kingdoms/empires mentioned earlier.
  - 2. The visions tell of the empires' rising and falling.
- F. Daniel 8 includes prophetic visions of the Ram and He-Goat.
  - 1. The Ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire.
  - 2. The He-Goat represented Greece, among which there was a notable horn representing Alexander the Great.
  - 3. From the notable horn of the He-Goat arose four notable ones, as well, and represented Alexander's generals: Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Seleucius, each ruling in separate areas.
  - 4. Out of one of the four horns, a little horn came forth representing one Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, self-proclaimed.
- G. These prophecies are played out in great detail in the historians' pens through the four hundred years.

### III. A HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF THIS PERIOD



#### IV. CONDITIONS SURROUNDING THIS TIME PERIOD

A. Rex Turner, Sr. contrasted the condition of God's people at the close of the Old Testament and at the beginning of the New Testament:

<b>Close of the Old Testament</b>	<b>Opening of the New Testament</b>
418 B.C. (Nehemiah)	4 B.C. (Jesus)
Under Persia	Under Rome
Many national enemies	Roman peace
Scantly populated	Densely populated
Cities in ruins	Well built cities
Land desolated	Land cultivated
Poverty abounded	Prosperity prevailed
People insignificant	Worldwide influence
No jurisprudence	Sanhedrin
No King	Herod the Great
Vague doctrinally	Sects strong doctrines
Synagogues loosely	Synagogues abounded
Inferior temple to first (Zerubbabel's Temple)	Superior temple to first (Herod's Temple)
No "Feast of dedication"	"Feast of Dedication"
Intermarriage abounded	Israel separate
Davidic Messianic Hope	Modified and Sublime
No Modernist	Modernistic spirit

#### V. BENEFITS SEEN FROM EACH EMPIRE COVERED IN THIS PERIOD OF TIME

- A. During the Babylonian Empire, the synagogue was established for the worshipper of God to gather and assemble.
- B. The Medo-Persian Empire helped to establish a universal law system for the benefit of all.
- C. During the time of the Grecian rule, there was established city-states, as well as the Hellenistic influence on the world, including a language well suited for the Gospel Age.
- D. The Romans brought about good roads and peace, even though the Jews were under the rule of the Romans.
- E. Each of these benefits, God determined fit for the time of the Gospel to be spread throughout the world (Gal. 4:4).

#### VI. CONCLUSION

- A. With even a brief overview, the Bible student is able to see the great value in an in-depth study of this period of time "between the testaments."

- B. A deeper fondness and understand is available to the one who will spend time in history's events and the Bible's prophecies which were fulfilled during this period of time.
- C. May we continue studying for the glory of God.

# CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER, EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED?

Garland Elkins

## INTRODUCTION:

### 1. The importance of unity.

- A. God's word teaches that it is sinful to be divided religiously.
  - 1) The Old Testament taught the importance of unity (Ps. 133:1).
  - 2) Christian unity is clearly taught in the New Testament (Jno. 10:16; Jno. 17:20, 21; Eph. 4:1-6).
  - 3) Religious strife and division are clearly condemned (I Cor. 1:10-13).
    - a. Those who cause division are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17).
    - b. Division among God's people is carnal (sensual) (I Cor. 3:3).
    - c. Factions, divisions, and parties are work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
  - 4) The denominational reply is, "We are all united in spite of our differences."
    - a. This view is impossible!
    - b. Denominations do not follow correctly "The one faith"; Eph. 4:5; Gal. 1:8, 9; Phil. 3.
- B. The Bible teaches the possibility of Christian unity.
  - 1) If Christian unity is impossible, two consequences follow:
    - a. Christ prayed for an impossibility (Jno. 17:20, 21).
    - b. The inspired apostle Paul prayed for an impossibility (I Cor. 1:10).
  - 2) How can unity be achieved in the religious world?
    - a. Neither on the basis of conflicting creeds nor unreliable feelings.
    - b. The only possible basis for unity is the word of God - It furnishes completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), and it is the rule by which we must walk (Phil. 3:16).
    - c. Illustrations: Sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); - God's word says to sing, and this needs nothing else to make it complete; can we all walk by this rule? Worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2) - God's word says the first day of the week, and not on the seventh day; can we all walk by this rule?
    - d. The objections are, "we can't see it alike." The trouble is not in seeing, but simply that we are unwilling to walk by God's rule.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. TWO CANNOT WALK TOGETHER AND BE IN DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS; IN FACT, NO ONE CAN WALK IN DENOMINATIONALISM AND BE AGREED WITH THE TRUTH.

- A. By denominationalism I refer to a sect or party in religion. Denominationalism is produced by different false doctrines. There must be different doctrines proclaimed in order to establish different denominations.
  - 1. This makes denominationalism rest upon division (Jas. 3:14-16).
  - 2. Without the teaching of conflicting doctrines denominationalism could not exist.

3. Therefore, when I show that division is wrong I prove that denominationalism is wrong!
- B. Some of the sins of denominationalism.
1. **Denominationalism nullifies the prayer of Jesus.**
    - a. In his prayer for believers Jesus prayed: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (Jno. 17:21).
    - b. Denominationalism is the very antithesis of this prayer. When one endeavors to build denominationalism he seeks to nullify this prayer of Christ.
    - c. Believers cannot be one while supporting denominationalism.
  2. **Denominationalism repudiates the teaching of the apostles.**
    - a. Paul wrote to Christians: "That ye all speak the same thing, [emp. Mine GE] and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment [emp. Mine GE] (1 Cor. 1:10).
    - b. No man can endorse denominationalism without repudiating this teaching.
    - c. To support denominationalism men must "speak different things," there must be "divisions," and they must be "divided asunder."
    - d. The teaching of the inspired apostle Paul and the teaching of denominationalism are as far apart as the east is from the west.
  3. **Denominationalism makes infidels.**
    - a. Jesus prayed that believers may be one "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jno. 17:21).
    - b. Since unity among believers would lead others to believe, then division would produce unbelievers.
    - c. When the world sees the divided state in religion today, with each denomination claiming to get their teaching from the Bible, it concludes that the Bible is a book of contradictions and unworthy of acceptance. Therefore, men become infidels.
  4. **Denominationalism makes God contradict himself.**
    - a. Many of the denominations advocate that they have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, and yet they teach different doctrines.
    - b. If what they contend were true (which, of course, it is not!) their teaching would make God contradict himself.

## II. THE INSPIRED APOSTLE PAUL TAUGHT THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT A SECT.

- A. When Paul was tried before Felix at Caesarea, he was accused by Tertullus, who was the representative of the high priest, and elders, from Jerusalem, as being a member of a sect. Paul denied the charge and said that they could not prove their accusation.
1. Tertullus, the orator, charged that Paul was a member of a sect (Acts 24:5).
  2. Paul said that they (the Jews) could not prove that charge against Paul and the church (Acts 24:13, 14).
  3. No inspired man ever said that the church was a "sect."

4. Only the uninformed or the enemies of the Lord, and of His church made that charge.

### **III. DENOMINATIONALISM PERVERTS SCRIPTURE IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT "TWO CAN WALK TOGETHER, EVEN THOUGH THEY DISAGREE."**

- A. They often misapply Mark 9:38-40.
- B. The passage reads: "John said unto him, Teacher we saw one casting demons in thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and he able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."

# GOD'S MESSAGE TO VARIOUS NATIONS THROUGH THE MINOR PROPHETS

B. J. *Clarke*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The bulk of material in the 12 books classified as the Minor Prophets is directed toward Israel and Judah.
2. However, a study of these inspired books also reveals that God has a message for the various nations which surrounded and interacted with His covenant people.
3. The aim of this lecture is to investigate the Minor Prophets in order to identify God's message to the Gentile nations.
4. What Divine message for the nations do we discover when we peer into this section of inspired literature known as the Minor Prophets? We see...

## I. THE EXAMINATION OF THE NATIONS

- A. The psalmist declared: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...the LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works" (Psa. 33:12a-15).
- B. The Minor Prophets substantiate the truth of this text.
  1. God examined and found fault with the conduct of the nations of Syria, Philistia, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon and Moab (Amos 1:3-2:3).
  2. The Assyrians failed God's examination of their lives.
    - a. Their wickedness had come up before the face of God (1:2), and thus Jonah was sent to call them to repentance (Jon. 3:4-10; Matt. 12:41).
    - b. God examined their response to His Word, and when "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way" (Jon. 3:10), He postponed their overthrow.
  3. In the book of Obadiah, God informed the Edomites that he was fully aware of their pride and their actions against the Israelites.
  4. Further evidence that God examines the conduct of the nations is evidenced in His statement, "And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease" (Zech. 1:15).
- C. The doctrine of Deism affirms that there is a God in Heaven but alleges that He is unaware or unconcerned about earthly affairs.
  1. The Minor Prophets reveal the exact opposite to be true.
  2. God was concerned about the conduct of the nations - His examination of the nations proves this to be so.

## II. THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE NATIONS

- A. God's examination of the nations revealed many transgressions, with pride as the underlying cause.
- B. Scripture declares that "everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 16:5).
- C. Numerous nations were guilty of pride, and were thus an abomination to the Lord



(Obad. 1:3-4; Hab. 2:9; Zeph. 2:8-10).

D. In fact, a survey of the Minor Prophets puts on display several abominations of the nations. We see...

1. Acts of *discrimination*.

- a. The Edomites were guilty of discrimination toward the descendants of Jacob (Obadiah).
- b. Because of Edom's hatred for the Israelites they were guilty of:
  - (1) Standing on the other side and watching with glee as foreigners entered into Jerusalem and carried its occupants away into captivity (Obad. 1:11-12).
  - (2) Looting the city of Jerusalem instead of helping the Israelites in the day of their calamity (Obad. 1:13).
  - (3) Cutting off the escape routes of the Israelites and turning them over to the enemy (Obad. 1:14).

2. The *termination* of innocent human life.

- a. Joel condemned Egypt and Edom for their violence against the children of Israel, and "because they have shed innocent blood in their land" (Joel 3:19).
- b. Amos indicted Syria for the barbaric act of murdering the residents of Gilead with "threshing instruments of iron" (Amos 1:3).
  - (1) The term "threshing" is the same term used to describe the Syrian king Hazael's oppression of Israel under Jehu and Jehoahaz (2 Kings 10:32, 33; 13:7).
  - (2) The victims were thrown before the threshing sledges, the teeth of which tore their bodies.
- c. Amos also confronted Edom "because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever" (Amos 1:11).
- d. The children of Ammon failed their examination "because they have ripped up women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border" (Amos 1:13).
- e. Habakkuk indicted the Babylonians for building towns through bloodshed and establishing a city by iniquity (Hab. 2:8-12).
- f. God promised Philistia that He would "take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth" (Zech. 9:7). What an ugly picture to contemplate!
- g. Are the abortion methods employed in this country any less barbaric than what is described above?

3. Their *dissemination* of idolatry and immorality.

- a. The word "dissemination" means "to spread abroad as if sowing seed."
- b. Sadly, the Gentile nations were very active and very successful in sowing seeds of idolatry into the hearts of God's people (Hos. 11:2; 5:25-26; Nahum 3:4; Zeph. 1:3-6).
- c. The nations were also successful in disseminating the immoral acts so often associated with idol worship - drinking strong drink (Hab. 2:15) and engaging in acts of fornication as a part of "worshiping" idols (Amos 2:7-8).

4. Their *dissemination* of God's covenant people.

- a. There were certainly times when God scattered His own people to foreign lands of slavery and captivity because of their disobedience (Deut. 28:64-68).
- b. However, there were also times when neighboring nations acted without God's approval, and there were times when nations acted with God's approval in punishing His people, but went beyond the bounds of God's intentions (Joel 3:3-8).
- c. On numerous occasions in the Minor Prophets material, God warns the nations that the time is coming when they will themselves be scattered.

### III. THE RUINATION OF THE NATIONS

- A. Because of their perpetual abominations, the nations brought about God's *indignation* against them (Nahum 1:3-6).
- B. Although the nations would employ their *imagination*s in an attempt to thwart God's promise to bring them to ruin (Nahum 1:11), they would be unsuccessful.
- C. The Minor Prophets predicted instead a...
  - 1. Divine Domination of the Nations.**
    - a. Nineveh was an exceeding great city, but God was greater (Jon. 3:2; Nahum). The power of God was greater than the power of Assyria (Nah. 1:3).
    - b. The stronghold of God is stronger than the stronghold of any nation (Obad. 1:3-10; Zech. 9:3-4).
    - c. The most powerful nations are like stubble before the fire of God's punishment (Obad. 1:18; Nahum 1:9-10).
    - d. God's domination of the nations was so complete that He sometimes used a nation(s) as the tool by which he judged other nations (Amos 6:14; 9:9; Hos. 8:5-14; 9:16-17; 13:6-8; Hab. 1:5), even using a nation of locusts (Joel 1:6-7).
    - e. Many nations gathered against God's nation, but were not powerful enough to exterminate her once and for all (Mic. 4:11-5:15; 6:5; Nahum 3:5-19; Hab. 1:14-17; 2:16-17).
    - f. Foreign nations who took God's people captive rejoiced at their apparent victory.
      - (1) However, their rejoicing was premature because God was not finished with His people (Mic. 7:8-20; Zech. 2).
      - (2) Their rejoicing was premature because they had not considered that a day of judgment was coming for them as well (Joel 3:1-15).
  - 2. Divine Elimination of the Nations.**
    - a. God promised that certain nations would either be eliminated altogether, or eliminated from world influence.
      - (1) In Edom's case, "they shall be as though they had not been" (Obad. 1:16).
        - (a) Edom shall be a desolate wilderness (Joel 3:19), and would become as stubble in the fire (Obad. 1:18).
        - (b) Her plans to rebuild the desolate places would accomplish nothing permanent (Mal. 1:3-4).

- (2) Assyria would be brought to “an utter end” and devoured as fully dry stubble (Nahum 1:8-10). They would become “a desolation, and dry like a wilderness” (Zeph. 2:13-15).
- (3) Moab and Ammon would become as Sodom and Gomorrah (Zeph. 2:8-10).
- (4) In general God would “cut off the nations” and make their streets waste. He would destroy their cities “so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant” (Zeph. 3:6).
- (5) God’s determination was to “gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy” (Zeph. 3:8).

#### IV. THE INCARNATION AND CORONATION

- A. In the Minor Prophets we find predictions of *the incarnation*, i.e., the birth of Jesus, the Word Who became flesh and dwelt among men (Micah 5:2ff).
- B. We also find predictions of *a coronation*, a crowning of the King of kings, Who would rule over a kingdom which is superior to any of the kingdoms of men (Zech. 6:12-13).
  1. This kingdom would be established in the last days, in Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-2).
  2. This kingdom would cut across national boundaries and earthly geography. All nations would be invited to become a part of this kingdom (Micah 4:2; Isa. 2:2-4).
  3. This kingdom would expand by peaceful instruction rather than by military coercion (Micah 4:3-4).
  4. The arrival of this kingdom would produce great encouragement and joyful singing (Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 2:10-12; 9:9-10).
- C. Through Haggai’s words, God looked to a time in the future when He would overthrow earthly kingdoms and establish the kingdom of the One who would come from the line of David and Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:22; Matt. 1:1, 6, 12-16).
- D. The kingdom the prophets saw coming was indeed established on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The message of the Minor Prophets is truly a message for all men of all nations.
2. God has provided a revelation of His will to all nations, and His expectation is that all nations would recognize their accountability to His will.
3. God is still engaged in an examination of the nations today, and God will still bring about the ruination of any nation that participates in abominations and wickedness.
4. God is no respecter of persons when it comes to obeying His will - He expects all nations to honor Him.
5. God is powerful enough to bring about the ruination of all nations, but instead He seeks the salvation of all nations by inviting them to obey the Gospel and become a part of the kingdom of His dear Son (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2; Col. 1:13).

# THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK: AN OVERVIEW

*Chance Hicks*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The word “prophet” means a spokesman, or one who spoke in the place of another.
  - A. The prophets were foretellers and forth-tellers in that they proclaimed the word of God and foretold future events that would come to pass.
  - B. The prophets were called:
    - 1) Seers (1 Sam. 9:9)
    - 2) Men of God (1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kings 17:18)
    - 3) Servants of God (1 Chr. 6:49; 1 Kings 18:36)
    - 4) Messengers of Jehovah (Isa. 42:19)
    - 5) Watchmen (Ezek. 3:17; 33:7)
2. The twelve minor prophets are minor only in the sense of the length of the works which they penned.
  - A. Their work is no less important than the work of the major prophets.
  - B. They were all inspired men of God who proclaimed His message to the people.
3. The prophet Habakkuk is different from the other minor prophets.
  - A. The other minor prophets carried the message of God from God to the people.
  - B. Habakkuk, on the other hand, took his problems and complaints before God.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. HABAKKUK: THE PENMAN

- A. Not much information is known about the prophet Habakkuk.
- B. His name means “embrace” or “pressed to the heart.”
  1. Habakkuk embraced his people and his nation – He had an intense affection for his nation, and he desired that they do that which was right (Hab. 1:2-4).
  2. Habakkuk embraced the plan and promise of God – When God revealed His plan to punish the people of Judah by the Chaldeans and His plan to punish the Chaldeans for their iniquities, Habakkuk did not reject the plan of God but received it (Hab. 3:2, 16-19).
- C. The home of the prophet is unknown, but he is likely from the city of Jerusalem.
- D. What can we learn from Habakkuk: the Penman?
  1. We can learn to **search** out the plan of God and that which we do not understand! (2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 8:31; John 5:39-40).
  2. We can learn to **set** our frustrations and concerns upon the shoulders and ears of God! (1 Pet. 5:6, 7; 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6-9).
  3. We can learn to **suffer** for the cause of Christ, looking forward to the eternal crown of life! (Hab. 3:16-19; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-19; Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).
  4. We can learn the **security** that can be found in the hands of Almighty God! (Hab. 3:18-19; Rom. 8:31-39; Jude 21-25; 1 John 5:11-15; 1 John 2:24-25).

## II. HABAKKUK: THE PAST

- A. The date of Habakkuk is approximately 612 – 606 B.C., making him contemporary with Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Nahum.
- B. The people of Judah were descendants of the children of Israel who had been delivered by the hand of God from Egyptian captivity through Moses.
  - 1. God brought them across the Red Sea on dry ground, through the wilderness providing manna, and to Mount Sinai where He gave them the law through Moses.
  - 2. God had promised to give this people the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1-3).
  - 3. God delivered the land of Canaan into the hand of the Israelites (Josh. 21:43-45).
  - 4. God gave stipulations to the Israelites concerning their possession of the land of Canaan (Deut. 8:7-20).
- C. The people of Judah had forsaken God, had forsaken His law, and had become morally corrupt.
  - 1. They had forsaken the Fountain of Living Waters (Jer. 2:13, 32; Jer. 5:30-31).
  - 2. They had begun worshipping the gods which their own hands had created (Jer. 2:23-28; Jer. 5:7-9).
  - 3. They had become deceitful people who robbed the fatherless and widows (Jer. 5:25-29).
  - 4. They had changed their mouths from speaking truth to speaking lies and shooting arrows (Jer. 9:2-9).
- D. The kings of this time period would have included Josiah and Jehoahaz.
  - 1. Josiah was a righteous king who desired to put away idolatrous acts that he might “*perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the Lord*” (2 Kings 23:24, 25).
  - 2. The righteousness of Josiah was not enough for God to turn His judgment from the sins of Judah (2 Kings 23:26).
  - 3. Josiah was at Megiddo while fighting against Pharaohnecho (2 Kings 23:29-30), and his son, Jehoahaz, reigned in his stead as an evil king (2 Kings 23:31-32).
- E. Habakkuk had seen his nation turn from the blessings of the True and Living God and was burdened by that which he saw (Hab. 1:1-4).

## III. A SIMPLE OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

- A. The Prophet’s Question and Answer Period (Habakkuk 1 & 2).
  - 1. Habakkuk’s first question – How can God overlook the sins of His people and allow them to go unpunished? (Hab. 1:1-4)
  - 2. God’s first answer – God is raising the Chaldeans to punish the wickedness of the Israelites (Hab. 1:5-11)
  - 3. Habakkuk’s second question – How can God use the Chaldean nation, which is even more wicked, to punish His people? (Hab. 1:12-17).
  - 4. God’s second answer – The punishment that God is bringing upon His people has already been determined and will come to pass (Hab. 2:1-3).
- B. The Punishment of the Chaldeans (Habakkuk 2)
  - 1. Woe because of their conquest (Hab. 2:6-8)
  - 2. Woe because of their covetousness (Hab. 2:9-11)

3. Woe because of their cruelty (Hab. 2:12-14)
  4. Woe because of their corruption (Hab. 2:15-17)
  5. Woe because of their commitment (Hab. 2:18-20)
- C. The Prayer of the Prophet (Habakkuk 3)
1. The plea of the prophet (Hab. 3:1-2)
  2. The powerful works wrought by God (Hab. 3:3-15)
  3. The praise of the prophet (Hab. 3:16-19)

#### IV. AN EXPANDED OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

- A. Habakkuk's Perception (Hab. 1:1-4)
1. His Cry (Hab. 1:2)
  2. His Concern (Hab. 1:3)
  3. His Conclusion (Hab. 1:4)
- B. God's Plan (Hab. 1:5-11)
1. The Unbelievable Work of God (Hab. 1:5-6)
  2. The Unstoppable Weapon of God (Hab. 1:6-11)
- C. Habakkuk's Problem (Hab. 1:12-2:1)
1. His Statement (Hab. 1:12-13)
  2. His Stalemate (Hab. 1:13-17)
  3. His Stand (Hab. 2:1)
- D. God's Picture and Proclamation (Hab. 2:2-20)
1. Write about the Calamity (Hab. 2:2-4)
  2. Woe because of the Chaldeans Conquest (Hab. 2:5-8)
  3. Woe because of the Chaldeans Covetousness (Hab. 2:9-11)
  4. Woe because of the Chaldeans Cruelty (Hab. 2:12-14)
  5. Woe because of the Chaldeans Corruption (Hab. 2:15-17)
  6. Woe because of the Chaldeans Commitment (Hab. 2:18-20)
- E. Habakkuk's Prayer (Hab. 3:1-19)
1. The Plea of the Prophet (Hab. 3:1-2)
  2. The Power of the Lord (Hab. 3:3-15)
  3. The Praise of the Prophet (Hab. 3:16-19)

#### V. KEY VERSES OF HABAKKUK

- A. Habakkuk 1:2 - *"O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!"*
1. The prophet is in deep agony over his people and has long cried unto the Lord for relief without any response.
    - a. God had heard the prayers of Habakkuk because *"the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (1 Pet. 3:12).
    - b. God had not heard the prayers of Habakkuk in the sense that He had not acted to punish the violence of the people of Judah.
    - c. The prophet expressed his agony and frustration but he did not reject God nor turn his back on Him.
  2. The words of the prophet are very similar to the words of frustration often written by the Psalmist.

- a. *“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?”* (Psa. 2:1).
  - b. *“Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?”* (Psa. 6:2-3).
  - c. *“Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?”* (Psa. 10:1).
  - d. *“How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? For ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?”* (Psa. 13:1-2).
  - e. *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent”* (Psa. 22:1-2).
3. We can learn from the prophet the need to cast all of our cares upon the Lord, but in so doing, we must not reject the Lord or His counsel.
    - a. Simply because we do not understand or perceive the work of God does not mean that God is not accomplishing His work and His plan.
    - b. The ways of God are not the ways of man, and His thoughts are not the thoughts of men (Isa. 55:8).
    - c. God’s thoughts and ways are higher than the ways of man (Isa. 55:9).
    - d. Man must rely upon God to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).
    - e. There are some things which belong unto the Lord that man cannot understand upon the earth (Deut. 29:29).
    - f. God is our Father, and He will hear all the prayers and petitions that we bring before His throne with boldness through Christ (1 Pet. 3:12; Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 5:14-15).
- B. Habakkuk 2:4 – *“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”*
1. The soul of Babylon became puffed up with pride.
    - a. They attributed to their success in conquering nations to their own power and might (Dan. 4:30).
    - b. Their pride would eventually bring about their destruction (Pro. 16:18).
  2. The just shall live by his faith.
    - a. This statement is quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).
    - b. If the people were to survive the captivity and the punishment God was bringing through the Babylonians, then they had to trust in God and place their obedient faith in Him.
    - c. This has always been the requirement of God that man live by faith which comes from the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).
    - d. The just, or righteous, will trust God not matter what enemies or perils he may face.

C. Habakkuk 2:20 – *“But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”*

1. The Lord is in His holy temple in heaven, and He is in control.
  - a. The Lord is not like the idols needing someone to place them in the temple and move them around.
  - b. God is alive and knows what is occurring in the land of Judah.
  - c. God is working out a plan to bring punishment on Judah and on the Babylonians.
2. The earth is to keep silence before the Almighty God.
  - a. Silence means “hush, keep silence, hold your peace, and hold your tongue.”
  - b. God’s plan has been revealed to Habakkuk, and His plan is just because God is just.
  - c. The inhabitants of the earth should keep their silence and submit to the mighty hand of God that they may be exalted at the due time (1 Pet. 5:6).
  - d. The people have a choice: they can heed the warnings by God through the prophets and live by faith (Hab. 2:4) or they can reject God’s warnings and perish at the hand of the Babylonians!

D. Habakkuk 3:17-19 – *“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.”*

1. Habakkuk describes the hardships and suffering that will come because of the destruction by the Babylonian armies.
  - a. There will be no crop production.
  - b. There will be no production from the livestock.
  - c. The land will suffer total devastation because of their sins.
2. Habakkuk, however, does not despair because of the devastation; rather he expresses his sincere hope and trust in Jehovah.
  - a. We too should be able to rejoice in the Lord no matter what we suffer in this life, as we look back at what God has done for us and look ahead to the promises that are in store.
  - b. Habakkuk, like the psalmist, understood that his strength was from the Lord (Psa. 18:2; Psa. 59:17; Psa. 62:7).
  - c. Habakkuk understood that if he trusted in God, then God would provide for him those things essential to his life (Matt. 6:33; Psa. 84:11).
  - d. The hinds’ feet are the feet of deer which allow them to swiftly and surely move through the forests and around the mountains.
  - e. God will bring Habakkuk, along with the other righteous who live by faith, to triumph and victory.
  - f. Homer Hailey wrote, “As the deer is able to climb to the summit of the mountain peak, far above the fears and shadows of the



valley below, so Jehovah will make His faithful walk upon the high places, far above the doubts and despairs of the valley of shadows from which he has escaped.”

- g. There is hope for the faithful remnant, and they would eventually be restored to the promised land.

## **VI. LESSONS FROM HABAKKUK**

- A. Evil will not go unpunished (Gal. 6:7).
- B. God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32).
- C. God will not reject anyone who honestly seeks after the truth (Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 11:6).
- D. We need to turn to God and to His Word when we have questions (2 Pet. 1:3; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
- E. God was working out His plan to save man from eternal punishment (Gen. 3:15; Dan. 2; Hab. 1:6; Gal. 4:4).
- F. No matter our outward circumstances we can rejoice in the promises of God (2 Pet. 3:9; Phil. 4:10-13; Heb. 6:17-20).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. The book of Habakkuk is a wonderful book which teaches us about our Father and His dealings in the universe.
2. Habakkuk brought his concerns before God, and God revealed to Habakkuk His plan for the punishment of the sins of Judah and the sins of Babylon.
3. Habakkuk placed his trust in God and lived by faith in God, rejoicing in his salvation.
4. God has revealed His plan for man's salvation – may we, as Habakkuk, accept the plan of God and walk by faith in God according to His plan that we too may rejoice in our salvation!

# THE BOOK OF HAGGAI: AN OVERVIEW

Jerry L. Martin

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Haggai is the first of the postexilic prophets, who appeared in Judah after the return from captivity.
  - A. Little is known about Haggai, outside of his identification as “the prophet.”
  - B. During the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia, Haggai and Zechariah worked among the people of Judah to encourage the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the temple.
    - 1) In the first year of their return they set up the altar and began offering regular sacrifices.
    - 2) When Haggai came on the scene, work on the temple had been idle for some fifteen years.
2. There are four discourses offered by Haggai in this short two chapter book.
  - A. The first discourse (1:1-11) was an exhortation to restart the temple construction.
    - 1) It was addressed to Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest.
    - 2) It was a message for the leaders and people to heed the Lord’s call to “Consider your ways” (1:5, 7).
  - B. The second discourse (2:1-9) was a message of encouragement to the builders.
    - 1) Haggai promised the glory of God would once again fill His house.
    - 2) Haggai predicts that the “desire of all nations” would be to come into the temple (Messianic).
  - C. The third discourse (2:10-19) was a vivid description of the corrupting influence of sin.
    - 1) The lean years had come because of their spiritual uncleanness and disobedience.
    - 2) After the rebuilding of the temple was resumed, Haggai promised restoration of God’s blessings.
  - D. The fourth discourse (2:20-23) was a personal word of exhortation to Zerubbabel.
    - 1) It contains a Messianic prophecy of consolation and hope.
    - 2) While the kingdoms of men would fall, the Messianic line, restored in Zerubbabel, would last forever.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. AUTHORSHIP

- A. Haggai is the source of this prophetic message.
  1. He is identified by name nine times in thirty-eight verses (1:1, 3, 12, 13; 2:1, 10, 13, 14, 20).
  2. The name Haggai means literally “my feast,” or “the joyous or festive one.”
- B. Liberal “scholars” have challenged the authorship of Haggai.
  1. Their objection is based on Haggai being referred to in the third person.
  2. Note: Such use of the third person by a writer in reference to himself is common in the Scriptures.

## II. HISTORICAL SETTING

- A. Haggai's four separate discourses are easily distinguished and dated by the chronological information contained in the text.
  - 1. His prophetic call came in late August of 520 B.C.
  - 2. Before the end of the year Haggai had delivered all four of his exhortations.
- B. Sixteen years earlier, in 536 B.C., as a result of the edict of Cyrus the Great, some 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel.
  - 1. In the first year they set up the altar, offered sacrifices, and began collection of funds as well as supplies needed for rebuilding the temple.
  - 2. In the second year reconstruction began with the laying of the foundation, slowed because of opposition from the Samaritans (Ezra 4:1-5), and then the work was completely halted as a result of a decree by King Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:6-24).

## III. A SIMPLE OUTLINE OF HAGGAI

- A. The People Are Stirred To Action (1:1-15)
- B. Hopes For The Temple (2:1-9)
- C. Promised Blessings (2:10-19)
- D. God's Final Triumph (2:20-23)

## IV. AN EXPANDED OUTLINE OF HAGGAI

- A. The First Message: Exhortation To Rebuild The Temple (1:1 - 1:15).
  - 1. Introduction
    - a. In the second year of Darius the King
    - b. In the first day of the sixth month
    - c. The word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet.
    - d. For Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah
    - e. For Jeshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest
  - 2. The People Were Rebuked For Their Indifference (1:1-4)
    - a. Some thought the time of captivity was not yet over, and that the time had not yet come to rebuild the temple.
    - b. God asks, "Why is that you dwell in cieled houses, while My house lies in waste?"
  - 3. God's Chastisement (1:5 - 1:6)
    - a. Consider your ways
    - b. You worked hard in your physical labors, but God withheld His physical blessings
    - c. Have you ever stopped to wonder why?
  - 4. Exhortation To Resume Building The Temple (1:7 - 1:11)
    - a. Consider your ways
    - b. Gather supplies and rebuild the temple, and I will be glorified
    - c. Haggai explains the drought and the lack of prosperity
    - d. The reason: God had been relegated to second place
  - 5. The Result Of The Prophet's Appeal (1:12 - 1:15)
    - a. The leaders and the people listened to Haggai's message

- b. Haggai promised the Lord would be with them
    - c. Twenty-four days later, the people began rebuilding the temple.
  - B. The Second Message: The Glory Of The Future Temple (2:1 - 2:9)
    - 1. Encouragement To The Builders In View Of The Comparative Poverty Of The Present Temple (2:1 - 2:5)
      - a. In the seventh month and twenty-first day, Haggai receives the next message from God.
      - b. The leaders and the people are to be questioned about who remembers the glory of the former temple, constructed by Solomon.
      - c. Even though this temple does not compare in size or beauty, the people are not to be discouraged.
      - d. God promises to be with them, and bless their efforts.
      - e. God will keep His covenant and His Spirit will remain among them, so that they need not be afraid
    - 2. The Glory Of The Messianic Temple (2:6 - 2:9)
      - a. God will eventually shake the heavens and the earth, as He brings the desire of the nations into the temple.
      - b. The glory of the latter temple will be greater than that of the former temple.
      - c. Peace and prosperity will reign.
  - C. The Third Message: Obedience Brings God's Blessings (2:10 - 2:19)
    - 1. The Infectious Nature Of Sin (2:10 - 2:13)
      - a. In the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, Haggai receives his third message from God.
      - b. A question from the priests about the ceremonial uncleanness.
      - c. Neglected spiritual duty is not sanctified by sacrificial ritual.
      - d. On the contrary, disobedience has infected the sacrificial offerings rendering them unclean.
    - 2. The Insufficiency Of Their Limited Obedience Has Affected Their National Interests (2:14)
    - 3. Disobedience Has Been The Basis Of God's Chastisement (2:15 - 17)
    - 4. Obedience Will Be The Basis Of God's Renewed Blessings (2:18 - 19)
  - D. The Fourth Message: The Restoration Of The Davidic Kingdom Through The Line Of Zerubbabel (2:20 - 2:23)
    - 1. Prediction Of The Overthrow Of The Gentile Kingdoms (2:20 - 22)
    - 2. Haggai Predicts The Restoration Of The Messianic Line In The Signet Of Zerubbabel (2:23)

## **V. KEY VERSES OF HAGGAI**

- A. Haggai 1:4-6 are key in provoking personal consideration.
- B. Haggai 1:9 is key to finding the answer as to why they were not prospering.
- C. Haggai 2:4 is key to providing encouragement.
- D. Haggai 2:6-9 are key Messianic verses (quoted in Hebrews 12:26-28).

## **VI. LESSONS FROM HAGGAI**

- A. Procrastination paralyzes today and robs tomorrow (1:2, 3).

- B. A life void of God's blessings is the picture of true emptiness (1:6).
- C. Discouragement is dispelled by renewed and revitalized faith (2:4).
- D. Unclean hands and indifferent lives cannot offer pure worship (2:10-14).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. The main thrust of Haggai's prophetic work was to stir God's people to action -  
Construction of the temple needed to be resumed after fifteen years of idleness.
2. Haggai also helped the people to see the connection between their spiritual neglect and the drought in their physical existence - The people had deluded themselves by thinking that if they first made themselves prosperous; they would then have a better ability to fulfill their spiritual obligations to God.

# THE BOOK OF HOSEA: AN OVERVIEW

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Hosea belongs to the Minor Prophet section of the Old Testament, of which there were 12 books.
  - A. Though his book comes first in our current arrangement, preceding him would have been Jonah, Joel and Amos.
  - B. He is an eighth century prophet and did his work over at least 60 years, or from 786-726 B.C.
  - C. He was contemporary with Amos, Isaiah and Micah.
    - 1) Amos was from the Southern Kingdom, but prophesied to the Northern Kingdom.
    - 2) Isaiah and Micah were prophets respectively to Jerusalem and Judah.
2. His name means "salvation" or "deliverance."
  - A. He had a good name at birth and added luster to it much like Andrew did in the New Testament.
  - B. He delivered a soul-saving message that could have saved Israel (also known as Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom) from the coming Assyrian Captivity.
  - C. He was Israel's weeping prophet, as Jeremiah was in Judah or the Southern Kingdom.

## I. AUTHORSHIP

- A. There is no real evidence for rejecting Hosea as being the earthly penman of this prophetic product.
- B. The Holy Spirit, quite obviously, is the heavenly author even as He is of the other 65 books of the Bible.
- C. We know no names of his immediate ancestors save the name of his father--Beerl.
- D. Being an Israelite means he was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. More remotely he was the seed of Adam, Enoch, Noah and Shem.

## II. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

- A. Chapters 1-3.
  1. Hosea and his faithless, immoral Gomer. It appears she was pure at first and went into harlotry subsequent to their marriage.
  2. Jehovah and His faithless bride, Israel. God's people were faithful at first, and then guilty of spiritual adultery.
- B. Chapters 4-13.
  1. Judgments against the people and the priests.
  2. Their manifold sins called for genuine repentance.
  3. Destruction and distress hovered over them.
  4. Toward God Ephraim was unthankful.
  5. Ephraim and Judah stood guilty before God.
  6. God's wrath was ready to be unleashed against his disobedient children.
- C. Chapter 14.
  1. The intense need to repent.

2. God's promise to heal their backsliding and to love them freely.

#### IV. AN EXPANDED OUTLINE OF HOSEA

##### A. Chapter 1.

1. Gomer, her sins and the children she bore--the third one likely not even Hosea's at all.
2. Promise of a better future.

##### B. Chapter 2.

1. Family conditions regarding Gomer and her sins.
2. Jehovah's patient love for his faithless bride.

##### C. Chapter 3.

1. Hosea buys back Gomer and gives her strict instructions.
2. The present and future relative to Israel – a brighter future is portrayed.

##### D. Chapter 4.

1. The Lord's controversy with His people.
2. Sin prevalent with knowledge nearly non-existent.
3. Idolatry has taken its toll of God's people. The nation was wedded to its idols and immersed in immorality.

##### E. Chapter 5.

1. Danger lurks for both Israel and Judah.
2. They turned elsewhere – not to Jehovah.

##### F. Chapter 6.

1. Ephraim is in great sin.
2. As a result she is very defiled.

##### G. Chapter 7.

1. Their sins were manifold and widespread.
2. Ephraim was like a cake unturned or half-baked.
3. Ephraim flirted with Assyria to the northwest and with Egypt to the southwest.
4. Repentance was foreign to their thinking.

##### H. Chapter 8.

1. Ephraim acted without respect for God's authority.
2. Israel forgot her Maker.
3. Ephraim faced punishment which was at hand – they had sown the wind and now faced the whirlwind of consequences.

##### I. Chapter 9.

1. Deep corruptions characterized this apostate nation.
2. Ephraim will surely reap what she had been sowing.
3. Ephraim faces a very bleak future because of her sins.

##### J. Chapter 10.

1. Ephraim's sins were of long standing.
2. They recognized no debt owed Jehovah.
3. Great was their wickedness.

##### K. Chapter 11.

1. God had called Israel out of Egypt and in later centuries would call Jesus, His Son, out of Egypt in Matthew 2.
2. With cords of a man and bands of love He called them.

3. How very hard it was for God to give up Ephraim.

4. Lies and deceit were laid at the feet of Ephraim.

L. Chapter 12.

1. Both Ephraim and Judah were reprovved.

2. A portion of their history is recalled relative to Jacob and Moses.

M. Chapter 13.

1. Ephraim majored in sin – adding sin to sin with rapidity.

2. Ephraim followed destruction, but Jehovah was the real helper.

3. God gave them a king in His anger and took him away in His wrath.

4. Ransom and redemption are promised.

5. Grave punishment lay ahead.

N. Chapter 14.

1. A plea for their return.

2. A promise of healing their backsliding.

3. Choose the ways of Jehovah, for they are right – not the travel of transgressors.

## V. KEY VERSES IN HOSEA

A. Hosea 1:7.

B. Hosea 2:19-20.

C. Hosea 4:6.

D. Hosea 4:11.

E. Hosea 4:17.

F. Hosea 7:8.

G. Hosea 8:7.

H. Hosea 10:12.

I. Hosea 11:1.

J. Hosea 12:6.

K. Hosea 14:4.

## VI. LESSONS FROM HOSEA

A. It just takes one person in a household – Gomer – to wreck its peace, tranquility and happiness.

B. From his own sad experiences with Gomer, Hosea knew how Jehovah must have felt toward His unchaste bride.

C. Hosea went the second mile in forgiving Gomer and taking her back.

D. It is sad when children have a mother like Gomer.

E. People may err greatly, but God graciously forgives when repentance occurs.

F. Sin has a payday, and both Ephraim and Judah experienced such.

G. Idolatry is one of the greatest insults a person can hurl at God.

H. Hosea was as faithful to God as Ephraim was faithless to Him.

## CONCLUSION:

A. Sin is seen in all its ugliness in the book of Hosea.

B. Ephraim did not take seriously the great wisdom of Proverbs 14:34.

C. With God mercy lingers while there is a possibility of repentance on man's part.



# HOW THE MINOR PROPHETS PREACHED

Curtis A. Cates

## INTRODUCTION

1. Though far short of being adequate to bespeak Christ's Deity, the comparison of the Son of God to the prophets was meant as a compliment (Mat. 16:13-14).
2. In the dealings of God to man religiously, there were prophets, priests, and kings, which converged into Christ—our Prophet, High Priest, and King.
3. The Greek "*prophetes*" means "to speak for," the prophets being spokesmen for God.
4. God's prophets "foretold" the future, but they mainly served as "forthtellers," preachers to the people of their own day.
5. There were "major" prophets and "minor" prophets, so distinguished for the length of their writings but not by the importance of their writings.
6. Often called "burden," their pronouncement, as well as their overall preaching and writings, came when the people and the nation were in danger of rebelling against and forgetting God.
7. Their powerful messages speak also to our day, enabling us through steadfastness and comfort to know the "God of hope" (Rom. 15:4-5, 13) and to see Christ as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-12).

## I. INSPIRATION OF THE PROPHETS

- A. God revealed His will through the prophets; they were inspired; they spoke the "God-breathed" Word; and, they spoke with authority.
  1. It had no human origin or source, for they were borne along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
  2. Jonah was told to "preach the preaching that I bid thee" (Jon. 3:2). Similar statements are: "The word of Jehovah that came to" Joel (1:1), Micah (1:1), Zephaniah (1:1), Zechariah (1:1); "the word of Jehovah by Haggai," "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts" (1:1-2); "The vision of Nahum" (1:1); "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see" (1:1); "The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi (1:1).
- B. The phrase "Thus saith Jehovah," though often used by God's spokesmen (e.g., Zec. 8:2-9, et al.), did not necessarily prove persons to be of God, for false prophets often used the same phrase (Jer. 28:2; Eze. 13:2); God had not sent the false prophets. They "prophesied out of their own spirits and deceived the people, having seen lies (13:3-16), and were "walking in a spirit of falsehood" and "do lie" (Mic. 2:11).
  1. True prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit in their message: "And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest... and he...said unto them, Thus saith God" (2 Chr. 24:20; cf. Micah 3:8).
  2. John wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits" (1 John 4:1-3).
- C. Preachers of today [since the apostolic age] are not inspired, as were the Biblical prophets; however, their purpose of delivering a "Thus saith the Lord" is the same, based upon the plenary, verbally inspired Word of God, God's power to save (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12).

## II. THE PROPHETS THEMSELVES

- A. Though God's messengers to the people, the prophets were still human.
  - 1. "Then spake Haggai Jehovah's messenger in Jehovah's message unto the people" (Hag. 1:13).
  - 2. The prophets were nonetheless individual persons; they did not have the same personalities, styles of speaking and/or writing, vocabularies, or background (e.g., Amos, Jonah, et al.).
  - 3. They did not preach because of personal ambition or pay (Amos 7:12-15).
  - 4. What an honor to have been entrusted by God with His Word to preach to others!
- B. The fact that prophets of God were flesh and blood is often forgotten.
  - 1. Sometimes, as in the case of Jonah, they could reject their mission at first and try to run from duty.
  - 2. They could want to give up and die, as Elijah and Jeremiah.
  - 3. The prophets could experience hurt, feel fear, become angry, and "cry their eyes out"; in the midst of their humbly declaring God's message, they surely could have used some kind words and a "pat on the back," instead of rejection, rebuke, and even at times threats of physical harm.
  - 4. Some prophets were killed for speaking the Truth (Jer. 2:30; Acts 7:52; Mat. 23:31, 37; 5:12; Heb. 11:32-40); evidently, no prophet turned his back on God in the Bible record when his life was thus threatened.
  - 5. God expected His messengers to be pure, moral in life, as was required in their message (Lev. 19:2; Isa. 6:1-7; Jer. 29:23).
  - 6. God's messengers did not allow themselves to be intimidated by the enemies of Truth (Amos 7:12-15; 1 Kin. 22:13-36).

## III. PURPOSE OF THE PROPHETS

- A. Preaching God's message, the prophets were to preach righteousness and to warn about and cry out against sin.
  - 1. The nation of Israel was to keep the bloodline pure for the Messiah to come to earth through the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Judah (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:13-16; 4:4; Mic. 5:2).
  - 2. The nation was warned through the prophets against turning from God to idols, even to the point of being taken away by hooks into captivity (Amos 4:2).
  - 3. To violate God's covenant and turn to idols was spiritual harlotry (Hos. 2:2); Hosea strongly warned against their wickedness, to no avail (14:2-3); it meant destruction to their souls and to the nation (Mic. 3:8).
  - 4. The prophets mourned and wept tears over having to give warnings of judgment (Zec. 9:1; 12:1); it indeed was a burden (Mal. 1:1). However, "The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8).
  - 5. Very regrettably, the wickedness at times had gone so far that they could not escape (Hos. 13:8-16).
- B. The prophets pleaded for their people to repent.
  - 1. Note Hosea's deeply loving appeal for Israel to repent in chapter 14 - "O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine

- iniquity" (14:1). God touchingly pleads, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them" (14:4).
2. God will bless those who bring themselves to repent.
- C. The receiving of pardon and of blessing from Jehovah has always been conditional.
1. The warnings of Jehovah are always accompanied with implied offers of mercy – if the person/people repent.
  2. Jonah's warning that Nineveh would be destroyed implied that God would change His mind upon their repentance (Jon. 3:4-4:2); the promise of Haggai 2:29 was also conditional, for example.
- D. The prophets preached about their God.
1. God is all-powerful: "Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20).
  2. God is all-seeing (Psa. 139:1-18).
  3. God is infinitely holy (Hab. 1:13).
  4. God is all-just (Nah. 1:2-3).
  5. God is full of pity and full of mercy (Jam. 5:10-11). "Jehovah is good" (Nah. 1:7), "slow to anger" (1:3), "a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness" (Jon. 4:2; cf. Psa. 103:8-14).

#### **IV. THE MESSIAH IN THE PROPHETS**

- A. The prophets also foretold future events, especially of the coming Messiah and His kingdom, the church.
1. The apostles on Pentecost quoted Joel's prophecy relative to Christ and His kingdom (Acts 2:16-36; Joel 2:28-32; cf. Acts 26:6-7).
  2. Zechariah prophesied of the Messiah (Zec. 9:9; 11:12; 12:10; 13:1-2, 7; et al.), as did Malachi of Christ's forerunner (Mal. 4:5-6).
  3. They were messages of hope in the kingdom, as in Micah 4:1-5.
  4. These references could be multiplied.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Gospel preachers and all other brethren--and nations--can learn much from the minor prophets.
2. May God give us solid, courageous, loving messengers who will declare the whole counsel of God.
3. Who will dedicate themselves to the Lord, who will prepare to preach the gospel, who will work to enlarge the borders of the church of our Lord?

# THE BOOK OF JOEL: AN OVERVIEW

*Prophet of Desolation, Inspiration, and Restoration*

Todd Clippard

## I. AUTHOR

- A. Joel – Yo-el = “Yahweh (Jehovah) is God”
- B. Thirteen other Old Testament characters bear the same name, but none are the same as the prophet.
- C. *The son of Pethuel* = “the sincerity of God”

## II. DATE

- A. Of some dispute ranging from 830 - 200 B.C.
- B. The early date places Joel in the reign of Joash.
- C. The early date makes Joel one of the earliest prophets of O.T. literature.
- C. Amos begins his prophecy (1:2) by quoting Joel 3:16 and ends the same in 9:13 quoting Joel 3:18.

**III. SETTING** – Israel has just endured a plague of locusts and drought brought on by their disobedience (1:1-12)

**IV. THEME** – a call to repentance for restoration of God’s favor

## V. SIMPLE OUTLINE

- A. The Day of the Lord – 1:1-2:27
- B. The Dispensation of the Gospel – 2:28-32
- C. The Demonstration of Righteousness – 3:1-21

## VI. EXPANDED OUTLINE

- A. Desolation: 1:1-2:11
- B. Lamentation 2:12-20
- C. Restoration: 2:21-32
- D. Retaliation: 3:1-17
- E. Glorification: 3:18-21

**VII. KEY WORDS** – desolate, desolation (6 times)

**VIII. KEY PHRASE** – “*the day of the Lord*” (5 times)

## IX. KEY PASSAGES AND LESSONS

- A. 1:1 – “Joel the son of Pethuel”
  - 1. Lit., “Jehovah is God, the son of the sincerity of God.”
  - 2. The importance of godly parenting and upbringing.
    - a. Deuteronomy 6
    - b. Ephesians 6:1-4 (cf. Col 3:20-21)
    - c. Hebrews 11:23
    - d. Luke 2:21-52
- B. 1:1-2:11 Utter devastation by the locusts, described as:
  - 1. A nation strong and without number - 1:6
  - 2. A great and strong people unlike any other before or after - 2:2
  - 3. Turning the garden of Eden into a desolate wilderness - 2:3

4. Running as horsemen with the noise of chariots and of fire; as a strong people in battle array - 2:4-5
  5. Causing the earth to quake, the heavens to tremble, darkening both sun and moon - 2:10
  6. As coming with the voice of the Lord - 2:11
- C. 1:2 - "*Hear this you elders . . .*"
1. Obviously these were not elders in the New Testament sense, but there is a strong parallel between the function and responsibility of these older men and that of elders in the church.
  2. These men shirked their responsibilities to teach and protect the people, and the result was a great apostasy and loss among the people.
  3. Too many elderships today are doing the same **with the same devastating results!**
- D. 1:8 - "*Lament like a young maid girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.*"
1. God desired his bride to return to him with great yearning.
  2. Deuteronomy 24:5 illustrates the need for young married couples to be together.
  3. Some commentators believe the young husband is dead, but the use of sackcloth does not necessarily imply death has occurred (e.g. Nineveh's repentance in Jonah).
  4. Lamentations 2:18; Psalm 119:136
- E. 2:13-14 - the nature of true repentance & God's forgiveness
1. "*Rend your hearts and not your garments*"
  2. Rending garments was a sign of great grief & despair:
    - a. Genesis 37:29, 34 - Reuben & Jacob
    - b. Numbers 14:6; Joshua 7:6 - Joshua & Caleb
    - c. Mark 14:53-65 (see verse 63)
  3. God does not want an outward demonstration, but an inward transformation.
- F. 2:28-32 - the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all nations
1. Including the Gentiles
    - a. Isaiah 11:10-12
    - b. Acts 2:16-21
  2. "*Before the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come*"
    - a. Possibly the destruction of Jerusalem
    - b. Most likely the Judgment Day (cf. Luke 3:16-17)
- G. 3:14 - "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision*"
1. 1 Kings 18 - Elijah vs. Baal's prophets at Mount Carmel (v 21)
  2. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

# THE BOOK OF JONAH: AN OVERVIEW

*Chris Butler*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. What comes to mind when I say Jonah? Most likely the first thought is about a large fish.
2. This book is more, however, than a story to tell our children.
3. This book has within it great lessons concerning responsibility, rebellion, repentance, reluctance, rededication, and resentment among other things.
4. This book is a great study for the church of the Lord today.
5. There is very little said of Jonah outside the book.
  - A. He is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25.
  - B. He is mentioned by our Lord concerning the resurrection. Mat. 12:39-41
  - C. His name means dove, and that is interesting when you consider the "flight" he took away from God and his responsibility.
6. The book of Jonah is questioned by many so called "scholars." It is viewed by many as just a fairytale story.
  - A. There are three views concerning the book. (Hailey)
    - 1) Mythical. "The mythical school assumes that the story is a myth that grew up around some incident in the history of Israel.
    - 2) Allegorical. "The allegorical view assumes that the story is an allegory of Israel's captivity, repentance, and restoration to its land."
    - 3) Historical. "The historical conviction accepts the position that Jonah lived as a prophet of God, that he went to Nineveh and preached to the people of that city, and God spared the nation."
  - B. All one needs to know is that this event was quoted by our Lord as a likeness of His resurrection. Mat. 12:39-41
7. The book contains a number of miracles, which are attacked by modernists who deny the inspiration of the scriptures, and of course the miraculous. The miracles related in the book include: (Winton)
  - A. The great storm (its timing and strength suggest the supernatural).
  - B. The great fish (its swallowing the prophet and disgorging him in the right place).
  - C. The calm that occurred when Jonah was thrown overboard.
  - D. The gourd: its growth; its demise; the strong east wind.
8. A Brief and very common outline.
  - A. Chapter One. Jonah Runs From God.
  - B. Chapter Two. Jonah Runs To God.
  - C. Chapter Three. Jonah Runs With God.
  - D. Chapter Four. Jonah Runs Ahead of God.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. JONAH FLEES FROM GOD AND INTO SIN. **Jonah 1:1-14.**

- A. God's Will. Jonah 1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh..."
  1. God's word to Jonah was plain and simple. It was stated as a Command.
  2. Note, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

3. A very great truth is seen in these verses: God sees all. Prov. 15:3; Heb. 4:13
  - a. God knew the wickedness of Nineveh, and He knew they needed to repent. God's cup was full so far as Nineveh was concerned, Jonah and the preaching he was to do was their only hope.
  - b. God requires this of all men. Acts 17:30-31; Luke 13:3, 5
    - (1) Repentance brings about a change from the sinful way of life to a new life patterned after Christ and His word.
    - (2) Jonah ran from the work of God in chapter one.
    - (3) Jonah runs, as it were, to Nineveh by chapter three.
  - c. Something caused a change. Maybe some members of the church need to spend a few nights in the belly of a great fish.
    - (1) Mat 3:8 "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance"
    - (2) Mat 21:28, 29 "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went."
    - (3) Act 26:20 "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
    - (4) Repentance is brought about by God's goodness and Godly sorrow. Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10
    - (5) If God's goodness is not enough to bring a man to penitence, then there is nothing left to offer but God's wrath.
  - d. Jonah experienced the chastening of the Lord first hand. It worked, for when the command came the second time, Jonah obeyed.
4. God's commands bring one of two actions. Either we Comply with the command, or rather we hold it in Contempt (disdain, dislike, hate).
  - a. The latter of the two is true of Jonah, and thus he ran from the responsibility God gave him. He did not agree with the command, and thus rebelled.
  - b. Much of the religious world is this way. If the Bible doesn't fit their thinking, then throw out what the Bible teaches.
  - c. There are at least three factors involved in obedience so far as I can tell.
    - (1) It is love that prompts man to comply with the commands of God: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
    - (2) Love when coupled with faith produces action: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6; cf. Heb. 11; Jam. 2).
    - (3) Of course the third factor is self explanatory. There must be action. Mat. 7:21-27; Jam. 1:21-22.
  - d. So as a result we question three areas with Jonah.
    - (1) Jonah's Love for God. Mat. 22:37.
    - (2) Jonah's Love for his neighbor. Mat. 22:39.
      - (a) Jonah failed to understand; Godliness does not hate.

1 Jn. 4:20 "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

(b) See also 1 John 2:9-11; 3:15; Luke 10:25-37.

(3) Jonah's Love for His Enemies. (Mat 5:44) "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

e. Nineveh was exceedingly wicked, so Jonah had no desire to preach there, because he wanted their destruction. Jonah wanted just the opposite of what God wanted.

5. There are literally millions of people the same way.

a. Salvation through different methods other than what the Bible teaches.

b. Worship in ways other than authorized.

c. God's ways are not our ways. (Isa 55:8) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

6. Jonah was displeased with God turning from his anger and sparing Nineveh. Jonah 4:1-ff

7. God's Command today.

a. Mat. 28:18-20. "Go ye therefore and teach all"

b. Mark 16:15-16 "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel."

8. Salvation comes only as a result of preaching the word, combined with obedience to what is preached.

a. 1 Cor. 1:21, Rom. 1:16, Rom. 10:10-17.

b. Acts 20:27 One must preach "all the counsel of God."

c. Heb. 5:8-9, Mat. 7:21-29, Jam. 1:22, 25.

B. Jonah's Way. Jonah 1:3. "But Jonah..."

1. Jonah Rebelled against the Authority of God.

a. Behind Jonah's running "from the presence of the Lord" is a terrible quality. It is rebellion. It means "defiance of authority or control."

b. Notice the first word of verse two: "But." Jonah did the exact opposite of the command. A stark contrast from the one who said, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).

(1) Jonah was told to go east, he went west.

(2) He was told to go to Nineveh, he went to Joppa.

(3) He was told to go and preach, rather he went to sleep.

(4) Note the following points from Wade Webster:

(a) "Down to Joppa" (Jonah 1:3).

(b) "Down into" the ship (Jonah 1:3).

(c) "Down into the sides of the ship" (Jonah 1:5).

(d) "Down" to the bottoms of the mountains in the sea (Jonah 1:6).

c. There must have been a terrible hatred of the people of Nineveh for Jonah to be willing to lose his life in defiance.



2. Jonah Ran to Tarshish. Jonah 1:3

- a. The text states that Jonah “rose up to flee unto Tarshish”.
- b. Please understand that Jonah exhausted more energy defying God, and running away from his task than he would have if he had just done what God said.
- c. All circumstances made it possible for Jonah to run away. Anytime we wish to defy God, to rebel against God rest assured that Satan will make all avenues open and readily available.
  - (1) He went to Joppa.
  - (2) He found the Ship.
  - (3) He had the money to pay the fare.
  - (4) But note, that in no way relieved Jonah from his responsibility.

3. Jonah’s ruin. When we run from God and our responsibility, all hope is lost.

C. God’s Wonder. God’s Reaction to Jonah. Jonah 1:4 “ But God.....”

1. God sends the Storm.

- a. God’s reaction is seen in the storm, and the God’s reason is made clear by Jonah in the depths of the sea.
- b. Jonah himself confessed that God made the sea. Jon. 1:9
- c. He must have known there was no way to remove himself from God’s eye: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psa. 139:7).
  - (1) He must have known God’s power over the creation.
  - (2) Psa. 135:7 “He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.”
  - (3) Prov. 30:4 “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?”
- d. He who had the power to calm the sea, also had the power to stir it up.
- e. This storm had as its purpose to get Jonah’s attention. This storm would send Jonah to the bottom of the sea. As we have seen already repentance is changing the mind.
- f. Jonah did everything in his power to get away, now it’s God’s turn.
- g. God brought about a change in Jonah.
  - (1) Hos. 4:7 “As they were increased, so they sinned against me: *therefore* will I change their glory into shame.”
  - (2) God has a way of doing that.

2. The Sailors. Jonah 1:5-ff

- a. Their Worry. They were afraid for their lives. Not only was Jonah guilty concerning Nineveh, but now also with respect to these sailors.
  - (1) Worry and anxiety, in most cases, causes people to turn to “their gods”.

- (2) That is the case here, only they cry and get no open ear, no answer, and no help.
- (3) How often it is the case that religious people find themselves in difficult situations and expects God to hear and answer their prayers.
  - (a) God's ears are indeed open, but to whom? (1 Pet. 3:12) "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."
  - (b) These men prayed to pagan gods, or gods created from the imaginations of men, thus they had no reason to expect an answer or help. Sound familiar?? 1 Kings 18:21-40
- b. Their Work. They were busy doing what they could.
  - (1) They prayed more than Jonah. Jonah 1:5
    - (a) What about you and me?
    - (b) Are we out-prayed by the religious world?
  - (2) They Worked more than Jonah.
    - (a) While Jonah was asleep, they were working.
    - (b) They sought to lighten the load in an effort to save themselves. 1:5
    - (c) After Jonah told them to cast him overboard, they worked to save him. 1:13
    - (d) What of you and I? Are we outworked by those in religious error? Tit. 2:11-14; Eph. 2:8-10; Mat. 5:15-16; 1 Tim. 6:18.
- c. Wonder about Jonah. Finally after doing what they could the captain went to Jonah with some questions.
  - (1) What meanest thou, o sleeper? The real answer. I am running away from myself and my god.
  - (2) For whose cause is this evil come upon us? I am responsible, finally he would admit this.
  - (3) What is thine occupation? Well I am a pathetic prophet of God, doing just the opposite of what God wants me to do.
  - (4) Whence comest thou?
  - (5) What is thy country?
  - (6) Of what people art thou? I am a Hebrew, I fear the Lord, the God of heaven. Really!!!!
  - (7) Each of these questions should have cut to the heart of Jonah given the situation. Each should have reminded him of the work God wanted him to do.
  - (8) Sometimes God asks questions. Remember the garden?
    - (a) Where art thou? Gen. 2:9
    - (b) Who told thee thou wast naked? Gen. 2:11
    - (c) What is this thou hast done? Gen. 2:13
- d. Their Willingness.

- (1) Even when Jonah told them to cast him overboard they were willing to work to keep from doing it. The Bible states "the men rowed hard".
- (2) They did not realize it was God's plan to cast Jonah overboard, but their compassion is seen in their working to save Jonah.
- (3) There are countless people in the world whose care and compassion far outshines many in the Lord's church.
- (4) We are to be a compassionate people.
  - (a) Compassion is a trait of Godliness. (1Jn 3:17) " But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"
  - (b) It should be extended to all, even those who do not deserve it. (Luke 15:20) "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."
  - (c) Compassion makes a difference. (Jude 22) "And of some have compassion, making a difference:"
  - (d) Compassion is a trait of our Lord. Mat. 9:36
- e. Their Submission to the Will of God.
  - (1) After doing all they could do, they cast Jonah overboard.
  - (2) Note the Results: "The sea ceased from here raging." 1:15
  - (3) Understand the lesson for you and me today:
    - (a) Good intentions not guided by God's way will always be unsuccessful.
    - (b) God's way gets results.

## II. JONAH'S FALL INTO THE WATER AS A SACRIFICE. Jonah 1:15-2:10.

### A. Jonah Sinks. Jonah 1:15

1. When we fail to follow the commands of God, this is just what we do.
2. Like we sing, "I was sinking deep in sin." This is just exactly what Jonah was doing, both literally and spiritually. Just as we sing, Love would lift Jonah from the depths.
3. Remember Peter, when he took his eyes off the Lord, he began to sink. Mat. 14:30
4. Do you think Jonah ever imagined that when he left for Joppa he would end up being cast into the angry sea?
5. The Sacrifice of Jonah, so to speak, would bring about the salvation of not only those on the ship, but also a city of six hundred thousand plus.

### B. Jonah is Swallowed. Jonah 1:17

1. While Jonah was sinking in sin, God was not finished with him.
2. He was swallowed by a great fish.
3. This fish was prepared by God. We don't know what kind of fish it was, but we do know God prepared it, sent it, and used it to His purpose.
4. This Fish was used to preserve Jonah. God's command was the same now

as it was when he first gave it.

a. The same is true today for you and me. Mat. 28; Mark 16.

b. God's word has not changed, will not change, but will endure.

(1) Psa. 100:5 "For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations."

(2) Psa. 117:2 "For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD."

(3) 1 Pet. 1:25 "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

(4) Matt. 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

#### C. Jonah's Situation. Jonah 2:1-10

1. Put yourself here in Jonah's place.

2. Note the words, "affliction, belly of hell, in the deep, midst of the seas, floods compassed me, thy billows, waves, I am cast out of thy sight, weeds were wrapped about my head, bottoms of the mountains, bars about me, corruption, my soul fainted."

3. What would you do? Does this sound familiar? Remember another who ran away and found himself in the pig pen?? Luke 15:11-24

4. Funny how our own pride takes us down our own path, rebelling against God, but when we meet the end of our decisions, the first place we turn is the God from whom we departed.

a. Psa. 119:71 "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

b. Heb 12:5 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."

c. Heb 12:7 "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

d. Jonah endured and the chastening of the Lord accomplished its purpose.

5. Jonah does the only thing he can do - He prays.

#### D. Jonah's Supplication. From the belly of a fish, deep in the ocean, God hears the prayer of his prodigal prophet.

##### 1. Jonah's Reasoning.

a. At the end of his retreat from God Jonah realized his only hope is the one from which he was running.

b. Rather than the course Jonah took, we should pray to God by reason of the wonderful blessings he bestows upon us each day.

(1) Physical life.

(2) Spiritual life in Christ.

c. Prayer should be a way of life for the Christian. 1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1; Acts 2:42; Rom. 1:9; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:3

d. Note the following:

(1) "Jonah prayed.....out of the fish's belly"

(2) "I cried by reason of mine affliction"

2. Jonah Remembered. Jonah 2:7

- a. Like the prodigal son, the prodigal prophet remembered what he had.
- b. In desperate situations they both remembered things were better back home.
- c. Jonah's only option was to pray to the God he so desperately needed.
  - (1) He was now in the same position of Nineveh.
  - (2) He needed salvation from his rebellion, and that from the belly of a fish. Can you imagine??
  - (3) Nineveh needed salvation from their wickedness.
  - (4) Jonah determined he would go and do as God said.

E. Jonah's Salvation.

1. The salvation of Jonah is based on several statements that show his repentance.
2. Note the following statements made by Jonah:
  - a. "I Cried by reason of mine affliction" 2:2.
  - b. "I am cast out of thy sight" 2:4.
  - c. "I will look again toward thy holy temple" 2:4.
  - d. "I went down to the bottoms" 2:6
  - e. "I remembered the Lord" 2:7.
  - f. "I will sacrifice unto thee" 2:9.
  - g. "I will pay that that I have vowed" 2:9.
3. From these statements there is no doubt that Jonah repented, and because of such, God caused the fish to spit Jonah out on dry ground.
4. Truly in a situation like that only God could save. Truly, with regards to sin only God can save.

### III. JONAH FOLLOWS GOD'S COMMAND AND SWIFTLY GOES TO NINEVEH.

#### Jonah 3:1-10.

A. God's Will. Jonah's Second Chance.

1. God's command was the same the second time. He still desired that Nineveh repent.
  - a. That is God's desire for all. 2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:30; Rev. 2:16; 3:19.
  - b. That is the purpose of all God has done. He wants to bring all to repentance through Godly sorrow. 2 Cor. 7:10
  - c. Think about all who have had a second chance.
    - (1) David. Psa. 51
    - (2) Peter. Cursed and said I don't know him...
    - (3) John Mark.
    - (4) How many have ever served God and not failed in one way or another? Jonah had a self righteous attitude, deeper evidently than the depths of the sea.
    - (5) Even after he was vomited on dry ground, he had the same problem.
    - (6) He wanted god's mercy, but he would not extend it to Nineveh.

(a) See Mat. 18:23-35.

(b) Here was a servant who was willing to receive mercy, but would not extend it.

2. Arise, go, preach.

a. The commands of God are the same today.

b. The church of our Lord should mirror the church of the first century.

(1) In mission: Evangelism, Edification, Benevolence. Mat. 28:18-20; Rom. 14:19; Jam. 1:27

(2) In doctrine: Jude 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

(3) God's word does not change, it will meet us in eternity. Jn. 12:48

B. Jonah's Way. Jonah preaches... 3:1-3.

1. With Purpose. Note the great difference the second time around.

a. Jonah arose. Same as the first commission. 3:2

b. Jonah went unto Nineveh. 3:2 Changed from the first commission.

c. Jonah preached. 4:2

(1) He was not allowed to preach whatever he wanted to.

(2) The Message he had to declare was not pleasant.

(a) No eloquence: Moses, Paul. Exo. 4:10; 1 Cor. 2:1

(b) No gimmicks, no illustrations with a few verses here and there.

(c) Just Preach what God said Preach.

(3) 1Co 2:2 "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

(4) Act 20:27 "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

(a) Concern for lost. Rom. 1:15-16 "debtor"

(b) Desperate need. Lost. Hopeless. Damned to hell. Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23.

(c) Cost. Phil. 2:5-11; John 3:16. It will cost us something as well.

2. With Power. God's word will accomplish its purpose.

a. The Gospel is God's word, and as such it is powerful.

b. Rom. 1:16; Isa 55:11 "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it."

c. The sermon was pointed: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

d. Sermons do not have to be long to be effective, as long as the word of God is proclaimed.

C. Nineveh Welcomes the preaching of Jonah. 3:5-10

1. The Proclamation. 3:5

a. A fast and sackcloth.

b. From the greatest to the least.

2. The Publication. 3:6

a. Here a wicked pagan King preached. This was made known throughout.

- b. Man and beast alike were to take part.
- 3. The Penitence of the People. 3:8-10 The desired result was repentance.
  - a. The statement was made, "let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."
  - b. Certainly when one is penitent in heart, a change will take place.
  - c. There are causes for repentance, and then there are effects.
    - (1) Godly sorry bring repentance it is a cause. 2 Cor. 7:10. In this case the destruction of Nineveh was the cause.
    - (2) Repentance, or changing the mind, then brings the effect. Note the change: Let every man turn.
    - (3) We are to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Repentance will be evidenced by our actions.
      - (a) God saw their works. 3:10
      - (b) They turned. 3:10
  - d. There is no need to question their repentance, for the Lord used the repentance of Nineveh to rebuke the hard heart of those who refused to hear the words of Jesus.
  - e. They wanted a sign, and Jesus said I will give you a sign, and Nineveh will rise in judgment against you. Mat. 12:38-41

#### IV. JONAH'S FAILURE. Jonah 4:1-11.

##### A. Jonah's Anger. 4:1.

- 1. Here we see part of the reason Jonah ran. Can you imagine being angry at the salvation of a people?
- 2. "To blaze up, to glow"
- 3. Paul said, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).
  - a. There is such a thing as righteous anger. God's anger or wrath is toward the sinful and unwilling to repent. John. 2:14-15
  - b. But here such is certainly not the case. Jonah is completely unjustified in his anger.
  - c. He is like the elder brother of Luke 15, who was angry because of his brothers return and the treatment he received from his father.

##### B. Jonah's Audacity. Jonah 4:2-3

- 1. Can you imagine approaching God in prayer about a command he has given and doing so as Jonah does here?
- 2. "Didn't I tell you." This was the very reason he fled from the presence of the Lord.
- 3. He had no desire for Nineveh to be spared.
  - a. Imagine this attitude. Here was Jonah mad, angry because God extended mercy and grace to Nineveh.
  - b. He had just received that same grace and mercy.
  - c. Do I want God to measure other people by the same standard he uses for me? Or do I want God to be more lenient with me?
  - d. Do I expect God to be harder on others than he is on me?
- 4. Unlike Paul, who said, "my heart's desire....Israel...might be saved" Rom. 10:1-2
- 5. If not for God's grace, where would we be? This grace when properly

- understood will lead us to be gracious with the message of the Gospel.
- C. The Lord's Answer 4:4-11.
1. Jonah's Patience.
    - a. Jonah so despised Nineveh that he went out and just waited to see if his desire would come true.
    - b. Some are like this in the church today. They just wait for someone to mess up and there they are.
    - c. "I told you so."
    - d. Little did Jonah know, Assyria would be spared another 150 years or so.
    - e. He made a booth, a tabernacle, a place where he could sit in the shade and watch what would happen.
  2. The Lord's Preparation.
    - a. A gourd. 4:6
    - b. A worm. 4:7
    - c. A wind. 4:8
    - d. All of these were designed to teach Jonah the lesson he needed so desperately.
      - (1) God is the creator of all. Gen. 1-2
      - (2) In the city of Nineveh were more than one hundred twenty thousand that could not tell their right hand from their left.
      - (3) Jonah was a selfish, self-righteous, Pharisee of his day.
  3. Jonah's Pity. 4:10
    - a. The Lesson.
      - (1) Here is the point of the whole book.
      - (2) Jonah cared more for a gourd than he did for the people of Nineveh.
      - (3) He cared more about the shelter it provided him than he did about an entire city wherein were sheltered some six hundred thousand people.
    - b. The church throughout the years due to a number of problems has turned inward in many places.
    - c. As a result of our efforts to keep brethren faithful, we have nearly ceased from our primary mission: The preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Mat. 28:18-20

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Are we compassionate toward the lost?
2. Are we like Jonah, unwilling to fulfill our responsibility in His service?
3. Do we care more about our own physical condition, than we do about the spiritual condition of literally millions of people today?
4. It is my prayer that we each will take to heart the wonderful lessons from this short four chapter book!



# THE BOOK OF MALACHI: AN OVERVIEW

*Robert D. Rawson*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Thankful for the lectureship.
  - A. Truthfulness is a given priority by Nesbit.
  - B. The practical application is sought too.
2. Malachi is so appropriate a study for our generation.
  - A. Spiritual decisions (Chapter 1).
  - B. Marriage troubles (Chapter 2).
  - C. God's nature needs to be seen (Chapter 3).
  - D. God's blessings will come (Chapter 4).

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. MALACHI HAS BEEN COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS THE AUTHOR**

- A. Noted in opening verse (1:1).
- B. Taught after the return from captivity.
  1. People were called 'Israel' (1: 5; 2:11, 16; 4:4).
  2. Also called 'Judah' 3 times (2:11; 3:4).
- C. Followed Haggai and Zechariah; Temple fully in use.

### **II. MALACHI'S HISTORICAL SETTING**

- A. Whereas Ezra and Nehemiah were in the building phase, Malachi was seeking to reform the sinful direction of God's people in worship and daily living (3:6).
- B. People had arrived back, often going into corrupt practices.
  1. Malachi's book was written after all the other books in the Old Testament-- 400 years later, Jesus would come.
  2. There are very few historical details in the book of Malachi. The greatest clue as to its dating may lie in the fact that the Persian-era term for governor (pehâ) is used in 1:8. This points to a post-exilic date of composition both because of the use of the Persian period term and because:
  3. The book of Malachi deals directly with abuses in the restored temple system -- apparently from firsthand experience. Thus, the book was almost certainly written in post-exilic times.

### **III. SIMPLE OUTLINE OF MALACHI**

- A. Burden of the Lord explained (1:1 – 3:15).
- B. Blessing of the faithful (3:16 – 4:3).
- C. Bind your remembrance of the Lord (4:4 – 4:6).

### **IV. EXPANDED OUTLINE OF MALACHI**

- A. Burden of cited misunderstood love (1:2).
  1. God's plan was carried out.
  2. Failure to see God's love brought challenges.

- B. Cited priests despising his name (1:6).
  - 1. Polluted bread upon My altar (1:7).
  - 2. Profaned My table (1:12).
  - 3. Drudgery of worship (1:13).
  - 4. Torn, lame and sick sacrifices (1:13).
- C. Duties of priests and brethren corrupt (2:11, 12).
  - 1. Metaphorical use of word "Judah" here.
  - 2. Holiness dealt with unfaithfulness.
    - a. "Traacherously" used often (2:10, 11, 14, 15, 16).
- D. Hypocrisy of divorcements (2:13).
  - 1. The Lord witnessed the marriage (2:14).
    - a. She is yet companion (2:14).
    - b. God's law set aside (Deut. 7:3).
  - 2. The Seed of God was the plan (2:15).
  - 3. God hates putting away (2:16).
- E. The Lord is worried (2:17).
  - 1. He has borne with you so long.
  - 2. You have provoked Him.
- F. Yet, the Lord remembers His word (3:1-15).
  - 1. My messenger will be sent (3:1).
  - 2. The Lord's way prepared (Mt. 11:14).
    - a. He's the refiner (3:2) to make pure.
      - (1) Sons of Levi purged (Acts 6:7).
    - b. He's like fuller's soap (3:2) to cleanse.
      - (1) Elijah will come (Mt. 17:10-13).
      - (2) Christ brings hope for the soul.
  - 3. Though you have robbed me (3:8).
    - a. You can repent (3:10-12).
    - b. You can be blessed again (3:12).
- G. The faithful have encouraged one another often (3:16).
  - 1. A book of remembrance of their names.
  - 2. These shall be spared (3:17).
  - 3. These thought upon His name.
  - 4. Righteousness can be understood (3:18).
  - 5. Judgment is to happen (4:1).
    - a. It's a great and dreadful day (4:5).
    - b. Elijah's preparation will be done.
  - 6. The faithful will find the Sun of Righteousness (4:2).
    - a. Healing will stretch out as rays of sun.
    - b. Hope will spring forth as calves in the stall.
    - c. The wicked will be overcome (4:3).
    - d. The true law will be spoken.
    - e. Traditions will be overcome.
      - (1) Hearts will be turned to truth.
  - 7. In most Masoretic Bibles, the fifth verse is repeated after the sixth verse so the 'curse' does not end the book; rather, the remembrance of God's law (Adam Clarke, 1825).

## V. KEY VERSES OF MALACHI

- A. 1:1 The Burden of the Word of the Lord
- B. 1:2 I have loved you, saith the Lord
- C. 1:11-13 Heathens might do better
- D. 3:1 My messenger will come
- E. 3:6 I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed
- F. 4:2 The Sun of righteousness will bring hope for all

## VI. LESSONS FROM MALACHI

- A. God knows what is happening, and has emotions arise (1:1).
  - 1. The people knew better than to behave this way.
  - 2. The priests knew better than to compromise.
    - a. Priests hurt themselves physically (3:10; Neh. 13:10).
    - b. Priests hurt themselves spiritually (2:3).
  - 3. Our lack of vision.
  - 4. Our last minute preparation for worship.
  - 5. Our failure to see the privilege of giving.
  - 6. Our holding faults and failing to forgive.
- B. God holds men to accountability.
  - 1. God was there at the marriages (2:14).
  - 2. God hated the evils of divorce; He changes not (3:6).
  - 3. We should contend for the faith (Jude 3).
  - 4. We should use opportunities to teach (Acts 19:9; Phil. 4:17).
  - 5. We must fear judgment ahead (Hebrews 9:27).
- C. God has mercy (3:6).
  - 1. The plan of God explained his love (1:2-5).
    - a. Magnified to the border.
  - 2. Hope will be sent (3:1; 4:1).
  - 3. Brethren can repent (Acts 8:22; 2 Corinthians 9:7).
  - 4. Brethren can worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24; Mt. 26:26-29).

## CONCLUSION:

- 1. Elijah (John the Baptist) prepared way for the Son of righteousness.
- 2. Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' righteousness (4:2).
- 3. Do you enjoy this hope in Christ?

# THE BOOK OF MICAH: AN OVERVIEW

*Tim Burroughs*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The Book of Micah is listed as the third minor prophet in the Septuagint (LXX), after Amos and Hosea.
  - A. The book canonically arranged is the sixth of the Minor Prophets in the present day arrangement of the Bible.
  - B. The Book of Micah has been called "Isaiah in miniature" because the prophet delivered a brief presentation of essentially the same message found in the book of Isaiah.
2. The message of the Book of Micah is relevant to man's spiritual needs.
  - A. The basic message concerns the matter of authority.
    - 1) Micah constantly stressed the need for living within the limitations of God's Word.
    - 2) He would severely condemn those who departed from the standards acceptable to God, whether they were prophets, priest, rulers, or people.
  - B. Authority was the basic foundation of Micah's preaching.
    - 1) It was the basic foundation of the preachers of the Restoration Movement.
    - 2) This is the basic foundation that needs to be preached by all who profess to be preachers of the Word of God today.
  - C. Micah would prophesy of the birth place of the One who would come to this world to save His people from their sins (Micah 5:2; cf. Matthew 1:21; 2:6).
    - 1) The Christ would come from Heaven with all AUTHORITY (Matthew 28:18).
    - 2) The message of authority will save man today just like it did in the days of Micah.
3. The theme of the Book of Micah is found in the very meaning of the prophet's name.
  - A. The name Micah means "Who is like God?"
    - 1) The preacher from Moresheth, would spend his life preaching the Word of God in hopes of finding those who desired to follow the standard of authority found only in the Word of God.
    - 2) "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8).
  - B. Micah denounced the sins of the people and pronounced their doom.
    - 1) However, he never ceased to plead for their repentance and to assure them of divine Pardon and restoration (Micah 2:12; 5:6-8).
    - 2) He spoke both of present desolation and of future glory.

4. The divisions of the Book of Micah incorporate the people's sin, their destruction, and their restoration.
  - A. First, God summons the people to hear (Chapters 1-2).
  - B. Second, God summons the leaders to hear (Chapters 3-5).
  - C. Third, God summons the mountains to hear (Chapters 6-7).
5. The Book of Micah records the characteristics of the prophet, as well as the people to whom he would speak.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE MAN AND AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**

- A. The Book of Micah was written by Micah (Micah 1:1).
  1. He was a native of Moresheth, a small town of Gath located about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem (Micah 1:14).
  2. Moresheth means possession of the wine-press.
  3. This is probably modern day Beit-Jibrin.
  4. This countryside was richly productive with its fertile soils that produced fields, olive groves, and flower covered hills.
  5. Moresheth was sufficiently detached from Jerusalem to produce men of courage and independence of thought.
- B. Micah is mentioned in the book of Jeremiah as a prophet of God (Jeremiah 26:17-19).
  1. He prophesied both to Israel and Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Pekah and Hoshea, the last two kings of Israel.
  2. Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah in the south, and of Hosea in the north.
  3. He was a humble countryman who sympathized with the common people.
- C. Micah recognized the divine sovereignty and holiness of God.
  1. He gives no account of his call to prophesy, but we know that he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord (Micah 3:8).
  2. Micah would be bold, severe, and uncompromising, yet loving, tender and consoling toward them that repent.

### **II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**

- A. The Political Background.
  1. Under the reign of Uzziah, Judah had experienced the greatest prosperity since the days of Solomon.
    - a. However, along with prosperity came social evils and spiritual falling away from God.
    - b. The mind of the people was turning to the evils of the world.
  2. Jotham (740-736 B.C.) would follow his father's (Uzziah) reign and instill the policies of his father.
  3. Ahaz (736-716 B.C.), an unusually wicked king when compared to other kings of Judah, ruled after the death of Jotham.

- a. In the days of Ahaz, Judah was threatened by the coalition of Israel and Syria.
- b. Ahaz would not join in their alliance against Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria.
- c. Ahaz's trust in Tiglath-pileser cost Judah her independence.
- 4. Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.) would succeed Ahaz as one of Judah's exceptionally good kings.
  - a. Had it not been for the rule of the good King Hezekiah and the diligent and fearless preaching of Isaiah and Micah, it is probable that Judah would have gone the way of Israel.
  - b. However, by the providence of God enough spiritual "salt" was found to save the land and the people from ruthless destruction by Assyria.

**B. The Social Background.**

- 1. The wealthy coveted the lands (Micah 2:1-2).
- 2. The rich robbed the poor (Micah 2:8).
- 3. Women were being cast out of their houses (Micah 2:9).
- 4. False prophets prophesied for reward (Micah 3:6, 11), priests taught for hire (Micah 3:11), and judges judged for a bribe (Micah 7:3).

**C. The Religious Background.**

- 1. Great religious reforms were made by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29-31).
  - a. The priests sanctified themselves and cleansed the temple.
  - b. Altars to idols were destroyed.
  - c. True worship was restored.
- 2. Micah did not seem completely pleased with these reforms.
  - a. The people had turned religion into a matter of tradition.
  - b. Religious ceremonies and observances were the center focus.

**III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**

- A. The Judgment Coming Upon Israel and Judah (1:1-16).
- B. The Sins Which Have Caused the Judgment (2:1-3:12).
- C. Prophecies of Future Glory as Encouragement and Consolation (4:1-5:15).
- D. God's Controversy with His People (6:1-7:20).

**IV. AN EXPANDED OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**

- A. The Judgment Coming Upon Israel and Judah (1:1-16).
  - 1. The prophet and his hearers (1:1.)
  - 2. A call to hearken to the Lord's witness against them (1:2).
  - 3. The coming calamity under imagery of a storm (1:3-4).
  - 4. Cause—sin (1:5).
  - 5. Samaria to be destroyed (1:6-7).
  - 6. Judah to be invaded (1:8-9).
  - 7. Cities of Judah to experience panic—a series of paronomasias (1:10-15).
  - 8. Mourning for Judah (1:16).

- B. The Sins Which Have Caused the Judgment (2:1-3:13).
  - 1. Woe to them that devise, work and practice evil (2:1).
  - 2. Guilty of covetousness, violence, and oppression (2:2).
  - 3. God will devise an evil against them (2:3).
  - 4. A parable against them (2:4-6).
  - 5. God's judgment not arbitrary (2:7).
  - 6. Robbery of peaceable men, women, and children (2:8-9).
  - 7. They have polluted their possession and will lose it (2:10).
  - 8. They have accepted false prophets (2:11).
  - 9. Restoration promised (2:12-13).
  - 10. Charges against princes under imagery of cannibalism (3:1-4).
  - 11. Charges against false prophets (3:5-7).
  - 12. Micah's claims of power (3:8).
  - 13. Charges against heads, princes, priests, and prophets (3:9-11).
  - 14. Jerusalem to be destroyed (3:12).
- C. Prophecies of Future Glory as Encouragement and Consolation (4:1-5:15).
  - 1. Mountain of the Lord's house to be established in the last days (4:1-8).
  - 2. Humiliation, captivity and return to precede "last days" (4:9-5:1).
  - 3. The ruler of new Zion (5:2-14).
  - 4. God's vengeance will be on those who will not hearken (5:15).
- D. God's Controversy with His People (6:1-7:20).
  - 1. God's people invited to plead their case against Him (6:1-5).
  - 2. The people's response (6:6-7).
  - 3. The Lord's answer through Micah (6:8-9).
  - 4. Sins of which they have not yet repented (6:10-12).
  - 5. Such sins must be punished (6:13-16).
  - 6. Micah confesses the sins of the people (7:1-6).
  - 7. Micah speaks for the spiritual remnant (7:7-10).
  - 8. God's promises (7:11-13).
  - 9. Prayer for guidance and answer (7:14-17).
  - 10. Doxology of praise – who is a God like unto thee? (7:18-20).

## V. KEY VERSES FROM THE BOOK OF MICAH

- A. Micah Predicted the Church of our Lord (Micah 4:1-8).
  - 1. Micah showed that in the last days (Christian Dispensation) that the Lord's house would be established (v. 1).
    - a. Paul calls the church of our Lord the "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15).
    - b. This is the church that was established on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-47).
  - 2. Micah said it would be established "in the top of the mountains" (v.1).
    - a. Micah is referring to Zion, a steep hill on the southeastern region of Jerusalem on which David built a fortress, and on which Solomon built the temple.

- b. The apostles were at Jerusalem when the church began (Acts 2).
  - 3. Micah predicted that “all nations shall flow unto it” (vv. 3-4).
    - a. This refers to both Jew and Gentile being accepted.
    - b. Jesus said, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16).
    - c. This plan was announced by Christ again (Acts 1:8).
- B. Micah Showed What Was Required of Man (Micah 6:8).
  - 1. To do justly is to act toward God and man according to the divine standard of righteousness revealed in His law.
  - 2. To love mercy is to show a compassionate warm heartedness toward man.
  - 3. To walk humbly with thy God is to recognize the absolute holiness and righteousness of God, and to walk in humble submissive obedience to His desire and will.
- C. Micah Shows the There is None Like God (Micah 7:18).
  - 1. God passes over iniquity, the grossest and basest of sin, and pardons transgressions, the going over or beyond His law.
  - 2. He does all this because He is God who retains not His anger forever, and because he delights in demonstrating loving kindness.

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. The spiritual needs of man today can be enhanced with the study and understanding of the Book of Micah.
  - A. His call for the men of his day was to hear the Word of the Lord.
  - B. That call is still prevalent on this side of the cross of Calvary.
- 2. “Who is like God?” was the mission of this prophet.
  - A. Man today would do well in carrying out the same mission as taught in the New Testament.
    - 1) Matthew 28:18-20
    - 2) Mark 16:15-16
  - B. One’s love for God will be demonstrated by it (John 14:15).
- 3. Micah’s incorporation of the people’s sin, their destruction, and their restoration in his preaching is an example of balance that is needed to win souls for the Lord and His cause (2 Timothy 4:2; cf. Romans 15:4).
- 4. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:11).



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# MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. This was the serious charge Hosea leveled against his peers in Hosea 4:6.
2. In a Nashville, Tennessee, gospel meeting in the mid 1950's I heard the late and lamented Gus Nichols say, "Ignorance of the Bible is the most damnable sin of our time."
  - A. Brother Nichols knew that Bible ignorance was a taproot from which so many other sins spring and are fueled.
  - B. If anything, Biblical ignorance is even more prevalent in 2009 than a half century ago in the mid-fifties.

## **I. THE CONTEXT OF THIS STRONG ACCUSATION**

- A. The context of Hosea 4:6 is not a pretty one at all.
- B. Knowledge was extremely scarce in Israel, the Northern Kingdom.
- C. Also absent in the land were:
  1. Truth – there was no truth in the land.
  2. Mercy – it, too, had forsaken the land.
  3. Knowledge of God – this was conspicuously absent from the land of the Northern Kingdom, as already observed.
- D. Prevalent in the land were:
  1. Swearing – people were careless and profane in what they said.
  2. Lying – it was common while truth telling was a forgotten virtue.
  3. Killing – human life was cheap; murder was rampant.
  4. Stealing – was as common as breathing, eating and sleeping.
  5. The committing of adultery – sexual purity was totally lacking among lascivious men and licentious women. Fornication and adultery were mixed and mingled into the very fabric of idolatrous religious practices. This was one of the major motivations for popular and pleasing idolatry.
  6. Blood touches blood – murder was not an infrequent crime but a common occurrence among the violent.
- E. It sounds like Hosea is writing about America and the whole world in 2009 rather than Israel in the eighth century B.C.
- F. Imminent punishment was on their threshold, and little did they realize its nearness. For shame.

## **II. AN ANALYSIS OF THIS TEXT**

- A. This sin of ignorance was not leveled against the pagan world of the eighth century B.C. such as the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and close neighbors such as the Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, or the Edomites.
- B. "My people" are the guilty ones of this unjustified infraction.
  1. These were His covenant people.
  2. These were the inhabitants of the very land God graciously had bequeathed

them centuries before.

3. These were the very people to whom the sacred oracles of God had been given (cf. Rom. 3:1-2).
  4. These were distant descendants of Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  5. These and Judah were the very people that constituted the chosen nation of Israelites to the God of Heaven.
- C. They were destroyed, or as the margin states, "cut off." Isaiah 5:13 is an excellent commentary on this verse proving Judah was in the same ignorant category. Again I write, "for shame!"
- D. Too little knowledge was the guilty culprit. It fits our day and modern mindsets to an alarming degree.
- E. Knowledge was not only exceedingly scarce, but had become a very unwelcome reality in their secular minds.
- F. The seeds thus were sown for God's rejection of them. Biblical ignorance extracts a very high cost.
- G. God's rejection of them meant the priesthood was also withheld from them.
- H. Their children also would pay a dear price in a sure-to-come captivity at the hands of cruel and calloused Assyria.

### **III. KINDRED PASSAGES ABOUT BIBLICAL IGNORANCE**

- A. Isaiah 1:3-4 – God's people knew less than brute beasts.
- B. Isaiah 5:13 – already mentioned, connected ignorance with captivity.
- C. Sadducees in Christ's day – were ignorant of Scriptures and the power of God (Matt. 22:29).
  1. These were the taproots of all their blatant unbeliefs.
  2. They were on the wrong side of truth and right in their every New Testament appearance.
- D. Ignorance extracted a very high cost in infidelic Jews at Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 (Luke 19:44). Contrast this with the well-established fact that NO Christian perished in that indescribable holocaust.
- E. Resurrection-denying Corinthians were not in the know about this fundamental of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:34).
- F. The Athenians in Acts 17 worshipped amidst ignorance (Acts 17:23).
- G. The prideful Gnostics-Docetics and Cerinthians in John's day were deliberately ignorant of the true nature of Christ's humanity and Deity respectively.

### **IV. BIBLICAL REMEDY FOR THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM OF IGNORANCE**

- A. Psalm 1:2.
- B. Psalm 119:11, 97.
- C. John 5:39.
- D. John 8:31-32.
- E. Acts 17:11.
- F. 1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16.
- G. 2 Timothy 2:15.
- H. Revelation 1:3.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Hosea in eighth century B.C. and Gus Nichols of the twentieth century A.D. both were on target in labeling Biblical ignorance as destructive and damnable.
2. It is a taproot from which sins of all kinds originate and grow.

# THE BOOK OF NAHUM:

## *“The Book Jonah Wanted to Write”*

Dwayne Butler

### INTRODUCTION:

1. I am indeed very thankful to be part of the Nesbit Church of Christ Lectureship entitled “Messages from the Minor Prophets.”
  - A. Thank you to brother Frank Chamberlain.
  - B. Thank you to brother Jim Mercer.
  - C. Thank you to the members from the Nesbit Church of Christ.
2. Not many people can get up here and say “Nesbit is my home!”
  - A. For that I am very thankful.
  - B. Where would I be without the good people here?
  - C. Thank you so much for helping me to grow and showing me what it is to be part of a Christian family.
3. It is a great honor to be on the same lectureship with great friends, teachers, and preachers of God’s Word.
4. It would not be possible for me to be who I am without the help of so many good people.
5. The topic assigned for today is the book of Nahum.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

##### A. Nahum the Man.

1. Nahum - “Consolation,” or “Compassion,” or “Full of Comfort.”
  - a. The people of Judah would need a message of comfort.
  - b. Nineveh had been a thorn in the side of God’s people for quite some time.
  - c. His name really typifies the encouragement his words brought to God’s people.
  - d. His message went not to Nineveh, but to God’s people.
    - (1) There were no more words of warning for Nineveh.
    - (2) Jonah gave Nineveh the only warning they would receive.

##### 2. We do not know very much about Nahum.

- a. We do know he was from Elkosh (Nahum 1:1).
- b. There have been many suggestions regarding the location of Elkosh, but none of these can be proven to be true.

##### B. Nineveh.

##### 1. The City.

- a. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria.
  - (1) We can read that this city was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-11).
  - (2) It was one of the oldest living cities during the time of Nahum’s writing.
- b. This was one of the greatest cities of all time.
  - (1) Jonah called this city “a great city of three days journey”

(Jonah 3:3).

- (2) From the book of Jonah we get an idea that their population was somewhere close to 600,000.
  - (3) The walls were over 100 feet high, flanked with 1,500 towers, each 200 feet high, and the walls were wide enough for three chariots to drive abreast on top.
  - (4) Even though Jonah referred to Nineveh as a great city, they were still amenable to God.
- c. Nineveh had been chosen by God to punish the Northern Kingdom of Israel; that happened in 721 B.C. (The first captivity).
- (1) It seems that nations like these forget why they came into power in the first place.
  - (2) At one time Assyria tried to destroy Judah, but God intervened (Isaiah 36-37).
  - (3) We could say Nineveh woke up dead (Isaiah 37:36-37).

## 2. The Cruelty.

- a. "Their armies destroyed and looted; they buried their enemies alive and even skinned them alive; they impaled people on sharp poles and left them to burn in the sun" (Weirsbe).
- b. "They worshipped the vicious god Ashur and a multitude of other gods and goddesses. Their brutality and cruelty was legendary. They were known to impale their enemies on stakes in front of their towns and hang their heads from trees in the king's gardens. They also tortured their captives—men, women, or children—by hacking off noses, ears, or fingers, gouging out their eyes, or tearing off their lips and hands. They reportedly covered the city wall with the skins of their victims. Rebellious subjects would be massacred by their hundreds, sometimes burned at the stake. Then their skulls would be placed in great piles by the roadside as a warning to others. Jonah decided he would rather quit than preach to such people." (Durant).
- c. "Abortion was a capital crime; a woman who secured miscarriage, even a woman who died of attempting it, was to be impaled on a stake." (Durant).
- d. "Prostitution was accepted as inevitable, and was regulated by the state." (Durant).
- e. "Just as the Romans took thousands of prisoners into lifelong slavery after their victories, and dragged others to the Circus Maximus to be torn to pieces by starving animals, so the Assyrians seemed to find satisfaction—or a necessary tutelage for their sons—in torturing captives, blinding children before the eyes of their parents, flaying men alive, roasting them in kilns, chaining them in cages for the amusement of the populace, and then sending the survivors off to execution." (Durant).

## C. Outlines of Nahum

### 1. Outline by Bob Winton:

- a. Nineveh's Destruction is Declared.

- b. Nineveh's Destruction is Described.
- c. Nineveh's Destruction is Defended.
- 2. Outline by Warren Wiersbe:
  - a. God is Jealous - Nineveh will Fall.
  - b. God is Judge - Nineveh's Fall is Great.
  - c. God is Just - Nineveh Deserves to Fall.
- 3. Additional Outline:
  - a. Nineveh's Doom is Declared.
  - b. Nineveh's Doom is Described.
  - c. Nineveh's Doom is Deserved.

## II. CONTENTS OF NAHUM

### A. Nineveh's Doom is **Declared**.

1. The **Patience** of God (Nahum 1:1-3).
  - a. Are we not glad that we serve a patient God?
    - (1) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
    - (2) The fact that we are here this very day is further proof of God's patience.
  - b. We serve a God who is omnipotent and righteous.
  - c. God is slow to become angry and His wrath is not quickly poured out.
    - (1) He is longsuffering to His offspring.
    - (2) God does not desire the destruction of any precious soul.
  - d. We need to remember that God had already sent one prophet to Nineveh.
    - (1) A little more than one hundred years before the time of Nahum, God forgave Nineveh.
    - (2) Because of their repentance, God did not destroy them.
    - (3) This shows us a little about the patience of God.
  - e. Unfortunately, Nineveh had returned to her wickedness.
    - (1) This time, she must be put down.
    - (2) Her cup of iniquity was full.
  - f. However, Nahum recorded for us that God will not overlook those who are wicked.
    - (1) Maybe Nineveh felt like God had forgotten them.
    - (2) Maybe they got a little too comfortable.
    - (3) How quickly people forget.
  - g. In the overall scheme of things, people have not changed.
    - (1) There are people in this world who have forgotten about God.
    - (2) This is where we come in.
      - (a) It is a reward.
      - (b) We get to help people.
  - h. Without God's Word, and our preaching the simple truths found

therein, these will not go to Heaven.

i. This responsibility should not be taken lightly.

2. The **Power** of God (Nahum 1:4-6).

a. Is it not true that our God is all powerful?

- (1) He rebukes the sea.
- (2) He can dry up all the rivers.
- (3) Mountains quake at our Lord.
- (4) He can melt the hills.
- (5) He can pour his wrath out like fire.
- (6) He can break the rocks.

b. Who can accomplish these things but the God of heaven?

c. Nahum follows up all these feats by asking a simple question.

- (1) Who can stand before his indignation?
- (2) Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?
  - (a) The answer is simple.
  - (b) No person can, and no nation can!
  - (c) Nothing can stand before the power of the Almighty.
  - (d) Many nations have tried to do this very thing.
    - i) Think of Sodom.
    - ii) Think of Rome.
    - iii) Think of the United States of America.

d. A country can only stand and shake its fist in the face of God until His patience runs out.

- (1) He was powerful enough to bring down Assyria.
- (2) He was strong enough to bring down Babylon.
- (3) He is strong enough to bring down the United States of America.
- (4) "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

3. The **Plan** of God (Nahum 1:8).

a. Any good leader has a plan of attack.

- (1) God does as well.
- (2) How exactly do you attack a city like Nineveh?
- (3) Assyria was a nation that was ready for war.
- (4) The city was fortified by walls, moats, and towers.
- (5) Its walls were 7.5 miles in circumference.
- (6) The walls were broad enough for three chariots to drive abreast on its top.
- (7) The outer perimeter formed a triangle which extended about 60 miles.
- (8) You do not just run into these walls and knock them down!

b. Fortunately for God's people, and unfortunately for Assyria, God had a plan.

- (1) With an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof (Nahum 1:8).
- (2) This happened exactly the way God said it would.

4. The **Promises** of God (Nahum 1:9, 12-15)



- a. We have two promises here (One to Nineveh, one to God's people).
  - (1) First, we have a promise of annihilation.
  - (2) "Nineveh, you are finished."
  - (3) No more of your name will be sown.
  - (4) I am going to destroy your graven images.
  - (5) God even says "I have already dug your grave!"
    - (a) "Now lie in it!"
    - (b) "You are finished!"
  - (6) Why? Because they were vile!
- b. Second, we have a promise of assurance.
  - (1) God says there is no reason to fear Nineveh anymore.
  - (2) God would break the yoke from off Judah.
    - (a) They had been forced to pay tribute.
    - (b) They lived under the continuous threats of a brutish nation.
  - (3) Keep your feasts and perform your vows.
  - (4) The wicked will not bother you anymore.
  - (6) Judah's arch enemy will very soon be cut off.

B. Nineveh's Doom is **Described**.

1. The **Preparation** of Nineveh (Nahum 2:1-4).
  - a. Nahum tells Nineveh to get ready (v. 1).
    - (1) Keep the munition!
    - (2) Watch the way!
    - (3) Make your loins strong!
    - (4) Fortify your power mightily!
  - b. God's people will return (v. 2).
    - (1) Assyria had completely decimated the Northern Kingdom.
    - (2) God did this to punish His own children, but always had every intention of bringing them back.
  - c. The dress of the valiant men, and the chariots of war (v. 3-4).
    - (1) The red shields.
    - (2) The men are all dressed in scarlet.
    - (3) They even have armored chariots.
    - (4) These people are ready for battle now!
2. The **Puny** Resistance of Nineveh (Nahum 2:5-7).
  - a. They are so perplexed they stumble (v. 5).
  - b. Their great palace will be no more (v. 6).
  - c. Their queen is going to be taken away (v. 7).
3. The **Plunder** of Nineveh (Nahum 2:8-13).
  - a. They will cry for those to stand, but they will already be running in the opposite direction (v. 8).
  - b. They will lose all the spoils that they had stolen themselves (v. 9).
  - c. Their hearts will melt with fear, and their knees will be knocking (v. 10).
  - d. Assyria is described as a lion who tore apart whatever they wanted, and also had no one to stand against them while doing so. They took treasures and stored them as a lion would do with his

prey (vs. 11-12).

e. This is the doing of the Lord (v. 13).

C. Nineveh's Doom is **Deserved**.

1. Because of a **Plurality** of Sins (Nahum 3:1-4).

a. It is full of lies and robbery (v.1).

b. A description of the chariots coming (v. 2).

c. The dead bodies are so many it cannot be told. They trip over them as they try to retreat (v. 3).

d. Nineveh used her blessings and strengths in ungodly ways (v. 4).

e. Again, this is the doing of the Lord (v. 5).

f. They will be as a gazing stock (v. 6).

g. Nations would cry because of her fall, but none would come to help (v. 7).

2. The **Powerful** No Amon Also Fell (Nahum 3:8-11).

a. Nineveh is better than No Amon (v. 8).

b. This nation had great strength, but was also carried away (vs. 3:9-10).

c. Nineveh would seek health, but none would come (v. 11).

3. Nineveh's **Power** and Wealth Will Not Save Her (Nahum 3:12-17).

a. Their strongholds will fall (vs. 12-13).

b. All her efforts, her wealth, and her armies will be futile (vs. 14-17).

4. The **Pitiful** End of Nineveh (Nahum 3:18-19).

a. Her leaders are dead and her people are scattered (v. 18).

b. Nineveh will not come back, and people will rejoice (v. 19).

### III. HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF NAHUM

A. What was the test of a true prophet?

1. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

a. If what he says comes to pass then he is a prophet.

b. If it does not happen then he is not a true prophet.

2. This was no different for Nahum.

a. He was a prophet to the truest extent.

b. Perhaps we could say of Nahum, "He always hit the nail right on the head!"

B. Let us now notice some of these prophecies and the fulfillment.

1. "But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies" (Nahum 1:8).

2. "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved" (Nahum 2:6).

a. The Tigris river overflowed and broke breaches in the city's walls.

b. After this happened, the Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians

destroyed the surrounding fortresses and besieged Nineveh.

c. It happened just the way God planned for it to happen.

3. "What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end:

- affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9).
- a. The overthrow was so complete that it was never rebuilt.
  - b. Nineveh vanished from the knowledge of men until its ruins were discovered during the 19th century.
  - c. When Alexander the Great fought the famous battle of Arbela near the site of Nineveh in 331 B.C., he did not know that a city had ever been there.
4. "There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (Nahum 3:19).
- a. This one here can be common sense.
  - b. How many Ninevites live in your neighborhood?
  - c. I am pretty sure I have never met one.
  - d. Isaiah also prophesied of this (Isaiah 10:24-27).
5. "Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy" (Nahum 3:11).
- a. Durant also says "Nineveh spent their last night slumbering with one another and having drunken orgies."

#### IV. GREAT LESSONS FROM NAHUM

- A. The law of sowing and reaping.
  1. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).
  2. This is not just true with people, but also with nations.
- B. One can fall from the grace of God.
  1. Because of Nineveh's repentance, God did not destroy them (Jonah).
  2. Because of their backsliding, God must take action.
    - a. This reminds me of what Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia.
    - b. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).
- C. God rules in the affairs of men and nations.
  1. "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that **the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will**, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).
  2. Sometimes we get so caught up in what is going on around us we forget that the God of heaven is in control.
    - a. We even talk sometimes about our country being God's country.
      - (1) The United States is not God's country!
      - (2) It never has been, it never will be!
    - b. Paul tells us exactly what God's country is (Galatians 6:15-16).
      - (1) It is the church (Spiritual Israel).
      - (2) If we are part of the Lord's church, we need not worry, because God's country will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44).
- D. We serve a God who is a patient and a long suffering God.
  1. Because of Nineveh's repentance (following Jonah's preaching) they were

- allowed to continue as a nation for at least one hundred years.
2. However, Peter through inspiration wrote: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
- E. God's patience will not last forever.
1. It is very true that we serve a patient and long suffering God.
  2. However, one day, that patience will come to an end.
  3. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  4. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).
- F. God is a stronghold in times of trouble.
1. There is no doubt that God's people were thrilled to hear "Nineveh is laid waste" (Nahum 3:7).
  2. In times of trouble or persecution, God should be our first thought.
  3. He will take care of us when no other person will.
- G. There are no strongholds secure against God.
1. How many great nations do we read that are made to look simple by the hand of God?
    - a. Edom.
    - b. Assyria.
    - c. Babylon.
  2. All these nations fell because there is no nation that can stand before the Almighty God.
- H. Sin will catch up to you in this life or eternity.
1. There are some who believe they can get by doing whatever they please.
  2. The Bible teaches differently: "**be sure your sin will find you out**" (Numbers 32:23).
- I. We serve a God of love and a God of great power.
1. We know God loved us because of Him sending His Son to die (John 3:16).
  2. We also serve a God who will not let sin go unanswered (Hebrews 10:31).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The Old Testament was written for our learning (Romans 15:4).
2. There are indeed many great lessons in Nahum from which we can learn.
3. God commanded us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15).
  - a. In order for one to understand the New Testament, they must first understand the Old Testament.
  - b. We should all do our very best to become students of God's Word.
4. By doing so we can be pleasing to God, and we can also answer every question that is asked of us (1 Peter 3:15).

# THE BOOK OF OBADIAH: AN OVERVIEW

*Dave Leonard*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Obadiah with its twenty-one verses in one chapter is the shortest book in the Old Testament.
2. It is one of seven Old Testament books not directly quoted in the New Testament, however, some think that Revelation 11:15 alludes to Obadiah 21.
  - A. Revelation 11:15 - "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."
  - B. Obadiah 21 - "And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."
3. "Obadiah" means "servant of the Lord."
  - A. There are approximately thirteen men in the Old Testament that wore this name.
    - 1) It was a common name among the Hebrews.
    - 2) It is not known which, if any of these, is the penman of this book.
  - B. The most notable among this number was the servant of king Ahab.
    - 1) During the persecution by Jezebel, this faithful servant of the Lord hid one hundred prophets in a cave, sheltering and feeding them (1 Kings 18).
    - 2) However, there is nothing written regarding this man being a prophet of the Lord.
  - C. Virtually nothing is known about this man except that he was a prophet of God and his prophecy concerned Edom.
    - 1) There is no revelation of his life, his family, or his dwelling place.
    - 2) Unlike Jeremiah (1:1-4), Ezekiel (1:1-3), Hosea (1:1), and other prophets who identified their fathers and the days during which they prophesied, we have no such revelation regarding Obadiah.
    - 3) All we have related to this man are the few verses of this short prophecy.
4. The message of the book reveals:
  - A. Edom's confident pride (v. 3).
    - 1) Edom's confidence is false because God tells her that even though she soars like an eagle and sits her nest among the stars she will be brought down (v. 4).
    - 2) God reveals the extent of her destruction when He shows that thieves leave a little behind and grape gatherers leave the gleanings, but she will be completely destroyed (vs. 5-6).
    - 3) In that day he shows that:
      - a. Her allies will betray her (v. 7).
      - b. Her stronghold will fail.
      - c. Her wise men have failed (v. 8).
      - d. Her "mighty men...shall be dismayed..." (v. 9).
  - B. Edom's violence against and mistreatment of her brother Judah when Jerusalem was destroyed.
    - 1) She refused to aid Judah when Jerusalem was plundered (vs. 10-11).

- 2) She rejoiced and gloated over what happened to Judah (vs. 12-13).
  - 3) She shared the spoils that were taken (v. 13b).
  - 4) She cut off those that tried to escape and delivered them up to the enemy (v. 14).
- C. The day of the Lord will be the reckoning day (referring here to Edom's destruction).
- 1) Edom will receive the reward of her own deeds and will fade away as though she never existed (vs. 15-16).
  - 2) On the other hand, the house of Jacob will be restored to her land and shall "possess their possession" (vs. 17-21).

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. DATE OF WRITING**

- A. Two dates are commonly offered for the time of the writing of this prophecy, 845 B.C. and 586 B.C.
- B. Like the personal life of the prophet, the date of the book is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty.
  1. The event in the book that is used to establish the date of writing is the violence done to Jacob resulting in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (vs. 10-12).
  2. Jerusalem suffered at least four assaults by her enemies:
    - a. Shishak against Rehoboam recorded in 1 Kings 14:25-26 and 2 Chronicles 12:1-10. 2 Chronicles 12:7 points out that this event did not result in the destruction of Jerusalem.
    - b. The Philistines and Arabians against Jehoram in 845 B.C., recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:16-17.
    - c. Joash against Amaziah when he took all the gold and silver, the vessels of the house of God, treasures of the King's house, hostages, and broke down 400 cubits of the wall around Jerusalem (2 Kings 14:8-14; 2 Chronicles 25:17-24).
    - d. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Jerusalem in 586 B.C., during which attack, all the houses of Jerusalem were burned with fire, the walls of the city were destroyed, and the inhabitants were taken captive (2 Kings 25:9-11).
  3. Most scholars hold to one of two events/dates. The reason these two dates are fairly well established is because there were mainly two sieges against Jerusalem:
    - a. The attack in 845 B.C. by the Philistines and Arabians, during Jehoram's reign.
    - b. The attack in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar.

### **II. HISTORY OF EDOM**

- A. Edom means "the red region" and the name was probably connected with the red rocks that are abundant in the territory.
- B. Esau, the brother of Jacob, was the one who started Edom (Genesis 25:22-26).
- C. God chose Jacob over Esau, so enmity prevailed between Esau and Jacob.

- D. Not only throughout their lives, but the two nations that came from them had quarrels and continual troubles between them as far back as we can research.
1. The two nations began having a legitimate conflict at the time of the Exodus.
  2. Saul had wars with Edom (1 Samuel 14:47).
  3. The conflict continued until the time of David (2 Samuel 8:14).
  4. Numbers 20:14-21 tells us why the Edomites refused passage to the sons of Israel.
  5. Edom joined forces with Moab and Ammon against Judaea (2 Chronicles 20:22).
  6. Edom revolted during the reign of Jehoram and set up their own king (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10).
  7. Throughout the ages Edom stands as a symbol of earthly non-spiritual people of the world.
  8. The Edomites were pushed from the land by the Nabataeans in the 2nd century B.C. and forced to occupy Jewish territory south of Judah.
  9. They were conquered by John Hyrcanus of the Maccabees who forced them to be circumcised and to accept the Law, thus they became Jewish proselytes.
  10. By 100 A.D. the Edomites had become lost to history.
- E. During the writing of Obadiah, the Edomites inhabited a space 110 miles long and 30 miles wide, located on the southern shore of the Dead Sea, and the land of the Midianites on the east.
- F. The two chief cities were Bozrah, which was impregnable, and Teman.

### III. A SIMPLE OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

- A. God's Vengeance on Edom (1-16).
1. It is certain (1-9).
  2. It is for a reason (10-16).
- B. God's Victory for Israel (17-21).
1. It is promised (17-18).
  2. It will be complete (19-21).

### IV. AN EXPANDED OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

- A. God's Vengeance on Edom (1-16).
1. It is certain (1-9).
    - a. The decree has gone forth to the nations (v. 1).
    - b. Deceived by pride in her location, Edom will be brought down (vs. 2-4).
    - c. Destruction will be complete (vs. 5-6).
    - d. Edom will be betrayed by allies (v. 7).
    - e. Not even wisdom and might can save them (vs. 8-9).
  2. It is for a reason (10-16).
    - a. For violence and unbrotherly conduct toward Jacob (vs. 10-11).
    - b. A rebuke against such conduct (vs. 12-14).
    - c. Therefore the "Day of the Lord" for them will mean receiving the same sort of treatment (vs. 15-16).

- B. God's Victory for Israel (17-21).
  - 1. It is promised (17-18).
    - a. Deliverance and holiness will be found on Mt. Zion, not Mt. Seir (the prominent mountain in Edom) (v. 17a).
    - b. The house of Jacob shall consume the house of Esau (17b-18).
  - 2. It will be complete (19-21).
    - a. The children of Israel will possess Edom and surrounding nations (vs. 19-20).
    - b. The ultimate rule will be that of the Lord (v. 21).

## V. KEY VERSES OF OBADIAH

- A. Verse 4: "Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."
- B. Verse 12: "But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress."
- C. Verse 15: "For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

## VI. PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM OBADIAH

- A. Pride goes before destruction as in Edom's case (Proverbs 16:18).
  - 1. Pride looks to self and like Edom says, "Who shall bring me down to the ground?" (v. 3).
  - 2. Its chief manifestation is mistreatment of others as seen in Edom's treatment of his brother.
  - 3. It's final issue is retribution as we shall reap what we sow (v. 15b; cf. Galatians 6:7-9; 1 Corinthians 3:6).
- B. Righteousness exalts a nation (Proverbs 14:34).
- C. God's Word is steadfast; Edom's end came as God predicted through Obadiah (vs. 1-4, 10; Jeremiah 49:18).
- D. Neutrality can be guilt (vs. 11; Matthew 6:24; 12:30).
  - 1. Edom refused to help Judah with her problems (vs. 10-11).
  - 2. The priest and Levite refused to get involved with the needs of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).
  - 3. Christians are to "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
- E. Human defenses are totally helpless when the power of God comes against them. Obadiah makes it quite clear that the only place of absolute safety is not in strongholds, mighty and wise men, or mighty nations, but in God.
- F. It is wrong to be happy over the calamity of another and to gloat over his misfortune (Proverbs 17:5b; cf. Job 31:20-29).
  - 1. Edom rejoiced over Judah's misfortunes.
  - 2. The Gentiles described by Paul found pleasure in those that did evil (Romans 1:32).
  - 3. Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity" (1 Corinthians 13:6), and Christians suffer



with those that suffer and rejoice with those that rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:26).

G. When one shares or sides with wrongdoing he becomes "one of them" or "partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

### CONCLUSION:

1. With this brief look at Obadiah we have seen that...
  - A. The prophets were not limited in their prophecies to the nations of Israel and Judah.
  - B. God held the heathen nations accountable for their actions as well.
  - C. While it was written primarily to comfort the Israelites in Obadiah's day, there are lessons to be gleaned for us as well.
  - D. The message of hope may have had its ultimate fulfillment in what we can enjoy ourselves today, in the person and work of Jesus!
2. In verse 15, we find the expression "the day of the Lord."
  - A. This expression often is used prophetically referring to God's judgment upon the nations.
  - B. The particular "day of the Lord" of which Obadiah wrote was "near", and was fulfilled with the destruction of Edom
  - C. But there is another "day of the Lord" yet to come!
    - 1) Of which God's judgments upon the nations were only a shadow, a type.
    - 2) Peter writes of that day, the whole world will be judged (2 Peter 3:7-13).
3. Are we ready for that "day of the Lord?"
  - a. Or do we, in our arrogance, take pride in our wisdom, might, or position in life?
  - b. If so, "the pride of your heart has deceived you" (v. 3).
  - c. How much better to humbly recognize that "...on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness;" (v. 17).
4. Have you come to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant and our only hope of deliverance from sin?

# RETURN UNTO THE LORD THY GOD

*Carrol Harris*

## INTRODUCTION:

### 1. RETURN UNTO THE LORD THY GOD!

A. This is the topic given to me for the lesson today.

B. I was asked to use as an introductory text Hosea 6:1: **“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us, he hath smitten, and He will bind us up.”**

2. Upon reading this scripture I immediately remembered the words of our Lord in **Matthew 23:37**, when He said: **“Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”**

A. Don't you just feel the depths of His love?

B. He seems to cry out for a people who though blessed over and over by a loving Father, just will not love Him enough to obey His commands.

3. David understood the need to be sheltered under the wings of the Father. For he said in **Psalm 17:8**, **“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.”**

4. I was reminded of God's continual love and care for His people, all through history, as recorded in the sacred pages of His holy word; and even with these wonderful blessings, His people continued to go their own way.

**A. The children of Israel were in bondage (slavery) in Egypt.**

1) God brought them out.

2) How did they repay Him? They forgot the power that brought them out and started to murmur and complain against the very one who had rescued them from the oppressor: **“And wherefore, hath God brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?”** (Numbers 14:3).

3) They even worshipped idols.

4) Now how must God have felt in the face of such disobedience, such lack of faith in the one who had saved them by so many marvelous feats? Yet, He provided a way of return for them.

**B. During the period of the judges** - There was a continual cycle.

1) God blessed them.

2) The people turned away and followed their own desires.

3) God then allowed them to be oppressed by other nations.

4) The people would cry out for God's help, and He would hear them.

- 5) Then in His great love would raise up a judge, who would deliver them from the oppressor and turn them back to God.
- 5) They would again forget God and His laws.
- 6) The cycle continued for more than 350 years (some scholars say more, some say less).
- 7) Samuel was the last of the judges. In I Samuel 7:3, Samuel told the Israelites, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away your strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

### C. The nation of Israel, and Judah.

- 1) Because of their unwillingness to remember God in their everyday lives, God allowed them to be taken captive by other nations.
- 2) Yet God has always been willing to accept His people back, and as Hosea 6:1 said, "He hath torn and He will heal, He hath smitten and He will bind us up."
  - a. Do you hear the promise in this verse? **He will heal; He will bind us up.**
  - b. When Satan cast his darts at us, when we are oppressed in some way, God will help us through.
  - c. And we can know, **yes I said know** that He will see us through. Do we believe that promise? Thanks be to God for his unchanging mercy and love toward his people.
  - d. **"And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).**
  - e. He would always call on them to return to His bosom to His protection; He wants His people to be saved; He wants His people to be blessed.
5. As I considered the history of God's people in the past, I thought how do we as Christian women need to **"RETURN TO THE LORD OUR GOD"**? In what ways have we left Him?

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. LET US CONSIDER OUR ATTIRE.

- A. **"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array But which becometh women professing godliness with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9-10).**
- B. The question of attire is almost without fail brought up in women's classes – I wonder why this is the case.

1. There continues to be *such* a problem today with women, young and old, in the church, desiring to be like the world.
  2. Most Christian women, whatever their age, know what is appropriate for Christians to wear; They just want to walk as close to the line as they can.
  3. We are to be different from the world – That ought to show in our attire.
  4. If a woman feels the need to be tugging or pulling at her clothing to be sure it isn't too low, too short, or too tight, maybe she needs to consider whether she is walking too close to the fashions of the world.
- C. Another aspect we need to consider in our attire is whether it is appropriate for the occasion.
1. What is appropriate for a picnic is not appropriate for a wedding, funeral, or, for that matter, worship.
  2. We know that while our Lord was here on this earth, He taught a parable in Matthew 22 about a man who came to a wedding without a wedding garment.
    - a. He was bound and cast out.
    - b. So you can see that even Jesus taught what is appropriate to wear one place might not be appropriate somewhere else.
  4. Many times we are too casual in our dress when we attend worship.
    - a. I know that God sees our heart, but what we wear affects many times how we worship.
    - b. Are we too casual in our dress? Does it affect our worship?
  6. We know if we are giving our best to God, and we will be more likely to worship acceptably if we know that we are giving and yes, wearing our best.
  7. And we certainly know that our example affects others.
- D. **Is this an area in which we need to return to God?**

## II. WHAT ABOUT OUR SPEECH?

- A. Ladies, I believe we are all aware that taking the names of God or Jesus in vain is wrong (sinful), and not becoming of a Christian.
- B. I believe we are all aware that gossip is sinful, that it is wrong or sinful to use curse words.
- C. But where some people get a little confused is those little “off color” jokes, or those words that are maybe a little “iffy” as far as a Christian using them.
  1. If there is a doubt about saying something, then perhaps you shouldn't, because more than likely it is wrong.
  2. Those questions you have in your heart and mind are there for a reason.
- D. Another thing we need to remember is having **FUN** at another person's expense is not an action that would please our Lord.

1. We need to make sure we are not taking pleasure in another's failures.
  2. Our words should be to edify, not to tear down. Paul said in Col. 4:6, **"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."**
  3. The wise man Solomon said in Proverbs 15:23, **"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is."**
  4. And David said in Psalm 19:14, **"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight."**
- E. Do we need to **return to the Lord our God in reference to our speech or our words?**

### III. WHAT ABOUT OUR ENTERTAINMENT?

- A. Television shows, movies, the friends with whom we spend time, the places we go - Could we do those things with our Lord present?
  1. Would we even want to?
  2. Or would we be embarrassed if He showed up at those events?
- B. You know He knows where we are and what we are doing at all times - I wonder sometimes if we actually think that He doesn't.
- C. Paul said in **I Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil"** (The ASV says "every form of evil") **Does that leave any room for questionable entertainment? I think not!**
- D. Our entertainment should be of a pure nature -- Something of which we would not be ashamed should our Lord appear.
- E. Is it possible that this is an area in which we need to **return to the Lord?**
  1. **Do we find ourselves enjoying the wickedness of others?**
  2. **Is this just a way for us to get close to sin but not feel that we are participating?**

### IV. WHAT ABOUT OUR HOMES?

- A. How have we as Christian women established our homes?
  1. **"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:21-22).**
  2. As Christian women we need to remember that woman was not taken from the head of man to rule over him, but from his side, under his arm - a place of protection and comfort.
- B. Paul tells us in Eph. 5:22-23, **"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."**
  1. Remembering this will make for a happier home.

2. It is the order that God ordained.
- C. We as Christian women need to remember that our homes must be established on the right foundation.
1. That foundation is the one that God laid down.
  2. This means that the wife must allow her husband's judgment to stand when they disagree.
  3. She may talk with him about the subject, but if they are not able to come to an agreement, his judgment must stand, and she must stand with him.
  4. She is also to reverence her husband, meaning she must show him respect.
    - a. If children do not see this respect in us, they will learn **disrespect**.
    - b. We must be careful that our own self wills and egos don't prompt us to demand concessions from our husbands that would cause our children, and yes even those around us, to doubt our husband's place as head of our home.
    - c. We must remember that love demands respect.
- D. Now I know that the husbands have some God-given directions also: they are to love their wives as Christ loved the church.
1. But you know ladies, if we conduct ourselves the way God intended, it will be a lot easier for them to be what they are supposed to be.
  2. In reality, many times we set the pace.
  3. We either make for peace and harmony, or confusion and discord.
- E. Do we need to **return to the Lord and his pattern in the area of establishing our homes according to HIS will?**

## V. WHAT ABOUT COMPLACENCY?

- A. Many in the Lord's church have become complacent in their thoughts and willingness to stand for truth – They are willing to please others at any cost.
- B. We can't always agree with others.
1. There are some things on which we must make a stand.
  2. Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-36, **"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."**
- C. Now we know that the Lord doesn't want us to just go about causing division for the sake of division, but when someone in our presence teaches something different than that which is in the word of God, we stand on the word.
1. True, we do find the right way to tell them.
  2. Not in a haughty, self righteous, I'm always right kind of way, but in a humble, quiet way, showing what the word of God teaches.
- D. Too many times Christians want to straddle the fence, so to speak.
1. They don't want to make any waves with anyone. Ladies we must teach!

- a. That is an opportunity knocking at your door – Open it and go in.
  - b. Do we love this person enough to teach them? That is what it boils down to.
- 4. We can't just teach about God's love and mercy, we must also teach about His justice.
  - a. We must be willing to tell people when they are wrong. It is as simple as that.
  - b. **In Rev. 3:14-16, The Laodiceans were told that because they were neither cold nor hot, (lukewarm) that God would spew them out of His mouth God has never been happy with one who is lukewarm.**
- F. Somehow we have become so complacent in our own little sphere, that we don't feel the need to be ready to answer every man.
  - 1. Don't you think this is why we don't speak up many times?
  - 2. We haven't studied and kept abreast of the scriptures, and we don't feel **ready** to speak up.
  - 3. Or we are afraid of offending those around us. Should we offend God instead?
  - 4. We must realize that we are on one side or the other.
    - a. There is no "middle ground."
    - b. There is no "straddling the fence."
  - 5. Do we need to **return to God in this area?**

## VI. WHAT ABOUT OUR WORSHIP?

- A. I mentioned earlier in this lesson about becoming casual in our dress for worship, but we become too casual in our assembly in other ways.
  - 1. It is very easy to get drawn into a long, loud conversation before services start, because we love each other and are happy to be together.
  - 2. I don't want to take away from that, because we should enjoy being together, but sometimes it is hard to switch gears so quickly.
  - 3. I think most of us are guilty of this at times. I believe that we need to stop a little earlier in our visiting and realize that we need to get our minds ready for worship, so that we can be pleasing to our God.
- B. And the people we are talking with might need a few minutes to prepare their minds for worship.
  - 1. It is a fearful thing to come into the presence of God at the place set aside for worship and not be prepared to focus on Him.
  - 2. What a privilege to be allowed to come together and worship our Heavenly Father. He is certainly deserving of more attention than we give on many occasions.
- C. Worship is not a party for us to visit, but a time for us to express collectively our praise, respect, and reverent devotion to Him.

D. Do we need to return to God in the area of our worship?

VII. WHAT ABOUT OUR SERVICE?

- A. Service to God involves much more than just coming and occupying a pew three times a week, but sadly many who have been Christians for a long period of time have failed to grow in their service to God, and have done just that.
- B. Maybe that was an example set by someone else – Are we guilty of setting that kind of example for others? I pray not.
- C. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).**
1. This is a command, if we want to be pleasing to God we must learn how to serve, and be willing to put that knowledge into action.
  2. Service to God involves serving others.
    - a. When we serve others, we are actually serving God.
    - b. **“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40).**
  3. Now if we could just keep this in the forefront of our minds, that we are serving Jesus, when we do for others, it ought to make us more zealous and willing to serve our fellow man.
- D. You know “zealous” is a word that we seem to have forgotten.
1. Are we zealous about anything?
  2. I see some new Christians who are so zealous.
  3. Oh, they may not have an abundance of knowledge of the scriptures, but they are excited about being Christians.
  3. And it’s sad to say our example many times cools them down really quickly.
    - a. They decide, “Well, maybe I don’t have to do anything either.”
    - b. “Sister Doe has been a Christian for 30 some odd years and she doesn’t do it. She must know what is expected of her.”
    - c. Wow, what an influence we can have on others!
- E. One time years ago I responded to the invitation of our Lord, confessing that I had not been zealous as I should, that, I wanted to be “on fire” again for the Lord.
1. I wanted to be a better servant.
  2. As I was going out the door, one lady stopped me and said “you are where I was last year, but you will get over it.”
  3. How sad! She had failed to live up to her commitment, and because of her failure, she wanted me to fail too.
  4. Paul told Titus in Titus 3:1 **“to be ready to every good work.”**



- a. He told Timothy in **I Timothy 6:18**, **“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”**
- b. James 4:17 tells us, **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”**
  - (1) That should be a staggering thought for us.
  - (2) Do we do all that we know is good?
  - (3) Remember James says it is sin if we know and do it not.

F. Is this an area in which we need to **return to the Lord**?

## VIII. WHAT ABOUT OUR BUSINESS DEALING?

A. Paul said in Romans 12:11, **“Be not slothful in business...”**

- 1. The word “slothful” here lends the idea of diligence.
- 2. In other words, Christians should not be lazy.
- 3. They need to be willing to give their employers a good day’s work.
- 4. Paul goes on to say in **Romans 13:13**, **“Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in strife and envying.”**

B. **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness (kindness), goodness, faith (faithfulness), meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22).**

- 1. You know, if we displayed these fruits of the Spirit in our daily lives, with all those people with whom we come in contact, even in those places of business, how pleasant our lives would be and how pleasant it would be for others.
- 2. What an example we could be.
- 3. Are we honest?
  - a. Are we showing forth all these fruits of the Spirit in the area of business dealings?
  - b. Or do we need to **return to the Lord**?

## CONCLUSION:

- 1. We all have weak areas in our lives – things on which we need to improve.
- 2. But God in His great love and mercy expects us to evaluate our lives (not someone else’s).
- 3. Once we have honestly evaluated our lives and found ourselves to be lacking in some area, God expects us to be willing to **return to Him**, just as He did with these people mentioned in Hosea 6:1.

# THE DANGERS OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

Irene C. Taylor

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible informs us that those things "written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4).
2. When we read the book of Amos we are given a view of the disaster which comes when prosperity creates a false view of peace.
  - A. True peace is not achieved through acquiring great sums of money or material gain.
  - B. It comes from doing right.
  - C. It is acquired through maintaining a close relationship with our Father above, and this is accomplished only by a close adherence to His commands.
3. Those who refuse to learn the lessons of yesteryear are doomed to repeat them.
4. A careful study of the book of Amos reads much like today's news.

## I. AUTHORSHIP

- A. The human author of the book of Amos is none other than Amos himself guided by Deity.
  1. He was an humble man from Tekoa in the province of Judah.
  2. He was "a herdsman, and a gatherer (dresser-ASV) of sycamore trees" (7:14).
- B. "God selected a rustic and rough-hewn man of integrity to be a prophet and he sent him from a small southern village into the wealthy, sophisticated city of Bethel as a messenger of truth and righteousness. Amos may not have had impeccable manners, his fashion of dress may not have been flawless, and his accent of speech may well have been colored by his upbringing, but it is unquestioned that he was faithful to that divine imperative which, in essence, placed a farm boy in the pulpit of the sanctuary at Bethel."<sup>1</sup>
  1. A "polished" speaker is not necessarily the most faithful, sound one.
  2. Our demand for those with higher degrees of learning has often opened the door for compromise with error.

## II. HISTORICAL SETTING

- A. Amos prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II.
  1. This was a period of great peace and prosperity.
    - a. The rich became richer. The signs of prosperity are:
      - (1) They had couches and silken cushions (3:12).
      - (2) They owned a winter house and a summer house (3:15).
      - (3) They had houses of hewn stone (5:12).
      - (4) There was revelry, songs, music, drinking of wine (6:1-7).
    - b. The poor became poorer.
      - (1) They oppressed the poor, crushed the needy (4:11).
      - (2) They tread upon the poor, taking wheat, afflicting the just,

taking bribes (5:11-12).

B. This was a time of moral corruption.<sup>2</sup>

1. There was cruel treatment of the poor as noted above.
2. People in power were covetous.
3. They practiced injustice (2:6).
4. Those in power engaged in immorality (2:7-8).

C. There was religious corruption.<sup>3</sup>

1. Calf worship, introduced during earlier time, continued to be practiced.
2. Ahab and Jezebel emphasized Baal worship.
3. Tithes were given every three days (4:4-5).

D. God had blessed them abundantly, yet they became cruel, selfish and rebellious.

1. They seemingly believed God would continue to favor them as His spiritual people, no matter what they did.

### III. PUNISHMENT METED OUT <sup>4</sup>

A. There were judgments from God against the nations for their sins.

1. Damascus - cruelty in war (1:3-5).
2. Gaza - enslaving captives (1:6-8).
3. Tyre - enslaving captives and violating the "brotherly covenant" (1:9-10).
4. Edom - pursuing his brother without mercy (1:11-12).
5. Ammon - severe and senseless cruelty (1:13-15).
6. Moab - for inhuman vengeance (2:1-3).
7. Judah - rejecting the law of God (2:4-5).
8. Israel - injustice, unrighteousness, and apostasy (2:6-16).

### IV. KEY VERSES OF AMOS

A. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (3:3).

B. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David" (6:1, 5).

C. "...I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son..." (7:14).

1. His father was not a prophet.
2. Neither was Amos originally a prophet.
3. God often uses the common man to do His will.

### V. LESSONS FROM AMOS

A. God has always intended for man to practice justice toward his fellow man.

B. Wealth and privilege include fulfilling responsibility.

C. Failure to accept God-given responsibility results in punishment.

D. Nations and individuals should live up to their opportunities and utilize their God-given knowledge and blessings for good and never evil.

E. God is not interested in elaborate, ceremonial worship but worship rendered according to His commands.

### VI. CONCLUSION

A. Mankind, in general, has failed to learn the lessons taught in the book of Amos.

B. We are today paying the price of such failure in the form of graft, injustice, immorality and religious corruption.

C. God's people must lead the way back to truth and right.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Highers, Alan E, "The Living Message Of The Book Of Amos," in **The Living Messages Of The Books Of The Old Testament**, Eds. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, Inc., 1977), p. 339.
- 2 Hailey, Homer, **The Minor Prophets** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972), pp. 84-85.
- 3 Ibid, p. 85.
- 4 Highers, pp. 338-339.

# THE MESSAGE CONCERNING THE MESSIAH IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

*Keith A. Mosher, Sr.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. A Greek edition of the Hebrew Bible has the following title after the book of Ezekiel:  
“book of the Twelve Prophets.” These “Minor Prophets” have also been called the “smaller prophets” because the writings are shorter than such prophetic works as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
2. Often one hears that there is little interest in studying the Old Testament, but the following suggestion is made to those who have such ideas as the foregoing: Has it ever occurred to you that the ancient books are a “family album” concerning the Messiah?
3. Jesus said on one occasion, to those Jews of His day, to “Search the scriptures, for in them (that is, in the possession of them, K.M.) ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me” (Jno. 5:39).
4. Therefore, one reading any Old Testament text should be searching for Jesus, that is, for texts concerning Him and His coming to save mankind.
5. This sermon is concerned with some of the messages in the twelve “Minor Prophets,” whether predictive or descriptive, concerning the Messiah.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE MESSIAH AND HOSEA**

- A. Hosea has often been called the “prophet of grace.” His name in the Hebrew is equivalent to the name “Jesus” in meaning—“salvation.”
- B. Hosea mentions that Jesus’ church will be made up of “not my people” and “my people.” That is, Gentiles and Jews will be in the church of Christ (cf. Rom. 9:25; 1 Pet. 2:10; and Hos. 2:23 and 1:10).
- C. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees of His day using Hosea 6:6.
- D. Hosea predicted the flight of Jesus into and out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1).

### **II. THE MESSIAH AND JOEL**

- A. Joel is sometimes called the “prophet of Pentecost” because of his prediction concerning the beginning of the Lord’s church (Joel 2:28-32).
- B. One comparing Joel chapter two and Acts chapter two should be very careful to remember that the preacher on Pentecost, Peter, is quoting Joel.

### **III. THE MESSIAH AND AMOS**

- A. No prophecy of Amos is directly connected to Jesus, but Amos did predict there would be no revelation for a long period after the Jewish return from captivity.
- B. For four-hundred years until the Christ came, no revelation was given to Israel (Amos 8:1-14).

#### **IV. THE MESSIAH AND OBADIAH**

- A. Obadiah wrote much about the pride of Edom.
- B. Jesus is the “pride destroyer” (cf. Oba. 21).

#### **V. THE MESSIAH AND JONAH**

- A. Jonah was a preacher to the Gentiles (Jon. 3:1-4).
- B. Jesus, too, had sheep to reach not of the nation of Israel (Jno. 10:16).

#### **VI. THE MESSIAH AND MICAH**

- A. Micah explicitly speaks of the coming of Christ by pinpointing the exact village in which the Christ would be born.
- B. “But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2).
- C. When the magi came to find Jesus, the ecclesiastical leaders of that time quoted the passage from Micah to confirm the birthplace of Messiah (Mat. 2:6).

#### **VII. THE MESSIAH AND NAHUM**

- A. According to Nahum, God can “rebuke the sea” (1:4).
- B. The Christ not only could still the sea, but also the storm (Mark 4:37-39).
- C. Nahum, in figurative language, by indicating the Divine ability to still a violent storm, pictured the Messiah as the “good news bearer.”

#### **VIII. THE MESSIAH AND HABAKKUK**

- A. Habakkuk pictured the Messiah as being trusted by those who have obedient faith (Hab. 2:4).
- B. Such obedient faith as described by Habakkuk meant to “trust God, all enemies to the contrary notwithstanding.” The Hebrew term is emcah and could be translated “firmness.”
- C. The apostle Paul connected Habakkuk 2:4 to the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17).

#### **IX. THE MESSIAH AND ZEPHANIAH**

- A. Zephaniah described the supernatural ability of God (Messiah) in a most unusual way (Zep. 1:15; 3:15).
- B. Messiah is the “Day Controller;” that is, He is in charge of time.

#### **X. THE MESSIAH AND HAGGAI**

- A. Some have tagged Haggai with the descriptive sobriquet— “prophet of realism.” Haggai prophesied to the restored Israelites who had returned from captivity and he ordered his people to get busy and to build the new temple upon the grounds of the one destroyed (Ezra 5:1).
- B. But, Haggai also predicted a “shaking” of the nations and a new “temple” (the church of Christ) when the “desire of the nations should come” (Hag. 2:6-9). The “desire of the nations” is Messiah.

#### **XI. THE MESSIAH AND ZECHARIAH**

- A. Zechariah is very explicit in his prophecies concerning Messiah.
- B. Messiah would be a King and a Priest on His throne (Zec. 6:12-13).
- C. Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a colt as a king would (Zec. 9:9).
- D. Messiah would be betrayed for the price of a slave (Zec. 11:12).
- E. Messiah would be pierced (Zec. 12:10).
- F. Messiah would be killed (Zec. 13:7).
- G. Messiah would take vengeance on Jerusalem ( Zec.14:1-11).

## **XII. THE MESSIAH AND MALACHI**

- A. Malachi's writing stands last in the English Bibles, but Malachi is not a proper name. Some interpreter, reading Malachi 3:1, saw the Hebrew word, which means "my messenger," and applied the title to the book.
- B. Malachi described the coming Messiah as the "Sun of righteousness." "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:2). Malachi also predicted the coming of John the baptizer (Mal. 4:5-6).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Messiah is the Son called out of Egypt (Hosea); the Spirit giver (Joel); the sword bearer (Amos); the pride destroyer (Obadiah); the Gentile seeker (Jonah; babe in Bethlehem (Micah); rebuker of the sea (Nahum); faith demander (Habakkuk); day controller (Zephaniah); the new temple (Haggai); betrayed slave but Priest and King (Zechariah); and the Sun of righteousness of Malachi.
2. Truly, Messiah is "Everything."

# WHY STUDY THE MINOR PROPHETS?

Bobby Liddell

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Ignorance (or rejection) of the Truth of God, and of the God of Truth, is an obstacle in every area of modern life, as it was in the days of the Minor Prophets (Hos. 4:6).
  - A. There are few, today, who study the Bible, and fewer still who have a working knowledge of the entire Bible (yet, note Psa. 119:97; 11).
  - B. Of all the parts of the Bible, perhaps none receives less attention, and none is less understood, than the Minor Prophets.
  - C. If for no other reason, this would be sufficient in answering the question before us.
2. Our question also naturally leads to another question: "Who were the Minor Prophets?"
  - A. They were inspired prophets whose work was to speak for God with faith and courage.
  - B. They were writing prophets whose work was within the ninth to fifth centuries B.C.
  - C. They were men of varying backgrounds whose missions differed, but who were, above all else, to be faithful preachers of God's Word.
3. Why study the Minor Prophets?
  - A. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are revelation* from God.
  - B. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are relevant* to man.
  - C. We should study the Minor Prophets because their prophecies present *principles of redemption*.
4. First, let us consider these preliminary questions: "Why study the Bible?" and "Who were the Minor Prophets?"

## DISCUSSION:

### I. WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

- A. If man would know what is the will of his Creator for him, he must study the Bible.
  1. God's creation discloses that there is a God (Psa. 19:1-6), but by God's revelation only does man know the name, number, and nature of God, and what is necessary to please Him (Psa. 19:7-14).
  2. God has spoken to man in the past, and speaks to man today through His revealed will, the Bible (Heb. 1:1ff; John 12:48; cf. Jer. 22:29).
  3. We live under the New Testament of Christ (Heb. 10:9-10; Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17; John 12:48; Gal. 6:2), but this does not mean that we should not study the entire Bible, including the books of the Old Testament; thus, the Minor Prophets also (Rom. 15:4; cf. 1 Cor. 10:11).
- B. The Bible is one Book, made up of sixty-six books, thirty-nine of which are in the Old Testament (Genesis through Malachi), and twenty-seven of which comprise the New Testament (Matthew through Revelation).
  1. The Old Testament has four sections: Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy), History (Joshua through Esther), Poetry (Job through Song of



- Solomon), and Prophecy, divided into Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) and Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi).
2. The New Testament also has four sections: Life of Christ, or Gospel Accounts (Matthew through John), History (Acts), Epistles (Romans through Jude), and Revelation.
  3. It is true, as one has well said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."
- C. We should seek to know the message of the Bible, as a whole; that is, God's plan for man's redemption through Jesus Christ, and that to the glory of God (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7), for only then can we understand correctly the message of any Bible book, or portion thereof, and only then can we appreciate, honor, and glorify God as we should (Eph. 3:21).
1. To understand properly the Old Testament, one must study it from the historical standpoint of its primary message: By the grace of God, and to His glory, the Christ, Who brings redemption for sinful man, is coming (Luke 24:44; Acts 26:22-23; 28:23).
  2. To understand properly the New Testament, one must study it from the standpoint of its primary message: By the grace of God, and to His glory, the Christ, Who brings redemption for sinful man, is come – and He is coming again (Heb. 9:24-28).
  3. Thus, whether in the Old or the New Testament, every book, chapter, verse, and word of God's revealed will is important, even to the smallest distinctions in words spoken by our Lord, or chosen by the Holy Spirit (Mat. 5:17-18; 22:32; Gal. 3:16).

## II. WHO WERE THE MINOR PROPHETS?

- A. A prophet was one who spoke on behalf of another (Exo. 4:14-16; 6:28-7:2; Deu. 18:18-22); thus, the men styled the Minor Prophets were those who spoke for God, by speaking the words that God gave unto them (2 Pet. 1:19-21).
1. One who spoke for God was called a seer (1 Sam. 9:9), a man of God (1 Kin. 13:1), a spiritual man (Hos. 9:7), a servant (Amos 3:7), or a messenger of the Lord (Hag. 1:13), but more often he was called a prophet.
  2. The prophet's work was to deliver, faithfully and fully, the inspired message, given by God, to the audience God intended (Jon. 3:2).
  3. This, the Minor Prophets did, and the inspired, written record of their work is part of the God-breathed Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  4. This fact alone is sufficient reason for our studying this section of Scripture.
- B. Of the books of the Old Testament, the Minor Prophets are the last twelve, as arranged in our Bibles, although not arranged according to chronology.
1. The Minor Prophets spoke and wrote in the four hundred year time period generally considered to be around 840 to 440 B.C. (thus, some of the Minor Prophets were contemporaries with the Major Prophets) that covers these major events in Israel's history: the division of the kingdom, the fall and captivity of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria, the fall and captivity of the Southern Kingdom by Babylon, and the restoration of the righteous remnant to their homeland under the reign of the Medo-Persian Empire.

2. They are called “minor” prophets because their writings are *shorter in length* when compared to the “Major Prophets” (the work of the Minor Prophets was generally shorter in *time* the Major Prophets), not because of their being *less important*, or *less authoritative*, or *later in time*.
  3. The five books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) are all much larger, with either of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel being larger than all twelve Minor Prophets' books.
- C. The Minor Prophets were men of diverse backgrounds, times, ages, social standings, locations, pedigrees, and missions.
1. They were men chosen by God for a specific time, place, and work (cf. Amos 7:14-15), and to them, God revealed His will (Amos 3:7-8).
  2. Some prophesied to God’s people, others to foreign nations, but always by encouraging the righteous, reproving the sinful, calling men back to God, declaring the justice of punishment if they continued in their evil course, and offering hope based upon repentance.
  3. Their literary styles varied in the presentation of oracles, visions, miracles, history, poetry, narratives, rhetoric, debate, dialogue, personal glimpses into the lives of the prophets, and both forth telling and fore telling elements of prophecy, moving from pronouncements of God’s destructive wrath to declarations of His tender love, from sorrow to rejoicing, and from doom to hope.
  4. We must remember that these men were, first and foremost, proclaimers of the Word of God, whose energies were given to preaching, and whose ambitions were toward faithful service to the Lord, not toward becoming authors of books bearing their names, yet we are thankful their prophecies were preserved in written form.
- D. A brief snapshot of each Minor Prophet.
1. Hosea: in his marriage to Gomer, portrayed the unrequited love God had for Israel, His wife who became the spiritual harlot.
  2. Joel: the prophet, who called for repentance, paralleled the plague of locusts with the Day of the Lord.
  3. Amos: “the country preacher,” was a herdsman from Tekoa, who also tended sycamore trees, and who prophesied in Bethel.
  4. Obadiah: whose work is the shortest book in the Old Testament, prophesied the downfall of Edom (descendants of Esau and perennial enemies of Israel).
  5. Jonah: son of Amittai, from Gathhepher, was the reluctant prophet whose powerful message converted Nineveh.
  6. Micah: the rural preacher, from Moresheth-Gath, the prophet of judgment, foretold the doom of Jerusalem and the temple.
  7. Nahum: predicted the fall of Nineveh, as the righteous justice of an angry God, and as reason for relief and rejoicing in Judah.
  8. Habakkuk: the prophet who dared to protest to God on behalf of Israel, in poetic form inquires how long God will allow injustices to continue.
  9. Zephaniah: prophet of royal lineage, denounced the sins of Judah, and warned of an enemy from without.

10. Haggai: post-exilic prophet, declared the rebuilding of the temple must be completed, and warned of the folly of God's people putting money into bags with holes.
11. Zechariah: co-laborer of Haggai, also urged his brethren to complete the temple's rebuilding, saw eight visions, and prophesied of the triumphant Christ.
12. Malachi: last of the Minor Prophets, in time and in arrangement in the Old Testament canon, called God's people to righteous service and worship, and affirmed that they had robbed God in tithes and offerings.

### III. WHY STUDY THE MINOR PROPHETS?

- A. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are revelation* from God.
  1. Their prophecies revealed the will of God.
    - a. Their messages came from God, as stated in each of the twelve books (Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:3; Oba. 1:1; Jon. 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Nah. 1:12; Hab. 2:2; Zep. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zec. 1:1; Mal. 1:1), not from man, and not from within themselves; therefore, their prophecies were not contradictory to one another, or to other inspired writings.
    - b. Only God can know the future, and the prophets knew only as God revealed the future to them, but they passed the "test of a prophet" in that their predictive prophecies came to pass (Deu. 18:20-22).
  2. Their prophecies revealed the attributes of God.
    - a. The Minor Prophets revealed God as deity, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, righteous, just, loving, merciful, compassionate, benevolent, mighty, majestic, longsuffering, and forgiving.
    - b. The Minor Prophets also show plainly that God still rules in the kingdoms of men, is intolerant of sin, judges wicked nations, and punishes them, as they deserve.
  3. Their prophecies revealed the nature of God's dealing with men.
    - a. From them, we learn how God dealt with sinful men and sinful nations, even with His own people when they forgot Him, rebelled against His will, disobeyed His commandments, refused to worship Him, went after other gods, made sinful alliances with the nations, trusted in themselves, and departed into depravity.
    - b. Knowing the nature of God, and the immutable, eternal principles by which God deals with men, we can know better how to understand how God deals with individuals and nations in our day.
- B. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are relevant* to men.
  1. They are as relevant as today's news.
    - a. The needs of men have not changed.
    - b. The problems of men have not changed.

- c. The answers for men have not changed.
- 2. Learning how these inspired spokesmen for God dealt with the challenges, opportunities, and problems of their day (social, moral, political, or spiritual) will help to strengthen our faith, bless our lives, aid our understanding of the New Testament, and help us in our personal action, reaction, and interaction with God's people and the world.
- 3. Likewise, the Minor Prophets reveal how God provides for His people, comforts the righteous, punishes the wicked, fulfills His will in the kingdoms of men, loves all men, and desires the salvation of all.
- C. We should study the Minor Prophets because their prophecies present *principles of redemption*.
  - 1. Their message from God was simple, clear, and easily understood.
    - a. If men trust and obey God, they will know the joys of salvation.
    - b. If men, for whatever reason, do not love God and obey Him, they will suffer for their wrong choices, and will be lost.
    - c. The message from God is the same today (1 John 5:3; Heb. 5:8-9).
  - 2. God's spokesmen dealt with corruption on all levels, of the people, prophet, priest, or prince, whether in Israel and Judah, or in foreign nations, and rebuked sin, calling for a return to the way of the Lord.
    - a. The Minor Prophets showed sin's deception, folly, and tragedy, that all sin is against God, whether committed by Israel, or by the heathen nations, and that God will reward accordingly.
    - b. The prophets called for righteousness in man's relationship with God, for justice in dealing with his fellow man (Amos 5:24), for civic responsibilities, social morality, and religious purity (cf. Mic. 6:8).
  - 3. The prophets pointed to a better day when spiritual Israel would have a spiritual King who would reign in an everlasting Kingdom.
    - a. The prophesied Messiah, from the lineage of Israel, would come from the righteous remnant, bringing salvation.
    - b. The Minor Prophets declared the love of God, and His plan, culminating in Christ and His church, offering salvation to Jews and Gentiles.
    - c. This, too, should be of special interest to all Bible students.

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Why study the Minor Prophets?
  - A. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are revelation* from God.
  - B. We should study the Minor Prophets because their *prophecies are relevant* to man.
  - C. We should study the Minor Prophets because their prophecies present *principles of redemption*.
- 2. In every case, the Minor Prophets presented the solution to the problems of their day, regardless of into which realm of man's activity they fell (spiritual, moral, social, or political), as simply this: in order to be right with man and God, man must return to God, and do His will from a heart filled with gratitude and love.

3. If we will study the Minor Prophets, and make proper application in obedience to God, we can have the same confidence as did Habakkuk: “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places” (3:18-19).

# THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH: AN OVERVIEW

Wade Webster

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Among all sections of Scripture, the Minor Prophets are among the most neglected.
2. Outside of the New Testament epistles, there is probably no section of Scripture as needed by the church today as the Minor Prophets.
3. The problems that were plaguing God's people and society then are still plaguing us today.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. A MINOR PROPHET

- A. The book of Zechariah is listed among the Minor Prophets. It is the eleventh of twelve.
- B. What is meant by the designation "minor?"
  1. It *does not* mean that they were lesser prophets. They were prophets in the fullest sense of the term. They were not one whit behind the chiefest prophets (cf. 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11). God spoke through them just as He did through the Major Prophets. Robert Taylor, Jr. noted 84 allusions of where Zechariah attributed his message to God (282). This is roughly 6 times per chapter.
  2. It *does not* mean that the prophecies that they gave were minor or lesser in importance. They were just as important as those given by the Major Prophets. The sins that they addressed were just as deadly and the prophecies that they gave about the kingdom and the Messiah were just as glorious.
  3. It *does mean* that the books that were penned by them were smaller in size. Among the Minor Prophets, Zechariah is the longest. While it is true that Hosea also has fourteen chapters, Zechariah is longer in both chapters and verses. Hailey noted that Zechariah was not only the longest, but also the most obscure of the Minor Prophets and the most difficult of all Old Testament books (318). Stancliff echoed this sentiment (197). The visions that fill up the first half of the book are especially difficult. The visions are as follows:
    - a. *The rider and horseman among the myrtle trees (1:7-17)*. The rider upon the red horse was the Second Person of the Godhead. He is called the Angel of the Lord in the context (1:11-12).
    - b. *The four horns and four smiths (1:18-21)*. Horns refers to powers. The powers are those who have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia had all played a part. They had been used to chastise God's people. Now, it was time for them to be cast down.
    - c. *The man with the measuring line in hand (2:1-13)*. Jerusalem's breadth and length are to be measured. It is likely that Spiritual Jerusalem is in mind. After all, the city had no walls. God was

to be a wall of fire about it. Physical Jerusalem had been a walled city from antiquity.

- d. *Joshua, the high priest and the Branch (3:1-10)*. Joshua, the high priest, represented all Israel. His filthy apparel represented Israel's sins. The Lord taking away the filthy garments and replacing them with clean garments represents pardon. Satan is present as the great accuser of the brethren and the Branch is there as an advocate on their behalf.
- e. *The candlestick and the olive trees (4:1-14)*. The vision was a message of encouragement for Zerubbabel, the temple builder. The temple will be finished.
- f. *The flying roll (5:1-4)*. The roll contained curses for those who had wronged man by thefts and God by taking His name in vain.
- g. *The woman in the midst of the Ephah (5:5-11)*. Zechariah saw a woman in a basket. The woman represented the wickedness of the people. The land of Shinar represented rebellion (Gen. 10:11-12). The vision probably portrays wickedness and rebellion being removed from God's kingdom to Satan's realm where it belongs.
- h. *The four chariots and variously colored horses (6:1-8)*. The four chariots (spirits) seem to represent forces that God sends in the administration of his government upon the earth. God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4). Red probably represents war and bloodshed; black probably represents famine and economic difficulties; white probably represents victory and celebration; and, bay or griseled represents the power to perform one's will. \*(Robert Taylor, Jr.'s material was especially helpful in interpreting these visions).

C. The lesson that is in this for us is that even seemingly minor assignments are of major importance before God.

1. Every member of the body is vitally important. Every member performs a vital function. Although not everyone in the first century church was an apostle, prophet, or teacher, they were members of the body and had an important function to perform (1 Cor. 12:14-31; Rom. 12:4-8). In like manner today, not everyone is an elder, deacon, or preacher. However, everyone is a member and has a function to perform. The health of the body depends upon every part doing its part. Although the work assigned to some members is smaller than that of others, like the writing assignments of the minor prophets were smaller than that of the major prophets, the work is just as vital (cf. Eph. 4:15-16).
2. The same great price was paid for every member of the body. No brother is dispensable (Rom. 14:5; 1 Cor. 8:11).

## II. A MURDERED PROPHET

A. Jesus mentioned a prophet named Zechariah that was murdered (Mt. 23:35).

- B. Was the prophet that Jesus mentioned the Zechariah under consideration in this lesson?
1. Since there is an Old Testament story about another prophet named Zechariah who was murdered between the temple and the altar (2 Chron. 24:20-22), some have assumed that Jesus simply mixed up the later prophet with the earlier prophet. If I had been the one to make the statement, then it would certainly be acceptable to speak of a mix up. I sometimes get people confused. However, such is unacceptable when talking about my Lord. He didn't get His facts mixed up.
  2. Jesus' statement was panoramic – from the first prophet to the last. Therefore, the Zechariah under consideration could not be the one mentioned in 2 Chronicles. After all, he died about 800 B.C. Although he was murdered, he was not far enough down the prophetic pathway to be the one under consideration in Jesus' statement.
  3. Many believe that two prophets named Zechariah died under similar circumstances.
    - a. It should be noted that 30 Old Testament men are specifically identified by the name Zechariah in the Old Testament (Taylor 281). With so many men by this name, it is not all that unlikely that two could have died a martyr's death.
    - b. It should be noted that many prophets were killed. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to believe that the last Zechariah suffered martyrdom like the earlier one (Mt. 5:12; 23:29-31, 34, 37; Lk. 11:47, 49-50; 13:34; Acts 7:52; Rom. 11:3; 1 Thess. 2:15; Heb. 11:35; Rev. 16:6; 18:24).
  4. The lesson for us in this is that we will be persecuted like the prophets. Although we may not be murdered, we will be mocked and mistreated.
    - a. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Mt. 5:10-12).
    - b. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Mt. 10:22-25).
    - c. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said



unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (John 15:19-21)

d. "Yea, and all that will *live* godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12; cf. John 16:2, 33; 1 Thess. 3:3-4).

### III. A MESSIANIC PROPHET

A. Zechariah is the most Messianic of all of the Minor Prophets. In fact, in Messianic references, he is second only to Isaiah among all the prophets. Keith Mosher, Sr. noted that "Zechariah's message is so strong concerning the Christ that approximately seventy-one quotations from the prophet occur in the New Testament" (278). Thirty-one of the references are found in Revelation and twenty-seven are found in the Gospel accounts, most during the last week of Jesus' ministry.

B. The book is filled with Messianic visions, prophecies, and statements. Both the King and His Kingdom are discussed in detail.

#### 1. The King:

- a. Zechariah spoke of God's servant the BRANCH who would come forth (Zech. 3:8; cf. Isa. 4:2; 11:1-10; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; 2 Sam. 7:12f). In like manner, Isaiah prophesied that He would grow up as "a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground" (Isa. 53:2). The description of Jesus as the BRANCH connects Him with the seed line of Abraham and David. It is interesting that the name Zechariah means "the Lord remembers." The Lord had not forgotten the promises that he made to Abraham and David. Jesus was the King who sprang from David's loins (Rom. 1:3).
- b. Zechariah prophesied that iniquity would be removed in one day (Zech. 3:9). Of course, Calvary was in view.
- c. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would be a king and a priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). It should be noted that His throne is in Heaven (Psa. 89:35-37) and that He cannot be a priest upon the earth (Heb. 8:4). These observations are crucial in dealing with Premillennialism.
- d. Zechariah prophesied that the king would enter Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey (Zech. 9:9; cf. Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:28-40).
- e. Zechariah prophesied that Christ would be a Shepherd (Zech. 9:16; 11:11). Of course, Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10).
- f. Zechariah prophesied the betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and the purchase of a potter's field (Zech. 11:12-13; cf. Mt. 26:15; 27:9).
- g. Zechariah prophesied the inhabitants of Jerusalem looking upon the Messiah that they had pierced (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37; Rev. 1:7).

The reference to piercing ties into crucifixion. Zechariah knew that Jesus was going to be crucified and not stoned. This cannot be accounted for other than by inspiration. After all, the capital punishment used by the Jews was stoning. Furthermore, Rome wasn't yet in power.

- h. Zechariah prophesied the smiting of the Shepherd and of the sheep being scattered (Zech. 13:7; cf. Mt. 26:31-32; Mk. 14:27).
- i. Zechariah prophesied of a fountain being opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1).
- j. Zechariah prophesied that He would be wounded in the house of His friends (Zech. 13:6).

## **2. The Kingdom:**

- a. Zechariah prophesied that the BRANCH would build the temple of the Lord or the church (Zech. 6:12; cf. Jer. 23:5; 33:15; 2 Sam. 7:12f; Mt. 16:18).
  - b. Zechariah prophesied that his kingdom would be a peaceful kingdom. He noted that it would not be defended by carnal weapons (Zech. 9:10; cf. John 18:10-11, 36).
  - c. Zechariah prophesied that the extent of His reign would be from "sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:10; cf. Mt. 28:18-20).
  - d. Zechariah prophesied of Spiritual Jerusalem or the church, and described God as a wall of fire about her and as the glory in her (Zech. 2:5; Eph. 1:22-23).
  - e. Zechariah pictured the removal of wickedness and rebellion from the kingdom to Satan's realm (Zech. 5:5-11). Please see earlier explanation under the first point. Of course, wickedness and rebellion are to be removed from the church (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Thess. 3:6).
- C. Although the Messianic parts of the book draw the most attention, and rightfully so, there are many other things addressed in the book.

**1. Repentance** - Through Zechariah, God called the people to repentance. He told them that if they would turn unto him, he would turn unto them (Zech. 1:4; cf. 1 John 1:9-10). Men who want forgiveness must turn from their sins to God (Jam. 4:8; Lk. 17:1-6). The emphasis on fasting in the book is connected with repentance. Repentance and fasting often went together. The people were to rededicate their hearts and lives to God.

**2. Restoration** - Like his older contemporary Haggai, Zechariah wrote to encourage his people to finish the temple that had been started sixteen years before. He began to prophesy around 520 B.C. The Messianic prophecies in the book were designed to give the people hope. It takes hope to get people to build. The message produced its desired result and the temple was completed within four years in 516 B.C. Haggai

encouraged his people to consider their ways, while Zechariah encouraged his people to consider their future.

D. The lesson in this for us is to focus our eyes on Jesus and hold on the hope that we have at His coming.

1. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).
2. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).
3. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).
4. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).
5. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. We have not touched the hem of the garment relative to the book of Zechariah; however, I hope that we have piqued your interest and you will study it further.
2. Let me conclude by expressing my thanks to Jason and the Nesbit elders for inviting me to be on the program and for assigning me this study.

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# THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH: AN OVERVIEW

*Patrick Morrison*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Deemed “minor” based upon the length of their writings, the messages of the minor prophets were, and still are, major in their importance to God’s people.
2. Zephaniah is among a number of Old Testament books that we do not study often, if at all.
3. The study of this remarkable minor prophet should serve as a warning to God’s people today that if we turn from God, a severe judgment awaits.
4. This book also provides hope through the Messiah for those that wait upon the Lord.

## **I. THE WRITER**

### **A. Zephaniah:**

1. His name means “he whom God has hidden.”
2. There are 3 mentions of this name in the Old Testament (1 Chron. 6:36; Jer. 21:1; Zeph. 1:1).
3. The Greek and Latin Bibles call him “Sophonias.”

### **B. His background:**

1. He traces his lineage back four generations (1:1).
2. It seems he links his lineage to king Hezekiah (“Hizkiah”), but for what reasons it is not known.
3. He would have been about 100 years removed from Hezekiah.
4. Most hold that he lived in Jerusalem due to his intimate knowledge of her condition (1:4).
5. He is also related to Josiah, as well as Isaiah.

## **II. THE DATE OF WRITING**

### **A. Zephaniah states that his work occurred during the reign of Josiah (1:1).**

1. Josiah’s reign was from approximately 640-609 B.C.
2. He was likely a contemporary of Jeremiah and Huldah; later with Habakkuk and Nahum.

### **B. The reign of Josiah brought sweeping spiritual reform.**

1. The days of Manasseh and Amon were dark times for Judah.
2. Though very young, Josiah sought to reform the nation, and did so for a time.
3. These reforms did not last, and Judah resorted to her former ways under Jehoahaz.

### **C. The question is whether Zephaniah’s work preceded or followed the great reforms of Josiah, which took place in 621 B.C.**

1. Zephaniah decried much of the evils that were prevalent before Josiah’s reforms.
2. It is doubtful that these evils reappeared during the latter reign of Josiah.
3. Zephaniah’s efforts may have helped lead to these great reforms.

4. Most place the date of his prophetic work around 626-625 B.C.

### III. PURPOSE FOR WRITING

- A. Zephaniah prophesied concerning the rise of a great power that would threaten Judah.
  1. Many think that he had in mind the Scythian invasion from the north.
    - a. They invaded Assyria and pushed south along the Mediterranean to Egypt.
    - b. The Scythians never really threatened Judah, however.
  2. Likely he was referring to the rise of the Babylonian empire, which indeed did threaten Judah and those surrounding her.
- B. Zephaniah's message served as a warning to Judah.
  1. She needed to reform her ways, or risk judgment through this rising world power.
  2. Zephaniah called upon Judah to repent and turn back to God.

### IV. MESSAGE OF ZEPHANIAH

- A. The day of the Lord is at hand (1:7)
  1. This phrase is used eight times in this short book.
  2. He has reference, not to the final judgment, but to judgment upon His own people.
  3. In vivid imagery, a feast is called (1:7-8).
    - a. The guests for the feast are the coming Babylonian army.
    - b. The sacrifice for the feast is Judah.
- B. There is hope in the midst of calamity.
  1. It seems that the day of grace had passed, and that this judgment was unavoidable.
  2. However, those who remained obedient would survive (2:3).
  3. The coming of the Messiah and the Gospel age is foreshadowed (3:14-20).

### V. OUTLINE OF ZEPHANIAH

- A. Judgment upon Judah (1:2-18).
  1. Judgment will affect those around them as well (vv.2-6).
    - a. Judgment affects the whole land (vv.2-3).
    - b. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem for idolatry (vv.4-6).
  2. Judgment on sinners of every sort (vv.7-13).
    - a. On princes (vv.7-8).
    - b. On idolaters (vs.9).
    - c. On merchants (vv.10-11).
    - d. On the indifferent (vs.12).
    - e. On wealthy (vs.13).
  3. The judgment is imminent and terrible (vv.14-18).
    - a. Judgment is sure and almost here (vs.14).
    - b. The terrible nature of this judgment (vv.15-17).
    - c. No deliverance from this judgment (vs.18).
- B. An exhortation to repent and persevere (2:1-3:8).
  1. Seek the Lord that they may be hidden in the day of wrath (2:1-3).

2. God will judge the nations near (2:4-11).
    - a. Judgment upon Philistia (vv.4-7).
    - b. Judgment upon Moab and Ammon (vv.8-11).
  3. God will judge the nations afar off (2:12-15).
    - a. Judgment upon Ethiopia (vs.12).
    - b. Judgment upon Assyria and Nineveh (vv.13-15).
  4. If God punishes the heathen, He will not spare Judah (3:1-8).
    - a. Woe to the princes, judges, prophets, and priests (vv.1-4).
    - b. God is sovereign (vv.5-7).
    - c. God has called – Judah has refused (vs.8).
- C. Salvation and glorification for the remnant who made it through the judgment (3:9-20).
1. God's remnant will return from captivity among the heathen (vv.9-10).
  2. The remnant will be restored, cleansed, and sanctified (vv.11-13).
  3. Remnant comforted and exalted to a position of honor (vv.14-20).

## VI. KEY THOUGHTS AND VERSES FROM ZEPHANIAH

- A. 1:7 – “Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God” (Psa. 46:10; Hab. 2:20).
- B. 1:12 – God will punish those who have “settled on their lees” or have become complacent.
- C. 1:12 – God is not indifferent toward us. He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.
- D. 1:18 – The futility of material possessions to avert the wrath of God.
- E. 2:3 – The hope of the righteous in the day of God's wrath.
- F. 2:15 – Pride will lead to the destruction of man and nation.
- G. 3:2 – A refusal to accept the correction of the Lord will lead to the destruction of our souls.
- H. 3:5 – “The unjust knoweth no shame.”
- I. 3:9 – We must “purify” our language in order to worship and serve God acceptably.
- J. 3:20 – The remnant shall return, ultimately pointing to the Gospel age.

## VII. LESSONS FROM ZEPHANIAH

- A. Even God's own people, when they turn away from the Lord, are not immune to the judgment and wrath of Almighty God.
1. Israel was guilty of divided allegiance (1:4-5).
  2. They mimicked the heathen around them in dress and practice (1:8-9).
  3. They practiced fraud and violence (1:9).
  4. Prophets, priests and judges were violent, ungodly men (3:3-4).
  5. They thought the Lord was not concerned with their behavior (1:12).
  6. She refused to receive correction (3:2, 7).
- B. The day of the Lord is a day of terror and calamity.
1. It represented a day of Divine wrath for refusing to repent of sins.
  2. It has come to be linked with the final judgment, but it must be understood that in its immediate context this was not what was implied.
- C. The nations who rejected God would also find themselves being judged by God.

1. Zechariah brings threatening from the Lord against the Philistines, Ammon, Moab, and also against Nineveh.
  2. They would feel the wrath of God for their refusal to heed and obey God.
- D. There is an alternative to destruction.
1. While the judgment of God upon Judah was certain, those who showed meekness and humility would be hidden in the day of wrath (2:3).
  2. No general repentance on the part of Judah will avert the judgment, but there is hope for the faithful that they will be brought through this time.
- E. God is concerned with what we do upon the earth (1:12).
1. Judah was convinced that God was indifferent toward them, neither punishing nor rewarding their behavior.
  2. God indeed cares, and takes notice of all that we do (Heb. 4:13).
- F. The light of truth will ultimately reveal us for what we truly are (1:12).
1. With an image of one searching through the city by candlelight, God states that He is searching the hearts of men to make known their sins.
  2. Jeremiah went throughout Jerusalem searching for a righteous man (Jer.5:1).
- G. In the presence of God man needs to recognize his own worthlessness.
1. "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God" (1:7).
  2. We must not question His righteous indignation and the fierceness of His judgments.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. May we as God's people today strive to avoid the mistakes that God's people of old made in bringing His wrath upon them.
2. May we hold forth the hope of salvation by preaching and teaching the good news of Jesus Christ.