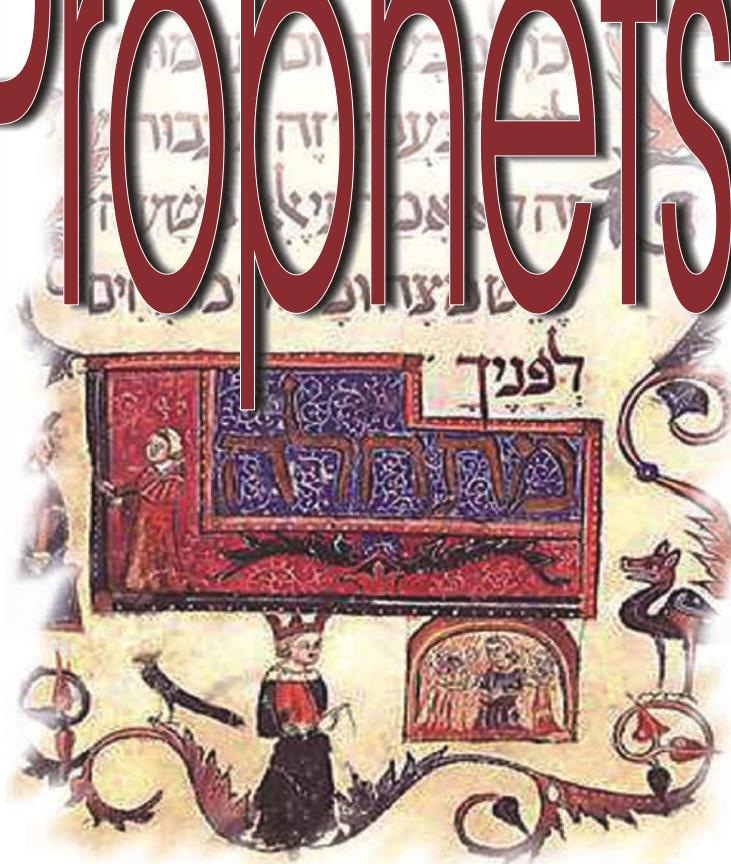


Study Guide

Minor Prophets



Taught by
Richard Rogers

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



THE
TWELVE

MINOR PROPHETS



INTRODUCTORY
OLD TESTAMENT
STUDIES

Arranged for study by
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The Minor Prophets Study Guide

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DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it to be one of the better commentaries available. A ***Commentary On The Minor Prophets*** by Homer Hailey will give you added and valuable information as you study these important books. Brother Hailey was an accomplished Bible student and teacher. As will all books authored by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not totally agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Assignments

Level II Students

(Non-Transferable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Tests: There is a Self Exam at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first. There will be only two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson twelve (12) and the other will be done at the end of the study. These tests will be sent only to those taking the course for *Sunset International Bible Institute* credit. (**The Tests will be 85% of your final grade**)

Memory Work: You will have forty (20) verses to memorize in your study of *The Minor Prophets*. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passages done at the appropriate time. Write out your memory verses, correct them with a different colored ink, and turn them in with your test papers. Or you may quote them to your Test Administrator and have him verify them on your appropriate test. **Please indicate which Bible version you are using.** (**Worth 10% of your final grade**)

Due with the Mid-Term Test: (10 verses)

2 Peter 1:20-21; Joel 2:12-13, 28-32; Hosea 2:6.

Due with the Final Test: (10 verses)

Amos 3:2; 5:2; 7:14-15; Micah 6:6-8; Nahum 1:2-3; Habakkuk 2:4.

Reading:

Read all 12 of the Minor Prophets two times during this course of study.
(Worth 10% of your final grade)

Instructions and Assignments

Level III Students

(Transferable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: One book will be required. *A Commentary On The Minor Prophets* by Homer Hailey. This book must be read in its entirety by the time the course is completed and a **two page evaluation written**. The section relating with each lesson on video should be read along with that lesson. Read each book of the Minor Prophets two (2) times before the course is finished. One of the readings should be in a modern version. (**This will be worth 10% of your final grade**)

Memory Verses: You will have thirty-two (32) verses to memorize in your study of *The Minor Prophets*. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passages done at the appropriate time. Write out your memory verses, correct them with a different colored ink, and turn them in with your test papers. Or you may quote them to your Test Administrator. **Please indicate which Bible version you are using. (10% of your final grade)**

Due by Mid-Term Exam: (17 verses)

2 Peter 1:20-21; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:18-19; Exodus 4:16; Joel 2:12-13, 28-32.

Due by Final Exam: (15 verses)

Amos 3:2; 5:2; 7:14-15; Hosea 2:6; Micah 6:6-8; Nahum 1:2-3; Habakkuk 2:4; Zechariah 13:7; Malachi 3:10; 4:5-6)

Tests: You must complete all the "Self Exam" questions in your Course Guide. There will be only two (2) tests for this course: the **Mid-term** and **Final** tests. The Mid-term at the end of lesson twelve (12) and the final at the completion of the course. You must obtain a grade of 70% or over on both exams. (**This will be worth 70% on your final grade**)

Grade Value Percentage:

The reading of the textbook and 2 page evaluation:	10%
Reading of all 12 Minor Prophets twice:	10%
Memory work:	10%
Mid-term and Final test:	70%
TOTAL	100%

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LESSON ONE

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to our study of the Minor Prophets. The title “Minor Prophets” is assigned to the twelve books contained in the last part of our English translation of the Old Testament. The term “Minor”, in this context, simply means the books are smaller in content in comparison to the other five prophetic books of the Old Testament.

A study of the Minor Prophets will enrich the life of anyone who applies himself to learn their teaching. On the other hand, it will only add to the confusion of those who would use their writings as a basis for speculation about the future. As we will see, the prophets were primarily preachers, forth-tellers of God’s word, not predictors of the future. Their message essentially pertained to the needs of the people in their day.

In this preliminary discussion there are three major topics we will consider:

- 1) The preliminary stages in the development of a prophet of God.
 - 2) Nonliterary prophets of the Old Testament (Those who prophesied but did not write scripture).
 - 3) The basic purpose of prophecy as seen from 2 Peter chapter one.
-

LESSON TEXT: None

LESSON AIM: To become better acquainted with the Minor Prophets by looking at three terms applied to this office, examining the three-fold purpose for prophecy, and learning of five different instructors during the Old Testament period.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Memorize three terms for individuals who demonstrated prophetic traits with at least one scripture for each.
 2. Learn the names of five different instructors who lived during the Old Covenant period of time.
 3. Commit to memory the three-fold purpose of prophecy.
-

PRELIMINARY STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPHET

The three terms used for a prophet and the five different kinds of instructors that existed during the Old Covenant period.

A. Three Terms for Individuals Who Demonstrate Prophetic Traits

1. *Man of God* (ish ha-elohim) – 1 Samuel 9:6; 1 Kings 17:18, 24. “*But the servant replied, ‘Look, in this town there is a man of God; . . . everything he says comes true.’*”
2. *Seer* (ro eh) – deals with the eye. This appears to have been the earliest term by which they were called, “*Formerly in Israel, if a man went to enquire of God, he would say, ‘Come, let us go to the seer,’ because the prophet of today used to be called a seer*” (1 Samuel 9:9).
3. *Prophet* (nabi) – Exodus 7:1; Amos 3:7; Jeremiah 7:25 – deals with the mouth. Though *prophet* is the general term used in the Old Covenant

writings, other designations are also used.

- a. "According to the uniform teaching of the Bible the prophet is *a speaker of or for God*. His words are not the production of his own spirit, but from a higher source." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia p. 2459)
- b. *To boil up like a fountain* (Hebrew). In both the Old and the New Testaments, a prophet is one who speaks the words and thoughts of God whether they relate to the past, to the present, or to the future.
- 3. The meaning of the word *prophet* from Scripture.
 - a. Exodus 4:16 – God said to Moses that Aaron should be ". . .thy spokesman . . .a mouth."
 - b. Exodus 7:1 – God said that Aaron should be Moses' *prophet*. Therefore as a prophet he was a spokesman, a mouth.

B. People Who Were Instructors During the Old Covenant

Under the law there were at least five classes of speakers: Moses, the law-giver; the wise men, who gave counsel; priests, who taught the law; prophets, through whom God spoke His word; and psalmists, who were the singers or poets in Israel. Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of three of these classes as important to the instruction of the people (Jeremiah 18:18; Ezekiel 7:26).

- 1. *Moses – The Lawgiver*, the servant of the Law. The Law given once, there would be of necessity, only one law-giver: Moses (Nehemiah 8:1, 14; 9:13-14; John 1:17; 7:19).
- 2. *Wise men* (and women) – *Counsel*. The function of these men and women was to give counsel.
 - a. Women – The first mention of such persons is that of a wise woman in 2 Samuel 14:1-24. (cf. 20:16-22).
 - b. Men – i.e. Ahithophel (1 Chronicles 27:33; cf. 26:14). Solomon was the wisest of counselors. The books of wisdom are Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.
- 3. Note: Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6.
- 3. *Priests – Teachers of the Law*. The special function of the priests was related to the law. Since the law was civil *and* ecclesiastical, their function was two-fold (Leviticus 10:8-11; Hosea 4:6; Ezekiel 22:26; Malachi 2:7).
 - a. To declare, interpret, and teach the Law.
 - b. To tend to the sacrificial duties.
- 4. **NOTE:** When apostasy came, the priests would be, in a large measure, responsible. (See Leviticus 10:8-11; Hosea 4:6; and Malachi 2:7).
- 4. *Prophets – The Word*. Their singular mission was to communicate to Israel the divine word (cf. Micah 3:8). "*Thus saith the LORD*."
- 5. *Psalmists – Poets*. Here we find expressions of the deepest emotions and feelings of the human spirit that is in tune with God's Spirit. Some psalms reflect, others express, many foretell, but all seek to glorify God.

NON-LITERARY PROPHETS

Prophets that spoke God's Word but did not write it down. (Or at least not preserved by God.)

A. Founders of the Hebrew Nation

- 1. *Abraham* was a prophet (Genesis 20:7).
- 2. *Isaac and Jacob* were prophets (Psalms 105:15; cf. 10-14).
- 3. *Moses* – was a prophet and stands in a class by himself (Numbers 12:6-8; Deuteronomy 18:15-18; 34:10; Hosea 12:13).

Note: *Miriam* was called a prophetess (Exodus 15:20).

B. In the Period of the Judges

- 1. *Deborah* – (Judges 4:4). Also an unnamed prophet (6:8).

2. *The prophetic bands*, or sons of the prophets (1 Samuel 10:5-13; 19:18-24; 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3-7; 4:1, 38; 5:22).

3. *Samuel* – the Prophet and Judge.

Samuel seems to mark the beginning of the prophetic “office” (Acts 3:24). He was both a transitional and foundational figure and the first in a long line of prophets that would deal directly with the rulers of Israel’s consciences.

C. In the Period of the Kings

1. From David to the division of the kingdom
 - a. *Nathan*:
 - 1) Rebuked David (2 Samuel 12).
 - 2) Prophesied of the Messiah (2 Samuel 7).
 - 3) Anointed Solomon (1 Kings 1).
 - b. *Gad*: Rebuked David for numbering Judah (2 Samuel 24).
 - c. *Ahijah*:Appealed to Jeroboam about ruling the ten tribes (1 Kings 11).
2. From the division of the monarchy to the time of Amos.
 - a. *Shemaiah*: Prophesied to Rehoboam that he should not fight Israel (1 Kings 12:21-24).
 - b. *Unnamed Prophet*: Prophesied to Jeroboam about his apostasy (1 Kings 12:21-24).
 - c. *Jehu*: Declaration of Baasha’s doom (1 Kings 16:1-7). Rebuked Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahab (2 Chronicles 19).
 - d. *Micaiah*: Stood up against Ahab’s Baal prophet Zedekiah (1 Kings 22).
 - e. *Eliezer*: Rebuked Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahaziah (2 Chronicles 20).
 - f. *Elijah*: The rebuker of the kings.
 - e. *Elisha*: The counselor of the kings.

THE BASIC PURPOSE OF PROPHECY (2 Peter 1:3-21)

A. Our Calling and Election (1:3-11)

1. All things provided by God’s power (vs. 3-4).
2. Our effort required for growth (vs. 5-9).
3. Our protection and welcome (vs. 10-11).

B. The Place of Prophecy in Redemption (1:12-21)

1. The need for a reminder (vs. 12-15).
2. The glorious eyewitness (vs. 16-18).
3. The more certain prophetic witness (vs. 19-21).
 - a. A light shining in darkness, leading to greater light (v. 19).
 - b. Not a product of man’s **intellect** (v. 20).
 - c. Not a product of man’s **desire** (v. 21a).
 - d. Not a product of man’s **power** (v. 21b).

Every prophet was chosen, commissioned, and empowered by God.

NOTE: The three-fold purpose for prophetic messages:

- 1) *Redemption* – for them and us.
- 2) *Courage* – for them and us.
- 3) *Patience* – for them and us.

These words were **spoken** for them, but they were **written** for our admonition. We are not just studying ancient history. We are studying the principles by which God led Israel to Him and the principles by which He leads us to Him. We will have great peace in studying these.

FURTHER STUDY MATERIAL:

We are dealing with a group of men who could in no sense of the term be called

minor. Neither are the doctrines contained in these books in any way *minor.* the twelve prophets are minor only in length. Read the following passages for some of the greatest statements in scripture: Amos 3:1-8; 6:1-6; Hosea 1-2; 4:6; 8:12; Micah 6:6-8; 4:1-2; Malachi 1:10; 2:7, 14; 3:10.

A. What Kind of Men Were These Prophets? They were all human.

1. Men of the Bible – often like fairy-tale characters.
2. Men of high character – saintly – makes them less real to us.
3. Preachers – some people say there are three classes of people – *men, women, and preachers.*

B. The Marks of a Prophet

1. He was always *an uncompromising individualist.* He could not be bound by convention or by public opinion or be restrained by the caution of diplomats.
2. He was *conscious of a divine call* that told him of the task set forth by God. He always realized that he was God's mouthpiece.
3. He was conscious of the privilege of *access to the inner counsel of God.* He was in immediate contact with God. He was the bearer of the precious secrets from the throne of God to needy man.
4. He was usually *a man of action with certain ruggedness of body and character* that commanded attention in any gathering.
5. He was *conscious of God's authority and backing in all emergencies.* It was usually true that he stood alone against practically all of his contemporaries.
6. *He was definitely a man of prayer.* His lonely, solitary life gave him plenty of time to keep in touch with God.
7. He was *clean and consecrated in life and character.*
8. He was *an outspoken critic of specific evils in the social order.* Kings, priests, princes, nobles and judges are denounced fearlessly.
9. He was *God's agent to reveal the future to the people.*

SPECIAL STUDY ON ELIJAH AND ELISHA

A. Dates: Elijah, c. 875-850 B.C. and Elisha, c. 850 B.C. till after 800 B.C.

B. Elijah – “Jah is God” – the religious reformer (1 Kings 2:12).

1. Of Tishbeh, formerly thought to have been located in Naphtali, but now thought to have been east of the Jordan, southeast of Sea of Galilee, and a little south and west of Ramoth-Gilead.
2. Prophesied during the reign of Ahab (876-854 B.C., I.S.B.E.).
3. Three scenes in the life of Elijah are outstanding:
 - a. His conflict with Jezebel and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-46).
 - b. His journey to Horeb, the mount of God (1 Kings 19:1-8).
 - c. His announcement of doom upon the royal house because of the judicial murder of Naboth (1 Kings 21).
4. Elijah, the challenger of Jezebel and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-46). Occasioned by Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, who instituted the persecution of Jehovah-worship, and introduced the worship of Baal (1 Kings 18:4, 13).
5. Elijah, the victim of despondency – the lesson at Horeb (1 Kings 19:1-18). Away to Horeb. Elijah was soon to learn that “truth is not impressed by lightening flashes.” When his life was in jeopardy from Jezebel, not a person responded to the prophet's cause.

God's voice in teaching, not force, must ultimately win. Lessons learned by Elijah at this period:

- a. A lesson of humility: “I am no better than my fathers.”
- b. A lesson of courage: Do not run until Jehovah commands it.

- c. A lesson of Gentleness: Do not trust too much in violent means for promoting spiritual and moral truth.
 - d. A lesson of patience and perseverance: God knows better than we do when our work is finished.
 - e. A lesson of hopefulness: "*Yet I will leave me seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal.*" God has more servants than we sometimes imagine.
- C. Elisha – “God is salvation” – son of Shaphat, lived at Abel Meholah, southeast of the Sea of Galilee, about two miles north of what is thought to be Tishbeh, the home of Elijah.
- 1. His call and preparation (1 Kings 19:19-21).
 - a. His preparation: spent several years (seven or eight) with Elijah.
 - b. Given a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. That is the portion of the firstborn son.
 - 2. His miracles of Judgment.
 - a. Curse upon the lads, eaten by she-bears (2 Kings 2:23-25).
 - b. Gehazi stricken with leprosy (2 Kings 5:20-27).
 - 3. His miracles of mercy.
 - a. Healing spring at Jericho by casting salt (2 Kings 2:19-22).
 - b. Supplying the allied armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom with water (2 Kings 3).
 - c. Supplying oil to the widow.
 - d. Raising from the dead the son of the Shunamite woman.
 - e. Removing the “death” from the pottage.
 - f. Multiplying the loaves for the people.
 - g. Healing Naaman’s leprosy.
 - h. Making the axe to swim.
 - i. Leading the Syrians into Samaria and sending them away kindly, having fed them.
 - 4. Death of Elisha (2 Kings 13:20-21).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. List the three terms for the individuals who demonstrate prophetic traits, and write one scripture reference for each.

1) _____ Scripture _____
2) _____ Scripture _____
3) _____ Scripture _____

2. Give the five different instructors of the will of God who lived during the Old Covenant period.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

3. What was the two-fold function of the priests?

1) _____
2) _____

4. Name ten nonliterary prophets of the Old Testament.

1) _____ 6) _____
2) _____ 7) _____
3) _____ 8) _____
4) _____ 9) _____
5) _____ 10) _____

5. What is the three-fold purpose for prophetic messages according to our study of 2 Peter 1:3-21?

1) _____ – for them and for us.
2) _____ – for them and for us.
3) _____ – for them and for us.

LESSON TWO

THE ORIGIN OF OFFICE AND TEST OF THE PROPHET

INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson we will consider two major subjects: the origin of the prophetic office, and biblical tests of the prophet (to see whether one is really a prophet or not). We will begin with the origin of the prophetic office as seen in Deuteronomy 18:9-22.

LESSON TEXT: Deuteronomy 18:9-22

LESSON AIM: To discover the origin of the prophetic office and to learn some contrasts between the divine office of prophet and the false prophet.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that the office of prophet originated with Moses.
 2. Study nine forbidden approaches to find the will of God.
 3. Memorize the eight-point biblical test of the Prophet.
-

THE ORIGIN OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE (Deuteronomy 18:9-22)

A. The Origin of the Prophetic Office for the Nation of Israel – Moses

1. Moses was not a prophet in the ordinary definition of the word *prophet*. He was the father (the beginner) of all the prophets.
2. Moses could be referred to as the fountain from which all the prophets drew.
3. The office of prophet was given to guard against idolatry.
4. Prophecy can have an immediate and a future fulfillment.

B. Moses Was the Medium Through Which God Communicated with Israel

1. Gave them His laws and conveyed to them His word and will. In this respect his place could be supplied neither by priest nor by king.
2. With his departure there would be required another office, that of a prophet, one who should be between God and the people, as the channel through which divine communications could pass to them.
3. In this text Moses announces that God would establish this office among them after they had entered the promised land.

ISRAEL'S FORBIDDEN METHODS OF APPROACHING GOD

A. Detestable, Forbidden Approaches to the Divine Will (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)

1. **Human sacrifice** – (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 18:21f; Jeremiah 32:35). “*You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods*” (Deuteronomy 12:31).
2. **Divination** – To determine by lot; witchcraft (Numbers 22:7; 2 Kings 17:16). “*The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for*

divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said” (Numbers 22:7).

3. **Sorcery** – “Soothsayer.” One who divines inspection, an auger. “*For the king of Babylon will stop at the fork in the road, at the junction of the two roads, to seek an omen: He will cast lots with arrows, he will consult his idols, he will examine the liver*” (Ezekiel 21:21). This is like modern palm reading.
4. **Interpretation of omens** – Practices magic; divines by signs (Genesis 44:5; Numbers 24:1). Like modern astrology. “*Isn’t this the cup my master drinks from and also uses for divination?*” (Genesis 44:5).
5. **Engager in witchcraft** – To enchant; claim to heal diseases. Medication, drug induced trances (Galatians 5:20).
6. **One who casts spells** – To bind; the tying of knots; cf. Voodoo cults.
7. **Medium** – Probably ventriloquists who would pretend to have a spirit within them (Ezekiel 21:21).
8. **Spiritist** – From “to know” – a predictor of future events.
9. **One who consults the dead** – Consult means to seek, ask, or worship the dead (Animism). (See 1 Samuel 28).

B. The Divine Provision – The Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:14-20)

“*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die.’ The LORD said to me: ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.’*”

The correct way for Israel to know the will of God was through the prophet of God.

1. **God’s prohibition** (v. 14). Do not practice paganism as the other nations do.
2. **God’s provision – a Prophet** (vs. 15-16).
 - a. He will be raised up by God.
 - b. He will speak for God.
 - c. He will be like Moses.
 - d. He will be an Israelite.
3. **The test of a Prophet** (18:21-22). His words come true! “*You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.*”

C. An Eight-point Biblical Test of the Prophet

1. He spoke only **in the Lord’s name** (Deuteronomy 18:20).
2. He spoke only **by revelation** (Deuteronomy 18:20; Amos 3:7).
3. His **moral character** was undeniable – never a breath of moral criticism.
4. He was conscious of the **divine call of God** (Amos 3:8; 7:12-13).
5. He was often **confirmed by signs or miracles** (cf. Moses, Elijah, Elisha).
6. His **message was in harmony with all previous revelation** (Deuteronomy 13).
7. **Historical events confirmed his message** (Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Jeremiah 28). Compare Daniel 12:8-13 to Matthew 24:15.
8. The **moral quality of the message** showed the difference between the true

and false prophets. False prophets were characterized by two things:

- a. An over-zealousness of nationalism (Ezekiel 13:1-16).
- b. A desire for personal gain and security (Jeremiah 23:13-18, 32).

- D. The Characteristics of the False Prophet.** Along with the true, there arose false prophets (see Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Jeremiah 28). These fall into two classes: the mercenary and the political, some prophesying for money, others for political favor (see Micah 3:5, 11). The false prophet's characteristics:
1. He was a **mercenary** (Micah 3:5-11).
 2. He was a **drunkard** (Isaiah 28:7).
 3. He was **profane and wicked** (Jeremiah 23:11).
 4. He **conspired to conceive visions** of the Lord (Ezekiel 22:28).
 5. He **walked in adultery and lies and supported evil-doers** (Jeremiah 23:14).
 6. He was **frivolous and treacherous** (Zephaniah 3:4).
 7. He was **a religious opportunist** – preaching what the people wanted to hear (Isaiah 30:10-11; Jeremiah 5:30-31).
 8. He **preached peace and prosperity in the midst of apostasy and God's Judgment** (Ezekiel 13:1-6; Jeremiah 23:17; Micah 36:5).
 9. He **practiced divination** (Ezekiel 22:28; Jeremiah 14:14).
 10. He **prophesied lies out of his own heart** (Jeremiah 23:16).

SUMMARY:

The prophets were those whose message originated in the heart of God. It was authenticated by what they did and how they lived. The false prophets were those who spoke visions from their own heart.

STUDY NOTES:

Basic principles for understanding the Prophets:

1. The Prophet is a man who **is moved by the Holy Spirit** (2 Peter 1:20-21).
2. The Prophet **cannot introduce strange things** (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Their function: To **call the people back to the Law**.
3. The true prophet is the man whose **oracles come to pass** (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).
4. Sometimes prophecy **is conditional** (Jeremiah 18:5-11). Consider Jonah and Nineveh. **A threat may be delayed by repentance** (1 Kings 21:29).
5. The prophets **lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles**.
 - a. Threats fulfilled in the exiles (cf. Zechariah 1:5-6).
 - b. Promises of return fulfilled in their return from Babylon.
6. Christ's first coming and the beginning of the church are important subjects of Old Testament prophecy (Romans 1:2; Acts 3:24-26; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
Christ – The ideal King (Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Jeremiah 33:6).
The suffering Servant (Isaiah 53).
7. Church – Kingdom, God's house, God's mountain, temple, sheepfold, etc.
7. God's final revelation is made in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). **This is that, As it is written**, settles the case.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. Name the nine forbidden approaches to determining the divine will of God.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

2. What would be the four characteristics of a prophet who was provided by God?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. What is the test of a prophet as outlined in Deuteronomy 18:21-22?

4. List the Eight-Point Biblical Test of the Prophet.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____

LESSON THREE

THE MEN AND THE BOOKS

INTRODUCTION:

Though the title of the course is “The Minor Prophets,” we are dealing with a group of men who could in no sense of the term be called “Minor.” Neither are the doctrines contained in these books in any way “Minor.” The twelve are “Minor” only in length. Some of the greatest statements in all Scripture are found in these books.

To conclude the introductory remarks about the Minor Prophets, we will note in this lesson:

- 1) What kind of men these prophets were.
 - 2) The mission of the prophet.
 - 3) Basic principles for understanding the prophets.
 - 4) And the chronological order of the prophets.
-

LESSON TEXT: All the scriptures listed in your notes.

LESSON AIM: To gain a better understanding of these books by looking at the character of the writers and to consider the possible dates of the books.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover the inner character of the prophets revealed by their outer actions.
 2. Examine and discover that the mission of the prophets involved being spokesmen for God.
 3. Learn several things which will give us better understanding of the prophets and their books.
 4. Examine the possible time periods of these prophetic books.
 5. Know the ten phrases that describe what kind of men the Old Testament prophets were.
 6. Be able to describe the mission of a prophet.
 7. Memorize the Minor Prophets in chronological order, knowing the periods under which they prophesied.
-

THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPHETS

The twelve prophets are minor only in length. Read the following passages for some of the greatest statements in scripture: Amos 3:1-8; 6:1-6; Hosea 1-2; 4:6; 8:12; Micah 6:6-8; 4:1-2; Malachi 1:10; 2:7, 14; 3:10.

A. They Were All Human

1. Sometimes men of the Bible are treated nearly as fairy tale characters.
2. They were men of such high, saintly character that often they make us uncomfortable.

B. They were Uncompromising Individualists (Amos 7; Micah 3:8)

“But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin.”

C. They were Conscious of a Divine Call

They *must* be the mouths of God, (Jeremiah 20:9; Amos 7:14-17). “*But if I say, ‘I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.*”

D. They were Usually Men of Rugged Body and Character

They commanded attention in any gathering. Yet, they were often lonely (1 Kings 22, “*Yet one man. . .*”).

E. They were Conscious of God’s Authority / Backing in all Emergencies

His contemporaries were constantly challenging the strange stance of God’s prophets (Amos 7:12-13; 9:1-23). “*Then Amaziah said to Amos, ‘Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don’t prophesy any more at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.’*”

F. They were Men of Prayer and Communion with God

Loneliness helped this (Daniel 6:4-23; 9:1-23).

G. They were Clean and Consecrated in Life and Character

Each lived a separated life (Matthew 16:14).

H. They were Conscious of the Privilege of Access to the Inner Counsel of the Lord. They bore the secrets of God spoke them to men.**I. They were Outspoken Critics of Specific Evils in the Social Order**

They did not deal in abstractions.

J. They were God’s Agents in Revealing the Future (Deuteronomy 18:18-20)**THE MISSION OF THE PROPHET: SPOKESMAN FOR GOD**

“*He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him*” (Exodus 4:16; Exodus 7:1; Jeremiah 1; Ezekiel).

A. God’s Spokesman for Judgment. “*You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins*” (Amos 3:2) (Hosea 4:6; 13:9; Micah 3:12).**B. God’s Spokesman for Salvation (hope) (Amos 9:11-14).** “*I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people, You are my people;’ and they will say, ‘You are my God’*” (Hosea 2:23 NIV; Micah 4:1-2).**C. It all Culminates in the Kingdom of God (Hebrews 12:22-28)**

Six things that are included in the Kingdom of God:

1. Angels.
2. Spirits of just men made perfect.
3. Jesus.
4. God.
5. The Spirit.
6. The church.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PROPHETS

- A. The Prophet Is a Man Who Is Moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21)**
- B. The Prophet Cannot Introduce Strange Things (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)**
His function is to call men back to the law.
- C. The Prophet's Oracles Come to Pass (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)**
- D. Sometimes Prophecy Is Conditional (Jeremiah 18:5-11; Jonah and Nineveh).** A threat may be delayed by repentance (1 Kings 21:29).
- E. The Prophets Lived Before and Immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian Exiles**
 1. Their threats were fulfilled in the exiles (cf. Zechariah 1:5-6).
 2. Their promises of return were fulfilled in the return from Babylon (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:20-23).
- F. Christ's First Coming and the Beginning of the Church Are Important Subjects of Old Testament Prophecy (Romans 1:2; Acts 3:24-26; 1 Peter 1:10-12)**
 1. Christ:
 - a. The ideal King (Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6).
 - b. The suffering Servant (Isaiah 53).
 2. Church:
The Kingdom, God's house, God's mountain, the temple, the sheepfold.
- G. God's Final Revelation Is Made In His Son.** *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe"* (Hebrews 1 NIV).
"This is that," "As it is written," settled the case (Matthew 21:37)..

THE MINOR PROPHETS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- A. The Early Assyrian Period – Ninth Century B.C.**
 1. Obadiah – c. 845 B.C.
 2. Joel – c. 830 B.C.
 3. Jonah – c. 800-780 B.C.
- B. The Later Assyrian Period – Eighth Century**
 1. Amos – c. 755 B.C.
 2. Hosea – c. 740 B.C.
 3. Micah – c. 725 B.C.
- C. The Chaldean Period – Seventh Century**
 1. Zephaniah – c. 625 B.C.
 2. Nahum – c. 614-612 B.C.
 3. Habakkuk – c. 625-605 B.C.
- D. The Post-Exilic Period – Sixth And Fifth Centuries**
 1. Haggai – 520 B.C.
 2. Zechariah – c. 520-518 B.C.
 3. Malachi – c. 444 B.C.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Name the ten traits that characterized what kind of men the Old Testament prophets were.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
 8) _____
 9) _____
 10) _____

2. Describe the mission of the Old Testament prophet. _____
-

3. List the six things that are included in the Kingdom of God according to Hebrews 12:22-28.

1) _____	4) _____
2) _____	5) _____
3) _____	6) _____

4. Write the seven basic principles for understanding the prophets.

1) _____	
2) _____	
3) _____	
4) _____	
5) _____	
6) _____	
7) _____	

5. In the space below, list the prophets in their chronological order according to the periods under which they served. You should list the time periods also.

The Ninth Century – early Assyrian:

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

Seventh Century – The Chaldean period:

Eight Century – Assyrian period:

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

Post-Exilic – After Babylonian Exile:

LESSON FOUR

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION:

 Obadiah is the shortest book of the Old Testament, having only twenty-one verses. It is not quoted in the New Testament, though there is a possibility that it is alluded to in Revelation 11:15. The title describes this book as a “vision” directed against Edom. Edom is another word for Esau, Israel’s brother, and here it has reference to his descendants. There was constant strife between the descendants of these two brothers.

In this lesson, and in the ones to follow, we will follow a particular pattern in studying each of these books. We will look at the date of the book, the outline of the book, then the teachings of the book.

Our Method of Study of the Minor Prophets:

- 1) The Date of the Book.
 - 2) The Outline of the Book.
 - 3) The Teachings of the Book.
-

LESSON TEXT: Obadiah 1-21

LESSON AIM: To understand that arrogance and pride bring about the judgment of God on any nation which thinks its position is impregnable.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the characteristics of the book of Obadiah which helps to establish the date of its writing.
 2. See that the violence and unbrotherly conduct against Judah brought about the destruction of Edom.
 3. Discover the great sin and tragedy of neutrality.
 4. Learn the meaning of the phrase, The “Day of Jehovah.”
-

THE AUTHOR – OBADIAH

Obadiah is without any personal history; however, his name, which means “worshiper of Jehovah,” is suggestive. He bore a very common name among the Semites, especially in post-exilic times. Attempts have been made to identify our prophet with some one of the dozen or more men named Obadiah mentioned in the Old Testament.

1. Obadiah, the steward in Ahab’s palace who hid the Lord’s prophets by fifty in a cave (1 Kings 18:3-16).
2. Obadiah, the teacher of the law sent out by Jehoshaphat into the cities of Judah (2 Chronicles 17:7).
3. The “man of God” in Amaziah’s time who advised the king not to allow the army of North Israel to accompany him against the Edomites (2 Chronicles 25:7).
4. Obadiah, one of the overseers, involved in repairing the temple under Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:12).

To Obadiah, however, evidently his “work was more important than the worker; and for the sake of the work, the author himself allowed his personality to slip into the background!”

THE DATE OF OBADIAH: c. 845 B.C.

A. Characteristics of the Book That Establish the Date

1. Edom is free (2 Kings 8:20-24; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10).
2. Jerusalem is invaded and sacked (2 Chronicles 21:16-17).
3. Jerusalem is invaded by strangers (2 Chronicles 21:16).
4. Captives are taken (2 Chronicles 21:17).
5. Judah will again subjugate Edom (2 Chronicles 25:5-14).

NOTE: The first four of these characteristics are fulfilled in both the invasions of 845 B.C. and 586 B.C. but the fifth is not true of 586 B.C. The Israelites never subjugate Edom again after 586 B.C.

B. Six Characteristics of 586 B.C. Babylon Destruction Is Not Found in the Book

1. The razing of the walls (2 Kings 25:10; Jeremiah 52:14; Nehemiah 2:15-17).
2. The burning of the Royal Palace (2 Kings 25:9; Jeremiah 52:13).
3. The burning of the Temple (2 Kings 25:9; Jeremiah 52:13).
4. The capture and deportation of the king to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7).
5. The deportation of the majority of the nation (2 Kings 25:11-12).
6. The emigration of the remnant to Egypt (2 Kings 25:26; Jeremiah 21:16; 43:22).

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. The Utter Destruction of Edom Decreed (vs. 1-16)

1. The announcement of judgment (vs. 1-9).
 - a. The decree (v. 1).
 - b. The condition (vs. 2-4).
 - 1) Deceived.
 - 2) Despised.
 - 3) Debased.
 - c. The judgment (vs. 5-9).

In spite of:

 - 1) Alliances.
 - 2) Wisdom.
 - 3) Might.
2. The cause of the judgment against Edom (vs. 10-14). **Violence and unbrotherly conduct against Judah.**

B. The Exaltation of Israel – the Kingdom Established on Mount Zion (vs. 17-21)

1. The remnant to escape in Zion (v. 17).
2. The remnant will possess Edom (and all enemies) (vs. 18-20).
3. The universal reign of the Lord from Zion (v. 21).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

A. Its Theme: *The fall of Edom because of cruelty*

B. Its Message: *God rules in the world*

C. Its Comfort: *Zion must be exalted*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *The consequences of pride* (strongholds are not strong).
2. *The violence of silence* (the sin of neutrality).

DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT – The Teachings of the Book

A. The Reasons for Edom's Fall (vs. 1-9)

Pride in their:

1. Position and defenses (vs. 1-4).

NOTE: Petra had high hills, lofty mountains, steep crags, tropical heat, and scarcity of water, which made attack very difficult. Innumerable caves offered refuge to the people, shade from heat and ample storage for food and water. A canyon from twelve to twenty feet wide, with perpendicular walls from 200 to 250 feet high, afforded the only entrance into the city. Only God could overcome such a formidable defense.

2. Riches and wealth (vs. 5-6).

- a. The soil produced ample foodstuffs for consumption and export (cf. 2 Kings 3:20; Jeremiah 49; Joel 3:19).
- b. Rich copper and iron mines at Ezion-Geber.
- c. Great trade routes at Ezion-Geber: one led to Egypt, the other to the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17).

Note: All of these stored riches are to be taken by others.

3. Allies – confederacies (v. 7). “*All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you; those who eat your bread will set a trap for you, but you will not detect it.*”

- a. Since Edom controlled the main trade routes and many sea lanes, the neighboring nations were eager to win and maintain Edom's good will.
- b. The selfsame allies in whom Edom proudly trusted will disappoint them and turn against them.

4. Wisdom and intelligence (v. 8). “*In that day, declares the LORD, will I not destroy the wise men of Edom, men of understanding in the mountains of Esau?*”

Eliphaz, the wisest of Job's counselors, had come from this area (Teman) (Job 2:11). It seems that Uz, Job's home, was also in Edom (Lamentations 4:21). Human wisdom does not normally follow God's way (Romans 1:18-32).

5. Military might (v. 9). “*Your warriors, O Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in the slaughter.*”

- a. Its mighty men, its social, civic and military leaders are confused, seized by panic and fear, held in the grip of bleak despair. So, all perish.
- b. Proud, boastful, rich, powerful, wise Edom is not only knocked down, but out! (cf. Ezekiel 32:29).

Note: What a price to pay for pride.

B. The Sin of Neutrality – the Violence of Silence (vs. 10-14)

When principles of righteousness are involved which justice demands be upheld, a stand must be taken. It is a sin to be neutral in such cases.

1. They stood aloof – on the other side.
2. They rejoiced in their brother's calamity.
3. They participated in the booty of their brother's fall.
4. They turned their brothers over to the enemy.

C. The Day of the Lord (vs. 15-21)

1. Judgment upon the enemy (vs. 15-21).
2. Salvation for the righteous (vs. 15-16).
 - a. Deliverance from their enemies.
 - b. Holiness toward the Lord.
 - c. Possession of the inheritance.
 - d. Victory over their enemies.
 - e. Possession of their enemy's land.
 - f. Rulership of their enemy's government.

Note: Therefore, the Kingdom is the Lord's.

CONSIDER:

A. Practical Lessons of Permanent Value.

1. Human defenses are utterly useless when the power of God comes against them.
2. Ridicule is always bad for it reveals a low human pride that means an utter lack of brotherly love.
3. Eternal justice will prevail.
4. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

“Hate silences the voice of compassion, blinds the soul’s vision, corrupts the social fabric, inflicts needless grief and dismay on innocent multitudes, and consigns the political systems founded by it to self-wrought destruction. No nation is defensible if it presumes to limit either God’s love and righteousness or our own moral obligations.” Cadman, *THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL*, p. 149.

- B. The invaders of Judah were the Philistines, Arabians and the Ethiopians (2 Kings 8:20; 2 Chronicles 21:16).
- C. Mt. Zion represents Jehovah’s stronghold and dwelling place among His people, in which there shall be those that escape.
- D. In contrast to this is the *Mt. of Esau* (Mt. Seir), which shall be taken, and the house of Esau consumed.
- E. Edom’s strongholds that are not strong.
 1. The stronghold of defenses.
 2. The stronghold of riches.
 3. The stronghold of confederacies.
 4. The stronghold of wisdom.
 5. The stronghold of military might.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Does Obadiah have anything to say to the man who, in the presence of calamity, does not want to get involved?
2. Contrast the dealings of God with Edom and Israel in the Old Testament.
3. Contrast the teaching of Obadiah on pride and that is found elsewhere in the Old Testament.
4. Discuss modern applications of verse eleven’s teaching on the sin of neutrality.
5. What has Obadiah to say to a militaristic age?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. Give four historical reasons for dating Obadiah at 845 B.C..

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. List the two major points in the outline of the book of Obadiah.

I. _____
II. _____

3. The theme of this book is: The _____ of _____ because of _____.

4. The message of the book is: _____ rules in the _____

5. The comfort of the book is: _____ must be _____

6. Give the two permanent lessons of the book.

1) _____
2) _____

7. Write the five reasons for Edom's fall.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

LESSON FIVE

THE BOOK OF JOEL

INTRODUCTION:

Joel's prophecy was enabled by a great locust plague. The people were faced with the most devastating locust plague the land had ever known. Wave after wave of these destroying pests swept down upon them. The adult locust is about two and one-half inches long, their heads resemble those of horses; hence, called by the Arabs, *Djesh Allah*, "God's army" (Joel 2:25).

It was, accordingly, a calamity such as this, which Joel employed to call the husbandmen, the vine-dressers, the priests, and the drunkards of his day to repentance. In his picture of their ravages he describes the beasts and lower animals as also suffering with men, as standing pathetic in their mute appeal, the dire calamity and their sufferings being an omen of the dreaded "Day of the Lord," which was about to come.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Joel

LESSON AIM: To understand that Joel's warning of calamity was for the purpose of calling the people to repentance. The book is an appeal from Jehovah to the people to seek Jehovah.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of the coming devastation of Judah pictured in the scourge of locust, drought, and fire.
 2. See in chapter two (2) a more urgent call to repentance and prayer, for the scourge is a forerunner of the day of judgment.
 3. Learn that God uses natural calamities to encourage ungodly people to repent and turn to Him.
 4. Also see that God does not withdraw His goodness toward His people, even in the midst of judgment.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: c. 830 B.C. (Early in Joash's reign, 2 Kings 12:1ff)

Reason for dating the book at 830 B.C.

A. The Enemies of Israel Are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Edomites.

"*To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. . .*" (2 Chronicles 21:10 NIV). "*The LORD aroused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near the Cushites. They attacked Judah, invaded it and carried off all the goods found in the king's palace, together with his sons and wives. Not a son was left to him except Ahaziah, the youngest*" (2 Chronicles 21:16-17 NIV).

B. There Is No Reference to Assyria Which Emerged about 760 B.C.

C. There Is No Reference to Babylon Which Soon Followed Assyria but Perished by 536 B.C.

D. Amos, Who Undoubtedly Wrote about 775 B.C. Seems to Quote Joel (Compare Amos 1:2 with Joel 3:16, “He said. . .”).

E. The Place Assigned it in the Hebrew Bible Shows Their Belief in its Early Date

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. The Plague: Harbinger of the “Day of the Lord” (1:1 – 2:17) – the prophet speaks. (A call to repentance)

1. Devastation – locusts, drought, fire (1:2-20).
 - a. The graphic description (vs. 2-4).
 - b. The call to repent (vs. 5-20).
 - c. A prayer for mercy (vs. 15-20).
2. The fast (2:1-17).
 - a. The warning (vs. 1-11).
 - b. The call (vs. 12-17).

NOTE: In this first section of the book **the prophet speaks.** The locust invasion is the ground of the prophet’s call to repentance. Unless the people repent, the locust invasion will be only a forerunner and warning of a greater judgment to follow.

B. The Day of the Lord: Blessing and terror (2:18 – 3:21). The Lord speaks. (Blessing on Judah, judgment on her enemies)

1. Blessings promised to Israel (2:18-32).
 - a. Repentance is implied (v. 18).
 - b. Temporal blessings (vs. 19-27).
 - c. Spiritual blessing (vs. 28-32).
 - 1) Outpouring.
 - 2) Judgment.
 - 3) Escape.
2. Judgment upon the nations (3:1-16a).
 - a. All wrongs avenged (vs. 1-3).
 - b. All enemies judged (vs. 4-8).
 - c. All by divine decree (vs. 9-16a).
3. Glorification for God’s people (3:16a-21).

NOTE: In the second section of the book **Jehovah speaks.** The day of Jehovah is to be a day of terror only to His enemies; it is to be a day of deliverance for His own people. If His people will repent and serve Him, they will be delivered; but if they choose to act as enemies toward Him, then the day of the Lord must be a day of judgment and destruction to them also.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK

A. Its Theme: *The “Day of the Lord” is at hand*

1. A day of Judgment (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14). Compare Amos 5:18ff; Isaiah 13:6, 9ff; Zephaniah 1:1ff; Jeremiah 46:10.
2. A day of Salvation (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Isaiah 63:4; Malachi 4:1-5).

B. Its Message: *God uses natural calamity to call for repentance (Joel 2:12-13)*

C. Its Comfort: *Repentance will avert the judgment of God*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *Judgment is inevitable.*
2. *The attitude of the heart determines destiny.*
3. *God delights in giving men His Spirit.*

THE DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT**A. The Day of the Lord.** (To be discussed more fully in the next lesson).

1. *A day of judgment* (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 21; 3:14).
2. *A day of salvation* (Joel 2:28-32).

B. God's Use of Natural Calamity (Joel 2:10-13, especially vs.12-13). Compare the book of Jonah, "A call for national repentance."**C. The Goodness of God in the Midst of Judgment (Joel 2:19, 20, 23, 25, 27)****D. The Pouring Out of the Holy Spirit Upon all Flesh (Joel 2:28-32)****SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL****A. Joel and the New Testament – Jack P. Lewis**

1. Peter appealed to Joel to explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21; cf. Joel 2:28-32; Numbers 11:29).
2. Paul used the phrase, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved*" (Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32).
3. Echoes in Revelation:
 - a. The moon turned to blood – Joel 2:31; Revelation 6:12.
 - b. The judgment as a harvest – Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:17ff.
 - c. Treading the winepress – Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:20; 19:15.
 - d. The locusts – Joel 2:1-11; Revelation 9:3-11.

B. Joel Chapter One. The locust invasion is made the ground of Joel's call to repentance. Unless the people repent a greater judgment will follow.

1. During the locust plague (vs. 2-4).
 - a. The locust plague is such that the old men cannot remember one so terrible. It is unescapable.
 - b. The four terms used in verse 4 may denote:
 - 1) Four stages of development.
 - 2) Four kinds of locusts.
 - 3) Simply completeness of devastation.
 - 4) Richard holds to the first.
2. A national call to repentance (vs. 5-14).
 - a. The description of the invasion is followed by a call to repentance.
 - 1) The *luxuries are cut off* by the invaders (vs. 5-7).
 - 2) The *worshipers are cut off* and the priests mourn for there is nothing to sacrifice (vs. 8-9). Indicates no fellowship with God! (Exodus 29:38ff).
 - 3) The *food is cut off* and all joy ceases (vs. 10-12).
 - b. This picture of desolation is followed by a call to repentance and fasting before Jehovah (vs. 13-14). They had no choice but to fast (all the food was gone), but they are called on to *sanctify* the fast.
3. The warning of the *Day of Jehovah* which is to come (vs. 15-20).
 - a. The locust invasion is followed by a terrible drought.
 - b. A prayer for mercy follows the description of the drought. The prayer of the prophet (vs. 19-20).

- C. **The Sound of Warning.** A more vivid description of the judgment follows. The appearance, noise and array of the locust is described (2:1-17).
 - 1. Sound the alarm in Mount Zion (2:1-4; cf. Numbers 10:5ff).
 - 2. The appearance of the locusts. Nothing can stop them! (vs. 4-9).
 - 3. A more urgent call to repentance follows the more vivid description of the judgment (2:12-14).
- D. **Immediate Temporal and Future Spiritual Blessings Are Promised Because the People Repented (2:18-31)**
 - 1. Repentance is implied between verses 17 and 18, for Jehovah had pity on His people.
 - 2. Not only material blessings, but also the Spirit, and all blessings attendant to His coming, would be poured upon them (2:28-32).
- E. **God's Judgment Is upon All the Enemies but Glory Is Given to God's People (3:1-21)**
 - 1. Who is to be judged – Tyre, Sidon and the Philistines (vs. 1-8).
 - 2. Description of the judgment (vs. 9-13).
 - 3. The Valley of Decision (vs. 14-17).
 - 4. The promise of abundant blessings (vs. 18-21).

Practical Lessons of Permanent Value

- 1. Disasters serve to turn men to God and prepare their hearts to hear Him.
- 2. Judgment upon the wicked nation is inevitable.
- 3. An awakened sense of dependence upon God makes for a genuine religious experience.
- 4. The character of the day of judgment depends on the attitude of the heart. It may be a day of terror or a day of blessing.
- 5. God delights to include all men everywhere in His great gift of the Spirit.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. Give the date of the Book of Joel and four historical reasons for the date.

Date: _____

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

2. List the two major points, with the accompanying verses, in the outline of the book.

I. _____

II. _____

3. The theme of the book is: The _____ of the _____ is at _____.

4. The message of the book is: _____ uses _____ to _____ for _____.

5. The comfort of Joel is: _____ will avert the _____ of _____.

6. List the three permanent lessons from the book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON SIX

SPECIAL STUDY ON THE “DAY OF THE LORD” AND “MOUNT ZION”

INTRODUCTION:

 here are two subjects that were introduced in lesson five over the book of Joel that are of special interest in prophetic literature. These are: the “**Day of the LORD**,” and “**Mount Zion**.” These two things are constantly before the student of the prophets and therefore should be considered in any study of the Minor Prophets. We are going to study these two important topics in this lesson.

LESSON TEXT: All the scriptures in the notes.

LESSON AIM: To gain an understanding of “**The Day of the LORD**” and “**Mount Zion**.”

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See that “**The Day of the LORD**” always has reference to the day of God’s judgment on the wicked.
 2. Understand that “**Mount Zion**” in the Old Testament was the place of God’s dwelling and in the New Testament specifically has reference to the church.
-

THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. Ninth-Century Origin – The Book of Joel (The locust plague)

1. Destruction from the Almighty (1:15). “*Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.*”
2. Trembling, darkness, gloom, clouds (2:1-2). “*Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. . .*”
3. Dreadful and cannot be endured (2:11). “*The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?*”
4. Great and dreadful for the ungodly – Survival and deliverance for the righteous (3:12-16).
5. Judgment for the wicked – Refuge for the righteous (3:12-16).

B. Eighth-Century Usage

1. Darkness, inescapable (Amos 5:18-20).
2. Punishment, reckoning (Hosea 9:7). “*The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac.*”
3. Humbling for the proud, lofty and self-exalted (Isaiah 2:12). “*The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted*

- (and they will be humbled)."
4. Disaster for greedy oppressors (Isaiah 10:3). "*What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?*"
 5. Destruction, despair, terror, cruel wrath, desolation, God's anger (Isaiah 13:6, 9, 13). "*Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty*" (v. 6). ". . . day of the LORD is coming, a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it" (v. 9). "*Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger*" (v. 13).
 6. Tumult, trampling, terror (Isaiah 22:5-13).
 7. Vengeance, retribution (Isaiah 34:8). "*For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause.*"
 8. Vengeance on the wicked – Favor for the righteous, ". . . to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:2 NIV).
 9. Vengeance on the wicked – Redemption for the righteous. "*For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come*" (Isaiah 63:4 NIV).

C. Seventh-Century Usage

1. Terror and trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). "*How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.*"
2. Punishment and disaster (Jeremiah 50:27, 31; 51:2). "*I will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to devastate her land; they will oppose her on every side in the day of her disaster.*"
3. Vengeance and sacrifice (Jeremiah 46:10). "*But that day belongs to the LORD, the LORD Almighty, a day of vengeance, for vengeance on His foes. The sword will devour till it is satisfied, till it has quenched its thirst with blood. For the LORD, the LORD Almighty, will offer sacrifice in the land of the north by the River Euphrates.*"
4. God's sacrifice (Zephaniah 1:7). "*Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has consecrated those He has invited.*"
5. Bitterness, wrath, distress anguish, trouble, ruin, darkness, gloom, clouds, blackness, trumpet, battle-cry, blood-letting, inescapable (Zephaniah 1:14-18).
6. Fierce anger, wrath on the wicked, shelter for the humble obedient (Zephaniah 2:2). "*Before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's wrath comes upon you.*"

D. Exilic Usage

The end has come (Ezekiel 7:1-27).

1. The end (vs. 2-3, 5, compare Amos 8:2, 10).
2. The time (vs. 7, 10, 12, compare 12:21-28).
3. The recompense (vs. 3-4).
4. The disaster (vs. 5-14).
5. The sword (vs. 15-22).
6. The extent (vs. 23-27).

Note the lesson: "I am the Lord" (vs. 4b, 9b, 27b).

E. Post-Exilic Usage

1. The reign of the Lord (Zechariah 14:1-9, 20-21).
 - a. Plunder (vs. 1-2).

- b. Deliverance (vs. 3-7).
- c. Sustenance (v. 8).
- d. Unity (v. 9).
- e. Holiness (vs. 20-21).
- 2. Refiner's fire: Destruction and purifying (Malachi 3:1-6).
- 3. Furnace of God (Malachi 4:1-6).
 - a. Burning fire for arrogant evil-doers.
 - b. Healing, joy, victory for the righteous.
 - c. Need: Remember the Law, watch for Elijah.

THE DESCRIPTION OF MOUNT ZION

- A. The Development of Mount Zion.** First names by which Mount Zion was known:
 - 1. Jebusite fortress (2 Samuel 5:6-10a).
 - 2. City of David (2 Samuel 5:10b; 6:12).
 - 3. God's holy hill (Psalms 2:6).
 - 4. The city of the great King (Psalms 48:1-2; 132:13).
- B. Prophetic Use of Mount Zion**
 - 1. The King and Mount Zion.
 - a. The King installed.
 - b. The King possesses the nations.
 - c. The King rules with a rod of iron (Psalms 2:6-9; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5).
 - 2. The Lord and Mount Zion.
 - a. The Lord will rule His enemies.
 - b. The Lord will rule with a scepter.
 - c. The Lord will be a priest forever (Psalms 110:1-4; Hebrews 5:6; 7:15-21).
 - 3. The Law will go forth from Zion (Isaiah 2:2-4; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8ff).
 - 4. Zion in Zechariah 8.
 - a. God is jealous for Zion – Jerusalem (vs. 1-2).
 - b. God dwells in Zion (v. 3).
 - c. God gives peace in Zion (vs. 4-11).
 - d. God gives Zion prosperity (vs. 12-19).
 - e. God gives salvation from Zion (vs. 20-22).
- C. Fulfillment in the Church** (Hebrews 12:22-28).
 - 1. Zion = The heavenly Jerusalem (v. 22a), the city of the Living God.
 - 2. Zion's inhabitants (vs. 22b-24a).
 - a. Millions of joyful angels.
 - b. Church of the firstborn ones.
 - c. God, the judge of all.
 - d. Spirits of just men made perfect.
 - e. Jesus, mediator of the new covenant.
 - 3. Zion's resource – Jesus' sprinkled blood (v. 24b).
 - 4. Zion's performance (vs. 25-28a).
 - 5. Zion's mission – Worship: reverence and awe (v. 28b).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. List twelve descriptive words or phrases from our study that describe the Day of the Lord.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____
- 12) _____

2. Mount Zion has its fulfillment in the New Testament in the _____ the City of the Living God.

3. Name the five different inhabitants of Zion from Hebrews 12:22-28.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

4. Zion's resource is _____

Scripture: _____

5. Zion's mission is _____

Scripture: _____

LESSON SEVEN

THE BOOK OF JONAH

INTRODUCTION:

he book of Jonah is not a prophecy, but an account of the prophet's mission to Nineveh to announce its speedy destruction. It is concerned chiefly with Jonah's own personal feelings and history in relation to this mission.

Jonah prophesied at a time of crisis in the history both of Assyria and Israel. God's gracious promise to Israel was fulfilled by Jeroboam (2 Kings 14:23), but since Israel did not repent (2 Kings 17:7-18), it rushed headlong into ruin.

God's threat against Nineveh, pronounced by the same prophet during a time of temporary decline, caused Nineveh to repent, so that God spared the city (Jonah 3:10; 4:11). Restored to power, Nineveh would eventually be used by God to destroy Israel.

LESSON TEXT: All the book of Jonah.

LESSON AIM: To learn of Jonah's mission to warn Nineveh, his response, rebellion to God's command, and finally, Nineveh's response to the warning.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See the prophets response to God's instruction to go warn Nineveh.
 2. Learn of God's patient working with the reluctant prophet.
 3. See the hearts of a pagan people melt at the preaching of God's commands concerning their wicked ways.
 4. Examine Jonah's reaction to the deliverance of a wicked nation who would later destroy 10 of Israel's tribes.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: c. 800-780 B.C.

- A. **During Jeroboam's Reign – 800-755 B.C.** (2 Kings 14:25). *"He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amitai, the prophet from Gath Hepher."*
- B. **Assyria's Period of Internal Strife.** Gieke states that from 800 B.C. till Tiglath-pileser's accession to the throne in 745 B.C. Assyria was torn with internal strife and by wars with revolting provinces, (*Hours with the Bible*, Vol. IV, pp. 183-184).
- B. **The Book of Jonah Is a Book of Miracles**
1. The storm and consequent stilling.
 2. The preservation of Jonah in the belly of the fish.
 3. The gourd in a night.
 4. The worm that smites the gourd.
 5. Jesus endorsed the second of these miracles (Matthew 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32).

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- A. **Jonah's Call and Flight to Tarshish (1:1-17)**. *Running away from God.* Key word: **Disobedience**.
 - 1. Charge and rebellion (vs. 1-3).
 - 2. Storm and confession (vs. 4-10).
 - 3. Sacrifice and deliverance (vs. 11-17).

- B. **Jonah's Miraculous Deliverance (2:1-10)**. *Running to God.* Key word: **Repentance**.
 - 1. Prayer (vs. 1-9).
 - 2. Deliverance (v. 10).

- C. **Jonah's Preaching in Nineveh (3:1-10)**. *Running with God.* Key word: **Obedience**.
 - 1. The repentant prophet's message (vs. 1-4). Jonah preached repentance to Nineveh.
 - 2. The sinful city's repentance (vs. 5-10).

- D. **Jonah's Complaint to God (4:1-11)**. *Running ahead of God.* Key word: **Bigotry**.
 - 1. The prophet's anger (vs. 1-5).
 - 2. The prophet's joy and despair (vs. 6-8).
 - 3. The Lord's rebuke and concern (vs. 9-11).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. **Its Theme:** *The willingness of God to save the heathen nations*

- B. **Its Message:** *The Lord is the One Universal God, the God of the whole earth*

- C. **Its Comfort:** *God will be gracious to all who will repent*

- D. **Its Permanent Lessons:**
 - 1. *We cannot run away from God* (Psalm 139:7-11).
 - 2. *It is possible to hate what God hates and not love what He loves.*

THE DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT

- A. **Jonah's Disobedience – chapter 1**
 - 1. Why did he go to Tarshish?
 - a. Not fear (cf. 4:1-2). Jonah was running from his assignment – Not trying to hide from God. He is a *reluctant rebel!*
 - b. Narrow-minded patriotism. He did not want to share the blessings of God with the Gentiles.
 - 2. His honest evaluation and effective solution. “*Cast me forth into the sea*” (vs. 11-12).

- B. **Jonah's Repentance – chapter 2**
 - 1. His deep despair.
 - a. “*Depths of the grave.*”
 - b. “*Very heart of the seas.*”
 - c. “*Banished from your sight.*”
 - d. “*Earth. . . barred me forever.*”
 - 2. His joyful deliverance.
 - a. “*He answered me.*”

- b. ". . . listened to my prayer."
- c. "I will look again toward your holy temple."
- d. ". . . brought my life up out of the pit."
- 3. His thankful praise.
 - a. Sacrifice with song.
 - b. Make good his vows.
 - c. Accept God's salvation.

C. The Prophet's Mission – chapter 3

- 1. The message: "40 days till the end." The first key to successful preaching is preaching what God bids to be preached.
- 2. The response: sorrowful repentance from the king down. The whole nation of people repented and proclaimed a great Fast.
- 3. The compassion: judgment delayed. God saw their works and changed toward them, sparing the city.
 - a. Repentance is a change of will or mind which results in a change of action.
 - b. True repentance may avert the catastrophe that has been threatened.

D. The Prophet's Bigotry – chapter 4

- 1. His anger: He is sorry that God is a loving God and mad enough to die. He would rather that Nineveh not repent and suffer the wrath of God.
- 2. His shelter: He is pleased with shade, distressed with its destruction.
- 3. God's lesson: **souls are more important than gourds.**

NOTE: Jehovah rebuked the prophet for being so concerned for that which affected his comfort, for which he had not labored, nor had he made it to grow, but who became indignant that God should spare a city of so many thousands of souls (vs. 10-11).

This is probably one of the most humanly characteristic traits to be found anywhere. Man's concern for that which affects him directly, but his indifference to that which affects another.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Have we escaped from the idea of a localized God?
- 2. What basis was there for Jonah's feelings toward Nineveh?
- 3. Harmonize the theme of Jonah with the idea of God having a chosen people.
- 4. How is Jonah different from the other Minor Prophets?
- 5. Does the fact that Jesus referred to Jonah prove conclusively that the book cannot be allegorical, parabolic, or fictional?

Practical Lessons of Permanent Value

- 1. When God enjoins a disagreeable duty, it is far easier to go and do it than to run away from it.
- 2. You can limit God by your disobedience.
- 3. God will be gracious if you will repent.
- 4. We are foolish to consider another's good conditions as hurt to self.
- 5. *All things are worked together for good* if we will yield to His purpose. Good will come out of evil circumstances.
- 6. Our concern should be with souls not gourds!
- 7. The tragedy of narrow-minded patriotism.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. Give the date of the book of Jonah and two historical reasons for the date.

Date: _____

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

2. List the four major points, with the accompanying chapters, in the outline of the book.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

3. The theme of the book is: The _____ of _____ to save the _____.

4. The message of the book is: The _____ is the _____ _____ God, the _____ of the whole _____.

5. The comfort of the book of Jonah is: _____ will be _____ to all who will _____.

6. List the two permanent lessons from the book.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

7. The most important lesson of the book of Jonah is:

LESSON EIGHT

THE BOOK OF AMOS, PART ONE

INTRODUCTION:

A

mos was stern, fearless, self-contained, a man of granite-make. He possessed a powerful well-knit mind and a vivid imagination, and is one of the most arresting figures ever on the stage of Hebrew history.

Amos was reared on the edge of the desert, twelve miles south of Jerusalem, one of the shepherds of Tekoa (Amos 1:1). He was a rustic being, a shepherd, and a natural enemy of urban immorality. He lived close to nature. His occupation naturally carried him to the wool markets of the northern cities. There he would become awakened to the life and religion of the people. Like John the Baptist, who spent most of his years in the same wilderness, he developed into a religious reformer, supremely concerned for the rights of God and justice among the oppressed.

Amos had no special professional or formal preparation to preach. He was educated, rather, in the school of vigilance. By inheritance or training, he was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son. He belonged to no established guild. God called him for one special mission. In the lonely wilderness, the shadow of God fell upon his soul and he became aware of God's coming judgments. He was now forced to lift up his prophetic voice in woes over his people. So, he went to Bethel and under the shadow of the royal palace, in the king's own religious sanctuary, he lifted up his voice in a vigorous and impassioned cry for justice.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Amos.

LESSON AIM: To obtain an over-all view of the book noting especially the date of writing, the outline, and the teaching of Amos.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the date of the book noting three reasons for assigning this date to the book.
 2. Learn something of the nature and character of the man, Amos, and the book he wrote.
 3. Become acquainted with the theme, message, and comfort of the book and learn the permanent lessons applicable to God's people today.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: c. 755 B.C.

- A. During the Reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (783-743 B.C.), and Uzziah of Judah (779-740 B.C.)
- B. Written after Obadiah (cf. Amos 1:11-12 with Joel 3:16)
- C. Written after Joel (cf. Amos 1:2 with Joel 3:16)

D. Written in a Time of Great Prosperity, Politically and Financially

E. Written During a Time of Two Threatening Perils – Temptations and Idolatry

1. Moral and religious corruptions, based on a wrong concept of the character of God.
2. The successes of the Assyrians, which were to the great mass of people an evidence of the superiority of the Assyrian deities and based upon worldly and military power.
3. Amos' answers to these dangers.
 - a. He stresses the spiritual character of God's nature.
 - b. He emphasizes the universality of God's rule.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. Judgments Against the Nations – chapters 1-2

1. Damascus – cruelty in war (1:1-5).
2. Gaza (Philistia) – slave traffic (1:6-8).
3. Tyre (Phoenicia) – delivered up “brothers” (1:9-10).
4. Edom – implacable hatred of their brother Israel (1:11-12).
5. Ammon – intense and uncalled for cruelty (1:13-15).
6. Moab – vengeance on dead king (2:1-3).
7. Judah – religious apostasy (2:4-5).
8. Israel – social and religious corruption (2:6-16).

B. Israel’s Crimes and Condemnation – chapters 3-6

1. The Lord’s choice of Israel is conditional (chapter 3).
2. The Lord warns the women (4:1-5).
3. Israel has not heeded God’s past warning (4:6-13).
4. Israel’s overthrow is inevitable and unavoidable (chapters 5-6).

C. Israel’s Future – chapters 7-9

1. The devouring locusts (7:1-3). The prophet’s plea saved Israel.
2. The consuming fire (7:4-6). The prophet’s plea saved Israel.
3. The searching plumb line (7:7-9). The prophet does not plead this time.
4. The basket of summer fruit (8:1-10).

Note: A famine of words (8:11-14).
5. The smitten sanctuary (9:1-10).
6. The restored tabernacle (9:11-14).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

A. Its Theme: *God’s justice and righteousness* (cf. 5:6-9, 24)

B. Its Message: *God’s desire for Israel is for them to be like Him* (3:2; 5:4)

C. Its Comfort: *After God’s sifting, a remnant will be ultimately restored*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *Elaborate worship insults God when there is no heart to honor Him* (5:21ff).
2. *Privilege implies and involves responsibility* (cf. 3:2).
3. *The necessity of personal conviction in the prophet* (cf. 7:14-15).
4. *Ease, luxury and idleness lead to open sin.*

AMOS, THE MAN

1. **Name:** “to bear, to place a load upon, burdened” or “burden-bearer.”
2. **Home:** Tekoa (1:1), a town of Judah (7:12), about six miles south of Bethlehem and about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. A wild desert country, the influence of which is seen in the prophet’s preaching (3:3-8).
3. **Occupation:** A shepherd of a specie of sheep called “nakads,” small and rugged, but prized for its fine wool. Also a “dresser of sycamore trees,” a tree producing a small fig, which had to be pinched or bruised before it would ripen. It was eaten mainly by the poor (1:1; 7:12-14).
4. **Characterization:** Amos might be called “the first Great Reformer.” He was not of the school of the prophets, who, by this time, were disposed to cry what the people wanted, but he was chosen of God (7:14-15). His very attitude breathes the desert air of his life’s environment. He was the stern prophet of justice and righteousness.

A CHARACTER SKETCH OF AMOS

1. Amos was humble – in not hiding his station in life.
2. Amos was wise – in not preaching over the heads of the people.
3. Amos was clever – in catching people’s fancy by judging their enemies first.
4. Amos was fearless – in not tickling the ear, but telling the truth boldly.
5. Amos was faithful – *Thus saith the Lord* was his message.

EXPANDED OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- I. The Approaching Judgment (chapters 1-2).
 - A. Punishment of the nations bordering Israel and Judah (1:3– 2:3).
 1. Damascus – for their cruelty in war (1:3-5).
 2. Gaza of Philistia – slave traffic (1:6-8).
 3. Tyre – delivered up *brothers* (1:9-10).
 4. Edom – for implacable hatred for Israel (1:11-12).
 5. Ammon – intense and uncalled for cruelty (1:13-15).
 6. Moab – vengeance, even on a king’s carcass (2:1-3).
 - B. Punishment of Judah – sin of religious apostasy (2:4-5).
 - C. Punishment of Israel – this is the theme of Amos’ prophecy (2:6-16).
- II. Israel’s Crimes and Her Condemnation (chapters 3-6).
 - A. Condemnation of wealthy ruling classes for civil and religious iniquities (3:1 – 4:5).
 1. Knowledge of Jehovah – makes her sin greater (3:1-8).
 2. Condemnation of their religious festivities – *which please you, not Jehovah* (4:4-5).
 - B. Unheeded chastisements (4:6-13).
 1. Chastisements which had been ignored (vs. 6-11).
 2. Final doom – *prepare to meet thy God* (vs. 12-13).
 - C. Overthrow of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes (chapters 5-6).
 1. Lamentations, denunciations, exhortations, threats (5:1-17).
 2. **First woe** – Terrors of the Day of Jehovah (5:18-27).
 3. **Second woe** – Upon the careless heads of the nation (ch. 6).

- III. Five Visions Which the Prophet Explains (7:1 – 9:10).**
- A. The vision of the locusts, in which the mercy of God averts the catastrophe (7:1-3).
 - B. The vision of the devouring fire – A severer judgment than that of the locusts, again averted by God's mercy (7:4-6).
 - C. The vision of the plumb-line – Destruction on Israel (7:7-9).
 - D. The vision of the basket of summer fruit – The ripeness of Israel for judgement (chapter 8).
 1. The time of mercy is past – destruction is at hand (vs. 1-3).
 2. The final eclipse of the nation – her sun sets at noon (vs. 4ff).
 - E. The vision of the smitten sanctuary – Destruction of the kingdom (9:1-10).
- IV. Promise of a Bright Future – The Messianic Hope (9:11-15).** The conclusion is the only optimistic note in the book.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. Give the date of the book of Amos and the five historical reasons for the date.
DATE: _____
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
2. The judgments of chapters one and two were against which eight nations and for what individual reasons?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
3. Write the theme of the book. _____
4. The message of the book of Amos is _____ desire for _____ is that they be _____.
5. The comfort of the book is after God's _____, a _____ will be ultimately _____.
6. List the four permanent lessons from the book.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

LESSON NINE

THE BOOK OF AMOS (2)

INTRODUCTION:

Ahis lesson is a continuation of lesson eight on the book of Amos. Remember that Amos' character was that of a stern, fearless, faithful prophet of God. His shepherd life had caused him to hate the sin of Israel. This made him the same kind of religious reformer as Elijah had been before, and that John the Baptist would be latter.

He was not a professional prophet. He was called to preach, and that made his message more impassioned than the professional preachers and prophets of that day. They challenged his stance in chapter seven as he proclaimed the downfall, not only of Jeroboam's house but also of the entire nation of Israel.

REMEMBER:

- * Date: Around 755 B.C., during the reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah.
 - * National Condition: The borders had been extended, and it was a time of national peace and prosperity along with social, individual and religious corruption.
-

LESSON TEXT:

The book of Amos

LESSON AIM: To obtain an understanding of several passages of particular interest in the book.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

You will . . .

1. Learn that privilege carries with it a very definite responsibility and a sudden peril when responsibility is neglected.
 2. Discover that unholy religion involves a sickening service and a hypocritical life style.
 3. Understand the greatness of God and the elemental character of justice.
 4. See that ease and idleness does not lead to a more faithful life but oftentimes to open sin.
-

SPECIAL PASSAGES OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

A. The Peril of Privilege (3:2). “*You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins*” (See also Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:6; 22:19; 28:9).

B. Unholy Religion

1. Sin in “God’s House” (4:4-5).
2. A sickening service (5:21-23).
3. A hypocritical people (8:4-6).

C. God Is Greater than Their Religion (5:8-9). “*He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns blackness into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name—he flashes destruction on the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin.*”

1. He is Creator, “. . . made the Pleiades and Orion.”
2. He is the Sustainer, “. . . calls for the water. . . pours them out. . . on the earth.”
3. He is the Judge, “*He flashes destruction on the stronghold.*”

D. Justice is Elemental and Eternal

1. Injustice in the courts (5:10-12). “*. . . you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth. You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts*” (cf. vs. 7, 24).
 - a. Hate truth – “*. . . you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth.*”
 - b. Trample poor – “*You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain.*”
 - c. Live in luxury – “*Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine.*”
2. Fraud in the market place (8:4-6).
 - a. Trample poor – “*. . . you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land. . .*”
 - b. Irreligious – “*. . . saying, ‘When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?’*”
 - c. Short pound, long dollar, dishonest weights – “*. . . skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.*”
3. Oppression in the heart (2:6-8).
 - a. Of the poor (vs. 6-7a). – “*They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed.*”
 - b. Of their God (v. 7b). – “*Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name.*”
 - c. Of their brothers (v. 8). – “*They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines.*”

E. Ease and Idleness Lead to Open Sin (3:15; 5:11; 6:4-6)

1. Winter house.
2. Summer house.
3. Ivory house.
4. Great house (mansion).
5. Stone mansions.
6. Ivory beds.
7. Rich foods.

8. Loud music.
9. Abundant wine.
10. Fine cosmetics.

NOTE: The judgment on one and all. “*The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness: ‘The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fish-hooks. You will each go straight out through breaks in the wall, and you will be cast out towards Harmon,’ declares the LORD.*”

Practical Lessons of Permanent Value

1. Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society.
2. Nations and individuals that have been favored are laden with corresponding responsibilities.
3. Ease, luxury and idleness lead to open sin.
4. Nations, and by analogy individuals, are bound to live up to the light and knowledge granted them.
5. The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commands.
6. The need for personal conviction in the Prophet of God (7:14-15).
7. The discipline of the desert is valuable. What a great service the desert did to Amos.

SELF TEST FOR LESSON NINE:

1. List the three ways in which Israel illustrated unholy religion with the appropriate scriptures.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
2. In what three ways is God greater than the religion of the Israelites?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
3. List from memory seven things of ease and idleness that lead to open sin.
1) _____ 5) _____
2) _____ 6) _____
3) _____ 7) _____
4) _____

LESSON TEN

THE BOOK OF AMOS (3)

INTRODUCTION:

This is the third and last lesson on the book of Amos. We are continuing our study on some special passages of particular interest within the book, passages that would have important meaning to them, but also have application to our lives today.

LESSON TEXT: Read again the book of Amos

LESSON AIM: To get a two-fold view of both the problems of Israel which will bring judgment and the hope for the future of Israel.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that thoughtless unconcern leads one to trust in strongholds that are not strong (6:1-6).
 2. See the contrast between a meddling unfaithful priest and the faithful prophet of God, the Lord's man.
 3. Understand that Israel had been God's chosen people, but because of their crimes the nation will be reduced to nothing.
-

THOUGHTLESS UNCONCERN

Strongholds that are not strong (6:1-6).

A. Wild, Wicked Women (4:1-3)

1. Fat cows of Bashan – “*Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria*” (cf. Psalm 22:12).
2. Poor people oppressors – “. . .you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy.”
3. Husband pushers – “. . .and say to your husbands, *Bring us some drinks!*”

B. “God Is Our God And We Are His People!” They thought that privilege demanded continued blessing instead of implying and involving responsibility.

C. “God Brought Israel Out of Egypt!” (Amos 2:10)

IMPLIED: “God will not forsake us now.” (Compare 9:7-8, Israel is not the only Exodus-people). God calls upon them to consider other nations: Calneh, beyond the Euphrates, and Hamath, to the north: are they better or greater than Judah and Israel? There was no place for complacency.

D. “We Worship God Regularly!” But God demands “right” not “rites” (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-23). These godless rulers of Zion and Samaria forget God who gave them their greatness. They put far away the day of reckoning, live luxuriously, satiate themselves in their revelry, and have no regard for the affliction of the poor.

NOTE: When the crust of that decaying society was removed, the creature inside was even worse still. Against the clamor of social festivities, commercial hawking, and liturgical chanting was the dreadful silence of society's patrons, who “do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.” If there is a sin that bottoms out the

empire of evil, this is it. Israel's social and political leaders had sunk to the level of unfeeling disregard for the crumbling empire around them.

AMOS AND AMAZIAH, THE PRIEST OF BETHEL (7:10-17)

A. A Meddling Priest – Amaziah, the king's man.

1. **Appeals to force** (v. 10). He sent to king Jeroboam, telling him what Amos was saying. *"Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words."* Compare 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
2. **Prompted by jealousy** (v. 10). He had a vested interest.
3. **Makes lying accusation** (v. 11). Falsehood and violence are the traditional propaganda of the kingdom of darkness. *"For this is what Amos is saying."*
4. **Judges Amos' moralality by his own standard** (v. 12). It is evident that he held his office for the "bread" offered him. He urged Amos to return to Judah and prophesy and eat bread there, implying that, like himself, Amos preached for money. *"Then Amaziah said to Amos, 'Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there.'"*
5. **Condemns idolatry by the argument he uses** (v. 13). He correctly represented the house at Bethel when he called it "the king's sanctuary" – it was of the king for it was certainly not of God. *"Don't prophesy any more at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."*

B. A Faithful Prophet, Amos, the Lord's Man

1. Humble (v. 14). His prophesying was an incident and the trust of Divine grace. *"Amos answered Amaziah, 'I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees.'"*
2. Loyal to his commission (v. 15). God has chosen the man, and that means unconditional surrender. *"But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"*
3. Zealous (v. 16a). *"Now then, hear the word of the LORD."* Compare verse 10b *"The land cannot bear all his words."*
4. Bold (vs. 16-17a). Prohibition is treated as a challenge. *"You say, Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac. Therefore this is what the LORD says . . ."*

NOTE: He declared his former occupation (v. 15), and then affirmed that it was Jehovah who took him; and it was Jehovah who told him what to do; and it was Jehovah who was now speaking, declaring what should happen both to the house of Isaac and to the priest and his family. He had no alternative but to speak.

C. A Harrowing Picture (v. 17)

1. Family dishonor. *"Wife. . .a prostitute, children. . .fall by the sword."* Compare Isaiah 13:6; Zechariah 14:2.
2. Family impoverishment. A Hebrew's property was his inheritance from the Lord.
3. Family extermination. To die childless was to the Hebrew the sum of disaster.
4. Dishonored death. No Jew could die happy expecting burial in a heathen country. Compare Genesis 47:30; 50:25; Hebrews 11:22.
5. National exile.

D. A Clenching Argument – “*The word of the Lord*”

THE SINS OF ISRAEL

Israel had been Jehovah’s chosen people; they only, of all the nations, had been His. Because of their crimes the nation will be reduced to naught.

A. Oppression of the Poor (5:7, 11)

They rob the poor in business dealings and the rich live extravagantly by this dishonesty.

B. Bribery of Judges (5:12)

The people hate justice, and the man that would judge righteously.

C. Dishonest Businessmen (8:5-6)

The merchant-men were so desirous of gain and of trade that, although they closed up on the day of the New Moon or Sabbath, they would yearn for its close that they might return to their corrupt trade (vs. 4-6).

D. Sold the Righteous into Slavery (2:6-7)

They sold the needy for a pair of shoes.

E. Sexual Immorality (2:7)

They became involved in prostitution and worship other than to Jehovah.

F. Told the Prophets Not to Preach (2:12; 5:10)

G. Materialism – The Women (4:1) and the People (3:15; 6:1-6)

The women are referred to as “kine of Bashan,” that is, as fat cattle of the rich pastures of Bashan, east of the Jordan. Extravagance and excess is condemned; there were those who owned a summer-house and a winter-house, decorated with ivory inlay; while others of the nation were in poverty and want.

H. Religious Corruption (4:4-5; 5:21-23)

Their feast days and offerings of worship were an abomination to the Lord, for unrighteousness characterized their lives, and there was no spirit of devotion in their worship – only “noise.”

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

A. Amos Offered a Program to Reverse the Forces of Decay That Were Wasting the Society – Seek the Lord and Live! (5:4, 6, 14). But he added a fragile “perhaps” (5:15).

B. Amos Closed with Vision of David’s House Being Restored (9:11-15)

Compare this passage with Acts 15:14-18.

1. The kingdom of David will be restored (Luke 1:31-33).
2. The kingdom will embrace all nations (Acts 2:39; Ephesians 2:11-22).
3. The kingdom will be blessed with super-abundance (Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 1:3).
4. The kingdom will be blessed with peace (Hebrews 13:20; Ephesians 2:14).
5. The kingdom will endure forever (Hebrews 12:24-28; Ephesians 3:20-21).

Discussion Questions

1. Out of the book of Amos, what passages do you find more appealing than

others?

2. Contrast Israel's place of privilege with that of the Church.
 3. Make modern-day applications of the sins of Amos' day to our own.
 4. What is Amos' alternative to destruction, if any?
 5. What did the *Day of Jehovah* mean to Amos?

SELF TEST FOR LESSON TEN:

1. List the three ways strongholds of Israel which were not really strong at all.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
 2. List the five characteristics of the faithful prophet Amos that contrasted him with the meddling priest, Amaziah.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
 3. Write at least 150 words describing the fulfillment of Amos 9:11-15 in the New Testament.

LESSON ELEVEN

HOSEA, THE PROPHET OF LOVE

INTRODUCTION:

Hll the world loves a lover! This has been true through the ages and is still true today. Only in Jesus are we confronted with a greater example of love than Hosea. He is definitely among the champion lovers of all times. His love was so powerful that even the vilest of all behavior could not dull it. Each time that his suffering plunged him to near despair, he learned more about the infinite heart of God, the greater sufferer. Gomer, his wife, broke his heart; but his forgiving attitude and action toward her gives to us a deep insight into the heart of the divine Lover. We will attempt in this study and in the next to analyze the life and the teaching of this rare individual—the Prophet of Love.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Hosea

LESSON AIM: To get an overview of the book by going through it in outline form. To get a glimpse of the heart of God as we look at the experiences of Hosea.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Determine the date of writing of Hosea by discovering which kings ruled during Hosea's prophesying.
 2. Summarize the teaching of Hosea by looking at the three major divisions of the book.
 3. Memorize the **Theme, Message, Comfort**, and the **three Permanent Lessons** of Hosea.
-

THE DATE AND WRITER OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

- A. **Judah's Kings were Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.** (The first three were co-rulers for the last year of Uzziah's reign).
- B. **Israel's King was Jeroboam II (783-743 B.C.).** It was probably written during his latter years, shortly before Israel's fall. Compare 7:9. "*His hair is sprinkled with gray,*" i.e. Israel is getting old, but he doesn't know it!
- C. **The Date of the Book: c. 745 or 740 B.C.**
- D. **The Man – Hosea**
 - 1. His name: "Salvation" or "deliverance."
 - 2. His home: From his sympathetic understanding of the people it is generally thought that he was a native of the north.
 - 3. His marriage; "He was directed to marry a woman given to idolatry—an idolatry which was often associated with licentiousness, although his bride was not an actually unchaste woman at first but only a spiritual adulteress. Later on idolatry brought forth its natural fruitage, and Hosea's wife became an actual adulteress." Sampey (stating Kirkpatrick's position). Heart Of The Old Testament, p. 156.

4. His character: Hosea was a man of deeply emotional nature, rich in his affections, a man who by instinct entered sympathetically into the lives of others.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

(An expanded outline will be given later in this lesson)

A. Israel's Unfaithfulness (chapters 1-3). (Adultery)

1. Hosea stands for God – The loving, patient husband.
2. Gomer stands for Israel – The lustful, immoral wife.
3. His children, Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi stand for individual Israelites – The scattered, unpitied, rejected strange children.

NOTE: Jezreel is used in two ways by Hosea – good to scatter seed as in sowing seed and bad in scattering Israel out of the land. It appears the last two children born to Gomer do not belong to Hosea, *bear HIM a son* opposed to *bare a daughter*.

B. Israel's National Sin and Chastisement (chapters 4-13)

Seven steps to judgment:

1. Lack of knowledge – failure of the priests (4:6, 11).
2. Pride – the priests, people, and princes are all guilty (5:5).
3. Instability (6:4).
4. Worldliness (7:8).
5. Corruption (9:9).
6. Backsliding (11:7).
7. Idolatry (13:2).

NOTE: Israel's lacks:

- a. Lack of Knowledge (4:1, 2, 6; 6:3, 6; 8:12).
- b. Lack of trust in God (5:13; 7:11; 8:5; 11:5-7).
- c. Lack of leadership (4:4-6; 6:8-9; 9:7; 7:5-7).
- d. Lack of love for God (chs. 1-3; 11:1-4).

C. Israel's Future Hope (chapter 14)

1. Divine requirement (vs. 1-3).
 - a. Repentance (v. 1) (The call to repentance) To Hosea, repentance is no mere change in the direction of one's life. It is a turning back upon one's self, a retracing of one's footsteps, a confession and acknowledgment of what one has abandoned. Repentance is not mere turning or returning. It is a deep and an ethical process – the breaking up of fallow ground, the labor and long expectation of the sower, the seeking and waiting for Jehovah till He sends the blessing.
 - b. Prayer (v. 2).
 - c. Trust (v. 3).
2. Divine remedy (vs. 4-5a).
 - a. Healing (v. 4).
 - b. Love (v. 4).
 - c. Supply (v. 5a).
3. Divine result (vs. 5b-7).
 - a. Deep rooted – pleasant tree (vs. 5b-7a).
 - b. Flourishing – filling food (v. 7b).
 - c. Blossoming – blessing (v. 7c).
4. Divine resource (vs. 8-9).
 - a. Fruitfulness (v. 8).
 - b. Wisdom (v. 9).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme: *God's love and His suffering nature***
 1. **God is a great and unceasing lover.** He is willing to go to any lengths to cause His people to pause, look upon, and come to know the lover who is wooing them.
 2. **God is a great sufferer** who has found His love unrequited. The people do not know their God. They are stupid, without intelligence, insensible to all that is high and holy, and above all they are not even conscious of the love of God for them. Since they cannot understand the love of God they cannot properly love God! See I John 4:19
- B. Its Message: *God's desire to forgive and restore***
- C. Its Comfort: *God is always waiting for the return of His wayward bride***
- D. Its Permanent Lessons:**
 1. **The marriage vow and relationship is sacred.**
 2. **Inward corruption is more dangerous to a nation than external enemies.**
 3. **The root of all sin is unfaithfulness to the Lord.**

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

- A. Practical Lessons of Permanent Value**
 1. Without the knowledge of Jehovah and His law there can be no fellowship with God. See I John 1:5-7.
 2. The sacredness and sanctity of the marriage relation.
 3. Sin destroys the nerve that enables men to make moral distinctions.
- B. Background of Hosea's Time**

The excesses by this time had become more marked than in the time of Amos. Hosea sums up the indictments against Israel in the one word *whoredom*. Israel had done worse than adultery; she had prostituted herself before the Baals of the land for hire (2:12-13).

 1. **Religiously** – the people were without knowledge (4:6; 5:4); as a result they were ignorant of His laws. Nominally, they paid homage to Jehovah, but in reality they honored the Baals, which brought from Hosea his most severe rebukes (4:11-13; 8:4; 9:10; 10:1-3; 13:1, 2; etc.).
 2. **Morally** – their conduct was the very opposite to that which God desired: swearing, breaking faith, murder, stealing, committing adultery, deceit, lying, drunkenness, dishonesty in business, and other things as abominable (4:2, 11, 12, 18; 6:8-9; 10:4; 13:1-2; etc.).
 3. **Politically** – their faithlessness was manifested in a two-fold manner:
 - a. Rebellion against all legitimate authority and the assassinations of various kings and princes (7:1-7; 8:4; 13:10-11).
 - b. Dependence upon human defenses (8:14; 10:13; 14:3), and foreign alliances (5:13; 7:8; 11:13; 8:9; 12:13; 14:3; but compare 7:16; 8:13; 9:3; 10:6; 11:11), rather than upon the power of Jehovah.

NOTE: “There was a two-fold cause for this widespread immorality: 1) The detestable vileness and hypocrisy of the priests, with whom, as usual, the false prophets were in league, and 2) The corruption of worship and religion at its source. The ‘calf-worship,’ was now beginning to produce its natural fruit. It would have indignantly disclaimed the stigma of idolatry. It was represented as ‘image-worship,’ the adoration of cherubic symbols, which were in themselves regarded as being so little violation of the Second Commandment that they were

consecrated even in the Temple at Jerusalem.” –Farrar, The Minor Prophets, pp. 78, 79.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. What part did a prophet's personal life play in his impact upon his society? Give specific examples.
2. What was the appeal of the Baal worship to Israel?
3. What are the chief reasons for believing that Hosea's marriage is to be literally understood.
4. What influence or New Testament thought has Hosea's teaching on adultery?
5. What lessons from Hosea do you find most applicable to the modern man?

EXPANDED OUTLINE

- I. Israel's adultery (chapters. 1–3).
 - A. Hosea and Gomer; Jehovah and Israel; Israel, the adulteress and her children (1:2-2:1).
 1. The prophet's marriage and children (1:2-9).
 2. Restoration of the children of Judah and Israel (1:10 – 2:1).
 - B. Chastisement of idolatrous Israel, conversion, and restoration (2:2-23).
 1. The threat of punishment (vs. 2-13).
 2. Conversion and final restoration (vs. 14-23).
 - C. The prophet's second symbolic marriage (ch. 3).
- II. Prophetic discourses: The ungodliness of Israel and its inevitable punishment (chapters 4–13).
 - A. Jehovah's controversy with Israel (chapters 4–6).
 1. Over national guilt (ch. 4).
 - a. Moral corruption in everyday life (vs. 1-5).
 - b. Lack of knowledge – failure of the priests (vs. 6-10).
 - c. Immoral religious practices (vs. 11-14).
 - d. Ephraim joined to his idols – but let Judah be warned (vs. 15-19).
 2. Corruption in all phases of life (ch. 5).
 3. Insincerity – an abomination before Jehovah (ch. 6).
 - B. Israel's corrupt political condition and consequence (chapters 7–8).
 1. The nation's moral degradation and anarchy (7:1-7).
 2. The nation's corrupt foreign policy – appeal to foreign nations (7:8-16).
 3. Judgment (ch. 8).
 - C. Israel's religious and moral apostasy – its punishment: exile and destruction (chapters 9–11).
 1. The degeneracy of Israel and ruin of its kingdom (chs. 9–10).
 2. Jehovah's love for prodigal Israel vs. Israel's ingratitude (ch. 11).
 - D. Israel's apostasy and God's fidelity (chapters 12–13).
 1. Israel's degeneracy into Canaanitish ways (11:12 – 12:14).
 2. Israel's deep fall (ch. 13).
- III. Israel's conversion and pardon (chapter 14).
 - A. God's grace promised once more to those who turn to Him (vs. 1-8).
 - B. Epilogue to the book (v. 9).

In the end Israel cries unto Jehovah, and He hears their cry and responds by an outpouring of rich blessings upon them.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. Write out the Theme, Message, Comfort, and three permanent lessons of Hosea.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Permanent Lessons:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. Give the date of the book. _____

3. Who were the four kings that ruled in Judah during the time of Hosea's prophecy?

4. What king was ruling in Israel during Hosea's prophecy? _____

5. Give the three major divisions of the book as given in your study book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

6. Name the seven national sins of Israel which are seven steps to judgment.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

7. Who does Hosea stand for in this book? _____

Gomer? _____

The Children? _____

LESSON TWELVE

HOSEA PART (2)

INTRODUCTION:

Let's take another look at the man. He was the home missionary of the Northern Kingdom—no mere visitor, outsider, like Amos. He had grown up in the midst of all of this idolatry, in the midst of all of this corruption. It had appalled his soul from early boyhood. He had decided even not to marry, evidently, because of the evil done there and because he knew he could find no woman who would share with him his deep concern for God and his deep concern for these people becoming the people of God.

He was a man of the soil and drew many of his simple images from the fireside, the garden, and the farm (Compare 4:16; 7:4-8; 8:7; 10:11; 13:3; 14:7). As he talks about crops and talks about sheep and he talks about cattle, you get the idea that he was not raised in the urban center of Samaria or Bethel or Gilgal. He is raised on the hillside where, like Amos, he would be close to God and, like Amos, would see the wide contrasts between God's will and the people's life and disobedience.

He was a man of deep, loving, poetic nature. Read the book and notice how often he speaks of loving, caring, and helping his beloved Israel.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Hosea (especially the scriptures in this study guide book)

LESSON AIM: To get a view of the character of Israel by looking at several terms God uses to describe them.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn ten figures applied to Israel which describe their character.
 2. See four shortcomings of Israel which brought on their downward turn.
 3. Learn four things which reflects the true nature of sin.
-

A REVIEW OF HOSEA FROM LAST LESSON

I. THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 740 B.C.

II. THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK: Israel's Unfaithfulness, National Guilt, Future Hope.

1. The broken marriage covenant, Israel's lack of marital faithfulness to God.
2. Illustrated in Hosea and Gomer's marriage and Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea.
3. In spite of their national guilt of idolatry, God still stood ready to bless if they would only repent, pray, and trust in Him.
4. And so, chapter 14 offered to them the future hope based upon their repentance and their prayer and their trust.

III. THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

A. **Theme:** *God's love and suffering nature.*

1. In the midst of nations whose gods never loved their people, Hosea's God loved His people.

2. In the midst of nations whose gods never suffered, Hosea's God suffered.
3. Hosea learned this great truth by his own experience with Gomer.

NOTE: Hosea loved Gomer in spite of all of her immorality and that immorality caused him to suffer so greatly. And then it dawned on him that if he loved Gomer that much, God loved Israel even more. And if he suffered that much with Gomer's sins, God suffered even more with Israel's sins.

B. Message: God's desire to forgive and restore.

1. Hosea wanted to forgive and restore.
2. God also wanted to forgive and restore.

C. Lessons of permanent value

1. The sacredness and the validity of the marriage vow. When God took Israel as His wife, God said, "I will be faithful to you, no matter what." And He was, even when finally He had to divorce that ungodly woman. But He always wanted her back. And Hosea did that same thing.
2. Inward corruption is more dangerous to a nation's existence than external enemies.
3. God is always ready to forgive. Compare the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15.

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. God's Figures for the Sinner

1. **An adulterous wife** (3:1). "*Go show your love to your wife again though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.*"
 - a. God says the willful sinner is an adulterer.
 - b. James also says the same thing. "*You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*"
 - c. Israel had been Jehovah's chosen people; they only, of all the nations, had been His.
2. **A wine-inflamed drunkard** (4:11). "*Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.*" The drunkard cannot do what he wants to do. He cannot go where he wants to go. He stumbles. He falls. He lies in his own vomit. There is nothing he won't do to get another drink of wine. There is nothing the sinner won't do to get another shot at sin.
3. **A backsliding heifer** (4:16). "*The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. How then can the LORD pasture them like lambs in a meadow?*" The sinner will go back to be pleased in areas where the pleasure has already died.
4. **A troop of robbers** (6:9). "*As marauders lie in ambush for a man, so do bands of priests. They murder on the road to Shechem, committing shameful crimes.*"
 - a. Robbers that are lying in wait on the way to the holy place.
 - b. When the worshipers come they jump on them.
5. **A hot oven** (7:7). "*All of them are as hot as an oven. They devour their rulers. All their kings fall and none of them call to me.*" There is no need to send any temptation to them.
6. **A half-baked cake** ("not turned") (7:8). "*Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over.*"
 - a. Toward sin, downward, they were hot.
 - b. Toward God, upward, they were raw and cold.
7. **A silly dove** (7:11). "*Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless—now calling to Egypt, now calling to Assyria.*" That's what the sinner is like. He doesn't know where to go.

8. **A deceitful bow** (7:16). “*They do not turn to the Most High; they are like a faulty or deceitful bow. Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt.*”
9. **An unwanted vessel** (8:8). “*They are from Israel! This calf—a craftsman has made it; it is not a god. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria. Israel is swallowed up; now she is among the nations like a worthless thing.*” Idolatry has led Israel’s vessel to be unwanted and worthless.
10. **A wild donkey** (8:9). “*For they have come up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone. Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.*” A wild donkey in heat all by itself. That’s God’s picture of the sinner!

NOTE: I think we need to look at those again one of these days and just see in our private study that is what we are like. Those ten things describe us, if willfully and wantonly we lead ourselves into sin.

B. Israel’s Shortcomings

1. **Lack of knowledge** (4:1, 2, 6; 6:3, 6, 8:12). “*...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children*” (Hosea 4:6 NIV).
What comes from a lack of knowledge?
 - a. Cursing.
 - b. Lying.
 - c. Murder.
 - d. Stealing.
 - e. Adultery.
 - f. Not keeping covenant.
 - g. Shedding blood.
2. **Lack of faith** (5:13; 7:11; 8:5; 11:5-7). “*When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his sores, then Ephraim turned to Assyria and sent to the great king for help. But he is not able to cure you, not able to heal your sores.*”
 - a. They cried out to other men, not to God.
 - b. They cried out to “dumb gods” and not to Jehovah God.
3. **Lack of leadership** (4:4-6; 6:8-9; 7:5-7; 9:7).
 - a. Priests who should have been the leaders of the people are actually lying in wait to hurt and destroy the people.
 - b. Israel had no leaders. Israel’s leaders were drunks. Israel’s leaders were thieves and robbers.
 - c. The only leader Israel had was Hosea. And they called him a madman. They called him a fool. “*The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac*” (Hosea 9:7 NIV).
4. **Lack of love for God** (Chs. 1-3; 11:1-4).
 - a. Gomer did not love Hosea, and Israel did not love God.
 - b. They hated God so much they would appeal to anybody other than God.
 - c. Gomer hated Hosea so much that she would go to any man and even sell herself on the marketplace before she would go home to Hosea and to his love.

C. The True Nature of Sin

1. Sin, in the final analysis, is unfaithfulness, infidelity, whoredom. See chapters 1-3.
 - a. “Whoredom” – found 18 times in Hosea.
 - b. It is the key word in all the book.

2. Sin ages the sinner and destroys his youthful spirit. The decay is gradual and imperceptible, but dangerous and fatal. See 5:12; 7:9.
3. Sin is contagious and, if continually exposed to its influence, one cannot hope to escape its consequences. See 4:9.
4. Sin's effects are as certain and as natural as the power of gravity. See 8:7.
5. Sin robs a people of the power to make moral distinctions. The optic nerve of the soul has been severed by gazing too long and too longingly at immorality. See 4:11. For the opposite, look at Ephesians 1:18.

NOTE: Man cannot see sin for what it is by observing with his physical eye the consequences of sin. You need to look into hell itself to see the final end and the final destiny of the sinner. Sin is nothing to be toyed with. It is a poisonous snake whose bite kills immediately. It is a roaring lion who devours people and there is nothing left. Sin is the very opposite of God and the very opposite of love.

CONCLUSION: HOSEA IS THE STORY OF UNREQUITED LOVE

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. List the ten figures God uses in Hosea to describe the sinner of Israel.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
 8) _____
 9) _____
 10) _____
2. There are four statements discussed by Richard Rogers which reflect the shortcomings of Israel. List these four things.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
3. What are the seven things which results from a lack of knowledge?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
4. Give the five statements which describe the true nature of sin in Hosea.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

LESSON THIRTEEN

MICAH, MESSAGE OF HOPE

INTRODUCTION:

icah takes his place in the prophetic arena of the eighth century as significantly as any of his contemporaries. He has not received as much attention from the scholars as Isaiah, Hosea or Amos, but he is nevertheless as deserving of our attention. His brevity is marked by deep insight into the social, religious and political movements of his day. He grasped the essence of God's requirement and verbalized it in the "golden rule" of the Old Covenant (6:8). He was not as lengthy or as eloquent or maybe even as perceptive as his contemporaries, but his impact upon his own and upon subsequent generations could still be measured in the memory of Judean elders (Jeremiah 26) and in the word of the teachers to Herod (Matthew 2:3-6). A message of hope and promise permeates the entire book.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Micah

LESSON AIM: To gain an overview of the book and its message of hope and promise to Judah.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the date of the book and the kings which reigned during this time and the historical evidence which support this date.
 2. See the social and religious conditions which are reflected in the sins of the times.
 3. Become familiar with a simple three point outline of the book of Micah.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: c. 735 – 700 B.C. Contemporary with Isaiah

A. The Reigns of Judah's Kings

1. Jotham – 739-735 B.C.
2. Ahaz – 735-715 B.C.
3. Hezekiah – 715-686 B.C.

B. The Historical Evidence

1. The high places still exists (1:5) and corruption and moral declension mark the nation (2:1-13). This would point clearly to the reign of Jotham and Ahaz for the message's beginning (Compare 2 Kings 15:35; 16:4; 2 Chronicles 28:4, 25).
2. The prophecy of the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians would place the message in chapter one before 722 B.C.
3. The allusion to human sacrifice (6:7) befits the time of Ahaz, who sacrificed his sons to Molech (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chronicles 28:3).
4. Micah's denunciation of idolatry and great wickedness would not have been delivered after the reformation under Hezekiah.

C. The Historical Background for this Date

1. As in Israel, it was a golden age of prophecy and a black age for Judah. It was a period of turmoil, strife, change and growth.
2. In 745 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) of Assyria began his re-conquest of the

West. In 738 B.C. his army was in Syria and at the gate of Samaria, the capital of the northern nation of Israel.

3. Israel and Syria, tired of Assyrian taxes, pled to Egypt for help against Tiglath-Pileser. Jotham and Ahaz refuse to join their alliance. The kings of Israel and Syria war against Ahaz, defeat him, and sack the city of Jerusalem. It was a dark hour.
4. Ahaz calls for help from Tiglath-Pileser who defeats both of the opposing kings. Ahaz is forced to go to Damascus and pay allegiance to Assyria. He had to accept his place as a puppet-king.
5. Sargon, the new king of Assyria, came upon the west in 711 B.C. and afflicted terrible judgment upon nearly all of Philistia and Judah. In some way Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem were spared.
6. At the death of Sargon, in 705 B.C., the young Sennacherib came into power in Assyria. Egypt, Phoenicia, Philistia, Judah, and others revolted against Assyrian rule. Sennacherib defeated every rebel, and only God's direct intervention saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem, the city of God.
7. These were stirring times. God was leading his followers and gradually working out His own great purpose in the world.

D. Social Conditions of the Time

1. Judges are corrupt in administering justice (2:2). "*They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellow-man of his inheritance.*" (3:2) ". . . you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones. . ."
2. Priests and prophets, the religious leaders, are full of greed (3:9-11).
3. Avariciousness and cruelty characterize the people (2:8-9).

E. Religious Conditions of the Time

1. False prophets (2:11). "*If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' he would be just the prophet for this people!*"
2. Soothsaying, witchcraft, superstition and idolatry (3:6-7). "*Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.*"

F. The Sins of the Times

1. Oppression of the poor (2:2, 8-9; 3:1-4).
2. Unscrupulous use of power (2:1f; 3:10).
3. Lack of integrity (6:12; 7:2-6).
4. Reckless scorn of religion (3:5-8; 5:12-14).
5. False prophets (3:5, 7, 9-11).
6. Greedy corruption in church and state.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. Exile and Restoration (chs. 1-2)

1. The case against Jerusalem and Samaria (1:2-7). (THREAT)
2. Lamentation over Judah's incurable disease (1:8-9).
3. Itinerary of judgment (1:10-16).
4. The crime and the punishment (2:1-5).
5. Dispute with false prophets (2:6-11).
6. Return from exile (2:12-13). (PROMISE)

B. The Fall and Rise of a Nation (chs 3-5)

1. The word against the princes (3:1-4). (THREAT)
2. The word against false prophets (3:5-7).
3. Micah, the true prophet.
4. The sins of the leaders and its consequence – Jerusalem's fall (3:9-12).
 - a. The accusation against them (vs. 9-11).
 - b. Consequence – Jerusalem to be plowed as a field (v. 12).
5. The exaltation of the Lord's house (4:1-4). (PROMISE)
6. A public confession (4:5).
7. The Lord's reign (4:6-8).
8. Exile to Babylon (4:9-10). (THREAT)
9. Israel's victory over the Nations (4:11-13). (PROMISE)
10. Announcement of Assyrian siege (5:1). (THREAT)
11. The emerging King (5:2-6). (PROMISE)
 - a. To arise out of Bethlehem – He will feed His flock.
 - b. The King will be the peace of His people.
12. A powerful remnant (5:7-9).
 - a. They will be as dew among the peoples.
 - b. They will be as a lion.
 - c. They will triumph over their enemies.
13. Destruction of idolatry.

C. Final Indictment, Lament, Promise (chs. 6-7)

1. The case against Judah (6:1-5). (THREAT) Israel's ingratitude for blessings bestowed.
2. The people's response (6:6-7).
3. The Lord's essential demands (6:8). (PROMISE) Not outward sacrifice, but righteous conduct, is God's requirement.
4. Jerusalem's sins and their consequences (6:9-16). (THREAT)
5. Lamentation over Judah's sins(7:8-13).
6. Jerusalem's lament and hope (7:8-13. (PROMISE)
7. A final word from the Lord God (7:14-17).
8. A final statement of faith (7:18-20).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. **Its Theme:** *God is a God of ethical righteousness*
- B. **Its Message:** *God's desire for pure religion*
- C. **Its Comfort:** *God's requirements are few, simple, and just*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *Elaborate pretensions of piety and liberal gifts in public cannot atone for a lack of true righteousness in the heart.*
2. *Courage comes to those who sense the presence of God in their life.*
3. *The unscrupulous use of power, even when within the bounds of law, hurts the heart of God* (Compare 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THIRTEEN:

1. Give the Theme, Message, Comfort, and permanent lessons of the book of Micah.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Permanent Lessons:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. What is the date of the book and with whom is Micah contemporary? _____

3. What three Judean kings reigned during Micah's prophecy? _____

4. Give the simple three point outline of the book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. Give four statements of historical evidence which establish the date of the book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. List six prevalent sins of the times.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7. Write out Micah 6:8 from memory. _____

LESSON FOURTEEN

MICAH (2)

INTRODUCTION:

This is our second lesson in the study of the book of Micah. It is good to find a worthy champion of the poor who has courage and power to deliver an effective message. Knowing his people so intimately, Micah was able to present in vivid colors the challenge to justice and consideration of the poor. His profound sympathy with the oppressed people came to life in unforgettable words. His spirit burned with righteous indignation as he saw the rank injustice practiced upon his neighbors and friends. The poor peasants of Judah had a strong champion in this young preacher from the country.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Micah

LESSON AIM: To learn of Micah's challenge to the leaders of Israel to treat the poor people with justice and consideration.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Consider the social conditions in Judah during the time of Micah.
 2. See Micah's quartet of evil-doers who were leading in oppressing the poor.
 3. Understand Micah's picture of God, the Kingdom, and the King revealed in the book.
-

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

- A. **THE DATE OF THE BOOK:** c. 735-700 B.C. (See the reasons from the previous lesson)
- B. **THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK:** Three simple points:
 1. There is an exile to come but a restoration to follow (chs. 1-2).
 2. There is a fall that Judah must endure, but they will rise back to glory (chs. 3-5).
 3. There is an indictment because of their sins, but there is promise that they will be back in the land, the wise, productive people of God (chs. 6-7)
- C. **THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK:**
See "The Teaching of the Book in previous lesson.
 1. God's Ethical Righteousness
 2. God's Desire for Pure Religion
 3. God's Simple Requirements

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. Social Conditions in Judah

1. Corruption in administering justice (2:2; 3:2). **Sinful Judges.** Their judges were greedy. They were taking out their greed on people.
2. Greed in religious leaders (3:9-11). **Sinful priests and prophets.** Here were people teaching God's word for only one reason, the pay, the money they could get out of it.
3. Greed and cruelty in the entire nation (2:8-9). **Sinful nation.** It was a sinful, wicked, greedy people, socially and morally.

B. Religious Conditions in Judah

1. False prophets abound (2:11). Prophets who preached what they, the people, wanted to hear.
2. Soothsaying, witchcraft, superstition, idolatry predominated (3:6-7). The land was wicked socially. It was wicked morally.

C. The Sins of the Time. The sins of the time are remarkably like Israel's. It would appear as if the older brother, Judah, has learned from the younger brother, Israel.

1. **Oppression of the poor** (2:2, 8-9; 3:1-4). They stayed awake at night planning the oppression that they would bring upon the poor the next day.
2. **Unscrupulous use of power** (2:1-2; 3:10). They used their God-given legitimate power in an unscrupulous and ungodly way.
3. **Lack of integrity** (6:12; 7:2-6). They would say one thing, and they would mean another. They lied to each other.
4. **Reckless scorn of religion** (3:5-8; 5:12-14).
 - a. They mocked the Sabbath day.
 - b. They mocked the will and the way of God.

NOTE: They still fulfilled legally to the letter what God wanted done. But they scornfully did so. They didn't do so out of their heart. A lesson every prophet of the eighth century teaches is that outward religion, when given to God, with no inward desire to serve him, is offensive to God. He hates it!

5. **False Prophets** (3:5, 7, 9-11).
 - a. They had the best prophets money could buy.
 - b. God does not do what they say He will do and that brings shame upon them.
6. **Greedy corruption** in church and state (1:5, 7; 2:8-9; 6:10-12). In the very capital of the city where the leaders were found, where worship should have been at its highest, it is corrupt to the core. Israel's sin is at the very heart of their land.

D. Micah's Quartet of Evil-Doers

1. *The greedy land-grabber* (2:1-2, 9; 7:5-7). He lay awake at night planning how to steal from the poor and widowed. The greedy land-grabbers were a reason for Israel's fall.
2. *The power-hungry rulers*.
 - a. They hated good and loved evil (3:1-4).
 - b. They took bribes (7:3). "*Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire—they all conspire together.*"
 - c. They were like cannibals (3:3). "*...who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?*"
3. *The hireling false prophets* (3:11). They divined (cf. Deuteronomy 18:11-13) for money and made war against anyone who opposed them and would not pay them (3:5).
4. The priests who taught for hire (3:11).

NOTE: The rich, the rulers, the proclaimers, and the religious teachers were leading in oppressing the poor and deceiving the populace.

E. Micah's Picture of God

1. He is the God who is **judge** (1:3, 6; 3:12). He is the one who is going to come and judge all that has happened.
2. He is the God who is **ethically righteous** (2:1-2; 3:2-3, 10-11; 6:8; 7:2). Every time Micah presents the immorality of the people (2:1-2; 3:1-11; 6:6; 7:2) he presents God's righteous nature.
3. He is a God who **loves peace** (4:3; 5:5).

- a. He will establish a kingdom of peace (4:3).
- b. He is going to send a King of peace (5:5).
- c. There will be a kingdom of peace ruled by a King of peace because God is a God that loves peace.
- 4. He is a God who **gives hope and promise** (7:7, 18-20).
- 5. He is the God who will **reach the world from Zion** (4:1-5).
 - a. The word of the Lord will go forth from Zion.
 - b. The Law will go forth from Jerusalem.

F. Micah's Picture of the Kingdom (4:1-8)

- 1. **Its Exaltation** – “Among” and “above” (v. 1).
- 2. **Its Extent** – “Peoples. . .stream to it” (v. 1).
- 3. **Its Standard** – “His ways” and “His paths” (v. 2).
- 4. **Its Commission** – “Law. . .from Zion” “Word. . .from Jerusalem” (v. 2).
- 5. **Its Power** – “Judge between” – “settle disputes” (v. 3).
- 6. **Its Plan** – “War instruments into farm tools” (v. 3).
- 7. **Its Peace** – Supply (“vine. . .fig tree”) and solace (no fear) (v. 4).
- 8. **Its Faith** – “Walk in the name of the Lord” (v. 5). Two key words: walk and name.
 - a. We will walk, that is, we will live – progress.
 - b. We will make our progress in the “name” of the Lord.
 - In the possession of God.
 - By the authority and strength of God.
- 9. **Its Strength** – “The LORD will rule over them” (vs. 6-7).
 - a. Not ruled by kings, prophets, or priests who desire something other than their good.
 - b. Ruled by the Lord who at the cross will show, “I am only concerned with your good, not mine.”
- 10. **Its Glory** – “Former dominion. . .kingship” (v. 8).

G. Micah's Picture of the King (5:2-9)

- 1. **His place of birth** (2a) – “Little” Bethlehem
- 2. **His lack of origin** (2b) – Going out from old times. He is eternal.
- 3. **His work in Israel** (3-4) – To shepherd God’s flock.
- 4. **His peace to Israel** (5-6) – Freedom from future enemies.
- 5. **His provision to Israel** (7-9) – They will be to the world as:
 - a. Refreshing dew and showers of rain.
 - b. Triumphant Lion.

NOTE: This is the picture of the King. It was this text that the rulers or the teachers of Israel used to tell Herod where the Messiah would be born, where Jesus was born.

H. Other's Quotation of Micah

- 1. In Jeremiah 26:18 (Micah 3:12) by the elders of Judah – Saved Jeremiah’s life.
- 2. In Matthew 2:5-6 (Micah 5:2) by the scribes in Jerusalem – Led to Jesus’ birthplace.
- 3. In Matthew 10:35-36 (Micah 7:6) by Jesus to apostles – Prepared the apostles for persecution that was to come.

CONCLUSION: The Nature of True Religion. “*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*” (Micah 6:8 NIV).

- A. *To do justly.* The golden rule (Matthew 7:12). Man’s relationship to himself – a **life of elementary morality**.
- B. *To love kindness.* Jesus said (quoting Hosea), “*I desire mercy not sacrifice.*”

Many times Jesus was “*moved with compassion.*” Man’s relationship to others – a **life of benevolence**.

- C. *To walk humbly before God.* Amos 3:3; Genesis 5:24; 6:9. Man’s relationship to God – a life of humble service.

NOTE: Three great qualities – justice, kindness and humility. Compare Matthew 22:37-40; 23:23; Galatians 5:22; James 1:27.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOURTEEN:

1. The social corruption in Judah involved what three groups of people?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
2. What two things or groups of people reflected the religious conditions in Judah in Micah’s day?
1) _____
2) _____
3. What was the lesson every prophet of the eighth century taught concerning one’s approach to God?

4. Give Micah’s quartet of evil-doers.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5. Micah pictures God in five particular ways. List these below.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6. What are the three things in 6:8 which show the nature of true religion?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

TEST TIME!

You have completed the first six Minor Prophets. At this point you will have a Mid-Term Test. You will need to review the material you have covered thus far. Especially review the **Themes, Messages, Comforts, Lessons, and Dates** of each book and be sure to re-read all six books you have studied.

LESSON FIFTEEN

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to our study of the book of Zephaniah. In Zephaniah we turn from the eighth century to the seventh century. The nation of Israel (10 northern tribes) has fallen, and only the nation of Judah exists. The long reign of Hezekiah's wicked son Manasseh who reigned from 687-642 B.C. has reversed whatever good Hezekiah had accomplished in his reforms and his attempt to make Israel again the religious center of the universe.

Manasseh had sought to survive in his world of turmoil by becoming pro-Assyrian in his politics. He had alliances. As a matter of fact, he was the puppet king of Assyria. The prophets would not allow this for a moment. To them, the only way to survive was absolute trust in God. And so Zephaniah is raised up by God to say, "Do not trust in the arm of the flesh. Do not trust in horses and chariots. Don't trust in your alliances with Assyria. Trust in Jehovah, as Hezekiah had done."

LESSON TEXT: The entire book of Zephaniah

LESSON AIM: To learn about the "Day of Jehovah," that the extent of God's rule includes all the universe, and that all His activity is for the salvation of the remnant.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Examine the historical background of the time that Zephaniah writes.
 2. Learn the date of the book, its writer, and an outline of the book.
 3. Know seven specific sins for which the people are guilty and thus deserve the pronounced judgment of Jehovah.
 4. Study the description of the Messiah's Kingdom.
-

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ZEPHANIAH

A. The Long Reign of Hezekiah's Wicked Son Manasseh (687-642 B.C.)

1. Reversed whatever good Hezekiah had accomplished.
2. Manasseh had sought to survive in his world of turmoil by becoming pro-Assyrian in his politics.
3. The prophets would not allow this for a moment. To them, the only way to survive was absolute trust in God.

B. Prophetic Witness During Manasseh's Reign

1. In the historical narrative of Manasseh's reign, we have record, though slight, of prophetic witness (2 Kings 21:10-15; 2 Chronicles 33:10).
2. As usual, the people or the king did not heed the prophetic message.

C. Manasseh Carried off to Babylon

1. God, in His marvelous grace, had the king of Assyria bind Manasseh, put a hook in his nose and carry him away to Babylon.
2. There, he turned to the Lord, humbled himself, and called on the Lord for deliverance.

D. Manasseh Removed the Foreign Idols

1. Back in Jerusalem, he did his best to undo the wrong he had done: removed foreign gods, removed the image from the temple of the Lord.
2. Restored the altar of the Lord, sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank-offerings unto the Lord, told Judah to worship only God.

E. Sacrifice to Idols Continued

1. But, while worshiping only God, they “continued to sacrifice at the high places.”
2. This confusion of the worship of the Lord with that of Baal is seen in Zephaniah 1:4-5. *“I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place the remnant (not a lot, but some) of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests.”*

F. Amon Re-Instituted the Idolatrous Practices

1. Amon, who followed his father Manasseh to Judah’s throne, re-instituted all the religious atrocities his father had tried to remove.
2. He had learned well from the early days of his father. Amon’s reign is short, but it re-institutes into the land all of the evil of Baal worship with its ungodly materialism and its ungodly sexual immorality.

G. Josiah, Last Good King of Judah

1. Came to the throne at the age of eight, sought God at age 15, began to reform in the land at age 20, completed the reformation at age 26. It was after this that Zephaniah prophesied.
2. He was killed by Pharaoh-Necho, ruler of Egypt, at Megiddo in his one act of rebellion against God.

THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

A. His Name and its Meaning

The name Zephaniah itself, meaning Jehovah hath hidden, suggests the prophet’s birth in the “killing-time” of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16). *“Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end . . .”*

B. His Ancestry and Family

He traces his ancestry back four generations to Hezekiah. He is, therefore, of royal ancestry. He is like Isaiah. He is welcome at the royal palace.

C. His Home

The prophet lived in Judah, probably in Jerusalem, “this place” (1:4). He may have been a part of the palace court.

NOTE: Perhaps, his ministry encouraged Josiah’s reforms of 2 Chronicles 34:1-7. Josiah, as great a king as he was would need the encouragement of the man of God telling him constantly that he is doing the will of God. He was a contemporary of Nahum and Jeremiah.

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: c. 625 B.C.

A. During Reign of Josiah (639-608 B.C.). The prophet’s activity may be placed between 630-625 or 626.

B. After Josiah’s Reforms

1. The remnant of Baal (1:4). "*I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, [and] the name of the Chemarims with the priests.*"
2. The king's sons (1:8). "*On the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all those clad in foreign clothes.*"

NOTE: Josiah is old enough not just to have a son, but to have sons that are worthy of judgment. That's a sad commentary on the fact that evil companionship corrupts good morals, isn't it? Here is Josiah, the best of the kings of Judah and yet his sons are following the wickedness of the time, and they will have to be judged with the people that have brought idolatry into the land. So I am persuaded that the book was written in the second half of the seventh century B.C., about the year 620 B.C.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. The Judgment of the Day of the Lord (chs. 1-2)

1. The day of judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem (1:1-2:3).
 - a. Total destruction (1:1-3).

"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth, declares the LORD. I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea." That's not literal. He simply says this judgment, destruction, that is going to come upon Judah and upon Jerusalem will be total. *"The wicked will have only heaps of rubble, and I will cut off man from the face of the earth, declares the LORD."*
 - b. Adequate causes (1:4-9).
 - 1) Apostasy and Idolatry (vs. 4-6).
 - 2) Moral and ethical corruption (vs. 7-9).
 - c. Terrible day (1:10-18).
 - 1) Lamentation demanded (vs. 10-13).
 - 2) Judgment described (vs. 14-18).
 - d. Repentance urged (2:1-3).
2. The day of judgment upon the nations (2:4-15).
 - a. Philistia – To the west (vs. 4-7).
 - b. Moab and Ammon – To the east (vs. 8-11).
 - c. Ethiopia – To the south – (v. 12).
 - d. Assyria – To the north (vs. 13-15).

B. The Salvation of the Day of the Lord (ch. 3)

1. Jerusalem's sinfulness and the Lord's righteousness contrasted (3:1-7).
 - a. Jerusalem's disobedience and faithlessness (vs. 1-2).
 - b. Condemnation of her leaders (vs. 3-4). (Princes, Prophets, Priests)
 - c. The contrasts itself (vs. 5-7).
2. The purpose of judgment – salvation and restoration (3:8-20).
 - a. Salvation for a remnant of the nations (vs. 8-10).
 - b. Salvation of a remnant of Israel (vs. 11-13).
 - c. Establishment of the kingdom (vs. 14-20).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

A. Its Theme: *The Day of Jehovah is near for all the world*

B. Its Message: *Jehovah is the God of the universe*

C. Its Comfort: *All that God does is for the salvation of the remnant*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *One becomes like the God he worships.*
 - a. If I worship a god that is immoral, I will become immoral. If I worship a god that is power-hungry, I will become power-hungry. If I worship a god that is cruel, I will become cruel.
 - b. If I worship a God whose name is love, then my name will become loving and lovable. If I worship a God that is peace-bringing, I will bring peace. If I worship a God that is hope-causing, I will cause hope. I need to be careful what I make ultimate in my life, for my life will become like it.
2. *Earnest warning is needed to draw us back to God.*
3. *We must put emphasis on the spiritual nature of the kingdom.*
Not on brick and mortar, not even on the works that we do or the sermons we preach or the songs that we sing. But on the one that we sing to, on the one that we serve, on the spiritual hidden secret nature of the church, the kingdom of God.

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. The Sins of Judah

1. Religious syncretism (1:4-5).
 - a. Baal
 - b. Molech
 - c. Stars of heavens
2. Wearing foreign apparel (1:8).
The law had stipulated certain apparel for certain tribes, and they were not even to have certain kinds of fringes on their borders because that would make them look like the Gentiles that were round about them. And if they looked like them, it won't be long until they are like them.
3. Robbery ("leaping over the threshold") (1:9).
4. Fraud and violence (1:9).
5. Violent and wanton leaders (3:3-4).
6. They considered God to be indifferent (1:12).
7. Refusal to receive correction (3:2, 7).

B. A Description of the Messiah's Kingdom (3:9-20)

1. From all nations with one purpose (vs. 9-10). (cf. Ephesians 2:11-22).
2. Restored, cleansed, sanctified (vs. 11-13). (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:10-11).
3. Comforted and exalted (vs. 14-20). (cf. 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:14-21).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

A. The Day Of Jehovah

1. Is near (1:14). "*The great day of the LORD is near—near and coming quickly.*"
2. Is a day of terror (1:15-16).
3. Comes as judgment for sin (1:17).
4. Falls upon all creation: man and beast, Hebrew and Gentile (1:2-3; 2:1-15; 3:8).

B. The Constant Necessity of Warning (1:14-16)

C. The Necessity of Moral Sifting (3:7-13)

D. The Spiritual Nature of God's Kingdom (3:14-20)

PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE

1. God gives assurance that humble seekers will be safe in the day of judgment.
2. God's ministers should put strong emphasis on the spiritual nature of the kingdom.
3. God's purpose is not vengeance but to cleanse and refine and save those who will allow Him to save them.

Questions for further study:

1. What have the times of Zephaniah in common with our own times?
2. What spiritual condition contains the greatest threat to the Lord's cause?
3. What does it mean to be *settled on their lees*?
4. What emphasis is there on the mercy of God in Zephaniah?
5. What traits of God are stressed? Discuss these.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIFTEEN:

1. Give below the Date, Theme, Message, Comfort, and the three Permanent Lessons as listed in the Course Guide.

Date: _____

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Lessons: 1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. List the seven specific sins of which the people of Zephaniah's time were guilty.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

3. During whose reign did Zephaniah prophecy? _____

4. Give the two-point outline of the book of Zephaniah.

Chs. 1-2: _____

Ch. 3 _____

5. Give a brief description of the Messiah's Kingdom from Zephaniah 3:9-20.

LESSON SIXTEEN

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

INTRODUCTION:

Ne are going to study the book of Nahum in this lesson. Jonah would have loved to have been there to hear Nahum preach because Nahum is one final “at last.” At last the city of Nineveh, and the nation of Assyria is to be destroyed. To understand the book of Nahum, we have to do a little talking about historical background, for these books were not written in a vacuum. They are written in the history of the day and about the history of that day. Let’s take a look at some Assyrian kings. We’ve already talked about one of them to a certain degree earlier.

A. Historical Background – Assyrian Kings.

1. Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) – 747-727 B.C. Deported some of the citizens of Northern Israel. He is also called Pul in the Bible, came down and didn’t destroy the city of Samaria, but they did surrender to him, and he took some of their citizens back to Assyria.
 2. Shalmaneser V – 727-722 B.C. He began the siege of the city of Samaria. Israel rebelled against Assyria, so Shalmaneser came this time, not to accept a surrender, but to destroy the city of Samaria. He died during the siege.
 3. Sargon II – 722-705 B.C. Finished the siege of Samaria. Destroyed the city, sowed salt into the hill upon which the city was built so that no one would be able to grow anything there for years. He was murdered in his palace in the year 705 B.C.
 4. Sennacherib – 705-681 B.C. He is the king that came back into the land to try to subjugate all of the country of Judah. He boasts that he shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage. But the next thing I read, he is back in the city of Nineveh counting his booty. Something happened. Every other city that he attacked he will say, “I destroyed them and killed their king or put a hook in the nose of their king and carried him back to Assyria.” But all he says in this case is, “I shut up Hezekiah in the cage. Meanwhile, back in the city of Nineveh, I was looking at what I had captured.” What happened you will find in the book of Isaiah and in the book of II Chronicles. You see, Hezekiah is praying to God. Isaiah is preaching for God, and because Hezekiah stood firm against Sennacherib, God sent a destroying angel into Sennacherib’s camp one night, and Sennacherib woke up and dug 185,000 graves in which he put the chief of his soldiers, and he limped home with a defeated army. And Hezekiah and Judah had not shot an arrow, had not thrown a spear or a stone. The victory had been God’s.
 5. Esar-hadden – 681-622. Very little is known about him.
 6. Assur-bani-pal – 668-625. Destroyed No-Amon (Nahum 3:8). Very cruel.
 7. Assur-til-ilani – 625-620.
 8. Sin-Sar-Uskin (Esar-hadden II) – 620-612. He, his wives, and his children and all his wealth were gathered in the palace, and fire set to it by the Babylonian army.
- B. Characterization of Nineveh. Farrar who wrote a history of Assyria wrote about this empire. He said there has never been a nation more fierce, more cruel, or more proud, that marched across the pages of history than this nation of Assyria. They boasted how when they fought battles, they strewed the countryside with the corpses of their enemies, how they ripped the hearts out of the kings and the princes and put their bodies on stakes and sat fire to them and cooked their hearts and would eat their hearts under the fire of the kings that they had destroyed. They put hooks into the noses and into the flesh of the people that

they conquered and pulled them back to Assyria. Of course they fought, and of course the flesh would rip away, but they would just put the hook in a place where it had not been before. There never has been a nation that deserved destroying more than the nation of Assyria. This was the nation that had repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now 100 or 200 years later, this nation is to be destroyed.

C. Nature of the Book.

In a day when dictators are seeking to run ruthlessly over the earth, the prophet Nahum comes to us with peculiar freshness and meaning. Vengeance still belongs to God. Such monstrous disregard of God and His righteous standards will bring swift and certain judgment. Any nation that deliberately sets itself to defy God and trample upon innocent people must feel the terrible touch of the divine hand. Assyria is “an object lesson. . . of the need of that righteousness – personal, civic and national – which alone exalts a nation.” Nahum’s book is a terrific arraignment of a nation that seeks glory by war and oppression. God still hates brutality, violence and wrong.

LESSON TEXT: All the book of Nahum

LESSON AIM: To learn from the book of Nahum that the doom of Nineveh is imminent and sure because of its cruelty, brutality, violence, and arrogance and make application to present day nations.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the date in which the book was written and the reasons for this date.
 2. Know the overall teaching of the book by studying with Richard Rogers the book by outline.
 3. Examine the historical background to the teaching in the book of Nahum.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 630-612 B.C.

- A. **The fall of No-Amon (Thebes) in 663 B.C. Had Already Occurred.** “Are you better than Thebes, situated on the Nile, with water around her? The river was her defense, the waters her wall” (Nahum 3:8). And the obvious answer is a resounding NO!
- B. **The Fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. Was Still Future**
- C. **Nineveh Was Still at the Height of Her Glory (3:16-17)**
 1. Nineveh thought they were still young.
 2. They were growing old and ready to disappear.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Nineveh will not fall because she has become weak. Nineveh will fall at the height of her strength.

A. Nineveh’s Doom – Decreed By The Lord (ch. 1)

1. The goodness and severity of the Lord (vs. 1-8).
 - a. Vengeance and mercy of God (vs. 1-3). “The LORD is a jealous and avenging God. The LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The

LORD takes vengeance on His foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies” (v. 2).

- b. Terrible anger against sin (vs. 4-6). “*Who can endure His fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire. The rocks are shattered before Him.*”
- c. God’s mercy – The refuge of the righteous (v. 7).
 - 1) Here is his mercy in the midst of judgment – not in contrast to it.
 - 2) He will deliver those who trust in Him – the righteous.
- d. God’s pursuit of His enemies (v. 8). His mercy is a refuge for the righteous, but His pursuit is the end of the wicked.
- 2. The complete overthrow of Nineveh (vs. 9-15).
 - a. Faithful deliverance (vs. 9-11). Affliction will not come from Assyria (as in the past).
 - b. Total destruction (vs. 12-14). Judah delivered from the yoke of Assyria by the destruction of Nineveh’s power.
 - c. Zion’s rejoicing (v. 15). He says there is good news from the mountain top. The enemy is dead. Nineveh has been destroyed.
 - 1) By the will of God.
 - 2) By the decree of God.

B. Nineveh’s Siege – Decreed by the Lord (ch. 2)

- 1. Assault upon the city (vs. 1-7).
 - a. Furious preparation (vs. 1-4). The approach of the enemy, humiliation of Nineveh. Nineveh gets ready for war. They had done it again and again and again. And they are sure of victory.
 - b. Hopeless resistance (vs. 5-6). All the resistance that they would make against the approaching enemy is useless.
 - c. The Queen-city captured (v. 7).
- 2. Flight of the people and sack of the city (vs. 8-15).
 - a. The inhabitants flee, the city is plundered (vs. 8-10).
 - b. The destruction is complete (vs. 11-13).

C. Nineveh’s Sins – Condemned by the Lord (ch. 3)

- 1. Retribution for her crimes (vs. 1-7). Nineveh’s fate brought upon herself as retribution for her own crimes.
 - a. Graphic description of battle (vs. 1-3).
 - b. Her sins cause of fall (v. 4).
 - c. Naked shame (vs. 5-7). The uncovering of her shame is Jehovah.
- 2. Her fate same as Thebes (vs. 8-11). The fate of No-Amon (Thebes) is to be the fate of Nineveh.
- 3. Her riches cannot save her now (vs. 12-19).
 - a. Fall of outlying strongholds (vs. 12-13).
 - b. Siege and destruction of the city (vs. 14-16).
 - c. Universal rejoicing over city’s destruction (v. 19b).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme: *The doom of Nineveh*
- B. Its Message: *God still rules the world*
- C. Its Comfort: *God will keep His promises*
- D. Its Permanent Lessons:
 - 1. *God hates brutality, violence, and wrong.*
 - 2. *There is a limit to God’s patience.*
 - 3. *The Lord is against any nation that acquires wealth by oppression and slaughter and war.*

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. About God (1:2-3, 7)

1. The Judge – Jealous, vengeful, furious, wrathful, great in power, will not acquit the wicked, indignant.
2. The Father – Slow to anger, good, a stronghold in trouble, know them that trust Him.

B. About Wicked Nations

1. Condemned to utter destruction (1:8-9).
2. Name will be blotted out (1:10).
3. God will dig its grave (1:14).
4. Great wealth and power cannot save it (3:8-19).

C. About Gospel Statements

1. Patience of God (1:3).
2. Refuge of God (1:7).
3. Salvation of God (1:15).
4. Restoration of God (2:2).

D. About Control of Nature

1. Weather (1:3).
2. Drought (1:4).
3. Calamity (1:5-6).

CONCLUSION: TWO SUPREME ASPECTS OF DIVINE HOLINESS

A. Wrath for the Wicked

1. Jealous of His honor (1:2).
2. Avenger of His will (1:2).
3. Full of wrath (1:2).
4. Fierce in anger (1:6).

B. Mercy for the Penitent

1. Slow to anger (1:3).
2. Good (1:7).
3. Cognizant of those who trust Him (1:7).
4. Deliverer from evil one (1:15).



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. Is Nahum's doctrine of God's providence in history relevant to present day international problems?
2. Is the joy Nahum shows over the fall of Nineveh lacking in Christian spirit?
3. Can a man love good if he does not hate injustice and evil?
4. Describe the contribution of Nineveh to Biblical history.
5. What features unique to this prophet does the book of Nahum present?

***GOD WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES!
NINEVEH WILL FALL!***

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIXTEEN:

1. Which Assyrian king boasted that he “had shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage?”

2. What happened when this king surrounded the city of Jerusalem with his army?

3. Give the date of the book of Nahum and three reasons for this date.

Date: _____

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. Give a three point outline of the book of Nahum.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. Give the Theme, Message, Comfort, and Permanent Lessons of the book.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Permanent Lessons:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON SEVENTEEN

BOOK OF HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION:

Habakkuk prophesied during a time that he really couldn't understand. Judah's sun is going down. It is just a few years from their total and absolute destruction. And the wickedness of the land is in front of this great man of God. He is having difficulty understanding it.

A. Characterization of the Book: The book of Habakkuk differs from other books of prophecy in one important aspect. Instead of being God's spokesman to the people, he takes the people's complaint to the Lord. The lawlessness and injustice in Judah and Jerusalem and the rising power of Babylon, as it was ruthlessly sweeping everything before its mighty move for conquest, sent the prophet to the Lord with his problem of faith. (Homer Hailey)

B. Characterization of the Prophet: The other prophets address the nation on behalf of God. Habakkuk speaks to God on behalf of the people. Their task was the people's sin, the proclamation of God's doom and the offer of His grace to the penitent. Habakkuk's task is God Himself, the effort to find out what He means by permitting tyranny and wrong. They attack sins, he is the first to state the problems of life. (G.A. Smith)

1. Habakkuk had witnessed the reformation under the dynamic leadership of Josiah, the last good king of Judah.
2. Habakkuk watched the fading glow of the setting sun of Assyria. A great world kingdom was dying before his eyes.
3. Habakkuk was a prominent citizen of Jerusalem who had the confidence and respect of the leaders of the city.
4. Habakkuk was a careful student of God's dealings with His chosen people.
5. When his doubts arose and he could not reconcile a bad world with a good God and a righteous law, he refused utterly to dismiss his doubts without an answer. We thank God for an honest searcher after truth who was willing to go directly to God for the answers.

LESSON TEXT: All the book of Habakkuk

LESSON AIM: To solve the problem of divine discipline for God's people and the courage that the righteous can have in time of crisis.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that God can and will judge His people when they become wicked through others even more wicked than they.
2. Know that the wicked, even though used by God to judge someone else, is always responsible to God for his own wickedness.
3. Discover that prayer, in the time of judgment and crisis, is the right approach and activity by repentant people of God.

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 625-605 B.C.

- A. After Assyria's Fall in 612 B.C.**
- B. Before First Deportation to Babylon in 606 B.C.**

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- A. God's Judgment upon Judah Through the Chaldeans (1:1-2:3)**
“Watch and See!”
 - 1. First perplexity (1:2-11). How can the Lord justify His indifference in the presence of wickedness and violence?
NOTE: The Lord's reply: “I am not indifferent! I am raising up the Chaldeans to judge wicked Judah.”
 - 2. Second Perplexity (1:12-2:3). How can a holy God employ an impure and godless agent?
NOTE: The Lord's reply: Wait and see the sure judgment of God upon all the wicked.
- B. God's Judgment upon the Chaldeans for Their Wickedness (2:4-20)**
“Stand and See!”
 - 1. The fundamental principle in world government (vs. 4-5).
 - a. The righteous – Live by faith (v. 4).
 - b. The wicked – Die by pride, power, greed (v. 5).
 - 2. The taunt song – Woes upon the Chaldeans (vs. 6-20).
 - a. Woe upon lust of conquest and plunder (vs. 6-8).
 - b. Woe upon building empire through cruelty and godless gain (vs. 9-11).
 - c. Woe upon building city through blood, i.e. war (vs. 12-14).
 - d. Woe upon drunken violence (vs. 15-17). Cruelty in the treatment of conquered kings and nations.
 - e. Woe upon idolatry (vs. 18-20).
- C. Prayer for Compassion in the Midst of Judgment (ch. 3)**
“Kneel and See!”
 - 1. Petition (vs. 1-2).
 - 2. The Lord's past work (vs. 3-15). The mighty works of Jehovah in the past: judgment and salvation.
 - a. Judgment approached (vs. 3-7).
 - b. Question: Why did the Lord appear? (vs. 8-12).
 - c. Answer: For the salvation of His people (vs. 13-15).
 - 3. The prophet and the Lord (vs. 16-19).
 - a. Fear and trembling (vs. 16-17).
 - b. Joy and trust (vs. 18-19).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme: *The universal supremacy of God's judgment on the wicked***
- B. Its Message: *Evil is self-destructive.*** “Tyranny is intolerable. In the nature of things it cannot endure, but works out its own penalties.” (G.A. Smith)
- C. Its Comfort: *Faithfulness is the guarantee of permanence***
- D. Its Permanent Lessons:**
 1. *The righteous can have courage in the time of crisis.*

2. *In every crisis God can be trusted.*
3. *In dealing with doubt God invites us to turn to Him and wait for His answer.*

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. A Contrast Between the Unjust and the Just (2:4-5)

1. Their characters:
 - a. The unjust – proud in soul, ungodly in life, rejected by God.
 - b. The just – believing in soul, upright in life, accepted by God.
2. Their destinies:
 - a. That of the unjust – death.
 - b. That of the just – life.

B. An Ideal Theophany – Manifestation of God (3:3-16)

1. The onward march of the Lord (3:3-5a).
 - a. His person designated: God – The Holy One.
 - b. His glory depicted: All pervading, splendid, hidden.
 - c. His advance described: From Edom, to execute judgment.
2. The wonderful acts of the Lord (3:5-7).
 - a. In nature: Plague and calamity.
 - b. In nations: Distress and anguish.
3. The terrible wrath of the Lord (3:8).
4. The glorious intervention of the Lord (3:9-16).
 - a. Nature's homage to the Judge (vs. 9-11).
 - b. Wrathful procedure of the Judge (vs. 12-15).
 - c. Merciful purpose of the Judge (v. 16).

PRACTICAL LESSONS OF VALUE

1. We can see and understand God only when we rise above the fog of human doubt.
 2. The real purpose of religion is not to have all doubts solved, but to be sure of God.
 3. In dealing with doubt God invites us to turn to Him and wait for His answers.
 4. When the Chaldeans have served God's purpose, they will still be guilty of the crimes committed, and fitted for the judgment themselves.
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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever asked Habakkuk's *Why?* Under what specific circumstances?
2. Are we to believe that God today punishes nations with other nations? Is it possible to predict God's alignment in present conflicts?
3. Is it sinful for man to ask questions?
4. What are the minimum conditions under which you would be willing to serve the Lord?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVENTEEN:

1. In what way does the book of Habakkuk differ from the other books of prophecy?

2. Complete the following statement: "The other prophets address the _____, Habakkuk speaks to _____"

3. Give the date of the book of Habakkuk and give two reasons for this date.

Date: _____

1) _____

2) _____

4. Give the three-point outline of the book with scripture reference.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. Give the Theme, Message, Comfort, and the three Permanent Lessons of the book.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Permanent Lessons:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON EIGHTEEN

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to our study of the book of Haggai. Haggai is one of the shortest of the prophets, and probably the simplest to understand. He is a man of one mind: build the Temple of the Lord. The world sits up and listens when a man challenges a nation to break away from habits that have held them and to rise up and build a great temple for the worship of their God. Haggai was able to do the seemingly impossible: produce the spark that set the Jewish people to work rebuilding God's house.

It is important for us to learn a little about the historical background of this book because, as we have said again and again and again, these men do not speak in a vacuum. They speak in a historical background to the historical needs.

Between the book of Habakkuk and this book of Haggai, Judah has gone captive into Babylon's land, and for seventy long years they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion. There was no joy. They ate no clean bread. They performed no clean service to God, for they were away from holy land, and they had no holy temple. The Babylonian empire had fallen to the Persian empire, and Cyrus the Persian king had said that everybody could go back to the land they were from and build the temple of their God. Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest led the people of God, in the year 536, back into promised land, back to the promised city of Jerusalem.

LESSON TEXT: All the book of Haggai

LESSON AIM: To learn that obedience to the commands of God is the basis for all blessings given by Him.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the historical background of the period of Haggai's prophecy.
 2. Know something of the prophet Haggai and the date of his prophecy.
 3. Learn four messages from the people and four responses of the prophet (God) which will outline the book.
 4. Memorize the Theme, Message, Comfort and Permanent Lessons of Haggai.
-

A. The Historical Background Of Haggai

1. The first return to the land under Zerubbabel, 536 B.C. The foundation to the Temple was laid. But when the old men saw the foundation of the temple, they saw that it was going to be nothing in size or in glory compared with the temple that had been destroyed in 586 or 587. And so discouragement set in on the people and they ceased the building to build their own houses.

They built nice homes, opulent houses, sealed houses, that is with ceilings on them rather than thatched roofs, and they turned to their own things and

weeds began to grow up and if you hunted the temple sight you would find it covered by the weeds of neglect. For sixteen long years they did not build the temple.

2. Haggai and Zechariah are called to urge the people to build again, 520 B.C.
3. The completion of the Temple, 516 B.C. This completed temple brought glory to God but still was a great disappointment to the people because physically speaking it was nothing compared with the temple that they once had enjoyed.
4. Return of Nehemiah to rebuild the wall, 445 B.C. In that action, the whole city will be completed. Their houses were complete. Their temple was complete. The wall was finished, and so the city was then the great city of God, and one in which they should have, and many did, take glory.

B. The Persians Kings

1. Cyrus – 559-529 B.C. The person that sent them back to the land.
 - a. He said, to build the temple of their God.
 - b. However, only the foundation of the temple would be laid. They would build their houses and they would build their city. But they would only lay the foundation of the temple.
2. Cambyses – 529-522 B.C.
3. Darius – 521-486 B.C. It was in his second year, 520, that Haggai began to preach and Zechariah began to preach and the people began to build again the temple of God.
4. Xerxes – 485-466 B.C. He is the Ahaseurus of the book of Esther.
5. Artaxerxes – 465-425 B.C.

C. The Prophet Haggai

1. The first to speak to the new Jewish colony.
 - a. Zerubbabel, the governor and Joshua, the high priest was the impetus of their life.
 - b. They began to build the temple and became discouraged.
2. Probably an old man (2:3). “Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?” (NIV)
3. His faith was akin to assurance (1:13). “Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: “I am with you.” declares the LORD.” (NIV) (See also Matthew 1:21; Matthew 28:20; Colossians 1:27)
4. Perhaps a priest (2:10-14).
5. Jewish tradition makes him to be a member of the Great Synagogue. The ruling people of the city out of which later the Sanhedrin will come.

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 520 B.C.

- A. **In The Second Year of Darius – 521-486.** “In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai . . .” (1:1).
 - a. Darius came to the throne in the year 521 B.C.
 - b. That would make Haggai’s book 520 B.C.

- B. From First Day of the Sixth Month to Twenty-fourth Day of the Ninth Month (114 days)**

He was Jehovah’s messenger in Jehovah’s message to the people saying, “I am with you,’ declares the LORD” (1:13). He was the Lord’s man giving the Lord’s message to the Lord’s people for the Lord’s purpose to get the Lord’s work

done. I mean, that's why he could get it done. Thus saith the Lord, was at the heart of anything Haggai had to say.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. First Message: A Popular Saying and Haggai's Response (1:1-15)

1. Introduction (v. 1). This first message is to the two leaders, Zerubbabel, the governor and Joshua, the high priest.
2. The popular saying (v. 2). The time is not right. *"Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not the time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built."* They gave at least four excuses for not building:
 - a. They had opposition from those that are around them.
 - b. They had their own houses to build.
 - c. They had the discouraging words of the old men as to the size of the building.
 - d. They had rumors from Persia that the king was dissatisfied with what they were doing.
3. The prophet's reprimand (1:3-6). *"Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"* Give careful thought to your ways: Your labor is in vain.
4. The prophet's solution (1:7-8). *"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,' says the LORD."*
5. The drought (1:9-11). *"Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands."*
6. The prophet's response (1:12-15). *"Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed."* If the leaders repent the people do also. What's the people's response? Fear!

A. Second Message: the Glory of the New and the Old Temples (2:1-9).

This is the message to give them the encouragement to keep building. The prophet's message that all the judgment is because they haven't built, and that blessings will follow the building, gets them started. But they have to have a reason to continue.

1. Introduction (2:1-2). This message is:
 - a. To the people and not simply to the leaders.
 - b. The first discouraging word was "it is not time to build."
 - c. Second discouraging word was: "The glory of this temple is not like that of the old temple."
2. The glory of the New Temple and the new age (2:3-9). *"But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD. 'Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty."*
 - a. The glory of the first temple was God.
 - b. The glory of this temple is God.
 - c. The glory of any other temple is God.
 - d. God is a covenant-keeping God (v. 5).
 - e. A coming glory (vs. 6-9). *"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations*

will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty." (See Hebrews 12:28-29)

C. Third Message: Priestly Lessons from the Law (2:10-19)

1. Introduction (2:10).
2. Two lessons on holiness and ritual purity (2:11-14).
 - a. If holy flesh touches unholiness, will it make it holy? The answer is no!
 - b. If unclean flesh touches clean flesh, will it make it unclean? The answer is yes!

NOTE: There is the lesson of the contagious nature of sin. He is saying, "Stop all your talking evil. Stop all your talking defeat. It's causing the people to be unclean!"

3. Promise of renewed blessing (2:15-19).
 - a. Past cursing because they had left off building the temple.
 - b. Present and future blessings (from that day forward) because they were building the temple.

D. Fourth Message: Hope for Revival of the Davidic House (2:20-23)

1. Introduction (2:20). Exaltation of Zerubbabel.
2. The Lord's shaking of heaven and earth (2:21-22).
3. Zerubbabel, the Lord's Signet Ring (2:23).

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK

A. Its Theme: *Build the temple*

B. Its Message: *Build the temple and God will bless you*

C. Its Comfort: *The obedient will ultimately be blessed*

D. Its Permanent Lessons:

1. *A stern call to duty is a good tonic.*
2. *Outward splendor does not constitute true glory.*
3. *The basis of all successful preaching – "Says the Lord."* Found in some form 26 times in 38 verses.

E. Three Great Moral Truths

1. Faithfulness is directly connected with material prosperity.
2. Discouragement, however profound, is not an adequate reason for neglecting duties, even when they seem to be encompassed with difficulty. *Be strong and work* is a glorious motto for human life.
3. When a good work is awaiting its accomplishment, the time to do it is now.

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. The Mistakes of the Temple Builders (1:2-6).

1. They failed to discern the signs of the times.
2. They were too easily daunted by opposition (Ezra 4).
3. They preferred the material and temporal to the spiritual and eternal.
4. They followed their own interests rather than the glory of God.

B. The Moral Progress of the World (2:6-9).

1. Requires great social upheavals. "*I will . . . shake the heavens and the earth.*"

2. Involves the satisfaction of moral cravings. "*The desire of all mankind will come.*"
3. Ensures the highest manifestations of God to mankind. "*I will fill this house with glory.*"
 a. God will be recognized as universal owner. "*The silver and gold is mine.*"
 b. God will be seen more gloriously than ever before. "*The later glory shall be greater than the former.*"
 c. God will be seen as the universal Peace-giver. "*In this place I will grant peace.*"

NOTE: This teaches that the church is the center of the world.

CONCLUSION:

Haggai's first message is to the leaders and not the people. He begins his message with a rebuke to the people for their delay in building the temple. It had been sixteen years since they had returned from Babylon, and there was not a temple. And without the temple the people were still unclean and eating unclean food.

Their failure to prosper was because of their failure to do that for which they had returned from Babylon: build God's house. When Haggai began to preach the people began to build and the house was completed in twenty-three days.

Questions for further discussion.

1. Is there evidence of a spirit in the church today comparable to that faced by Haggai?
2. What conditions did the returned exiles find in Jerusalem?
3. What verses in Haggai do you find most challenging?
4. What lessons relevant to our day can you see in Haggai's discussion of evil?
5. Has Haggai anything to teach concerning ownership of the world's assets? If so what?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHTEEN:

1. Give the Theme, Message, Comfort, and three Permanent Lessons of the book of Haggai.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Lessons: _____

2. List the four messages that outline the book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

3. What or who was the real glory of both temples? _____

4. What is the date of the book of Haggai? Give proof of this date.

LESSON NINETEEN

ZECHARIAH (1) INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to our study of the book of Zechariah, a contemporary with Haggai building the temple. What Ezekiel was to the pre-exilic and exilic eras, Zechariah was to the post-exilic age. Not only did he outline the program of restoration, the heart of which was the Temple and priesthood, but he, like Ezekiel, filled in much detail about the Messianic age that lay ahead (See especially the last six chapters). With a new urgency to establish a durable kingdom, he proclaimed the Lord as king over Judah and promised that He would become king over all the nations.

It has been said by many that he is the most messianic prophet of all the Old Testament, that he spoke more about the King and the kingdom, percentage-wise, than even did the great Isaiah or Jeremiah. I believe that to be true. That's why we are really going to give some close and careful attention to this book.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Zechariah

LESSON AIM: To get an overview of the book as we look at Zechariah's emphasis on the restoration of the temple and priesthood as well as his concept of the Messianic age.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover that the date of the book is between 520-516 B.C.
 2. Learn of eight night visions which reveal Israel's immediate future.
 3. Examine two oracles about the Messiah and His kingdom announcing the judgment of Israel's enemies and the future of the Lord's people.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 520-516 B.C.

The book starts in 520 and ends sometime either in 516 when the temple was finished or shortly after the finishing of the temple.

- A. **Chapters 1-8 Are Dated.** From the eighth month of Darius' second year to the ninth month of Darius' fourth year. Three hundred ninety one days is how long this man prophesied, just a little over a year.
- B. **Chapters 9-14 Are Undated.** Thought to be after 516 B.C.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- A. **Introduction: A Call to Repentance (1:1-6).** “*The LORD was very angry with your forefathers. Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty.*” (1:2-3 NIV) It is a call to repentance and a call to return to the Lord.

B. Eight Night Visions: Israel's Immediate Future (1:7 – 6:15)

1. *The Rider and the horsemen among the myrtle trees* (1:7-17).

Interpretation: Where God is, peace reigns.

- a. Explanation of the man among the myrtle trees.
- b. The cherubim, the avenging angels of God. “*And they reported to the angel of the LORD*” (we will study that later and find out that is the Lord Himself) “*who was standing among the myrtle trees, ‘We have gone throughout the land and the whole world is at rest and in peace.’*” That’s because God is in Israel again. Because they have begun to build God’s Temple, God will now take up His permanent abode with them again, and wherever God is, peace is there.

2. *The four horns and the four smiths* (1:18-21).

Interpretation: Brute force must be put down. God avenges His people. These horns and these craftsmen say that brute force will be put down.

3. *The man with the measuring line* (2:1-13).

Interpretation: The Lord is our wall and glory. “*Then I looked up—and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand!*”

- a. Jerusalem, a city without walls, is measured.
- b. The Lord to be her security, her glory.

4. *Joshua accused by the adversary* (3:1-10).

Interpretation: God cleanses and clothes His anointed Those that He sends His Spirit upon, God has already cleansed them and God has already clothed them. (See Galatians 3:26 – 4:7).

5. *The gold lampstand and the two olive trees* (4:1-14).

Interpretation: God empowers His leaders. He not only clothes them, He not only cleanses them, He not only anoints them, but He empowers them. This is the passage that will be alluded to in the book of Revelation as we speak of the great power God gave the leaders against the Roman persecutor.

6. *The flying scroll* (5:1-4). (On which sins of the land are written)

Interpretation: Sinners and their sins removed from the land. He will not only cleanse His leaders. He will cleanse His land. All the sinners and all the sins committed will not be written on the scroll that can be read in Israel’s land because they are obedient, because they are following God.

7. *The woman in a measuring basket* (5:5-11).

Interpretation: Sin will be removed from the land. This woman is wickedness, and God says this nation will no longer be characterized by wickedness so I am removing sin or wickedness from the land.

8. *The four chariots and their horses* (6:1-8).

Interpretation: God keeps His promises and will judge the wicked. Here are four closest to Him that are riding upon their chariots and they are bringing judgment upon the wicked, and therefore salvation to the righteous.

- a. In Revelation – Cherubim.
- b. In Ezekiel – Cherubim.
- c. In Isaiah – Seraphim.

NOTE: The climax of the Visions is the crowning of Joshua (6:9-15). This is symbolic of the branch (Messiah) King and Priest. This is a real act that really happened but it was symbolic of the branch, the Messiah, the king and the priest.

- a. Jesus the Lord is the Branch.
- b. He is going to build a temple later.
- c. He will be clothed with majesty.
- d. He will sit and rule on His throne.
- e. He will be both priest and king – “priest sitting on His throne.”

So the last message to them as they are getting ready now to finish the temple, they are eighteen months away from the temple being finished, I am sending the branch. I am sending the one that will be both king and priest, and He will build a temple that will make this one appear as nothing. The old men had said when they saw this one, "Why, this is nothing compared to Solomon's." He said, "Yes, and because you have done this little thing, because you have built this little temple, I am going to give you one that will extend from sea to sea and from land to land."

C. The Problem of Ceremonial Fasting (chs. 7-8)

1. The negative reply (7:1-14). While they were in captivity, they were so sorrowful that they began to fast on months and on times they were not commanded to fast (7:1-4).
 - a. Inquiry from Bethel, shall we continue these fasts? (vs. 1-3). The reply, NO!
 - b. Rebuke: Uselessness of insincere fasting (vs. 4-7). What you need to do is to be faithful to me.
 - c. Warning: Moral and spiritual obedience required (vs. 8-14).
2. The positive reply (8:1-23). (To the question: "Shall we continue to fast?")
 - a. The future restoration and blessing of Zion (vs. 1-17). They are already restored to the land, but he will bring the restoration of blessing and honor and glory to God.
 - 1) Restoration (vs. 1-13).
 - 2) Condition: Obedience (vs. 14-17).
 - b. The nature of true worship (vs. 18-23).
 - 1) The fasts will become feasts (vs. 18-19). Being back in the land there is no more reason to fast. Now feasts are in order.
 - 2) The nations will entreat God (vs. 20-23). They will see you feasting. They will see you rejoicing. They will see you honored by God, and so they will come and seek me.

NOTE: So the first eight chapters have said: Get this temple built! And in the building of the temple you will find great blessings from God.

D. The Messiah and His Kingdom (chs. 9-14)

1. First oracle – Judgment of Israel's enemies (9:1–11:17).
 - a. The Messiah's advent (9:1-17).
 - b. Jehovah will fulfill His word (10:1-12).
 - 1) He will take care of them (v. 1).
 - 2) He will give them material blessings.
 - 3) He will strengthen them.
 - 4) He will redeem them.
 - 5) He will bring to Zion all that He has promised.
 - c. Jerusalem will be destroyed because of rejecting the Good Shepherd (11:1-17).
2. Second oracle – The future of the Lord's people (12:1–14:21).
 - a. God will protect and glorify His people – the church (12:1-14). He will make it a time that all the people of God are equal in His sight and are all alike anointed as Joshua had been, crowned as Joshua had been. He will protect and glorify His people.
 - b. God will smite His shepherd in order to save His people (13:1-9). In 13:7-8 He says, "*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my equal. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. Two-thirds will be destroyed. One-third will be brought to the fire and purified and made the exalted people of God.*"
 - c. God's day of judgment: Vengeance and salvation (14:1-21).

- 1) For the enemy of God's people – destruction, vengeance.
- 2) For God's faithful people – salvation, honor, holiness.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme**
 1. Chs. 1-8 – *Build the Temple and God will bless you.*
 2. Chs. 9-14 – *The glory of the King and His kingdom.*
- B. Its Message: *Everything in God's house is holy***
- C. Its Comfort: *God always blesses the obedient* (cf. Romans 8:28)**
- D. Its Permanent Lessons:**
 1. *The world-wide reach of God's kingdom* (2:11; 6:15; 8:23; 14:16).
 2. *The eternal glory due the Messiah, Christ* (2:10-11; 3:8-9; 6:12-13; 9:9-17; 11:4-14; 12:10; 14:8-9).
 3. *God does, and always will, rule* (14:7-14).

PICTURES OF THE CHRIST

1. The Messianic King (chapter 9:9-10). Two new features are introduced:
 - (1) *Having salvation*, hence the Savior, and
 - (2) *Lowly*, hence humble in spirit.
2. The rejected shepherd (11:4-17; 13:7-9). Jesus is the good Shepherd (cf. John 10) but the people, the Jews, rejected His leadership (John 19:15).

CONCLUSION:

In the book of Revelation chapter 4, I see at the very center of the universe the throne of God. And at the very center of that throne I see the slain lamb. In the center of my universe is the throne of God and at the heart of that throne is my brother. God my father, Jesus my brother, the Spirit my comforter, rules, not only in this world but in the world of heaven and in the world of hell. I have nothing to fear. That gives me great peace in believing in Jesus Christ. I hope you find it, too.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINETEEN:

1. Write out the two-fold Theme, Message, Comfort, and the three Permanent Lessons.

Theme: 1) _____
2) _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Lessons: 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

2. Give the date of the book. _____

3. Write out the four point outline of the book with Scripture divisions.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

4. List the eight Night Visions in 1:7-6:15.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____

5. Summarize the main message of chapters 1-8. _____

6. What are the two oracles in 9:1 through 14:21?

1) _____
2) _____

LESSON TWENTY

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH (2)

INTRODUCTION:

Zechariah came to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12:4, 16). He was both a priest and a prophet and was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Haggai was the older man and only prophesied for three months. This fellow prophesied for a little over two years. Zechariah differs from the great prophets that preceded him in three points:

1. The emphasis on visions as a means of divine communication. Eight night visions in quick succession was the basis of the first half of his book.
2. The apocalyptic symbolism entering into his visions He pictures things not in reality but in visions that declare the reality, in symbols that declare the reality.
3. The large place angelic meditation occupies in his communication with the Lord. Angels bring the vision. Angels carry out the mission.

From the beginning to the end he, like Haggai, pleads for the rebuilding of the house of God. His most sublime promises center around the completed Temple.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Zechariah

LESSON AIM: To get a composite view of the coming Messiah, His rejection, His sovereignty, and description.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See some pictures of the Christ as the Messianic King, the rejected Shepherd, and the divine Sovereign.
 2. Get a view of the King as the Branch, Servant, Kingship, Good but Smitten Shepherd.
 3. Examine scriptures which prophesy of Christ's betrayal and crucifixion.
-

REVIEW:

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 520-516 B.C.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

1. Introduction.
2. Night Visions.
3. Fasting.
4. King and Kingdom.

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK.

- A. **Theme:** *Build the temple and God will bless you*
- B. **Message:** *Everything in God's house is holy*

C. Comfort: God always blesses the obedient

D. Lessons:

*The world-wide reach of the Kingdom.
The eternal glory due the Messiah.
God does, and always will, rule.*

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. Pictures of the Christ

1. The Messianic King (9:9-10).

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle, riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."

- a. Savior – “Having salvation.” He will not come being Himself saved, He will come having salvation to offer to people.
- b. Humble – “Gentle.” – “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest for I am meek and gentle of spirit” (Matthew 11:28).
- c. Pure – “Righteous.” – “Which of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why don’t you believe me?” The Pharisees looked at Jesus through the microscope of their own prejudice for three years, trying to find something wrong with Him, and they were not able to find one single thing wrong in His life.
- d. Victorious – “Battle bow . . . broken.” – He says, I will come and break all the battle bows of all the world. “I will break the chariots of Ephraim and the battle bow of Judah.” He says, I will come to be victorious over all the enemies of the people of God. You see, our Jesus comes riding upon that beautiful white charger in Revelation chapter 19, and He comes sprinkled in blood. And that is not His blood, that’s the blood of His enemies that He stomped beneath the feet of that white charger. He comes to win all of our battles and to be victorious over all of our foes.
- e. Effective – “proclaim peace.” – In this place I will give peace, is the prophecy throughout the Old Testament and Jesus came to be peace and, therefore, to give peace in all of the land.
- f. Majestic- “rule from sea to sea.” – He rules from sea to sea, from the river to the end of the earth. That is a lesson all the world needs. All the world will not hear it, but it is true anyway. That rider on the white horse in Revelation 19 had on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. The Rejected Shepherd – 11:4-17; 13:7-9.

Let’s look at the fact that God’s shepherd was rejected by God’s flock, but nevertheless saved a poor remnant among them.

- a. Their own shepherds – Unsparring slaughter (11:4-6).
 - 1) They have butchers, not shepherds. Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished.
 - 2) They had wicked shepherds. “They will oppress the land, and I will not rescue them from their hands.”
 - 3) They had shepherds that were destroyers.
- b. The good shepherds – Two staffs (favor and union) (11:7). The good shepherd comes and He has two staffs: favor and union. And He guides

- the old people. He guides the people with His favor, His grace, and union, their unity.
- c. The flock – Rejected the shepherd (11:8-9). They rejected Him. He was the Good Shepherd. He never did them harm. He fed them. He healed them. He clothed them. He housed them. And yet they rejected Him. “*And I grew weary of them.*” That’s a tragic word. You see, if I reject the Shepherd He grows weary of me, and I don’t want the Lord growing weary of me. “...and I said, ‘I will not be their shepherd.’”

NOTE: The Judgment (11:10-17). Consider the judgment that God’s own Shepherd came to render. “*Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it.*” One can lose the grace he has received. “...revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. It was revoked on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the LORD.” You see, the flock as a whole are judged. He breaks this covenant He had with them.

- d. God’s own Shepherd – Sacrificed (13:7-9). The good Shepherd, the rejected Shepherd, now the smitten Shepherd. Chapter 13:7, “*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my equal, declares the LORD Almighty. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*” That is quoted in the New Testament and applied to Jesus at His death. “*And I will turn my hands against the little ones, against the sheep.*”

NOTE: Notice the beautiful lesson of the Shepherd. The Shepherd is coming in judgment upon the false shepherds. The Shepherd is coming in judgment upon the wicked among the sheep, but the Shepherd will not only save the afflicted sheep, He will refine them and purify them and they will say, “This is our shepherd. We will follow Him.” Jesus, the Great Shepherd.

- 3. The Divine Sovereign (14:1-11).
 - a. The day of the Lord: Judgment, fear, flight (14:1-7). We have seen that day again and again and again. It is the day of final judgment upon the wicked enemies of God. Here it is a day of fear and a day of flight as the Lord comes to execute the day.
 - b. The Water of Life (14:8; cf. John 7:38; Revelation 22:1-2).
 - 1) “*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink’*” (John 7:37 NIV).
 - 2) “*Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water’*” (John 4:10 NIV).
 - 3) In Revelation 22 there is coming out from the throne of God a river of water as clear as crystal.
 - c. The one Lord and King (14:9; cf. Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6).
 - 1) “*Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12 NIV).
 - 2) “...one LORD, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5 NIV).
 - 3) “...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one LORD, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live” (1 Corinthians 8:6 NIV).
 - d. The peace secured (14:10-11; cf. Ephesians 2:14; Hebrews 13:20).

B. The King Cometh. Let's look at that King. Briefly through the book of Zechariah, just a quick trip, and notice the things that are said, the titles that are given to Jesus.

1. Christ the Branch (3:8). "*Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.*"
 2. Christ the Servant (3:8).
 3. Christ's triumphant entry on a donkey's colt (9:9). "*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*"
 4. Christ the Good Shepherd (9:16; 11:11).
 5. Christ the Smitten Shepherd (13:7). "*'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!' declares the LORD Almighty. 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.'*"
 6. Christ betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (11:12-13).
 7. Christ's hands pierced (12:10). "*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.*"
- The Messiah, the Good Shepherd, the smitten Shepherd, the betrayed Master, now becomes the pierced friend. It was His own. It was the ones that John had prepared for Him. It was the ones that He came to preach to. It was the ones He healed, the ones He fed, the ones to whom He gave back their dead. I mean, it was the ones He lived among and served among and wept among and laughed among and lived among. Those were the ones that pierced Him. It was not the enemies of God that pierced the hands of Jesus. It was not the strangers. Although the Romans drove the nails, it was the Jews that pierced His hands.
8. Christ wounded in the house, His friends (13:6). "*What are these wounds on your body?*" He said, "*It was the wounds that I received in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword against my shepherd.*" He is the stricken Shepherd of God. Christ is wounded in the house of His friends, but it was God who awoke the sword. It was God who said, "*I will judge my Shepherd.*" He did that so He would not have to judge me. I owed a debt I could not pay. He paid a debt He did not owe. On the cross Jesus not only opened up a fountain for me to be saved, but it was by the judgment of God upon it that fountain, that water flows. God had to make a choice. He could judge the entire world and they had no hope or He could judge His Shepherd and the whole world had hope. I am so grateful to God that He found it in His love to smite the Shepherd that I might be saved.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS: Review

1. The MAN: Zechariah came up to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12:4, 16). He was both a priest and a prophet, and was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).
2. Characterization of the book: This is one of, if not the most, Messianic writings of the Old Testament.
3. Some teachings of the book: Chapters 1-8.
 - a. Zechariah differs from the great prophets who proceeded him in three points
 - 1) The emphasis on visions as a means of divine communication.
 - 2) The apocalyptic symbolism entering into the visions.

- 3) The large place angelic mediation occupies in his intercourse with Jehovah.
- b. From beginning to end he, like Haggai, pleads for the rebuilding of the house of God, and his most sublime promises center around the completed Temple.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY:

1. List six descriptive terms which picture the Christ in Zechariah.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

2. List eight titles given to or things that are said concerning Jesus.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH (3)

INTRODUCTION:

Zechariah's name means "The Lord Remembers." This is also the heart of his message. He proclaims to his people the Lord as their Covenant God, who remembers forever His covenant established with Israel on Mount Sinai. Zechariah preached God's covenant law, in order to make them conscious of their wickedness, and God's gospel, which alone could turn them back to the Lord to serve Him in loving obedience. Since Zechariah was a priest and the head of his family, he naturally takes a keen interest in the Levitical ritual and in the restoration of the Temple.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Zechariah

LESSON AIM: To investigate several scriptures which speak of the "**Angel of the Lord**" showing that He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover that the "**Angel of the Lord**" appears throughout all the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi.
 2. See from several passages that the "**Angel of the Lord**" is one with the Lord Himself.
 3. Learn that the "**Angel of the Lord**" identifies Himself with God, the Lord Jehovah.
-

REVIEW:

A. Date of the Book: 520-516 B.C.

B. Outline of the Book

1. Build the Temple.
2. Renewal of Worship.
3. The coming Messiah.

C. Teaching of the Book

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

A. Pictures of Christ

B. The King Cometh

C. The Blessings of the Kingdom

D. **The Angel of the Lord (1:11-12; 3:1; 4, 6; 12:8).** *"And they reported to the angel of the LORD, who was standing among the myrtle trees, 'We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace.' Then the angel of the LORD said, 'LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?'"* (Zechariah 1:11-12 NIV) Questions to be answered: Who is

this Angel of the Lord? What does he do for us? Do we see him in the New Testament today?

1. The Angel of the Lord appears first in the age of the Patriarchs, then throughout the history of Israel. He appears in the ages of Moses, the Judges, Elijah, in the visions of Zechariah; and in the prophecy of Malachi (where he is called the “Messenger of the covenant”).
2. Who is this “Angel of the Lord”? A careful study of the passages below will make it evident that somehow it is the Lord Himself, perhaps the pre-incarnate name for the Word who became flesh in Jesus (John 1:1-2, 14).
3. Read the following passages and the surrounding contexts: Genesis 16:7-11; 21:17; 22:11, 15; 31:11-13; 48:16; Exodus 3:2; 14:19; Numbers 22:22-35; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-12, 20-22; 13:3-21 (cf. vs. 22-23); 2 Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 1:3, 15; 19:35; 1 Chronicles 21:12-18, 30; Psalms 34:7; 35:5-6; Isaiah 37:36; 63:9; Zechariah 1:11-12; 3:1-6; 12:8; Malachi 3:1.
 - a. The word “angel” means “messenger” and the word “word” would mean “message.”
 - b. This messenger always brings in his person the message of God.
 - c. Not *an* angel of the Lord, but *the* Angel of the Lord.
4. There ought to be no doubt that He is one with the Lord
 - a. He promises Israel to send an Angel before them—to keep them and bring them safely to Canaan.
 - 1) God identifies this Angel/Messenger with Himself – *My name is in him* (Exodus 23:20-26, esp. v. 21).
 - 2) That Name which He Himself had called His own, His name forever (Exodus 3:14-17), that Name, His glory, which He will not give another (Isaiah 42:8) is in the Angel.
 - 3) Inherent in His very nature and being, He is the Lord.
 - 4) He calls him the Angel of His presence (Isaiah 63:9 – “...and the angel of his presence saved them.”), literally, “the Angel of His face” (cf. Exodus 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:14). Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10 that this “Angel” was Christ.
 - b. They who look upon the Angel look upon the Lord. In the presence of the Angel, Jehovah is present (cf. Judges 6:11-12, 13:2-23).
 - 1) Gideon: “When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon he said, ‘the LORD is with you, mighty warrior.’” Then verse 14, “The LORD turned to him.” Notice, the angel of the Lord in verse 11 becomes the Lord in verse 14.
 - 2) Manoah (Samson’s father): The Angel of the Lord turns out to be the Lord Himself. “I’m going to die because I have seen God.” Seeing the angel of the Lord, Manoah said he had seen God.
 - c. The Lord calls this Angel God, Lord (Adonai); Lord (Jehovah). Read Genesis 16:7-11 (cf. v. 13); Genesis 32:28 (cf. Hosea 12:4-5); Exodus 3:2-15; 14:19 (cf. 13:21). Especially, note Zechariah 12:8.
 - d. The Angel identifies Himself with God, the Lord Jehovah.
 - 1) Speaking to Jacob (Genesis 33:11), He calls Himself the God of Bethel (v. 13; cf. 28:10-22).
 - 2) He attributes to Himself the Lord’s oath, covenant, deliverance from Egypt, conquest of Canaan (Judges 2:1-3; Joshua 5:13-6:2).
 - 3) He accepts sacrifices offered to God (Judges 6:17-24, 13:3-23).
 - e. Hagar recognizes in Him, the Lord Jehovah – calls Him God (Genesis 16:7-14).
 - f. Abraham also calls Him the Lord (Genesis 22:11, 14), and Jacob calls Him the Lord (Genesis 48:15-16). Zechariah calls Him the Lord (3:1-10).
 - g. This Angel of the Lord is the Covenant Angel, or as Malachi (3:1) calls

Him, “the Messenger of the Covenant.” As such He has revealed Himself on many occasions.

- 1) **To Abraham:** Genesis 15:18-21 (Possession of Promised Land). Genesis 12:1-7; 15:4-5 (A seed: physical and spiritual). Genesis 15:6 (Faith in whom accounted righteousness).
- 2) **To Hagar:** Genesis 16:3-16.
- 3) **To Jacob:** Genesis 48:12-16 (cf. 28:11-22).
- 4) **To Moses:** Exodus 3:2-22.
- h. The Angel claimed to be the author of the Covenant (Judges 2:1-3).
- i. After the Exile it was the Angel who pleaded for the covenant people (Zechariah 1:11-13). It was the Angel who absolved Joshua and confirmed the high-priestly office of the Old Covenant as a type of the New Testament priesthood of all believers (Zechariah 3:1-10).
- j. Malachi calls this Messenger (Angel) of the Covenant “the Lord coming to His Temple,” (i.e. the church of the New Covenant). He comes as the long-awaited Redeemer, the Refiner of His people, the Judge of the world.

CONCLUSION:

Now, let's try to put all that together. We read a lot of passages because the Bible has a lot to say about this. It is not strange at all that the one who was to come as the Messiah, the Word of God, the Son of God as He becomes, that He would have a prominent place in the Old Testament theology. You've got God the Father and the Holy Spirit emphasized and repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament. It is not strange then, is it, that somehow the second person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ as He will become, would have an emphasis there. And that's why in these 25 incidents, in these some 65 passages, *the angel of Jehovah* comes and appears to *the* people of God and particularly to some leader, not only to empower him but to assign him a task. This is God Himself.

This is the one who will say, “*I and the Father are one.*” This is the one who will say, “*My words are the words that will judge people in the last day,*” and this is the one who in the last book of the Bible, chapter 19, comes riding out upon a white charger and on His garment and on His thigh is a name written, “*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,*” and His name is called, “*The Word of God,*” the message of God. The messenger of the Old Testament is now personified in the incarnated human flesh and is become the message of God.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

1. When or where does the “Angel of the Lord” first appear in the Bible?

2. List ten (10) reasons given in the course guide which indicate that the “Angel of the Lord” is One with the Lord.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH (4)

INTRODUCTION:

This is our final lesson on Zechariah. I really hate to leave this great book; a book written in the sixth century, sometime between 520 and 516 B.C.; a book that really has discussed the heart of the life of the people of that day; a book that has brought great meaning into our life personally in this New Covenant age; a book that has discussed in eight night visions the fact that God is in total rule and in total control of all the world; a book that has discussed in two great chapters that fasting is not the keynote of God's kingdom. Fasting was appropriate when they were in Babylonian and Assyrian captivity, but now that they are back in the land and now that God is dwelling among them, fasting really does not have that much place. They need to feast rather than fast.

Jesus and His disciples were one time rebuked and criticized because they did not fast as John the Baptist's disciples fasted, and Jesus said as long as the bridegroom is here, fasting would be out of order. If I am ever gone, then they will fast, but Jesus said to them that He would be with them, even to the end of the earth.

Then in that third part of Zechariah's book that we will look very briefly here today, and see that the kingdom of God and the King Himself is exalted. Here are some closing lessons from Zechariah.

LESSON TEXT: The book of Zechariah

LESSON AIM: To gain understanding of the blessings of the kingdom of Christ; that it will be a good time for good people, and that it will be a reign of holiness.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of seven great blessings connected with the future Messianic kingdom and realized in the present kingdom, the church.
 2. Examine four things which will reveal that it will be a good time for good people.
 3. See that the reign of holiness spoken of in 14:20-21 embraces all the affairs of the leaders, all domestic concerns, and all religious concerns.
-

REVIEW:

A. Date of the Book: 520-516 B.C.

B. Outline of the Book: Introduction, Night Visions, Fasting, King and Kingdom.

C. Teaching of the Book

- Theme: 1) Build Temple and God will bless you (1-8).
2) Glory of the King and His Kingdom (9-14).

Message: Everything in God's House is holy.

SOME SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

- A. Pictures of Christ**
- B. The King cometh**
- C. The blessings of the kingdom**
- D. The Angel of the Lord**
- E. The Blessings of the Kingdom of Christ**
 1. The extent (14:9). "*The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and His name the only name.*"
Some New Testament passages:
 - a. "*Go make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19).
 - b. "*My house is a house of prayer for all the nations*" (Mark 11:17). The extent of the kingdom of Christ is all the earth!
 2. Abundant material blessing (10:1). "*Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone.*"
New Testament teaching. 1 Corinthians 9:10, "*Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*"
 3. Abundant spiritual blessing (12:10). "*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication.*"
 - a. Grace is their gift and supplication is their response.
 - b. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul says that, "*God our father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*"
 - c. In Philippians 4:19 Paul says, "*My God will supply every need of yours and save you into His eternal kingdom.*"

NOTE: In Acts chapter 2, the Spirit of God Himself was poured out, verse 33, and that poured-out Spirit was promised to everyone that would repent and be baptized, those whom the Lord has called unto Him. The spiritual blessings and the kingdom of God are beyond imagination. There is not only the grace of God in His mercy, but there is the fact that He hears my prayer. It is the spirit of grace and of supplication.

That's how powerful these spiritual blessings in Christ are. God does pour out an attitude. He doesn't just pour out grace and supplication. He pours out an attitude, a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplication. I know that I have received the grace of God and am saved from my past sins. I know that, when I speak God listens. That's one of the great blessings of the kingdom.

4. Salvation – The opened fountain (13:1). "*On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and iniquity.*"
 - a. Revelation 1:5 – "*To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood. . .*"
 - b. Ephesians 1:7 – Paul says that I am redeemed by the blood of Christ. "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. . .*" You see, there is a fountain. It is the blood of Christ, and it is open. It was not opened and then closed. It is open yet today. Anytime, anywhere, anyone wants salvation, he can run to the cross of Christ and in the blood that still flows free there he can have redemption from his sin, even salvation from the frustration of the sinful life that he has

lived in the past because John says in 1 John 1:7, “*If we walk in the light as He (God) is in the light, we have fellowship with Him, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*”

5. Kingdom set up on earth (14:9-11).
 - a. The Kingdom will be set up on the earth and will never be destroyed.
 - b. The shaking of the earth and a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28-29; Colossians 1:33).
 - c. That kingdom has been set up. It is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. No distinction in kingdom (12:7). “*The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honour of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah.*” The apostle Paul declares in Galatians 3:26-29, “*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*”
7. Everything and everyone holy (14:20-21). “*On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty,*”
 - a. The holy kingdom of God, a people for God's own possession. “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light*” (1 Peter 2:9 NIV).
 - b. “*But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'*” (1 Peter 1:15-16 NIV).

F. A Good Time for Good People (12:4-9)

1. A time when enemies shall be vanquished (verse 4).
 - a. Horse and rider (their enemies) smitten with panic and madness and blindness.
 - b. The Lord will watch out for Judah (protection).
2. A time when power shall be augmented (verse 5-6a).
 - a. The power of unity (verse 5). “*Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'*” Notice the confidence of the people. This union and valor of the people would be the “strength” of their leaders without which the leaders would find themselves utterly powerless. Notice Ephesians 4:4-6 is followed by a discussion of leaders.
 - b. The power of conquest (v. 6a). “*On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves.*” God invests all good men with the power to conquer all their spiritual foes (Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). As fire consumes wood and straw, so the righteous consume all enemies.
3. A time when they shall be established in their home (v. 6b). “*They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.*” Cf. 14:10-11; Jeremiah 23:6; Hebrews 12:22-28; Philippians 3:20.

The thought is simple: Re-occupancy and permanent possession.
4. A time when they shall all be blessed equally (vs. 7-9).
 - a. Equal Honor (v. 7). 1 Samuel 2:7-8; Mark 10:43-45; Luke 14:11; Galatians 3:26-29.
 - b. Equal Protection (vs. 8-9).
 - God will shield his people – Hebrews 13:5-7.
 - God will destroy their foes – 1 Corinthians 15:54-58.

G. The Reign of Holiness (14:20-21)

1. Embraces all the affairs of the leaders (verse 20).
 - a. Warriors – “Horses.”
 - b. Priests – “Cooking pots” in Lord’s House.
2. Embraces all domestic concerns (v. 21a).
Every pot and pan in Jerusalem – Holy cook-ware.
3. Embraces all religious concerns (verse 21b).
 - a. Sacrifices holy (The food they eat).
 - b. No merchandising in God’s House. 2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; 2 Peter 2:2.

H. Glory Is Due Our King

1. He is coming.
2. He will dwell among us.
3. He will save many (2:10-11).
4. He will build the temple.
5. He will sit as king and priest.
6. He will bring peace (6:12-13).
7. He will be pure and lowly.
8. He will be a victorious warrior.
9. He will bring power to His people (9:9-17).
10. He will bestow spiritual blessings: Grace and supplication (12:10).
11. He will give living water.
12. He is the only Lord. (14:8-9).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO:

1. List seven great blessings connected with the future Messianic kingdom and realized in the present kingdom, the church.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

2. In Zechariah 12:4-9 are four things which indicate it will be a good time for good people. List these four things below.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

3. What is the extent of the reign of holiness given in 14:20-21? It embraces what three things?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

MALACHI (1)

INTRODUCTION:

In Malachi, we face a man who has sensed the futility of the cold, formal, external type of religion that masquerades under the name of the genuine. In dynamic rebellion he throws all that he can muster into the work of bringing the people back to the spiritual conception of worship that God requires.

- A. The book of Malachi is an argument with the people. Malachi does not present his message in preaching form. He makes a charge against the people, and the people will respond and then he will prove the charge and move to a next one. He has an argument, then, with his people. Not a sermon to his people, but an argument with them.
 1. Not only with the wicked among them, who in forgetfulness of what Jehovah is like –
 - Corrupt the ritual.
 - Fail to give the Temple tithes.
 - Abuse justice.
 - Marry foreign wives.
 - Divorce their wives.
 2. But also with the pious, who, equally forgetful of God's character are driven by their pride to ask questions like –
 - Whether God loves Israel?
 - Whether He is a God of justice? If He is, where is He?
 - Whether it is not vain to serve Him? What good do I get from serving God?

LESSON TEXT: The book of Malachi

LESSON AIM: To get an overall view of the teaching of the book by studying the outline of the book.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover the date of the book and reasons offered for accepting this date.
 2. Learn of six disputations in the book which will serve as an outline of the book.
-

B. The book of Malachi offers the following answers:

1. God does love Israel. He has established them back in their land.
2. God is worshiped even among the heathen. Why isn't He worshiped in Israel?
3. God is Father of all Israel.
4. God will bless Israel when they put away their abuses and bring their tithes to God.
5. God is coming to totally destroy Israel but will send warning (Elijah) before He does. This is probably the main lesson of the book.

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 445-432 B.C.

A. Between the First and Second Visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem

In 445 B.C., under Nehemiah's leadership the people had pledged to bring their tithe into the Lord's storehouse (Nehemiah 10:37-39). This agreement (Nehemiah 9:38-10:39) included a number of other reforms: the cessation of mixed marriages, the strict observance of the Sabbath and the sabbatical year, and the promise to return all the interest they had charged their brothers.

B. In 432 B.C., after a Trip to Persia. Nehemiah returned and found that the abuses condemned earlier were no longer present. The biblical background then is Ezra 7-10 and the book of Nehemiah. With this timing agrees the facts that:

- 1) Malachi does not mention Haggai and Zechariah.
- 2) Malachi is not mentioned by them.
- 3) The Temple and its service is fully restored.
- 4) The frequent reference to disrespect of the temple and its service by priests and people (Malachi 1:6-14; 3:5; 8:12).

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

We will give a survey of this book as we outline it so we can see the book as it sits before God as a whole.

A. Six Disputations (1:1-4:3). (Superscription, verse 1). “An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.” He has a SINGLE thing to say (An oracle) involving six disputations.

1. About love (1:2-5). God loves Israel!
 - a. His love asserted (2). “I have loved you, says the LORD.”
 - b. His love demonstrated (3-5). “‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ The LORD said. ‘Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated.’”

Edom – destroyed and always under the wrath of God.
Jacob – you have been and are preserved in your land.
2. About Honor (1:6-2:9). “A son honors his father.” Where is my honor?
 - a. Rebuke of the faithlessness of the priests and people (1:6-14).
 - 1) You show contempt for my name.
 - 2) You show contempt for my altar. “When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty.”
 - 3) The cure: “Now implore God to be gracious to us.”
 - 4) The prophet’s (God’s) desire: “Oh, that one of you would just shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar!”
 - 5) He rebukes the priests because they are offering Him their leftovers and not their full and true worship.
 - b. Curse pronounced upon the faithless priests (2:1-9).
 - 1) Immediate reformation will be the only way of escape (vs. 1-4).
 - 2) Covenant with Levi and the ideal priest (vs. 5-7).
 - 3) The apostate priests and their disgrace (vs.8-9).
3. About faithlessness (2:10-16). You have perverted the Lord’s covenant. “We have one father.”
 - a. Foreign marriages (vs. 10-12). If you read Nehemiah’s book you will find one of Nehemiah’s main functions in returning to the land, was to get them to put away the foreign wives that they had and go back to the wives of their youth, that the land might not be corrupted and that the law might be honored.
 - b. Far-reaching divorces (vs. 13-16).

- 1) They had put away the wives of their youth.
- 2) They had covered the altar of Jehovah with tears.
- 4. About divine justice (2:17-3:5). “Where is the God of justice?”
 - a. The question (2:17). Where is He?
 - b. The answer (3:1-5). He is coming soon—to bring justice!
 - 1) Jehovah’s appearance as a refining fire (3:1-2).
 - 2) Purification of priests and people (3:3-5).
- 5. About repentance (3:6-12). “The unchanging God still demands repentance.”
 - a. The Lord’s unchangeable nature (v. 6).
 - b. The people’s fickleness and Jehovah’s course (vs. 7-9).
 - c. The Lord’s promise to the tithers (vs. 10-12).
- 6. About serving God (3:13-4:3). “Your words have been stout against me.”
 - a. Complaint: The wicked prosper – The righteous suffer (3:13-15).
 - b. Separation: Of the pious from the wicked (3:16-18).
 - c. Destruction: Of the wicked (4:1).
 - d. Exaltation: Of the righteous (4:2-3).

B. Conclusion of Entire Old Testament (4:4-6)

- 1. Look back to the Law (v. 4).
- 2. Look forward to Elijah (v. 5).
- 3. Look upward for judgment (v. 6).

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme: *God loves Israel***
- B. Its Message: *God is not served by partial service***
- C. Its Comfort: *God is on the side of the loving and honest***
- D. Its Permanent Lessons:**
 - 1. *Divorce is an abomination in God’s sight.*
 - 2. *Insincerity in worship insults God.*
 - 3. *Our giving is a measurement of our spirituality.*
 - 4. *People suffer if preachers fail to study and teach all truth.*
 - 5. *God loves a pure, happy, clean home (and heart).*

Practical Lessons of Permanent Value:

- 1. One who sins wilfully and wantonly cannot please God by an elaborate worship.
- 2. The people suffer when the preacher fails to study and teach all the truth.
- 3. God still holds out the challenge to all His chosen ones to put Him to the test to find the rich supply of blessings that is available.

Topics for Further Discussion:

- 1. What contribution has Malachi to make to the marriage-divorce question? Compare it with New Testament teaching.
- 2. Are the offerings given to God today of better quality than in Malachi’s day? Is robbery a common practice?
- 3. What lessons about religious leadership are to be learned from Malachi?
- 4. What suggestions about a Godly home may be drawn from Malachi?
- 5. Does Malachi say anything about religious indifference in addition to the other prophets?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-THREE:

1. Give the Theme, Message, Comfort, and the five Permanent Lessons for the book of Malachi.

Theme: _____

Message: _____

Comfort: _____

Permanent Lessons:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

2. List the six disputation given which serve as an outline of the book.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

3. Give the date of Malachi and show why this date is chosen.

Date: _____

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

MALACHI (2)

INTRODUCTION:

The prophet Malachi is the last of the series of prophets, beginning with Moses, who for a thousand years had lifted up their voice to the people of God in rebuke and judgment for their transgressions on the one hand, and in the prediction of the future glorious Messianic kingdom on the other. By this time a hundred years had passed since the Jews had returned from their captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem. The early religious enthusiasm after the return had subsided. Following a period of revival (Nehemiah 10:28-30), the people had again become indifferent religiously and lax morally. This book is a call to repentance and humble obedience, and a stern call of judgment to the disobedient and rebellious.

Malachi is the Hebrew for *My Messenger*. The prophet is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, and the book that he wrote comes naturally at the end of the Old Testament. It was the last portion of inspired Hebrew prophecy. It was written to the whole nation, but especially to the *Remnant* who returned after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon.

LESSON TEXT: Book of Malachi

LESSON AIM: To see God's call to repentance and humble obedience, and a stern call of judgement to the disobedient and rebellious through some special studies in the book.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See the nature and obedience of the true priests contrasted to the nature and disobedience of the false priests.
 2. Learn the four-fold qualifications of the ministers of God.
 3. See Malachi's preparation for the Messiah and hear him finally say: Remember the Law, look for Elijah and escape judgment.
-

THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 445-432 B.C.

THE OUTLINE: Six disputation about love, honor, faithfulness, justice, repentence, serving God.

THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK

- A. Its Theme: *God Loves Israel*
- B. Its Message: *God Is Not Served by Partial Service*

SPECIAL STUDIES FROM THE BOOK

- A. Contrast Between True and False Priests
 1. False priests:
 - a. **Despise God's name** (1:6). “A son honors his father and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master,

where is the respect due me?’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘It is you, O priests, who despise, who show contempt for, my name.’”

- b. **Offer polluted sacrifice** (1:7, cf. 1:8). They placed defiled food on His altar. They offered crippled and diseased animals. They offered blind animals. They were giving God the leftovers. They were giving God what they themselves did not want.
 - c. **Cause many to stumble in the Law** (2:8). “*But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,’ says the LORD Almighty.”*
 - d. **Show respect of persons** (2:9). “*...have shown partiality in matters of the law.”*
2. True priests:
- a. **They fear the Lord** (2:5). “*My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.”*
 - b. **They speak truth and righteousness** (2:6a). “*True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips.”*
 - c. **They walk in peace and uprightness** (2:6b). “*He walked in peace and uprightness. He walks with me.”*
 - d. **They turn many away from iniquity** (2:6c). “*He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.”*
 - e. **They have knowledge of the Lord** (2:7). “*For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction-because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty.”*

NOTE: That is very interesting. Since today, according to 1 Peter chapter 2, we are a kingdom of priests, that we are priests offering spiritual sacrifices unto God, so we like those priests must fear the Lord. We must speak truth and righteousness. We must walk in the will and the way of God and turn many people by our teaching from their sin.

But the key thing the priest did in the Old Testament is what the priest does now, and it is not to offer sacrifices. If you go back and read in the book of Leviticus chapter 10 where the priesthood is instituted, you will find that there they were to offer sacrifices, all right, but their primary function was to teach Israel the difference between the holy and common, to teach in Israel the Law. When Israel was brought into the promised land by Joshua, the tribe of Levi was given no large section of land as their tribal inheritance. But they were given 48 cities within those tribes, and there the Levites were to live, and there the Levites were to teach, the priests were to teach the people the Law so that they might keep that land that they were brought into.

B. The Sins of the People

1. Spiritless, routine worship (1:6-8).
2. Evil associations (2:10-12).
3. Questioning the Lord’s justice (2:17; 3:6).
4. Robbing God (3:7-12).
5. Impatience in waiting for God to act (3:17; 4:3).

C. What Divorce Is in God’s Eyes

1. Profanity of the covenant of God (2:10).
2. Profanity of God’s holiness (2:11).
3. The cause of one’s sacrifice to be rejected (2:13).
4. Treachery against one’s companion (2:14).
5. Against the purpose of the home (2:15).

6. The thing God hates (2:16a).
 7. Violence against the innocent (2:16b).
- NOTE:** A cause of being cut off by God (2:12).

D. The Qualifications of God's Ministers (2:6-7)

1. **A message from God** – “*The messenger of the Lord Almighty*” (v. 7).
2. **Fidelity in delivering it** – “*True instruction. . .in his mouth*” (v. 6a).
3. **A life in harmony with it** – “*He walked with me in truth and uprightness*” (v. 6b).
4. **Zeal for people to receive it** – “*Turned many away from sin*” (v. 6c).

E. The Day of the Lord (4:1-3)

1. **The divine fire** (v. 1).
 - a. Its discriminate operation – Burns stubble, purifies silver (3:3).
 - b. Its total operation – Root and branch destroyed.
2. **The healing sunrise** (v. 2).
 - a. Its requirement – “*Revere my name.*”
 - b. Its result – “*Healing in its wings.*”
 - c. Its rejoicing – “*Leap like calves.*”
3. **The treading righteous** (v. 3).
 - a. The Lord’s victory is their victory.

F. Malachi's Preparation for the Messiah

1. The true value of ritual (1:6-14).
 - a. God deserves our honor (vs. 6-9).
 - b. God’s name to be honored in His temple (vs. 10-11).
 - c. God is a king to be feared (vs. 12-14).
2. The crime of divorce (2:10-16).
 - a. Violates God’s covenant (vs. 10-12).
 - b. Violates their covenant (vs. 13-14).
 - c. Violates sanctity of honor (vs. 15-16).
3. The coming Messiah and His kingdom (3:1-6; 4:1-3).
 - a. The purifier of His people (3:2b-4; 4:2).
 - b. The judge of the wicked (3:2a, 5-6; 4:1, 3).
4. The eternal discipline of the Law (4:4-6).
 - a. Rebuke of priests for not expounding the law (2:7-8).
 - b. Warning to people for forgetting the law (2:17-3:12).
 - c. Now a final reminder:
 - Remember the Law
 - Look for Elijah
 - Escape judgment

Topics for Further Discussion

1. What contribution has Malachi to make to the marriage-divorce question?
2. Are the offerings given to God today of better quality than in Malachi’s day? Is robbery a common practice?
3. What lessons about religious leadership are to be learned from Malachi?
4. What suggestions about a Godly home may be drawn from Malachi?
5. Does Malachi say anything about religious indifference in addition to the other prophets?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

1. List the characteristics and practices of the false priests.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. List the characteristics and practices of the true priests.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

3. What are the four qualifications of God's ministers in 2:6-7.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

4. What are the three things contained in Malachi's final reminder?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

~~Study Guide~~

Richard Rogers

Richard Rogers was born in 1936 in Dallas, Texas. He was educated at Abilene Christian University, and Florida Christian College. An avid reader and diligent Bible student, he authored some twenty workbooks and published outlines.

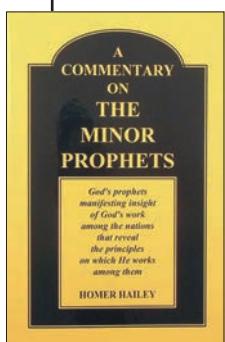


Richard was well known and recognized as a gifted evangelist, teacher, and lectureship speaker. Until his death he was in great demand as a missionary encourager and world evangelist. He taught for more than three decades at Sunset International Bible Institute, assisting in the training of thousands of preachers and missionaries. Richard mentored church planting teams in California, Mexico, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Richard preached for local congregations at Blue Ridge, Azle, and Midland, Texas as well as the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock. Speaking appointments took him to forty states and thirty foreign countries and to many Christian university campuses as a teacher and lecturer. He was also a frequent speaker at workshops across the nation.

Richard can still be heard proclaiming the word of God via hundreds of audio and video sermons and lessons available through Sunset External Studies.

Richard and his wife, Barbara, were blessed with four children and a number of grandchildren.



Homer Hailey's book *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets* is a companion book to this study.

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