

The Minor Prophets

**Notes prepared by
Carey Dillinger
For the Adult Bible Class at
Beverly Shores church of Christ
Leesburg, Fl.**

THE MINOR PROPHETS

Bible Class Notes

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Why should we study the Old Testament, in general?

- To strengthen our faith:
by observing how God has dealt with His believers through the ages and,
by seeing the Messianic prophesies and relating them to their fulfillment in Christ.

Why should we study the Prophets, specifically?

- To give courage to the faithful through an understanding of how the prophets dealt with the religious, political, social, and moral corruptions of their time.
- To make us aware of the fact that God has always attached consequences to disobedience, and to have a better understanding of the principles on which those consequences were and are based.
- To improve our abilities to deflect and defeat modern day interpretations of Old Testament prophecy.

References:

A Commentary on The Minor Prophets - Homer Hailey (commentary)

The Minor Prophets - Robert Harkrider (workbook)

NOTE: For all practical purposes, the notes that follow are a synopsis of Hailey's commentary, generally following Harkrider's outline. The "Applications for Today" found at the end of each section were adapted from Harkrider's workbook.

Carey Dillinger

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS

I. Who are the Prophets? (condensed from Harkrider's outline)

- A. Five classes of Old Covenant instructors.
 1. The lawgiver: Moses
 2. Counselors: Wise men
 3. Lawyers: Priests
 4. Speakers: Prophets
 5. Poets: Psalmists

B. Prophet defined as a spokesman on another's behalf.

C. Examples of some designated as prophets

1. Abraham
2. Moses
3. Deborah, Judges, Miriam
4. "Sons of the prophets"
5. Samuel

II. How are the Prophets Classified?

A. Two classifications: (see Chart 1-1)

1. "Earlier Prophets" Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings
2. "Later Prophets"
 - a. "greater prophets" Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
 - b. "lesser prophets" "The Book of the Twelve."

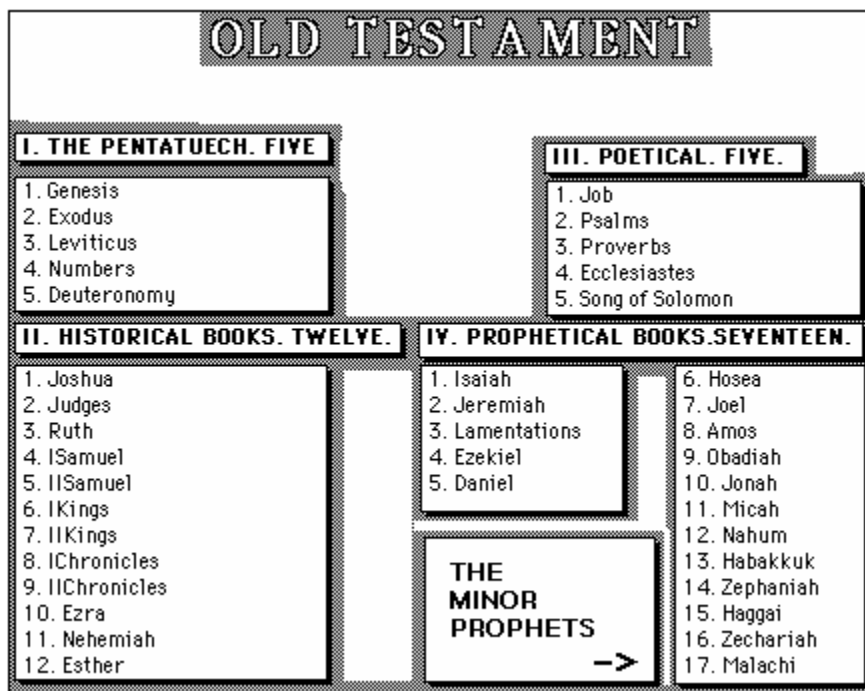


Chart 1-1

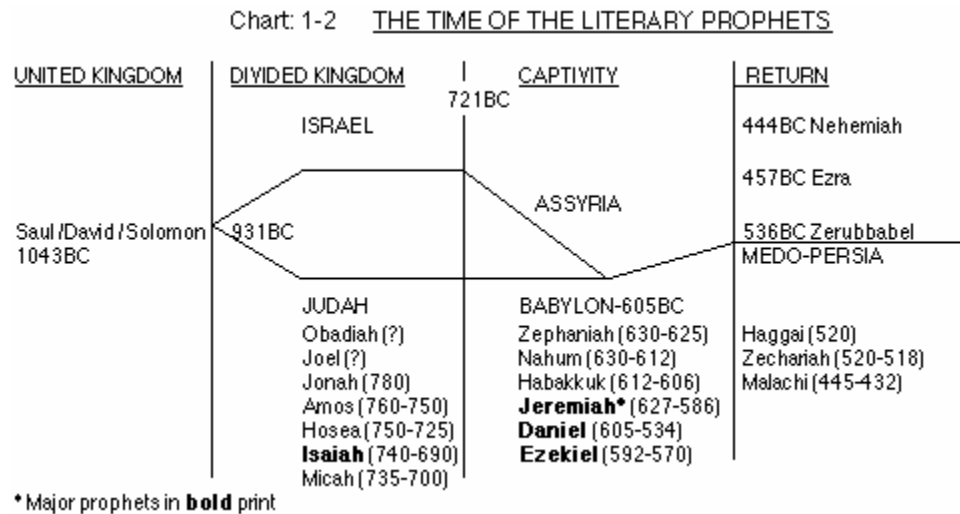
B. The Major and the Minor Prophets

C. Oral and Literary Prophets

III. How Can We Understand the Message of the Prophets?

- A. Must Keep Three Ideas in Mind:
1. What were the conditions at the time the prophet lived?
 2. What was God's relation to the heathen nations?
 3. Observe the teachings concerning the King and Kingdom to come.
- B. Important Themes Developed by the Prophets
1. Holiness of God
 2. Sovereignty of God
 3. Immutability of God's Word
 4. God's attitude toward sin
 5. Repentance and righteousness
 6. Worship

IV. Purpose of Studying the Books "Out of Order." (see Chart 1-2)



- A. Chronological order versus Textual order.
- B. Order of Our Study (chronological):

1. Obadiah - p.3	7. Zephaniah - p.38
2. Joel - p.7	8. Nahum - p.42
3. Jonah - p.11	9. Habakkuk - p.45
4. Amos - p.14	10. Haggai - p.50
5. Hosea - p.21	11. Zechariah - p.53
6. Micah - p.31	12. Malachi - p.57

OBADIAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. Utter Destruction of Edom Decreed [1-16]

A. Announcement of the judgment (1-9)

1. The decree (1) Edom had sinned against Jehovah; therefore, Jehovah will arouse the heathen nations against them.
2. Condition: deceived by pride, despised and debased by Jehovah (2-4)
Because of the mountainous terrain that Edom occupied, it thought itself invincible. Obadiah prophesies that Jehovah will bring Edom down. Destiny, doom, and deliverance of nations are in God's hands (Acts 17:26). Jehovah can build up a nation or cast it down.
3. Completeness of the destruction (5,6) As well as being confident in its physical strength and strategic location, Edom was proud of its wealth. A wealth gained legitimately by mining ore deposits and illegitimately by controlling and robbing the caravan trade. Jehovah declared that when Edom is destroyed, there would be nothing left. Edom would be plundered, as it had plundered the caravans and other nations.
4. Treachery of his allies (7) The surrounding nations that had made treaties with Edom in the past would break those treaties. They would have no allies to turn to at the time of their destruction.
5. Failure of his wisdom and might (8,9) With its allies gone, Edom would then lose the counsel of its wise men. The city of Teman in Edom was distinguished for its men of wisdom. Eliphaz came from Teman to comfort Job (Job. 2:11). With God against Edom, its allies and wise men gone, the warriors would be cut off from their refuge and slain.

B. Cause of the judgment against Edom (10-14)

1. Violence and unbrotherly conduct toward Judah (10,11) While pride was certainly a reason for Edom to be destroyed, God had something else against them. They had perpetually mistreated the Israelites, their kinsmen. When enemies had plundered Israel, Edom stood with the enemies. This helps us to possibly place the setting of Obadiah's prophecy (2 Chron. 21:8-18).
2. Warning against such conduct (12-14) Edom is now charged to "look not," "enter not," and "stand not." It is a sin to rejoice in another's calamity or to participate in the cause of that calamity. The sin becomes that more heinous when the perpetrator brags that it will never happen to him! It is also a sin to share in the spoils of a plundered nation. Does this ring a bell for us today? Finally, it is a sin to prey upon hapless fugitives by robbing them or enslaving them for your own gain or the gain of your allies.

C. Terrors of the judgment: the day of Jehovah (15,16)

Every sowing brings its own harvest. Edom would have their "day of Jehovah." While this would be a day of terror to Edom, it would be a day of deliverance to God's people. Whether Edom had desecrated God's holy city in a literal or figurative sense, they would

be devoured by their own ungodliness. Edom would be completely removed from the face of the earth by Jehovah's divine judgment.

II. Exaltation of Israel: the Kingdom of Jehovah to be Established Upon Mount Zion [17-21]

- A. A remnant to escape to Mount Zion (17)
While destruction is to be found on Mt. Seir (Edom), deliverance will come to Mt. Zion (Israel). Mt. Zion represents a place of protection and worship. The house of Jacob refers to the spiritual descendants as well as the physical ones. We are assured in the NT that Christ rules over the house of Jacob today (Lu. 1:33).
- B. Conquest of Edom (Mount Seir) and surrounding nations (18-20)
The victors would take all of the possessions of Edom. The divided Israel would be united in the final victory. The actual destruction of physical Edom was begun by the Chaldeans, and then continued by the Nabataeans who drove them out of their land into southern Judea. The Maccabees then destroyed most of the remnant of Edom (now called the Idumeans) during the first century B.C. Finally, the Romans dispersed the remainder with the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem and their identity was lost forever. Historically, the most notable Idumeans were the Herods. The coming of Christ then, was the sign of the final destruction of Edom. (See Balaam's prophecy, Num. 24:15-24.) Also a comparison of Amos 9:11,12 with Acts 15:15-18 will lend more credence to this thinking. If any Edomites were to escape destruction, it would have to be under the auspices of Mt. Zion. When the destruction of Jerusalem came who were saved? History will show that the Christians evacuated before the destruction. Who held Mt. Zion at this time? Spiritually speaking it was Jesus Christ.
- C. Jehovah's universal sway from Mount Zion (21)
None of the captives from Israel would be forgotten either. They would be delivered by "saviors." These would ultimately be the Apostles and evangelists sent by Jesus into the uttermost corners of the world. The kingdom under consideration here is the one prophesied by Zechariah (Zech. 9:10).
In spiritual matters, God's people have always been able to hold dominion over the heathen, even in physical matters the people of the world are bound for eventual defeat.

Applications for Today

- A. v.3 - Pride always goes before the fall.
B. v.10 - We must have proper attitudes towards our brethren. James 3:14,15;
Rom. 12:9- 21; Mt. 5:44-48.

JOEL: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. **The harbinger of the day of Jehovah: the judgment of God and the prophet's call to repentance (the prophet speaks). [1:2-2:17]**

- A. Devastation of Judah: scourge of locusts, drought, and fire. (1:2-20)
1. Graphic description of the locust scourge. (2-4) Palestine has been ravaged by locusts many times throughout history. The locust invasion mentioned here is severe. The four terms used to describe the locusts could refer to the four stages of development in the life of a locust or four separate waves of locusts. When locusts come into Palestine they generally move from the northeast to the southwest.
 2. Call to various classes to mourn (repent). (5-14)
 - a. Drunkards-all luxuries are cut off, (5-7). Both luxuries and essentials will be destroyed. The source of wine will be cut off. The locusts will be as an army (nation) bent only on destruction.
 - b. Whole nation-means of the sustenance of life is lacking, (8-12). Implements of worship will be destroyed. With the grain, fruit, vines, and supply of olive oil cut off, everyone will suffer.
 - c. Exhortation to repentance, (13,14). A call to repentance and fasting is to be initiated by the priests. Wearing of sackcloth was a symbol of misery of the body and soul. The elders and all the people should follow the example of the priests.
 3. The awful calamity: "day of Jehovah"-prayer for mercy. (15-20) Judgment will come as described in the locust plague. Because of their wickedness everything would fail. Even the animals would be affected. We see that indirectly sin affects all creation. The locust scourge would be followed by drought and fire. The prophet turns to the Lord for Divine intervention. Many modern interpreters try to make "the day of Jehovah" apply to the final judgment in every instance. We must use the context to determine which time of judgment is indicated.
- B. A more urgent summons to repentance and prayer: for the scourge is a forerunner of the Day of Judgment. (2:1-17)
1. The urgent summons. (1-11)
 - a. The trumpet of warning, (1-3). The alarm from Zion signifies a warning from God's dwelling place. The descriptions used here remind us of the descriptions of the plagues against Egypt. Notice the before and after picture. Before: the Garden of Eden. After: a deserted barren wasteland.
 - b. A more vivid description of the calamity, (4-11). The prophet wants his listeners to experience the sensation of helplessness as he uses very vivid language to express the locust horde. The invaders cannot be stopped. Compare the language of these verses to Mt. 24:29, Mk. 13:25, Lu. 22:25-28, as Jesus describes the destruction of Jerusalem. Also, Rev. 6:12-14, where John describes the fall of Rome. The hordes of locust are seen by the prophet as Jehovah's army, carrying out His terrible judgment against the wicked.

2. A more urgent call to repentance. (12-17)
 - a. Rend the heart, not the garments, (12-14). But wait! There is time to repent. If the people will turn to Jehovah, He will have mercy. He demands not just an outward sign of contrition, but also a repentance from the heart (inward). If the people repent of their wickedness, then God will repent of the destruction. He would pour out a blessing in the place of the judgment. He provides them with the physical items necessary for them to worship Him.
 - b. Sincerely repent and fervently pray (15-17). The outward display of repentance would be an assembly of the people. Here the trumpet is a call to assemble. Everyone was to assemble, including those usually excused, namely nursing babies and their mothers, as well as newlyweds. Prayers for salvation should be made because it would cause their nation and their God to suffer ridicule if they were conquered by a heathen nation.

Applications for Today

- A. 2:11 - The sinful should tremble at the coming judgment (Heb. 10:26-29; 2 Cor. 5:11; Mk. 9:43-48).
- B. 2:13- The Lord wishes that no one would perish, 2 Pet.3:9. God is merciful to all who receive Him, but He will bring severe judgment on those who refuse to obey, (Rom 2:4-11; 11:22).

II. The day of Jehovah: a day of blessing to Israel, a day of terror to her enemies (Jehovah speaks). [2:18-3:21]

- A. Blessings promised to Israel (2:18-32)
 1. Repentance implied Jehovah's gracious change. (18)
 2. The removal of Jehovah's army; temporal blessings promised. (19-27)
 Jehovah will show compassion upon a repentant people by sending food and driving out the locusts. Some would be driven into the eastern sea (Dead Sea), others into the western sea (Mediterranean). The invaders will be completely destroyed. Their death-stench would be a reminder of the dire consequences of judgment for the wicked. Just as they had been called on to weep and mourn, now people are called on to rejoice and be glad. Their food, land, and cattle would be refreshed. The former rain is autumn rain; the latter rain is spring rain. These rains would cause the crops to be plentiful. Their material blessings would be abundant. The people will praise Jehovah, because He is concerned for them, sends the judgments, removes the offenders, and bestows the blessings. Jehovah is to be recognized as the sovereign ruler.
 3. Outpouring of the Spirit and approaching judgment. (28-32)
 - a. Outpouring of the Spirit, (28,29). An outpouring of the Spirit is prophesied following the time of material blessings. Peter declared the fulfillment of

this prophecy in Acts 2:16ff. The outpouring began with the Apostles in Acts 2 and continued with the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. Prophets in the NT included men and women, Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5. The outpouring would hold no distinction of age, sex, or social order. Only under the New Covenant is the principle of "no distinction" recognized, Gal 3:28. The complementary terms "prophesying," "visions," and "dreams" cover the entire gamut of inspiration by the Spirit.

- b. Judgment upon the wicked parallel to blessings on Israel, (30,31). Forerunners would precede the great and terrible day of the Lord. Blood suggests death; fire suggests burning cities. Other writers such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, echoed similar language. While Jesus came first to save the world (Jn. 3:17-18), judgment was inevitable (Jn. 3:18-20). Those who reject Christ will receive a just reward.
- c. The escape of a remnant in Zion, (32). God always provides a means of escape by obeying His commands or revealed will. This obedience is what is meant by "calling on the name of the Lord." The remnant that is saved will be spiritual Israel.

B. Judgment on the nations (3:1-16a)

- 1. All wrongs committed against the people are to be avenged. (1-3)
What would happen to the heathen nations who had opposed the people? If we accept that this prophecy is fulfilled during NT times, at Pentecost, then these judgments occurred sometime after that. There is a literal "Valley of Jehoshaphat" but the language here is figurative. It represents an ideal place for judgment to take place. The cruelty of the heathen nations against God's people can be seen in the low estimate of the value of human life that characteristic of societies that reject God.
- 2. Neighbor nations will suffer the severe judgment of slavery in a far land. (4-8)
The people of the Mediterranean coast are mentioned as having carried away the precious things of God. This included material goods, as well as, the people themselves (Amos 1:6-10) It is hard to pinpoint the exact time of the fulfillment of this prophecy, perhaps it simply represents an avenging judgment of the shameful treatment inflicted on the people of the Lord.
- 3. Destruction of all heathen powers by a divine decree. (9-16a)
The prophet warns the enemies of God to prepare for war. The tools of peace will be converted into tools of war. This is the opposite character of those in God's kingdom (Isa. 2:4). The nations are called to judgment, because it is time for the judgment. The figures of the harvest of wheat and grapes "pre-call" Rev. 14:14-20. Many multitudes will be judged.

- C. Glorification of the people of God: Israel's final happiness and peace (3:16b-21) contrasted with the desolation of her enemies (the world powers). Jehovah will be a refuge to the believers. It is during these times of judgment and refuge that all men will know that Jehovah is God and that He reigns in spiritual Zion. This is the kingdom that cannot be defeated, but will finally be delivered to the Father by the Son (1 Cor. 15:24-28). These things will come to pass in the days after the Messiah. While spiritual Israel will flourish, its traditional physical enemies will decline. The fulfillment of this prophecy continues even today as God dwells among His people, the church.

Applications for Today

- A. 2:28-32 - The outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 confirmed that the Messianic age had come, Mk. 1:14,15.
- B. 3:17,20 - God's people are protected by Him. The kingdom is indestructible, because it is a spiritual kingdom, Heb. 12:22,28; Rom. 8:35-39.

JONAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. Jonah's call and flight to Tarshish (his disobedience: running away from God). [1:1-16]

- A. Jehovah's charge to go to Nineveh, and the prophet's disobedience. (1-3)
The city of Nineveh is one of the oldest known cities of the civilized world, (Gen. 10:8-12). It is estimated that Nineveh became a city between 5000-4000 BC. Located on the Tigris River, 250 miles north of Babylon and 500 miles northeast of Jerusalem. For many years it was the capital of Assyria. The city had a history of wickedness and cruelty. At the time of Jonah, the city was at a low point in its political and military power. Jonah ran from his appointed duty because of his personal patriotism and his fear that Jehovah would spare Nineveh. He ran in the exact opposite direction of Nineveh towards one of the western outposts of the known world Tarshish, located in what is now southwestern Spain. (2000 miles away).
- B. The great wind and Jonah's confession. (4-10)
The Storm was an act of God (within nature) as opposed to a miracle, (Ps. 104:4). As the ship began to sink, the sailors lightened the load and called on their gods. The irony is obvious, as the heathen shipmaster had to rebuke God's prophet and calls on him to pray. Casting lots was a popular OT method of settling issues. The Israelites themselves practiced various forms of lot casting including the God given Urim and Thummin. The only NT incident recorded is in Acts 1:21-26. The result of casting lots in Jonah's case can be neatly summed up by Proverbs 16:33. The sailors immediately demanded a confession from Jonah and he quickly related his circumstances. This is an example of the contrast in Jonah's personality. A coward before God, but brave before these men. Jonah was well aware that Jehovah is the only true object of worship, yet he ran from him.
- C. Jonah sacrificed cast into the sea. (11-16)
The sailors were willing to do anything to appease Jonah's God. Jonah shows his brave side again as he volunteers to have himself thrown overboard. Notice how Jonah can be compared and contrasted with the Christ. One contrast involves the words of the sailors here, "do not charge us with innocent blood," with the words of the crowd in Mt. 27:25. The calming of the seas made true believers of Jonah's shipmates. See how God can even use disobedience to glorify Himself.

II. Jonah's miraculous preservation (his prayer: running to God). [1:17-2:20]

- A. The fish prepared by Jehovah. (17)
The fish being "prepared" indicates appointment not the construction of some new fish. The miracle was in the fact that Jonah survived the ordeal being swallowed by the fish and living in its belly for three days. To deny this miracle leads to a denial of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, (Mt. 12:38-40). The resurrection is the supreme sign of Christ's deity.

- B. Jonah's prayer from the deep. (2:1-9)
 Much of chapter two echoes the Psalms. The words of the Psalmists are certainly appropriate to Jonah as he expresses his feelings and cries out to the Lord. Jonah simply realizes that if salvation is to be found, it can only be found in Jehovah. The psalm of Jonah is related in words that indicate it was written after his deliverance. This accounts for the attitude of thanksgiving found where an attitude of petition would be expected. Jonah knew that the sailors were acting as God's instruments. God cast Jonah into the sea. In Jonah's words, we can hear both repentance and hope. Hope is always the reward of true repentance. Jonah's physical situation was hopeless, only Divine intervention could prevent his death. Compare Jonah's prayer to Ps. 73:2,17. Following idols or even your own way will lead to destruction. Jehovah is the only source of salvation. Jonah's baptism in the fishes belly signifies his rebirth to do the Lord's will.
- C. Jonah's deliverance. (10)
 We know nothing concerning the how or where of this miracle. What we do know is that Jonah was spared and returned to fulfill his appointed duty.

Applications for Today

- A. 1:3 - Man cannot flee from the presence of the Lord. He is all-present and all-knowing. Heb. 4:13; Gal. 6:7,8; 2 Cor. 5:10.
- B. 1:2; 3:1,2 - God's message must be preached. 2 Tim 4:2-4; Acts 20:26,27.

III. Jehovah's second call; Jonah goes to Nineveh (his preaching: running with God) [3:1-11]

- A. The call, response, and message to Nineveh. (1-4)
 Jonah is again commanded to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's message. Initially, God had told Jonah to "cry against the city," this time to "cry unto it." Even today, the only preaching that will lead to salvation is that preaching which God commands. This time there is no hesitation or argument from Jonah, he obeys God immediately. Nineveh was a huge city. It would take Jonah three days to make his way across the city. The Lord gave Nineveh forty days to repent. Threats against nations by God were generally conditional. If they would repent of their evil, God would not destroy them. (Jer.18:7-10)
- B. Repentance and Jehovah's gracious change. (5-10)
 From Lu. 11:30 we know that the Ninevites knew of Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish. They listened to his message, believed, and repented. Their sorrow concerning their sins was so great that they went into mourning. This act of contrition reached from the king himself to the lowest servant, and even to the beasts. The king commanded his subjects to turn from their evils ways. This shows that he understood that the punishment prophesied to come was for the wickedness that Nineveh had committed as a nation. As the people repented, so did God. It is easy to visualize to true definition of repentance here. It is a turning or change of mind and will. God loves even the most heathen among

us. He is willing that all men everywhere should repent so that He can show them His mercy. On the other side of the coin, man cannot ignore God's fierce hatred for sin, cruelty, and corruption.

IV. A narrow prophet vs. a merciful God (his complaints: running ahead of God). [4:1-11]

A. Jonah's anger at Nineveh's repentance. (1-5)

Jonah has quite a few personal problems including selfishness and a bad case of ethnocentrism. He is actually angry with both God's and Nineveh's repentance! The reason Jonah ran from God in the first place was he was afraid this would happen. Jonah wanted Nineveh destroyed. Contrast the prayer found here to the one in chapter two. Now he wants to die, rather than see Nineveh saved. Jonah leaves the city as a pouting child who takes his bat and ball and goes off to sulk because the game is not being played his way. This narrow, sectarian viewpoint was prominent among the Israelites. They believed Jehovah was their God and He was not to be shared with anyone. This is a similar attitude portrayed by the Prodigal Son's elder brother.

B. The gourd vine and the worm. (6-8)

Here we see the tender love of God and His mercy toward His servant and the loveless and selfish nature of Jonah. God causes the gourd vine to grow so Jonah could be comforted. When the vine appeared, Jonah was glad. We are selfish creatures indeed when we would be happy over a shade vine and sad because thousands of lives would not be taken. Because of this very attitude, God sent the worm and the wind to discomfort Jonah.

C. Jehovah's rebuke and lesson of the gourd vine. (9-11)

Jonah is angry again. And again for no good reason. Here in these last verses we can see the true contrast between man and God. Man is only concerned with that which directly affects him, no matter how trivial, while being totally indifferent to some happening that might have a greater value, but does not touch him personally. Man may cry and complain over some personal aches and pains, all the while praying for the total destruction of his fellow man. If each of us are singularly important to God, why can we not see the importance of thousands of individuals to God? If there were 120 thousand people in Nineveh that were not of an accountable age, then the total population could be estimated at 600 thousand or more. God cares for and is concerned about all of his creation.

Applications for Today

A. 3:10 - Works of faith are necessary for salvation,
Rom 10:17; Eph. 2:10; Jms. 2:14-24.

B. 4:5 - Those who are spiritual must help the truly penitent bear their burdens,
Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 15:1. We cannot be the elder brother.

AMOS: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title and Preface: [1:1-2] Although Amos was a full-time herdsman and vine dresser and a permanent resident of Judah the southern kingdom, God chose him to take this prophecy to the northern kingdom, Israel. For more history concerning the time of this prophecy see: 2 Kings 14: 23-28; 15:1-28; and 2 Chron. 26. The earthquake mentioned here is also noted by Zechariah (14:5).

I. The approaching judgment. The heathen's and Israel's sins. [1:3-2:16]

A. Punishment of the nations bordering Judah and Israel. (1:3-2:3)

1. Damascus for their cruelty in war. (1:3-5) Notice how Amos pronounces judgment on the six surrounding heathen nations, then Judah and finally Israel. The repetitive reference to three transgressions and for four is not literal, but indicates many transgressions. He begins with three nations that have no blood ties to Israel. Damascus, the capital of Syria was located 135 miles north-northeast of Jerusalem. Their sin was that of excessive cruelty against their enemies in time of war.
2. Gaza of Philistia slave traffic. (1:6-8) Gaza was the chief city of Philistia, southwest of Jerusalem. Their sin was dealing in slaves.
3. Tyre delivered up "brothers." (1:9,10) located on the coast of northern Palestine. Tyre had made a covenant of peace with Israel in the time of King David and their King Hiram. They violated this treaty and dealt slaves with Edom. Tyre was finally destroyed by Alexander the Great.
4. Edom for implacable hatred for Israel. (1:11,12) Edom was blood related to Israel through Esau. Our study of the prophet Obadiah shed much light on the poor relationship between Edom and Israel. Their sin was simply hatred of their brethren.
5. Ammon intense and uncalled-for cruelty. (1:13-15) Ammon was located east of Gad and north of Reuben. Ammon and Moab were descendants of Lot by the incestuous plot of his daughters. (Gen. 19:30-38). Their crime was also cruelty during war. Their inhumanity towards pregnant women and their unborn children was not only an overt act of cruelty; it was also a psychological ploy to prevent their enemies from procreating.
6. Moab vengeance even on a king's carcass. (2:1-3) located south of Reuben, east of the southern end of the Dead Sea. Their sin was that of desecrating the tombs of their dead enemies and turning their bones into building materials. The judgment against Moab would be terrible in its scope. (Isa. 15:5; 16:11; Jer. 48:36)

B. Punishment of Judah her sin was religious apostasy. (2:4,5)

Note the difference between the accusations against the nations and against Judah: cruelty vs. apostasy. Judah was not free from sin. Theirs was religious apostasy. They rejected God's laws and would not live by His rules. The judgment against Judah was averted for 135 years due to the work of the prophets Isaiah and Micah and King Hezekiah.

- C. Punishment of Israel the theme of Amos' prophecy. (2:6-16)
1. Sins of Israel: injustice and oppression, shameless immorality, contempt for the Lord. (2:6-8) Now Amos comes to the true reason for coming to Israel. They were also guilty of religious apostasy. Their hearts were hardened, they had no regard for the poor, and their overall moral conduct was horrible. They had made slaves of their own people in violation of the commands of Lev. 25:39-46. The judges were corrupt and the rich got richer at the expense of the poor. They had turned to idolatry and were using temple prostitutes. They disobeyed the commands of Deut. 24:12,13. Amos will continue to cry out against their sins throughout his ministry.
 2. Scornful contempt of the Divine benefits bestowed. (2:9-12) The reason that Israel possessed the land was because Jehovah had made it so. He drove out the previous inhabitants. He brought the people out of Egypt. Those under the Nazarite vow were being compelled to violate their vows by the bullying of the people. The people killed the prophets, rebelled against God and basically held all that was holy in utter contempt.
 3. Inevitable consequences. (2:13-16) In the accusations against the nations they are pictured as cruel, barbarous, etc.; against Judah and Israel the accusations are civil religious, and charges of oppressions. This accusation becomes the thesis of the book; the remainder of the book is an elaboration of these charges. Here Amos begins to announce the judgment against Israel. An alternate translation of verses 13 and 14 reads, "I will press you with the full force of war, as a loaded wagon presses the earth over which it passes." The swift will not escape, the strong will be weak, the mighty will be helpless, the archer will not be able to pull his bow, no one will escape, and the hero will become a coward.

II. Israel's crimes and her condemnation [chapters 3-6]

- A. Condemnation of the wealthy ruling classes for civil and religious inequities. (3:1 4:5)
1. Jehovah had known Israel, which makes her crime greater. (3:1-8)
 - a. Because chosen for Jehovah, her sins must be visited. (1,2) Amos is speaking the words of Jehovah. While the message is directed primarily at Israel, Judah would do well to listen. Because Jehovah had redeemed them from bondage, they belonged to Him. Because they belonged to Him, they must be disciplined by Him.
 - b. The prophet's right to speak: chosen of God. (3-8) The "two" mentioned in verse three is God and the prophet. Jehovah, as the lion, had His prey in sight and was about to attack. With the metaphor of the bird snare, the prophet suggests that Israel had set a trap with its own sins and was stepping into this trap of its own device. The trumpet blast was a sounding of alarm (remember Joel 2:1?). The prophet's voice is represented by the trumpet. The judgment will not come until a warning is sounded. This warning is as a roaring lion, to be heard and to be heeded. Because God spoke to Amos, he was compelled to prophesy.

2. Civil oppression and inevitable judgment on the ruling class. (3:9-4:3)
 - a. The ruling class: their sins. (3:9-15) The first to be condemned are the wealthy ruling class. Amos calls for witnesses from the surrounding countries to view the corruption within the walls of Samaria. They would see lawlessness, oppression and mistreatment of the weak. The moral values of the entire nation were in shambles. Hosea makes it clear in his prophecy that the "adversary" to rise up against Israel would be Assyria. The adversary would eventually: (1) surround the land, (2) bring down the nation's strength, and (3) plunder the palaces. The judgment would be severe. While Samaria was the political capital of Israel, Bethel was the center of religious activity. The religious leaders were also guilty of the excesses of the rich. Additionally, they had instigated idol worship. God would destroy them for that.

Applications for Today

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. 2:4 - B. 3:3 - | <p>Being religious is not enough. We cannot substitute our own ways for God's ways. 1 Sam. 15:22,23; Lu. 6:46; Prov. 14:12.</p> <p>When we agree with God, we will obey God and be in unity with our fellow believers. 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3-7.</p> |
|--|---|

- b. The luxury-loving women: a special judgment against them. (4:1-3) The wives of the rulers and the rich are referred to as fat cattle. They relaxed in the lap of luxury, while they encouraged their husbands to oppress the poor. God promises these women, through his prophet, that they would be among the first to be taken captive when Israel falls.
 3. Condemnation of their religious festivities "which please you," not Jehovah. (4:4,5) Amos uses irony here to point out that Israel was practicing "religion." But it was idol worship and contained no true piety or devotion to God. Their rules of religious conduct were self-contrived and included activities that were against God's law (Lev. 7:13,14). They forced free-will offerings from the people. They showed a rebellious spirit towards the Lord.
- B. Unheeded chastisements the prophet turns to the nation. (4:6-13)
 1. Chastisements from Jehovah, which have gone unheeded. (4:6-11)
 - a. General famine, "cleanness of teeth." (6) God had previously chastised the people, but they had not heeded these punishments and warnings. First, He sent famine to try to turn them back to Him.
 - b. Drought. (7,8) Second, He sent drought, withholding the rains of February and March when the fields needed the rain the most.
 - c. Blasting, mildew, locusts. (9) A third visitation came upon the crops in the form of a withering wind, and a blight that left the grain fruitless.
 - d. Pestilence, at the same time enemy attacks. (10) Next came pestilence, similar to those brought upon Egypt. Accompanying this pestilence was war.

- e. Earthquake, burning. (11) The fifth chastisement included earthquakes and burning reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - 2. Final doom, for which prepare. (12,13) They had looked upon God as a Being to be flattered; He looked upon them as children to be disciplined. Discipline had availed nothing; therefore, "Prepare to meet thy God." Because they did not respond to these, they were exhorted by Amos to prepare to meet God in a more severe judgment. While this final judgment is not outlined here, it is implied that it will be severe and final.
- C. Overthrow of kingdom of ten tribes. (chapters 5 and 6)
- 1. Lamentations, denunciations, exhortations, and threats. (5:1-17)
 - a. Lamentation Israel is fallen. (1-3) In the following two chapters, Amos stresses the coming judgment and reminds the people that they can avert this judgment. Here in chapter five, Amos begins a lamentation (funeral poem) over the nation of Israel. Even though Israel had remained protected from captivity to this point, the kingdom was near its end (Hosea 1:4). The nation would perish in a destructive war and only a remnant would remain.
 - b. Seek Jehovah, forsake idolatry, and live. (4-6) Jehovah offers hope of salvation on His terms. This salvation cannot be found in any of their idolatrous religious centers of worship. This included cities that had previously been centers of true worship in former times when the kingdoms were united. The call here is accompanied by a threat of severe judgment.
 - c. But Israel turns righteousness into unrighteousness. (7-9) The ruling classes had made a mockery of the court system. They would pay for their unrighteousness. As Creator, God had the power to destroy as well. He not only controls the immediate forces of nature, but also has the ability to supernaturally affect the earth if He so desires.
 - d. This unrighteousness God must punish, unless they seek Jehovah. (10-15) The people hated honest judges and only wanted those in power who matched their corruption. A true judge under the law was to meet the qualifications and dispense his duties according to Deut. 16:18-20 and Ex. 23:6-9. The judges in power in Amos' time were the antithesis of true judges. Although Amos senses the futility of his preaching, he continues to speak under God's direction, much like Isaiah (Isa. 6:11,12). Some of the people claimed to be in touch with God, but Amos denies that claim. They trusted in false confidence that they were still God's people and He would not allow these judgments to come upon them.
 - e. The announcement of judgment. (16,17) As the Lord passes His judgment upon the land, sounds of mourning and despair will be heard as death and destruction takes place.
 - 2. First woe terrors of the day of Jehovah. (5:18-27)
 - a. Terrors of the day. (18-20) The people were yearning for the "day of Jehovah," but expecting it to be a day of darkness and judgment on their enemies. The prophet emphasizes that "the day" will actually be one of

- terror upon their own ungodly nation. As Israel tries to escape, they will jump from the frying pan into the fire.
- b. Their heartless worship will not avert the day. (21-24) God's attitude towards Israel's religious activities is clearly shown. He rejects all aspects of their worship the feasts, solemn assemblies and offerings. God had previously ordained all of these activities, but they had corrupted them and themselves to the point where God would not accept their worship. Their music was "noise." Their songs were empty. Verse 24 brings a majestic vision of God's justice and righteousness returning as water cascading out of the mountains.
 - c. They have followed the steps of their fathers. (25-27) The people had been hypocritical in their worship even back to the wilderness wanderings, when they mingled idol worship with God worship. Because they were unable to free themselves spiritually from their captivity to idols, God would return them to physical captivity.
3. Second woe upon the careless heads of the nation. (chapter 6)
- a. The luxury-loving wealthy rulers. (1-6) Many of the rulers felt secure and at ease. They did not see the immediate danger. If other great cities had fallen, then Samaria and Bethel could suffer similar fates. They had embraced violence, luxury and revelry as the way of life. They would not heed the warnings of Amos, because they did not believe the warnings. They were content to manufacture musical instruments and use them in their sordid feasts and banquets.
 - b. Exile and destruction are certain. (7-11) These revelers will also be at the head of the line, when captivity comes. The people and the cities will be delivered up. Those that escape the sword will die of starvation. Custom would be broken when bodies would be cremated because cemeteries would be inaccessible. The people would come to fear even the sound of Jehovah's name and the destruction it would bring.
 - c. Cannot be averted by their foolish trust in power. (12-14) The end of sin against God is always disaster. Israel had acted in a manner that can be characterized by the words "sheer stupidity." They had turned from God to idols and taken their own lives into their own hands, because they believed they had the power of their own salvation within themselves.

Applications for Today

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| A. | 5:21-23- | You cannot worship God any way you choose.
Mt. 15:5-7; Gal. 1:6-8; Mt. 7:21-23. |
| B. | 6:1-6- | Prosperity often gives us a false sense of security.
Lu. 12:15-21; 1 Tim. 6:6-10; Prov. 30:9; Deut. 8:11-17. |

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). In this first vision, Amos saw a swarm of locusts eating up the last of the crops. Amos prayed to God to not go through with this calamity and God heard his prayers (Jms. 5:16).
- B. The vision of the devouring fire a severer judgment than that of the locusts, again averted by mercy of Jehovah. (7:4-6)
The second calamity was to be more severe than the first total destruction. Again, Amos interceded on behalf of Israel and this calamity is averted.
- C. The vision of the plumb line destruction on the idolatrous nation of Israel. (7:7-9)
In this vision God is showing Amos that Israel no longer measures up to His standards. The plumb line would show that Israel was no longer straight and true.

An interlude: antagonism of Amaziah towards Amos. (7:10-17)

With this threat against the King, Amaziah the priest of Bethel confronts Amos. First by sending word to the King, then in a face-to-face stand off. Amaziah accuses Amos of being a prophet for hire. He wants Amos to leave Israel and cease his work. Of course, we know from Chapter 1, that Amos was not a professional prophet and from the later chapters that he would not be deterred from doing God's work by man's intimidation. Because of his ungodly attitude, Amaziah and his family would be accursed.

- D. The vision of the basket of summer fruit - the ripeness of Israel for judgment. (ch.8)
 - 1. The vision and its significance: the time of mercy is now past, destruction is at hand. (8:1-3) After this interruption, Amos sees a fourth vision. The nation is ripe for destruction. Jehovah repeats the threat of the third vision (7:8). Any joy that had been previously found in the land would turn to mourning.
 - 2. The final eclipse of the nation her sun sets at noon. (8:4-14) Even though the people pretended to be religious, they longed for the holy days to end so they could be about their business. Their religion was hypocrisy. They were short-selling some customers and overcharging the rest. The poor had become impoverished because of these unscrupulous tactics of the rich. To be true to Himself, Jehovah must punish Israel. The end will come as an earthquake, a flood or an eclipse. Suddenly, and totally, Israel will be destroyed. The consequences of this judgment will be a famine of the word of God. Even if they cry out for a message from God, He will not respond. Because of their idolatry, God would withhold further messages from them.
- E. The vision of smitten sanctuary destruction of the sinful kingdom. (9:1-10)
In this final vision, Amos sees the people buried beneath the ruins of a house built on the foundation of falsehood. The false places of worship would be destroyed from top to bottom. They could run from the Lord but they could not hide! Those who were captives would suffer as well; no prisoners would be taken. If these threats seem harsh, we must realize that justice demands punishment of corruption and iniquity. The earth

will melt at the mere touch of Jehovah. His omnipotence and omniscience allows Him to use all of the forces of nature to bring either judgment or blessing. Even though Israel had once been Jehovah's own, they would not mean any more to Him now than a heathen nation. While the nation of Israel might cease to exist, the lineage of David would continue (Jer. 30:11; 46:28). As a race of people, the Jews still exist, but their former glory as a world power has never been restored. The kernels would be spared and the chaff destroyed. The chaff is obviously sinners (v.10).

IV. Promise of a bright future the Messianic hope. [9:11-15]

This conclusion is the only optimistic note in the book. Notice how each book directed to Judah or Israel has an optimistic note of future glory. Compare this passage with Acts 15:14-18. Amos closes his book with a final optimistic look at the future. When would this day come? Our reference to Acts 15 shows that Amos was looking forward to the spiritual kingdom as established by the Messiah. There would never be another physical, earthly kingdom of God's people. See also Lu. 1:67-79; Acts 3:18,21,24-27. James the Apostle understood the message of Amos and realized that the gentile acceptance of Christ was a fulfillment of this prophecy. If we believe that the spiritual throne of David has not yet been established (as the premillennialists teach) then we as gentiles are still without hope. Those that follow the Messiah will enjoy God's blessings through the Messiah. These blessing will be of a spiritual nature and culminate in a heavenly home. Once we reach that heavenly homeland, we can never be removed from it (Phil 3:20,21). These verses have already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Applications for Today

- A. 8:11- If we reject the truth, a time may come when we can no longer find it.
2 Thess. 2:10-12; Acts 13:45,46; Jms. 1:22-25.
- B. 9:11- David's tabernacle has been raised up through Christ. The kingdom is now
and it is of a spiritual nature.
Acts 2:33-36; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 12:28; Col. 1:13; 1Tim. 6:13f.

HOSEA: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. Israel's adultery [chapters 1-3]

It is probable that Hosea began prophesying during the last days of King Uzziah and continued until the first days of King Hezekiah. This places Hosea after Amos. For more historical information see 2 Kings 14:23 18:8 and 2 Chron. 26:1 29:11.

A. Hosea and Gomer, Jehovah and Israel: Israel the adulteress and her children (1:2- 2:1)

1. The prophet's marriage to Gomer by divine command, and the three children who are given prophetic names. (1:2-9)
 - a. Hosea charged to take a wife of "whoredom." (2,3) It is possible that Gomer did not begin to practice her sinful activities until after her marriage to Hosea. "The land" stands for the people, while "their great whoredom" stands for their unfaithfulness. Gomer was probably practicing idolatry. Other than the information found in these three chapters, nothing is known of Gomer or her family.
 - b. Jezreel symbolizing the overthrow of Jehu's dynasty. (4,5) For more concerning the significance of the name Jezreel, read 2 Kings 9 and 10. The point is that Jehu's dynasty would be overthrown even though Jehu followed the commands of God. Jehu's selfish attitude was his ancestor's downfall. The house of Israel would end; its political power would never be restored.
 - c. Lo-ruhamah Jehovah will no more have mercy upon Israel. (6,7) It is possible that Hosea did not believe the second child was his. The name means "no mercy or pity." God's mercy would only continue towards the house of Judah. We can see from passages such as Isa. 37:36 and Ezra 8:22,31 that Judah owed all of her blessings to God. Please note that while Hosea was primarily prophesying with Israel in mind, he would often include Judah in the warnings, threats and promises. In some cases he would direct an aside to Judah only.
 - d. Lo-ammi the utter rejection of Israel. (8,9) The name means "not my people." God would no longer claim them as His own. Hosea knows that this third child is not his, and Gomer's unfaithfulness is obvious.
2. Restoration of children of Judah and Israel. (1:10-2:1) These verses indicate that at some future time a portion of the nation will be "re-inherited." New Testament verses (1 Pet. 1:1; 2:10; Rom. 9:26) indicate that the gospel would call both Jew and gentile, both of whom "were not God's people." Their opportunity to become sons of the living God would come through His Son. In that day, those who had been Lo-ammi would become Ammi and those who were Lo-ruhamah would become Ruhamah.

B. Chastisement of idolatrous Israel, conversion, and final restoration. (2:2-23)

1. The threat of punishment. (2-13)
 - a. Condemnation of sinful conduct. (2-7) It is clear from verses 2 and 13 that Jehovah is now addressing the nation. Just as Hosea had experienced the

unfaithfulness of Gomer, Jehovah had experienced the unfaithfulness of the nation of Israel. Jehovah is the husband, Israel is the wife, and the children are the individual Israelites. Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, Jehovah renounces the marriage. To save the marriage, Israel must stop her adulteries. If she refused to stop, Jehovah would take back every blessing He had ever given her. The children had followed their mother's example and were guilty of idol worship. Once Israel is abandoned by God and end up in a pitiful condition, they will try to return to God. Israel would learn their lesson too late.

- b. Punishment more fully developed. (8-13) Israel used the riches God had given them for worshiping Baal. The worship associated with this idol was very sensual and licentious in nature. Because of their sin of idolatry, God would rescind His blessings. Left only to their own devices and helpless because of their impotent idol-god, Israel would suffer. They had not only worshiped a false god, but they had forgotten the true God.

2. Conversion and final restoration. (14-23)

- a. The promise of their conversion. (14-17) God would continue to work to restore a remnant of Israel. He would deliver them from the valley of Achor (trouble, Josh. 7:26), just as He delivered them from Egypt. The proper husband/wife relationship could be restored. Passing through the valley of Achor refers to their impending Assyrian captivity.
- b. The renewal of a covenant and mercies. (18-23) When would this restoration take place? It would take a New Covenant to accomplish the task. (Isa. 11:1-11) The new marriage would be spiritual, so the physical implements of war would not be needed. It would be based on the New Covenant. The new relationship would rest on five characteristics: righteousness, justice, loving kindness, mercies and faithfulness on the part of God and the His new people. The promise of a New Covenant has been fulfilled in Christ. The writers of the NT accepted Hosea's prophecy as a prophecy concerning Christ and His relationship to the church (as we saw earlier in the Romans and 2 Peter passages). At the time of Christ, the people had already returned to Canaan, and thus the New Covenant could be established, all spiritual blessings could be bestowed, all mercy could be shown, and God could make the people His own. All through His son Jesus Christ.

C. The prophet's second symbolic marriage. (chapter 3)

1. The symbolic action of the prophet. (1-3) Hosea is told to remarry Gomer. The analogy between Hosea and Gomer, and, Jehovah and Israel is resumed. Hosea bought Gomer back from her degradation for what amounted to 30 pieces of silver, the price of a wounded slave (Ex. 21:32). Gomer was to remain chaste until she could prove herself faithful, this chastity included relations with her own husband.

2. The application to Israel. (4,5) The children of Israel would have a similar separation from God in their Assyrian captivity. Who is "David the King" of the latter days? Jesus Christ.

II. Prophetic discourses: The ungodliness of Israel and its inevitable punishment. [chapters 4-13]

A. Jehovah's controversy with Israel. (chapters 4-6)

1. The controversy: over the national guilt. (chapter 4)
 - a. Moral corruption in everyday life. (1-5) Based on his own personal experiences, the prophet was able to clearly see the sins of the people. Israel was a nation in decay. Jehovah takes Israel to court because of their transgressions of the Law. They were charged with having no truth, no goodness nor no knowledge of God. Contrarily, they were false swearing and breaking faith with their brothers, as well as committing murder. Israel had broken ten out of ten commandments. The consequence of sin has always been and will always be punishment. "Contending with the priest," means arguing with God. All of the sins mentioned here called for the death penalty under the Law of Moses.
 - b. Lack of knowledge failure of the priests. (6-10) Hosea blames the priests for failing the people in this area. The priests were teaching what the people wanted instead of what the people needed. In this, they condoned and encouraged sin (Jer. 6:13).
 - c. Immoral religious practices. (11-14) Their idolatry, licentiousness, and drunkenness (all done for supposed religious purposes) took away their ability to think clearly. They were practicing idolatry and witchcraft, which kept them from being "under Jehovah." Even though the daughters and brides committed the physical acts, the fathers and husbands would be held more accountable. Their self-imposed ignorance would not save them, they were all accountable.
 - d. Ephraim joined to idols but let Judah be warned. (15-19) Hosea now warns Judah to abstain from idols. Bethel (the house of God) had become Bethaven (the house of vanity). Judah was to avoid such places of false worship, as well as false swearing and simply avoid Israel in general.

Application for Today

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| A. | 2:19,20- | The five words are efficient for our physical as well as spiritual marriages. |
| | ` | Mt.19:6-9; 5:32; Rom. 7:2,3; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Eph. 5:22-33. |
| B. | 4:6- | Any nation that rejects the knowledge of God rejects morality and spiritual hope. Eph. 4:17-19; Rom. 1:18-32; 2Thess. 2:10-12; Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23. |

2. Corruption in all phases of life. (chapter 5)
 - a. Guilt of priests, people, and princes. (1-7) Because of corruption, punishment is inevitable. Idolatry was everywhere. The ringleaders of this apostasy were the priests and the King. Death of innocents was somehow involved. Israel is referred to here as Ephraim, because the King was of that tribe. It was through the house of Ephraim that the downfall of Israel came. The pride of Israel should have been Jehovah, but she had turned her face toward the world. A century later Judah would follow Israel's example. Idolatry leads to destruction.
 - b. Judgment must follow all to suffer the consequences; destruction slow, but sure. (8-15) The alarm was being sounded by the prophets. Israel's downfall would not come without warning (Amos 3:7), but the warnings would be ignored. Judah would also experience the wrath of Jehovah because of corrupt leaders. The beginning of the end for Israel was the introduction of calf worship by Jereboam I (1 Ki. 12:28-33). God would destroy Israel slowly, as a moth destroys a garment. When Israel perceived their troubles they should have looked to Jehovah, but instead made alliances with their enemies. "King Jereb" means king of strife or contention and is symbolic here for Assyria. In the end, God will use Assyria as His own means of punishment upon both Israel and Judah. Israel will be taken captive and remain captive until they repent.
3. Insincerity an abomination before Jehovah. (chapter 6)
 - a. Israel's return, but without heartfelt repentance. (1-3) There are two possible interpretations of these three verses: (1) This could be a prayer of contrition raised by the people. They might come to realize that blessings only come to penitent sinners. If the people will repent, God will bless them. (2) Perhaps instead, these verses show only an outward repentance and not an inward one. Jehovah would not be deceived by this false repentance. This second view seems more in keeping with the following verses.
 - b. Jehovah is not deceived there is no sorrow for sin on Israel's part. (4-11) Jehovah is hurt by their shallowness and lack of true repentance. He desires that His people be righteous. This would include them being loyal, faithful, full of brotherly love, and love of God. Goodness and knowledge are the roots of pure love, not animal sacrifices. Yes, God instituted animal sacrifice, but the people were abusing it. They believed that the outward tokens would relieve them of the burden of their sins. "But they like Adam," would be expelled from their "Eden" as he had been expelled from his for transgressing God's law. Gilead here represents the hideout of outlaws and evildoers. Gilead was a mountain range to the east of the Jordan River that had become such a hideout. The whole nation of Israel had become as such a hideout for criminals. Topping the list of these criminals were the priests. The city of Shechem was chosen as a city of refuge (Num. 35:9-15; Josh. 20:7), but instead had become a sanctuary for murderers (the priests themselves). Judah was also caught up in this defilement of God's precepts. They will also be judged.

- B. Israel's corrupt political condition and consequence. (chapters 7,8)
1. The national government internally moral degradation and anarchy. (7:1-7) All of Israel was involved in this wickedness. If one area of the country would begin to do better, evil would spring up elsewhere. The weakness of the government encouraged lawlessness, specifically violence. The rulers did not turn to God in making their decisions, but instead trusted their own judgment. Instead of opposing the evildoers, the King and his princes collaborate with them. In the meantime, these very evildoers are plotting against the King. They are waiting for an opportune moment to kill the King, perhaps a feast day or his birthday. It appears that the King is ignorant of this plot. What is pictured in these verses is complete moral and political chaos. History tells us that four of the last six Kings of Israel were murdered (2 Ki. 15).
 2. The nation's corrupt foreign policy her appeal to foreign nations is to end in destruction. (8-16) Their foreign policy was as corrupt as their internal politics. God had always commanded Israel to keep themselves separate from the surrounding nations. The ruling tribe had allowed the nation to intermingle with their neighbors. They were "a cake not turned," cooked on the heathen side, but raw on God's side. The power of Israel has been destroyed by the outward influence of the heathen nations and the inward acceptance of that influence. Israel had tried to play both ends against the middle, attempting to form alliances with both Egypt and Assyria. While God was attempting to restore Israel through the prophets, the people had turned to idols. They fretted over material things and gave no regard to spiritual matters. What knowledge they did possess, they used for unseemly purposes. They would sometimes pretend to return to Jehovah, but would not truly repent. Because the rulers had defied God and boasted of their personal power, they would die by the sword. The people had allowed themselves to be led astray, they also must die. Their so-called ally, Egypt, would mock them as they fell to Assyria.
 3. Judgment national corruption and its consequences. (chapter 8)
 - a. Judgment has become inevitable idolatry is an abomination: as have sown, so shall reap. (1-7) The trumpet sounds the alarm of war. Assyria will swoop down over Israel as an eagle. The people had the law (Ex. 19:5,6), but had transgressed it. They had been conditionally promised a lifetime deed to the land, but they had violated those conditions (Deut. 28- 30). In contrast to their true conduct, they would claim to know God. They obviously did not know God. They had violated His covenant. In choosing their Kings, they had not followed God's wishes. Since the division of the kingdom, not a single king of the north had followed Jehovah. Because of their idolatry and rebellion, the north would fall. Their handmade calves and idols of worship would be destroyed. The people had sown the wind (nothing) and would harvest the whirlwind (destruction).
 - b. Appeals to the nations will not save Israel. (8-10) Their allies will not help them. Indeed they will become despised among the heathens. They prostituted themselves before the heathens in hopes of attaining favors

from them. One of the nations they turned to for assistance was Assyria, the very nation that would eventually carry them away captive.

- c. Multiplied idolatry its harvest: condemnation and judgment. (11-14) While God had authorized one altar (Deut. 12:5), the people had erected many, including altars to the calf and to Baal. The people had ignored the particulars of God's law. Their sacrifices were no good and their iniquities abounded. Egypt in this verse represents captivity. Judah was not innocent of these sins. They had built man-made fortifications when they should have built up their relationship with God.

Application for Today

- A. 5:6; 6:6- Outward form of worship is not sufficient to please God. He is concerned with not only what we do but also why we do it. 1 Cor. 11:20-30.
- B. 8:12- God's word will seem strange to those who rebel against Him. Unless we read the Bible and obey it, our claims to believe it are meaningless. Mt. 7:21-23; Lu. 6:46; Rom. 10:1-3.

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. (chapter 9)
 - a. The apostasy and its punishment: exile. (1-9) It is possible that at this point in Hosea's ministry that Assyria was not threatening Israel (2 Ki. 15:19,20). This would account for the joy being expressed at this time by the people. They loved their material possessions and their idols. Both of these were doomed to fail them and exile was ahead. The return to Egypt here indicates captivity, but in Assyria. Once in captivity, "out of Jehovah's land" they would not be able to practice true religion properly even if they wanted to! Their possessions would become Assyria's possessions. Memphis contained the royal burial ground of Egypt. Figuratively it would represent the loss of Israel's luxuries. False prophets were in the land (Micah 2:11). The blind were leading the blind; both were falling into the ditch. Ephraim did not trust in God's appointed prophets, but allowed themselves to be trapped by false prophets. The days of Gibeah (Judges 19,20), refer to a time when the tribe of Benjamin was almost completely destroyed because of their sins. Ephraim was as bad now as the men of Benjamin were in those earlier days.
 - b. As God found Israel and as they became. (10-17) The prophet reflects on the earlier days of Israel. When God first found Israel, He was pleased with them. However, at Baal-peor (Num. 25:1-9) they had joined the Moabites in the worship of their idol. Their lust for the physical and material drew them away from Jehovah and toward idolatry. A man is

like who or what he worships. Everything God had blessed them with would be removed, twice over. In the end, Ephraim would bring the people to destruction at the hands of a foreign power. Gilgal had once been the sight of many blessing for Israel (Josh. 4:19,20; 5:9; 1 Sam. 11:14,15; Micah 6:5). Now Gilgal was a hotbed of idolatry. Because of this the people would become "without a father's mercy" and "not his people." Ephraim means double-fruit, but they would become fruitless.

2. Guilt in rebellion against God. (chapter 10)
 - a. The guilt and the imminent destruction. (1-8)
 - (1) Puppet kings and puppet gods. (1-3) If Israel was a truly healthy vine it should have brought forth fruit for Jehovah. Instead only idolatry multiplied. While lip service was given to God, the idols possessed their minds. These idols would be destroyed (Ps. 80:8-19). If Jehovah is feared (respected), then He must be revered. Reverence comes only through service. Since their king was not on God's side, he was helpless. With no help from their impotent gods and impotent king, Israel was doomed.
 - (2) Their righteousness now becomes poison. (4,5) The rulers are hypocrites. they swear falsely and make covenants they do not intend to keep. Their "right" is wrong and their "justice" is injustice. Their words are poison. Their idols will be carried away with the people into captivity.
 - (3) Assyria is now named, the instrument of judgment. (6,7) Hosea names Assyria as their captors. The monarchy will be destroyed.
 - (4) The terror of the judgment. (8) The places of their idol worship will become desolate. The people would seek refuge in the mountains. Under similar circumstances, Judah would seek similar refuge (Isa. 2:19). In later times a similar cry would come from Jerusalem (Lu. 23:30) and again at the end-times (Rev. 6:16).
 - b. Israel's persistence in rebellion. (9-15) At the original battle of Gibeah, the tribe of Benjamin was reduce to 600 men, yet the tribe still survived. Ephraim would be utterly destroyed. This destruction would take place at God's convenience, and come at the hands of a heathen nation. The two transgressions mentioned here could be their rejection of God as their King, when they demanded an earthly king (1 Sam. 8) and finally their rejection of Jehovah as their God, when they embrace idolatry. The yoke to be placed on Israel's neck would be unbearable. Both Judah and Israel would do slave labor for their captors. Hosea calls for repentance: (1) "Sow yourselves in righteousness," (2) "reap according to kindness," and (3) "break your fallow ground." Instead of doing these things, Israel had been "plowing wickedness and reaping iniquity." Israel would find that reliance on strength in numbers and material objects would be to no avail. The destruction of Bethel would be as horrible as any destruction known to man.

3. Jehovah's love for prodigal Israel vs. Israel's ingratitude. (chapter 11)
 - a. Israel's ingratitude (back to Israel's history a third time, see 9:10; 10:9; 11:1). (1-7)
 - (1) Love vs. ingratitude. (1-4) The connection between this passage and Mt. 2:15 is that as the Israelites grew into a nation while in Egypt (away from the idols of Canaan), Jesus was allowed to grow in Egypt (away from Herod's death threat). Even though Jehovah persisted in loving Israel, they continued to sin. As god called them, they turned to idols. Their ingratitude for their father was immense. In return for His love and compassion, Jehovah received ingratitude and rejection.
 - (2) Ingratitude demands punishment. (5-7) It is because of their attitude that the people will go into captivity. While Egypt was a symbol of captivity to Israel, Assyria would be their captors. By refusing Jehovah's love, they accepted bondage. By refusing Jehovah's leadership, they accepted Assyria as their leader.
 - b. Deserved utter destruction but love of God tempers judgment with mercy. (8-11) In these verses Jehovah's heart is represented as being emotionally torn. He could not bring Himself to completely exterminate Israel as He had done with Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 29:23). While God is obligated to enact judgment, He also has the right to show mercy. The remnant that would be spared were the ones who would "walk after Jehovah." This return of the faithful is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:22-28), to the heavenly fatherland (Phil. 3:20).

Applications for Today

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| A. | 10:1,2 - | The object of our religion should be to please God, not ourselves. Mt. 15:7-9; Rom. 10:1,2; 2 Cor. 10:12. |
| B. | 11:7- | If we have no Biblical authority for our religious practices, then we are no better than Israel in the time of Hosea. Mt. 21:23-27; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Gal. 1:6-8; 2; Jn. 9. |

- D. Israel's apostasy and God's fidelity. (chapters 12,13)
 1. Israel's degeneracy into Canaanitish ways. (11:12-12:14)
 - a. Worldliness Ephraim deceitful; Judah unsteadfast. (11:12-12:6)
 - (1) Faithlessness of Ephraim brings punishment on all posterity. (11:12-12:2) Jehovah is speaking here, and makes charges against Ephraim (Israel). Repeatedly in this book, Israel has been charged with living in falsehood and preaching deceit. Judah is not innocent in these matters. Israel had done everything to court the favors of Assyria and Egypt, instead of turning to Jehovah. In these dealings with the foreign nations, Israel was dishonest.
 - (2) Example of forefather should have led to faithfulness. (3-6) Now the prophet looks back to Jacob, the father of both Israel and

Judah. Jacob had always held God in high regard. He had taken the birthright from his older brother Esau, and had wrestled and overcome the angel of the Lord. He had followed the commandments of the Lord. The same power available to Jacob through Jehovah was available to Israel. To obtain this power, Israel must repent, call on the name of Jehovah, and "wait for thy God continually." This "wait" consisted of trusting in God and allowing Him to lead the way to their salvation.

- b. But Israel has become Canaan. (12:7-14) Instead of becoming like Jacob, Israel had become like Canaan. Israel's wealth had been gained through fraud, independent of God's blessing. Because of their corrupt practices they would be driven from the land. What excuse did they have for their ignorance of God? None! Gilead (6:8) is once again used as an example of their wicked practices. As Gilgal would be destroyed, so would the entire nation. Their father Jacob had worked in virtual slavery to obtain his wives, and his payment from God was the possession of the land. In contrast, the children of Israel had done nothing to earn the land. Moses had led them there. Instead of showing gratitude, they provoked the Lord.
2. Israel's deep fall. (chapter 13)
- a. Idolatry, the basis of Israel's destruction. (1-8)
 - (1) Idolatry, the curse. (1-3) In earlier times, Ephraim had prospered above all nations and tribes (Gen. 48:18-20; Judges 8:1-3; 12:1ff; 1 Kings 11:26ff.). When the descendants of Ephraim introduced calf worship, and begin to give prominence to Baal, their destruction was sealed (1 Kings 12:25ff; 16:29-33). First, they perverted the worship of Jehovah by introducing the calf; then they worshiped the calf itself. The act of "kissing one's hand toward the calf," was an act of homage toward the false deity (Job 31:27; 1 Kings 19:18; Ps. 2:12). Idols and their worshipers will not endure forever. Indeed, they will disappear as smoke from a chimney.
 - (2) Jehovah, their benefactor and judge. (4-8) Jehovah had always demanded allegiance to himself only. He had revealed Himself to them repeatedly as the most powerful force in the universe. Still, Israel rejected the creator for the creature. God would turn on them as a lion or bear turns on its prey. They would be torn to pieces by God. Their idols would be helpless to aid them.
 - b. Distrust in Jehovah this was the destruction of Israel. (9-16) Israel had always had trouble accepting God's ways and making them their own. They had demanded an earthly king (1 Sam. 8:4,5). These very same earthly kings had led them into idolatry. Israel had their earthly king and their earthly king had failed them miserably. The next kingdom would be of God's making and it would be a spiritual kingdom. Hosea is specifically speaking of the kings of the ten tribes, because there was not a true worshiper of the Lord among the lot of them. As the inability of a pregnant woman to give birth endangers both the mother and child, the

evil kings had endangered the people individually and as a nation. If the nation is to be redeemed, it will come through a new birth. While Hosea looks to the restoration of the people, our hindsight allows us to see Sheol defeated and the new birth instituted in Christ (1 Cor. 15:54,55). Note the play on words when Hosea says that Ephraim (double-fruit) would become fruitless. The end of Ephraim is a picture of terror and destruction that was the trademark of Assyria's way of making war.

III. Israel's conversion and pardon. [chapter 14]

A. God's grace once more to those who turn to Him. (1-8)

1. Call to repentance. (1-3) In this final chapter Hosea alludes to the Messianic hope. He calls them to repentance and complete conversion. They must plead for forgiveness and their pleas must be genuine. Their repentance must be expressed in complete trust in and dependence on God.
2. The promise of healing. (4-8) A penitent remnant can be healed through Jehovah's grace and mercy. He will love them and turn His anger from them. He will bring them strength and beauty. Those who dwell under the influence of the new Israel will bring forth fruit themselves.

B. Epilogue. (9)

Israel cries to Jehovah; he hears their cry and responds by an outpouring of rich blessings. Who has wisdom (Prov. 9:10)? A wise man fears the Lord. A prudent man applies wisdom. A better day will come when those that love the lord will walk in His footsteps. Read "retrospect" from pages 184-185 Hailey's Minor Prophets.

Applications for Today

- A. 13:6 - When the wealth of the rich becomes their source of pride, and they forget God, then their wealth becomes a curse.
Deut. 8:11-14; 32:15; Prov. 30:8-9; Lu. 12:15-21.
- B. 14:9 - It is God's way or the highway the highway to hell.
2 Jn. 9; Gal. 1:6-8; Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12.

MICAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title: Author and date of Micah's labors. [1:1]

The political and historical background for this book can be found in 2 Kings 15:17-20:21 and 2 Chron. 26-30. Nothing further is known of Micah, beyond what can be found in this book. Micah's work began shortly after Isaiah's and continued during the Judean reign of the three kings listed. While Isaiah was prophesying mainly to Israel, Micah emphasized Judah and particularly Jerusalem.

I. Judgment on Samaria and Judah salvation of a remnant. [chapters 1 & 2]

A. Judgment on Samaria and judgment on Judah. (1:2-16)

1. Samaria her destruction. (2-7)
 - a. General announcement of judgment. (2-4) Judgment brought against God's people by God should act as a warning to the surrounding nations. This judgment comes from heaven. The prophet uses the figure of natural disasters to show the terror and terribleness of judgment.
 - b. Destruction of Samaria. (5-7) "Jacob" stands for both nations, Israel and Judah. Israel's crimes were committed among the ten tribes of the north; Samaria its capital is specified. Judah's sins were found to emanate from its capital, Jerusalem. The prophet (and God) is holding the rulers responsible for bringing the nations to apostasy and ruin. Samaria would be cast down from its mountain (Amos 6:1). The city, along with its idols would be destroyed. Once again, we see a prophet liken Israel's spiritual apostasy to physical harlotry. All of Israel's possessions would eventually fall into the hands of her captors.
2. Lament over the destruction of Judah. (8-16) It was characteristic of these oriental people to wail and cry aloud in times of grief. Micah would do this himself because of the terrible judgment to come. Stripped and naked here does not mean totally nude, but dressed in clothes of mourning or perhaps dressed as a slave or captive. Micah realizes that Judah is following in the footsteps of Israel and so he grieves her as well. In verses 10 through 16 Micah makes a play on words for each town mentioned to show the results of judgment. (See Hailey's quote of Farrar, pp. 195,196). Some of these "puns" would actually rhyme, if pronounced in Hebrew. Notice how the prophet speaks as if the people have already been taken into bondage.

B. Causes that make the judgment inevitable. (2:1-11)

1. Arrogance and violence of the nobles. (1-5) This attitude of the rulers and the wealthy made judgment necessary. Their evil was not simply mistakes made, but actions planned and deliberate. They have no regard for the victims of their evil, namely the poor. God's judgment would turn their arrogance to sorrow. Their conquerors will taunt them with a parable making fun of their hardship just as they had mocked the poor.
2. False prophets who would silence the true prophet. (6-11) Here we see the leaders and their hired false prophets accusing the true prophets of continually preaching

doom and gloom. They call on Micah and his fellow true prophets to desist from their work. The false prophets claim that God will only do good to and for His people. In a manner of speaking this is absolutely true. The warnings, the punishments, the judgments, were all designed to do good, that is restore Judah. The leaders are again condemned for oppressing the poor, they had no regard for any of their subjects, be they man, woman or child. This oppression was practice continually. The prophet promises that in the judgment they would be treated as they had treated others. No wonder they did not want to hear the prophecy of Micah. They would prefer a prophet who spoke what they wanted to hear.

- C. Eventual restoration of a remnant. (2:12,13) Here Micah inserts a word of hope. A remnant would return. The rejoicing of this small group would sound like a multitude. "The breaker who has gone up," is probably a Messianic reference. If so, the breaker is the liberator, the freedom giver. While his critics were claiming Micah was only preaching calamity, here we have a positive prophecy of hope and encouragement.

II. Contrast between present devastation and future exaltation. [chapters 3-5]

- A. The sins and crimes of the heads of the nation. (chapter 3)
1. Civil rulers: outrages committed by them. (1-4) This chapter introduces a fresh prophecy that serves as an introduction to the Messianic message of the following two chapters. Micah presents a contrast between the old and the new, the present and the future. The leaders will feel the brunt of this prophecy. Their corruption was complete, their nature was cannibalistic. They chewed up their victims and made soup of their bones. As they have sown, so shall they reap (1 Pet. 3:11,12)
 2. False prophets' condemnation of their mercenary practices. (5-8) The false prophets are as guilty as the rulers are. They have led the people off the spiritual path. They inflict wounds while calling out "all is well." They are prophets for profit only. Their last days will be dark. (Amos 8:9; Jer. 15:9) they will enter into deep mourning (Ez. 24:17). Micah's own spirit of prophecy was true and powerful in contrast to the spirit of the false prophets, which was of Satan and weak. Micah's power was derived from the Lord; the false prophets had only their own will to stand on. A true prophet declares what the people need to know and condemns them for their sins.
 3. Rulers, prophets, and priests renewed condemnation. (9-12)
 - a. The accusation against them. (9-11) The prophet brings his doom saying to its ultimate climax with these verses. He lays the blame for judgment against the rulers, the prophets and the priests. The corrupt government had been built by the innocent blood of the people it was designed to serve. The so-called spiritual leaders were only in it for the money (Ecc. 10:19). They attempt to hide behind Jehovah, claiming Him as their protector and benefactor. Micah proclaims destruction to Judah for their evil and perverted spirituality. The total destruction portrayed here was postponed until the time of the Babylonians, but it still did come.

- b. Consequence: Jerusalem to be plowed as a field. (12) For the mountainous city of Jerusalem to be leveled and plowed as a field is a sign of total destruction.

Applications for Today

- A. 2:6,7- Some preaching never includes a rebuke, a reproof, or even a distinctive message because the preacher thinks "love" is never negative. God's Word however, sometimes contains chastisement as well as exhortation.
2 Tim. 4:2-4; 2 Cor. 7:9; 1 Jn. 5:3, 2 Cor. 2:15-17.
- B. 3:11- Claims of being "with the Lord" are sometimes just claims. The quickest way to have God leave us is to ignore His word.
Lu. 6:46; Mt. 7:21-23; 15:13,14; 1 Jn. 4:1

B. The Messianic hope in contrast to present destruction. (chapters 4 & 5)

- 1. The glory of the latter days. (4:1-8)
 - a. The glorification of Zion the center of universal religion of Jehovah. (1-5)
There is no clearer Messianic prophecy found in the Old Testament, than these two chapters. "In the latter days," always refers to the time of the Messiah when used by the prophets. An end will come to the Jewish age and a new era under a new spiritual leader would come. The place where the new temple would rest would be inaccessible to forces of destruction (Dan. 2:44; 7:13,14; Heb. 12:28). All nations could worship in the new Zion, which would become the source for all true instruction and would provide for learning unto salvation. Jesus confirms that Jerusalem is the starting point for this new Zion (Lu. 24:47). The nature and character of spiritual Zion would be one of peace, not one that could be defended by physical weapons, but one that could be defended by the Sword of the Spirit (Jn. 18:36; 1 Ki. 4:24b-25). Those who come to the mountain of Jehovah, will walk, live, and conduct themselves in the strength of Jehovah forever. All these promises have been fulfilled in Christ (Heb. 12:21-28; Phil. 3:20; Jn. 10:28,29). Micah was not envisioning a time when God would dominate the world by brute force, or an age when all political kingdoms would live at peace on earth. Only spiritually, through God's spiritual kingdom, will these promises be fulfilled.
 - b. The restoration of "the former dominion" healing of the dispersed. (6-8)
These things are related to the previous things by the phrase "in that day." Therefore Micah is still speaking concerning the Messiah. This gathering is the remnant mentioned in (2:12). These will make up the spiritual kingdom to come. It was customary to build a tower to watch over the flock (2 Chron. 26:10), so the reference here is to a spiritual watchtower. The "former dominion" is a reference to the restoration of the power of the house of David (compare to Amos 9:11,12).

2. Distress and captivity before restoration, "now," (4:9-5:1)
 - a. Distress into Babylon before restoration. (4:9,10) Micah interrupts his message of the distant future to consider the present and immediate future. He emphasizes the captivity that will precede the restored kingdom. There will be much mourning and pain. People will be left homeless. Micah names Babylon as the captors of Judah, not Assyria (Isa. 39:1-6). The might of this prophecy lies in the fact that Babylon would not rise to power for another 100 years!
 - b. Deliverance of Zion and destruction of the enemy Jehovah's purpose. (4:11-5:1) Presently however, it was Assyria that was oppressing Judah. It is likely that the surrounding nations participated with Assyria in this persecution. This present distress would be repelled. Perhaps Micah is referring to the coming destruction of Sennacherib's army (Isa. 37:36-38). The picture in (5:1) is of people gathered into a city of siege. Though humiliated by this siege, the city would triumph.
3. The Messiah and the Messianic era. (5:2-15)
 - a. The Messiah who shall arise out of Bethlehem shall feed the flock. (2-4) Now the prophet returns to prophecy concerning the future. In this chapter, Micah will develop the character and rule of the restored dominion of the house of David. The new leader would be victorious, and come from Bethlehem, the ancestral home of David. However, His ancestry will be deeper than David's; it will be traced back to God Himself (Mt. 2:5,6). The woman in childbirth (see 4:10) represents the faithful remnant who would survive Babylonian captivity (compare to Isa. 66:4-8). The prophet was looking forward to the Messiah and His spiritual Kingdom. John's vision (of Rev. 12:1-6) is of this same faithful remnant, through whom the Messiah would descend. The Messiah would be a shepherd, a divine provider of every good and precious thing. He will be universally recognized.
 - b. The Messiah to be the peace of His people. (5,6) The word "peace" will come to mean Messiah (Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:14). "Assyria" is used in this verse to refer to the enemies of the Messiah in general. The Messiah will have a number of under-shepherds that will help to fight His spiritual battles (as we saw in 4:3, also see 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Spiritual weapons will be employed (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:17).
 - c. The Messiah provides power to His people. (7-9) The new Israel will possess the following exceptional qualities:
 - (1) The remnant to be as dew among the peoples. (7) exercising a refreshing spiritual and moral influence.
 - (2) To be as a lion. (8) among the beasts, exercising a kingly strength and power among men.
 - (3) To triumph over their enemies. (9) These promises for the distant future would give the faithful hope in the face of the upcoming captivity and destruction.
 - d. In this strength and power Israel is to triumph. (10-15) Micah continues the Messianic prophecy. There will be no symbols of force or war in the

true Messianic kingdom. Horses and chariots had originally been forbidden to Israel's armies by God (Deut. 17:16; 20:1) and they would not be needed in the new Israel. (See also Hosea 14:3 and Zech. 9:9,10.) War under the Messiah would be waged through the power of truth. Jehovah would defend the people and the cities of refuge would become useless. All forms of magical ritualism would be outlawed in the new kingdom. With the magicians and witches would go their idols and false deities. The "asherin" or Canaanite fertility totems must be torn down. The Israelites had been told to demolish these earlier (Ex. 34:13), but instead had incorporated them into their own worship (2 Ki. 23:6). The Messianic kingdom would have no place for the relics of paganism. To this day, no nation can reject Jehovah and his truth and survive without impunity.

Applications for Today

- A. 4:12- We must do God's will in God's way or we will fail. Isa. 55:8,9; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12. The only source to know God's will today is through His inspired Word the Bible. 1 Cor. 2:11-13; 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Jn. 9.
- B. 5:2- Fulfillment of prophecy is a strong proof that the Bible came from the mind of God, and not the mind of man. Isa. 42:9; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:20,21.

III. Jehovah and Israel in controversy (judicial contest) the way to salvation. [chapters 6 & 7]

- A. The case against Israel. (chapter 6)
1. Israel's ingratitude for blessings bestowed. (1-5) Micah now emulates his predecessor, Hosea, by calling the nation to court. With the mountains of Israel as their jury, the nation must present their case. Jehovah will act as the judge and attorney for the prosecution. He asks questions such as: where have I failed you, why have I wearied you, how have I wronged you, and tell me why you have left me? Jehovah testifies that He has only done good towards Israel. He freed them from Egypt and gave them the Law of Moses. He had turned curses against them into blessings. Among all these righteous acts of God, no evil act could be found.
 2. Not outward sacrifice, but righteous conduct, is God's requirement. (6-8) The people are convicted and admit their guilt. However, their view of the true nature of Jehovah is wrong. They believe that large quantities of offerings can placate God, even to the extreme of offering their own children. Their willingness to appease God includes everything except that which God demands. Sacrifices pale in comparison to what God actually demands from Judah, namely, a penitent heart towards God and towards their neighbors. He requires them to do His will, to act toward Him according to His divine standard of righteousness revealed in His law, to show compassion towards their fellow men, and to walk in humble, submissive obedience to God.
 3. Jehovah's threat of judgment denunciation of prevalent crimes. (9-14) The prophet addresses Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah. Only the wise will give heed to

these words. God has appointed chastisement to be brought against Judah. This punishment will be determined based on their answers to a series of questions such as: has their wealth been received through corruption or can they cheat their neighbor in business and be right with God? They had been violent, deceitful, and oppressive. These sins would not go unpunished. Because of the sins of the rich, the whole population will be made to suffer. They will come to want and humiliation, as their savings will be lost or used up by others. Their crops would fail or be stolen. Why? Because they have given themselves over to idolatry. While the Kings of Israel (Omri and Ahab) had corrupted the northern kingdom with calf worship, Judah had not remained unaffected. The ultimate fruit of this corruption desolation.

B. Penitential prayer and divine promise. (chapter 7)

1. Confession of the nation's guilt (people, or prophet). (1-6) The prophet mourns the fact that there are no righteous to be found among the ranks of Judah. The godly men are gone, only the evil ones remain. The powerful are corrupt, using their station to manipulate the courts, the religion and the wealth of Judah. Their day of judgment has been prophesied (Ez. 3:17; 33:7). No one can be trusted in these evil times, not even among one's own family.
2. Confession of faith prayer of the penitent. (7-13) Now the prophet speaks on behalf of the spiritual remnant. They will turn to Jehovah. They will trust Him, depend on Him, and let him lead the way. Even if the nation falls, Jehovah will not forsake her, but guide her on to a better day. Those that are spiritual will confess their sins and humbly bear the indignation brought upon them. They have faith in God. Those who remain faithful will be rescued. In the day of restoration, when Jehovah brings the faithful remnant back under His protective presence (Zech. 2:4,5), they will come out of all nations. The new spiritual Zion will flourish as the rest of the earth remains spiritually desolate because they will reject the Messiah.
3. Prayer for the renewal of grace; and the Lord's answer. (14-17) The penitent remnant prays for God to be their Shepherd. They pray that they can remain apart from the world (Num. 23:9b; 2 Cor. 6:17). Jehovah responds to the prayer with assurances of marvelous things to come. As His people had been redeemed from Egypt, so will the spiritual ones be redeemed from bondage through the Messiah (1 Cor. 10:1 ff.). The power of the Messiah would render His enemies deaf and dumb (Job 26:14). Good-hearted men will come to recognize that only through the Messiah can salvation come (Acts 4:12).
4. Doxology: praise to Jehovah who alone is God. (18-20) The prophet stands in awe in the presence of God's infinite greatness and love. None can compare to the one true God. None can demonstrate compassion and loving kindness to the extent God can. He will trample sin under His feet. These sins can be taken away and remembered no more (Ps. 103:2; Jer. 31:34; Acts 3:19). All of the promises made to Abraham and Jacob are fulfilled in Christ. Because of Christ, this prophecy of judgment and promise, travail and birth, glory and hope, ends on a high note as it looks to the future.

Application for Today

- A. 6:6,7- Outward action is meaningless without inward obedience. Commands not obeyed from the heart can bring damnation to our souls.
1 Cor. 11:22-30.
- B. 7:18-20- No god can compare to our God. Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:1; Rom. 5:6-11;
Eph. 2:8- 10.

ZEPHANIAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title and Inscription [1:1]

Read 2 Chron. 33,34,35 and 2 Kings 21,22,23 for the historical background for the period of this prophecy. It is possible that Zephaniah is the descendant of King Hezekiah and if so, that makes him the only prophet known to be of royal blood.

- I. Judgment upon the whole world Judah in particular. [1:2-18]
 - A. A world judgment. (2-6)
 1. Prelude: judgment on the whole world. (2,3) The judgment to come will be universal. The far-reaching consequences of this judgment are comparable to those of the flood. The judgment will affect man and beasts. We have already noted other prophets that have made this same pronouncement (Joel 1:18; Hos. 4:3; also Jer. 12:4). The "stumbling blocks" represent idols and the sins that accompany them. Man is responsible for this judgment being brought against him.
 2. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem for idolatry. (4-6) Jehovah will stretch out His hand and utterly consume and cut off Judah for their sins. Jerusalem will be cleansed of the Baal worshipers. The priests of the idols would also be cut off. In addition, the unfaithful priests of the Temple would share the same fate as the priest of the idols. Here we have three classes of false worshipers mentioned: star worshipers, false swearers, and "those turned back from Jehovah." Moses had specifically forbidden worshiping the heavens (Deut. 4:19). This would include astrology. The false swearers divided their allegiance between God and the idol gods. The third group had simply become indifferent towards Jehovah. They could not care less about God and the things of God.
 - B. Judgment on sinners of every rank. (7-13)
 1. On princes. (7,8) Silence is demanded in the presence of Jehovah (Hab. 2:20). The "day of Jehovah" always refers to a time of judgment against the wicked. Judah will be the sacrifice for these sins. The surrounding nations will be the witnesses and (from Habakkuk) we know that the Babylonians will be the executors of the judgment. The members of the royal family are held responsible for the conditions in Jerusalem. While Josiah, the current king, was godly, his descendants would not be, and therefore would not be spared. Many of the wealthy as well as the rulers had taken on the affectations of the foreign lands. They were condemned because they had forsaken the customs of their own divinely appointed kingdom and had adopted those of a heathen people.
 2. On thieves (or idolaters). (9) "those that leap over the threshold" could refer to the priests of the idol Dagon, because of the situation described in 1 Samuel (5:4,5). It is more likely however, that it is a reference to a ring of burglars or thieves.
 3. On traders. (10,11) The "fish gate" is thought to have been located near the northern wall, towards the east in the city of Jerusalem. The destroyers would come from that direction (1 Chron. 33:14; Neh. 3:3; 12:39). Mishneh is thought to be a section of the city located near the fish gate. The location of the section of the

city known as Maktesh is unknown, but it was obviously a place of trading. The "Canaanites" here are actually Judeans, who are acting like Canaanites (Hos. 12:7). They were unscrupulous in their business dealings. Along with these evil merchants, their bankers would also be cut off.

4. On indifferent and wealthy. (12,13) The depraved and the indifferent will also be brought under judgment. Jehovah would search Jerusalem until every one of these would be found. "To settle on the lees" is a metaphor that comes from the treating of wine. If allowed to remain too long on its lees, wine would become harsh, syrupy, and unfit for consumption (Jer. 48:11, 12). These people looked on God as just another idol. In the judgment, God would demonstrate to them the true difference between the idols and Himself. Their end would be destruction.

C. The imminence and terrible nature of the judgment. (14-18)

1. Imminent. (14) The day is near. A bitter day of complete defeat. So complete that not even the strong will survive.
2. A terribly dark day. (15-17) The day will overflow with divine wrath. A day of trouble and distress, waste and desolation, darkness and gloom, clouds and thick darkness, trumpet and alarm, all directed against the fortified cities. This distress is a direct result of the sins of the people.
3. There will be no deliverance. (18) They would become lost in their own environs, their blood would be spilled, and they would become as manure on the ground. Jehovah had determined their destruction and there would be no escape. Jehovah's jealousy is as a consuming fire. His righteous resentment and indignation at being replaced in the people's hearts by idols and having His righteousness exchanged for pagan wickedness, fueled this fire of jealousy.

Applications for Today

- | | | |
|----|-------|--|
| A. | 1:5- | It impossible to have unity between God's religion and man's religion. Accepting the tenets of Islam, Buddha, etc. rejects the distinct Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jn. 14:16; 8:24; 12:48; Mt. 6:24 |
| B. | 1:18- | When the Lord comes in final judgment, nothing in this world will deliver the evildoer. Mt. 16:26; 1 Jn. 2:15-17 |

II. Exhortation to repentance and perseverance. [2:1-3:8]

- A. Call to repentance and to seek the Lord, that they may be hidden in the day of the Lord. (2:1-3) In His address to Judah, Jehovah uses the term "O Nation," the same one He used for the heathen nations. Judah had sunk to their level. Judah is called to repentance to avoid the punishment and judgment that has been decreed. The people must "seek Jehovah." Those who would answer the call would be meek, humble, lowly and submissive towards God. Only those hiding under the sheltering wings of Jehovah can hope to escape the judgment.

- B. Reason: God will judge the nations near and far. (2:4-15)
1. Judgment upon the nations that are near. (4-11)
 - a. Upon Philistia. (4-7) In a scene similar to the one in Amos 1, we see the surrounding nations condemned. The four cities of Philistia represent the entire nation. The Cherethites were a tribe or branch of the Philistines (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23; 1 Chron. 18:17; 1 Sam. 30:14; Ez. 25:16). The Philistines are thought to have originated from the island of Crete (Amos 9:7; Jer. 47:4). Their seacoast would become desolate, the residences of their proud cities replaced with huts and caves. The coast would be the future home of the remnant of Judah (Jer. 32:42-44). This prophecy was fulfilled when the Babylonian captivity ended.
 - b. Upon Moab and Ammon. (8-10) Trouble between God's people and Moab and Ammon goes all the way back to Moses (Num. 22-24). The immediate sin of these nations appears to be their encroachment into Judah's territory. Their destruction is compared to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. The basis of their sin was pride, their reward: utter destruction (Is. 16:6; 48:26,29). Thus the end of the descendants of Lot.
 - c. Upon all the gods of earth. (11) False worship of some kind has always been the root of sin and evil on this earth. Jehovah would show His true supremacy over any and all idols. While the idols of these heathen nations have long since disappeared, Jehovah remains.
 2. Judgment upon powerful nations afar. (12-15)
 - a. Upon Ethiopia. (12) Egypt is represented here because it was currently under the rule of Ethiopian Pharaohs (Ez. 30:4-5,24,25; Is. 18:1,2).
 - b. Upon Assyria and Nineveh. (13-15) Now the prophet proclaims judgment upon Assyria. At this time, Assyria was the most powerful, flourishing and dominating nation on earth. Zephaniah would have to be either inspired or crazy to make such a prophecy. The land of Assyria would become pastureland; the cities would be stripped of their glory. Only rubble and rubbish would remain. Ezekiel "comforted the Pharaohs by prophesying that Assyria would accompany them to Sheol (Ez. 32:18- 23).
- C. If God punishes the heathen, He will not spare Judah. (3:1-8)
1. Woe to the polluted city classes of sinners and sin. (1-7)
 - a. Princes, judges, prophets, priests. (1-4) The prophet turns back to Jerusalem, the polluted and rebellious city. This rebellion had led to depravity, which in turn led to cruelty and oppression of the poor. Four charges are leveled against Jerusalem: (1) She did not obey the voice of God, (2) She did not receive correction or instruction, (3) She placed her trust in false gods, and (4) She did not draw near to God. Four classes of Her people are condemned: princes, judges, prophets and, priests.
 - b. Jehovah's constant reminder of His sovereignty. (5-7) No matter how man acts, God will always act in accordance with His divine character. He must do what is right (2 Tim. 3:13). Jerusalem had become so callous that they did not even realize they were sinning. God's attitude towards the heathen

nations should have served as a reminder to Jerusalem that He would not accept idolatry. It did not (Deut. 9:4,5; Lev. 26; Deut. 28). Jehovah had asked Judah to "fear Him and receive instruction;" give Him reverence and regard His possessions and; do His will. Judah had chosen to do none of these things.

2. God has called; they have refused therefore, Woe! (8) The pious few are called on to wait for Jehovah. Isaiah is fond of this expression (Isa. 40:31; 42:4; 49:23; 64:4). It means to allow Jehovah to do His work. It involves both trust and patience. The "prey" mentioned here could represent the faithful remnant. This interpretation is in harmony with Is. 53:12. The decision to bring universal judgment was not to exterminate humanity, but to refine humanity. The judgment would be severe to the point that only the pure would survive.

III. After the judgment, salvation, and glorification for the remnant. [3:9-20]

- A. From among the heathen will God's remnant come. (9-10) Those that return to Jehovah would be purified (Isa. 6:5,7; Jer. 1:9; Dan. 10:16) and serve together. This is a prophecy of Messianic hope (Heb. 13:15,16). The remnant would return from the remote regions of the earth. If verse 10 is parallel to Isa. 66:20, then the dispersed Jews would return as an offering to the Lord through the work of the Gentiles (Rom.11:11-14).
- B. Israel restored will be cleansed and sanctified. (11-13) When the prophecy of verses 9 and 10 is fulfilled, then sins will be blotted out. The meek will inherit God's spiritual kingdom. Those strong in the faith, with confidence in Jehovah will replace those that are haughty. The remnant will be righteous and truthful. Their security will not be found in fortifications of their own making, but only in the Lord.
- C. Israel comforted and exalted to honor. (14-20)
 1. The people are to rejoice. (14-17) The prophet calls on the remnant to sing and rejoice in their salvation (Zech. 2:19; 9:9). In the spiritual kingdom (Zion), Israel, and Judah will be reunited. The removal of the judgments and the return of the King will be cause for celebration. The idols are destroyed and will not return. The pure love that God has for the redeemed is expressed in these verses.
 2. The promise of Jehovah renewed. (18-20) The pious will be gathered to Jehovah. Those who afflict God's people will be dealt with severely. (Compare to Micah 4:6,7.) Note the "I's" of Jehovah: "I will gather, I will deal, I will save, I will Make, etc." The work of redemption will be the Lord's work. The people had been scattered because they had refused Him. He would bring them back. In this assurance and hope, the people could rightfully rejoice.

Applications for Today

- A. 2:3- Men should seek the Lord (Acts 17:27). We are separated from God, when we erect barriers of indifference and sin (Isa. 59:1,2). The Lord will only be found by the meek and the humble (Mt. 5:5,6; Ps. 51:16,17).
- B. 3:8- To wait upon the Lord involves two major attitudes: 1) the willingness to obey God's will and 2) patience (Ps. 25:3-5; Phil 4:11-13).

NAHUM: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title: The prophet and his subject. [1:1]

The destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, is the subject of this prophecy.

I. Nineveh's doom by the decree of Jehovah [chapter 1]

A. The goodness and severity of Jehovah. (2-8)

1. Vengeance and mercy of God. (2,3) The prophet uses "Jehovah" five times in these two verses. He is jealous, as a husband for a wife. His vengeance is just. He will also execute judgment upon the enemies of His people. He will not act impulsively, but He will not excuse the guilty. The force of His judgment will clear everything in its path.
2. The terribleness of His anger against sin. (4-6) He has the ability to reveal His power through nature. His presence is able to throw the whole world, both man and nature, into convulsions. Who could withstand such power? Not Assyria. He could cover them as molten lava covers the land when a volcano erupts.
3. The greatness of His mercy a stronghold to the faithful. (7) This verse presents the other side of God's nature. He is good, and just as powerful to protect His people, as He is to destroy their enemies (Isa. 37:36-38).
4. The pursuer of His enemies. (8) God is determined to destroy Nineveh, as a river overrunning its banks, floods and destroys. It will be a complete destruction (Zeph. 2:13ff.).

B. The complete overthrow of Nineveh. (9-15)

1. God's faithfulness in the present crisis: affliction not again to come from Assyria (as in the past). (9-11) This passage is probably addressed to both Assyria and Judah. "What do you devise against Jehovah?" To Assyria: You will be destroyed (Isa. 10:24-27). To Judah: I am capable of destroying your enemies. Assyria considered itself beyond conquering; they were intoxicated with pride and power. For the use of drunkenness as a sign of pride, see also (Jer. 13:9, 13, 14 and Hab. 2:5). Assyria's entire spirit and purpose toward Jehovah is one of evil devices. These devices would come to nothing.
2. Judah delivered from the yoke of Assyria by destruction of Nineveh's power. (12,13) Assyria is doomed. Jehovah had used Assyria to afflict Judah (Isa. 10:5-21), but that source of trouble would never afflict Judah again. The bonds that held Judah to Assyria against her will would be broken.
3. Destruction of Assyria. (14) Included in this destruction would be the end of Assyria's idol gods. The nation would be destroyed and Nineveh its capital would pass into oblivion.
4. Rejoicing in Zion. (15) When news of Assyria's final destruction reaches Judah there will be rejoicing. The prophet urges Judah to remain faithful to God through their feasts of thanksgiving. While trouble may pursue Judah from elsewhere, Assyria is a threat no more.

II. Siege and destruction of Nineveh decreed by Jehovah. [chapter 2]

- A. Assault upon Nineveh: doom of the city. (1-7)
1. Furious preparation for battle. (1-4) Jehovah will be the scatterer and shatterer of Nineveh. He will do this through the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Here Nahum warns Assyria to prepare for their judgment. Through the destruction of Assyria, the nation of Israel could have honor, self-respect, and glory restored. The references to red here seem to indicate the battle dress of those coming to conquer Assyria. History points to red as the battle colors of the Babylonians (Eze. 23:14). The city of Nineveh will be overrun by the enemy; there will be no stopping them.
 2. Hopelessness of resistance. (5,6) The defenders of the city would watch helplessly as the invaders brought their battering engines into place. All efforts to defend the city are in vain; the city is destined to destruction. Jehovah will allow and assist in this destruction.
 3. The city, as a queen, is captured and moans. (7) The picture here is one of deep anguish and sorrow as the proud city comes to an end.
- B. Flight of the people and sack of the city. (8-13)
1. The inhabitants flee, the city is plundered. (8-10) For centuries, Nineveh had been a gathering place, but now everyone will attempt to leave her. The invaders are commanded to completely ransack the city. Of course, the plunder did not rightfully belong to Nineveh in the first place, as they had stolen it themselves. Now the city will come to be utterly desolate. The spirit of the people will be broken. The pain, terror, and torture that they had brought down on their enemies would now come down on them.
 2. The destruction is complete. (11-13) So complete in fact that for centuries its original location was unknown. Only in the early 1800's were archaeologists able to identify its location with certainty. The prophet compares the people of Nineveh to the lions. For centuries, Nineveh had been "king of the jungle." They had lorded their might over all men, but their enemy is not just man anymore. Jehovah is against them now. The misery that Nineveh had brought upon their subjugated nations would end.

III. Nineveh's sins and her inevitable doom. [chapter 3]

- A. Nineveh's fate brought upon herself as retribution for her crimes. (1-7)
1. The graphic description of the battle. (1-3) The city was a bloody place already, but the invaders would make it even more so. The fierceness of the battle described here needs little comment. This fierceness only ends when the corpses of the dead are scattered and men stumble over them as they rush from place to place.
 2. The cause: her sins. (4) Nineveh had worked like a harlot to conquer the world. Using outward appearance and seductive techniques along with idolatry Nineveh had appealed to the world and they had allowed her to lead them. The story of Nineveh can be quickly summed up by (Prov. 7:11, 27).

3. The uncovering of her shame is of Jehovah. (5-7) While the nations alone could not overcome Assyria, with God's help they would shame her before the world. Nineveh would be held up to reproach and disdain. She will become a gazing stock for the entire world to revile. The sight of her will be so horrid that no one will want to stay around her for long. No one will bemoan her, comfort her or give her consolation. The world will accept the news of her fall as glad tidings.
- B. The fate of No-amon is to be the fate of Nineveh. (8-11) Assyria had destroyed the Egyptian city of No (Thebes). For centuries No had been an important part of Egypt's power center. The prophet questions if Nineveh is any better than No. No had been strong because of its location, as had Nineveh. In the end, No had been sacked and destroyed and Nineveh was in for a similar fate. Whether No and Nineveh were intoxicated on their own pride or the cup of Jehovah's wrath, the result is the same destruction.
- C. Inability of Nineveh's resources to save the city. (12-19)
1. Fall of the outlying strongholds. (12,13) Nineveh's first line of defense would fall, because their inhabitants were weak.
 2. Siege and destruction of the city. (14-19a) The prophet calls on Nineveh to prepare for the siege, to do all they can to defend the city. The entire population is pictured as working to prepare the city. Work that will be to no avail. The city will burn, the people will die, and the destruction will be complete. Their economic system will fail and the trade routes will cease to come through Nineveh. As a swarm of insects moving away at the break of day, the Assyrian army will flee, perish and disappear forever, leaving no trace of their existence. The siege will last over two years. The city cannot recover from it, the wound is terminal, and it is final.
 3. Universal exultation over the fall of Nineveh. (19b) Not an expression of selfish glee - as in "they got what is coming to them" - but a rejoicing over a vindication of righteousness. The world will expel a collective sigh of relief at the destruction of Nineveh - "At last!"

Application for Today

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| A. | 1:2,3- | God is not just good, He is also severe.
Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10:26-31. |
| B. | 2:8-10- | God is the ruler over all nations of the earth, not just the ones who believe in Him. Rom. 1:18-32. |

HABAKKUK: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title and name of author. [1:1]

"Burden" means heavy load and refers to Habakkuk's oracle or prophecy.

I. God's judgment upon Judah, the wicked people of God, through the Chaldeans [1:2 - 2:3]

A. First perplexity, and Jehovah's reply. (1:2-11)

1. The prophet's lamentation over the rule of wickedness and violence. (2-4)
* Perplexity: How can Jehovah justify His indifference in the presence of wickedness and violence? The prophet had been appealing to Jehovah for an undisclosed period. The wicked were in control of the nation; they had twisted and distorted the truth to attain that control. This had been at the expense of the righteous.
2. Jehovah's reply: He is not indifferent; He will raise up the Chaldeans to execute His judgment. (5-11)
 - a. Their rise is of Jehovah. (5,6) Jehovah controls the rise and fall of the nations. Wickedness may be tolerated to a point, but judgment is inevitable. Jehovah will use a wicked nation to bring judgment upon Judah's wickedness. His choice in this matter was the Chaldeans (Babylonians). In this current ascension to world domination, they were unstoppable. They had already defeated Nineveh and would eventually conquer Egypt.
 - b. Their character is of themselves. (7-11) In the world of Habakkuk the Chaldeans were known to be fierce, impetuous, dreaded, and feared. They copied Assyria in the policy of removal of captives to foreign lands to destroy their spirit of nationalism and revolt. The Chaldeans feared no government nor respected no man. Even though Jehovah raised up Babylon to its status and used it as His instrument of punishment and judgment, they were nevertheless guilty, in the Lord's sight, of the sins committed. Just as God had used the Assyrians to discipline Israel, the Babylonians would chastise Judah.

B. Second perplexity, and Jehovah's reply. (1:12 - 2:3)

1. How can a holy God employ an impure and godless agent? (12-17)
 - a. The confident hope that God's people will not perish. (12) Habakkuk recognizes that God is eternal and absolutely Holy; therefore, the faithful remnant would not perish. They might be chastened, corrected and even carried away, but not destroyed.
 - b. The perplexity: God's use of so wicked a nation as Chaldea. (13-17) Habakkuk recognized Judah's wickedness and was in full harmony with the fact that this wickedness should be punished. But why use Babylon, when they were even more wicked than Judah? But were they? Remember, God does not think as man thinks. The greater one's opportunity to know and do right, the greater his sin when he refuses both!

Perhaps the prophet was referring to the unwarranted punishment of the just remnant. It is an invariable law of God that the just suffer along with the guilty. Judah would be as helpless as fish in the path of the fisherman's nets, when the Chaldeans came. From verse 15, we see that the Chaldeans are totally equipped fisherman, they lack nothing that would insure their success. They are so successful, that they worship and feed off their own power. When and how will the plunderer be stopped? God answers this question in chapter two.

2. Jehovah's reply: The judgment is sure, but not immediate. (2:1-3)
 - a. The prophet's decision: wait. (1) Habakkuk determines to look to Jehovah to reveal the answers he seeks and wait patiently for Jehovah's own time to make known the revelation.
 - b. The command: write plainly, for the promise is certain. (2,3) The prophet is commanded by God to write the answer on tablets, so that all might know God's will. The prophet encourages his listeners to wait for the answer and that the suffering remnant of true believers would survive the ordeal and the destroyer would be destroyed.

II. God's judgment upon the Chaldeans, the ungodly world power. [2:4-20]

- A. Fundamental principle in world government. (4,5)
 1. The righteous live by faith. (4) Although Habakkuk is the first Bible writer to state this principle in these words, the principle itself is not new with him. Paul used this verse as the foundation of his argument against the Jewish legalists as they tried to justify themselves solely by their works of the law (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11). Also, the writer of the Hebrew letter saw the approaching Roman invasion of Jerusalem as a parallel to the Babylonian invasion of Habakkuk's time (Heb. 10:37-39).
 2. The wicked drunken on pride, power, greed will not continue. (5) Using "wine" as a negative characteristic is popular in the Old Testament (see: Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35). Here however, the Chaldean's "wine" is their pride as it concerns their power and conquest (see: Isa. 29:9; 51:21). Babylon refused to stay at home and build a noble, God-fearing government, but instead set out on its conquest of the world.

Applications for Today

- A. 1:13- Could a nation more wicked than the USA be used by God to overthrow it? Salvation is based on obedience to God's will and not on comparative righteousness.
Lu. 12:42-48; James 1:22-25; 2 Cor. 10:12; 13:5.
- B. 2:4- The righteous still live by faith. The Hebrew writer urges us to persevere in faithfulness, even to the saving of our souls. Heb. 10:38,39.

B. Woes upon the Chaldeans: a taunt song. (6-20)

1. Woe upon lust of conquest and plunder. (6-8) A taunting proverb is a terse derogatory song, whose meaning the Chaldeans could not miss. It would be sung against them by all of the nations they had oppressed. The woe pronounced here is against conquest of lands to which a nation has no moral right. The prophet makes three charges against Babylon: 1) You have plundered many nations, 2) you have shed men's blood, and 3) you have done violence to land, cities and people. The consequences would be Babylon's destruction, which was fulfilled in October of 539 BC.
2. Woe upon effort to build a permanent empire through cruelty and godless gain. (9-11) The gain obtained here is evil because the method used to obtain it is evil. The Chaldeans thought they were invincible and their city impregnable (walls 85 feet thick). Even though God was using Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish His purposes, the Babylonian king was still held responsible for his methods. Even the city of Babylon itself stood as a testimony to the unrighteousness of its people and king. This leads to the third woe.
3. Woe upon the building of cities with blood. (12-14) Greed is the driving force behind the methods of the Babylonians. The use of forced and slave labor to the point of the workman's death is condemned. Jeremiah foretold the destruction of the Chaldeans by the Medes (ch. 51). This prophecy foretold and fulfilled stands as a testament and witness of the deity of Jehovah (2 Pet. 1:19-21).
4. Woe upon cruelty in the treatment of conquered kings and nations. (15-17) Using wine or drugs to get someone intoxicated to the point that they can be taken advantage of, was not invented by Hollywood. The Chaldeans had misused their power in a similar way. Promises were made to the conquered nations and never kept. The victim nations were eventually stripped of their possessions, honor and dignity. The prophecy against Babylon would be for them to receive their own medicine. The Chaldeans had held all of God's creation in contempt, setting themselves up as lords over all. In addition to making men suffer, forests, beasts, land and cities had suffered. It is still a sin against God to strip the world of its natural resources that He created for the good of man.
5. Woe upon idolatry. (18-20) The idol is a lie and a teacher of lies. It promises what it can never produce as it leads people away from Jehovah and towards destruction. A dumb idol cannot speak, and dead stone cannot arise. There is no life in an idol and therefore no intelligence. Jehovah is the ultimate contrast to any idol.

III. Prayer for compassion in the midst of judgment. [chapter 3]

A. Petition. (1,2)

1. Title: author and melody. (1) The book is concluded with a prayer written in the form of a psalm. The prophet's questions have been answered. He understands that Judah must be punished for her sins and that God will use the evil Chaldeans to perform the chastisement. Finally, he understands that the Chaldeans will also be punished for their sins and a faithful remnant of God's people will survive. The

poem was composed under strong emotional pressure, it was written in an impassioned and triumphal way. The word "Selah" is perhaps a musical notation signifying a pause or perhaps a crescendo in the music.

2. Revive thy works. (2a) The prophet calls on Jehovah to begin working among His people now.
 3. In wrath remember mercy. (2b) As God had in times past delivered His people, the prophet prays for a similar blessing presently.
- B. The mighty works of Jehovah in the past: judgment and salvation. (3-15)
1. Jehovah's terrible approach. (3-7) (See Duet. 33:2) God comes from high places, such as the mountains. He is depicted as a mighty radiance coming down from the particular mountains of Teman and Paran. His glory and brightness will cover the heavens. Rays coming forth from His hands designates the outpouring of His power. Pestilence is pictured here (as in other prophet's writings) as legitimate weapons of God's wrath. His presence can and will fill the whole earth. As God had previously driven nations asunder, so now will He drive Babylon. Ethiopia (Egypt), and Midia had previously been judged and punished; now it is Babylon's turn.
 2. Question: Why did Jehovah appear? (8-12) The rivers and the seas had been used as instruments of God's wrath. His actions had been for the salvation of His people (Ps. 77). The prophet apparently is referencing Duet. 32:40-42 here in verse 9. Nature reacts when God commands it, whether river, sun, moon, stars, mountains or storms (Isa. 13:9-13; Joel 2:1,2,10; 3:14). Everything God had previously done to deliver His people from His (and their) enemies He could and would do again.
 3. Answer: For salvation of His people. (13-15) God does not act on a whim. His activity always involves the salvation of His people. The remnant of the faithful would produce the Anointed-One, the Messiah. The head of the house of the wicked would be removed, and thus the entire house destroyed. Allies would turn against allies. The Medes had previously helped the Chaldeans defeat Nineveh, now the Medes would join the Persians in defeating the Chaldeans. God's previous use of the Red Sea, the Jordan and the River Kishon would serve as reminders to His people that He could take similar measures in the future against His enemies.
- C. Implicit confidence in Jehovah, the God of salvation. (16-19)
1. Fears and trembling at the tribulation. (16,17) The prophet changes the tempo of his poem to reflect a spirit of calmness and faith. Although he still experienced a sense of dread, he was no longer afraid. The prophet's emotions are akin to an athlete awaiting the starting gun, or a speaker readying himself for a speech. He is ready to meet whatever God brings forth with dignity and confidence. Even if all resources of food should fail, the prophet will trust Jehovah.
 2. Joy and confident trust. (18,19) In the God of his salvation. "Jehovah, the Lord is my strength." Victory and triumph are in Jehovah. Faith is the victory.

Application for Today

- A. 2:20- God does not need man; man needs God! Acts 17:24-28. Man owes God quiet, humble, reverent submission. Heb. 12:25.
- B. 3:19- "The Lord God is my strength!"
Job 13:15; Heb. 13:5,6; Rom. 8:31; Phil.4:13.

HAGGAI: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title: The prophet and his commission. [1:1]

It has been 16 years since the Jews had returned from captivity. God calls on Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to resume rebuilding the temple. (Ezra 3:8; 4:24) Haggai's message is directed to Zerubbabel (Sheshbazzar), the governor, and Joshua, the high priest.

I. First Message Rebuke for religious indifference and admonition to build the Temple. [chapter 1]

A. The message. (2-11)

1. The people's selfishness and unconcern. (2-6)
 - a. Their selfishness. (2-4) The people do not think that the time to rebuild the temple has come. Haggai's message comes in the form of a rebuke. According to Jehovah, it is past time to rebuild. The people were too busy building "ceiled houses" to be concerned with the temple. "Ceiled," indicates more than just rudimentary shelter, perhaps even opulent.
 - b. Their ways and the result: curse. (5,6) What had they accomplished since their return from Babylon? Because of their selfishness, Jehovah had cursed them with a lack of necessities. There was not enough food, drink, clothing or money, to allow the people to live comfortably.
2. The divine displeasure and exhortation to resume the building operation. (7-11)
 - a. Consider your ways get busy. (7,8) The prophet indicates that prosperity will come only if they build the Lord's house. They will have to get busy and go up the mountain for timbers to begin the building.
 - b. The visitation from God. (9-11) Because the people had returned from captivity with a selfish attitude, God had not blessed them. He had actually stood in their way. To be utterly concerned with one's own welfare and ignore the things of God, can bring only retributive consequences. Jehovah had even withheld the heavy dew, which was important during Israel's dry season.

- #### **B. The people respond by going to work on the temple. (12-15) The remnant respond immediately to the prophet's message and work on the temple resumes. Remember, the prophets from before the captivity prophesied that only a remnant would return. Four of the five books written after the return refer to those returning as the remnant. Jehovah has fulfilled all of His promises made to the remnant: the land promise and the Messiah. The only thing left for the Jews is salvation through Jesus Christ. Now Haggai speaks a word of encouragement from the Lord, to the people. He assures them that the Lord is with them. Within four weeks of Haggai's initial prophecy concerning the rebuilding of the temple, work had begun. The temple had been in ruins nearly 70 years.**

II. Second message Consolation to those in despair: the glory of the new temple. [2:1-9]

- A. Jehovah's presence with the builders. (1-5) In conjunction with the rebuilding, a second message comes from Jehovah through Haggai. Those who had lived through the captivity and now returned to see the desolation of the city and the temple, were of course disheartened. Haggai encourages them and the younger ones to carry on. The new temple would not be as opulent as Solomon's, but it did not need to be to be acceptable to Jehovah. Their strength in the effort could be found in the Lord (Eph. 6:10). While the Lord provides the strength, the people must do the work. As always with God, strength, through faith, combined with work will remove all obstacles. God's promise to be with them was in accordance with such passages as (Ex. 19:5,6; 24:8; 29:45).
- B. The temple's future glory. (6-9) Gifts to restore the temple had been given from different sources, such as the Kings of the Medes and Persians as well as the Jews themselves. Yet these gifts were not enough to restore the temple properly (see Ezra 1,3,6,7 and Isa. 60:5,11). The exact meaning of these verses is open to much debate among the OT scholars, especially the phrase "this latter house shall be greater than the former." Perhaps it is a comparison of Zerubbabel's temple at completion with itself at the beginning. Alternatively, it may a description of the glory of the church built by Christ to any of the man-made temples of the Jews (Eph. 2:21,22; 1 Cor. 3:16,17; Heb. 12:26-29).

III. Third message Completion of the temple a guarantee of blessings of nature. [2:10-19]

- A. The people's uncleanness a result of their own conduct. (10-14)
1. Their punishment the result of their own uncleanness impressed by two questions. (10-13)
 - a. Question one: Communication of holiness by holy objects on contact. (10-12) The third message came exactly three month after the work had begun on the temple. These questions were proposed to the priests because it was their responsibility to teach the people the difference between clean and unclean (Lev. 10:8-10; Deut. 17:8-13). Holiness is not communicated by contact with holy objects (Lev. 6:27).
 - b. Question two: Communication of legal defilement by contact. (13) However, an unclean object can defile a clean object (Lev. 21:1,11; Num. 6:6-8; 19:11-13,22).
 2. Application to Israel the cause of their uncleanness. (14) The word "nation" here may indicate that Jehovah does not fully regard Israel as His people. Because they had not taken the appropriate steps under the Law to cleanse themselves, their works were automatically defiled. Once cleansed from their defilement, then and only then would Jehovah's presence be felt among them.
- B. Indifference has produced calamity; zeal will restore prosperity. (15-19) The prophet calls on the people to recall the past 15 years and see that their efforts have not produced as they should. Jehovah pronounces this lack as judgment upon them to try to turn their hearts to Him. The people must come to realize that all production and fruitfulness

depends on the Lord. The prophet confirms that this day is a turning point and blessings are to follow.

IV. Fourth message Renewal of the promise of salvation: exaltation of Zerubbabel [2:20-23]

- A. Overthrow of the nations. (20-22) This message came on the same day as the third message. It points beyond material blessings and towards spiritual hope. The heathen nations will eventually be overthrown and blessings will come through Zerubbabel (David's descendant). As brought out by the prophets, Jehovah will use one heathen nation to destroy another and then raise a third to destroy the destroyer.
- B. Messianic hope preserved in Zerubbabel. (23) To make Zerubbabel a signet or a seal was an honor because it made him the authentic designee of God. (For more about seals see: Song 8:6; Jer. 22:24,30.) The promise originally made to David in (2 Sam. 7:11-14) is now revived in Zerubbabel. The final fulfillment of this promise would not come in the person of Zerubbabel, but through his lineage (Mt. 1:12,16).

Applications for Today

- A. 1:2-6- We cannot put our trust in our material possessions and be rich in God's sight. Mt. 6:19-21; Lu. 12:16-21.
- B. 2:15-19- God expects us to prioritize our lives according to His wishes, not ours. True happiness can only be found when we do it God's way. Mt. 6:33; Lu. 14:16- 24; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19.

ZECHARIAH: TEACHER'S NOTES

I. Visions and messages of exhortation, consolation, and encouragement. [chapters 1-6]

- A. Call to repentance. (1:1-6) While Haggai, through his preaching, was able to get a portion of the people moving in the right direction, it was left to Zechariah to convert the hard cases. His work begins two months after Haggai's. In these verses the prophet appeals to Jehovah as his source of inspiration. Zechariah points out the displeasure Jehovah had with the pre-exile Israelites, and reminds the remnant to avoid the same pitfalls. The city, the temple and the villages were in ruins because of the rebellion of the ancestors. The experience of history is a great teacher, but its lesson often falls on the ears of dull students. The fathers and their contemporary prophets have come and gone, but the word of Jehovah stands firm. The lesson: Do as Jehovah commands you, and not as your fathers did.
- B. Eight night visions and their interpretation. (1:7-6:8) (See Chart below for synopsis.)
1. The rider and horsemen among the myrtle trees. (1:7-17) Purpose: to assure the people that the temple will be rebuilt.
 - a. The date. (7) This series of eight visions came to the prophet in one night; exactly five months after work on the temple began.
 - b. The vision: the horsemen among the myrtles. (8-11) (A vision appears while the receiver is awake.) The significance of the horse colors here is unclear, but their appearance was in a low, shady place. Zechariah inquires the meaning of this apparition. According to verse 11, Zechariah's guide and interpreter during these visions is the angel of Jehovah (Gen. 22:11, 15-16; 48:15ff; Ex. 13:21; 14:19; 23:20ff; Josh. 5:14; Isa. 63:9). The evidence seems to indicate that this angel is the chief rider of the group, and the group represents God's messengers to the world. They report that they have been all over the earth and it was at peace. This was not in accordance with the promises of Haggai (2:6-8). When then would God act?
 - c. Jehovah's promise of mercy on Zion. (12-17) The angel of Jehovah petitions the Lord on behalf of the people. How long? The answer: after 70 years. The interpreting angel instructs Zechariah to carry this message to the people. The Lord is jealous for His people and His city; He has not forgotten them or their situation. Likewise, He had not forgotten the sins of the surrounding nations. God promises to restore Jerusalem and the temple. This promise of blessing will come through three avenues: (1) "cities shall yet overflow with prosperity," (2) "Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion," (3) He will "yet choose Jerusalem" as the capital of His people. Partial fulfillment of these promises will be found in Zerubbabel's temple and Nehemiah's walls. As always, God's promises are conditional upon the people's faithfulness. Malachi will show us that the people did not complete their part of the contract, postponing complete blessings until the coming of the Messiah.

2. The four horns and the four smiths. (1:18-21) Purpose: To show that their enemies would be cast down.
 - a. This vision of the horns and smiths. (18-20) Horns are symbols of power and strength (Amos 6:13). Four represents the world, the four corners of the earth. The horns represent hostile powers that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. To try to make these horns refer to four specific world powers is impossible; they instead represent the entirety of all nations that have oppressed God's people. Immediately, the prophet is shown four craftsmen or smiths.
 - b. Every hostile nation has its match in Jehovah. (21) The smiths had come to scatter the oppressors. These smiths represent instruments of destruction raised to destroy the destroyers.
3. The man with the measuring line. (2:1-13) Purpose: So that the people would understand that Jerusalem would be restored now, but God's long-range plan was to build a spiritual Jerusalem of unlimited size.
 - a. The vision of the man with the measuring line. (1-5) This man is a surveyor sent to measure Jerusalem. In this vision, there are four characters: the man, the prophet, the interpreting angel, and another angel of superior authority. The man represents those among the Jews who thought only of restoring physical Jerusalem. The message to be taken to him indicates that physical walls will not hold spiritual Jerusalem. Walls will not be needed because they would hinder expansion and because Jehovah himself would act as a protecting wall of flame around the new Jerusalem. This is the Jerusalem of the future (from their perspective).
 - b. The prophecy: the people will return to Zion. (6-13) Jehovah calls on the people to flee the world and come rejoicing to spiritual Jerusalem. The word of the Lord here comes once again through His angel. Those who had plundered Judah had touched the apple (or gate) of God's eye, therefore they would be severely punished. The true believers are commanded to sing and rejoice, because Jehovah is coming to again dwell in their midst. A time will come when people from all nations will dwell in the New Jerusalem. The holy land is wherever Jehovah dwells, which indicates why the New Jerusalem will have no physical bounds. The heathen nations were on the brink of judgment, Jehovah will build and inhabit the new Zion, and His promises concerning Jerusalem would be fulfilled.
4. The trial and acquittal of the high priest, Joshua. (3:1-10) Purpose: To announce the cleansing of the priesthood, which would enable them to officiate for the people and bring them back to God.
 - a. The accusation, acquittal, and cleansing of the high priest. (1-5) Joshua, the high priest, represents the entire priesthood in this vision. Of course the purpose of the priesthood was to represent the nation before Jehovah, so Satan's charge is against both the priesthood and indirectly, the nation. Satan, in this vision, represents a prosecuting attorney with God as the

judge. The priesthood (Joshua) is on trial and accused of being unfit. Jehovah rebukes the accuser even though the previous high priests had allowed the spiritual lives of the people to fall into disarray (Eze. 22:26; Hos. 4:6,8; Mic. 3:11). As always, Satan can be counted on to underestimate the grace of God. Jehovah once again confirms His choice of Jerusalem, that Joshua is the high priest of His choosing, that He is the Savior, and through His care, the remnant would be returned and cleansed. The filthy clothing of Joshua represents the sins of both the priesthood and the people (see Isa. 64:6). Jehovah commanded that the filthy garments be removed and replaced by the appropriate priestly apparel. Even the prophet cannot restrain himself from participating in this scene, by calling for a new turban (Ex. 28:36-38). Jehovah's imputed grace has now made Joshua a fit representative of the nation and fit for service before the Lord.

b. Prophetic address: significance of the symbolic action. (6-10) Joshua is now charged by the angel of Jehovah to maintain his personal righteousness and to remain faithful to his priestly duties. His duties will include ruling and directing the affairs and worship of the Lord's house; keeping the courts of Jehovah's house free from idolatry and; acting as the mediator for the people with Jehovah through the high priest's God-given place of access. Having this place of access made Joshua and those high priests to follow a type of the Branch to come. The stone mentioned here could represent the Messiah Himself or perhaps the kingdom over which He rules. The seven eyes represent the complete watchfulness of God concerning this stone (Dan. 2:44; 7:14ff.). The sins of the land would be removed in one day. On that day peace would begin to rule in the kingdom as the redeemed begin to invite their neighbors to share the blessing of the kingdom with them.

5. The golden lamp stand and two olive trees. (4:1-14) Purpose: To assure Zerubbabel that God would enable him to complete the task of rebuilding the temple.
- a. The vision of the lamp stand and the two trees. (1-3) The excitement of the previous visions had evidently caused the prophet to fall into a sleep-like stupor. The angel came again and revived the prophet (Lu. 9:32). Now the angel asks the prophet what he sees. The lamp stand here is not the traditional "Menorah" of the Jewish holidays. This one was lit by oil from a reservoir located on top. The oil was provided by the two adjacent olive trees. The scholars argue as to whether there were seven pipes to seven lamps or seven pipes to each of the seven lamps. No one has ever seen such a lamp as this and efforts to draw or construct such a lamp have been unsatisfactory. The idea of the seven pipes however is that they would supply an ample amount of fuel to keep the seven lamps lit. The proximity of the olive trees will be further explained in verse 12.
- b. The prophet's questions and the angel's explanations. (4-14)
- (1). The first question and explanation. (4-10) The vision was clear to the prophet, but the meaning was not. The angel seems surprised that the prophet had no idea as to the meaning of the vision. The

angel makes it clear that this is a message to Zerubbabel. He will be able to complete his task, but not by human force, strength, wealth or prestige. The power to complete the temple will come from the Spirit of God, that is, divine omnipotence. Obstacles standing in the way will be removed. "Bringing forth the top stone" is an indication of putting on the finishing touches. The completion of the temple by the hands of Zerubbabel (by the power of God) would be an assurance to the people that the angel of Jehovah had truly been sent. Additionally, the completion of the physical temple would be a pledge that a greater spiritual house would be erected by Zerubbabel's ancestor. The work in progress had seemed a small accomplishment to many, but it was Jehovah's work and therefore not inconsequential. The "eyes" of the Lord will rejoice as they watch the completion of the temple take place.

- (2). The second question and explanation. (11-14) What then is the significance of the two olive trees? From this verse we learn that a never-ending supply of oil is flowing from out of two olive branches. According to the angel, the trees represent the two anointed ones (or sons of oil). Under the Old Covenant, two men held offices that called for anointing: the high priest (Ex. 30:30; Lev. 8:30; 21:10) and, king (1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Kings 9:1-6). These two offices represent the religious and civil aspects of the theocracy. Evidently, the two being represented here would be Joshua and Zerubbabel.

Eight Night Visions and Their Interpretation

SCRIPTURE	VISION	PURPOSE
1:7-17	(1) The rider and horsemen among the myrtle trees.	To assure the people that the temple will be rebuilt.
1:18-21	(2) The four horns and the four smiths.	To show that their enemies would be cast down.
2:1-13	(3) The man with the measuring line.	So that the people would understand that Jerusalem would be restored now, but God's long range plan was to build a spiritual Jerusalem of unlimited size.
3:1-10	(4) The trial and acquittal of the high priest, Joshua.	To announce the cleansing of the priesthood, which would enable them to officiate for the people and bring them back to God
4:1-14	(5) The golden lamp stand and two olive trees.	To assure Zerubbabel that God would enable him to complete the task of rebuilding the temple.
5:1-4	(6) The flying roll.	To show that the curse of God would be upon those who are dishonest.
5:5-11	(7) The woman in the ephah.	To assure the people that the land will be purified from wickedness, when the temple is completed.
6:1-8	(8) The four chariots and horses of various colors.	To portray the earth at peace under the protective providence of God.

Application for Today

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| A. | 1:5,6- | Men live and die, but God's word endures forever (1 Pet. 1:23-25). |
| B. | 4:6-10- | Human wisdom and strength are not the only powers at work when we set about to accomplish God's will.
Eph. 3:20; 2 Cor. 9:8-11 |

6. The flying roll. (5:1-4) Purpose: To show that the curse of God would be upon those who are dishonest.
 - a. The vision of the flying roll. (1,2) The ancient Hebrews wrote on scrolls of leather or parchment. The scroll of this vision was open, extremely large, and flying. The dimensions of the scroll are the same as those of Solomon's porch (1 Ki. 6:3) and the holy place of the tabernacle.
 - b. The prophetic significance: the curse; sinners and their houses will be swept away. (3,4) The scroll would traverse the world going wherever God's people lived. The curse was against stealing and false swearing, sins against both man and God. The law condemned both (Ex. 20:15; Lev. 5:4; Josh. 23:7). The curse would be as a devouring fire upon the house of the transgressors, abiding there until destruction was complete.
7. The woman in the ephah. (5:5-11) Purpose: To assure the people that the land will be purified from wickedness, when the temple is completed.
 - a. The vision of the ephah and the woman. (5-7) The ephah was a large barrel or basket perhaps holding about 10 gallons. The exact size is not specified, but represented a container large enough to hold a woman. The basket and its contents represented the wicked people throughout the land. The basket was covered with a lid of lead.
 - b. The significance: wickedness transported out of the land. (8-11) The use of an immoral woman to signify wickedness is common to the prophets (Isa. 1:21; Hos. 2:5; Eze. 23). The vision continues as two women come and remove the basket from the land to Shinar. This is a reference to the country originally established by Nimrod (see Gen. 10:10,11), but here it probably a symbol of Satan's world government. The book of Revelation further symbolizes the separation between the wicked kingdom and God's kingdom by the "harlot" and the "bride," and by the "great city" and the "holy city," and by the beast out of the sea and the 144,000. Wickedness must be completely removed from God's kingdom and His people, and this separation must be maintained throughout time.
8. The four chariots and horses of various colors. (6:1-8) Purpose: To portray the earth at peace under the protective providence of God.
 - a. The vision of the chariots and horses. (1-3) The vision of horses and chariots came from between two mountains of bronze. It is impossible to tell if they represent two specific mountains, more likely representing the lofty heights from which the messengers of God would come. While the prophet does not describe the significance of the horse's colors, the Revelation suggests that red would represent war and blood; black would

represent grief and famine, while white would represent victory (Rev. 6:1-8). The gray horses were powerful and capable of carrying out God's will. When comparing these verses with Ezekiel (14:21; 5:16,17). We conclude that this vision represents God's judgments of famine, pestilence, and sword against the heathen nations and the victory of righteousness.

- b. The prophet's question and the angel's explanation. (4-8) To understand the four scattering winds of heaven see Jeremiah (49:36; 51:1) and Daniel (7:2). The black horses were sent to the north country, which represents Assyria and Babylon, even though they are actually located more to the northeast. The white drawn chariot of victory followed the black representing the final victory. The gray horses proceeded south towards Egypt and possibly Edom and Ethiopia. These countries would represent all of the heathen powers of the world. It appears that having completed its mission to the south, the fourth chariot "walked to and fro through the earth." In addition to representing the spirit of vengeance, judgment, scattering, and destruction, they also represented the spirit of mercy and redemption (see Isa. 26:9). This concluding vision answers the questions raised by the first vision concerning the "peace" among the heathen: peace would not last long and destruction of the heathen was imminent.

C. Symbolic crowning of the high priest, Joshua. (6:9-15)

1. Children of captivity provide the gold and silver for the crown. (9-11) This is not another vision, but instructions given to the prophet from Jehovah. The prophet was to go to three men who have recently returned from captivity and take gold and silver from them to make a crown. It seems that these men were bearing these precious metals as gifts to help in the restoration of the temple. The purpose of the double-tiered crown was to symbolize the offices of priest and king. Zerubbabel is not mentioned because he was not the king, but only a governor, Joshua on the other hand was the legitimate high priest.
2. Explanation: symbolic of the Branch, crowned king and priest. (12-15) The Law did not call for the high priest to wear a crown, only a special turban. The high priest was to signify that God would fulfill the crown's true significance in the Branch. Isaiah had called the Branch the "shoot out of the stock of Jesse" or as the "root of Jesse." Jehovah makes five declarations concerning the Branch:
 - a. He would come from lowly origins, but would become exalted (Isa. 53:2; 52:13; Amos 9:11).
 - b. He would build the spiritual temple of Jehovah (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:21 ff.; Heb. 3:6).
 - c. He will be given honor, majesty, and power, reigning on David's throne (2 Sam. 7:11-14; 1 Ki. 2:12).
 - d. He will be a priest as well as a king after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:9; 7:1-3). Christ fulfills these qualifications and is ruling in His kingdom now, not in some later thousand years.
 - e. Peace will come because of the branch holding both offices (Mic. 5:5; Eph. 2:14,17).

3. The crown would be a memorial to the three men who had brought the gold and silver from Babylon and for the hospitality shown by Josiah. The crown was to be kept in the temple. Verse 15 points to a time when Gentiles would take part in the building of the spiritual kingdom. If the Jews obey the voice of Jehovah and do not rebel against His instructions, they will build along side the Gentiles. To participate they must accept and obey the word of truth.

II. The question of fasting, and Jehovah's answer. [chapters 7,8]

A. The fast-days of Israel, and obedience to the word. (7:1-7)

1. The occasion of the prophecy. (1-3) It has been almost two years since Zechariah received the eight night visions. It appears that work on the temple had been progressing in the interim. Upon their return from captivity, some had re-inhabited Bethel, the old capital of the northern kingdom. The people of this village had questions concerning fasting and sent an envoy to Jerusalem to get answers. The fast of the fifth month had been instituted in memory of the destruction of the temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Should the practice be continued, if the temple was almost rebuilt?
2. Fasting not essential, but hearing is. (4-7) Zechariah replies from Jehovah: Their fasting had been for selfish motives. The Law had authorized only one fast, the Day of Atonement, to be held in the seventh month. The Jews had added other unauthorized fasts out of their own self-pity. They needed to learn that they could not gain the Lord's favor by fasting, eating, or drinking. The answer to their questions could have been found in the words of the pre-captivity prophets. If their fathers had listened to the word of Jehovah, Jerusalem would have never been destroyed and the kingdom would not have gone into captivity.

B. The first half of the Lord's answer to the question of fasting. (7:8-14)

1. What Jehovah had required of the fathers. (8-10) The prophets in exile had echoed the prophets from before the captivity. The people were to show justice, kindness and, compassion and do not oppress the widows, fatherless, travelers or, the poor.
2. The refusal of the fathers to hearken the lesson that should have been learned. (11-14) Neither Jehovah nor His word had changed, but those who lived before the captivity refused to obey. They had rebelled against (and eventually rejected) God. Their rebellion and rejection had been symptoms of their perverse hearts. Their hearts were harder than flint and so they would not hear nor heed the law. Their present condition was a result of their refusal to hear Jehovah. From the time of Moses, Jehovah had said He would forsake the people if they forsook Him (Deut. 4:27; 28:64). The responsibility for the captivity, the destruction and, the desolation lay solely upon the people. Jehovah had further fulfilled His promise by returning the remnant; therefore, there was no need for fasting; only doing the will of the Father.

- C. The second half of the Lord's answer: the promise of restoration to His favor. (8:1-23)
1. The time of redemption draws nigh. (1-8) Now the prophet looks to the future and announces what Jehovah will do to fulfill His purpose. Zechariah appeals to the Lord as the source of his message 16 times in this chapter. God declares His return to, and jealousy for, Zion and His ardent love for the people. While these prophecies have an immediate application to the people of Zechariah's day, the fuller application is to the Messianic period of today. God assures the people, old and young, that security is coming based on their faithfulness. The people should not be in wonder at these promises, because of who is behind them. Promises such as:
 - a. The people will be saved from the whole world.
 - b. Once saved, they will dwell in the midst of spiritual Jerusalem.
 - c. God would deal with his people based on truth and righteousness. He would keep His part of the covenant; the people must keep theirs.
 2. Message of encouragement and admonition. (9-17)
 - a. The people must hear the present day prophets. (9-13) The people must not follow in the errant footfalls of the ancestors. They must listen to Haggai and Zechariah. The temple had now been under construction for 18 years (2 years since Haggai's call to finish it). Before the reconstruction had begun, the land was desolate and the people unemployed, but since building had begun things were improving. With the people in tune with the prophets of the day, Jehovah can restore peace to the land, make it grow and flourish and restore the inheritance promised by Moses. The promise of returning a remnant of both houses to the land had been fulfilled.
 - b. Jehovah will fulfill His good promises. (14-17) As He had kept His word concerning His wrath against unbelief, so will He fulfill His promises of blessings for belief. He makes two positive requirements: (1) Every man must speak the truth and, (2) Let all court cases be settled according to truth and justice. In contrast, he makes two negative demands: (1) Do not devise evil against each other and, (2) Take no false oaths. (Compare to the vision of the flying scroll, 4:3.)
 3. Fasting to be changed into rejoicing. (18-23) The four unauthorized days of fasting would become feasts of gladness. The other nations will be so impressed by this joy and gladness, that those among the heathen would also seek Jehovah. They will be able to see the difference between their empty idolatry and the worship of the one true God. Many men will come seeking out the religion of the Jews and language barriers will be broken down. The exact time of fulfillment of this prophecy is hard to determine, but consider the conversions of such heathens as Cornelius, the Philippian Jailer and the devout Greeks and chief women of Acts. Also, remember that on the day of Pentecost every man heard the gospel preached in his own language.

Application for Today

- A. 6:12,13- An argument against premillennialism and an insightful passage concerning Christ as Priest and King.
Heb. 8:1,2; Acts 2:30-36; Rev. 17:14; Eph. 1:20-23.
- B. 7:5-13 - Just because man devises "holy days" does not mean they are acceptable to God.
1 Pet. 4:11; Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Mt. 15:7-9; 7:21-23.

III. World powers and the kingdom of God. [chapters 9-14]

This division of the prophecy is divided into two oracles (or burdens). The first concerning the heathen and the second concerning Israel. Some time has passed since Zechariah's last prophecy, and perhaps the temple is now completed. Many of the promises made were possibly being interpreted by the people as not happening, therefore they were disappointed and in need of encouragement. These chapters are very difficult to interpret so we must keep in mind the words of Peter (2 Pet. 1:20ff). As much as possible, this book should be interpreted in light of its use by the New Testament writers and Jesus Himself, thus avoiding the pitfalls of speculation that many have fallen into trying to prove their hobbies concerning the end-times.

- A. First oracle judgment! Destruction of heathen powers over Israel. (chapters 9-11)
1. Fall of the heathen world, and deliverance and glorification of Zion. (ch. 9-10)
 - a. Judgment falls of heathen world. (9:1-7) Beginning with the Medo-Persian Empire and eventually settling on Damascus, judgment will come against the heathen. This will be in contrast to the blessings that come upon Jehovah's people. Surrounding nations such as Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon would feel God's wrath. Tyre, the island stronghold had become wealthy through sea trade. This wealth and power would end and the city would be destroyed by fire. This prophecy would be fulfilled in the times of Alexander, who would lay siege to the city and eventually overcome it. Now the prophet passes from the Phoenician cities to the four chief cities of Philistia. Each would be laid to waste and its native population extinguished. The practice of idolatry and the abominations that accompanied it would cease. A remnant of these heathens would turn to Jehovah. By N.T. times Philistia had lost its identity as a nation. Their destruction also took place at the hands of Alexander.
 - b. The Messianic King and His reign. (9:8-10) Even though the heathen nations would be overthrown and the Grecian culture would dominate the region, God would protect His people. Those faithful to Jehovah should be ever looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, the "one that ruleth righteously," (2 Sam. 23:3; Isa. 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5,6; 33:15,16). He would bring complete and full salvation. He would be humble and lowly. The

character of His rule and kingdom would include a complete rejection of carnal means of security and defense; all of spiritual Israel under one king; a message of peace and good news (Eph. 2:17); reaching beyond the boundaries of the ancient physical kingdom "unto the ends of the earth." A careful reading of the gospels and Acts will establish the fulfillment of all of these characteristics by Jesus Christ, (Mt. 21:1-11; John 12:13-19). His entry into Jerusalem on the unbroken colt of an ass, marked the beginning of His passion and culminated with Him being crowned King over the Kingdom of God.

- c. Complete victory of the sons of God over the sons of Greece. (9:11-17) More captives of foreign nations would be released from bondage and are encouraged here to return to Zion. The expression "render double" perhaps indicates a balancing of the scales; their sins had received equal punishment and their punishment equal blessing, (Rev. 18:6,7a). Jehovah's power is indicated by Judah and Ephraim operating in conjunction as a bow and arrow. The reference to the sons of Greece is pointing to Alexander's invasion and subsequent attempt to capture not only the people but also convert them to the Hellenistic culture. Many Jews were drawn away by Greek philosophy, but the prophet promises that the lineage would remain intact until the coming of the Messiah. During the time between the Testaments, the Macabees fought against incredible odds to maintain the Jewish faith and culture. Jehovah would be as a shepherd, protecting and rescuing His flock in times of trouble, ultimately freeing His people from the Greek philosophy and religion through the Messiah, (Gal. 3:26-29).
- d. Complete redemption of the people of God. (chapter 10) The prophet uses this chapter to enlarge upon the promises of chapter 9. The people are encouraged to pray to God to continue blessings. This is in contrast to praying to idols, which is a waste of time and a source of false guidance. The prophet also warns of the fortunetellers and false interpreters of dreams. It was their love for these very things that lead them into captivity in the first place. They became as sheep without a shepherd. This left them at the mercy of the foreign nations (or false shepherds). Jehovah promises to not only deliver the flock, but also use it as His battle horse. From out of Judah would come the "cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20) of the spiritual dwelling place of Jehovah who could be depended upon to uphold God's laws and provide everything necessary to withstand the enemy. The nation will be completely equipped to do the work of the Lord. Remnants of Ephraim and Judah would share in this victory. Part of this victory was fulfilled in the times of the Macabees, but complete fulfillment only came in the Messianic age. Jehovah would call His people from among Judah, the ten tribes, and the Gentiles. Those that are still scattered, will increase, find Jehovah, and return to Him and worship Him. The original boundaries of Canaan would not hold those that would return to the Lord. Egypt and Assyria would no longer be a threat, nor would any other world power. Meanwhile, the redeemed of Ephraim would be strengthened.

2. Allegories of the good and foolish shepherds. (chapter 11)
 - a. Lamentation of the humiliated land. (1-3) But what land does this represent? Perhaps not land at all, but instead the end of the Jewish economy, which is the old order. But perhaps the land was involved. When Jehovah sent the Good Shepherd, the Jews rejected Him and the Romans were brought against the land; and all that was lofty, great, and meaningful to the Jews was destroyed.
 - b. Allegory of the good shepherd. (4-14)
 - (1). The shepherd's loving care. (4-6) Zechariah is to take the part of the shepherd, but it is not clear whether symbolically or literally. The oppressors of the flock, had claimed that they were in Jehovah's favor, yet they had shown no pity on their poor subjects. God would use world powers to destroy world powers.
 - (2). The people's lack of appreciation. (7,8) The prophet is commanded to feed the flock and is assisted by his two staves "Beauty" (Favor) and "Bands" (Union). Zechariah became disgusted with three shepherds and cut them off. Who these three were is hard to say, but perhaps they were helpers that did not measure up to the prophet's (and God's) standards.
 - (3). Withdrawal of the good shepherd. (9-14) The three scourges could represent pestilence, sword and famine. The prophet broke the staves, indicating that Jehovah's favor will be taken away. When the shepherd asks that his work be rewarded, the people give him 30 pieces of silver (Mt. 26:15; Ex. 21:32). This showed their contempt for the shepherd and the Lord. "Cast it unto the potter," probably means throw it away. The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 brought an end to the Jewish system of religion, the tribal identities were lost, animal sacrifices ceased, and the nation has been in remnants ever since.
 - c. Allegory of the foolish shepherd. (15-17)
 - (1). Conduct of the foolish shepherd. (15,16) Now the prophet takes up the tools of a foolish shepherd: a staff, a bag and, a pipe. This shepherd would have no real interest in the sheep, except to get what he can from them for his own use and comfort. Compare this to the leaders of the Jews after the crucifixion of Christ.
 - (2). Overthrow of the foolish shepherd. (17) "It is an irrevocable law of Jehovah that indifference to stewardship entrusted to a person must invariably bring its own individual judgment."

Applications for Today

- | | | |
|----|-----------|---|
| A. | 9:9-10- | This prophecy refers to the Kingship of Jesus Christ, (Mt. 21:1-11). |
| B. | 11:10-14- | The troubles that have come upon the physical nation of Israel are the result of their rejection of Christ. However, God still extends His invitation to Jews to believe in Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16). As Gentiles we are commanded not to boast against Jews but instead work for their salvation, (Rom. 11:13-36). |

- B. The future of the people of Jehovah: judgment by which sifted and refined. (chs. 12-14) Jehovah reveals the holy and indestructible character of the new spiritual body. This is the second oracle the burden concerning Israel.
1. Israel's conflict and victory, conversion and sanctification. (12:1-13:6)
 - a. Marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem. (12:1-9)
 - (1). Conflict of nations and Jerusalem; destruction of the new nations. (1-4) The prophet once again assures his listeners that his words are the words of Jehovah, the living, creative, eternal, and controlling God. To outsiders, the New Jerusalem would look weak and helpless, easy prey as it were. However, they would come to learn that it was immovable. Jehovah would fight and defend His people from outside forces, be they man or devil. The enemies would become confused and their weapons would become useless. The enemies would stagger as if drunk and be cut and bleeding in their defeat at the hands of Jehovah. His church will stand because He is its power.
 - (2). Strength by which to overcome. (5-9) The ultimate source of strength for all believers is Jehovah. In the spiritual kingdom, the leaders and citizens feed off each other's spirituality. (For more on "in that day," see addenda.) Jerusalem (the spiritual kingdom) is personified as a woman who stands in her place, and remains unharmed. A place that all nations of the earth will come (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-5; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22,23). This New Jerusalem will be the inheritance of the lowly and humble. All will stand on an equal basis before God. "In that day," all people will either be for the Lord or against Him (Mt. 12:30). All the righteous will stand as David before Goliath. Any "nation" that would dare come against the people of Jehovah would be defeated.
 - b. Spirit of grace and of penitential lamentation. (12:10-14) Spiritual strength comes through the grace of God. God's unmerited favor would cause His people to repent and follow Him. They had previously rejected Jehovah as their shepherd, now they will pierce Him. However, they will eventually repent and turn to Him. John applies this prophecy to Christ (Jn. 19:37). Mourning for this evil deed would be as the mourning at the death of King Josiah in the valley of Megiddo (2 Chron. 35:20-25). All families would be affected, whether royal, priestly or, lowly.
 - c. A fountain of grace for salvation. (13:1-6) The death, burial and, resurrection of Christ provided forgiveness of sins (Rom. 3:23-26; 1 Jn. 1:7). This event will mark the end of idolatry among God's people. Therefore, any form of idolatry would be a mark of a false church. True prophets would cease to prophesy, but false prophets would continue. The completion of the gospel would end the need for prophecy (1 Cor. 13:9,10). False prophets will be easy to recognize, because of their claims of "latter day revelations" (Gal. 1:6-8; 1 Jn. 4:1). The false prophecy will pale in comparison to divine revelation. Upon his conviction as a false prophet, he will deny ever claiming to be a prophet.

2. Judgment of refinement for Israel, and glorious end for Jerusalem. (13:7-14:21)
- a. Fate of the shepherd's flock by which refined. (13:7-9) The shepherd is called upon to give up His life for the sheep. Jesus quoted this prophecy and applied it to the scattering of His disciples (Mt. 26:31,32). This "cutting off" would refine the flock, leaving only the truly pure sheep. The pure remnant would be further tried and tested (1 Pet. 1:6,7; 4:12). The prophecy of Hosea (2:1, 23) will be fulfilled (Rom. 9:25,26; 1 Pet. 2:9,10).
 - b. Judgment and deliverance. (14:1-5) The persecution of the sheep will continue. While some have tried to make this prophecy point only to the fall of physical Jerusalem in AD 70 or the rise of the Roman papacy, it more likely refers to the assault of the world in general, upon the spiritual kingdom of Christ (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:7). As always, the true children of God will remain protected throughout these conflicts. The fulfillment of the prophecy of these verses can be seen in such incidents as the scattering of the saints (Acts 8); the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 24:30,31) and; the fall of the Roman Empire (Rev. 19:11-21).
 - c. Complete salvation. (14:6-11) Here we see a day of distress. Not completely light, because of the distress, but not completely dark, because of hope in its midst (Jn. 14:18; Heb. 13:5). Even under duress, living waters will continue to flow from the church (Jn. 7:37,38). Only Jesus as the Messiah fits all of the characteristics described here. The church would be safely inhabited because that is where the Lord will dwell.
 - d. Destruction of enemy nations. (14:12-15) A death curse will come upon the enemies of the church. They will rise up against their own neighbors and destruct by internal corruption, in much the same way that physical Israel destroyed itself. Meanwhile, the people of God will be united and victorious.
 - e. Conversion of the heathen nations. (14:16-19) A remnant of the enemies of the Lord, will eventually turn to Him. The prophet uses the symbol of the feast of the tabernacle to show that the converts will worship according to God's plan. Those who refuse the Messiah will live in a perpetual spiritual desert (Eph. 1:3). Egypt stands here as a symbol of bondage, captivity and, all who would not receive the Lord or who would be His enemy.
 - f. Everything unholy removed; all is holy to Jehovah. (14:20,21) The horses formerly used for war would now bring worshipers to the Lord. All pots and bowls would be clean in the eyes of Jehovah, without the need of ceremonial cleansing. No person would be called unclean because of his race or previous religion. Where are these promises realized? In the church of today. Every individual and principle of worship and service has been cleansed and dedicated by the blood of Christ (Mt. 26:28). There is no distinction in Christ, because all have been redeemed through Him (Rom. 3:21-26). The church then can be presented to Christ according to the requirements of Eph. 5:26,27: glorious and holy; without blemish, spot or wrinkle.

Applications for Today

- A. 13:2- Along with prophecy, demon possession passed out of the land. The devil only controls those who yield to him (Rom. 6:16-18). Through Christ we can resist the devil and overcome him (Jms 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8,9; Heb. 2:14,15).
- B. 13:9- The world will always hate those who live righteously. The world hated the Lord and will continue to persecute His disciples (Jn. 3:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-16; Jms. 1:2,3).

MALACHI: TEACHER'S NOTES

Title: Author and subject of prophecy [1:1]

For the historical background of the times read Ezra 7-10 and all of Nehemiah. The style of Malachi's prophecy is unique: He makes a charge against his readers, he then presents their potential objections and, finally he refutes the potential objection. It has been 100 years since the return from exile (see time line: p. 3). As did Zechariah, Malachi calls his prophecy "the burden of the word." The message is addressed to the entire nation of Israel.

I. Condemnation of the priests' faithlessness. [1:2-2:9]

A. Jehovah's love for Israel. (1:2-5)

1. The divine love asserted. (2) In the people's minds, they did not see how God loved them. The prophet assures them that indeed He does.
2. The divine love demonstrated. (3-5) The example of the persons and nations of Jacob and Esau stand as proof of God's love for Israel. His choice of Jacob was not arbitrary, but demonstrates that He was not controlled by human concepts of action. His hatred of Esau came by way of that nation's unholy character and disposition towards Him. The word for hate here is not the "love less" sometimes used, but a complete despising of Esau. The Edomites were evidently bragging that their nation would rise again, but the prophet refutes this boast. History bears out that Edom never was able to rebuild itself. As always, the fulfilled prophecies of God concerning the nations of history serve to magnify Him.

B. Rebuke of the faithless priests and people. (1:6-14)

1. Worthlessness of the people's sacrifices. (6-8) The relationship between father and son, and by implication, the master and servant was dictated by the Law (Ex. 20:12; 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21). If the people knew of the honor commanded by sons for their fathers and servants for their masters, how could they misunderstand the love they should have for God? Even the priests despised His name. Malachi now answers the potential objection of the priests, who will deny despising the name of Jehovah. The offerings were unacceptable (polluted). By making these false offerings, the priests were holding God and His worship service in contempt. The Law required unblemished sacrifices, but the priests were offering the blind, lame and, sick from among the flock (Lev. 22:17ff; Deut. 15:21).
2. Better to close the temple. (9,10) If the governor of the land would not accept these sorry offerings, how can the priests expect God to accept them? The attitude of the priests made it impossible for their prayers (and thus the people's prayers) to reach God. It would be better if someone would shut up the temple, than to allow this false worship to continue to take place there. It would be better to not worship at all!
3. A superior service rendered among the Gentiles. (11-13) This prophecy looks forward to a time when, under the Messiah, God's name would be great among

the Gentiles. "Incense" and "pure offering" are used figuratively to represent prayers (Rev. 5:8) and living the holy life (Heb. 13:15,16). The Jews should have been an example to all other nations, but were instead making a mockery of their responsibility. Their meaningless religious service and its condemnation stands as a warning to worshipers of today. The work of the priests had become a burden to them. Instead of joy and gratitude being expressed for having been given such an awesome mission, they were bored.

4. The curse of Jehovah. (14) Those that were using blemished animals to meet their religious obligations were under God's curse. These vows were made voluntarily and would have been better left unmade (see Eccl. 5:4,5).

C. Curse pronounced upon the faithless priests. (2:1-9)

1. Immediate reformation the only way of escape. (1-4) The curse of Jehovah will come upon the priesthood if immediate steps are not taken to make corrections. Because they had insulted the name of Jehovah and brought it into disrepute, they must now give glory to it or suffer the consequences. Failure to make these reforms will cause their offspring to be cut off (the priestly lineage will be broken) and the dung of the sacrifices would be spread upon their faces (they will be unfit for service to the Lord and excommunicated from the camp). If the tribe of Levi could not keep themselves fit for the service for which they were appointed, they would be removed from their station.
2. Covenant with Levi and the ideal priest. (5-7) The covenant had been one of "life and peace." (Num. 25:12ff. Phinehas, representing the entire tribe of Levi.) Their responsibility as the priestly tribe included: keeping the covenant, teaching the Law, observing the sacrifices and, blessing by their faithfulness (Deut. 33:8- 11). The priests were to reverence Jehovah and their duties (Num. 25:6-13). "The law of truth" represents the whole of God's will as it had been revealed (Ps. 119:160). To meet their obligations the priests must constantly study and meditate on the Law. Additionally, the prophet designates the priests as God's messengers.
3. The apostate priests and their disgrace. (8,9) Three charges of corruption and faithlessness: (1) "Ye are turned out of the way" of duty and from the way of truth; (2) "Ye have caused many to stumble in the law"; (3) "Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi." Because they had failed to keep their part of the covenant, Jehovah was not bound to keep His part. Instead of having honor among men, they were held in contempt. Their prestige had been lost and would not be returned. They were guilty of showing respect of persons in their interpretation of the Law. They had regressed almost to the point of their pre- captivity ancestors (Mic. 3:11; Zeph. 3:4; Eze. 22:26).

Application for Today

- A. 1:6-10- Many are practicing the same kind of weary and boring unacceptable worship today. Outward form demands inward obedience. (Jn. 4:24; 1 Cor. 11:20-30; Ps. 51:16- 17; Lu. 6:46; Mt. 15:7-9)
- B. 2:6-10- The elders of the church today have many of the responsibilities outlined for the priests (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Those who only desire the office as a position of prestige rather than a work of ministering will reap a curse from the Lord.

II. Condemnation of divorce and mixed marriages. [2:10-16]

By divorcing their Jewish wives and marrying foreign women, the men of Malachi's time were sinning not only against God their Father, but also against their brethren in the common faith. The reason that sin against the brethren occurred was that these women were idolaters. Intermarriage had been specifically forbidden by Moses (Ex. 34:16). Solomon opened the door to idolatry and the original fall of the united kingdom by violating this law (1 Kings 11:1-2; Neh. 13:23-27). The sin is two-pronged: the divorce of the faithful Hebrew wife and, the marriage to the heathen woman. The tears of the mistreated wives would stand as a barrier between the men and their appropriate worship of Jehovah. The people do not understand the problem. The prophet joins in the condemnation of this sin by explaining the far-reaching consequences, namely: the loss of a godly and holy posterity. That is, having oneself and one's family cut off from the covenant family of God. A lesson for us all: age does not change the relationship of youth's love and pledge. God's eternal plan for us has always been one man, one woman, forever (Rom. 7:1-3). God hates divorce, period!

III. Day of the Lord Condemnation of religious indifference and skepticism. [2:17-4:6]

- A. Jehovah's approach in judgment. (2:17-3:6)
1. Their question, "Where is the God of justice?" (2:17) This verse is the introduction to the remainder of the book. Jehovah is tired of their faithless, skeptical attitude. He makes two charges against them: (1)- they have called His righteous and holy judgments into question and, (2)- they have attempted to align Jehovah with evil.
 2. Jehovah's appearance as a refining fire. (3:1,2) Jehovah promises that He is coming to render true judgment, but before that time His messenger will come. By studying Isaiah, Malachi and the four Gospels we can easily conclude that the prophet is speaking of John the Baptist (Is. 40:3; Mal. 4:5, Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lu. 3:4; Jn. 1:23). Furthermore, Jesus testifies that John the Baptist was the "Elijah that was to come" (Mt. 11:10,14; 17:12ff.). When the Lord would come, it would be unannounced. The Messiah would come to act as a bond between Jehovah and His true followers (Isa. 42:6; 49:8). Jesus fits this prophecy perfectly as the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15; 13:20). But His coming will surprise

the Jews, because He is coming to judge everyone, not just the heathen. His judgment will act as a process of purification and cleansing.

3. Purification of priests and people. (3:3-5) The purification would begin with the priesthood, it would be a new spiritual priesthood under the New Covenant (1 Pet. 2:5,9), whose sacrifices are those of praise and thanksgiving. Only under the conditions expressed here will the new nation be acceptable and pleasant to Jehovah. Now we are at the crux of the answer to the question posed in (2:17). Judgment is coming against the people as well as the priests. Such sins as sorcery and adultery were worthy of death under the Law (Lev. 20:10,27). False swearing; withholding wages and; oppressing widows, orphans and travelers; were all condemned by the Law (Ex. 22:21-24). Why would the people do such things? They did not fear God.
 4. Jehovah's unchangeableness (3:6) Without fear of God, there is no restraint against evil. Jehovah will not change (Jms. 1:17). His infinite love will protect the righteous, but His infinite hatred of evil will destroy the unfaithful (Ps. 89:14ff; 97:2ff.).
- B. Wrongful withholding of tithes and offerings. (3:7-12)
1. The people's fickleness and Jehovah's curse. (7-9) God's promises have always been conditional, man is expected to cooperate and do his part. The people had not done their part, so the condition of God's return to them, was their return to Him. This leads to their next "question". They seemed to have absolutely no conscience of wrongdoing. Beyond robbing their brethren, they had robbed God.
 2. Jehovah's bountiful reward for their respect and faithful discharge of duty. (10-12) The whole nation is brought under the charge of tithing improperly. They are charged to bring the whole tithe and then and only then will God do His part. Contingent on their return were the full blessings of God. These would include positive blessings for the people as well as destruction of their physical enemies and enemies of nature. Their land would become a delightful land, in their eyes, their neighbors' eyes and God's eyes.
- C. New defense of Jehovah's justice. (3:13-4:3)
1. Complaint: the wicked prosper, the righteous suffer. (3:13-15) The people had talked harshly against Jehovah and spoken against His moral government. They saw no use in serving God and so their outward attempts at worship were worthless. Because they were not being rewarded for their "worship," they perceived the prospering wicked as those that were truly blessed. This warped thinking brought them under the woe of (Isaiah 5:20).
 2. Separation of the pious from the wicked. (3:16-18) There is always a faithful remnant (1 Ki. 19:18), no matter how evil the people are in general. Jehovah keeps the words, deeds and, disposition of His faithful followers ever before Him. The idea of a book of remembrance is common to both testaments (Ps. 56:8; Dan. 7:10; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12). Those remembered would include the reverent and those who kept the Lord at the forefront of their thoughts and intentions. Jehovah will make the faithful his personal possession. His judgment is not restricted to one "day," but He continuously brings judgments against wicked people and

nations. It is during the times of such judgments that Jehovah keeps track of those that serve and obey Him. These judgment days allow the people to clearly see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, and between serving God and not serving Him.

3. Utter destruction of the wicked. (4:1) The former prophets also used the scene of a devouring fire as the destructive force of judgment on the wicked (Amos, Zephaniah). The ultimate day of judgment will be at the second coming of the Lord, when the wicked will be eternally destroyed from Jehovah's presence (1 Thess. 1:9).
4. Exaltation and glorification of the righteous. (4:2,3) Divine righteousness is accessible to all who will receive it, as the rays of the sun shine on all who will stand in its light. The victorious righteous will tread the fire-destroyed wicked under foot as ashes under their feet. This victory of the righteous and defeat of the wicked is guaranteed by the Lord.

D. Closing admonitions. (4:4-6)

1. Exhortations to faithful observance of the law. (4) The true Israelite must respect and keep the Law of Moses. Malachi's reference to Moses as the author of the Law stands as internal evidence of Moses' inspiration. They are required to keep the whole law, not just the Ten Commandments.
2. Elijah the messenger and his work of preparation. (5,6) While John the Baptist was not Elijah in the flesh (Jn. 1:21), he was the Elijah of promise (Mt. 17:11-13). His mission was to turn the affections of the people back to God and His divine Law. Only in this condition would the people be prepared to receive the Messiah. As the original Elijah preached repentance and a return to the Lord, so would John. To avert destruction, the people must repent; some did but most did not. By A.D. 70, their temple and their city were destroyed. Malachi's prophecy serves as a final appeal, a final warning and, a final promise. An appeal to purge the wickedness from among themselves, a warning of the inevitable judgment on the wicked, and a promise of one who could form a permanent bond between Jehovah and his people. Jehovah would remain silent from this point forward, until the forerunner would announce the impending arrival of the Messiah.

Application for Today

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| A. | 2:16- | Marriage involves a covenant between a man, a woman and, God. God instituted marriage and man cannot dissolve it without considering His laws concerning it. God hates divorce and has always intended that there should be one man for one woman.
(Pro. 2:17; Gen. 2:24; Deut. 24:1-4; Mt. 19:9; Rom. 7:1-3) |
| B. | 3:8-10- | When Christians minimize the importance of "purposing in their hearts" and "giving of their means," they become guilty of the same sin.
(2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:2) |

Would Malachi Be Heard Today?

“YE SAY”	MAL.	THE LORD’S ANSWER	SCRIPTURE
Wherein hast Thou loved us?	1:2-4	I chose Jacob over Esau	Jn. 3:16
Wherein have we despised Thy name?	1:6-13	Ye offered polluted bread; in weariness	Rev. 3:15-17
Why is God displeased with us?	2:11-16	Ye divorced your wives & married heathen.	Mt. 19:9
Wherein have we wearied Him?	2:17	Ye say the evil is good.	Eph. 5:3-11
Wherein shall we return?	3:7	Keep My ordinances.	2 Jn 9
Wherein have we robbed Thee?	3:8	In tithes and offerings.	2 Cor. 9:6,7
Wherein have we spoken against Thee?	3:13,14	Ye say it is vain to serve God.	2 Cor. 4:16-18