

LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION: Dealing with a group of men who could in no sense of the term be called "Minor". Neither are the doctrines contained in these books in any way "Minor". The twelve prophets are "Minor" only in length. Read the following passages for some of the greatest statements in scripture: Amos 3:1-8; 6:1-6; Hosea 1-2; 4:6; 8:12; Micah 6:6-8; 4:1-2; Malachi 1:10; 2:7,14; 3:10.

I. What Kind Of Men Were These Prophets?

1. They were all human.
 - a. Men of Bible - often like fairytale characters.
 - b. Men of high character - saintly - makes them less real to us.
 - c. Preachers - some people say three classes of people - "men, women, preachers."
2. They were uncompromising individuals - Amos 7 - Micah 3:8.
3. They were conscious of a Divine Call - Must be Jehovah's Mouthpiece - "I was no Prophet" - Deep spiritual insight.
4. Usually men of certain ruggedness of body and character that commanded Attention in any gathering - often lonely - "Yet one man" - I Kings 22.
5. They were conscious of God's authority and backing in all emergencies - His contemporaries are constantly challenging the strange stance of God's prophets.
6. They were men of prayer and communion with God - loneliness helped this.
7. They were clean and consecrated in life and character - Not one single breath of criticism of personal life - each lived a separated life.
8. They were conscious of the Privilege of access to the inner counsel of Jehovah - Bore secrets of God to man.
9. They were outspoken critics of specific evils in the social order. Did not deal in abstractions - Amos to Amaziah - Micah to Leaders - Malachi to Priests.
10. They were God's agents in revealing the future -

II. What Was Their Mission

- Spokesman for God - Exodus 4:16, 7:1; Jer. 1: Ezek. 3.
- a. For judgment - Amos 3:2; Hos. 4:6; 13:9; Micah - plowed under, 3:12.
 - b. For salvation (hope) - Amos 9:11-14; Hos. 2:23; Micah 4:1-2.

III. Basic Principles For Understanding The Prophets

1. The Prophet is a man who is moved by the Holy Spirit - II Peter 1:20,21.
2. The Prophet cannot introduce strange things - Deut. 13:1-5. Function: call back to the Law.
3. The true prophet is the man whose oracles come to pass - Deut. 18:20-22.
4. Sometimes prophecy is conditional - Jer. 18:5-11 - Jonah and Nineveh. A threat may be delayed by repentance - I Kings 21:29.
5. The prophets lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.
 - a. Threats fulfilled in exiles - cf. Zech. 1:5,6.
 - b. Promises of return fulfilled in return from Babylon.
6. Christ's first coming and the beginning of the church are important subjects of Old Testament prophecy - Rom. 1:2; Acts 3:24-26; I Peter 1:10-12.

Christ - The Ideal King, Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Jer. 33:6.
The Suffering Servant - Isa. 53.
Church - Kingdom, God's House, God's Mountain, Temple, Sheepfold, etc.
7. God's Final Revelation Is Made In His Son - Heb. 1:1-2. "This is that" "As it is written" Settles the Case.

LESSON TWO

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

I. Date - c.845 B.C.

A. Characteristics of the book that establish the date.

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

B. Six characteristics of 586 B.C. (Babylonian Destruction) not found in Obadiah.

1. The razing of the walls (II Kings 25:10; Jere. 52:14; Neh. 2:15-17)
2. The burning of the Royal Palace (II Kings 25:9; Jere. 52:13)
3. The burning of the Temple (II Kings 25:9; Jere. 52:13)
4. The capture and deportation of the King to Babylon (II Kings 25:7)
5. The deportation to Babylon of the entire nation with but few exceptions (II Kings 25:11-12)
6. The emigration of the Jews to Egypt (II Kings 25:26; Jere. 41:16; 43:22)

II. The Outline Of The Book

- A. Edom must be destroyed, vv. 9.
- B. The reasons for the destruction - cruelty, treachery and unbrotherly conduct, vv. 10-14.
- C. In the hour of judgment Edom will be ruined while Israel will be restored and blessed, vv. 15-21.

III. History Of Edom

- A. Beginning of Esau and Jacob: In the womb and at birth (Gen. 25:22-26); the birthright (Gen. 25:27-34); the blessing (Gen. 27); the later meeting of the brothers (Gen. 32-33); at the time of the Exodus (Num. 20:14-21); subjection of Edom under David (II Sam. 8:13-14); revolt of Edom under Jehoram (II Kings 8:20-22). See also Malachi 1:25; Heb. 12:14-17.
- B. Later, or close of Edom's History, consult any good late work such as the following: Joseph P. Free, *ARCHAEOLOGY AND BIBLE HISTORY* pp., 276-277; I. S. B. E., *Edom or Idumaea*; Emil G. Kraeling, *BIBLE ATLAS* p. 343; Ernest Wright, *ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE*, p. 230; Ernest Wright, *THE WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL ATLAS TO THE BIBLE*, pp. 69-70.

IV. Teaching Of The Book

- A. Fall of Edom because of cruelty and pride vv. 3-4
- B. The Consequence of Neutrality vv. 10-14. When principles of righteousness are involved which justice demands be upheld a stand must be taken. It is a sin to be neutral in such cases.
- C. God is in active control of every phase of His creation. Obadiah teaches the inflexible integrity of God. It was God's joy to carry out His purposes upon all the nations and to look with special favor upon his chosen people.

V. Practical Lessons Of Permanent Value

- A. Human defenses are utterly useless when the power of God comes against them.
- B. Ridicule is always bad for it reveals a low human pride that means an utter lack of brotherly love.
- C. Eternal justice will prevail.
- D. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- E. "Hate silences the voice of compassion, blinds the soul's vision, corrupts the social fabric, inflicts needless grief and dismay on innocent multitudes, and consigns the political systems founded by it to self-wrought destruction - No nation is defensible if it presumes to limit either God's love and righteousness or our own moral obligations" Cadman, *THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL*, p. 149.

VI. Discussion Questions

- A. Does Obadiah have anything to say to the man who, in the presence of calamity, does not want to get involved?
- B. Contrast the dealings of God with Edom and Israel in the Old Testament.
- C. Contrast the teaching of Obadiah on pride and that found elsewhere in the Old Testament.
- D. Discuss modern applications of v. 11's teaching on the sin of neutrality.
- E. What has Obadiah to say to a militaristic age?

LESSON THREE

THE BOOK OF JOEL

I. Date: About 830 B.C. Proven by following facts:

- A. Enemies of Israel are the Philistines, Phoenecians, Egyptians and Edomites.
- B. No reference to Assyria which emerged by 760 B.C.
- C. No reference to Babylon which soon followed but perished by 536 B.C.
- D. Amos, who undoubtedly wrote in the eight century B.C., seems to quote Joel.
Compare Amos 1:2 with Joel 3:16.
- E. The place assigned it in the Hebrew bible shows their belief in its early date.

II. Outline Of The Book

- A. The Locust plague and drought call the people to repentance (Joel 1:1; 2:27)
- B. The day of Jehovah, heralded by the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28; 3:16)
- C. The glorious future of Judah and Jerusalem (Joel 3:17-21.)

III. Literary Relationship of Joel to the other Prophets

Joel 1:15	—	Isa. 13:16
2:2	—	Zeph. 1:15
2:3	—	Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35
2:10	—	Isa. 13:10
2:32	—	Obad. 17
3:10	—	Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3
3:16	—	Amos 1:2; Isa. 13:13
3:17	—	Ezek. 36:11; Isa. 52:1
3:18	—	Amos 9:13

IV. The Man Joel

- A. Reasonably certain that he was a native of Jerusalem; Would be aware of all the priestly corruption.
- B. He was a pious, godly, courageous preacher who followed the locust plague to cry for repentance.
- C. As a preacher he would have to rank high.

V. Teaching Of The Book

A. The day of Jehovah

- 1. A day of judgment - Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14. Compare Amos 5:18ff; Isa. 13:6, 9ff; Zeph. 1:1ff; Jere. 46:10.
- 2. A day of Salvation - Joel 2:28-32; Compare Isa. 63:4; Malachi 4:1-5.
- B. God's use of natural calamity as a call for national repentance - Joel 2:12-13.
- C. The goodness of God - Joel 2:19, 20, 23, 25-27.
- D. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh - Joel 2:28-32.

VI. Joel And The New Testament - Jack P. Lewis

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

VII. Practical Lessons Of Permanent Value

- A. Disasters serve to turn men to God and prepare their hearts to hear him.
- B. Judgment upon the wicked nation is inevitable.
- C. An awakened sense of dependance upon God makes for a genuine religious experience.
- D. The character of the day of judgment depends on the attitude of the heart. It may be a day of terror or a day of blessing.
- E. God delights to include all men everywhere in His great gift of the Spirit.

VIII. Questions For Further Study

- A. What traits of God do you see most plainly presented in Joel?
- B. What are the chief duties of man emphasized in Joel?
- C. What is the cause of calamity as seen by Joel? Can we subscribe to this idea?
- D. What is involved in repentance as seen by Joel?
- E. What, according to Joel, is the purpose of fasting?

LESSON FIVE

THE BOOK OF AMOS

- I. The Date of the Book: About 755 B. C.
 - A. During the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (783-743 B. C.) and Uzziah King of Judah (779-740 B. C.).
 - B. Written after Obadiah (Compare Amos 1:11-12 with Obadiah 10-14).
 - C. Written after the book of Joel (Compare Amos 1:2 with Joel 3:16).
- II. The Outline Of The Book
 - A. Judgment against Nations - Read Amos 1-2.
 - B. Judgment against Israel - Read Amos 3-6.
 - C. Visions Regarding the Future - Read Amos 7-9.
 1. The Devouring Locusts - 7:1-3.
 2. The Consuming Fire - 7:4-6.
 3. The Searching Plumbline - 7:7-9.
 - INTERLUDE: Argument with Amaziah - 7:10-17.
 4. The Summer Fruit-Basket - 8:1-10.
 - INTERLUDE: A Famine of Words - 8:11-14.
 5. The Lord at the Altar - 9:1-10.
 6. The Restored Tabernacle of David - 9:11-15.
- III. Character Sketch
 - A. Amos was humble - in not hiding his station in life.
 - B. Amos was wise - in not preaching over the heads of the people.
 - C. Amos was clever - in catching people's fancy by judging their enemies first.
 - D. Amos was fearless - in not tickling the ear, but telling the truth.
 - E. Amos was faithful - "Thus saith the Lord" was his message.
- IV. Teaching Of The Book
 - A. God is a God of Justice and Righteousness - Amos 5:6-9, 24. Yet he also talks of His mercy - 7:2,5; 5:15.
 - B. The Prophet's Concept of Israel
 1. The people of Jehovah - 2:9-10; 3:1-2.
 2. The divine ideal for Israel - 3:2; 5:4, 24.
 3. Israel's Sins
 - a. Oppression of the Poor - 5:7, 11
 - b. Judges taking bribes - 5:12.
 - c. Businessmen were dishonest - 8:5-6.
 - d. Sold righteous into slavery - 2:6-7.
 - e. Sexual immorality - 2:7.
 - f. Told Prophets not to preach - 2:12; 5:10.
 - g. Materialism. The women, 4:1. The people, 3:15; 6:1-6.
 - h. Religious corruption, 4:4-5; 5:21-23.
 - C. Strongholds That Are Not Strong - False Confidence Of The People:
 1. God is our God and we are His people! They thought that privilege demanded continued blessing instead of implying and involving responsibility.
 2. God brought Israel out of Egypt (Amos 2:10)! Implied: God will not forsake us now. (Compare 9:7-8) No place for complacency.
 3. We worship God regularly! God demands right rather than rites (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-23).
- V. Practical Lessons Of Permanent Value
 - A. Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society.
 - B. Nations and individuals that have been favored are laden with corresponding responsibilities.
 - C. Ease, luxury and idleness lead to open sin.
 - D. Nations, and by analogy individuals, are bound to live up to the light and knowledge granted them.

- E. The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commands.
- F. The need for personal conviction in the Prophet, 7:14-15.
- G. The discipline of the desert is valuable. What a great service the desert did to Amos.

VI. Discussion Questions

- A. Out of the book of Amos, what passages do you find more appealing than others?
- B. Contrast Israel's place of privilege with that of the Church.
- C. Make modern-day applications of the sins of Amos' day to our own day.
- D. What is Amos' alternative to destruction, is any?
- E. What did the "Day of Jehovah" mean to Amos?

LESSON SIX

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

- I. Date: About 750-735 B. C. During the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel.
- II. Outline Of The Book
 - A. A strange love story - Chapters 1-3
 1. Hosea stands for God - The loving, patient husband.
 2. Gomer stands for the nation of Israel - the lustful, immoral wife.
 3. Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi - stand for the individual Jews - The scattered, un-pitied and rejected strange children.
 - B. Israel's national sin and chastisement - Chapters 4-10
 1. Lack of knowledge 4:6,11
 2. Pride 5:5
 3. Instability 6:4
 4. Worldliness 7:8
 5. Corruption 9:9
 6. Backsliding 11:7
 7. Idolatry 13:2
 - C. Israel's future hope - Chapters 11 - 14
 1. God's choice (compare 11:1 with Exodus 19:4-6; Ps. 147:19-20)
 2. Israel's sin (compare 11:2 with book of Judges; Gal. 6:7; II Peter 2:21)
 3. The Grace of God (compare 11:4 with John 12:32-33; 14:4 with Romans 5:20; Hosea 14 is the greatest chapter in the Bible for backsliders.)
- III. Israel's Problems In Hosea's Time
 - A. Israel's blacklist of sin
 1. Falsehood - 4:1
 2. Licentiousness - 4:11
 3. Murder - 5:2
 4. Robbert - 7:1
 5. Oppression - 12:7
 - B. God's figures for the sinner
 1. An adulterous wife - 3:1
 2. A wine - inflamed drunkard - 4:11
 3. A backsliding heifer - 4:16
 4. As troops of robbers - 6:9
 5. Hot as an oven - 7:7
 6. A cake not turned (half-baked) - 7:8
 7. Like a silly dove - 7:11
 8. Like a deceitful bow - 7:16
 9. Swallowed up - 8:8
 10. A vessel wherein is no delight 8:8
 11. A wild ass - 8:9
 - C. Israel's lacks
 1. Lack of knowledge - 4:1-2,6; 6:3,6; 8:12
 2. Lack of trust in God - 5:13; 7:11; 8:5; 11:5-7
 3. Lack of leadership - 4:4-6; 6:8-9; 9:7; 7:5-7
 4. Lack of love for God - Chapters 1-3; 11:1-4
- IV. The Teachings Of The Book
 - A. The picture of the true nature of God
 1. God is a great and unceasing lover. He is willing to go to any lengths to cause His people to pause, look upon, and come to know the lover who is wooing them.

2. God is a great sufferer who has found His love unrequited. The people do not know their God. They are stupid, without intelligence, insensible to all that is high and holy, and above all they are not even conscious of the love of God for them. Since they cannot understand the love of God they cannot properly love God! See I John 4:19.

B. The picture of the true nature of sin.

1. Sin in the final analysis is unfaithfulness, infidelity, whoredom. See chapters 1-3
2. Sin ages one and destroys his youthful spirit. The decay is gradual, imperceptible, but dangerous and fatal. See 5:12, 7:9.
3. Sin is contagious and one who exposes himself to the atmosphere and presence of those whose influence is bad cannot hope to escape its certain consequences (4:9).
4. Sin's effects are as certain and as natural as the power of gravity (8:7). Sin can only end in captivity, for the heart is rotten to the core.
5. Sin robs a people of the power to make moral distinctions (4:11). The optic nerve has been severed by gazing too long and too longingly at immorality.

C. The picture of true repentance

1. To Hosea repentance is no mere change in the direction of one's life. It is a turning back upon one's self, a retracing of one's footsteps, a confession and acknowledgment of what one has abandoned. Repentance is no mere turning or re-turning. It is a deep and an ethical process - the breaking up of fallow ground, the labor and long expectation of the sower, the seeking and waiting for Jehovah till He sends the blessing.
2. Study the following verses: Hosea 3:5; 5:4; 6:1; 14:1-2.

V. Practical Lessons Of Permanent Value

- A. Without the knowledge of Jehovah and His law there can be no fellowship with God. See I John 1:5-7.
- B. The sacredness and sanctity of the marriage relation.
- C. Sin destroys the nerve that enables men to make moral distinctions.
- D. Inward corruption is more dangerous to a nation's existence than external enemies.
- E. The root sin from which all others spring is unfaithfulness to Jehovah.

VI. Questions For Further Discussion

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

LESSON SEVEN

MICAH – The Champion Of The Poor

I. Date: 735 - 700 B. C. Contemporary with Isaiah.

II. Background

A. Historical and Political conditions

1. The golden age of prophecy and the black age of Judah. It was a period of turmoil, strife, change and growth.
2. In 745 B. C. Tiglath Pileaser III began his reconquest of the West. In 738 B. C. his army was in Syria and at the gates of Samaria, the capital of the northern nation of Israel.
3. Tired of Assyria's taxes. Israel and Syria pled to Egypt for help. Jotham and Ahaz refuse to join up. Rezin, the King of Syria, and Pekah, the King of Israel, war with Ahaz, defeat him, and sack the city of Jerusalem. It was a dark hour.
4. Ahaz calls for help from Tiglath Pileaser who defeats both of the opposing Kings. Ahaz is forced to go to Damascus and pay allegiance to Assyria and accept his place as puppet King.
5. Sargon, the new king of Assyria, came upon the west in 711 B. C. and afflicted terrible judgement upon nearly all of Philistia and Judah. In some way Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem were spared.
6. At the death of Sargon in 705, the young Sennacherib came into power in Assyria. In the west Egypt, Phoenecia, Philistia, Judah and some of the smaller kingdoms revolted. Sennacherib defeated every rebel and only the direct intervention of God saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem (II Kings 19).
7. These were stirring times. God was leading His followers and gradually working out His own great purpose in the world.

B. Social Conditions

1. Corrupt in administering justice 2:2; 3:2
2. Greed in Religious Leaders 3:9-11
3. Avariciousness and Cruelty of the people 2:8-9

C. Religious Conditions

1. False Prophets 2:11
2. Soothsaying, witchcraft, superstition and idolatry 7:2, 4-6

D. The Sins of the times

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

III. Outline

- A. General prediction of judgment chapters 1-3
- B. The coming Messianic Kingdom chapters 4-5
- C. The Lord's controversy with his people and final mercy chapters 6-7

IV. Teaching of the Book

A. Micah's quartet of evil-doers

1. The avaricious land-grabber 2:1-2, 9; 7:5-7. He lay awake at night planning how to steal from the poor widows.

2. The rulers who hated good and loved evil 3:1-4, took bribes 7:3. Micah says such are cannibalistic 3:1-3.
 3. The false prophet who divined for money 3:11. If not given the money prepared war against you 3:5.
 4. The Priest who taught for hire 3:11.
- B. Micah's picture of God
1. He is the judge 1:3, 6; 3:12
 2. He is a God of Ethical Righteousness 6:8; 2:1-2; 3:2-3, 10, 11; 7:2
 3. He is a God who loves peace 4:3; 5:5
 4. He is a God of Hope and Promise 7:7, 18-20
- C. God's program for Judah — Chapter 4
1. Anguish
 2. Suffering
 3. Punishment
 4. Exile
 5. Return
 6. A new kingdom of redeemed souls
 7. The evangelization of the nations
- D. The nature of true religion Micah 6:6-8
1. To do justly. The golden rule (Matthew 7:12). Man's relationship to himself—a life of elementary mortality.
 2. To love kindness. Jesus said (quoting Hosea), "I desire mercy not sacrifice". Many times Jesus was "moved with compassion." Man's relationship to others—a life of benevolence.
 3. To walk humbly before God. Amos 3:3; Gen. 5:24; 6:9. Man's relationship to God—a life of humble service.
 4. Three great qualities—justice, kindness and humility. Compare Matthew 22:37-40; 23:23; Gal. 5:22; James 1:27.
- V. Practical Lessons of permanent value
- A. Elaborate pretensions of piety and liberal gifts in public cannot atone for a lack of true righteousness in the heart.
 - B. The unscrupulous use of power, even though within the bounds of law, hurts the heart of God.
 - C. Courage comes to anyone who senses the presence of God in his life.
 - D. The difference between the false prophet and the true is no more in creed than in conduct.
 - E. How reasonable are God's basic requirements! How unchangeable are His demands! How deep and tender and changeless His great love.
- VI. Questions for further discussion
- A. Contrast the conditions faced by Amos and those faced by Micah.
 - B. What is the secret of true preaching according to Micah?
 - C. Is Micah opposed to worship by sacrifice?
 - D. What are some of the high points in the development of the Messianic hope?
 - E. What motives made a man to be a false prophet?

LESSON EIGHT

BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

- I. Date: About 625 B. C. During the reign of Josiah, 639-608 B. C. After Josiah's Reforms: Compare 1:4 "The remnant of Baal" and 1:8 "The King's sons."
- II. Background:
 - A. Political—in Judah.
 1. Good King Hezekiah succeeded by his son, Bad King Manasseh, a boy of twelve years. The heathen party assumed control of the government (2 Chron. 33:1-9; 2 Kings 21:10-16). Later Manasseh repented but without saving the nation (2 Chron. 33:10-20).
 2. Amon, who followed Manasseh, was also wicked (2 Chron. 33:21-25).
 3. Josiah, the last good king of Judah, came to the throne at the age of eight, sought God at 15, began to reform the land at 20, completed the reform at 26. It was after this that Zephaniah prophesied.
 - B. Political—in the East
 1. Israel had fallen to Assyria and had been carried away captive.
 2. In 625 Nabopolassar established Babylon as a separate nation and began to battle with Assyria.
 3. In 612 Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, defeated the Assyrian empire and destroyed the great city of Nineveh.
 4. No doubt it was this rise of Babylon to power that gave occasion for the prophecy of Zephaniah.
 - C. Religious and Moral
 1. Sweeping religious and moral reforms took place in the day of Josiah.
 2. Yet, although reform had restored the ritual the people worshipped only externally.
 3. Social injustice and moral corruption were widespread.
 4. Luxury and extravagance were seen on every hand.
- III. Outline of the Book
 - A. Threatening and judgment—Chapter 1
 - B. Warning and Admonition—Chapter 2
 - C. Encouragement and Promise—Chapter 3
- IV. The Sins of Judah
 - A. Religious Syncretism
 1. Baal 1:4
 2. Milcam 1:5
 3. Host of Heaven 1:5
 - B. Wearing of foreign apparel 1:8
 - C. Leaping over the threshold (robbery) 1:9
 - D. Fraud and Violence 1:9
 - E. Prophet, Priest and Judge are violent and wanton 3:3-4
 - F. Indifference, that considered God as uninterested in human behavior 1:12.
 - G. A refusal to receive correction 3:2, 7.

V. The Teaching of the Book

- A. The Day of Jehovah: Is near (1:14). Is a day of terror (1:15-16). Comes as judgment for sin (1:17)? Falls upon all creation: man and beast, Hebrew and gentile (1:2, 3; 2:1-15; 3:8).
- B. The constant necessity of warning (1:14-16).
- C. The necessity of moral sifting (3:7-13).
- D. The Spiritual nature of God's Kingdom (3:14-20).

VI. Great Passages in Zephaniah

- A. 1:14-18—Description of Day of Jehovah
- B. 2:3—What to seek—Pathway to safety
 - 1. Jehovah
 - 2. Righteousness
 - 3. Meekness
- C. 3:1—The opposite of Micah 6:2
- D. 3:3-4—Description of Leaders of Judah
- E. 3:9-20—Description of the Messiah's Kingdom.
 - 1. From all nations with one purpose 9-10 (Eph. 2:11-22)
 - 2. Restored, cleansed, sanctified 11-13 (I Cor. 6:10-11)
 - 3. Comforted and exalted 14-20 (I Pet. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:14-11)

VII. Practical Lessons of Permanent Value

- A. One Becomes like the God he worships
- B. Earnest warning is needed to draw us back to the presence of God.
- C. God gives assurance that humble seekers will be safe in the day of judgment.
- D. God's ministers should put strong emphasis on the spiritual nature of the kingdom.
- E. God's purpose is not vengeance but to cleanse and refine and save those who will allow Him to save them.

VIII. Questions for further study

- A. What have the times of Zephaniah in common with our own times?
- B. What spiritual condition contains the greatest threat to the Lord's cause?
- C. What is it to be "settled on their lees?"
- D. What emphasis is there on the mercy of God in Zephaniah?
- E. What traits of God are stressed? Discuss these.

LESSON NINE

BOOK OF NAHUM

- I. Date: Between 630-612 B. C. Nineveh fell in 612 B. C., the book was written before the destruction. Nahum speaks of the capture and destruction of No-Amon (Thebes) which took place in 633. Therefore, the book was written after this date.
- II. Historical Background
 - A. Assyrian Kings
 1. Tiglath-Pileaser III (Pul) -747-727. Deported some of the Northern citizens of Israel.
 2. Shalmaneser V, 727-722. Began the siege of Samaria.
 3. Sargon II, 722-705. Finished siege of Samaria. Murdered in 705.
 4. Sennacherib 705-681. Shut up Hezekiah like a "bird in a cage."
 5. Esarhaddon, 681-622.
 6. Assur-bani-pal, 668-625. Destroyed No-Amon (Nahum 3:8). Very cruel.
 7. Asur-ital-ilani, 625-620.
 8. Sin-sar-uskin Esarhaddon II, 620-612. He, his wives and children and wealth were gathered in the palace, and fire set to it.
 - B. Characterization of Nineveh:

"Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed on the way to ruin. The kings of Assyria tormented the miserable world. They exult to record how 'space failed for corpses'; how unsparing a destroyer is their goddess Ishtar; how they flung away the bodies of soldiers like so much clay; how they made pyramids of human heads; how they burned cities; how they filled populous lands with death and devastation; how they reddened broad deserts with carnage of warriors; how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders and strewed the mountains and choked rivers with dead bones; how they cut off the hands of kings and nailed them on the walls, and left their bodies to rot with bears and dogs on the entrance gates of cities; how they employed nations of captives in making bricks in fetters; how they cut down warriors like weeds, or smote them like wild beasts in the forests, and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs." —Farrar, Minor Prophets, pp. 147-148.
- III. Outline of the Book
 - A. God, The Father, Is The Judge—chapter 1:1-7
 - B. The verdict of guilty for Nineveh—chapter 1:8-14
 - C. The execution of Nineveh by God—chapters 2 & 3.
- IV. Teachings of the Book
 - A. About God 1:2, 3, 7
 1. The Judge—Jealous, vengeful, furious, wrathful, great in power, will not acquit wicked, indignant.
 2. The father—slow to anger, good, a stronghold in day of trouble, knowing them that trust Him.
 - B. About Wicked Nations
 1. Condemned to utter destruction—1:8, 9.
 2. Named will be blotted out—1:10.
 3. God to dig its grave—1:14.
 4. Great wealth and power cannot save it—3:8-19.
- V. Practical Lessons of Permanent Value
 - A. There is a limit to God's patience. Compare Jonah and Nahum.

- B. God still rules the world.
- C. A nation built on pride, cruelty, force and selfishness cannot hope to have friends in the day of its fall.
- D. God hates brutality, violence and wrong.
- E. When God lifts His finger in judgment, the mightiest nations must fall.

VI. Questions for Further Discussion

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

LESSON TEN

BOOK OF HABAKKUK

- I. Date: 612-606 B. C. Assyria had fallen in 612 B. C. The oppression of Judah and first exile, which occurred in 605 B. C. had not taken place.
- II. Characterization of the Book.
 - A. "The book of Habakkuk differs fundamentally from the other prophetic books: while the utterances contained in the other books claim to be the words of Yahweh addressed to the people, in this book the prophet, representing the people, addresses and challenges Yahweh." Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament* p. 508.
 - B. "The other prophets address the nation Israel, on behalf of God; he rather speaks to God on behalf of Israel. Their task was Israel's sin, the proclamation of God's doom and the offer of His grace to their penitence. Habakkuk's task is God Himself, the effort to find out what He means by permitting tyranny and wrong. They attack the sins, he is the first to state the problems of life." —G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*. Vol. II P. 130.
- III. Outline of the Book
 - A. God's judgment upon Judah, the wicked people of God, through the Chaldeans, 1:1-3. "Watch and See."
 - B. God's judgment upon the Chaldeans, the ungodly world power—2:4-20. "Stand and See."
 - C. Prayer for compassion in the midst of judgment—3:1-19. "Kneel and See."
- IV. Teaching of the Book
 - A. The universal supremacy of God's judgment on the wicked.
 1. Judah by the Chaldeans
 2. The Chaldeans because of their cruelty
 - B. Faithfulness is the guarantee of permanency—2:4. Faithfulness means integrity, fidelity, steadfastness under all provocation.
 - C. Evil is self-destructive. "Tyranny is intolerable. In the nature of things it cannot endure, but works out its own penalties". —G. A. Smith, *Book of Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II p. 144.
 - D. To solve the problem of divine discipline for his faithful fellow countrymen is the great aim of his book.
 - E. The courage that the righteous can have in the time of crisis.—3:17-19.
- V. Practical Lessons of Permanent Value
 - A. In every crisis God can be trusted.
 - B. Evil has within itself the germs of death.
 - C. We can see and understand God only when we rise above the fog of human doubt.
 - D. The real purpose of religion is not to have all doubts solved, but to be sure of God.
 - E. In dealing with doubt God invites us to turn to Him and wait for His answer.
 - F. Remember these verses:

"Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith." —2:4.

"But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." —2:20.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." —2:14.

VI. Questions for Further Discussion.

- A. Have you ever asked Habakkuks' "Why?" Under what specific circumstances?**
- B. Are we to believe that God today punishes nations with other nations? Is it possible to predict God's alignment in present conflicts.**
- C. Does Habakkuk 2:20 teach what the song normally is used to teach? If not, what does it teach?**
- D. Is it sinful for man to ask questions?**
- E. What are the minimum conditions under which you would be willing to serve the Lord?**

LESSON ELEVEN

BOOK OF HAGGAI

- I. Date: 520 B. C. In second year of Darius from the last week of August to the 24th day of December.
 - A. Persian Kings
 1. Cyrus 559-529
 2. Cambyses 529-522
 3. Darius 521-486
 4. Xerxes 485-466
 5. Artaxerxes 465-425
 - B. Jewish Events
 1. First return under Zerubbabel and laying of foundation of Temple—536 B. C.
 2. Completion of Temple—516 B. C.
 3. Return under Ezrat to restore worship—458 B. C.
 4. Return of Nehemiah to rebuild the wall—445 B. C.
 5. Malachi's prophecy closes the Old Testament Canon —about 430 B. C.
- II. Outline of the Book
 - A. A message of rebuke—Chapter 1:1-11.
 - B. A message of accomplishment—Chapter 1:12-15.
 - C. A message of courage—Chapter 2:1-9.
 - D. A message of assurance—Chapter 2:10-23.
- III. Teaching of the Book
 - A. "Haggai was a man of one idea. From beginning to end he urged without conventional eloquence or poetic flights of the imagination but with simple and earnest words of warning, exhortation and promise, the speedy restoration of the Temple of Jehovah." —Eiselen, Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, Vol. II, P. 551.
 - B. Three great moral truths
 1. Faithfulness is directly connected with material prosperity.
 2. Discouragement, however profound, is not an adequate reason for neglecting duties, even when they seem to be encompassed with difficulty. "Be Strong and Work" is a glorious motto for human life.
 3. When a good work is awaiting its accomplishment, the time to do it is now.
 - C. The basis of all successful preaching: "Thus saith Jehovah." It moved people, stirred spirits, got results. Used in some form 26 times in 38 verses.
 - D. The contagious character of the sin of procrastination (Hag. 2:10-19). Teaches that while holiness is not contagious, unholiness is. A well man does not spread health; but a sick man may cough and impart disease. By indifference they had become unclean.
 - E. The eternal character of God's Kingdom—2:7-8; cf. Isa. 2:2-4; Ezekiel 40-48. Fulfilled in the church, Hebrews 12:18-29.
- IV. Practical lessons of permanent value.
 - A. A stern call to duty is a good tonic.
 - B. We are not to live in fine dwellings and allow God's work to lie in ruins.
 - C. How futile is human effort and endeavor when separated from spiritual emphasis.
 - D. The best test of oratory is found in whether or not the words stimulate action.
 - E. Outward splendor does not necessarily constitute true glory.

V. Questions for further discussion

- A. Can you find in the church today evidence of a spirit comparable to that faced by Haggai?
- B. What conditions did the returned exiles find in Jerusalem?
- C. What verses in Haggai do you find most challenging?
- D. What lessons relevant to our day can you see in Haggai's discussion of evil?
- E. What has Haggai to teach concerning ownership of the world's assets?

LESSON TWELVE

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

- I. Date: 520-516 B. C. See Haggai for background on the date.

- II. The outline of the Book.
 - A. The chosen people and the temple—Zechariah 1-8.
 1. Repent—1:1-6.
 2. Eight Night Visions—1:7 - 6 - 8.
 - a. The Angelic horsemen—1:7-17. God's eyes are on the wicked.
 - b. The four horns and the four smiths—1:18-21. God's hand will be on the wicked.
 - c. The measuring line—Chapter 2. God's loving protection available for his people.
 - d. Cleansing of Joshua, the High Priest—Chapter 3. God will cleanse and exalt his servants.
 - e. The golden candlesticks—Chapter 4. God will give his leaders authority equal to task.
 - f. The flying roll—5:1-4. The wicked people removed from glorified land.
 - g. The woman in the Ephah—5:5-11. Wickedness is carried away on divine wings.
 - h. The four chariots—6:1-8. God's administrative forces of righteousness.
 3. The crowning of Joshua, the High Priest—6:9-15.. Represents Jesus, the King—Priest.
 4. God wants righteousness not fasting—Chapters 7-8.
 - B. The Messiah and his kingdom—Zechariah 9-14
 1. The Messiah's advent—Chapter 9.
 2. Trust Jehovah to fulfill his word—Chapter 10.
 3. Jerusalem destroyed because of rejection of good shepard—Chapter 11.
 4. God will protect and glorify his people, the church—Chapter 12.
 5. God will smite his shepherd in order to save his people—Chapter 13.
 6. God's day of judgment for vengeance and salvation—Chapter 14.

- III. The Teaching of the Book
 - A. Pictures of the Christ
 1. The Messianic King—Chapter 9:9-10. Two new features are introduced: (1) "Having salvation", hence the savior and (2) "lowly", hence humble in spirit.
 2. The rejected shepherd—11:4-17; 13:7-9. Jesus is the good Shepherd (cf. Jn. 10) but the people, the Jews, rejected his leadership (John 19:15).
 3. The restored and penitent people—11:1-3; and much of the rest of the book.
 4. The divine sovereignty—Christ rules over all the earth—Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:8.
 - B. The King Cometh!
 1. Christ the branch—3:8
 2. Christ the servant—3:8
 3. Christ's triumphal entry on a colt—9:9
 4. Christ the good shepherd—9:16; 11:11
 5. Christ the smitten shepherd—13:7
 6. Christ betrayed for 30 pieces of silver—11:12, 13
 7. Christ's hands pierced—12:10
 8. Christ's People saved—12:12; 13:1
 9. Christ wounded in the house of the friends—13:6
 10. Christ will come in judgment upon Israel—Chapter 14.

- C. The blessings of the kingdom of Christ
 - 1. The extent of the kingdom—"All the earth"—14:9.
 - 2. Abundant material blessing—10:1.
 - 3. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit—12:10.
 - 4. Revelation of the "Pierced" Messiah—12:10; 13:7.
 - 5. Kingdom set up on earth—14:9-11.
 - 6. Gospel will go to the Jew first, then Gentile—12:7.
 - 7. Everything and everyone will be holy in the kingdom—14:20-21.
- IV. Practical lessons of permanent value
 - A. A high regard for God's purpose in the world.
 - B. The world-wide reach of God's kingdom—2:11; 6:15; 8:23; 14:16.
 - C. The eternal glory due the Messiah, Christ—2:10-11; 3:8-9; 6:12-13; 9:9-17; 11:4-14; 12:10; 14:8-9.
 - D. God does and always will rule—14:7-11.
 - E. It is important for Christians to maintain a hopeful, optimistic outlook—knowing they cannot fail.
- V. Topics for further discussion
 - A. Discuss the concept of peace described by Zechariah.
 - B. Discuss the good and bad in fasting as a religious practice.
 - C. List and discuss the major sins denounced by the prophet.
 - D. List and discuss the messianic prophecies found in the book.
 - E. Are there any new forces in the struggle between truth and error introduced in this book? If so, what are they? Discuss.

LESSON THIRTEEN

BOOK OF MALACHI

- I. Date: 445-432 B. C. Between the first and second visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Biblical background then is Ezra 7-10 and the book of Nehemiah.
- II. The Outline of the Book
 - A. Jehovah loves his people—1:1-5
 - B. Jehovah condemns the priest's faithlessness—1:6-29.
 - C. Jehovah condemns illegal marriages—2:10-16.
 - D. Jehovah condemns the people's indifference—3:17; 4:3.
 - E. Jehovah makes one last appeal to the law—4:4.
 - F. Jehovah points to Elijah to come—4:5-6.
- III. Teaching of the Book
 - A. Contrast between true and false priests.
 1. False priests
 - a. Despise God's name—1:6.
 - b. Offer polluted sacrifice—1:7—The blind, lame and sick.—1:8.
 - c. Cause many to stumble in the law—2:8.
 - d. Show respect of persons—2:9.
 2. True priests
 - a. Fear Jehovah—2:5.
 - b. Truth and righteousness on his lips—2:6a.
 - c. Walks in peace and uprightness—2:6b.
 - d. Turns many away from iniquity—2:6c.
 - e. Has knowledge of Jehovah—2:7.
 - B. The sins of the people
 1. Spiritless routine worship—1:6-8.
 2. Evil Associations—2:10-12.
 3. Questioning Jehovah's justice—2:17; 3:6.
 4. Robbing God—3:7-12.
 5. Impatience in waiting for God to act—3:17; 4:3.
 - C. What divorce is in God's eyes.
 1. Profanity of the covenant—2:10.
 2. Profanity of God's holiness—2:11.
 3. Cause on one's sacrifice to be rejected—2:13.
 4. Treachery against companion—2:14.
 5. Against purpose of the home—2:15.
 6. A thing that God hates—2:16a.
 7. Violence against the innocent—2:16b.
 8. Cause of being cut off by God—2:12.
- IV. Practical lessons of permanent value
 - A. God loves a pure, clean, happy home.
 - B. Divorce is an abomination in God's sight.
 - C. Insincerity in worship insults God.
 - D. One who sins willfully and wantonly cannot please God by an elaborate worship.
 - E. Our giving is a barometer that measures our spiritual temperature.
 - F. The people suffer when the preacher fails to study and teach all the truth.

- G. God still holds out the challenge to all his chosen ones to put him to the test to find the rich supply of blessing that are available.
- V. Topics for further discussion
 - A. What contribution has Malachi to make to the marriage-divorce question? Compare it with N. T. Teaching.
 - B. Are the offerings given to God today of better quality than in Malachi's day? Is robbery a common practice?
 - C. What lessons about religious leadership are to be learned from Malachi?
 - D. What suggestions about a Godly home may be drawn from Malachi?
 - E. Does Malachi say anything about religious indifference in addition to the other prophets?

THE 400 YEARS FROM MALACHI TO MATTHEW

Closing Thought of Old Testament: "Christ is coming." Opening point in New Testament: "Christ has come!" What happened in the intervening years to prepare the way for "the fulness of time."

- I. Notable Prophecies:
Genesis 3:15; 22:18; 49:10; Deut. 18:15; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 53:1-7; Isaiah 59:20; Daniel 2:44; Joel 2; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 13:1; Malachi 3 and 4.
- II. Notable Events:
 - A. Babylonian Captivity (Synagogues Facing Jerusalem; Dry Bones; David's Anointing).
 - B. Cyrus, Persian Emperor (Ezra, Nehemiah).
 - C. Esther Preserves Jewish Nation.
 - D. Mt. Gerizim (Samaritans-John 4).
 - E. Erection of GREAT LIBRARY in Alexandria.
 - F. Septuagint Version—280 B. C.
 - G. The Rule of Alexander the Great (334-323).
 - H. GREEK CULTURE PERVADES SOCIETY.
 - I. GRÆCIAN PHILOSOPHERS ("Hellenism").
 - J. "Abomination of Desolation" (Daniel 9; 168 B. C.; Destruction of Jerusalem 70 A. D.).
 - K. Rome Conquers in 146 B. C.
 - L. Rise of Jewish Sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Essenes, Zealots).
The Pharisees as "separated ones" opposed hellenism.
 - M. The Talmud and Tradition.
- III. Significant People:
 - A. Zoroaster
 - B. Buddha
 - C. Confucious
 - D. Socrates--Plato--Aristotle
 - E. Philip of Macedon
 - F. Alexander the Great
 - G. Philadelphus
 - H. Antiochus Epiphanes (Epimanes)
 - I. The Maccabees ("Hammer")
 - J. John Hyranus
 - K. Cato-Roman Senator
 - L. Epicurus
 - M. Zeno of Athens ("Stoa"-Porch)
 - N. The Caesars
 - O. The Herods
 - P. "Hasidim"—"the pious"—opposed combination of civil authority with priesthood.
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Quote from Seneca
 - B. Romans 1 for degeneracy of Gentiles.
 - C. Galatians 4 and 5 and Romans 10 for Decline of Jews.
 - D. The Universal Need for Christ—Romans 3:23; Gal. 4:4.
 - E. II Corinthians 9:15.