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AN OUTLINE STUDY GUIDE TO:
THE MINOR PROPHETS

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The Prophets -- Messengers of God

- I. Introduction.
 - A. Exploding from the pages of the Old Testament come the most powerful, colorful and courageous men since the days of Moses. 1. They were powerful in the spirit, passionate in delivery, fearless in their denunciation of the political, social, moral and religious corruption of the day.
 2. An understanding of the political, social, moral and religious corruption faced by the prophets of their day and the way they met those conditions will give courage to the Lord's faithful today.
 - B. It is therefore with the purpose in mind of learning more about God and His methods of dealing with His people in sin, and with sinful nations of the world, that we approach this study.

- II. Reasons for Study.
 - A. They picture the political, social, and religious conditions of the Old Testament period.
 - B. They throw light on our own day and our own situation by announcing the eternal principles of divine providence which will always operate whenever similar conditions are present.
 - C. We see the basic principles that God requires of men.
 - D. They help us have a deeper understanding of the New Testament.
 - E. They help us have a deeper faith in God and the scriptures as we see their prophecies fulfilled in Christ.
 - F. Much mis-understanding of message of prophets.

- III. What is a Prophet?
 - A. Terms used in the Bible referring to prophets.
 1. Ro'eh (seer) -- to see. Used 11 times in the Old Testament.
 2. Chozeh -- seeing or gazing. Used 22 times in the Old Testament.
 3. Nabhi -- to utter, proclaim, speak. Used 300 times in the Old Testament.
 4. Several words are used in the English Bible.
 - a. Man of God - I Samuel 9:6; I Kings 17:18.
 - b. Servant of God - I Chronicles 6:49; I Kings 18:36.
 - c. Messenger of Jehovah - Isaiah 42:19.
 - d. Watchman - Ezekiel 3:17.
 - B. Biblical meaning of term prophecy.
 1. Not limited to nor primarily with foretelling the future. The prophets are not to be used as a calendar to speculate concerning the future.
 2. Actually it means any message or instruction given by God to man through a representative of God, known as the prophet.
 3. Basically, the prophets were preachers or proclaimers of the word of the Lord. This might involve foretelling the future but not always.
 4. There is a difference between a prophet and a priest.
 - C. Characteristics of the prophets.
 1. "In both the Old and New Testaments, (a prophet) is one who, under

the influence of the Holy Spirit, speak the words and the thoughts of God, whether they relate to the past, to the present, or to the future." Milligan: Scheme of Redemption, p. 298.

2. "According to the uniform teaching of the Bible the prophet is a speaker of or for God. His words are not productions of his own spirit, but come from a higher source." I.S.B.E. cf. Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:2-3.
3. Reference to the scripture will give us a more satisfactory meaning: "It is stated, Exodus 7:1, that Aaron was to be Moses' prophet. In Exodus 4:16, it is said he should be 'thy spokesman,' 'a mouth.' Therefore the prophet was a 'spokesman,' a 'mouth'." Hailey, op. cit., p. 2.

- D. Purpose of prophecy.
 1. To call God's people back to a religious, moral, and spiritual condition from which they had fallen.
 2. To warn them of approaching calamity or punishment.
 3. To encourage and strengthen by giving promises of a better day.
 4. To direct the nation of Israel or other nations through sermons, personal advice, and divine revelation.
- E. Methods of revelation to the prophet - II Peter 1:20, 21.
 1. A vision.
 2. An open call by voice.
 3. Through a dream.
 4. Silent inspiration.

IV. Instructors in the Old Testament.

- A. Were at least five classes of speakers. cf. Jeremiah 18:18; Ezekiel 7:26. "The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet."
 1. Moses - law-giver. Only one law-giver. Nehemiah 8:1, 14; 9:13-14; John 1:7; 7:19.
 2. Wise-men who gave counsel. II Samuel 14:1-24; II Samuel 20:16-22; Solomon, Job, Proverbs.
 3. Priests, who taught the law. Leviticus 10:8-11; Hosea 4:6; Malachi 2:7.
- B. The prophets are generally divided into three groups - the early prophets, the major prophets and the minor prophets.
 1. The early prophets did not write down their message (except for Moses) but were as important as the later ones.
 2. One group was not more important than another.
 3. The major prophets are just longer than the minor prophets.

V. The list of Prophets.

- A. The early group.
 1. Moses 1447-1400 In Egypt and wilderness
 2. Samuel 1100- In Israel
 3. Elijah 870- In Israel
 4. Elisha 850- In Israel
- 2 -
- back to God
Leading people
Baalism
Warning against
Nation"
Teacher of the
God's law given

2. Size of response is not necessarily sign of success.
- a. Outward manifestations such as the size of the contribution and the number of members are held dear and are coveted as proof of his power.
- b. There is no room for compromise.

1. Must courageously preach God's message.
- a. "Characteristically, the sermons that the prophets preach are completely devoid of maudlin sentimentality or tear-jerking phrases."

- B. Lessons for us.
3. Not to cause civil revolt.
2. Not prediction of exact conditions of modern times; cars, space travel.
1. Not prediction of last time.
- A. Lessons not there.
- VII. Lessons for today from the Prophets.

E.	The post-exilic group.		1. Haggai	520-	In Jerusalem	Rebuilding temple
			2. Zechariah	520-	In Jerusalem	Rebuilding temple
			3. Malachi	435-	In Jerusalem	Final warning to Jews
D.	The exilic group.		1. Daniel		In Babylon	Universal sovereignty of God
			2. Obadiah	586-	In Jerusalem or Babylon	Edom
			3. Ezekiel	592-	In Babylon	Destruction and rebirth of Israel
C.	The seventh century group.		1. Zephaniah	630-622	In Jerusalem	Coming day of Jehovah
			2. Jeremiah	625-585	In Jerusalem and Egypt	Destruction of Jerusalem
			3. Nahum	625-612	In Jerusalem	Destruction of Nineveh
			4. Habakkuk	610-605	In Jerusalem	Both Judah and Babylon shall be punished
B.	The eighth century group.		1. Amos	760-	In Israel (Jereboam II)	Punishment of Israel
			2. Hosea	745-	In Israel	God's love for Israel
			3. Isaiah	740-698	In Jerusalem (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah)	The salvation of Israel
			4. Micah	735-	In Jerusalem	Punishment and future blessing of Israel

- b. It may never occur to many that the size of the membership may be due to the lack of prophetic preaching.
3. Must call a lost world to repentance.
4. Outward show in religion is not pleasing to God.
5. God must be placed first. cf. Matthew 6:33.

Joel, Preacher of Repentance

- I. The Man.
 - A. Very little is known about Joel.
 1. His name is a compound of two Hebrew names for God - Jehovah and El - and means Jehovah is God.
 2. He was the "son of Pethuel" (1:1) and prophesied in Judah and Jerusalem.
 3. He was probably a native of Jerusalem.
 4. It is possible that he was a priest, since he shows such an intimate knowledge of the Temple and its worship.
 - B. "As a preacher of repentance he takes high rank among the prophets of God." (Yates, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 193)
- II. The Times.
 - A. The time of the book of Joel is unknown but arguments have been made for both early and late dates.
 1. Arguments for early date.
 - a. The enemies dealt with in the book are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Edomites rather than those of a later period.
 - b. No reference is made to Assyria or Babylon.
 - c. Its position in the Hebrew canon between Hosea and Amos indicates that ancient tradition took it to be an early book.
 2. Arguments for late date.
 - a. The book differs in style from the early books.
 - b. The Northern kingdom is not mentioned and Judah is called Israel.
 - c. Elders and priests are the authorities in Jerusalem and no mention is made of a king.
 - d. The religious conditions of the early date are not reflected.
 - B. The people were faced with the most devastating plague of locusts the land had known.
 1. In addition a serious drought had completed the picture of devastation.
 2. The prophet uses this calamity as an opportunity to call the people to repentance. He wants the people to turn to God and give Him a chance to prove His love.
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is the coming day of Jehovah.
 - B. The purpose of the book.
 1. His purpose is to warn the people of the need for humility and repentance.
 2. He warns of the punishment coming upon the enemies of God.
 3. He speaks of the ultimate victory and glory of God's cause.
 - C. Outline.
 1. The plague of locusts: The sign of judgment - 1:1-2:11.
 2. A plea with the people: The call to repentance - 2:12-17.
 3. A glorious future: The vision of blessing - 2:18-3:21.
 - D. Theories of interpretation.
 1. Allegorical or figurative -- the locusts are symbols of the hostile armies of world powers that are to attack Israel in successive invasions.

2. Apocalyptic -- Joel uses the locusts as a device to give an accurate description of the last days when hosts of unearthly warriors shall come in battle array (cf. Revelation 9).
3. Historical -- the locusts are real and Joel simply uses them as a means to call the people to repentance. Surely this is the correct view.

E. Key verses.

1. 1:4, 14-16.
2. 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 25, 28-32.
3. 3:2, 14, 20, 21.

IV. Lessons for Today.

- A. Disasters can turn men to God and prepare their minds to hear Him.
- B. Judgment is inevitable. No one need hope he can escape.
- C. The character of the judgment day depends on the attitude we have. It may be a day of terror or a day of blessing.
- D. Genuine repentance gives God an opportunity to send blessings instead of calamities.
- E. True repentance is seen in a change of heart. 2:13.

Jonah, the Reluctant Preacher

- I. The Man.
 - A. He was a native of the northern kingdom from Gath-hepher in Zebulun about four miles north of Nazareth.
 1. He was the son of Amittai.
 2. His name means "dove."
 3. He was an advisor to Jeroboam II. (II Kings 14:25.)
 4. He lived around 800-780 B.C.
 - B. He was a man whose patriotism exceeded his spirituality.
 1. "He was not a coward but a willful, strong, impulsive prophet who could not afford to let God make a serious mistake." (Yater, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 187)
 2. He is the only minor prophet in whose career the miraculous plays a prominent role and the only one whose major activity is on foreign soil.
 - C. He is the only minor prophet mentioned by Jesus and is the only Old Testament character likened by the Lord to himself. (Matthew 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32.)
- II. The Times.
 - A. Jeroboam II extended the borders of the kingdom from Hamath to the Dead Sea, an area larger than at any time since the days of Solomon.
 1. It was a time of ease and prosperity in both Israel and Judah.
 2. There was unparalleled success and luxury.
 3. A selfish, narrow nationalism had developed that caused Israel not to think on friendly terms with any of her neighbors.
 - B. Assyria, in the east, was becoming increasingly powerful with Nineveh as its capital.
 1. Adad-Nirari IV of Assyria made three trips to Palestine to keep his subjects in line but did not molest Jeroboam.
 2. Nineveh was becoming a world power and was noted for her wickedness.
 - a. Zephaniah wrote of Nineveh: "These were the people who said, there is none besides us. . . they dwell carelessly." (Zephaniah 2:15.)
 - b. One hundred thirty-five years later Nineveh fell because of sin. (Nahum 1-3.)
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is the destruction of Nineveh.
 - B. The purpose of the book.
 1. It shows God's willingness to save even the heathen nations if they repent.
 2. It is unique in that it tells the story about a prophet rather than being a collection of speeches made by the prophet.
 - C. Outline.
 1. Jonah's disobedience: running from God - 1.
 2. Jonah's prayer: running to God - 2.

3. Jonah's repentance: running with God - 3.
4. Jonah's complaint: running ahead of God - 4.
- D. Theories of interpretation.
 1. Mythical -- it is a myth with an imaginary person and an imaginary experience.
 2. Allegorical -- Jonah is a type of Israel and the fish represents Israel's captivity.
 3. Historical -- it occurred just as it is recorded.
 - a. It was held to be so by both Jews and Christians until only a little over one hundred years ago.
 - b. Jesus refers to it as historical. Matthew 12:40.
 - c. One of the best defenses of it being historical is in Jesus and Jonah by J. W. McGarvey (reprint, Murfreesboro, Tenn: Dehoff, 1952).
- E. Key verses.
 1. 1:2, 3, 12, 17.
 2. 2:2, 5, 10.
 3. 3:3, 5, 10.
 4. 4:1, 9-11.
- IV. Lessons for Today.
 - A. One cannot run away from God. (cf. Psalms 139:7-11.)
 - B. God is concerned for all men.
 - C. It is easier to do God's bidding than to try to run away. (Proverbs 13:15.)
 - D. God is merciful when men repent.
 - E. The path of self-will always leads to trouble.
 - F. God means what He says.

Amos, The Country Prophet

- I. The Man.
 - A. Amos was from Tekoa, a small village about twelve miles south of Jerusalem.
 1. His name means "burden" or "burden-bearer."
 2. He was contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea and Micah.
 3. His prophecy was around 760-750 B. C.
 - B. He was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees.
 1. The word used to describe him indicates he was a herdsman of an ugly type of sheep which was noted for its fine wool.
 2. The sycamore trees which he tended produced a kind of fruit that had to be pierced in order to ripen.
 3. He seems to have been from a poor, rustic background.
 4. His employment would indicate that he was a poor but patient man.
 - C. He did most, if not all, of his preaching in the Northern Kingdom though he was from the South.
- II. The Times.
 - A. Political conditions.
 1. It was during the reign of Jeroboam II in the North and Uzziah in the South.
 2. Both of these kings had been successful in bringing peace and prosperity to their kingdoms.
 3. Assyria was growing in power but had not yet extended her control over these countries and the surrounding nations were not strong enough to give them trouble.
 - B. Social conditions.
 1. It was a time of great prosperity and wealth.
 2. The ease and extravagance of the wealthy contrasted with the misery and suffering of the poorer people who could not afford the bare necessities.
 3. There was much dishonest gain, injustice and oppression.
 4. Judges, government officials, and priests were corrupt: Might had become right.
 - C. Religious conditions.
 1. The people were outwardly religious but it was mostly show.
 2. There was elaborate ceremony but little feeling.
 3. Immorality was everywhere, the righteous were hated and oppressed and there was much insincerity and superstition.
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is the punishment of Israel.
 - B. The purpose of the book.
 1. The purpose of the book was to show that Israel would certainly be destroyed if she didn't repent.
 2. It pointed out that a remnant will be saved.

- IV. Lessons For Today.
- A. God holds those most responsible whom He blesses greatest. 3:2; Luke 12:48.
 - B. God sends warnings to man to lead to repentance. 4:6-12; Psalms 119:67, 71; Luke 13:1-5; Revelation 9:20-21.
 - C. Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society.
 - D. Life without concern for spiritual is wasted. 6:1-6.
 - E. Spiritual neglect leads to spiritual famine. 8:11; II Thessalonians 2:11.
 - F. The most elaborate worship is but an insult, when one is insincere. 5:21-24; Jeremiah 7:4.

- C. Outline.
- 1. Judgment against the nations for their sins - 1-2.
- 2. Israel's crimes and her condemnation - 3-6.
- 3. Five visions of coming judgment - 7:1-9:10.
- 4. Promise of a bright future - 9:11-15.
- D. Key verses.
- 1. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13.
- 2. 2:1, 4, 6.
- 3. 3:2, 3, 4, 8, 12.
- 4. 4:1, 4, 6-12.
- 5. 5:15, 18, 19, 21, 24.
- 6. 6:1-6.
- 7. 7:4, 7, 14-15.
- 8. 8:1, 11.
- 9. 9:11.

Hosea, the Prophet of Love

- I. The Man.
 - A. He seems to have been a native of the Northern Kingdom.
 1. His name means "deliverance" or "salvation."
 2. He was the son of Beeri.
 3. He prophesied during the times of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in the South and Jeroboam II in the North.
 4. His prophecy was probably sometime after 746 B.C.
 5. He was contemporary with Amos, Isaiah and Micah.
 - B. He married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim.
 1. Their first son was Jezreel (God sows or punishes).
 2. Next was born a daughter, Loruhamah (not favored or unpitied).
 3. Third was a son, Loammī (not my people).
 - C. Hosea seems to have been a sensitive young man who came to appreciate the great love of God from the things that happened in his own life.
- II. The Times.
 - A. Hosea preached in the Northern Kingdom a little later than Amos.
 - (cf. under Amos)
 1. Amos had watched the ease-loving people loll in idleness and luxury.
 2. Hosea saw those same people hardened and made criminal by the conditions around them.
 3. Bloodshed, robbery, murder and organized vice were visible on every hand.
 - B. Assyria was becoming more powerful and under Tiglath-Pileser, more menacing.
 - C. Religiously, the people were ignorant of God's laws and didn't care.
 - D. Morally, they were the very opposite to what God desired.
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is God's love for Israel and is expressed in the words "Return unto the Lord." (6:1)
 - B. Purpose.
 1. To show God's love.
 2. To plead for a return to God.
 3. To warn that Israel will be cut off if she does not repent.
 - C. Outline.
 1. Hosea's domestic life as a symbol of Divine love for Israel - 1-3.
 2. Israel's guilt - 4-8.
 3. Israel's punishment - 9-13.
 4. Repentance will bring a brighter future - 14.
 - D. Key verses.
 1. 1:2.
 2. 2:5, 8, 14, 19, 20.
 3. 3:2.
 4. 4:1, 6, 9, 17.

5. 5:4.
6. 6:4-6.
7. 7:8-9, 11.
8. 8:3, 7.
9. 9:10.
10. 10:12.
11. 11:1, 4, 7.
12. 12:1.
13. 13:2, 9.
14. 14:1, 9.

IV. Lessons For Today.

- A. The road to ruin is progressive.
1. Lack of knowledge - 4:6, 11. cf. John 5:39.
2. Pride - 5:5.
3. Instability - 6:4.
4. Worldliness - 7:8.
5. Corruption - 9:9.
6. Backsliding - 11:7.
7. Idolatry - 13:2.
- B. Nothing can quench God's love.
- C. Genuine repentance will bring forgiveness and full restoration to God's favor.
- D. Inward corruption in a nation is more dangerous to its existence than external enemies. cf. 13:9.
- E. God suffers intense pain when men desert Him.

Micah, the Champion of the Downtrodden

I. The Man.

- A. His name means "who is like Jehovah?"
- B. His background.

1. He was a native of Moresheth-Gath, a small village near the Philistine border about 20 miles from Jerusalem.
2. The great international highway from Assyria to Egypt ran through the area.
3. He has been referred to as a country prophet or farmer-prophet.

- C. He prophesied around 738-698 B. C.
1. He was contemporary with Isaiah in the south and Amos and Hosea in the north.
2. He has been called a champion of the poor.

II. The Times.

- A. Though it was a prosperous time from several standpoints, it was also a period of turmoil, strife, change and growth.
- B. Assyria was becoming an increasing menace and when Sargon II came to power he destroyed Samaria in 722 B. C. Next the Assyrians turned toward Jerusalem and the city was spared only when God sent the destroying angel to smite the Assyrian army - II Kings 19:35ff.

- C. Things were at a low ebb morally and socially.
1. The greed of the nobles, building up estates by ejecting small land-owners (2:1-2); widows and orphans were robbed and plundered (2:9); creditors were without mercy (3:10); and greed knew no limits.
2. Judges were corrupt, the priests were immoral and corrupt and the prophets were hirelings.
- D. Religion had become a matter of form. The people didn't want any preaching done except the weak, insipid variety that would allow them to go their way without embarrassment.

III. The Book.

- A. The purpose is to expose Israel's and Judah's sin. He shows that sin will be punished but a glorious future awaits the faithful.
- B. Outline.
1. Denunciation of Israel and Judah - 1-2.
2. Contrast between present devastation and coming exaltation - 3-5.
3. The Lord's controversy - 6-7.

- C. Key verses.
1. 1:2, 9.
2. 2:1, 11.
3. 3:1, 2, 11, 12.
4. 4:1-3, 10.
5. 5:2.
6. 6:2, 6-8.
7. 7:18.

- IV. Lessons for Us.
- A. Elaborate display of piety and generous gifts cannot take the place of righteous living and obedience from the heart. I Corinthians 13:1ff.
 - B. The unscrupulous use of power, even within the letter of the law, hurts the heart of God. cf. I Corinthians 6:1ff.
 - C. Courage comes to those who look to God rather than their fellowmen.
 - D. People are seldom better than those who lead them.
 - E. God's purpose will triumph in the end.

Zephaniah, the Preacher of Doom

- I. The Man.
 - A. His name means "Jehovah hides."
 - B. He was apparently a great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, the king. ch. 1:1.
 - C. He was probably from Jerusalem or nearby.
 - D. He prophesied in the reign of Josiah (640-609 B.C.).
 1. "The prophet's activity may be placed between 630-625, perhaps in 626. If this date is correct, Zephaniah and Jeremiah began their ministries in the same year." (Eislen, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 3144.)
 2. He was not only contemporary with Jeremiah but probably also with Nahum, Huldah, and Habakkuk.
 - E. "He was a flaming evangelist who spoke with fury and effectiveness a burning message of rebuke to a people who were rapidly losing all power to respond to such serious challenges." (Yates, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 166.)
- II. The Times.
 - A. Political background.
 1. Through the reigns of Manasseh and Amon wickedness had increased in Judah (cf. II Chronicles 33:1-9; II Kings 21:10-16).
 2. Though Josiah attempted to bring about a reform with the help of men like Jeremiah and Zephaniah it was too late and could not turn the nation completely back to God.
 3. It had been about 100 years since the northern kingdom of Israel had been carried away by Assyria.
 - a. Now Assyria has declined in power and when Assurbanipal died in 626 B.C. the death knell of the country was sounded.
 - b. Babylon was growing in power and under Nabopolassar was able to gain supremacy in the East.
 - B. Religious and moral background.
 1. Josiah's reform seems to have mostly reached only the surface.
 2. Social injustice and moral corruption was widespread.
 3. The fashions, practices, worship, and morals were "like the nations around them."
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is the coming day of Jehovah.
 - B. The purpose is to warn of the coming day of wrath and destruction for all who have sinned against God.
 - C. Outline.
 1. The judgment of Jerusalem and Judah -- 1.
 2. The judgment of surrounding nations -- 2:1-3:7.
 3. The righteous remnant shall be delivered -- 3:8-20.
 - D. Key verses.

1. 1:4-6, 7, 12, 14-15, 18.
2. 2:1-3.
3. 3:2, 7, 9, 11-13, 15.

IV. Lessons For Today.

- A. The Day of the Lord is a day of terror and doom to those who disregard the way of God.
- B. The Day of the Lord is inevitable for all men of every race.
- C. A man's belief about God largely determines his conduct.
- D. Those who humble themselves and seek the Lord will be safe in the day of destruction.
- E. The promise that joy will displace mourning and tranquility will follow the storm should bring joy to sorrowing hearts.

Nahum, Prophet of God's Vengeance

- I. The Man.
 - A. His name means "comforter" or "consoler."
 - B. He tells us he is an Elkoshite, but no one knows where that was.
 1. Jerome claimed he was a native of Galilee living near what was later to become Capernaum ("village of Nahum").
 2. Others have located it in Judah near Eleutheropolis, 20 miles S. W. of Jerusalem.
- C. Other than these things little is known about Nahum.
 1. From the book we can gather that he was a patriotic man who had a deep dislike for the Assyrians.
 2. "For sheer beauty, poetic imagery, dramatic description and vivid imagination Nahum is unsurpassed among the prophets." (Yates, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 159).
- D. The dates for the prophecy is apparently some time just before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B. C. It is after the fall of Thebes about 663 B. C. (Nahum 3:8). Probably it was not written before 630 B. C.
- E. He may have been contemporary with Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

II. The Times.

- A. The Assyrian empire is in its glory.
 1. Nineveh, founded by Nimrod, had been famous for centuries.
 - a. Its walls were one hundred feet high, seven and one-half miles in circumference, and wide enough for three chariots to drive abreast.
 - b. Its final destruction in 612 B. C. was so complete that Alexander the Great did not notice the site in 331 B. C. and the ruins were not discovered until 1842.
2. Assyria was a nation largely geared for aggressive war.
 - a. Its atrocities were proverbial as the records and art left by its kings make clear.
 - b. Though it could conquer the world, it was unable to rule it.
 - c. The Assyrians saw men and nations as tools to be exploited to gratify the lust of conquest and commercialism.
3. Assyrian kings of this period.
 - a. Tiglath-Pileser III, 747-727 B. C. Deported some of the Northern inhabitants of Israel.
 - b. Shalmaneser V, 727-722 B. C.
 - c. Sargon II, 722-705 B. C. Destroyed Samaria.
 - d. Sennacherib, 705-681 B. C. Surrounded Jerusalem but was driven off by God. Was murdered by his two sons, who were driven out by a younger son.
 - e. Esarhaddon, 681-668 B. C.
 - f. Assur-bani-pal, 668-625 B. C.
 - g. Assur-til-lani, 625-620? B. C.
 - h. Sin-sar-uskin (Esarhaddon II), 620?-612 B. C. When Nineveh was besieged by the Medes and Babylonians, he, his wives, and chil-

- dren and their wealth were gathered in the palace and they were burned to death when it was set on fire.
- B. Only the Southern kingdom of Judah remained.
1. Josiah attempted to bring about a reform with the help of Huldah and perhaps Jeremiah.
2. The reformation lacked spiritual depth but it did bring about a new emphasis on God's law.

III. The Book.

- A. The theme of the book is the destruction of Nineveh.
- B. The purpose.
1. The purpose of the book is to show that wicked Nineveh will be overthrown.
- C. Outline.
1. The judgment of Nineveh declared - 1.
2. The judgment of Nineveh described - 2.
3. The judgment of Nineveh defended - 3.
- D. Key verses.
1. 1:2, 3, 7, 8, 15.
2. 2:13.
3. 3:19.

IV. Lessons For Today.

- A. There is a limit to the patience of God.
- B. God rules in the kingdoms of men.
- C. The wages of sin is destruction.
- D. The arrogance that indulges in senseless destruction of life and property angers God.

Habakkuk, The Questioning Prophet

- I. The Man.
 - A. His name means "to embrace."
 - B. Practically nothing is known about the prophet.
 1. He described himself as "the prophet." 1:1
 2. Some think he may have been from the tribe of Levi.
 3. In rabbinic tradition he is made to be the son of the Shunammite woman and is said to have fled to Egypt after Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem.
 4. In the Apocryphal book Bel and the Dragon a fanciful story says he was carried by the hair of his head by an angel to Babylon to supply Daniel with pottage when the latter is in the lion's den.
 - C. Unlike the other prophets who represented God to the people, Habakkuk was a spokesman for the people to God.
 - D. He was probably a contemporary with Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Nahum and likely can be dated around 612-606 B. C.
- II. The Times.
 - A. The Assyrian sun had set just a few years prior to the prophet's message and now the world was looking upon the new terror of the Chaldeans, "that bitter and hasty nation."
 1. Nineveh fell in 612 B. C.
 2. Habakkuk probably wrote before the actual victory of Babylon over Jerusalem in 605 B. C.
 - B. The prophet had witnessed the reformation under Joseph and then the slide into apostasy.
 1. The people of Judah were enmeshed in violence and idolatry.
 2. Men raised up strife and contention (1:1), oppressed righteous people (1:2, 13), lived in open sin (2:4, 5, 15, 16), worshiped idols (2:18, 19) and oppressed the poor and the defenseless (1:4, 14, 15).
 - C. Habakkuk can see that such wickedness should be punished but could not understand why a nation more wicked should be the instrument.
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is that both Judah and Babylon shall be punished.
 - B. The purpose of the book is to state Habakkuk's complaint to God.
 1. He arranges his book in the form of a dramatic dialogue between the Lord and himself.
 2. This is followed by a series of woes against the Chaldeans and a beautiful poem expressing confidence in the God of his salvation.
 3. He concludes that "the just shall live by faith." 2:4
 - C. Outline.
 1. The prophet's complaint -- 1:1-2:20.

- a. The first complaint -- 1:1-4.
- b. God's answer -- 1:5-11.
- c. The second complaint -- 1:12-2:1.
- d. God's answer -- 2:2-20.
2. The prophet's prayer -- 3.
- D. Key verses.
1. 1:3, 4, 12, 13.
2. 2:4, 14, 20.
3. 3:17-19.

- IV. Lessons For Today.
- A. Evil is self-destructive. Tyranny carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. Galatians 6:7.
- B. The Lord disciplines him whom He loves.
- C. The just shall live by faith.
- D. In every crisis God can be trusted.

- I. The Man.
 - A. His name means "servant of Jehovah."
 - B. Nothing is known about the prophet.
 1. Though there are 13 men with this name in the Old Testament, there is no valid reason that can be given to identify the prophet with any of them.
 2. Three of these men have been suggested as the prophet.
 - a. The Talmud suggests that the prophet is the same as Ahab's servant (I Kings 18:3f).
 - b. Pseudo-Euphrasius identifies him with Ahaziah's captain (II Kings 1:13-15).
 - c. Others have suggested he was the same as Jehoshaphat's servant (II Chronicles 17:7).
 - d. Probably it was none of these.
 3. We can't even determine for sure the date of the prophet.
 - a. Guesses have ranged from 850 B. C. down to 312 B. C.
 - b. The list of attacks on Judah which could be referred to by the prophet can be narrowed down to two: The days of Jehoram when the Arabians attacked the city (around 848-844, see II Chronicles 21:8-10, 16-17); or the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans in 586.
 - c. The most likely date would seem to be the one in 586.
 - "We know from the temper of the book that he was a pious, patriotic, sensitive resident of Judah who dared put into words something of the flaming indignation of his soul." (Yates, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 170)
- II. The Times.
 - A. The Edomites have plundered the Jews at a time when they are having trouble from other sources, having forgotten that they are brethren.
 - B. Because of their heartlessness and pride God will destroy them.
- III. The Book.
 - A. The theme of the book is the utter destruction of Edom.
 - B. The purpose of the book is to show that nothing can save them from God's wrath.
 - C. Outline.
 1. Edom will be destroyed -- 1:1-9.
 2. The reasons for Edom's destruction -- 1:10-14.
 3. Israel will be restored and blessed -- 1:15-21.
 - D. Key verses: 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 17.
- IV. Lessons For Today.
 - A. Human defenses are utterly useless against the power of God.
 - B. "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

- C. It is wrong to rejoice in the calamity of another and to gloat over his misfortune.
- D. The callous indifference of the person who stands aloof in the hour of distress and calamity of someone else is wrong.

Haggai, the Mover of a Nation

I.

The Man.

- A. His name means "festive or happy one."
- B. Nothing is known about the prophet other than what we learn from the book and from Ezra 5:1 and 6:14.
1. It has been suggested that he was an older man who had endured the Babylonian captivity from his statement in 2:3.
2. He was contemporary with Zechariah.
3. His messages were delivered over a period of four months during the second year of King Darius of Persia in 520 B. C.
- C. "Haggai was a man of one idea. From beginning to end he urged, without conventional eloquence or poetic flights of imagination, but with simple and earnest words of warning, exhortation, and promise, the speedy restoration of the Temple of Yahweh." (Eiselen, Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, Vol. II, p. 551.)

II.

The Times.

- A. A number of Jews had returned from Babylonian captivity under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, in 536 B. C.
1. They started to rebuild the temple by laying the foundation but then were stopped by their enemies. Ezekiel 4.
2. Nothing was done for almost 10 years.
3. Haggai and Zechariah were called by God to encourage the people to finish the work they had begun.
4. As a result of their encouragement the work was completed in four years -- 520-516 B. C.

III.

The Book.

- A. The theme of the book is the rebuilding of the temple.
- B. The purpose of the book is to encourage the people to get busy rebuilding God's house.
- C. Outline.
1. Rebuke and call to action -- 1:1-15.
2. The future glory of God's house -- 2:1-9.
3. The completion of the temple is a guarantee of new blessings -- 2:10-19.
4. Zerubbabel promised God's guidance and protection against the heathen kingdoms -- 2:20-23.
- D. Key verses.
1. 1:2, 4, 5, 6, 9.
2. 2:3, 9, 13, 14, 17.

IV.

Lessons for Today.

- A. When our own affairs crowd out God's then we've been away from God too long.

- B. Sin is contagious but holiness is not. A well man does not spread health; but a sick man may impart disease. 2:10-19.
- C. God can cause the ordinary to become glorious. Outward splendor does not necessarily mean true glory. 2:9.
- D. God blesses those who place Him first. 1:6ff; Matthew 6:33; Malachi 3:10.
- E. Reasons for 16 years of failure.
1. Easier to promise than to do. Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5.
 2. Materialism. 1:6.
 3. Defeatism -- "can't make it as pretty as the first temple anyway."
 4. Procrastination.

Zechariah, Encourager of God's People

I.

The Man.

A. His name means "whom Jehovah remembers."

B. He is the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.

1. This Iddo may possibly be the Iddo mentioned in Nehemiah 12:4, 16 who was a priest.

2. Zechariah is listed among the priests who made the journey from Babylon under Zerubbabel. Nehemiah 12:16.

C. He is contemporary with Haggai and apparently they worked together. He began his prophecy two months later than Haggai and seemed

to give the enthusiasm to keep the work moving forward.

2. His preaching lasted about 2 years, from 520-518 B. C.

D. A Zechariah, son of Berechiah is mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 23:35 as being martyred, but scholars generally think this is not the same as the author of this book since there is no evidence or tradition that this prophet suffered martyrdom.

E. "He does not rebuke or condemn or berate the people. With striking colors and vivid imagination he paints glowing pictures of the presence of God to strengthen and help." (Yates, Preaching From The Prophets, p. 206.)

II.

The Times.

A. The background for the book is the same as for Haggai.

B. Though Haggai had encouraged the Jewish people to start rebuilding the temple it was easy for them to become discouraged and quit.

C. Zechariah was just the voice needed to lift them into the kind of enthusiasm that would keep them working and get the job finished in

516 B. C.

D. The date of the prophecy is 520-516 B. C.

III.

The Book.

A. The theme of the book is the restoration of God's people.

B. The purpose.

1. The first purpose is to encourage the rebuilding of the temple.

2. The prophet also encourages the people regarding the future.

C. Outline.

1. Three prophecies -- 1-8.

a. Introduction -- 1:1-6.

b. Eight visions -- 1:7-6:8.

1) Divine horses (God's messengers) -- 1:7-17.

2) Four horns (nations opposed to Israel) -- 1:18-21.

3) The New Jerusalem to be unlimited -- 2.

4) The high priest, Joshua, accused by Satan, but acquitted -- 3.

5) Golden candlestick, olive trees, symbolize the new community -- 4.

6) The curse of crime upon the criminal -- 5:1-4.

- 7) The measure of Israel's guilt -- 5:5-11.
- 8) God's judgment executed in the different quarters of the earth -- 6:1-8.
- 9) Crowning of Joshua -- 6:9-15.

c. An oracle of Zechariah -- 7-8.

1) The question of fasting.

2) The future hope.

2. Two prophecies -- 9-14.

a. Oracle of promise to the new theocracy -- 9-11.

1) Victory over hostile powers; Israel restored -- 9.

2) Israel strengthened -- 10.

3) Israel punished for rejection of God's guidance -- 11.

b. Oracle of victories of the New Theocracy -- 12-14.

1) Jerusalem, besieged, to be saved by God -- 12.

2) A remnant of Israel purified, saved -- 13.

3) Apocalyptic vision of judgment, glory of Zion -- 14.

D. Key verses.

1. 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 18.

2. 2:1, 4.

3. 3:1, 8.

4. 4:2, 6, 9, 10, 14.

5. 5:1.

6. 6:1-5, 12, 13.

7. 7:3, 5, 9, 10, 13.

8. 8:16, 19, 23.

9. 9:8, 9.

10. 10:3, 12.

11. 11:7, 12, 16.

12. 12:1, 10.

13. 13:1.

14. 14:20.

IV. Lessons for Today.

A. Great preaching can restore drooping faith.

B. The true glory of a city is to be found in its devotion to God.

C. God wants faithful leaders to tend his flock.

D. It is important for God's followers to maintain a hopeful, optimistic outlook, knowing that He cannot fail.

E. We should not despise the day of small things -- 4:10.

F. God plus one makes a majority -- 4:6.

Malachi, the Messenger of God

I.

The Man.

- A. The name Malachi means "my messenger."
1. Many think that Malachi was not his name but rather should just be translated messenger.
2. The Septuagint does so translate it in Malachi 1:1 but retains the title Malachias at the beginning.
3. The Targum, as well as Jerome, assigned the book to Ezra but by the second century Malachi was regarded as a proper name.
- B. Very little is known about the prophet.
1. He was apparently contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah.
2. This would make his dates around 445-432 B. C.

C.

- "His style is that of the scribes. It is known as the didactic-dialectic method, consisting first of an assertion or charge then a fancied objection raised by his hearers, and finally the prophet's refutation of their objection." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, "Malachi" p. 1970)
- D. In dynamic fashion he rebels against the cold, formal, external type of religion that masquerades under the name of genuine and does his best to bring the people back to the spiritual concept of worship which God wants.

II.

The Times.

- A. The temple had finally been rebuilt in 516 B. C. at the urging of Haggai and Zechariah.
- B. In 457 B. C. Ezra came from Babylon to help re-organize and re-establish the nation and its worship.
- C. In 444 B. C. Nehemiah came to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
1. By this time the Jews have been back from captivity about 100 years.
2. They have become lax in their devotion to God.
3. Though they have been cured of idolatry forever, they have become steeped in formalism.
4. The priests were corrupt and immoral and the people had become cynical and godless.
- D. It was the "Golden Age" of ancient Greece and Rome was gradually coming onto the scene.

III.

The Book.

- A. The theme of the book is God wants true worship.
- B. The purpose of the book is to give a final Old Testament warning to the Jews.
- C. Outline.
1. God's love for Israel -- 1:1-5.
2. Condemnation of unfaithful priests -- 1:6-2:9.
3. Condemnation of mixed marriages and divorce -- 2:10-16.
4. Condemnation of religious indifference and skepticism -- 2:17-4:3.
5. Closing admonitions -- 4:4-6.

- D. Key verses.
1. 1:2, 6-8, 12, 13.
2. 2:1, 8, 11, 14-16, 17.
3. 3:1, 7-10, 13-14, 16, 17.
4. 4:2, 4, 5.
- IV. Lessons For Today.
- A. God will not accept the leavings - 1:8, 12-13; 3:8-10.
B. Insincere and ritualistic worship is not acceptable - 1:14.
C. God hates divorce - 2:16.
D. We may rob God - 3:8.
E. As the priests, so the people - 2:8.
F. Each must determine for himself whether the day of the Lord is to be a day of terror or a day of joy - 3:16-4:2.

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