

PROPHETIC LITERATURE

OF

THE OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF
THE BOOKS OF PROPHECY

BY
FRANK BRISCOE

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**INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF
THE BOOKS OF PROPHECY
ISAIAH through MALACHI**

**WITH SELECTED ARTICLES ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS PERTAINING
TO THE PROPHETS**

By

Frank Briscoe

THE PREACHER NEEDS TO KNOW THE OLD TESTAMENT*

By Jack P. Lewis

A church cut loose from the Old Testament is a tree with its tap root cut. God's revelation is a revelation through the means of history; it is not a revelation of timeless truths alone. In the Old Testament the problems are set which are resolved in the New Testament; namely, the fall of man, sin, and redemption. Only in terms of the Old Testament can it be understood what God accomplished in the sending of his son into the world. Were the echoes and allusions to the Old Testament cut out of the New Testament, the blanks would leave the remainder too spotty to read. The New Testament writers assumed that the reader would have sufficient knowledge of the Old Testament to grasp immediately the allusions made to it. Concepts like covenant, messiah, atonement, Son of Man, Son of David, chosen race, pastor, and others, have no clear meaning apart from their Old Testament background. An abundance of lesser concepts also have their roots there.

The moral lessons of the Old Testament are eternal in their value. There one can see clothed in human form the warnings and the precepts elsewhere taught. He meets Cain asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?", Lot pitching his tent toward Sodom, Potiphar's wife chasing Joseph, Baalam loving the hire of wrongdoing. David committing adultery with his neighbor's wife. Solomon climbing the ladder of success until his heart is turned from God, and Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard. But he also meets Abraham leaving his father's house to talk by faith. Moses turning his back on Egypt's riches. Elijah defying Jezebel, Micaiah ben Imlah choosing bread and water as fare in preference to reward for flattering the king, and Daniel's refusing the king's dainties. The man who does not regularly draw from the riches of the Old Testament has impoverished his preaching. How much richer are the treasures here to be found than are the platitudes of psychology and sociology! Let us not forsake the fountain of living waters and turn to broken cisterns that can hold no water (cf. Jer. 2:13).

In the Old Testament one sees how God in order to save the world chose one family, nurtured, protected, and favored it in order that he might finally save those of faith of the entire human race. The Stoics thought of history moving in circles; Shakespeare speaks of life as being a stage full of sound and fury, but meaning nothing; but history in the Old Testament has meaning. God is working out a plan. The world is moving steadily and inevitable to a goal — its destiny with God.

The outpouring of the religious impulse revealed in the Psalms is priceless. Here in lyric poetry is laid bare the longings of the soul. Man has never more forcefully stated the torment of the guilty conscience and the relief brought by genuine repentance than is done in Psalms 51 and 32; awareness of the brevity of life than in Psalm 110; and the beauty of harmony than in Psalm 133. The mold broke when the Psalmists expressed trust in God in words of Psalm 23. None has ever been able to express it that way again. As long as men wander like sheep and find in God their shepherd it will

have an appeal. Compared with these and other Old Testament treasures rock poetry and music are poor indeed! Long after they have been forgotten as passing human curiosities, men who put forth the effort to know them will still be thrilling to the themes of the Psalms.

The Hebrew prophets when persistently studied contain rich veins of ore out of which the diligent preacher can mine gold week after week, year after year. Where in all literature could you surpass the convicting power of Nathan's story of the one lamb; Isaiah's song of the vineyard, or Jeremiah's story of the potter remaking the broken clay into another vessel? Who has surpassed Amos' description of opportunity and responsibility (Amos 3:1); Micah's summary of the essence of God's demands (Micah 6:8); Hosea's picture of the love of God (Hosea 11:1ff); Zephaniah's picture of the Day of the Lord (Zeph. 1:14ff.); or Habakkuk's statement of unconditional faith (Hab. 3:17)? The prophets do not yield gold easily. It takes diligent digging, but the reward is high. I have listened to men try to preach who took their themes from children's books or from current magazines. My heart saddened for it seemed to me that they had traded their birthright for a mess of pottage.

A popular concept in the study of Old Testament theology is that of recital. The Old Testament is not merely the narration of stories or the narration of ancient history. Its narratives are a recital or a confession of faith. Perhaps we meet this concept in action in the frequent Old Testament introduction, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." I believe in the God who created man, brought the flood, chose Israel and gave her the land of Palestine. I believe in the God who raised David to the throne, took Israel to Babylon, and then in a unique act restored her to her land. He is the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God I serve.

*Selected and Adapted from: Essays, Outlines and Collected Notes on Prophetic Literature. By F. Furman Kearley, 1983.

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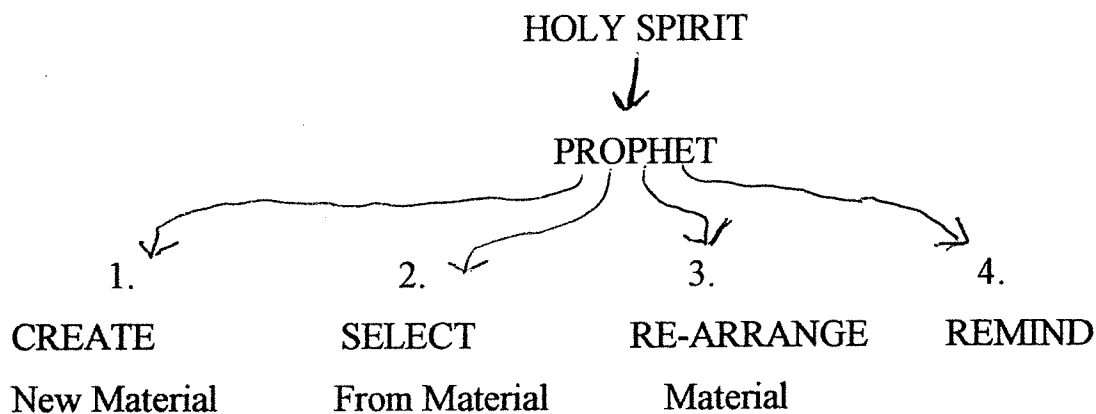
HOW THE PROPHETS SPOKE

In what sense are the words of the prophets the Word of God? We must remember that the Bible was not just dropped down to us from God, but that the Word of God has come to man through the words of men in given historical situations.

Two opposite extremes in view of inspiration are:

1. The mechanical dictation idea which is illustrated in the writings of II Ezra. In II Ezra he describes how he drank a cup and his heart was filled and he knew everything from creation. He then used five scribes as helpers and wrote in unknown characters. His writings took 40 days, writing all day and eating at night. In all 94 books were written. He made public the first 24, which are the 39 books of the Old Testament. He kept the last 70 to give to the wise.
2. On the opposite extreme are those who say that God only gave a vague idea and the writer supplied the rest. There are many ideas of inspiration that fall in between these two extremes.

Our purpose is to examine the prophets and see how they are the Word of God. Although the prophets were inspired and spoke as the Spirit directed, Jehovah allowed the personality and background of each man shine through his message, making the book throb with both the life of man and of God.



There are three means described as the methods by which the prophets received God's message.

1. Dreams
2. Visions
3. Direct word from God to the soul.

Dreams as recorded in scripture are of two kinds. First, there are those of the ordinary dream phenomena. Secondly, there are dreams which communicate to the sleeper a message from God. (Gen. 20:3-7; I Kings 3:5; Matt. 12:10-14).

Non-covenant people of the Old Testament needed a Joseph or a Daniel to interpret their dreams. (Pharaoh, Nebauchadnezzar, Belshazzar).

On some occasions God speaks and so renders human intervention unnecessary (Gen. 20:3ff; Matt. 2:12). And when members of the covenant community dream, the interpretation accompanies the dream. (Gen. 37:5-10; Acts 16:9).

Jeremiah censures the false prophet for treating the dreams of their own sub conscious as revelations from God. (Jeremiah 23:16, 25-27, 28). Another discussion of the false dreamer is found in Deut. 13:1-5.

VISIONS: It would be hard if not impossible to draw a clear distinction between Biblical uses of the terms visions and dreams. We probably associate the idea of visions more with Ezekiel, Daniel and of John's Revelation.

DIRECT WORD FROM GOD TO THE SOUL. This most often described by such terms as: "Being filled with the Holy Spirit;" "The Spirit of God"; "The Word of God"; etc.

The mission of the prophet was to communicate to Israel the divine word. Though they did predict, it may be said of them that so far as their work as a whole was concerned they were proclaimers rather than predictors.

Three things one should keep constantly in mind as he studies the work of the

prophets.:

1. First, it is necessary to understand the political, moral, social and religious conditions at the time in which the prophet lived. What ever the condition, the prophet endeavored to meet them by pointing the people back to God.
2. A second point of observation should be what the prophets consider is God's relation to the heathen nations with whom the Jewish people come in contact.
3. A final point to regard is the prophet's teaching of a future kingdom and king to be fulfilled in one who was to come.

THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF PROPHECY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION

MAJOR SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION:

1. The liberal school contends that these prophecies express the high hopes of the prophets but were never fulfilled and never will be.
2. The amillennial and post millennial view these prophecies as figurative in nature and achieving spiritual fulfillment in the church.
3. The premillennialists interpret the O.T. prophecies as literal, and they expect a literal fulfillment of them still in the future at the return of Christ when he will set up a literal kingdom and reign from Jerusalem.

“Within the household of believers, there are two major systems of interpretation. The first of these is the system of the spiritualization of prophecies. This approach, in general, denies that the prophecies of the future king and kingdom of God ever had a literal meaning but rather had a higher spiritual meaning and found fulfillment in the Christ and the church.

On the other hand, the other main approach within the house of believers may for convenience sake be designated as the approach of futurization. This approach tends to take all of the prophecies whose fulfillment cannot be documented as having already literally taken place and project them into the future saying that they are yet to be fulfilled.” 1

If no evidence of a fulfillment of the prophecy can be found, then one must examine one of the three following possibilities: (a) Were conditions not met by people involved in the prophecy so as to cause the Lord to ‘repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them’ or ‘repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them’ (Jeremiah 18:7,10). (b) Is this a genuine case of unfulfilled prophecy? (c) Or is the prophecy yet to be fulfilled at some point in the future? Among the most difficult problems in the interpretation of prophecy are the following three:

1. When is a prophecy to be regarded as conditional and recognition made that the conditions have not been met and thus the prophecy will not be fulfilled?
2. Exactly when is a passage to be taken literally and when figuratively and if it is figurative, how is the figurative language to be interpreted?
3. When and to what degree is spiritual fulfillment to be recognized? 2

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONDITIONAL PROPHECY IS FREQUENTLY ILLUSTRATED.

First, prophecies and promises made to individuals contain explicit statements of conditions. When God sent the prophet Ahijah to inform Jereoboam that He would give him the northern kingdom and establish his house, the Lord made clear it was conditional by saying,

"And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." (1 Kings 11:38).

Jeremiah makes several prophecies with explicit conditions and many others that imply that if repentance were forthcoming, the Babylonian destruction could be set aside. (Jeremiah 17:19-27; 22:1-8; 26:1-15; 38:1,18; 42:10-17).

The Bible abounds in various "if-then" passages which clearly indicate the conditional nature of God's statements. Leviticus 26 is one of these beautiful passages. In 26:3, God begins by saying *"If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then...."* In verses 4-13, God enumerates all the blessings He will bring upon them for obedient services. But in verse 14, He states the converse, *"If ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments...."* Then in verses 16-45, God enumerates all the punishments and chastisements He will bring upon them for their disobedience. 3

"There are some either-or situations. On the other hand, one makes a mistake when he concludes that every situation must be an either-or situation. There are those who assume that all prophecy is either literal or it is all figurative. Their underlying assumption is that all prophecy was uttered in one manner and one manner only. 4

Deuteronomy 28 is an even more famous example of such promise/threat passage. (See also Deuteronomy 7:12-16 and 11:26-28).

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONDITIONAL PROPHECY IS TAUGHT IN THE CANCELED PROMISED BLESSINGS. God canceled his promised blessing to Eli because of sin:

"I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father should walk before me forever: but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2:30).

This promise had been made to the house of Eli's father. This is most likely a reference to the promise made to Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar. Eli was

a descendent of Ithamar. God's statement to the father of Eli had been His intent, but it obviously was conditioned by the behavior of the future generations.

CONDITIONAL PROPHECY IS IN PERFECT HARMONY WITH THE NATURE OF GOD. The nature of God as proclaimed in the decalogue of His characteristics is:

"A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression in sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6,7).

In short, the Lord is the perfect blending of justice and mercy. It is His nature to give sinners every opportunity to repent and, when they repent, to forgive them. Thus, it is natural that His prophecies, His promises, and His threats would all be conditional except those that pertain to His ultimate sovereignty and scheme of redemption. Many times in scripture it is noted that God repented of evil He intended to do or repented of blessings He intended to bestow (Genesis 6:6; Jeremiah 18:8,10; 26:3, 13, 19; Joel 2:13,14; Psalm 106:45).

CONDITIONAL PROPHECY IS IN HARMONY WITH THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY. According to Zechariah 7, II Kings 17, II Chronicles 36, and many other passages, one of the chief purposes, if not the most significant purpose of prophecy was to motivate men to repent of sin and turn toward God so He might bless them instead of punish them. Since this is the purpose of prophecy, it is essential that the prophetic pronouncement of punishment or blessings be conditional depending upon the reaction of the hearers. This is exactly the principle that Jeremiah states in Jeremiah 18. On this point, Olshausen had said "None of the divine predictions are bare historical proclamations of what is to take place; they are alarms calling men to repentance, of which it may be said, that they announce something for the very purpose that what is announced may not come to pass.⁵

To this aspect of conditional prophecy Bales adds; "There were prophecies which were conditional, and in some cases the condition was not stated, but implied. It was not said that God would spare Nineveh if she repented. However, the destruction was coming on her because of her wickedness. She repented and God did not overthrow her in forty days. (Jonah 3:4-10). Why should He announce judgment at all, why not send it unannounced, except that God looks for a possible repentance so that He might not need to judge?⁶

OTHER COMMENTS ON THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF PROPHECY:

“But it is not the case that a genuine prophecy must be fulfilled like an edict of fate. Such prophecy is not an inevitable decree of fate, but is a word of the living God to mankind, and therefore conditioned ethically, and God can, if repentance has followed, withdraw a threat (Jeremiah 18:2ff; case of Jonah), or the punishment can be mitigated (I Kings 21:29). A prediction, too, Jehovah can recall if the people prove unworthy (Jeremiah 18:9f). A favorable or an unfavorable prediction can also be postponed, as far as its realization is concerned, to later times, if it belongs to the ultimate cancels of God, as e.g. the final judgment and deliverance on the last day. It is therefore not correct to demand a fulfillment pedantically exact in the form of the historical garb of the prophecy. The main thing is that the Divine thought contained in the prophecy be entirely and completely realized. But not unfrequently the finger of God can be seen in the entirely literal fulfillment of certain prophecies.” 7

R.B.Y. Scott refers to conditional prophecy as a result of moral conditioning. “What is about to happen is the necessary consequence of a moral situation; at the same time it will be the concrete realization of the prophetic ‘Word’ which expresses in relation to that situation the righteous will of Yahweh. When God is about to act, he makes known his purpose; ‘Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.’ These predictions are integrally related to the spiritual situation of those who hear them; furthermore, they are morally conditioned by the fact. ‘You have not returned unto me, says Yahweh, ...therefore thus will I do unto you, O Israel.’ ‘Take heed, and be quiet, fear not. (But) if you do not believe, you shall surely not be established.’ This moral conditioning and immediate reference explains how a prophetic forecast, far from being inevitable fulfilled with literal exactness, can be modified or withdrawn altogether.” 8

1 F. Furman Kearley, Essays, Outlines and Collected notes on Prophetic Literature. (Abilene: Abilene Christian University, 1983), p. 132

2 Ibid., p. 122

3 Ibid., p. 139

4 James D. Bales, Prophecy And Premillennialism. (Searcy, Arkansas, 1972), p.17.

5 Kearley, Essays, page 148.

6 Bales, Prophecy and Premillennialism. page 234.

7 C. von Orelli, "Prophecy" In International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. Edited by James Orr, vol. 4, p. 2460.

8 R.B.Y Scott, Relevance Of The Prophets. (New York; 1978.), pp 10,11.

LITERARY PROPHETS

Page 1

There are 16 Literary Prophets, and their activities cover a little over 400 years. From 850 B.C. to 432 B.C. They fall in the Old Testament periods of: The Divided Kingdom, Judah Alone; Captivity; and Restoration.

JOEL

“Jehovah Is God”

DATE: 830 - 825 B.C. A Prophet of Judah and Jerusalem.

BACKGROUND: It is set in Judah and Jerusalem. No kings are mentioned. The book occasioned by an invading locust army.

JONAH

“Dove”

DATE: 780 - 775 B.C. Prophet of Israel.

BACKGROUND: Jonah was from Gath-hepher. He was a prophet in the days of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-25). It is written primarily from the historical point of view....the history of a man, a nation, and God.

AMOS

“Burden-bearer”

DATE: 760 B.C. Prophet of Israel.

BACKGROUND: Amos was from the village of Tekoa, about 6 miles south of Bethlehem. He had been a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam, king of Israel. (II Kings 14:15; II Chron. 24-27). The borders of both Israel and Judah had been spread to their original size. It was a time of Luxury, and Moral, Political and Religious corruption.

HOSEA

“Salvation”

DATE: 750 - 735 B.C. Prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

BACKGROUND: Nothing is said of his early life or home. His ministry coincided with the reigns of: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam II of Israel. (II Kings 14-20; II Chron. 24-32). It was an era of peace, plenty, prosperity and luxury. The condition of the people is perhaps summed up in the one word “whoredom.”

LITERARY PROPHETS

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ISAIAH

“Jehovah Is Salvation”

DATE: 740 - 700 B.C. Prophet in Judah and Jerusalem.

BACKGROUND: He was a prophet during the reign of four kings of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah) and at the Fall of Israel. There was a rich class and poor class of people and a wide gap between. Corrupt government and Idolatrous religion.

MICAH

“Who Is Like Jehovah”

DATE: 740 - 700 B.C. Prophet in Judah.

BACKGROUND: He was of the village of Moresheth-gath. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, and ministered under the same kings. (II Kings 14-20; II Chron. 24-32). It was a time when the people were under the control of: “false prophets” (2:11) “priests who taught for hire” (3:11). “Rulers in their greed were as cannibals” (3:1-3). And “Judges, judged for a bribe” (7:3).

NAHUM

“Consolation”

DATE: 663 -612 B.C. Prophet of Judah.

BACKGROUND: Nahum the Elkoshite...but where is Elkosh located? Lived during the reign of the kings: Manasseh, Amon and Josiah. The book identifies the fall of No-amon, the Egyptian Thebes (3:8). This was carried out by Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria about the year 663 B.C. And Nineveh was destroyed by Medes and Chaldeans 612 B.C.

HABAKKUK

“Embrace”

DATE: 630 - 620 B.C. Prophet of Judah.

BACKGROUND: Nothing of the early life of the prophet is known. Most of the background is the same as Nahum. Was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah.

LITERARY PROPHETS

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ZEPHANIAH

“Jehovah Hides”

DATE: 630 - 620 B.C. Prophet of Judah.

BACKGROUND: See Nahum and Habakkuk, and Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

DATE: 627 - 561 B.C. Prophet in Judah, then carried to Egypt.

BACKGROUND: He was raised to be a priest, but God called him to be a prophet. He served during the reigns of: Josiah, Jehozhaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Also when Gedaliah was governor. It is the time just before; during; and after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. Included the beginning of the captivity in Babylon.

OBADIAH

“Servant of Jehovah”

DATE: 845 or 587 B.C. Wide difference of opinion concerning the date of book.

BACKGROUND: The prophet refers to an attack on Jerusalem in which the Edomites helped. That can well be narrowed down to two possibilities: the days of Jehoram when the Philistines and Arabians attacked the city, the early date. Or the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, the late date.

DANIEL

“God Is My Judge”

DATE: 605 - 530 B.C. Prophet in Babylon during the Captivity.

BACKGROUND: Carried to Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar and lived into the reign of Darius king of Persia.

EZEKIEL

“God Strengthens”

DATE: 590 - 560 B.C. Prophet in Babylon during the Captivity.

BACKGROUND: See Daniel and later part of Jeremiah.

LITERARY PROPHETS

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HAGGAI

“Festival”

DATE: 520 B.C. In Jerusalem, Post-Exile prophet during second year of reign of Darius.

BACKGROUND: Judah had returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. Now sixteen years later the temple had not been rebuilt. The message is a simple but earnest warning... **“Build The Temple.”**

ZECHARIAH

“Whom Jehovah Remembers”

DATE: 520 B.C. In Jerusalem, Post-Exile prophet, see Haggai.

BACKGROUND: See Haggai. Much confusion about the last 6 chapters. It seems most likely that the final 6 chapters were written by the same author, but a much later date, dealing with different problems.

MALACHI

“My Messenger”

DATE: 445 - 432 B.C. The content of the prophecy fits well into the conditions described by Nehemiah.

BACKGROUND: First exiles had returned during 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest. Encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple between 520 and 516 B.C. Ezra had returned with a second group of exiles in 458 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city about 444-443 B.C. The conditions of the people as revealed in Nehemiah and the bold and courageous attack of Malachi against the problems which the latter sets forth in his book point to the contemporary dates of the two.

HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHETS

854 - 430 B.C.

Page 1

This brief outline will be given based on the kings of Judah as the dividing points.

- I. JEHOSHAPHAT, 873 - 850. As king he took away the high places and Asherim from Judah, (II Chron. 17:6). He sent out princes, priests, and Levites to teach the law (II Chron. 17:7-9). But he made the great and almost fatal mistake of making an alliance with the wicked king, Ahab of Israel.

Ahab was the king of Israel at this time, 869 - 851 B.C. He was the husband of Jezebel and the innovator and patron of foreign gods. Frequently warred with Syria and was killed in war with Benhadad of Syria.

The Assyrian king at this time was Shalmaneser III, 858 - 824. He was the first Assyrian king who had political and military contacts with a king of Israel (10 Northern tribes).

The prophets of this time were: Elijah; Micaiah; Jehu; Jahaziel and Eliezer

- II JEHORAM, 850 - 843 B.C.

He married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, (II Chron. 21:6). To ensure his reign he killed his 6 brothers (II Chron. 21:1-4). He received a letter from Elijah, (after Elijah had died) telling him of his death and end as king.

The kings of Israel were Ahaziah, 850 B.C. and Jehoram, 849-843 B.C. He was wounded at Ramoth Gilead, (II Kings 8:28-29) and killed by Jehu (II Kings 9:14-28).

The Prophets at this time were; Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 6:9-10).

- III AHAZIAH, 842 B.C. Reigned only one year as king of Judah. He was followed by his mother...

- IV ATHALIAH, 842 - 838. She was Ahaziah's mother and also the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. When she saw that her son, Ahaziah was killed, arose and destroyed all the seed royal and usurped the rule over the kingdom of Judah. However God's providence saved Joash (Jehoash), Ahaziah's son. He was hid from Athaliah and later became king. (II Kings 11:1-3; II Chron. 22:10ff).

The king of Israel at this time is Jehu, 842-816 B.C. He destroyed the house of Ahab (II Kings 10:1-17) He also destroyed Baal worship and Jezebel (II Kings 10:18-28).

HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHETS

854 - 430 B.C.

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- V. JOASH 837 -801 B.C. After he was saved from Athaliah, he was hid by Jehoiada and his wife for six years. The nobles, people and generals rose up against Athaliah and slew her and made Joash king. Under the guidance of Jehoiada he ruled well, but after Jehoiada died he forsook the house of the Lord and served idols.

Jehu the king of Israel, was followed by Jehoahaz, 815:-801 B.C. Under his reign lost most of the kingdom to Syria.

The Assyrian kings were Shalmaneser III, who was followed by his son, Shamshi-adad V, 823 -811 B.C. Settled the revolt started during his father's reign, but lost all of Shalmaneser's western conquests. He was followed by the child king, Adad-mirari III, 810 - 783 B.C.

Joel and Elisha were the prophets of God at this time.

- VI AMAZIAH, 800 - 784 B.C.

Conquered Edom and took away their gods (II Chron. 25). Also warred against Jehoash of Israel, but was not successful.

Kings Of Israel: Jehoash, 801 - 787 B.C. Under his reign recovers cities of Israel from Syria. Jeroboam II 786-747 B.C. Restored all the territory that was lost to Israel. Prosperity was evident under his reign.

Prophets of this time were: Elisha; Joel; Jonah; and Amos.

- VII UZZIAH, 783 - 742 B.C.

Did that which was right, put down the enemies of Judah and promoted husbandry. But he offered incense to Jehovah and was smitten with leprosy.

The kings of Israel were: Jeroboam II; Zechariah, 746-745 B.C. He was slain by Shallu after 6 months. Shallu then ruled for 1 month and was killed by Menahem, 745 - 739 B.C.

This period ends with the invasion by the Assyrian king, Tiglath - Pileser III.

The prophets of this time were: Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah.

HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHETS

854 - 430 B.C.

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VIII JOTHAM, 742 - 736 B.C.

May have begun his rule while his father (a leper) was still alive.
Threatened by Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel.

The kings of Israel: Shallu, Menahem then Pekahiah, 738 B.C. He was slain by Pekah, who reigned 737 - 733 B.C.

The prophets at this time: Hosea, Isaiah, Micah.

IX AHAZ, 735 - 716 B.C.

In order to retain his throne, Ahaz became tributary to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria.

Kings of Israel: Pekah, Hoshea, 732 - 721 B.C. Israel, The Northern Kingdom was destroyed and carried away captive.

The Assyrian kings were Shalmaneser V, 726 -722 B.C. and Sargon, 721 - 705 B.C.

The prophets were Hosea, Isaiah and Micah.

X HEZEKIAH, 715 - 688 B.C.

Restored temple worship. Invoked the aid of God to overcome Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem. But made the mistake of showing the Temple treasures to the visitors from Babylon.

There are no more kings of Israel.

XI MANASSEH, 687 - 643 B.C.

Known for his unlimited cruelty and idolatry. Was the beginning of the end for Judah.

Esarhaddon, 680 - 669 is the king of Assyria. Brought Assyria's "second empire" to the height of its power. He was followed by Assur-bani-pal, 668 - 627 B.C.

XII AMON, 642 - 641 B.C. Was as wicked as his father.

XIII JOSIAH, 640 - 610 B.C.

Repaired the temple, the Book of Law found and true worship restored. Destroyed altar at Beth-el, in general brought good reform to Judah. But at a young age he was killed by Pharaoh Necho.

Assur-uballit, 611 - 606 B.C. The last of the kings of Assyria, and a new Empire is on the horizon. Babylon.

HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHETS

854 - 430 B.C.

Page 4

The prophets of this time: Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Obadiah.

XIV JEHOAHAZ, 609 B.C. Had only a 3 month reign.

XV JEHOIAKIM, 609 - 599 B.C.

PLACED ON THRONE BY Pharoah Necho. But the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar are victorious and the first group of Israelites are carried away into captivity.

XVI By 586 B.C. the destruction of Jerusalem is complete and the Hebrews are carried away into Babylonian Captivity.

The prophets of God are:

Daniel 605 - 530 B.C.

Ezekiel, 590 - 560 B.C.

XVII POST EXILE: 536 B.C. - 432 B.C.

Judah returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. Sixteen years later the temple had not been rebuilt.

Prophets of God: Haggai 520 B.C. Zechariah 520 B.C.

Second group of exiles in about 458 B.C. Under leadership of Ezra, then a few years later Nehemiah returns 444 - 443 B.C. and the wall of the city of Jerusalem are rebuilt.

Prophet of God: Malachi, 445 - 432 B.C.

“ISAIAH”

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. Isaiah lived through a pivotal period of his nation's history, the second half of the 8th century BC., which saw the rise of written prophecy in the work of Amos, Hosea, Micah and himself, but also the down fall and disappearance of the greater part of Israel, the ten tribes of the Northern kingdom.
 - B. Modern criticism that questions the authorship of Isaiah, will be for another lesson and another study. For now we simply note that....In none of the 21 passages in the New Testament where the writer or speaker quotes Isaiah or appeals to the prophet by name is there any hint or suspicion that more than one Isaiah wrote the book bearing that title.
 - C. Isaiah places strong emphasis upon the fact that Jehovah is the “Holy One of Israel” (this expression is used some twenty five times in the book) and accordingly, He sends forth judgment (used fifty two times) or comfort used eighteen times) depending upon how people respond to Him.
 - D. “Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and feet on the solid earth, with his heart in the things of eternity and his mouth and hands in the things of time, with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in the very definite moment of history.”
(From: Commentary on Isaiah, by Homer Haily.
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The Nature Of Christ

- A. ISAIAH is known as the Messianic prophet for interlaced all through his message are glorious glimpses of the promised Christ. Some of these are:
 - 1. A view of the divine pre-incarnate Christ (6:1-13; John 12:41).
 - 2. The birth of Immanuel (God is with us) to the virgin (7:14; Matt. 1:22,23)
 - 3. The rejection of the divine Christ as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (8:13,14; I Pet. 2:8; 3:14).
 - 4. Jesus as Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting father, Prince of Peace, and heir to David's throne (9:6; Luke 1:32).
 - 5. The Messiah and His benevolent and universal reign during the Christian age (11:1-10; Romans 15:12).
 - 6. Christ is the precious, tried cornerstone that is to be laid in Zion (28:16; Romans 9:33; I Peter 2:6).
 - 7. John the Baptist's preparatory work for the coming Lord (40:3-5; Matt. 3:3).
 - 8. The Master's compassionate and just ministry (42:1-4; Matt. 12:18-21).
 - 9. The atoning work of Jehovah's suffering Servant (53:1-12; Acts 8:32-35).

"ISAIAH"

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B. THE ABSOLUTE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw "the Lord"... "Holy, holy holy, is Jehovah of hosts... The inspired apostle John identifies this Being as Christ and affirms: "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory" (John 12:36-41).
 2. In Isaiah 8:12-14, the prophet rebukes sinful fear and urges the people to sanctify "Jehovah of hosts." In I Peter 3:14,15.. "but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.
 3. Isaiah told of John the Baptist... that "voice of one that crieth" (40:3) - and the fact that his messenger was to prepare in the wilderness "the way of Jehovah" and make level in the desert a "highway for our God." That Jehovah God was Christ, our Savior, as the N.T. clearly indicates (Matt. 3:3; John 1:23).
-

THE MESSIANIC AGE

A. THE MESSIANIC prophet gives exciting previews of the coming age, the Christian era.

B. SOME OF THESE ARE:

1. 2:2-4; in the "latter days" Jehovah's's house will be established in Jerusalem and into it all nations will flow.
 - a. "Last days" ..Joel 2:28...same time.
 - b. Fulfilled on day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16,17).
2. Establishment of the Throne of David. (9:7).
 - a. Though it was fulfilled by Christ (Luke 1:32,33) it was not a reference to a literal throne because no descendant of David could prosper from the time of king Jecohiah (also known as Coniah) Jer. 22:24-30).
 - b. Christ was to function as priest while on David's throne (Zeck.6:2,13)
But Christ could not act as priest on earth...(wrong tribe).

C. Why the Jews could not see and accept this great purpose of Jehovah as set forth by Isaiah and fulfilled in the Christ who came has long been a mystery. The prophet, however, had an explanation for it: the Jews closed their eyes, stopped their ears, and hardened their hear so that they could not accept the truth. (6:9-10)

MISUSED TEXTS

A. Isaiah 35:8 READ

1. Rather than stressing the simplicity of God's way and how that even simple minded people can find salvation...

“ISAIAH”

Page 3

2. This passage evidently teaches that truth that wayfaring men...ungodly, rebellious characters, shall not accidentally stumble into the high way of holiness.

B. ANOTHER IS Isaiah 14:12: READ

1. For years this has been used as a favorite text to prove that Satan is a fallen angel.
2. Lucifer has become a synonym for the Devil.
3. Rather - Lucifer is star...shooting star...Bright, brilliant for a moment, then burns up.
- 4 .A careful reading of the text however, will show that it refers to Babylon in general and Nebuchadnezzar in particular.

B. AGAIN: Isaiah 55:8 READ

1. We usually use this passage along with I Cor. 1:18-25 to emphasize the wisdom of God and comparative foolishness of man.
2. Even tho this is a Bible truth...
3. It seems that Isaiah is simply stating fact that Judah had not retained God's ways and thoughts in their hearts and mind.

Book Preserved Because

ISAIAH 53.....READ AND CLOSE.

ISAIAH CHAPTER FIFTY THREE

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. For twenty-six centuries the 53rd chapter of the book of Isaiah has been a beauty spot of biblical literature.
 - 1. Kyle Yates called it the "Mt. Everest" of Old Testament prophecy."
 - 2. It was from this section that the treasurer from Ethiopia was reading.
 - 3. From this text Philip preached about Jesus.
 - B. Because of its great prophetic message of Christ it has been the target of critical attacks.
 - 1. One that Isaiah did not author the material.
 - 2. The other that this great passage has no primary reference to Jesus Christ.
 - C. Jesus himself declared that Isaiah 53 was "fulfilled" in him (Lk. 22:37), and that should settle the matter!
-

Jehovah's Suffering Servant

- A. A declaration of the sort of unbelief that would be characteristic of the Jewish nation in general (v. 1).
 - 1. *"Who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?"* A negative answer is anticipated.
 - 2. John interprets this (John 12:37-38) of Jesus' miracle-working abilities, which were an extension of Jehovah's "arm" (power).
 - 3. The Jews, for the most part, refused to believe on Him.
 - B. THE PROPHET DESCRIBES THE REJECTION AND SUFFERING OF THE LORD JESUS. (v. 2,3).
 - 1. Christ grew up before the Father as a "tender plant out of dry ground".
 - 2. From the human vantage point, it appeared quite unlikely that Jesus could accomplish anything.
 - 3. How dramatically history has proved false that assumption!
 - 4. His power was not in a physical attraction; rather, it was grounded in his own divine nature, and in his relationship with the Father. (John 1:11)
 - C. CHRIST WAS PUT TO DEATH:
 - 1. In the divine scheme of things, that act would constitute an atonement sacrifice on behalf of rebellious man. (Vs. 4-6).
 - 2. The substitutionary nature of the death of Jesus is abundantly affirmed; he bore our griefs and sorrows.
 - 3. Jesus received the stroke of God for *our* transgressions.
 - 4. *When we are tempted to complain about God's allowance of suffering in this world, let us humbly reflect upon the experience of His Son.*
-

ISAIAH CHAPTER FIFTY THREE

Page 2

SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- A. THE UNIVERSAL SINFULNESS OF HUMANITY IS AFFIRMED.
 - 1. "All we like sheep have gone astray.
 - 2. Without Jesus, the human family void of hope.
 - B. This deplorable condition is our personal responsibility.
 - 1. We were not "born astray"
 - 2. **Rather, we have "gone astray".**
 - C. The remedy of Jesus' death is available potentially for all.
 - 1. Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us "all."
 - 2. This declaration stands in bold contrast to Calvinism's concept of a "limited atonement" i.e., that Christ died only for the elect.
-

DEATH ON THE CROSS

- A. The submissive disposition of the Lord during his trial is depicted (v.7). (Phil. 2:8).
 - 1. Though he was oppressed and afflicted, Jesus made no defense in an attempt to save his life (v. 7a).
 - 2. Rather, meekly, as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, he endured the cross(v. 7b; cf. John 1:29; Hebrews 12:2).
 - B. Corrupt legal proceeding. As a result, the Roman procurator's judgment....
 - 1. "*I find no crime in him*" was taken away.
 - 2. A survey of the Jewish criminal code in vogue during the first century reveals numerous infractions of the law during that frenzied pursuit to murder Jesus.
 - C. The events associated with Jesus' death were extraordinary.
 - 1. In death he was treated as a wicked person...though he had done no violence.
 - 2. Yet he was buried in a rich man's tomb (v. 9). (In life he had no place to lay his head, even the fox had holes, but was buried in garden tomb.
 - 3. Normally, a crucified criminal was not even afforded a burial under Roman custom.
 - D. The death of Christ was fundamental in plan of God for human salvation.
 - 1. Jesus was an "offering for sin" in order that divine justice be satisfied. 10a
 - 2. The Lord's "days" were prolonged, however, by virtue of his resurrection from the grave (v. 10b).
 - 3. Christ's mission was thus victorious,
 - 4. It is therefore only through the Savior that reconciliation with God can be effected. (V. 12b).
 - 5. **New Testament is filled with reference to fulfillment of Isaiah 53.**
-

THE BOOK OF THE LAW WAS LOST!

There is not a darker picture in the history of the Hebrews than that which is described in II Kings chapter twenty one and twenty two. The "Book of the Law", God's Word for Israel had been lost.

How far into sin will a people go when they no longer have or know God's Word? In II Kings 22, we are told:

"They have forsaken me" (v. 17)

"Have burned incense unto other gods," (v. 17).

Look at the condition in Israel during the time the book of the law was lost:
"Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." (II Kings 21:16).

"He (Amon) did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah as did Manasseh his father. And he walked in all the way that is father waled in, and served the idols that his father served and worshiped them, and forsook Jehovah, the God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of Jehovah" (II Kings 21:19-22).

"He (Manasseh) made his son to pass through the fire." (II Kings 21:6). This is a reference to the practice of infant sacrifice adopted and adapted from the fire god "Molech."

The following article is a history of the introduction and development of human (infant) sacrifice as it came into and was accepted in Israelite worship.

MOLECH

“The Introduction Of Molech Rites Into Israelite Worship”

INTRODUCTION:

- A. God Prohibits “Human and Child Sacrifice.”
- B. Israel Practices Such Abominations.
- C. How Did Such a Practice Enter Israelite Worship?

II. NAMES AND PLACE OF THE WORSHIP.

- A. Different Names and Different Spellings.
- B. The Place Of Worship.

II. ORIGIN OF MOLECH WORSHIP AND CHILD SACRIFICE.

- A. The god of the Ammonites.
- B. A god of the Canaanites.
- C. Direct Connection with Baal.

III. THE PRACTICE OF HUMAN SACRIFICE.

- A. Principle Behind the Practice.
- B. What Man Hoped To Gain.
- C. Biblical Prohibition.
- D. Rationalization By Man.

IV. BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY.

- A. Prohibited In Leviticus.
- B. Mentioned In Connection With Ahaz.
- C. Expanded In The Time Of Manasseh.
- D. General Practice In The Land Of Judah.

V. NATURE OF THE PRACTICE OF MOLECH SACRIFICE.

- A. Three Theories Presented.
 - 1. “Pass through the fire” no harm, but a lustration or purification of the child.
 - 2. Child slaughtered, then offered as a burnt offering.
 - 3. Child burned alive as a sacrifice.
- B. All Three Practiced.

VI. HOW MOLECH WORSHIP WAS INTRODUCED INTO ISRAEL.

- A. Solomon - “built a high place”.
- B. Ahaz - “offered his son.”
- C. Manasseh - “offered his children”.
- D. General Practice In The Land.

VII. WHY DID ISRAEL SACRIFICE THEIR CHILDREN?

- A. Influence Of Surrounding Nations.
- B. Misunderstanding Of The Demands Of God.
- C. Reaction To The Calamities That Befell Them.

CONCLUSION:

- B. A Subtle Beginning.
- C. Slow, But Steady Growth.
- D. Destruction Of One Nation, Captivity Of The Other.
- E. God's Pronouncement Of Doom.

MOLECH

“The Introduction Of Molech Rites Into Israelite Worship”

At the time of the late seventh century and early sixth century prophets, there had arisen in Israel the practice of making their children “pass through the fire” to the idol Molech.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Moreover, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. I also will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And if the people of the land do at all hide their eyes from that man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and put him not to death; then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that play the harlot after him, to play the harlot with Molech from among the people. (Leviticus 20:1-5)

From this specific and stern warning from God we move to the time of the prophets and see this practice:

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Jeremiah 32:35).

Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Were thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children, and delivered them up, in causing them to pass through the fire unto them?” (Ezekiel 16:20,21).

Other passages are: II Kings 21:6; 23:10; 17:17; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; Ezekiel 20:26,31; 23:37; II Chronicles 28:3.

The purpose of this paper is to look at this practice with special attention as to when and how it was introduced into the nation of Israel.

The names used to identify this god are Molech, Moloch. Milcom or Malcam, the national god of Ammon, The Toheth or Tophet with a ‘high place’ where child sacrifices were offered by fire to this deity. “The Valley of Hinnom, site unsure, but somewhere just outside the city of Jerusalem seems to be the center of this worship”¹

The origin of Molech worship and child sacrifice is somewhat obscure and there is

¹D.F. Payn, “Topheth”, New Bible Dictionary. Edited by J.D. Douglas, p. 1208.

a great variety of views. Milcom or Malcam was peculiarly the national god of the ammonites, as was Chemosh of the Moabites. The name Molech or Moloch was recognized among the Phoenicians, the Philistines, the Arameans, and other Semitic peoples, as a name for the divinity they worshiped from a very early time. That it was common among the Canaanites when the Israelites entered the land is evident from the fact that it was among the abominations from which they were to keep themselves free. (Leviticus 20:1-5).

There are also good grounds for seeing a community of origin between Molech and Baal. The name, the worship, and the general characteristics are so similar that it is natural to assign them a common place or origin. "Moloch-worship reached the climax of its abominable cruelty in the Phoenician colonies of which Carthage was the center shows that it had found among that people soil suited to its peculiar genius."²

The most likely and almost certain fountain of the Hebrew practice is the Phoenician cult, and abundant testimony is extant from Greek and Roman authors, agreeing with the passages in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. "In Phoenicia and in Phoenician colonies, notable at Carthage, the sacrifice of children was a prominent rite in the public religious services."³

The Old Testament also represents these sacrifices as Canaanite. Some question this, especially the liberal school, and for them the value of this testimony is diminished by the fact that from Hosea onwards the contaminating influence of Canaanite culture was the common prophetic explanation of the religious corruption of Israel. The late date they assign the peculiar Molech cult forbids them to suppose that it was adopted, like the Baal worship, from the old population of the land in the period of occupation and settlement. But if we take the Canaanite in the larger sense in which it includes the Phoenicians, this theory of the origin of the cult is probably true.

"For, though there is sporadic or inferential evidence of child sacrifice in many parts of the world, the Phoenicians and their colonists, especially the Carthaginians, are the one civilized people of antiquity of whom we know that the sacrifice of their own children was practiced, not as an occasional recrudescence of savage superstition, nor in the hole-and-corner rites of some abominable mystery, but as an established and prominent part of the public religion."⁴

But how did man begin the practice of "human sacrifice?" Oesterley states: "In its most exaggerated form the imparting to the deity of the life-principle, or 'soul-

²T. Nicol, "Molech", The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, p. 2075.

³George W. Gilmore, "Molech", The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Maculey Jackson, p. 451.

⁴G.F. Moore, "Molech", Encyclopedia Biblical. Edited by T.K. Cheyne, p. 3189.

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substance,' took the form of human sacrifice. The gift-idea, of course, enters in here too, as well as that of propitiation, but, whatever other motives prompted these sacrifices, the gift was soul-substance."⁵

Nor should the practice of human sacrifice be regarded as a characteristic of savage races. It may be found much more frequently among barbarians and semi-civilized people than among genuine savages. This must mean, at any rate in part that such people had not yet arrived at the stage of religion in which gods were conceived of on anthropomorphic lines.

In the twentieth chapter of Leviticus we have a list of capital crimes, included in this list is the question of "human sacrifice." "How early the terrible practice of offering 'the fruit of the body' in atonement for 'the sin of the soul' arose, we can scarcely say. It has been supposed to be as early, at all events, as the time of Abraham. Some entertain the notion that the sacrifice of Isaac was primarily a temptation to imitate the custom existing in the land."⁶

Men offered the lives of their fellows in sacrifice to their gods as a rule, in the hopes of thereby saving their own. "Human sacrifice is essentially a method of life insurance, absurd, no doubt, according to our ideas, but not an act of wanton cruelty."⁷

Ewald observes:

If no scruples held man back from giving the dearest he had when feeling in his heart drove him to sacrifice it to his God just as it was, then he would easily feel even the life of a beloved domestic animal not too dear to be given up at his hearts urgent demand. Nay, only in the offering up of life or soul, as the last that can be offered, did it seem to him that the highest was presented. But the logical consequence of such feelings was that human life must ultimately be looked upon as incomparable the highest and most wondrous offering, whether the life offered be that of a stranger, or, as that which is dearest to one, that of one's own child, or even of one's self. Thus human sacrifice was every where the proper crown and completion of all these utterance of the fear of God.⁸

We know that the most strenuous declamations of the prophets were directed against this type of Canaanitish sanctuaries.

⁵W.O.E. Oesterley, Sacrifice In Ancient Israel, (New York: The MacMillan Co.,) p. 187.

⁶Joseph S. Exell, "Leviticus" The Pulpit Commentary, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co.), p. 313.

⁷Oesterley, Sacrifice In Ancient Israel, p. 190.

⁸R.M. Edgar, "Leviticus", The Pulpit Commentary, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co.) P. 315.

The practice of sacrificing children to the god Molech, as well as the name of God Himself, are mentioned for the first time in the Book of Leviticus 18:21. The rite or at least the god was introduced during the reign of Solomon. That this sacrifice came across a tendency which had already manifested itself here and there in Israel at an earlier date, cannot be denied, but it is equally certain that this god, Molech was a total stranger to the people of Israel before the period just alluded to. While we cannot say clearly from what nation this sacrifice extended itself to Israel, it is not quite certain that it was from the Ammonites. In any case we know that a similar sacrifice was widely extended at an early period throughout the region of Canaanitish or Phoenician civilization. "In the kingdom of Judah it made its first appearance in the higher walks of life after the mournful days of King Ahaz, as the prophets of this later date bitterly complain."⁹

When we come to consider the nature of this worship, few details are given regarding it in Scripture. Three basic rites, or practices have been suggested.

The Mishna seems to understand the rite as an initiation not as a sacrifice; in the Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Abaye (4th Century) explained the custom as he imagined it: "There was a row of bricks with fires on both sides of it, between which the child must pass."¹⁰

His contemporary Raba compared it to the Jewish custom of swinging over the Purim bonfires. Similarly Jewish interpreters in the Middle Ages – e.g., Rashi on Leviticus 18:21; the father handed over his son to the heathen priests; they built two large fires between which the boy was made to pass. It was generally assumed that the child went through unscathed.

Nicol adds to this: "To pass through the fire has been taken to mean a lustration or purification of the child by fire, not involving death."¹¹

A second description is that the victims offered to the divinity were not burnt alive, but were killed as sacrifices, and the presented as burnt offerings.

The testimony of both the prophets and the laws is abundant that the victims were slain and burnt as a holocaust: see Jer. 7:31; 19:406; 32:35; Ezek. 16:20ff., 23:37-39; Deut. 12:31, also 2 Kings 17:31; Isa. 57:5f.

These passages, prove that the children were not burnt alive, but were slaughtered like other sacrificial victims; see especially Ezek. 16:20f; 23:37f. Also Gen. 22. "Josephus, therefore, correctly interprets 2 Kings 16:3 when he says of Ahaz, 'he also

⁹Heinrich Ewald, Antiquities of Israel, (London: Longman-Green and Co., 1876) pp. 228, 229..

¹⁰G.F. Moore, Encyclopaedia Biblica. P. 3184.

¹¹T. Nicol, "Molech" I.S.B.E. P. 2075.

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sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering to the idols (ὁ μόκος ἰτρώει), according to the custom of the Canaanites."¹²

The third and popular conception, molded for English readers largely by Milton's "Moloch, Horrid King" as described in PARADISE LOST, Book I, is derived from the account which Diodorus Siculus gives in his HISTORY of the Carthaginian Kronos or Moloch.

The image of Moloch was a human figure with a bull's head and out-stretched arms, ready to receive the children destined for sacrifice. The image of metal was heated red hot by a fire kindled within, and the children laid on its arms rolled off into the fiery pit below. In order to drown the cries of the victims, flutes were played, and drums were beaten; and mothers stood by without tears or sobs, to give the impression of the voluntary character of the offering."¹³

DeHoff expands on this by explaining: "This idol was the personification of the influence of the sun and was made of brass in the form of a man with the head of an ox. The fire was kindled inside and the child to be sacrificed to him put in his arms and roasted to death."¹⁴

The evidence would indicate that at different times all three rites were practiced by the Israelites.

How was such a terrible practice, and that in direct disobedience to God, introduced and accepted in the worship of Israel?

Solomon built a high place for this god in "the hill that is before Jerusalem" (I Kings 11:7). George W. Gilmore discredits the idea that Solomon was responsible for the introduction of this idol practice on the following grounds:

1. The sacrifice of children is not in the Old Testament associated with Milcom.
2. The place of worship of the two cults was different.
3. In the category of the sins of Solomon in the chapter cited the sacrifices of children does not appear; he burned incense and sacrificed to the gods of the peoples, but there is silence as to human sacrifice.
4. The condemnation of this sin by the prophets is not in evidence till a later period, and it is inconceivable that such a practice could have escaped the denunciation of early prophets had it existed.¹⁵

But while the practice of human sacrifice, and child offering by fire may not have

¹²G. F. Moore, Encyclopaedia Biblica. P. 3185.

¹³T. Nicol, "Molech" I.S.B.E. p. 2075.

¹⁴George W. DeHoff, "The Pentateuch" DeHoff's Commentary, (Murfreesboro: DeHoff Publications, 1976), p. 286.

¹⁵George W. Gilmore, "Molech" Schaff-Herzog, p. 450.

begun in the time of Solomon, the recognition of Molech, and the approval of a "high Place" for him opened the door for the consequence that followed.

The first reference to the practice of causing the children "to pass through the fire" is in 2 Kings 16:3. Ahaz, king of Judah, "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out from before the children of Israel."

"Many scholars are accordingly of the opinion that the cult was introduced in the eighth century - most likely by Ahaz himself, whose penchant for foreign fashions in worship is known (2 Kings 16:10-16)."¹⁶

Manasseh is the next king connected with the sacrifice of children (2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chronicles 33:6). In the last half century of the kingdom of Judah the frequent denunciations of the prophets prove that the sacrifice of children was a common thing, not an on occasions of extremity, but as a part of an established cult. "The victims were frequently, if not always, first born sons or daughters of their mother."¹⁷

Why did the Jews sacrifice their children? We would be wrong if we imagined that these sacrifices were introduced, like Ahaz's new altar, in idle imitation of a foreign fashion. The spirit in which they were offered is expressed in the words which the author of Micah 6:7 puts into the mouths of the people: "Will Yahweh accept thousands of rams, myriad streams of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" The sacrifice of the firstborn, the dearest thing on earth, is the most costly and therefore the most efficacious offering by which the wrath of God can be averted. The tenth plague on Egypt, and the consecration of the first born male to the Israelites must have been considered. It is not strange therefore, that these sacrifices should have been multiplied in the last age of Judah, when disaster after disaster proved how heavily the anger of Jehovah rested upon the nations. "If their neighbors, at such a time, offered to their gods this uttermost atonement, would Yahweh expect less of his people? Nay, did not he demand as much?"¹⁸

This would also explain the disclaimer often repeated in Jeremiah, ".....cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." (32:35).

¹⁶G. F. Moore, Encyclopaedia Biblica. p. 3186.

¹⁷Ibid. p. 3187.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 3188.

The sacrifices were suppressed and the sanctuary dismantled and defiled by Josiah in 621 B.C. (2 Kings 23;10). But even Josiah's through reformation failed to end the Molech-worship, and it revived and continued till the destruction of Jerusalem, as we learn from the prophets of the time. Nothing is mentioned of the practice in post-exile history.

The horrible practice of sacrificing their children had a subtle beginning, and then a slow but steady growth that helped send one nation to its destruction (North Israel) and another (Judah) to captivity. Israel failed to drive out all of the Canaanitish people from the land and to remove all of their "high places". The king (Solomon) opened the door just a little by permitting a "high place" for Molech to be built. Another king, Ahaz went further and caused "his son to pass through the fire." Manesseh then gives full approval and offers "his sons and daughters" to the god. By then the practice was generally accepted by the nation.

Josiah lead a reform that was successful for a while, but the practice again revived and God pronounces its doom:

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter; for they shall bury in Topheth, till there is no place to bury." (Jeremiah 7:32).

KINGS OF JUDAH AT TIME OF JEREMIAH

1. Evil reigns of Manasseh 687 -641. Amon 644-640.
2. Josiah - 640 - 609. Killed by Pharaoh-neco of Egypt at Megiddo. 609. Neco and Egypt ruled Judah 609-605. In 605 Josiah inaugurated a rather extensive reform against the evils promoted by Manasseh and Amon.
3. Jehoahaz 609 (3 months) Neco carried him into Egyptian captivity and put Jehoiakim on the throne.
4. Jehoiakim 609 - 598. Jerusalem youths, including Daniel and his 3 friends carried captive to Babylon, 605. First Stage of babylonian captivity.
5. Jehoiachin - 598 (3 months) carried captive into Babylon with about 10,000 of the leading citizens of Jerusalem, including Ezekiel. 2nd Stage.
6. Zedekiah 598-587. Pro-Babylonian at first, but later shifted allegiance to Hophra of Egypt. Jerusalem fell in 587-6 Third Stage.
7. Gedaliah 587-582 Governor of Judah under Babylonian control. Murdered by Ishmael, after which Jeremiah and Baruch were forced to flee with a band of Jews under Johanan to Egypt.

This information covered in II Kings 22 thru 24.

JEREMIAH

1

INTRODUCTION

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of time; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us". Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities"

- A. Time: 650 - 586 + or - B.C.
- B. The Prophet: More inspired biographical information about Jeremiah than any other personality of the Old Testament.
 - A. Son of Hilkiah, of the priest in Anathoth...an hour and a half's walk northeast of Jerusalem.
 - B. Called to be a prophet at early age (Jer. 1:6).
 - C. Called in the thirteenth year of Josiah, i.e. ca. 627-626 B.C. His ministry continued until the final destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.
 - D. Known as the "weeping" prophet.
 - E. "By nature Jeremiah was gentle, tender and sympathetic, yet he was charge by God to proclaim a stern message of irreversible gloom. Loving his people with a deep affection, he constantly found himself the object of hatred, reproached with treason. Although he was sensitive to the extreme, he was forced to undergo a constant barrage of slander and persecution that would have crushed the spirit of the most callous. Weak and retiring by nature, he was ever thrust into the limelight." (Archer, OT Intro., pp. 348-349).
- C. He was God's man from first to last, and therefore a true patriot to the end.
- D. He prophesied under kings Josiah, Jehoahz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. And for a period of time after the fall of Jerusalem and then was carried into Egypt. His work covered a period of about 50 years.
 - 1. Jeremiah preached judgment upon Judah. The reasons every where mentioned was apostasy from Jehovah, and idolatry practiced in the "high places".
 - 2. The judgment which is to come in the near future, as a punishment for the sin of the people, is from the outset declared to be the conquest of the country through an enemy from abroad. ("Terror from the north").

BRIEF OUTLINE

- A. The Message:
 - 1. 1:7 "And whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak."
 - 2. 1:9 "Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."
- B. The Commission:
 - 1. "See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."
 - 2/ Both negative and positive.
- C. The Problem:
 - 1. 2:13 "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain

JEREMIAH

2

of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

2. They left God, looking for a more exciting place to drink.

CONCERNING GOD

1. Jehovah the “Fountain of living waters” (2:13) – source of life and sustenance.
2. The potter (18:1-12).
3. Creator of the World (5:22; 8:7;
4. Lord of history controlling the nations (2:1ff). Nebuchadrezzar the “servant” of God.
5. Knows the hearts of men; tries and reward (11:20; 16:17; 18:10;
6. “Divine transcendence and divine immanence” (23:23-24).
7. Intimate God: “husband” (2:2), “father” (3:19), “merciful” 3:12),
8. God deals with men in a personal relationship (6:20; 7:1-31; 11:154
9. Obedience to Jehovah’s laws which would issue in social and personal ethics was demanded (2:34; 6:7; 21:11-12).

CONCERNING ISRAEL

1. Israel as God’s elect: “first fruits” (2:3) a “choice vine” 2:21) the “beloved” 11:15 ; Jehovah’s “heritage” (12:7-9) “vineyard” (12:10) His flock (13:17).
2. Israel the “bride” (2:2, 3:6) the “son” (3:29,22).
3. Chosen at deliverance from Egypt (2:6 –apostasy began with settlement in Canaan (2:7)
4. Israel restless (2:23-24) goes off in adultery and harlotry.
5. No hope for Israel but to repent.

THE FUTURE HOPE

- A. A message which points beyond judgment to a time when Israel’s fortunes would be Restored.
- B. Hope oracles: 32:15; 29:10-14; 31:2-6, 15-22;
- C. The New Covenant (31:31-34) READ
 1. Individuality: “I will put my law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts”
 - a. The total duty of each man is to know God for himself.
 - b. “Christ is my personal savior.”
 2. Universality:
 - a. “They shall all know me”
 - b. Great Commission
 3. Remission of sins:
 - a. “I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more”
 - b. Matthew 26:28....READ
 - c. Acts 2:38READ and close.

JEREMIAH

3

BOOK PRESERVED BECAUSE

- A. It teaches us that in Religion External circumcision is of no value without inner purity of heart.
 - 1. The external temple will be destroyed, because it has become the hiding place for sinners.
 - 2. Having our name on the "church roll" will be of no value if our heart is not right with God.
 - B. External sacrifices have no value, if those who offer them are lacking in spirituality.
 - 1. Or...external acts of worship are of no value if those who offer them are lacking in spirituality, or sincerity.
 - 2. Hypocrisy is always offensive to God!.
 - C. READ CHAPTER 31:31-34 AGAIN.
-

JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINTS

“Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which Jehovah overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear a cry in the morning, and shouting at noontime; because he slew me not from the womb; and so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb always great. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?” (Jeremiah 20:14-18).

What could have brought out such a bitter complaint? Why would he complain that God had let him live, what caused him to wish that he had never been born?

In order to understand this, and the other complaints of Jeremiah, we must understand something about his life. He was chosen (he did not choose for himself) as a youth to be a spokesman for God. he was lifted from a gentle and quiet town and thrust into the midst of a nation in religious and political turmoil.

God often used events in the lives of the prophets to symbolize what was to happen to his people. We see this with Hosea and Gomer, the names of the children of Hosea, and Isaiah. In the case of Jeremiah God forbid him to marry, to go to funerals, to go to weddings or to feasts. While this symbolized the dark future for the nation of Israel, it must also have had a profound effect on the life of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 16).

Kyle M. Yates describes the life of Jeremiah in this way: “Misunderstood by his own family, opposed by priest and prophet, shunned by his people, his life was a tragic experience. Even though he complained and questioned God’s treatment of him he continued to urge his fellow citizens to turn to God for cleansing and deliverance.”¹

In the hour of battle for the city of Jerusalem, he opposed resistance and counseled surrender to the Babylonians. It was called “treason” and he was soundly hated as one who weakened the morale of the defenders of the city.

Again Yates states: “Throughout his life he was continually conscious of the hand of God upon his very person. This divine compulsion doomed him to perpetual loneliness and to an unending opposition. As God’s spokesman he was constantly going counter to every current of his day. Eternity alone will reveal the suffering, the

¹Kyle M. Yates, Preaching From The Prophets. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1942), p.

heartaches, the loneliness and the distress of soul that wrung the heart of God's loyal prophet."²

Added to this are THE PERSECUTIONS OF JEREMIAH:

1. They refused to take seriously and to put into action the word of God which he preached. "Thus says the Lord....Give heed..... But they said, 'We will not give heed.'"(6:16,17).
2. The people often ridiculed the message and work of Jeremiah. "I have become a laughingstock all the day; Every one mocks me" (20:7).
3. They brought accusations against him in order to cast reflection on his good name. He was accused of deserting to the Babylonians (37:12,13). In spite of his protest to the contrary, he was cast into prison on the charge of being unpatriotic and a traitor to his country (37:14,15). Jeremiah 18:18 tells how the religious leaders of Judah plotted against Jeremiah, saying, "Come, let us smite him with the tongue."
4. He was often harmed physically. When he announced that Jerusalem and its temple were going to be destroyed like a broken potter's vessel (chapter 19), the priest (chief officer of the temple), Pashhur, "beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in stocks." (20;2).
5. Like Paul, Jeremiah was often cast into prison for what he preached (see 36:26; 37:15, 21; 38:28; 39:15). On one occasion, he was forbidden to preach any more in the temple because his words were so despised (36:5).
6. His life was often in jeopardy because he preached God's word. Some of the earliest threats on his life came from those who knew him best—the men of Anathoth (11:21), the men of his own home town (1:1). Even Jeremiah's own family sought to harm him because of what he preached. As a result of his sermon on the temple (the church building), the religious leaders said: "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against the city" (26;11). And remember how he was cast into an old, abandoned cistern and left to die because he announced the down fall of Jerusalem (38:1-6).

Can we understand how Jeremiah, who on many occasions prayed for his enemies and those who persecuted him (15:11; 18:20), could at times become very angry, and ask God to destroy his enemies who were persecuting him (11:20; 15:15; 17:18; 18:21-23). Perhaps his bitterest prayer is found in chapter 18 verse 23.

"Thou, O Lord, knowest all their plotting to slay me.

²Ibid., p. 134

Forgive not their iniquity,
Nor blot out their sin from thy sight.
Let them be overthrown before thee; ‘
Deal with them in the time of thine anger.”

THERE ARE FIVE SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS REGISTERED BY JEREMIAH

NUMBER ONE: Jeremiah 11:18 - 12:5

“But I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living.” Jeremiah then asks the question which has troubled man through out the ages: *“...wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?”* (12:1). This causes him to renew the complaint begun in chapter 11 that he might see God’s vengeance on the evil; *“...pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.”* (v. 3).

Jeremiah’s first complaint might be summed in this way; *“I preached what you told me to preach and like a lamb I was led to the slaughter. My own family, and the people of my home town seek my life. Let me see your vengeance upon them.”*

God answers; *“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And though in a land of peace thou are secure, yet how wilt thou do in the pride of the Jordan?”* (12:5). In other words if you can’t deal with the little ones (men of Anathoth) how can you deal with the big one (the leaders in Jerusalem) or, if you can’t deal with little sinners how can you deal with big sinners? God was telling Jeremiah that it was going to get worse before it got any better.

“Jeremiah was complaining to God because of his hard lot. Yahweh strikes him with a terrific blow when He bluntly reminds him of trials, distresses and crises that are yet to come that will make his present irritations seem small. He assures His prophet that he knows and understands and gives credit for all of his past performances. He believes in Jeremiah and assures him that he is being chosen from the elementary training course to be promoted to the more difficult field of battle. Each bit of suffering he has endured has fitted him for new adventures. God does not throw us out into the race with horses until we have had training with footmen. Each victory we will fit us to measure up in the hour of tragic crises. What will you do in the swelling of the Jordan? When the Jordan bursts its banks

How will you stand?³

NUMBER TWO: Jeremiah 15:10-18

Jeremiah begins in verse 10, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" He then complains because he had accepted the responsibility for preaching God's word to sinners (v. 16) and had born reproach because of his personal commitment to God (v. 15), and yet God had done nothing to help him bear his burden. He asks God;

"Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook,
Like waters that fail?" (v. 18).

His complaint would be: "I have done all that you have told me to do, and I am suffering for it...where is your help? Will you fail me?"

Again God gives answer. If you will return, (and you will not be my prophet if you don't return), then I will take care of you. "I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible" (15:21).

NUMBER THREE: Jeremiah 17:12-18

Jeremiah tells God that his enemies rebuke him because the things which God told him to predict had not yet come to pass. "Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of Jehovah? Let it come now." (V. 15). He reminds God that it was not his idea to preach the message of doom, that he did so only because God told him to do so. Thus he asks God: "Let them be put to shame that persecute me, but let not me be put to shame; let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed; bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction." (v. 18). In short Jeremiah is saying; "I preached your message.... now let it happen."

NUMBER FOUR: Jeremiah 18:19-23

Jeremiah reminds God how he had prayed for the good of this people and now they returned only evil. In response to his message they sought his life; "for they have digged a pit for my soul." So he now asks God to no longer turn away his wrath from them, but to deliver them up. "Yet, Jehovah, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me; forgive not their iniquity neither blot out their sin from thy sight; but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thou with them in the time of thine anger." (v. 23).

³Ibid., p. 145

NUMBER FIVE: Jeremiah 20:7-18

Jeremiah had just delivered the message from God concerning the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again;" (19:11). Pashhur, the chief officer "smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper gate of Benjamin, which was in the house of Jehovah." (20:2).

Jeremiah then makes his last and most bitter complaint. He accuses God of persuading him to proclaim his words even though he did not really enjoy this. "O Jehovah, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded; thou art stronger than I, and has prevailed; I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out; I cry, Violence and destruction! Because the word of Jehovah is made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut upon in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." (vv. 7-9) We sometimes misuse this passage. We speak of the burning desire that we have to proclaim God's Word, and use this, when in reality with Jeremiah the opposite was true. He decided not to proclaim God's message. His complaint was that God was stronger than he, and caused the words to burn within him until he could no longer contain, or be silent.

In verses 10 through 18 he asks to see God's vengeance, then wished he had never been born.

"A more crushing burden was never laid upon mortal man. In the whole history of the Jewish race there has been no such example of intense sincerity, unrelieved suffering, fearless proclamation of God's message, and unwearying intercession of a prophet for his people as is found in the life of Jeremiah. But the tragedy of his life is this, that he preached to deaf ears and reaped only hate in return for his love to his fellow-countrymen. He was lightly esteemed in life, and he sank into the grave a broken hearted man. From being of no account as a prophet he came to regarded as the greatest of them all."⁴

⁴Ibid., p. 134

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LAMENTATIONS

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. As the title suggests, this book expresses grief, sorrow, lament and anguish.
 - B. The picture of the distress of Zion after the siege by the Chaldaens.
 - C. Written in poem style, by an eye witness...Jeremiah the Prophet.
 - D. Probably written shortly after the Fall of Jerusalem.
 - E. THE PICTURE:
 - 1. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people"...First statement of the Book.
 - 2. "But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us"...Last statement in the Book.
-

Learned Too Little- Too Late

- A. **The Human Family Is Slow To Learn!**
 - 1. People see suffering in others, but convince themselves that it will not be their lot.
 - 2. While the multitude fall in the abyss, they convince themselves that they will be able to safely walk by.
 - 3. Behold the end of those that have sinned before, yet continue to walk in their evil ways.
 - B. **Examples:**
 - 1. What happened to Adam and Eve...yet look at the action of CAIN.
 - 2. NOAH saw what happened to the people in the flood...but...drunk.
 - C. **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL!**
 - 1. Deliverance from Egypt.
 - 2. The many Tragedies that befell them.
 - 3. Yet they never learned the folly of sin.
 - D. **Lamentations....the account of Learning Too Little...Too Late.**
 "My people are bent on backsliding from me:" (Hosea 11:7)
-

SIN BRINGS SUFFERING

- A. 1:1-11: Jerusalem...became filthy, because she sinned grievously. Yet she took no thought of her doom.
 - 1. This book will forever stand as a reminder of the consequences of sin.
 - 2. Israel took no thought of consequence of her sin...until it was too late!!
 - 3. The "Book" is a Lamentation for the plight of the people as result of sin.
 - 4. "The Wages of sin is Death" (Romans 3:23).
 - 5. With a broken heart, Jeremiah Laments this death.

LAMENTATIONS

Page 2

Sin Brings Suffering, cont.

B. THE MERCIES OF GOD:

1. In the midst of this is rich consolation.
 2. *"The steadfast love of the lord never ceases."* v. 22. That such a beautiful expression of assurance in God's unfailing mercies should be found in Lamentations and in such a context is indeed remarkable and carries its own rich consolation.
 3. **AGAIN:** "The wages of sin is death".....BUT ..."the Free gift of God is Eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". (Romans 6:23).
-

A CRY FOR HELP

A. Not so much from the people....as from Jeremiah for the people.

1. The need for help.
2. Seen in the destruction of the land and the people.
3. ****Transpose:** This from the **physical** to the **spiritual**.
from **Time** to **Eternity**.

B. Jeremiah would, that the people would cry for help.

1. "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us."
 2. "Behold our reproach."
 3. Jeremiah wanted so much for it to be as it was in former times.
 4. This was impossible without turning from their wicked ways and applying their hearts to His commands.
-

FIVE DIVISIONS

- A. CHAPTER ONE: "The Way Of Wickedness".
 - B. CHAPTER TWO: "The Wrath Of God".
 - C. CHAPTER THREE: "The Weight Of Sorrow".
 - D. CHAPTER FOUR: "The Want Of Help".
 - E. CHAPTER FIVE: "The Wreck Of Iniquity".
-

Book Preserved Because

A. IT TEACHES US:

1. The Difference Between Sorrow for the consequence of sin and.....
 2. Sorrow for sin. Sorrow for our sin.
 - B. Blessed are they that mourn....For they shall be comforted..(explain)
 1. Godly Sorrow Worketh Repentance....
 2. Jeremiah's Sorrow....The People's Sorrow....See The Difference....
 - C. This Book Will Stand Forever As A Reminder Of The Consequences of Sin.
It is a Book of Weeping...Because it is the account of learning to little to late.
-

EZEKIEL

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. Historical Background:
 - 1. Fall of Nineveh and rise of Babylonian Kingdom.
 - 2. Defeat of Israel and death of Josiah, 609 B.C.
 - 3. Jehoiachim on throne, died and Jehoiachin, king ... Carried away to Babylon with the upper classes of Israelites; Ezekiel was among them (597) .
 - 4. Ezekiel; Name Means = "God will strengthen".
 - B. ZEDEKIAH IS KING.
 - 1. A time of undue optimism; ... lead by false prophets.
 - 2. Ezekiel message - (see also Jeremiah).
 - a. Doom for Jerusalem.
 - b. Eventual return of the captives.
 - C. IN JERUSALEM THE FEELING WAS: (They said of the exiles)...
 - 1. "They have gone far from the Lord; to us the land is given for a possession" (Ezekiel 11:15).
 - 2. "Abraham was only one man; yet he got possession of this land; but we are many: the land is surely given us to possess" (33:24).
 - D. IN EXILE...THE FEELING WAS:
 - 1. "Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live." (33:10).
 - 2. "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; and we are clean cut off" (37:11).
 - E. TO COMBAT THIS DESPAIR, which if unchecked might lead to a complete abandonment of Jehovah, is the aim of the second portion of Ezekiel.
-

HIS COMMISSION

- A. HIS CALL: (Chapter One).
 - 1. Describes his vision as arising from a storm cloud.
 - 2. Without getting lost in the details this vision represents the glory of God.
 - 3. God's glory is not tied to just one locality but can be any where.
 - B. HIS INSTRUCTION: (Chapter Two).
 - 1. Go to a rebellious people.....Imprudent and Stiff Hearted.
 - 2. Preach whether they hear or refuse (v. 7) read.
 - 3. Ate the book given to him ...in the mouth sweet as honey...(3;3).
 - C. HIS FEAR.....Overwhelmed...Seven days, speechless.
 - D. HIS DUTY:
 - 1. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel." 3:17
 - 2. A watchman, once chosen must warn of approaching danger, otherwise he is responsible for the inevitable calamity.
 - 3. When the warning is sounded..whether heeded or not..Watchman did duty
-

EZEKIEL

Page 2

HIS MESSAGE

- A. "JERUSALEM MUST BE DESTROYED."
1. Regardless of what false prophet may say.
 2. As already seen...attitude of those left in Jerusalem.
- B. SYMBOLIC ACTION...a pantomime by which the prophet's message is graphically acted out.
1. Clay brick... plays war...shows the siege of the city by Neb.
 2. Eat sparingly...poor food...worse conditions...portray what it will be like during the siege.
 3. **Cut off his hair:**
 - a. One part is burned....
 - b. 2nd part hacked to pieces with the sword.
 - c. Third part scattered to the wind.
 - d. **A few hairs saved in his robe.
 - e. This describes the fate of the people of Jerusalem.
 4. His Wife: "The desire of his eyes"...was taken from him by death.
 - a. He was to show no sorrow.
 - b. When people asked him the reason for his strange behavior, it gave him a chance to preach his message: Jerusalem, and the temple, "the delight of their eyes" is doomed.
- C. TO COMBAT THE FEELING OF DESPAIR that came as a result of the message that Jerusalem was destroyed.
1. **Read Psalms 137.**
 2. The story of "Dry Bones" (Ezekiel 37).
 3. The two sticks...that became one stick (37:16) Ephraim and Judah will be restored as one nation.
- D. **EZEKIEL AND REVELATIONS:**
1. Some time we need to do a study of these two books together.
 2. Much of Revelations finds its beginning in Ezekiel.
-

EZEKIEL

Page 3

Other Messages of Ezekiel

A. MANY ERRORS REFUTED BY EZEKIEL. Some examples are:

1. No Payday For Sin Refuted.
 - a. Israel lived as though there were no payday for sin, as though God had no law for sowing and reaping.
 - b. Babylon Captivity was their Payday.
 - c. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (18:20). (See Article at end of this outline.)
2. Calvinism Refuted.
 - a. Total Hereditary Depravity....Ezekiel..."son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither...father of the son" (18:20).
 - b. Original sin: Sin is an act that is committed, Not inherited.
 - c. Unconditional Security: Wicked can repent...or ... the righteous can become wicked. (18:24-27).

B. GOD WILL NOT BE QUESTIONED, TRIED BY MAN (20:31).

Message For Us Today

A. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: (18:4; 20).

1. **The Preacher - Watchman**
 - a. "I have made thee a watchman" (3:17) .
 - b. Great Commission (Matthew 28)
2. **The Hearer:** Can either hear, and heed the watchman or forbear, that is refuse to listen. (2:7).

B. PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

1. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die..."(18:4; 20).
2. "But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." (18:21).

C. GOD'S INVITATION:

1. **READ Ezekiel 18:30-32.**
 2. Now Read. **II Peter 3:9...** "Longsuffering...not willing (wishing) that any should perish; but that all should come to Repentance."
-

EZEKIEL 18:19-32

Ezekiel was carried into Babylonian captivity as a part of the second of three groups in 597 B.C. He received his prophetic call about five years later, 592 B.C. and was Jehovah's voice to the Hebrew captives for about 20 - 22 years.

The message of our text was shortly before the fall of Jerusalem. The immediate occasion for the passage was the use of the proverb, "*The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge*" (18:2). "That this was a common proverb in ancient Israel around this time is evidenced by Jeremiah's reference to it (Jer. 31:29), though he used it in a slightly different context from Ezekiel".¹

By use of this proverb the people were trying to both escape personal responsibility for the calamity that had befallen Israel, and to justify their failure to do the works of repentance that the prophet of God required of them. Stalker observed that they used the proverb either to exonerate themselves from blame for the impending calamity or to plead impotence to avert it, since according to the proverb its cause lay in the unalterable past. The proverb gave them both an alibi and an excuse for moral inertia.²

The passage divides itself into two major sections. The first, verses 19-24, declares the personal responsibility of the individual in his relationship with God, and thus his own responsibility for what happens to him. The second section, verses 25-32, considers the question, "Is God equal" or "just" in His dealings with man. Good and bad alike had suffered from national disaster, and worse was to come; if God were just He would not permit such indiscriminate hardship.

Ezekiel 18:19-24

Yet say ye, Wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Saith the Lord Jehovah; and not rather that he should return from his

¹John B. Taylor, Ezekiel, An Introduction and Commentary. (London: Thy Tyndale Press, 1969), p. 147.

²D.M.G. Stalker, Ezekiel, Introduction and Commentary. (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 163.

way, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? None of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Ezekiel directly attacks the belief that one generation is punished for the sins of another. The expression used is not merely bear the iniquity, but bear (part) in the iniquity.³

In declaring man's individual responsibility, Ezekiel 18:19-24 presents at least three problems. The first is that it is an apparent contradiction of much of the rest of the Book. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 tell of national punishment for the wicked, and is a theme that re-occurs in Ezekiel. "It had been the basis of much of Ezekiel's own teaching, namely that the suffering of the exiles could be traced back to the persistent rebellion, idolatry and unfaithfulness to the covenant of previous generations of Israelites."⁴

The second problem is that it oversimplifies human experience, and the third is how to reconcile it with the Decalogue; "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20:5).

Stalker tries to solve these problems by giving the passage an eschatological setting. "Ezekiel, like Jeremiah is referring to the coming Kingdom and coming Day of Judgment....when he affirms that a son will not bear the iniquity of his father, he is not denying the Second Commandment and the facts of heredity and national and family solidarity."⁵

To view it only in the Christian or New Testament sense of final judgment is to lift it out of context and to leave the Jews of Ezekiel's day to wonder what he meant.

Ezekiel reinforces his assertion about individual responsibility in vv. 21ff by pointing out the possibility of changing ones life. The wicked can repent and do righteousness and live, or the righteous can turn back to a life of sin and die.

What is the "life" and "death" of which Ezekiel speaks? "Life in this biblical sense is much more than mere physical existence and in fact involves more than material well-being, although of course neither of these accents is wholly absent."⁶

Corporate and communal responsibility are acts, and the experience of the Jews

³G.A. Cooke, Ezekiel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 200.

⁴John B. Taylor, Ezekiel. P. 147.

⁵D.M.G. Stalker, Ezekiel. p. 163.

⁶Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Ezekiel 18:25-32". Interpretation. 1978), p. 300.

bore witness to this. But Ezekiel would have them to see that these were not the only facts. "God's redeemed community is a nation of righteous or repentant individuals. And in the situation with which the prophet was immediately concerned, it was dangerous for the exiles to be concealing themselves behind an unbalanced view of their national responsibility in order to avoid the prophetic demand for repentance and a new way of life."⁷

Ezekiel is saying that regardless of the circumstances in which man may find himself, he alone has the power to determine his life and death in relationship with God. He may or may not be responsible for physical surroundings, that is exile or captivity, but he is directly responsible for his relationship with God, and he cannot use a bad experience (exile) as an excuse to keep from turning to God and living a righteous life.

The second section considers the question, "Is God Equal" in His dealings with man:

Ezekiel 18:25-32

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel: is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth therein in his iniquity that he hath done shall die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord Jehovah. Return ye, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherein ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live.

The ultimate evasion of self-examination occurs as the people try to blame God for their predicament. The people say, "the way of the Lord is not just" (vv 25-29). In this context "way" means "principle of action".⁸

Ezekiel sets out to vindicate God's justice by declaring that it is not God who is "unequal", but rather it is Israel. God's position is stated as, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (v. 32a). But rather, "turn yourselves and live" (v. 32b).

⁷John B. Taylor, Ezekiel, p. 148.

⁸Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Ezekiel 18:25-32", p. 300.

Having established individual responsibility, he also established individual possibility. "Turn yourselves" is a declaration that it is within the power of each individual to re-direct his life. "Here we see the individual man's life freed from being fettered by the sum of all the deeds he has so far done, which keep him from turning round from the course he has once begun."⁹

Man is not benefitted or handicapped by either his, or is ancestral past. When man meets God what is decisive is his own state at that moment, his total orientation of life. "When God confronts him with 'life' or 'death', what is decisive is his state of that moment; if, though once righteous, he is wicked, his previous righteousness is of no avail to him, he then 'dies'. And conversely. God's ways are therefore perfectly just; it is human judgment that is illogical."¹⁰

If blame could be placed on previous generations Israel could shrug off any sense of sin and accuse God of being "unjust". This would excuse them of self-examination and need for reformation of life.

In this entire section Ezekiel presents the truth that God desires not the death but the repentance of the wicked, and that each individual is both free and responsible for his own actions.

"The ultimate goal is the corporate renewal which can come as people turn, one by one, from their murmuring against God and against each other and begin instead to reinforce one another in the doing of God's will."¹¹

The entire passage revolves round two questions: Does the son bear the iniquity of the father? And if so, "Is God equal"?

The Jews argument for an affirmative answer to these questions, was in the fact that they were in captivity, not just for their own sins, but because of the sins of their fathers. They were avoiding even considering individual repentance, which would have been difficult and costly, by shifting the blame upon their ancestral past. And claiming that even if they repented they would still suffer for the sins of others.

God, through Ezekiel, answers that it was sin, national sin, theirs and the generations that had gone before them that had brought about the downfall of the nation. But in the matter of the individual, God judges him according to what he is doing, not by what has been done, or is being done by the nation.

That God is "equal" or "just" is then proven by Ezekiel. if the son does righteously, he shall live. But the soul that sins, it shall die. Each father, and each son is

⁹Walter Eichrodt, Ezekiel. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 241.

¹⁰D.M.G. Stalker, Ezekiel. p. 163.

¹¹Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Ezekiel 18:25-32", p. 286.

responsible for his own life (future). The wicked can repent and live, which is God's desire, because He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. When he repents ("turn yourselves") his past acts of sin will not condemn him. Or the righteous can return to the way of the wicked, but if he does, he will die. His past acts of righteousness will not save him. So whether one "lives" or "dies" depends upon what he does.

The equality of God in thus dealing with each individual according to his own acts was undeniable just. It was Israel who was unjust or unequal, in attempting to escape their own personal responsibility by hiding behind a false proverb. With the destruction of the proverb, they are left without excuse.

They are both responsible and free to choose their own future. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel" when God desires that you "turn yourselves and live."

"DANIEL"

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. The book of Daniel illustrates God's care for His people.
 - B. **BUT WHO IS DANIEL?**
 - 1. "Daniel" means, "God is my judge."
 - 2. Nothing at all is known of his parentage or family.
 - 3. We do know from reading this book that he had fine instruction.
 - 4. He was taken captive and carried to Babylon by king Nebuchadnezzar in 3rd year of reign of Jehoiakim. (1:1).
 - 5. He was a very young man.
 - C. **He was determined to serve the God of Heaven**, even in the presence of heathenism, and was absolutely unswerving in his religious convictions.
-

MEETING THE CRISIS

- A. Daniel chosen for a position full of glory and honor.
 - 1. How exciting this must have been.
 - 2. Even tho he is in a strange land...the honor of being selected to serve king.
 - 3. **Brings a crisis to his life:**
 - a. Must eat at the King's table.
 - b. Unclean food (would violate his religious training).
 - c. What will he do?
 - B. **MANY YEARS LATER:** The decree...for a period of 30 days, on the pain of death....no one could offer a petition to gods or man, except to the king. (Darius).
 - 1. What is Daniel going to do?
 - 2. Skip praying for 30 days?
 - 3. Hid....Let no one see him...
 - 4. NO...As was his custom....as he always did...prayed unto God three times a day.
 - C. **HOW DID DANIEL MEET EACH CRISIS?**
 - 1. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat. (1:8).
 - 2. Regardless of what the devil offers....remember that God is there.
 - 3. Daniel just said "**NO**"
- ***Later we will see what God did:**
-

The Dream; & Interpretation

- A. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, couldn't remember or understand it.
 - 1. The Dream is recorded in Daniel 2:31-35. READ
 - 2. The Interpretation in Daniel 2:36-45. READ.
-

“DANIEL”

Page 2

DREAM , cont.

B. Brief Outline Leading To Everlasting Kingdom.

1. Nebuchadnezzar: “Thou art the head of gold. And the student of both secular and sacred history will note:
2. Medo-Persian: Represented by the breasts and arms of the image.
3. A young man, **Alexander**, son of Philip conquers empire after empire...and weeps because there were no more to conquer....This the third Kingdom of the dream.
4. The ruins of these kingdoms merged into the Roman Empire. Represented by the legs, feet and toes of iron and clay. This is the kingdom with which “stone cut out without hands” comes in contact. “The stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

C. NOW HEAR DANIEL:

1. Chapter 2:14: READ.
 2. The N.T. picks up the story.
 - a. “In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”
 - b. What days? Herod...The Roman Empire...4th of the dream.
 - c. Mark 9:1: “There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see Kingdom of God come with power.”
 - d. Luke 24:49, “tarry in Jerusalem unto....receive power from on high.
 - e. Acts 1:8, ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.
 - f. Then Acts 2.
-

Handwriting on the Wall!

- A. THE STORY in Daniel chapter 5.
 - B. Note and read v. 25.
 - C. Can you see the writing on the wall?
 - D. All the ways in can be applied today.
-

"DANIEL"

Page 3

Book Preserve Because

A. Jehovah's nation in the eyes of the world.

1. For a 1000 years God has nurtured the Hebrew nation.
2. Now Jehovah's nation had been destroyed by a nation that worshiped idols.
3. In the eyes of the world....was the gods of Babylon more powerful than the God of the Jews?

B. THREE TIMES....EVEN FOUR THE BOOK OF DANIEL declares that "GOD IS ABLE." Let's notice:

1. **DANIEL:** you remember refused the King's food...after a time of eating pulse and drinking water...How did they look. (v. 14).
2. **THE FIERY FURNACE:**
 - a. The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
 - b. READ 3;17-18, "God whom we serve is able.
 - c. The final results.
3. **DANIEL AND THE LIONS DEN:** Perhaps the most famous of all.
 - a. The decree that was passed and why.
 - b. Daniel as was his custom...prayed..
 - c. Arrested and placed in the Lion's Den.
 - d. Darius comes early....**Read 6:19-22.....GOD IS ABLE!**
4. **THE GOD WHO WAS ABLE TO DO ALL THIS...IS ALSO THE GOD WHO WAS ABLE TO ESTABLISH AN ETERNAL KINGDOM!**

C. THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF BOOK OF DANIEL IS THAT GOD IS ABLE!!

HOSEA

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. "HOSEA"....means "salvation" or "deliverance"
 - B. DATE: 750 - 720 B.C. (?)
 - C. TIME OF PROSPERITY BUT ALSO OF IMPENDING DOOM.
 - D. The language of the book is plain and frank. To show the exceedingly sinfulness of sin.
 - E. Yet maybe more than any other O.T. book we learn that "God Is Love".
Hosea is the John of the Old Testament.
-

Historically and Religiously

A. HISTORICALLY:

- 1. Days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah Kings of Judah. And Jeroboam and Joash, Kings of Israel.
- 2. Days of great prosperity.
- 3. Then internal feuds brought weakness.
- 4. Forgot God and began to look one way or another for help.
- 5. Samaria fell, Israel carried away....Judah besieged.

B. RELIGIOUSLY:

- 1. Socially and morally corrupt.
 - 2. "She went after lovers and forgot me, sayeth the Lord." (2:13).
 - 3. READ opening text. (4:1-3).
 - 4. The people were bent on backsliding.
-

WHO IS GOMER?

- A. Opening statement of the book (1:2) "*Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms; for the land has committed great whoredom departing from the Lord.*"
 - 1. What did God mean?
 - 2. The answer must be based upon a careful study of entire book.
 - 3. At least three interpretations have been offered.
 - a. Literal history and Hosea was commanded to marry an actual adulteress and he obeyed the command.
 - b. Many consider it an allegory, claiming that no such marriage took place. Just a parable.
 - c. Majority of interpreters hold that Hosea actually married Gomer, a clean woman guilty of spiritual adultery. Later Idolatry brought forth its natural fruits.

HOSEA

Page 2

B. THE CHILDREN OF THE MARRIAGE:

1. 1. "Jezreel"; vengeance..."I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." (1:4).
2. "Lomhamah"; "No mercy"... "For I will have no mercy upon the house of Israel. (1:6).
3. "Loammi" not my people.... "for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God."
4. But also note...God is willing to change the name.
 - a. "Ammi" = "My people"
 - b. "Ruhamah" That hath obtained mercy.

C. THE WOMAN OF CHAPTER THREE:

1. No doubt this is Gomer.
 2. She is a drinking adulteress.
 3. God tells Hosea to "buy her back"
 4. "So I bought3:2-3....The comparable love of God is here shown for his backsliding wife....Israel.
-

DRIFTING FROM GOD

A. Again and again Hosea accuses God's redeemed people of forsaking Him. (2:2,5; 2:13; 4:12; 7:13; etc.)

1. The departure was no sudden decision on their part.
2. Rather the result of a slow gradual inner decay.
3. Until they were no longer God's people and he was no longer their God.

B. CAUSE OF DRIFTING:

1. The first step in Israel's way down was a lack of knowledge. (4:1,2) "*Nor knowledge of God in the land*"
2. "*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; that thou shalt be no priest to me, seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children*"(4:6).
3. "They have left off to take heed to the Lord." (4:10).

C. PROCESS OF DRIFTING AWAY:

1. Material Greed (2:5)
 2. Rejection of truth. (4:6).
 3. Unworthy Leadership (6:9)
 4. Compromise with idolatrous neighbors (7:8)
 5. Pride and self sufficiency (5:5; 7:10).
 6. The Love of Sin. (9:10).
-

Message For Us Today

A. GOD IS LOVE:

1. Chapter 2 beginning with verse 14, there are listed 10 things that God would do for Israel if she would return.
2. READ.

B. SIN CAUSES GOD TO WEEP.

1. Hosea 11:1-8.
2. V. 8; "my compassions are kindled together...."
3. Remember Jesus...as he looked over Jerusalem and wept.

C. NEVER HAD SO MANY BEEN OFFERED SO MUCH FOR SO LITTLE.

1. READ 14:1-7.
2. **And they refused:** Destroyed by Assyria.

D. Mark 16:15-16; NEVER HAVE SO MANY, BEEN OFFERED SO MUCH, FOR SO LITTLE. (on our part). (Eph. 2).

1. John 3:16.
2. Matt. 11:28-30.

E. ROMANS 11:22: *"Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off."*

JOEL

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. DATE: 830 B.C. - Some contend for a date of about 500 B.C.
1. Since we know nothing of Joel, the son of Pethuel, we must look else where for a date.
 2. No identifying kings are mentioned.
- B. JOEL = "Jehovah Is God"
- C. THE OCCASION:
1. The calamity that befell the land from locusts and drought and from fire that followed.
 2. Some think the locusts were an invading army.
 3. The stronger possibility is that these were literal locusts from which the prophet draws his lesson and his strong call to repentance.
 4. Unless there is repentance and righteousness of life on the part of the nation, the locusts will be followed by a stronger and more severe judgment, an invasion by the nations.
- D. THE MESSAGE: (Joel 2;12-14).
1. Warning to the people and nations.
 2. Call to repentance
 3. 'Day of Jehovah'.
- E. THE PROPHET OF PENTECOST".
1. Because of Joel 2 and Acts 2.
 2. It may be said that though the book begins in gloom, with a dark and terrifying picture, it closes with the anticipation of a bright and glorious day to come.
-

LOCUSTS

- A. NUMBER:
1. As many as 75,000 eggs may be concentrated in less than a sq. yard.
 2. All begin to hatch at once. It is said that the ground appears to quiver and tremble.
 3. Ten miles wide and eighty or ninety miles in length....the whole surface might literally be said to be covered with the.
 4. Numbers are estimated at millions and million, perhaps even a billion.
- B. STAGES: Four term used - probably refers to the four stages.
1. Eggs...75,000 per square yard.
 2. Larvae
 3. Hoppers..
 4. Wings...fly...adult.
- C. TOTAL DEVASTATION... Read from article on "Locusts" and a "A Locust Plague" at the end of this lesson.
-

JOEL

Page 2

"DAY OF THE LORD"

- A. The "Day of the Lord" appears five times in the book. (1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 2:31; and 3:14).
 - B. CAN BE VIEWED IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE CATEGORIES.
 - 1. A day of temporal judgment.
 - 2. A day which leads men to repent and return to God.
 - 3. A day which contains great promises for the faithful.
 - 4. Day of Pentecost as described by Joel in 2:28-32 - Divinely interpreted by Peter in Acts 2:16-21.
 - 5. The Final Day of Judgment upon all humanity at the end of time.
-

DAY OF PENTECOST

- A. "Pentecost Pointer"
 - B. "Day of Pentecost" often mentioned in the prophecies of O.T.
 - C. It is the "day which the Lord has made" (Psalms 118:24) NOTICE:
 - 1. The gates of righteousness are opened to man (v. 19)
 - 2. Man may enter the gate of the Lord (v. 20).
 - 3. The Lord become man's salvation (v. 21)
 - 4. The Lord became the head of the corner (Mat. 21:42; I Pet. 2:7) (v. 22).
 - 5. Men would bless the Lord out of the house of God (v. 26)
-

Book Preserved Because

- A. Why God has preserved this book for us.
 - 1. It is a call to repentance.
 - 2. We are to repent toward God.
- B. THE ABSOLUTE DESTRUCTION FOR THOSE WHO CONTINUE in sin.
 - 1. As terrible as the locusts plague was, it was but a warning of the more terrible judgment which was to come upon those who do not repent.
 - 2. "The burners of the land"...so called by the Romans...which is the meaning of the name.
- C. Luke 13:3... Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish....
 - 1. Acts 3:19
 - 2. Acts 2:38
- D. "THE DAY OF THE LORD" ...that is yet to come..

FINAL JUDGMENT....

WHAT THEN?

WHAT THEN?

When the great plants of our cities,
Have turned out their last finished work;
When the merchants have sold their last yard of silk
And dismissed the last tired clerk. ‘
When our banks have raked in their last dollar,
And paid their last dividend;
When the judge of the earth shall say,
“Closed for the night.”
And asks for a balance....**WHAT THEN?**

When the singers have sung their last anthem,
The minister offered his last prayer;
When the people have heard their last sermon
And the sound has died out in the air.
When the Bible lies closed on the pulpit,
And the pews are all empty of men;
When each one stands facing his record - **WHAT THEN?**

When the actors have played their last drama, ‘
And the mimic has made his last fun;
When the film has flashed its last picture,
And the bill board displayed its last run.
When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,
And gone out in the darkness again;
When the trumpet of ages has been sounded,
And we stand in His presence....**WHAT THEN?**

When the bugle’s call sinks into silence,
And the long marching columns stand still;
When the captain repeats his last order,
And they have captured the last fort and hill. ‘
When the flag has been hauled from its masthead,
And the wounded and dying check in;
When a world that rejected its Savior,
Is asked for a reason ----**WHAT THEN?**

INVASION BY LOCUSTS!

(Most of the following was taken from: Exploring the Book, by J. Sidlow Baxter, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan.)

“The young locusts rapidly attain the size of the common grasshopper, and proceed in one and the same direction, first crawling, and at a later period leaping as they go, devouring every green thing that lies in their path. They advance more slowly than a devouring fire, but the ravages they commit are scarcely inferior or less to be dreaded. Fields of standing wheat and barley, vineyards, mulberry orchards, and groves of olive, fig and other trees are in a few hours deprived of every green blade and leaf, the very bark being often destroyed. The ground over which their devastating hordes have passed at once assumes an appearance of sterility and dearth. Well did the Romans call them ‘the burners of the land,’ which is the literal meaning of our word ‘locust.’ On they move, covering the ground so completely as to hide it from sight, and in such numbers that it often takes three or four days for the mighty host to pass by. When seen at a distance, this swarm of advancing locusts resembles a cloud of dust or sand, reaching a few feet above the ground, as the myriads of insects leap forward. The only thing that momentarily arrests their progress is a sudden change of wether; for the cold benumbs them while it lasts. They also keep quiet at night, swarming like bees on the bushes and hedges until the morning sun warms them and revives them and enables them to proceed on their devastating march. They have no king nor leader, yet they falter not, but press on in serried ranks, urged in the same direction by an irresistible impulse, and turn neither to the right hand nor the left for any sort of obstacle. When a wall or a house lies in their way, they climb straight up, going over the roof to the other side, and blindly rush in at the open doors and windows. When they come to water, be it a mere puddle or a river, a lake or the open sea, they never attempt to go round it, but unhesitatingly leap in and are drowned, and their dead bodies, floating on the surface, form a bridge for their companions to pass over. The scourge thus often comes to an end, but it as often happens that the decomposition of millions of insects produces pestilence and death. History records a remarkable instance which occurred in the year 125 before the Christian era. The insects were driven by the wind into the sea in such vast numbers that their bodies, being driven back by the tide upon the land caused a stench which produced a fearful plague whereby eighty thousand persons perished in Libya, Cyrene, and Egypt.

The locust, however, soon acquires its wings, and proceeds on its way by flight, whenever a strong breeze favors its progress. Our attention has often been attracted by the sudden darkening of the sun in a summer sky, accompanied by the peculiar noise

which a swarm of locusts always makes moving through the air; and, glancing upward, we have seen them passing like a cloud at a height of two or three hundred feet.

We call particular attention to the above mention of the fire-like effects of the locusts; of the noise made by their wings; of the darkening of the sun; and of their destruction as the sea shore exactly as Joel describes (2:20). But if a locust 'swarm' is so awful, what must a locust 'plague' be! It is little wonder that when Moses announced a coming plague of locusts Pharaoh's counselors exclaimed in desperation, "knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

Mr. James Bryce, in his *Impressions of South Africa*, writes: 'It is a strange sight, beautiful if you can forget the destruction it brings with it. The whole air, to twelve or eighteen feet above the ground, is filled with the insects, reddish brown in body, with bright, gauzy wings. When the sun's rays catch them it is like the sea sparkling with light. When you see them against a cloud they are like the dense flakes of a driving snow-storm. You feel as if you had never before realized immensity in number. Vast crowds of men gathered at a festival, countless tree-tops rising along the slope of a forest ridge, the chimneys of London houses from the top of St. Paul's - all are as nothing to the myriads of insects that blot out the sun above and cover the ground beneath and fill the air whichever way one looks. The breeze carries them swiftly past, but they come on in fresh clouds, a host of which there is no end, each of them a harmless creature which you can catch and crush in your hand, but appalling in their power of collective devastation.'

Or to quote, in an abbreviated form, from W.M. Thomson's classic work, *The Land And The Book*: "their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a living deluge. We dug trenches, and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death 'heaps upon heaps'; but the effort was utterly useless. Wave after wave rolled up the mountain side, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches and hedges - those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. It was perfectly appalling to watch this animated river as it flowed *up* the road, and ascended the hill above my house. For for days they continued to pass on toward the east....millions upon millions. In their march they devour every green thing, and with wonderful expedition. The noise made in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower on a distant forest. Nothing in their habits is more striking than the pertinacity with which they all pursue the same like of march, like a disciplined army.'

In the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, October 1865, a writer recorded: 'Our garden finished, they continued toward the town, devastating one garden after another. Whatever one is doing one hears their noise from without, like the noise of armed hosts, or the running of many waters. When in an erect position their appearance at a little distance is like that of a well-armed horseman.' Another writer says: 'To strength

incredible for so small a creature, they add saw-like teeth, admirable calculated to eat up all the herbs in the land.' Another says: 'After eating up the corn, they fell upon the vines, the pulse, the willows, and even the hemp, notwithstanding its great bitterness.' and another says: 'for eighty or ninety miles they devoured every green herb and every blade of grass.' And another says: 'the gardens outside Jaffa are not completely stripped, even the bark of the young trees have been devoured, and look like a birch-tree forest in winter.' and still another: 'the fields finished, they invade towns and houses, in search of stores. Victual of all kinds, hay, straw, and even linen and woollen clothes and leather bottles, they consume or tear in pieces. They flood through the open, unglazed windows and lattices; nothing can keep them out.' W.M. Thomson tells us that when the millions upon millions of locust eggs hatch, the very dust seems to waken to life, and the earth itself seems to tremble with them; and later, when the vast new breed have acquired wings, the very heavens seem tremulous with them. And as for Joel's likening of the locusts to "dawn scattered on the mountains," G.A. Smith says: 'No one who has seen a cloud of locusts can question the realism even of this picture; the heavy gloom of the immeasurable mass of them, shot by beams of light where a few of the sun's imprisoned beams have broken through or across the storm of lustrous wings. This is like dawn beaten down upon the hilltops, and crushed by rolling masses of cloud, in conspiracy to prolong the night.'

We need add no more. The foregoing evidence settles two things conclusively: the *awfulness* of a really bad locust plague; and the *literalness* of Joel's description. There can remain no doubt that the invasion which Joel announced as imminent was an invasion by locusts; nor can we doubt that it was this to which he referred, in the first place, when he said: "the day of Jehovah is at hand." The connection in the context is too clear to mistake.

LOCUSTS

In the book of Joel one finds a terrible description of the day of the lord in the form of a plague of locusts. But how many people in the world are familiar with locusts and what they can do? This will be a short study on locusts.

The Life Of The Locusts.

The average life-span of the locust is about four months. But if they are in a cold mountainous area, or if their food supply dries up, they can slow down their body functions enough to increase their life-span to a year.

The first stage of the locust's life is the egg stage. In order to hatch, an egg must absorb its weight in water from the moist soil around it. Each egg is about the size of a piece of rice. The eggs are laid in pods of about seventy in number. Each pod is sealed with a foamy substance to help retain moisture in the pod. The pod is laid about four inches below the surface of the soil.

All the eggs hatch at the same time and the hoppers, as they are called, emerge to the surface. The juvenile locust start eating as soon as they emerge from the earth. The hoppers shed their natal skin very soon after their emergence. They then turn dark after a couple of hours, and within a few days they move off in large, thick bands.

The next phase of the locust's life is the adult stage. The hopper attaches himself to something so that he is upside down so that gravity can help him shed the shell-like skin. This skin splits down the back and the locust breaks out of it by expanding it's abdomen and thorax.

The final phase of the locust's life is the egg-laying stage. During this stage of the female's life she becomes a very intense, chrome yellow in color. This is the final color change of the locusts for breeding and egg-laying. The area must have moist soil and fresh vegetation for the eggs to hatch and the hoppers to feed.

The female extends her abdomen to about twice its normal length and deposits the pod of about seventy eggs with the foam that seals it. The female has sensors at the end of her tail to determine if conditions are adequate for her eggs. During the last four weeks of the female's life she can lay about 200 eggs in three pods.

The Movement Of The Locusts.

The locusts has a double set of wings that span about five inches across and beat between 1,100 and 1,200 times a minute, moving him along at ten miles an hour. But the major means of movement is the wind. Locusts can remain in the air, with the wind, up to twelve hours. With good winds the range of the locusts is 3,000 miles in their lifetime.

The Feeding Of Locusts.

The locust has serrated jaws that rasp from side to side. The adult eats the

equivalent of its body weight daily, .04 to .09 ounces. However the locust can live about four days on stored fat without eating. They have a remarkable effective sense of smell by which they locate their food.

The Devastation Of Locusts.

Locusts destroy everything. They eat trees, leaves, grass, crops, and all forms of vegetation. It is the young adults that do the most damage because they begin to fly farther and eat more than at any other time. The locusts swarm has been likened to a living tumbleweed: the front edge of the swarm alights to feed, the others pass overhead, then those that have eaten rise up and start all over again.

The desert locust, probably the Biblical locust, is capable of tremendous multiplication and devastation. It can invade nearly eleven million square miles. One swarm in 1958 measured 400 square miles and contained about forty billion locusts, which was capable of eating 80,000 tons of food per day.

AMOS

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. THE MAN: From obscurity of a shepherd to a few brief moments upon the stage of history.
 - 1. NAME; Means "burden-bearer"
 - 2. HOME; Village of Tekoa, about 6y miles south of Bethlehem..12 miles south of Jerusalem.
 - 3. OCCUPATION; Had been a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees.
- B. CHARACTERIZATION: Some one has described Amos as "the first Great Reformer." He was not of the school of the prophets (7:14-15). As Hosea was summed up in the word "loving-kindness" Amos is summed up in the one word "justice."
- C. THE DATE; He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam, king of Israel so would be about 750 -760 B.C.

BACKGROUND

- A. BORDER: Borders of both Israel and Judah had been spread to their original size. They were at Ease...No real enemies.
- B. LUXURY:
 - 1. "Summer-house," the "houses of ivory" "couches" and "silken cushions" "houses of hewn-stone"
 - 2. The voluptuous women were spoken of as "kine of Bashan," who insisted that their husbands provide ample wine and other luxuries for their feasts, even if the poor had to be crushed in order to provide these (4;1-3).
- C. MORAL AND POLITICAL CORRUPTION:
 - 1. The moral condition of the nation is clearly revealed by the prophet's shock at the cruel treatment of the poor by the rich...
 - 2. Covetousness and immorality of the people in power, and general contempt for things holy. (2:6-8).
 - 3. There was an abundance of religion, but it was far short of what God required, because the ceremonies were not coupled with justice and righteousness (5:24).
 - 4. **they did much; sacrifices, tithes, etc. But it was that which please themselves rather than that which pleased God. (4:4,5).
 - 5. For all of this God would bring them to judgment; therefore; "prepare to meet thy God" (4:12). Often taken out of context. Doom was coming!

AMOS

Page 2

TEACHINGS

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- A. The prophets's conception of Jehovah...A world view of God and the nations. Never refers to Jehovah as "The God of Israel".
 - B. THE PROPHETS CONCEPTION OF ISRAEL.
 - 1. The people of god...thus a special relationship to Him.
 - 2. Should reflect the character of God.
 - 3. Israel had failed in the divine purpose; therefore, judgment.
 - C. PERMANENT LESSONS OF THE BOOK.
 - 1. Justice between man and man is divine foundations of society.
 - 2. Privilege implies responsibility.
 - 3. Failure to recognize and accept responsibility is sure to bring punishment.
 - 4. Nations, individuals must live up to light and knowledge.
 - 5. The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commands.
-

FIVE VISIONS

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- A. THE LOCUST coming during the latter growth and complete calamity was only averted by the mercy of God (7:1-3).
 - 1. Remember Joel
 - 2. The message about locust plagues.
 - B. THE DEVOURING FIRE (7:4-6).
 - C. THIRD; GOD STATES that He will not pass them by any more.
 - 1. Calamity is coming.
 - 2. ****The Plumb Line**** (7:7-9).
 - D. FOURTH: A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT:
 - 1. Beautiful to see ...Good...but
 - 2. Ripe fruit cannot be kept.
 - 3. The judgment of God upon Israel could not be kept.
 - 4. God would even send a famine of hearing the words of the Lord (8:11).
 - E. FIFTH; THE SMITTEN SANCTUARY" (9:1-10).
 - 1. The end is near...
 - 2. But the righteous would not be destroyed with the wicked. (9:9).
 - 3. Principal message of the book is DOOM!
-

AMOS

Page 3

Applied to Current Problems

- A. Could his book sound any more like today's news? Look at chapter six! Judgment because of:
1. Luxurious living.
 2. Impiety.
 3. They felt secure.
 4. No one could overtake their armies, the people thought.
 5. Put far away the evil day.
- B. We can scarcely fail to be impressed with the similarity of the conditions in the time of Amos to those of today. Although Amos prophesied in the 8th century before Christ, he addressed himself to a society to which we are no strangers. Consider some prominent characteristics Amos confronted:
1. Prosperity
 2. Love of Luxury
 3. Disregard and Oppression of the Poor
 4. Ritualistic Worship
 5. Religious Apostasy.
- C. We would not have to search far to discover the same characteristics today. since Amos addressed such a nation and society, it is readily apparent that prophecy has a particular pertinency for our day.
- D. Israel concluded that since He was their God and they His people, and since they had been so extravagant in their offerings and worship, surely He would favor them.
-

AMAZIAH'S OF TODAY

- A. There has always been efforts to weaken and dilute the truth. To intimidate the prophets. (7:12-13)
1. "Catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.
 2. "Be careful what you say - you may drive them farther away."
 3. We want to appeal....may be appealing to the world.
 4. "The land is not able to bear all his words"
- B. The direction of the world today (church) say only the things people like to hear...
1. No more "fire and brim stone" sermons.
 2. The Hireling"Amos was not for hire.
- C. "THE PROPHETS PROPHECY FALSELY, AND THE PRIESTS BEAR RULE BY THEIR MEANS; AND MY PEOPLE LOVE TO HAVE IT SO;" (Jer. 5:31).
- D. **READ...II Tim. 4:1-4.**

CONCLUSION:

"Seek ye me, and ye shall live," (5:4).

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say." (5:14).

Book Preserved Because ...

- A. True servants of God today must speak God's truths and have courage like Amos and speak the whole council of God even in the sinner's den (3:3-8; 7:10-17).
 - B. Christians today must recognize the perils of privilege. Privilege brings responsibility and it brings the danger of one thinking he can slip by without being accountable because of his privilege. In our privileged position we must recognize that more is demanded of us rather than less. We must practice worship that is pleasing to God and not to ourselves. A worship that is in spirit and in truth with an attitude of faith and obedience according to God's plan of salvation. God is to be praised, worshiped, and feared for His power is great and He controls and over rules all things to accomplish His will (4:6-13; 5:4-9).
 - C. A corrupt sense of values like seeking the wrong things, loving the wrong things, hating the wrong things is the basic cause of sin (5:4-17). Whereas justice and righteousness are the foundational virtues for a right relationship to God and society.
-

IS THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID YET TO BE RAISED UP?

Amos 9:11-15

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.

A thorough reading of the passage indicates that it is dealing with future promised blessings to the people of Judah, especially the house of David and also to the people of Israel.

The First Promise: The tabernacle of David will be raised up and restored as in the days of old.

The Second Promise: David's kingdom will possess Edom.

The Third Blessing: All the nations called by God's name will share in the victory and blessings of the tabernacle of David.

The Fourth Promise: Is of great agricultural success and abundance of grapes and wine.

The Fifth Promise: God will bring back the captivity of his people Israel and they will build waste cities, plant vineyards and have fruitful gardens.

The Sixth Promise: They will be planted upon their land, and no more plucked up.

It is clear that this passage falls into the category of passages concerning future blessings or an idyllic age.

Four basic interpretations are given concerning this passage.

1. The critic-liberal view.
2. The figurative-spiritualization view.
3. The premillennial-literal view.
4. The conditional-multiple meaning view.

The Critical-liberal view denies the authenticity of this passage and claims that it is an interpolation added over 300 years after Amos, following the Babylonian captivity, by some who expected or hoped to create an expectation for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. This school of thought simply passes over the passage as they do similar ones by considering it high hopes held by a few Hebrews but which never

achieved fulfillment. It would be cited by the most critical as an example of unfulfilled prophecy.

The Figurative-Spiritualization school of thought deals with the passage in too simple a manner. They regard all of it as figurative and claim that it had as its full meaning, the coming of Christ, the establishment of his church or kingdom, and regard all the promises as reference to spiritual blessings in the church. It is certainly true and clear that the Holy Spirit in guiding Amos had in mind Christ, the establishment of the church, and God's intent for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. This is proved by James citing the passage as having this meaning in Acts 15:13-21.

However, to say that is all the passage meant originally, when uttered by Amos, is to fail to take into consideration the detailed language of the passage and the context in which it is placed. It also fails to recognize a fundamental principle concerning the New Testament use of Old Testament prophecies. When Matthew 2:15 cites Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt did I call my son," it is clear that Matthew is using the phrase topologically. In the original context in Hosea 11:1, Hosea's reference is obviously to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. That served as the type, and Christ is the anti-type. Further, the citation in Matthew 2:17,18 concerning Rachel weeping for her children, is clearly a prophecy with a multiple meaning. A close examination of the context in Jeremiah 31:15 makes it obvious that when Jeremiah made the statement he was referring to Rachel weeping for the people of Judah going into captivity. The Holy Spirit, however, had a greater event in mind as well, and was anticipating the slaughter of the innocents. A thorough study of most other fulfilled prophecies, cited in the New Testament, from the Old Testament, will indicate that most of these prophecies had a context and a meaning to the original audience and situation as well as a spiritual one concerning Christ, his church, and other blessings of the Christian age.

It is this failure of the figurative-spiritualization school of thought to take seriously, the Old Testament context which causes the premillennial-literal school to reject in general, the spiritualization or amillennial approach to prophecy. Further, the failure of the figurative-spiritualization school to take seriously the Old Testament context of prophecies give a basis for the critical-liberal school's low estimate of the scholarship of the Christian community.

Premillennial-literal school of thought. In this case there is closer harmony between the amillennial view and the premillennial view that in most similar passages. This is due to the fact that James does cite the passage in Acts 15. While some premillennialist may try to interpret the reference to raising up the tabernacle of David, as referring to the second coming of Christ and establishing his kingdom upon the earth for a thousand years, this is not the view expressed by their best scholars. J. Barton Payne, in his exhaustive work, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, says of verse 11,

“The reference must be to His first coming; for Acts 15:16 emphasizes that it is this event which enables the Gentiles, from the Apostolic period onward, to seek God.”

However, Payne and other premillennialists do reject the amillennial-spiritualization interpretation of verses 13 through 15. The premillennialists contend that there has been no literal fulfillment such as this, but that God’s prophecy cannot be broken. Therefore, there must be a literal fulfillment of these promises and that fulfillment will be in the millennial kingdom.

The premillennialist, by insisting on a literal fulfillment of every promise and prophecy made in the Old Testament, even after Christ has come and died, and after he comes the second time, requires ridiculous and unscriptural things to be in the millennial kingdom. They insist that there will be a literal temple, the restoration of Jewish festivals, and the restoration of animal sacrifices, and many other trappings of the Old Testament system. This is clearly in contradiction to the teaching of plain passages in the New Testament. Their system of interpretation of prophecy is clearly so full of problems that it causes thinking people to reject the entire system of Christianity.

The Conditional-multiple meaning approach offers the solution to the passages containing promises of future blessings. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, and especially Jeremiah 18:1-12, establish clearly the principle of the conditional nature of God’s promises and his prophecies, concerning the Hebrew nations and other nations. A careful study of the book of Jeremiah as a whole indicates that repeatedly, his prophecies were expressed in a conditional manner. If the people would repent and serve the Lord, they could stay in their land, be blessed, and prosper, but if they continued in sin, they would go into captivity. Jonah’s prophecy to Nineveh, “Yet forty days, and the city of Nineveh shall be destroyed,” contained no expressed condition, but Jonah knew it was conditional, and so did the people of Nineveh. They repented, and God repented and did not destroy them.

Micah’s prophecy in Micah 3:12, concerning Jerusalem being destroyed and plowed as the field and being a heap of rocks, is cited in Jeremiah 26:16-19 as an unfulfilled prophecy. However, no one was happier that it was an unfulfilled prophecy than God and Micah. The threat was uttered in the hope that it would be an unfulfilled prophecy by motivating the people of Jerusalem to repent. It had its desired effect. Hezekiah heard Micah and led the people in a great repentance and God spared the city.

God made many promises of future blessings to the Hebrew people, but many of these prophecies could not be fulfilled because the Jewish people did not do the things necessary to bring about the fulfillment. No one is sadder that they could not be fulfilled than God and Christ. as described in Matthew 23 Jesus wept over the city of

Jerusalem and stated he would have saved and delivered her if the people would have accepted him, but because they did not accept him, her house was left unto her desolate. Jesus then proceeded to give his great prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Had the Hebrew people of the period of the captivity and the post captivity really returned and been faithful to God and served him according to the law, there is no way we can know how blessed the Hebrew nation would have been. However, they did not meet the conditions. In captivity they sinned, when they returned they sinned, and their sins are described in the books of Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. Further, the New Testament shows the results of their additional sins during the inter-testamental period and of their sins during the time of Christ and ultimate rejection of him. As a result, instead of being able to bless the Hebrew nation, God was forced to curse them again, and to leave their house unto them desolate and to bring the destruction that came in A.D. 70. Christ's words, then, in Matthew 24 and 25, completely obliterate all of the promises concerning the physical Hebrew kingdom. God has no further obligation to restore a Jewish kingdom, restore the Jews to their physical homeland or any other such thing. Paul, in Romans 11 makes it clear that the Jews stand and fall by the same principles upon which Gentiles stand and fall. Both may stand by faith and obedience and both will fall by disbelief and disobedience.

Thus, Amos 9:11-15 had a literal meaning to the original audience. It meant that if the Southern Kingdom would be faithful and righteous, God would make strong and powerful the dynasty of David and give them victory over their enemies and to all who would join with them in following God. It meant that they could receive the same kind of agricultural blessings promised in Leviticus 26, and Deuteronomy 28. It further meant that if the Northern Kingdom of Israel would return to God and serve him, they, too, could have many great blessings of the kingdom.

However, the Holy Spirit had in mind an even greater promise and an unconditional one. Regardless of whether the Hebrew people were righteous or not, God had an overriding plan before the foundation of the world to send his son into the world that men might be saved by him. This promise was never conditioned by man's behavior. Also God had planned before the foundation of the world and had promised to Abraham that he would bless all the people of the earth. Thus, he would make his gospel available to Gentiles as well as Jews. These aspects of the prophecy are cited by James as being fulfilled in Christ, in his kingdom and in God's desire for the gospel to go unto the Gentiles.

OBADIAH

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Who was Obadiah? All we know for sure is that he was God's spokesman.
v. 1 "Thus saith the Lord God"
 - a. As many as 13 Obadiah's mentioned in Old Testament.
 - b. We have no way of knowing if the author was one of them.
 2. DATE: Without more knowledge of author...exact date not possible.
 - a. Could be early or late because events described happened more than once.
(II chron. 21) 848-844 B.C. Or
 - b. Psalms 137...Babylonian captivity...possible date 686 B.C.
 3. Message of The Book.
 - a. The sins of Edom, the topic of the book of Obadiah, must have been great in the sight of Jehovah since He had not only this prophet but Ezekiel, Amos, Jeremiah, and the author of Psalm 137 as well portray their sins and the impending doom of the nation.
 - b. Obadiah though the shortest book in the O.T. has within it tremendous truths concerning God's dealings with His own people and the other nations of the earth.
-

Who Were The Edomites

1. Birth of Jacob and Esau. "Two nations are in thy womb".
 - a. Israel.
 - b. Edomites Esau
 2. Isaac loved Esau.....Rebekah loved Jacob. (Gen. 25:28).
 3. Esau loses his birthright. (Gen. 27).
 4. When Israel crossed the Red Sea and was ready to enter Canaan, were refused permission to pass through Edom because of Esau vengeance. (Number 20).
 5. Edom was later subdued by David (II Sam. 8:14).
 6. Second Kings 2, records a later revolt by Edom.
 7. Jeremiah predicts her final and complete destruction (Jer. 49).
 8. Esau's vengeance for Jacob's getting the blessing was "continuous until Herod the Great" who as "Idumean on his father's side."
 9. Edom is Gone...."What soever a man soweth that shall he reap."
-

OUTLINE

- A. The announcement to the Edomites of their impending doom and complete destruction because of the divine judgment against them. (V. 1-9).
 1. *"For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. 15*
 2. Destruction would be total...trusted in their allies instead of God.

OBADIAH

Page 2

OUTLINE, cont.

3. Trusted in their position...Natural defense.
 4. Their destruction would be such, that they would be but a memory for future generations.
 5. Their doom was sealed. God said so.
 - B. What were their crimes that caused this judgment of God upon them?
 1. Cruel and unbrotherly conduct toward Judah at a time of national calamity.
 2. Shame would cover them because of their violence and inhumane cruelty to their kindred.
 3. Rather than being saddened because Israel was being punished, they rejoiced. (V. 12; Psalms 137; Jer. 49).
 4. They were filled with worldly pride just before their fall.
 - C. But Jehovah had great plans involving the remnant of Jews to be carried off into Babylonian captivity. *They must be returned and restored to their land* (vs. 17-21).
 1. Edom would fall and fall forever.
 2. Judah shall "possess their possessions" v. 17. "But upon Mt. Zion shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy." v. 17.
 3. After 70 years ...Israel returned to Zion.
-

LESSONS

- A. "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 17:34).
 1. Our nation has been built by those who believed in God and sought to glorify him. American has a great heritage. But...
 2. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).
 3. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).
- B. DO NOT ALIGN YOURSELF WITH THE ENEMY.
 1. In the world....in religious circles.
 2. Or in the church!
 3. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).
 4. **When one shares the spoil of wrong-doing, though he may not be an instigator of the crime, standing "on the other side" he becomes "even...as one of them" (v. 11).

OBADIAH

Page 3

LESSONS, cont.

C. GOD'S PROMISE IS TRUE.

1. Edom is gone!
2. Obadiah's vision" was true.
3. Christ is coming. Prepare to meet thy God.

D. PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION:

1. It did with Edom.
2. Pride promotes strife.

E. AS A PEOPLE SOWS, SO WILL IT REAP.

1. JESUS SAID: "*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" (Matt. 6:14-15).
2. In time of divine judgment, God provides a means and a place of escape for those who will turn to Him. The place provided is His Mount Zion.

REASON FOR THE BOOK

A. One reason God has given us this book today is to show that GOD'S WORD IS TRUE!

1. He declared the complete destruction of Edom and they passed from the pages of history.
2. He promised escape and deliverance for those who return unto Him...His Mount Zion.

B. FOR US TODAY:

1. He has declared the end of the wicked
 - a. From Satan....
 - b. To all whose name is not found in book of life. (Rev. 20 - 22).
 2. A place of Refuge, Security...
 - a. The church here...
 - b. Heaven for eternity.
 3. This Book is a constant reminder that **GOD'S WORD IS TRUE!!**
-

JONAH

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN AND THE DATE:

1. The Book of Jonah gives us an unusual insight into the character of the man.
2. His name and place of birth identify him as the prophet of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-25)

B. DATE: 780 B.C.

INTERPRETATIONS

A. The Book of Jonah differs from all other books of the prophets. It is written primarily from the historical point of view...the history of a man, a nation, and God.

B. THREE SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOOK.

1. The Mythical: The mythical school assumes that the story is a myth that grew up around some incident in the history of Israel.
 2. The Allegorical: The allegorical view assumes that the story is an allegory of Israel's captivity, repentance, and restoration to its land.
 3. The Historical: The historical conviction accepts the position that Jonah lived as a prophet of God, that he went to Nineveh and preached to the people of that city, and that God spared the nation. It accepts as historical fact that before going to Nineveh Jonah fled from Jehovah, that a storm arose at sea, that the prophet was cast overboard and was swallowed by a great fish, and that later he was vomited up on the land. (Jesus placed His sanction on the story as historical fact by comparing it to His own death, burial, and resurrection [Matt. 12:39-41])
-

THE MESSAGE

- A. God is willing and anxious to save even the heathen nations if they repent.
 - B. Jehovah is the one universal God, the God the whole earth.
-

JONAH

Page 2

LESSONS

- A. National sin demands national repentance.
 - B. One cannot run away from God. (J.W. McGarvey said, "Jonah learned, and through his valuable experience millions have learned, that when God enjoins a disagreeable duty, it is far easier to go and do it than to run away from it.)
 - C. God is able to use all incidents in the life of His servants for their good and His glory. (Sailors learned about God).
 - D. Opportunity begets challenges.
 - E. The infinite concern of God for life is shown in contrast to the concern of man for the material.
-

ASSIGNMENT:

- A. PREACH GOD'S MESSAGE.
 - 1. Jonah was told where to go and what to preach (Compare Mark 16;16).
 - 2. BUT he did not really care for the salvation of this great city.
 - 3. To Jonah, the destruction of Nineveh was deserved and even desired.
 - B. GOD'S EMPHASIS ON THE MESSAGE: not on the man or the method.
 - C. "CRY AGAINST" is far removed from the pseudo-intellectual, detached "win friends and influence people" philosophy of too many pulpits.
Jonah is not the last preacher who found a ship for Tarshish rather than face his Nineveh.
 - D. THE VALUE OF DISCIPLINE
 - E. JONAH CARED not for Nineveh, so he could hardly rejoice when repentance on her part saved her from destruction. It is only when we care for men while they are lost, and evidence that concern by reaching them with the gospel, that we may rejoice with the angels in heaven when they repent.
-

JONAH

Page 3

THE MIRACLES

- A. One should distinguish between “an act of God” and a Miracle.
 - B. Storm...act of God....could be miracle but not necessary.
 - C. Fish....
 - D. The preserving of the life of a man in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights and the ejecting of him upon the land would be a miracle!.
-

Book Preserved Because....

- A. GOD COMMISSIONS JONAH TO GO AND PREACH.
 - 1. *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it;”*
 - 2. Jonah had to choose....Obey or Disobey.
 - B. THE GREAT COMMISSION:
 - 1. *“And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.’”(Mark 16:15).*
 - 2. We have to choose....Obey or Disobey.
 - 3. Are we carrying the gospel to the world today?
 - C. TO ALL MEN EVERY WHERE THERE ARE BUT “TWO CITIES” ON YOU MAP. THE NINEVEH OF OBEDIENCE AND THE TARSHISH OF DISOBEDIENCE.
-

***GOD'S CONCERN FOR NINEVEH AND THE GENTILE NATIONS**

Jonah 1:2

The book of Jonah has been one of the favorite and most extensively examined books in the critic's den. Too many problems and difficulties have been raised to discuss them all in this lesson, but we do wish to examine a few.

One problem has been a difficulty even within the Bible believing community. Many have developed the concept that God established an exclusive relationship with the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, and that he had nothing to do with the Gentile world. Their concept is that God completely gave up on the Gentile world.

While it is true that Paul says in Romans 1:24 that God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, it is not true that God had an exclusive relationship with Israel and that he did not continue to work in behalf of the Gentile world. God always cared for them. The Old Testament gives a few glimpses here and there of God's continued interest and work among the Gentiles. No doubt, God did much more among them than we can determine from the few glimpses revealed in the Old Testament.

First of all, God's care and concern for all the nations and the people of the earth was involved in his special call of Abraham and the choice of Abraham's seed, the Hebrew nation. God did not choose them because he had rejected the others, but rather he chose them in order to bless and benefit all human beings and nations, through Abraham and his seed (Genesis 22:18). Galatians 3:16 makes it clear that God's intent was to bring Christ into the world through Abraham's seed in order to make salvation available to all men. Thus God selected Abraham and the Hebrews, to work through them ultimately in more effectively saving more of the Gentiles.

That God did not establish an exclusive relationship with the Hebrews, but continued to be the God of the Gentiles as well, is clearly indicated in the circumstances surrounding the giving of the Ten Commandments and the law. In Exodus 18:12 Jethro or Reuel, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifice for God. Throughout the context he is identified as the priest of the Midian, and there is no indication that he ceased this relationship and function.

In Numbers 22, it is clear that the prophet Balaam sustained a relationship to God. While it is true that Balaam sinned and loved the hire of wrong doing, it does not negate that fact that at the outset of the incident described, he was a prophet in the area of Mesopotamia who knew and talked with God.

God gave Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession and showed care for the Edonmites (Deuteronomy 2:5). God gave Ar unto the Moabites for a possession and protected them (Deuteronomy 2:9). The same is true of the Ammonites (Deuteronomy

2:19).

That God maintained concern and control over Gentile nations, is shown by his commissioning Elijah and ultimately guiding Elisha to anoint Hazael of king over Syria (I Kings 19:15-18; II Kings 8:7-15).

Not only does Jonah express God's universal concern for all men and nations, but so do the other prophets. Amos 9:7 affirms, "Are you not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O Children of Israel? Says Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kier?" the book of Habakkuk shows that God was concerned for the sinners among the Babylonians as well as for the sinners among the Hebrews. Isaiah 49:6 and other parallel passages show that God was using the Hebrews as a light to the Gentiles.

In Romans 2 Paul argues that God had a continued interest in the Gentiles during the time of Hebrew nation and the law, and that there was a provision that the Gentiles, who did by nature the things of the law, could find justification as well as the Jews under the law.

The Bible is written not to tell us everything that God has done, but some special things God has done to redeem man by planning, before the foundation of the world, to send his son and working in the history of the world, to bring about the fullness of time when his son would come. It is impossible to reconstruct God's entire interest in dealings with the Gentiles, but it is clear that he always had a concern for them, and was working his plan for their benefit, as well as for the benefit of the Hebrew people. God has never been, and is not now a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35).

The conclusion of the book of Jonah, when God expressed his concern for Nineveh is also a fitting way to express God's concern for all nations and people. In Jonah 4:10,11 God told Jonah, "You have had regard for the gourd, for which you have not labored, neither made it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand: and also much cattle?"

*Selected and adapted from an article by Furman Kearly.

THE PROBLEM OF JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH

Jonah 1:17

And Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Most of the criticisms against the book of Jonah are based on an anti-supernatural bias. The miracles in Jonah are no more difficult to perform, or to believe in, than the miracles in the Gospels or Acts. However, critics focus on Jonah and the great fish because it is unique and they can be more effective in charging and convincing others that this is a ridiculous situation. Because of the love and respect of most people for Christ, the critics dare not ridicule the miracles of Christ, but generally, they can get away with ridiculing Jonah. There is no more reason to reject the miracle of the great fish, than there is to reject the miracle of Peter getting coins from a fish's mouth to pay taxes (Matthew 17:27). The difference is in the psychological response the critics receive.

Is supernaturalism so incredible? Certainly, it should not be (Acts 26:8). If there is a God at all, then supernaturalism is possible. If Christ is the son of God, then supernaturalism is possible. If there was a creation by God, then supernaturalism is possible, for God certainly could enter into his creation, and intervene at any time he chose. If Christ was raised from the dead, then supernaturalism is possible. The rejection of supernaturalism is the rejection of Christ, the Bible, and all religion, morals, and ethics.

Specific Observations On The Great Fish. First, critics allege a contradiction in the Bible between Jonah 1:17 and Matthew 12:40. Because the New Testament is translated whale instead of fish, critics contend that a whale is a mammal and not a fish. This charge only indicates the ignorance of the critics who make it. (1) The original Hebrew word and the original Greek word, both mean a creature of the sea. Neither the Greek word nor the Hebrew word has a specific type of fish inherent in its meaning. The English translations that use wale are erroneous by being far more specific than they should be.

(2) Classifying a whale as a mammal is merely a human classification and very late in date. The present biological classification system began about the middle of the 18th century, and has gradually developed to the present sophisticated system. Even among biologists, there are many conflicts as to classification and no one claims infallibility for their system. Such a classification system was totally unknown in the Old Testament and the New Testament world. For general purposes, most people still consider an animal that lives in the sea to be in the category of fish. It is indeed

ridiculous for critics to demand that the Bible conform to some recent classification system devised by men.

Considerable evidence is in existence to indicate that it is possible for some varieties of whales and sharks to swallow a man. While it is still disputed whether a clear case exists of a man surviving such a swallowing, it is agreed that such swallowings have taken place. Victor B. Scheffer, in his book, the Year Of The Whale, published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1969, discusses a number of reported instances of humans being swallowed by sperm whales on pages 82 through 87. Other studies can be found.

Whether there have been any modern parallels to Jonah, or not, the fact is that the scripture says God prepared a great fish. The best way to deal with this biblical account is simply to regard it as a miracle and not attempt to explain it by some naturalistic process. The gourd and the worm would also appear to be miraculous. We have no reason to apologize for miracles for our universe and life itself is a miracle, and apart from God, it cannot be explained. Rather than expending our time and effort in finding naturalistic explanations, we should simply spend more effort in demonstrating the existence and power of God and increasing our faith in him and his word.

THE REPENTANCE OF GOD

Jonah 3:10

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

At least thirty times the Old Testament speaks of God's repenting. By far, most of these express God's sorrow or regret concerning men not living up to God's expectations, or to their potential, or not meeting the conditions expected of them. Thus, God is sorry and often must change his planned behavior toward man. In Genesis 6:7, God was disappointed in the course of conduct chosen by mankind and it was necessary for God to punish, rather than bless, as he would prefer to do. In I Samuel 15:11, 35, God is disappointed in the conduct of Saul and forced by Saul's not meeting the conditions expected of him, to cancel his promises to Saul's house and divert them to one after his own heart.

In the same context, I Samuel 15:29, it is said that God will not lie nor repent for his is not man that he should repent. However, since all of these words come from the same Hebrew word nacham, the context makes it clear that this verse is simply meaning that God will not change his pronounced punishments upon Saul and his diversion of the blessings intended for Saul, to another house. It certainly could not mean that God never feels disappointment, sorrow and regret that causes him to change his previously announced plans.

All of these references to the repentance of God, come from the Hebrew word nacham. This word basically conveys the concept of disappointment, sorrow, regret, which leads to a change in one's action. The use of this word in the Pi'el simply means to comfort or console. The word is not used in reference to God in the sense that God has done something wrong or committed some error, but simply expresses his disappointment, sorrow and regret, and the necessity for God to change his previous intentions. Sometimes, as in Jeremiah 18:8, 10, the reference may be to God changing his previously intended action to punish, and blessing instead. This is precisely the sense in Jonah 3:9, 10. God saw the contrition of the people of Nineveh, extended his compassion toward them and did not carry out his proposed threat to destroy the city.

One of our truly great blessings is that our God is gracious and merciful and conditions his acts toward us, by our acts toward him. While there are principles and aspects of God's nature, in which he is immutable, yet he is not so inflexible that he cannot adjust his infallible actions to deal with fallible human contingencies. Praise God, that he is a God who repents.

MICAH

"Who Is Like Jehovah"

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN:

1. Is of the village of Moresheth-gath. A small town about 20-25 miles S W of Jerusalem.
2. Know nothing about his occupation or family.
3. He was a prophet of the poor and down trodden.
4. "He had Amos's passion for justice and Hosea's heart for love." (Jm. M. P. Smith; I.C.C.)
5. He was a contemporary of Isaiah.
 - a. Isaiah close to Kings and Rulers.
 - b. Micah to the poor.
6. Each saw Jehovah as the infinite ruler of nations and men. Each recognized the absolute holiness and majesty of their God, and each pointed out that to violate the principles of His divine sovereignty and holiness would bring inevitable doom. (H. Haile).

B. THE DATE:

1. 735 B. C. - 700 B. C.
2. Micah lived and labored in one of the darkest days of Israel's history. Both Israel and Judah had yielded to the soul-destroying influences of idolatry, and their faith in the true God was shaken.

BACKGROUND

A. POLITICAL:

1. A degree of success had come to Judah under King Hezekiah.
2. Had brought with it social evils and spiritual failings.
3. By 702, or 701 Much trouble. Assyrian invasion. Hezekiah shut up like a "bird in a cage".

B. SOCIAL:

1. Socially and morally Judah presented a dark picture during the latter part of the 8th century.
2. Rulers sold the rights of men and vested interests gained control of lands.
3. The people were under the control of::
 - a. "False prophets (2:11).
 - b. "Priests who taught for hire (3:11)
 - c. "Rulers in their greed were as cannibals (3:1-3, 9).
 - d. Judges, judged for a bribe (7:3).

C. RELIGION:

1. Had been many reforms by Hezekiah (Isaiah) But this did not last.
2. From Micah we learn the people were long on show and short on devotion

MICAH

"Who Is Like Jehovah"

Page 2

TEACHINGS

A. JEHOVAH:

1. The holiness of Jehovah and the righteousness of His government are stressed by Micah.
2. As long as Jehovah's people do right- they enjoy His favor.

B. THE MESSIAH:

1. Compare: Micah 4 and Isaiah 2.

C. BASIC MESSAGE:

1. *"What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do **justly**, and to **love kindness**, and to **walk humbly** with thy God. (6:8).*

PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

- A. The question of authority is basic to the book of Micah. Rulers, Prophets, Priest and People did not have the respect for God and His Word that they should have had.
- B. The lack of respect for the Bible today is the beginning of the road to ruin.
1. Atheism and infidelity had denied a divine revelation.
 2. Roman Catholicism consider the Bible alone as inadequate - and insist on traditions, etc. of "living church".
 3. Protestantism have nullified their plea for the Bible alone by their creeds.
- C. Therefore the basic plea for a return to the authority of God's Word is needed now as much as ever!

MICAH AND CULTS

1. God's condemnation through Micah is relevant to the proliferation of witchcraft, Satanism, Astrology and religious cults of every conceivable nature today. The publication of literature on these subjects has become a multi-million dollar business.
2. A cursory glance at almost any newsstand will make this evident. Even some in the church today are entranced by horoscopes and the current predictions of such as Jeane Dixon. Fortune tellers, and mediums are having a heyday. All such works of darkness have always been forbidden by God.
3. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10-12; Ex. 22:18; Acts 19:18,19.

MICAH

“Who Is Like Jehovah”

Page 3

Book Preserved Because

- A. With unflinching boldness, he condemned evil in high places, among princes, prophets, priests and the people.
1. Above his fierce denunciations and predictions of doom, the burden of his soul was for the repentance and restoration of the people of God.
 2. He possessed the relentless conviction that God never ignores sin, that sin incurs just and painful punishment, and that “the way of the transgressor is hard.”
- B. **GOD’S GREAT DESIRE TO SAVE.**

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the loving-kindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. (7:18-20).

NAHUM

Page 1

THE MAN

- A. Name: Consolation or consoler.
- B. Home: Nahum the Elkoshite...but where is Elkosh located?
1. No one really knows.
 2. Capernaum, means "village of Nahum".
- C. OCCUPATION of the prophet is unknown.
- D. CHARACTERIZATION:
1. MOST STUDENTS OF THE PROPHETS ACCLAIM Nahum's writings to be one of the most poetic of them all.
 2. George A. Smith describes it; His language is strong and brilliant; his rhythm rumbles and rolls, leaps and flashes, like the horsemen and chariots he describes. (Vo. 11 p. 91).
 3. Knopf points out the fact that Hebrew poetry does not rhyme, but has measure cadences within the lines. "These cadences indicate emotion—two short, sharp beats for alarms; four beats for marching or dignity; three for ordinary; and five for deep feeling, joy or sorrow. Nahum's sound pictures of a city's fall are lost in current Bible translations. However, it is possible, by proper translation of the original Hebrew and arrangement of the English phrases, to imagine ourselves on the very walls of Nineveh, witnessing the whole gripping tragedy. Now the enemy has been sighted. The alarm is given (2:1), in the characteristic two-beat measure of agitation (read with accents indicated):
- Se't the wa'tch
Gu'ard the wa'y
Bu'ckly the a'rmor
Mu'ster a'rms.

Now the tramp of the enemy is heard (2:3,4).

The shi'elds of the he'roes are dy'ed with re'd
The warriors are cla'd in sca'rlet ga'rb
The cha'riot me'tal gle'ams like fi're
In the da'y of ba'ttle the ho'rses are plu'nging.
On the stre'ets the cha'riots ra'ttle
They go lu'rching acro'ss the squa'res.

Short two-beat lines tell of the conflict (2:4-6)

They fla'sh as fi're
They da'rt as li'ghtning
The no'bles atta'ck
They ca'rry the ou'tposts

NAHUM

Page 2

They ru'sh to the wa'll
They se't up the co'everings
The wa'ter gat's are o'pened.

Then comes the doom of the city (2:6-8)

The pla'ce goes do'wn in ru'in
The que'en is unve'iled and ca'ried o'ff
Her mai'dens mo'an like mou'ning do'ves
They are bea'ting upo'n their brea'sts
Nineveh is li'ke a po'ol of wa'ter
Her wa'ters are flo'wing awa'y.

In striking four-beat measure imitating the galloping horses, Nahum pictures the looting with the vividness of a news-reel (2:9; 3:2,3).

Lo'ot the si'lver, lo'ot the go'ld
Endliss i's the pre'cious sto're
H'ark! The whi'p and ra'ttling whe'el
Ga'lloping ho'rse and cha'riot's re'el
Ho'rsemen cha'rging with gla'sh of swo'rd
Gli'ttering spe'ar and wou'nded ho'rde
Pi'les of sla'in no e'nd of de'ad '
They stu'mble upo'n their co'rpses dre'ad.

Try reading this with the rhythmic cadence indicated by accent marks, imagining galloping horses and lurching chariots.

The lines are quite different from those in the usual translations, yet here are the pictures and feelings that Nahum was trying to express to his readers. (Carl Sumner Knopf, "Ask the Prophets," p. 76f).

4. The lesson of his beautiful worded yet dreadful prophecy is one to which the world could well give heed today. The prophet reveals the eternal principle of the omnipotent God that for a nation to survive it must be established upon and directed by principles of righteousness and truth.

DATE

1. The book identifies the fall of No-amon, the Egyptian Thebes (3:8) This was carried out by Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria about the year 663 B.C.
 2. And Nineveh was destroyed by Medes and Chaldeans, 612 B.C.
 3. Somewhere between these two dates Nahum wrote. (Aprox. 630 to 612 B.C)
 4. He was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah.
-

NAHUM

Page 3

BACKGROUND

1. Does not touch upon the internal conditions in Judah and Jerusalem.
2. Deals with Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Homer Haily gives this information as immediate background of Assyria:
 - A. Tiglath-pileser III, 745-727 B.C. This monarch began a program of world conquest. He invaded the West and deported some of the inhabitants of northern Israel, removing them to an area north of Nineveh.
 - B. Shalmaneser V, 726-722 B.C. Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria, 722 B.C., but died before the city fell.
 - C. Sargon II, 722-705 B.C. This king completed the siege of Samaria, 721 B.C., which had been begun by Shalmaneser. He was murdered 705 B.C.
 - D. Sennacherib, 705-681 B.C. Sennacherib boasted on his monuments that he had shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "as a bird in a cage." He was murdered by two of his sons in 681 B.C., who were then driven out by a younger son, Esarhaddon, who became king.
 - E. Esarhaddon, 681-668 B.C.
 - F. Ashurbanipal, 668-625 B.C. His campaign in Egypt resulted in the fall of No-amon (Nahum 3:8). Much booty was carried away by him into Assyria. According to the records this king was very cruel.
 - G. Assuretil-ilani, 625-620 B.C.
 - H. Sin-shar-ishkeen (Esarhaddon II) 620-612 B.C. when Nineveh was being besieged by the Medes and Chaldeans, Esarhaddon II gathered his wives and children and wealth into the palace and set fire to it. He perished in the fire. (A Commentary on the Minor Prophets, Homer Hailey, pp 250)

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- A. NINEVEH'S DOOM - BY THE DECREE OF JEHOVAH; chap. 1.
 1. The goodness and severity of Jehovah, vv. 2-8.
 - a. Vengeance and mercy of God. vv. 2,3.
 - b. The terribleness of His anger against sin, vv. 4-6.
 - c. The greatness of His mercy, stronghold to faithful, v. 7.
 - d. The pursuer of His enemies, v. 8.
 2. The complete overthrow of Nineveh, vv. 9-15.
 - a. God's faithfulness in the present crises: affliction not again to come from Assyria (as in the past), vv. 9-11.
 - b. Judah delivered from the yoke of Assyria by destruction of Nineveh's power, vv. 12, 13.
 - c. Rejoicing in Zion, v. 15.
- B. SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH - Decreed by Jehovah, ch. 2.

NAHUM

Page 4

1. Assault upon Nineveh: doom of the city, vv. 1-7.
 - a. Furious preparation for battle, vv. 1-4.
 - b. Hopelessness of resistance, vv. 5,6. The city, as a queen, is captured and moans, v. 7.
 2. Flight of the people and sack of the city. vv 8-13.
 - a. The inhabitants flee, the city is plundered, vv. 8-10.
 - b. The destruction is complete vv. 11-13.
 - C. NINEVEH'S SINS AND HER INEVITABLE DOOM; chap. 3.
 1. Nineveh's fate brought upon herself as retribution of crimes vv. 1-7.
 - a. The graphic description of the battle, vv. 1-3.
 - b. The cause: He sins, v. 4.
 - c. The uncovering of her shame is of Jehovah, vv. 5-7.
 2. The fate of No-amon is to be the fate of Nineveh, vv. 8-11.
 3. Inability of Nineveh's resources to save the city. vv. 12-19.
 - a. Fall of the outlying strongholds, vv. 12,13.
 - b. Siege and destruction of the city, vv. 14-19.
 - c. Universal exultation over the fall of Nineveh v. 19b.
-

THEME

1. The theme of his prophecy was the approaching fall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire.
2. The character of the Assyrian rulers and people in general was that of excessive cruelty.
3. Farrar give a vivid and clear description of their general character:
Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of their 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 devastation; how they reddened broad deserts with carnage of warriors; how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders as with chaff; how they impaled 'heaps of men' on stakes, and strewed the mountains and choked rivers with dead bones; how they cut off the hands of kinds 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 brick in fetters; how they cut down warriors like weeds, or smote them like wild beats in the forests, and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs.

(Farrar - The Minor Prophets, pp. 147,148.)

NAHUM

Page 5

Book Preserved Because

A. IT TEACHES US THAT GOD IS:

1. The God of the world, not just the God of one people or nation.
2. That “the soul that sinneth shall die.”
3. That “the wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23).

B. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IS SURE:

1. “It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this cometh judgment” (Heb. 9:27).
 2. There is no escape. (Rev. 6:16-17).
-

HABAKKUK

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN:

1. Name: means "embrace"
2. Home: The home of the prophet is unknown. Context leads one to conclude that it was Jerusalem.
3. Occupation: Nothing is known.

B. THE DATE:

1. Various dates from 630 B.C. to Babylonian captivity have been assigned.
2. The most probable is some where between 612-606 B.C. 606 B.C. was when the first group from Judah went into Babylon.

C. BACKGROUND:

1. Upon the death of Josiah at Megiddo, Jehoahaz, his son, was made king. His reign is summed up in a sentence, "*And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done*" (II Kings 23:32).
2. He was replaced by his brother Eliakim, or Jehoichim, he reigned for eleven years and his reign was equally as wicked.

D. CHARACTERIZATION:

1. The Book of Habakkuk differs from other books of prophecy in one special aspect. Instead of taking Jehovah's message directly to the people, he takes the complaint of the people to Jehovah, representing them in the complaint.
2. In God's answer, which told of the Babylonian captivity, a second question is raised by the prophet.
3. How could Jehovah punish Judah by using a nation more wicked than it?

LESSONS

A. The Lessons or Message of the book are many.

1. The universal supremacy of Jehovah's judgment upon the wicked.
2. Faithfulness is the guarantee of permanence.
3. Evil is self-destructive.
4. The fact of divine discipline.

B. To solve the problem for his fellow-countrymen and still be faithful to Jehovah, is the great aim of his book.

HABAKKUK

Page 2

Some Points To Notice:

- A. *"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."*
- B. Being God's truth, it will speak. It is not a dead letter, but a living thing, hastening on its cause, and accomplishing the purpose for which it was sent.
- C. A COLLOQUY: The whole prophecy may be classified as a colloquy, a mutual discourse or conference, between the prophet and God.
1. Part one...Judgment upon the wicked presented in the form of a colloquy between Habakkuk and God (Chap. 1 and 2).
 - a. Habakkuk's first complaint (1:1-4).
 - b. God's answer (1:5-11).
 - c. Habakkuk's second complaint (1:12-17).
 - d. God's second answer (2:1-20) including the 5 woes.
- D. WHY? A number of "why's" even as man is asking "why" today.
-

Book Preserved Because

- A. One of the faults of man is that he never believe that God is in earnest until the wrath comes. (1:5).
- B. DESCRIPTION OF IDOL:.... *"Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!; Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it"* (2:19) See also Isaiah 44:9-20.
- C. *"But Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."* (2:20).
1. This is not just a lesson that we should be "quite" in the church building or in times of worship....
 2. BUT it is a lesson that we must respect the voice (teachings) of God. We must be silent, that is;
 - a. Don't argue with God.
 - b. Do not try to impose our own thoughts and teachings.
 - c. As the apostle stated; *"O man, who art thou that repliest against God"* (Romans 9:20-21).
- D. ONE OF THE GREATEST STATEMENTS OF FAITH is found in the Book
1. In response to Habakkuk's prayer God has showed him what is to come.
 2. His fear and feelings are described in 3:16,17.
 3. Terrible times are coming, yet Habakkuk could say....(3:18,19). READ
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ZEPHANIAH

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN:

1. Name— Zephaniah means “Jehovah hides,” or “Jehovah has hidden”.
2. Ancestry – The prophet traces his ancestry back four generations to Hezekiah. This would make the prophet of royal blood.
3. Occupation and Home.-- Nothing is known of the prophets occupation, nor where he lived. Indication is Jerusalem.

B. DATE:

1. It would be safe to suggest 630 to 625 B.C.
 2. Internal evidence would suggest he began to write as the rise of the Chaldean power began.
-

BACKGROUND

A. POLITICAL, in Judah.

1. Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh, a lad of twelve years.
2. Doubtful that at any period of its history Judah had a more wicked ruler than Manasseh.
3. Ammon succeeded Manasseh, was also wicked.
4. Josiah, came to the throne at the age of eight, and was the last good king to reign over Judah. Brought about many reforms, yet it is in his life that the prophet writes.
5. In the process of cleansing the temple a copy of the law was found and read before the young king. Alarmed at what he heard, he sent to a prophet, Huldah, for a word from God concerning what he had learned. Caused it to be read before the people.

B. POLITICAL, in the East.

1. War clouds, dark and foreboding, were hovering over the horizon to the North.
2. In 625 B.C. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, declared the independence of Chaldea from her Assyrian lords.
3. Led to war between Chaldea and Assyria. Nebuchadnezzar was general.
4. Pharaoh-necho of Egypt determined to help Assyria.
5. Josiah attempted to stop him at Megiddo by throwing his forces in the path of Necho. He succeeded but was killed in the battle.
6. For four years Egypt dominated Judah, but in 605 Necho was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. (Here is enacted one of the ironies of history. Judah led by Josiah, had attempted to aid Chaldea by fighting against Egypt at Megiddo. And now became a vassal of the nation it had attempted to help

ZEPHANIAH

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C. RELIGIOUS AND MORAL:

1. Sweeping reforms had been undertaken by Josiah.
2. The people appear at this time to be nervous, cruel, and corrupt.

D. TEACHING AND LESSONS:

1. The Day of Jehovah. (At hand; "near" etc. 1:7, 14,15,16,17)
2. "No hotter book lies in all of the Old Testament. Neither dew nor grass nor tree nor any blossom lives in it, but it is everywhere fire, smoke and darkness, drifting chaff, ruins, nettles, saltpits, and owls and ravens looking from the windows of desolate palaces" (The book of the Twelve Prophets, vo II, p. 48).

MESSAGE

A. ZEPHANIAH WARNS THE NATIONS OF THEIR IMPENDING DOOM

1. Jerusalem and Judah are first denounced (1:2-6).
2. Certain classes are definitely pointed out, and condemned (1:8-13).
 - a. The nobility
 - b. The royalty
 - c. The tradesmen
 - d. The Indifferent
 - e. The Obstinate
3. Swift and certain doom is soon to be visited upon Jerusalem (1:14-18)
4. The prophet pleads for repentance (2:1-3).
5. The surrounding nations are specifically denounced (2:1-15).

B. THE PROPHET FORETELLS THE CAPTIVITY AND DELIVERANCE OF JERUSALEM (Chap. 3).

1. The obstinacy of Jerusalem is deplored (3:1-7).
2. The prophet pleads with the people (3:8).
3. Purification and deliverance will finally come (3:9-11) read Psa. 137:1-4.
4. A few of the very poor were left in the land to till the soil (3:12,13).
5. God's blessings are to come upon His restored people (3:14-20).

Book Preserved Because

A. DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING: (Zeph. 1; II Peter 3; Matt. 25).

1. It's universality (Zeph. 1:2; John 5:28-29).
2. The Door of Hope is left open (Zeph. 2, 3; Matt. 11:28).

B. God's Blessings are to come upon His people (Zeph. 3; Revelations 21 and 22).

1. This has been God's message from the beginning.
2. This message is given to us in a very vivid way through the words of the Prophets.

HAGGAI

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN:

1. The name Haggai means "festival" or festive." May be shortened form of Haggiah, "festival of Jehovah."
2. What we know of him is limited to Ezra 5:1,2; 6:14-16; and to the short book that bears his name.
3. Did he live to see the temple completed and to worship in it with the faithful remnant? We could wish he did, but we are not told.
4. Written over a period of only about 4 months.

B. HOME AND OCCUPATION:

1. We know nothing except that he returned from Babylon with the remnant under Zerubbabel and that he was a prophet.
2. See book of Ezra.

C. DATE:

1. Second year of reign of Darius 1:1; which would be 520 B.C.
2. He is the first Post-exile prophet.

D. BACKGROUND:

1. Judah had been carried away to Babylon 586 B.C. some as early as 605.
 2. Returned under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. Over 150 years before Isaiah had prophesied this under Cyrus, (44:24-45:7).
 3. In about 536 then the foundation of the temple had been laid.
 4. Now 16 years later nothing had been done to rebuild it.
 5. And the people had not prospered, in fact they had suffered much during this 16 year period.
-

THE MESSAGE

A. A simple but earnest warning..."**BUILD THE TEMPLE**"

B. HOW BIG IS OBEDIENCE?

1. Obedience is so big that it is the one way man has to show that he loves God.
 - a. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."* (Mark 12)
 - b. *"This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments"* (I Jn. 5:3).
 2. Obedience is so big that God teaches that the one way in which you can show that you believe in Him is by obedience. (Heb. 11:6).
 3. By obedience we show our wisdom.
 - a. Matthew 7, the wise builder.
 - b. The Bible teaches that obeying God is the most important thing to do!
-

HAGGAI

Page 2

LESSONS

A. TO PLEASE GOD....

1. In Israel's condition the prophet sees faithfulness and material blessings directly connected.
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.
4. The basis of all successful preaching is "saith Jehovah." It got results then, and such preaching will get results today.

B. FROM THE BOOK OF HAGGAI WE LEARN:

1. There is a need for timely, penetrating questions.
 2. God's people are under certain specific fundamental obligations.
 3. Obligations do not disappear merely because opposition appears.
 4. People need to be reminded of their duties.
 5. Affluence can be dangerous.
 6. God's works is controversial.
 7. A remnant may be all that is left to do the work.
 8. God favors the faithful!
-

Book Preserved Because

A. God's people are under certain specific fundamental obligations.

1. Consider your ways. (Who is responsible for where you are?)
2. Build the house! (1:8 read). Then it was the temple...today it is the church (I Tim. 3:15).

B. **GOD MUST BE FIRST!!**

1. "Be strong" (2:4). The work needed to be done. (See Eph. 6:10).
2. "Work" (2:5) The temple would not rebuild itself. (John 9:4). See.
3. "Fear ye not" (2:5). "If God is for you" Romans also Matt. 28:20).
4. "Ask now the priest concerning the law" (2:11) "Study to show..."

C. Obligations do not disappear merely because opposition appears!

1. Or our own what we "think" we should do.
 2. The church (that's us) has a responsibility, obligation that must be met regardless of the opposition of the world.
-

ZECHARIAH

"Whom Jehovah Remembers"

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN:

1. Zechariah was a popular name among the Hebrews; there are at least twenty-seven men bearing the name in the Old Testament.
2. Zechariah identifies himself as "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo."
3. He is not to be confused with Zechariah, also a priest, son of Hehoiada, (II Chron. 24:20-22).
4. The book of Zechariah may be thought of as a sequel to Haggai. The temple was begun and constructed in the midst of conflict, but it would be completed.
5. Zechariah looks beyond the immediate temple to the Messiah and the spiritual temple of God, and to the final consummation of God's purpose in the glory of the Messiah and His rule.

B. THE DATE:

1. No controversy concerning the first 8 chapters. All scholars agree that these prophecies were spoken in the years 520-518 B.C.
2. But of the last 6 chapters much confusion. Some even deny Zechariah as the author.
3. It seems most likely that the final 6 chapter were written by the same author, but at a much later date, dealing with different problems.

BACKGROUND

A. Following Babylon Captivity.

1. Judah had been carried away to Babylon, 586 B.C. some as early as 605.
2. Returned under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. Isaiah had spoken of this in Isaiah 44:24-45.
3. In about 536 the foundation of the temple had been laid.
4. Sixteen years later nothing had been done to rebuild it.
5. The people had not prospered, in fact they had suffered much during this 16 year period.

B. CHARACTER OF THE BOOK.

1. It is the longest and most obscure of all the Minor Prophets and in many ways the most difficult to interpret.
2. Some judge Zechariah's book "the most Messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological, of all the Old Testament."
3. Zechariah differs in three points from the prophets who preceded him:

ZECHARIAH

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Page 2

- a. He gives emphasis to visions as a means of divine communication.
 - b. Angelic mediation occupies an important place.
 - c. Apocalyptic symbolism entering into the visions is another outstanding characteristic of his writings.
-

THE VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH

A. ABOUT HIS VISIONS:

1. A typical feature of Zechariah's prophecies may be found in his visions. Some are brief; some set forth bold imagery. Through them the prophet of God conveys the same lessons found in the other portions of his inspired work. In the midst of these visions is found the most familiar and striking statements made by the prophet Zechariah: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (4:6).
2. The visions of Zechariah focus one's thoughts on the omnipresence of Jehovah, the reality of sin and suffering, and the dire need of divine pardon. Zechariah's visions foretell the overthrow of Zion's enemies, the heathen nations who would thwart the purposes of God. and his vision thrill the heart with promises of Jerusalem to become the City of Peace.
3. All of the visions have a single divine source: "the word of the Lord unto Zechariah." And all the visions have the same date: "upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month....in the second year of Darius."

B. THE VISIONS:

1. "The horsemen among the myrtle trees." The "angle of the Lord" is encountered in the first vision to show that God's eyes are upon the nations.
2. "The Four Horns." They represent the heathen powers which had so oppressed God's people. The four carpenter, or smiths, will fray or terrify Israel's oppressors. The enemies of Judah will be thrown into disorder and chaos. The forces of evil, then or now, who may be arrayed against the body of Christ cannot stand against the power of God. "If God be for us, who can be against us"?
3. "The man with the Measuring Line." A young man measures the outline and limits of the city. Thus Jerusalem would be judged and blessed. What God could and would have done for the city of Jerusalem....an unwall'd city...great and protected by God.
 - a. For a moment consider the message would go out from Jerusalem and all nations would flow unto it. See Daniel 2; Acts 2; Eph. 2.
 - b. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation". (2:13).
4. "The High Priest". The first 3 visions show how God is going to act in

ZECHARIAH

"Whom Jehovah Remembers"

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Jerusalem's behalf. Now we begin to see the condition of the people and their relationship with God. The High Priest stands as a representative of the people before the angel of the Lord. Satan appears to accuse, but God himself intervenes and rebukes the accuser. God commands the angels to take the filthy garments from Joshua and cloth him with rich, festal apparel. Such an action of grace typifies the cleansing of Joshua and representively the people. (See the Hebrew letter's discussion of Christ as our High Priest).

5. "The Golden Candlestick and The Olive Trees." The unending source of blessings God brings to His people. Man's works were not sufficient, but God's will must prevail. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." (4:6; Eph. 2:8,9).
 6. "The Flying Scroll." Given to depict God's judgment upon individual sinners. The two sins of stealing and perjury are listed on opposite sides of the scroll. Maybe they are given to represent the whole law. Judgment proceeds from the throne of God.
 7. "The Woman In The Barrel". "This is Wickedness" (5:8). The very personification of wickedness. Though attempting to escape, she is thrust back into the ephah - barrel. Sin must be banished from the land. (5:9-11)
 8. "The Four Chariots and Two Mountains". This final vision sets forth a divine judgment upon the heathen nations. The chariots of God go forth to execute His judgment. It is altogether fitting that the concluding vision would deal with the heathen and his being shaken, completing a circle of visions dealing with the heathen and with Jehovah's own.
- C. See Homer Hailey's, A Commentary on The Minor Prophets, for an outline of the book.
-

Book Preserved Because....

- A. The book explains God's dealing with the wicked, and His protection of the righteous.
 1. Israel's deliverance, depended; "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts*" (4:6).
 2. Israel was very slow to learn this lesson and many times in fear they reached out to Egypt and other nations for their help, when all they needed to do was call upon God.
 3. Never were the heathen nation able to protect them!
 4. Never did God fail, when they turned to and followed Him.
- B. In so many ways this typifies man's search for salvation today.
 1. God in His love has sent His Son, (John 3:16) and His Grace as appeared bring salvation to man (Titus 2:10).

ZECHARIAH

"Whom Jehovah Remembers"

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2. Yet man today, like Israel of old, find it difficult to completely trust and obey God.
 - a. They do not study His Word.
 - b. Reject specific commands as not being important.
 - c. They had rather have "what they feel" than what God has said.
 - d. Man adds to and takes from God's Word until they don't recognize it when they see it.
 3. Man desires the protection, and salvation of God, but like Israel of old they look to others and other teachings for instruction.
 4. They are well described by Jesus and Isaiah.... *"This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."* (Matthew 15:8,9).
-

MALACHI

"My Messenger"

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

A. NAME:

1. The "name Malachi" is not found in this form anywhere else in the Bible.
2. Some have suggested, that it is not really a name of a man.
3. But since none of the prophets wrote anonymously, it is highly reasonable to conclude that this is the name of Jehovah's last literary prophet who is His final Old Testament messenger to the people.

B. DATE:

1. Some have defended an early date, 470 B.C. others have suggested a time just before the Maccabees, or 200 B.C.
 2. In as much as the content of the prophecy fits well into the conditions described by Nehemiah, the most acceptable date for the prophecy is the period of 445 - 432 B.C.
-

BACKGROUND

A. First contingent of exiles had returned during 536 B.C., under leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest.

1. Encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple between 520 and 516 B.C.
2. Ezra had returned with a second group of exiles in 458 B.C.
3. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city about 444-443 B.C. Second term as governor 430 - 425 B.C.

B. The conditions of the people as revealed in Nehemiah and the bold and courageous attack of Malachi against the problems which the latter sets forth in his book point clearly to the contemporary dates of the two.

PROBLEMS

A. Serious abuses had crept into Jewish life.

1. The priests had become lax and degenerate.
2. Defective and inferior sacrifices were allowed to be offered upon the Temple altar.
3. The people were neglecting their tithes.
4. Divorce was common and God's covenant was forgotten and ignored.

B. JEHOVAH CONDEMNS THE PRIESTS:

1. They despise God's name (1:6).
2. They offered polluted sacrifices (1:7), the blind, lame and sick (1:6).

MALACHI

"My Messenger"

Page 2

C. THEY CAUSED MANY TO STUMBLE IN THE LAW (2:8).

D. THEY SHOWED RESPECT OF PERSONS (2:9).

E. BUT THE PRIEST OF JEHOVAH IS TO:

1. Fear Jehovah (2:5).
 2. Have truth and righteousness on his lips (2:6a).
 3. Walk in peace and uprightness (2:6b; cf. Eph. 4:1-3).
 4. Turn many away from iniquity (2:6c).
 5. Have knowledge of Jehovah (2:7; 2 Tim. 2:15).
-

MESSAGE

1. The exiles had been back in Judea from Babylon for over a hundred years; but instead of becoming better they had become worse. The people had begun to doubt the promises of God. Malachi had to remind them that the promises had been made conditionally, and the people had not lived up to the conditions stipulated. God had fulfilled his part of the promise, but they had failed to keep their part.
 2. Worship was in a state of decay because the priests had allowed it to degenerate to the point where they offered to the Lord what they did not want to keep. They had not brought in the tithes, and this, Malachi declared was the way they were robbing God. Malachi's message is that though the proper ritual is important, it is not an end in itself and does not please God.
 3. Malachi accused the Jews of divorcing their wives so they could marry heathen women; this God despised.
 4. Malachi deals with the dangers, temptations, and sins which was destroying their faith in Jehovah.
-

MALACHI

A. **CONDEMNS:**

1. Their doubt of God's love for them.
2. Their despising of Jehovah's name.
3. Their offering of polluted bread.
4. Their sacrificing of blind, lame, and sick animals.
5. Their growing weary with worship.
6. Their failure in bringing the tithe into the storehouse.
7. Their divorcing of the wives of their youth.
8. Their skepticism that it pays to serve God.
9. Their doubting that Jehovah was a righteous God.

MALACHI

"My Messenger"

Page 3

- A. MAKES ONE LAST APPEAL TO THE LAW! (4:4).
1. This appeal is the last one to be made in the "old way." The next appeal to repentance would come through John the immerser, who came to prepare the way for the Christ, in the "Spirit of Elijah."
 2. Malachi points to Elijah to come! (4:5,6).
 - a. Consider Malachi's words about Elijah (3:1; 4:6,6).
 - b. Consider Isaiah 40:3-5; Matt. 3:1-3; John 1:23; Luke 1:17).
 - c. Jesus' words Matthew 17:10-13.
- B. I Corinthians 10:11; 2 Peter 1:12,13.
-

Book Preserved Because

- A. BECAUSE OF ITS PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE!
1. God loves a pure, clean, and happy home. Divorce is an abomination in God's sight.
 2. Insincerity in worship insults God. One who sins willfully and wantonly cannot please God by an elaborate worship.
 3. Giving is a barometer that measures our spiritual temperature.
 4. God still holds out the challenge to all His chosen ones to put Him to the test to find the rich supply of blessings that are available.
- B. Malachi, the last book in our English version of the Old Bible, was the last word from God until the first Book of the New Testament was written. About 400 years intervened between the time of the close of the Old Testament cannon and the opening events recorded in the Gospels.
- C. The Book of Malachi serves as a fitting close to God's ancient revelation to His people. A final appeal is made to the people to purge out the wickedness from among them and to render to Jehovah an acceptable service. A final warning is given of inevitable judgment upon the wicked. And a final promise is made of Jehovah's righteousness to be provided in Him who would be the personal bond of unity between Jehovah and His people. There was no more that Jehovah could say or do; therefore no word was heard from Him until the silence was broken by the messenger who would introduce the Messiah. This messengers call to repent was followed by the words of grace spoken by Him in whom God was doing His work and revealing Himself and His will. (Homer Hailey "A Commentary On The Minor Prophets, p 426)
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