

WORSHIPPING OUR CHRIST IN ALL THE BOOKS OF PROPHECY

The Scriptures are all about God revealing Himself to His creatures. The ultimate expression of God's nature and character is Christ. Note the words of Hebrews 1: 3 Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (KJV). Since the Word of God reveals God, and Jesus is the image of the Invisible God, then we can find and worship our Lord Jesus Christ in every part of the Bible!

1. In the Books of History we see God's servants Following the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Creator in the Garden, the Rock in the Wilderness, the Angel of the Lord and so on!
 2. In the Books of Poetry we see God's servants Worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Suffering One, the Good Shepherd, the Redeemer and so on!
 3. In the Books of Prophecy we see God's servants:
 - Seeing Christ (Major prophets) as Ruler, Prince of Peace and so on.
 - Trusting Christ (Pre-exilic prophets) as the Judge, One from Everlasting and so on.
 - Hoping in Christ (Post-exilic prophets) as the Sun of Righteousness, the Coming King and the Lord of All.
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- I. A SURVEY OF CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES
 - A. ISAIAH (740-681 BC) contemporary with: Hosea (753-715 BC) and Micah (742-687 BC). "Worshiping our God of SALVATION. Key verse: 53:5-6.
 - B. JEREMIAH (627-586 BC) contemporary with: Habakkuk (612-588 BC) and Zephaniah (640-621 BC). "Worshiping our God of REPENTANCE". Key verse: 2:19.
 - C. LAMENTATIONS (by Jeremiah 627-586 BC) contemporary with: Habakkuk (612-588 BC) and Zephaniah (640-621 BC). "Worshiping our God of HOPE". Key verse: 3:22-24.

- D. EZEKIEL (593-571 BC) contemporary with: Daniel (605-536 BC), Habakkuk (612-588 BC) and Jeremiah (627-586 BC). "Worshiping our God of THE NEW HEART". Key verse: 36:26-27.
- E. DANIEL (605-536 BC) contemporary with: Jeremiah (627-586 BC), Habakkuk (612-588 BC) and Ezekiel (593-571 BC) "Worshiping our God WHO RULES". Key verse: 4:17.
- F. HOSEA (753-715 BC) contemporary with: Jonah (793-753 BC), Amos (760-750 BC), Micah (742-687 BC) and Isaiah (740-681 BC). "Worshiping our God of FAITHFULNESS". Key verse: 3:1.
- G. JOEL (835-796 BC) contemporary with: Elisha (848-797 BC) and Jonah (793-753 BC). "Worshiping our God of WRATH". Key verse: 1:15.
- H. AMOS (760-750 BC) contemporary with: Jonah (793-753 BC) and Hosea (753-715 BC). "Worshiping our God of JUSTICE". Key verse: 5:24.
- I. OBADIAH (853 BC) contemporary with: Elijah (875-848 BC), Micaiah (865-83 BC) and Jehu (855-840 BC). "Worshiping our God in HUMILITY". Key verse: 1:3.
- J. JONAH (793-753 BC) contemporary with: Joel (853-796 BC) and Amos (760-750 BC). "Worshiping our God of MERCY". Key verse: 4:11.
- K. MICAH (742-687 BC) contemporary with: Hosea (753-715 BC) and Isaiah (740-681 BC). "Worshiping our God of RIGHTEOUSNESS". Key verse: 6:8.
- L. NAHUM (663-612 BC) contemporary with: Zephaniah (640-621 BC). "Worshiping our God of JUDGMENT". Key verse: 1:7-9.
- M. HABBAKUK (612-588 BC) contemporary with: Jeremiah (627-586 BC), Daniel (605-536 BC) and Ezekiel (593-571 BC). "Worshiping our God of SOVEREIGNTY". Key verse: 3:17-19.
- N. ZEPHANIAH (640-621 BC) contemporary with: Jeremiah (627-586 BC). "Worshiping our God of HOPE". Key verse: 3:17.
- O. HAGGAI (520 BC) contemporary with: Zechariah (520-480 BC). "Worshiping our God of SACRIFICE". Key verse: 1:4.
- P. ZECHARIAH (520 BC) contemporary with: Haggai (520 BC). "Worshiping our God of JEALOUSY". Key verse: 1:3.
- Q. MALACHI (430 BC) contemporary with: Ezra?. "Worshiping our God of First Love". Key verse: 1:2.

ISAIAH

"WORSHIPING OUR GOD OF SALVATION" (960828)

From ¹the revolt of Satan to the rule of the Savior-all is told by Scripture's most eloquent prophet Isaiah He was the Shakespeare of the prophets and the Paul of the Old Testament. Isaiah has more to say about the greatness of God (40,43), the horrors of the Tribulation (24), the wonders of the Millennium (35), and the ministry of Christ (53) than any other book in the Bible. Isaiah 53 is probably the most important and far-reaching chapter in the Old Testament, as it is quoted from or alluded to 85 times in the New Testament. Jesus said that Isaiah saw His glory and spoke of Him (John 12:41). This book is an extended commentary on Jonah 2:9, when that prophet exclaimed from the fish's belly, "Salvation is of the Lord" The word salvation appears 33 times in the writing of the prophets, and of these, 26 instances occur in Isaiah.

- I. JUDGMENT BY THE LORD 1:1 - 39:8 [with 39 chapters, this first section of Isaiah is like the O.T. declaring the holiness, righteousness and justice of God]
- II. COMFORT IN REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION 40:1 - 66:24 [with 27 chapters this concluding section of Isaiah is like the N.T. declaring the grace, compassion and glory of God]

The Book of Isaiah has three major themes. These may be summarized as:

1. CONVICTION: The overwhelming sense of sin and the wrath of God against sin. This is clearest in the 21x Isaiah uses the word "woe". In God's sight our good deeds are "filthy rags" [64:6-7];
2. CONFESSION: The all pervading awareness of the Power, Majesty and Holiness of God. And 23x he uses the Divine Name of "THE HOLY ONE OF GOD", a name nearly unique to Isaiah except for 5 other passages.
3. CONFIDENCE: The crystal clear sight of the Salvation and Coming Victory of Christ.

JEREMIAH

"WORSHIPING OUR GOD OF REPENTANCE" (960904)

¹ Adapted from *Willmington's Visualized Study Bible*, 1984 Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton. Other sources used are: [The Word of God](#); Baxter, [Explore the Book](#); Scroggie, [The Unfolding Drama](#); [Christ in all the Scriptures](#); [The Criswell Study Bible](#); [Walk through the Bible](#); [The Compact Guide to The Bible](#), Lehman Strauss, CHM.

Jeremiah² must have had an incredible childhood. The Scriptures tell us God had chosen him before his birth to be a prophet. His family was notable in their service for the LORD. Life was exciting for the son of a high priest. Jeremiah 1:1. Jeremiah's woes were unimaginable to our relatively peaceful lives. He lived through the death throes of the nation of Judah. In his lifetime he saw the decay of God's chosen people, the horrible destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nation to Babylon. He preached for 40 years and saw no visible result among those he served. Instead those countrymen he warned for God sought to kill him if he wouldn't stop preaching doom (Jer. 11:19-23); his own family and friends were involved in plots against him (12:60; God never allowed him to marry, and thus he suffered incredibly agonizing loneliness (16:20; there were plots to kill him in secret so no one would find him (18:20-23); he was beaten severely and then bound in wooden stocks (20:1-2); his friends spied on him deceitfully and for revenge (20:10); he was consumed with sorrow and shame and even cursed the day he was born (20:14-18); finally, falsely accused of being a traitor to his own country (37:13-14), Jeremiah was arrested, beaten, thrown into a dungeon, and starved many days (37:15-21). If an Ethiopian Gentile had not interceded on his behalf he would have died there. In the end, tradition tells us he was exiled to Egypt, where he was stoned to death by his own people. He had virtually no converts to show for a lifetime of ministry.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this book is the fact that despite the terrible woes of the life Jeremiah was called to (1:5), he saw that it was all at the Master Potter's Hand (18:1-6). At the point of near despair over his failed ministry, God asked Jeremiah to go to the Potter's house and there he would get a message from the Lord (18:2). Although Israel had failed so grievously, the heavenly Potter was able to bless them again if they would but repent and yield to his Perfect Touch.

LAMENTATIONS

"WORSHIPPING OUR GOD OF HOPE" (960911)

Jeremiah³ sits down and looks over the smoldering ruins of his beloved Jerusalem. His voice rises into the wail of sorrow - a lament.

² Sources used are: The Word of God; Baxter, Explore the Book; Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama; Christ in all the Scriptures; The Criswell Study Bible; Walk through the Bible; The Compact Guide to The Bible, Lehman Strauss, CHM, MacArthur, Ashamed of the Gospel, p. 76-77, Sanders, Spiritual Discipleship, P. 129-136.

³ Sources used are: The Word of God; Baxter, Explore the Book; Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama; Christ in all the Scriptures; The Criswell Study Bible; Walk through the Bible; The Compact Guide to The Bible, Lehman Strauss, CHM, .

His funeral dirge over the city of God, inspired by the Spirit of God is a message for all the people of God. This book is a master crafted poem with five stanzas. Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 each start with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, 22 in all. This form of poetry called an acrostic is beautiful in form and powerful in communication. Chapter 3 is the centerpiece of this poem, with three 22 verse acrostics making it 66 verses long. The theme of the book and this middle chapter agree, as Jeremiah discovers - GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS our Great Lord!

- I. The Outline:
 - A. First Dirge: Jerusalem's Desolation because of Her Sin (chap. 1)
 - B. Second Dirge: God's Punishment of Jerusalem's Sin (chap. 2)
 - C. Third Dirge: Jeremiah's Response (chap. 3)
 - D. Fourth Dirge: The Lord's Anger (chap. 4)
 - E. Fifth Dirge: The Remnant's Response (chap. 5)
- II. The Message: Chapter one contains an astounding commentary on Galatians 6:7 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no SECURITY apart from the LORD. Jerusalem the city portrays the state of Jerusalem the people chosen by God. Note these grim reminders:
 - A. NO COMFORT In v.2 "none to comfort" yet the Lord offered comfort continually to His people.
 1. Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (KJV) This is the very same word as Lam. 1:2. Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (KJV)
 2. Jesus always has offered enduring comfort. John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (KJV)
 - B. NO REST In v. 3 "no rest" was found by Jerusalem, yet the Lord offered and promised His rest:
 1. Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. (KJV)

2. Isaiah 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (KJV)
- C. NO REFRESHMENT In v. 6 "no pasture" yet the Lord promises to feed His people:
1. Psalm 23:2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (KJV)
 2. Psalm 81:16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee. (KJV)

EZEKIEL

"WORSHIPING OUR GOD OF THE NEW HEART" (960918)

In 598 BC Ezekiel⁴ was taken captive with 10,000 other fellow Judeans by Nebuchadnezzar. He arrived in Babylon at the age of 25 (II Kings 24:8-16; Ezekiel 1:1-2). He had a lovely wife (16:2) who died (24:16-18). He lives in a house during the exile to which numerous captives come and seeking counsel of him (8:1; 14:1; 20:1). After five silent years, he begins 20 years of speaking for God. Ezekiel like our Lord Jesus Christ began his ministry by a river at the age of 30. In an astounding vision he sees cherubim portraying the Divine attributes of God. Ezekiel is God's man. He saw God and it changed his life.

- I. GOD'S SERVANTS SUBMIT TO HIM.
 - A. THEY ARE OPEN TO GOD'S WORD Ezekiel 1:3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him. (NASB)
 - B. THEY ARE LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE Ezekiel 1:3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him. (NASB)
 - C. THEY ARE WAITING FOR GOD'S HAND Ezekiel 1:3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him. (NASB)
 - D. THEY ARE FOLLOWING GOD'S LEAD Ezekiel 1:20 Wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go in that direction. And

⁴ Sources used are: The Word of God; Baxter, Explore the Book; Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama; Christ in all the Scriptures; The Criswell Study Bible; Walk through the Bible; The Compact Guide to The Bible, Lehman Strauss, CHM, Jensen, Biblical Viewpoint, Cawood .

the wheels rose close beside them; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. (NASB)

II. GOD'S SERVANTS SEE HIM! Ezekiel 1:22-28

A. HIS GLORIOUS MAJESTY v. 22, 27 "awesome gleam of crystal . . . glowing metal . . . like fire . . . like a rainbow" all of these sights were given to Ezekiel to remind him of how awesome, how glorious and how indescribably majestic God truly is! As Psalm 29:2, 10 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array. 10 The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever. (NASB). Our first crop of asparagus made me unable to ever eat that formaldehyde laced, canned and limp mummified green stuff sold as asparagus in the store! Is it any less true about God? Once you see Him nothing else satisfies! The question is have you ever seen Him?

O Worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O Sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space!
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

Author: Sir Robert H. Grant

B. HIS FINAL AUTHORITY v. 26a "throne" seeing this throne taught Ezekiel that God was in control. The exile, the enemies of God and all the fears of life melt in the radiance of His Sovereign Throne. By the way, that still is true. Ezekiel was a POW. He was surrounded by murderous enemies who had vandalized his home, dragged him away and savagely ended the lives of thousands of his people . . . yet in the midst of even that, God showed him, He was still on the throne!

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like the sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
'It is well with my soul.'

Author: Horatio G. Spafford

C. HIS ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY v. 26b "high up" speaks to Ezekiel. The throne of God is atop all else. Nothing is beyond it or above it. God reigns! While Jeremiah (41 years of ministry, 627 - 586 BC) played the funeral dirge

of doom over Jerusalem, a lonely exiled prophet named Ezekiel (20 years of ministry, 592 - 572 BC) was watching the gathering storm God would use to sweep Judah into Captivity. Deported to 200 miles north of Babylon Ezekiel was 600 miles from Jeremiah in Jerusalem for the last 12 years of Jeremiah's ministry. And for 26 years Ezekiel was 200 miles north of Daniel (606 - 533 BC) who was in Babylon for his 73 years of ministry. These three prophets overlapped parts of their prophetic ministries. Ezekiel learned as he lived away from his home and his people, he never was far from his God. God taught him that His presence was not limited to the Temple in Jerusalem. As Ezekiel saw the destruction of his nation he learned God is not thwarted by our disobedience. Though He is grieved and saddened, His plan will not fail.

- D. HIS UNVIELED GLORY IN CHRIST v. 26c "like a man" this sight God gave Ezekiel was that the. It was the reminder that our Lord Jesus Christ is as Hebrews 1:3 declares, "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (NASB)".
- E. HIS UNCHANGING PROMISES v. 28 "like a rainbow" this reminder created by God as a sign that He keeps His Word. Whatever He says He will do!

DANIEL: "WORSHIPPING OUR GOD WHO RULES" (960925)

In God's opinion of History, the Kingdom of Babylon was the richest and most glorious of all in character. Babylon was the head of gold in the image God revealed to NEBUCHADNEZZAR. As its realm spread across the then known world, it left in its wake the dust of crushed opponents foolish enough to challenge God's chosen instrument of judgment. To the helm of that incredible Empire rose an incredible young man of God -- Daniel. But have you ever considered what it must have been like to be prime minister to the greatest empire in the world in its time? Untold streams of decisions, meetings, conferences, banquets, clay tablet work (Like our paper work), holdups on the freeways in your chariot as well as all the everyday needs of life. Like going to the sandal shop, stopping at the repair shop to have new wheels put on the chariot and the needs of the horses ... ALL that considered, Daniel was a very responsible man, committed and most

of all BUSY! How did he cope with life at the top. He knelt on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks to his God -- AS HE ALWAYS DID! In the midst of his cabinet position in a world wide empire and all the pressures that came with such a position, DANIEL FAITHFULLY PRAYED. Not just at a meal, no, he found a way to stop it all, go to a quiet, private chamber, KNEEL and come into the presence of God in thanksgiving. When life is tough, when it seems like the bad guys are winning, remember there is a God in Heaven Who Rules! When you are spied upon, attacked and cast into the lion's den by your adversaries, remember there is a God in Heaven Who Rules!

- I. A God in Heaven Who Rules should cause each of us to be:
 - A. PEOPLE OF CONVICTION (Present Holiness) 1:8
 - B. PEOPLE OF CONFIDENCE (Past and Future Confidence)
 - 1. OUR GOD RULES Daniel 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; (KJV)
 - 2. OUR LORD CARES Daniel 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. (KJV)
 - 3. OUR GOD MOVES HISTORY ALONG! Daniel 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. (KJV)
 - C. PEOPLE OF COMMUNION (Constant Prayerfulness)
 - 1. OUR LORD WANTS US TO BRING IT ALL TO HIM! Daniel 2:17-18 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. (KJV)

THREE MEGATHEMES

(present in all 12 Minor Prophets)

- I. The Minor Prophets declare GOD IS IN CONTROL. Indeed, they do more than merely declare it; the Sovereign hand of God is

- everywhere visible. Overriding the words of these twelve writers is the reality that God is the sovereign Lord of history. They affirm that nothing happens, either to Israel or to the gentile nations, that is not the result of His direct determination. The destruction by locusts in Joel was God's doing. Nineveh's ups (revival with Jonah) and downs (complete destruction in Nahum) was sent -from the Lord. When Assyria decimated Israel and Babylon wiped out Judah, it was God who did it. Any doubts these prophets had over the precise purpose of God's actions- Habakkuk is one who had great problems- evaporate the moment they remember the Almighty God is in control.
- II. The minor Prophets declare GOD IS HOLY. A comprehension of His utter holiness was the impetus for their scathing indictments of sin. Wherever the sin was found, among God's people or in foreign lands (Edom, as in Obadiah; Assyria, as in Nahum) -it was still an affront to the Lord and must be dealt with. As nowhere else in the Scriptures, sin is denounced and repentance is ardently and earnestly demanded. They declare that with genuine repentance, the judgment of God falls.
- III. The minor Prophets declare GOD IS LOVINGLY JUST. God's love and justice appear so harsh that liberals verses dealing with God's love. Such actions betray a basic misunderstanding of the perfections of our Lord. The great love of the Lord for His people (even His love for Nineveh) caused Him to send messengers with His message. They warned of coming judgment. And in time the judgment falls. Sin is always an affront to God. Sin always destroys. Sin is always judged. But for His own, judgment is to turn them from sin to their Rightful Master. These truths must be emphasized as much today as they were 28 hundred years ago. Individuals are still sinning and running away from God just as Israel did. Nations are still offending the righteousness of a Holy God just as Israel did.

HOSEA

“WORSHIPING OUR FAITHFUL GOD” (961023)

Hosea had a life of grief. His only beloved wife Gomer was persistently unfaithful to their marriage. This sorrow gave Hosea a unique perspective with which to speak about the parallel unfaithfulness of Israel for their Lord. The compassionate heart of God with no diminishing of His holy standard is seen in this book. Hosea paints a powerful portrait of the coming revelation of the love and holiness of God perfectly revealed in Christ. There is moral and spiritual bankruptcy. Sin is unashamedly practiced. God is abandoned. Worship

of the True and Living God is replaced by false and lifeless idols. Hosea depicts the inward decay of a collapsing nation. Ultimately Assyria captured and deported the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC.

- I. **Worshipping the Beauty of Christ in Hosea:**
 - A. **As the Promised Messiah** Hosea 1:10
 - B. **As the Prince of Life Triumphant over the Grave** Hosea 6:2
 - C. **As a Child protected by God** Hosea 11:
 - D. **As our Wonderful Savior:**
 - 1. **He Drew us to Himself** Hosea 11:4
 - 2. **He is our only Hope** Hosea 13:4
 - 3. **He is our Redeemer** Hosea 13:14
- II. **SEEING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN HOSEA**
 - A. **God Faithfully Warns His People:** Israel forgot their Maker (8:14) but God never forgot them, rather He:
 - B. **Israel Faithlessly lives apart from God:** *By their deeds* (Hosea 7:2)
 - C. **Israel Faithlessly Neglects God's Word:** Israel stumbled into sin (4:5; 5:5) and didn't even know it (7:8,9) because she became satisfied and forgot God (8:14; 13:6).
 - D. **Israel Faithlessly Compromised God's Plan:** Mixing with the nations (7:8) caused them to stray and rebel (7:13) and ultimately to be led astray by a spirit of harlotry (4:12; 5:4).
 - E. **God Faithfully Disciplines His Disobedient Children:** Since Israel has stumbled into sin, God will surely chastise them (4:1; 5:2) for they have transgressed His covenant (6:6,7; 8:1; 13:4).
 - F. **God Faithfully seeks His People:** Hosea urges Israel to ACKNOWLEDGE their guilt (5:15) and then RETURN to (6:1), KNOW (6:3) and WAIT for Him (12:6).

961030we

Joel

Our God of Wrath

The book⁵ of Joel tells of a great plague of insects which came upon the land of Judah as a judgment from God against sin. In the law,

⁵ Moody Monthly, May, 1965.

God had promised material prosperity to His people for obedience, and adversity for disobedience. The period described in the opening prophecy was one of famine and suffering because an enormous hoard of insects had eaten much of the vegetation. The distress in Judah because of this judgment is seen as a foreshadowing of greater distress in a coming day of greater judgment. That yet future period is described as "the day of Jehovah". This phrase may be considered as the theme of the book. "The day of Jehovah" is the time of God's judgment upon the earth in connection with the second coming of Christ. A simple, basic outline of the book is as follows:

- I. **GOD SEEKS REPENTANCE** (ch. 1) Repentance always refers to a "turn about". As someone once said, "God whispers to us in our joys, but shouts to us in our sorrows". The Lord wants to use disasters and tragedies to refocus our hearts upon Him. So often the scientific explanation neatly blinds the eyes of people to God's hand behind the scenes! In the Scriptures repentance and forgiveness are always tightly bound together. If we repent we **will** be forgiven. And if we **won't** repent we **can't** be forgiven.! Joel is commissioned to declare the lesson needing to be learned from the locust plague.
- II. **GOD GIVES REVELATION** (ch. 2)
- III. **GOD PLANS RESTORATION** (ch. 3)
 - A. Portrait of universal judgment (1-17) Moral declension; Physical disaster.
 - B. Picture of eternal age (18-21) Millennial blessing following the judgment of the Day of the Lord. The land freed from wickedness is again blessed of God.
 - C. But what is the benefit of such a study?
 1. ESCHATOLOGY POINTS TO CHRISTLY LIVING
Revelation 19: 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (KJV); 1 John 3: 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (KJV)
 2. ESCHATOLOGY PRODUCES HOPEFUL LIVING Romans 15: 13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (KJV)
 3. ESCHATOLOGY PROMOTES CONFIDENT LIVING 1 John 2: 28 And now, little children, abide in him;

that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (KJV); 1 John 5: 19-20 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (KJV).

961106we

Amos

Our God of Justice

Amos prophesies during a period of national optimism in Israel. Business is booming and boundaries are bulging. But below the surface, greed and injustice are festering. Hypocritical religious motions have replaced true worship, creating a false sense of security and a growing callousness to God's disciplining hand. Famine, drought, plagues, death, destruction-nothing can force the people to their knees. Amos, the farmer-turned-prophet, lashes out at sin unflinchingly, trying to visualize the nearness of God's Judgment and mobilize the nation to repentance. The nation, like a basket of rotting fruit, stands ripe for Judgment because of its hypocrisy and spiritual indifference. The name Amos is derived from the Hebrew root amas, "to lift a burden, to carry." Thus, his name means "Burden" or "Burden-Bearer." Amos lives up to the meaning of his name by bearing up under his divinely given burden of declaring Judgment to rebellious Israel. The Greek and Latin titles are both transliterated in English as Amos. Amos ministered after the time of Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. At this time Uzziah reigned over a prosperous and militarily successful Judah. He fortified Jerusalem and subdued the Philistines, the Ammonites, and the Edomites. In the north, Israel was ruled by the capable King Jeroboam II. Economic and military circumstances were almost ideal, but prosperity only increased the materialism, immorality, and injustice of the people (2:6-8; 3:10; 4: 1; 5:10-12; 8:4-6). During these years, Assyria, Babylon, Aram, and Egypt were relatively weak. Thus, the people of Israel found it hard to imagine the coming disaster predicted by Amos. However, it was only three decades until the downfall of Israel.

I. OUTLINE

A. PROLOGUE (1:1-2)

- B. PEOPLE JUDGED (1:3-2:16)
 - 1. Sledges of Torture - Damascus (1:3-5) CRUELTY (human rights violations)
 - 2. Slave Trafficking - Gaza (1:6-8) SLAVERY (selling people for money)
 - 3. Severing Treaty - Tyre (1:9-10) DISHONESTY (breaking promises)
 - 4. Sword of Terror - Edom (1:11-12) VENGEFULNESS (hated her brother)
 - 5. Sadistic Triumphant - Ammon (1:13-15) VIOLENCE (cruelty to defenseless)
 - 6. Spoiling Tombs - Moab (2:1-3) DISRESPECTFULNESS (spiteful to the dead)
 - 7. Spurning the Torah - Judah (2:4-5) DISOBEDIENCE (unfaithful to God)
 - 8. Social Transgressions - Israel (2:6-16) HARDHEARTEDNESS
- C. PURPOSE OF THE JUDGMENT (3:1-6:14)
- D. PICTURES OF JUDGMENT (7:1-9:10)
- E. PROSPERITY AFTER JUDGMENT (9:11-15)

II. The Judgment of God Explained:

- A. A number of lessons can be learned from this prophecy.
 - 1. First, God is *overly patient with* nations, giving time to repent before Judgment falls.
 - 2. Second, God is *no respecter of* nations; all will be judged for their sin.
 - 3. Third, when the cup of sin within a nation is full, Judgment will be *irrevocable*.
 - 4. *Fourth*, God is *sovereign* over all nations, choosing the time of their rise and fall.
 - 5. Fifth, nations are held *accountable* for brutal abuse shown to countries captured in war.
 - 6. Sixth, *God's standards for* judging nations are similar but the results differ.
 - 7. Seventh, God brings Judgment on leaders and nations who *perpetrate* fraud, oppression, and violence against its people.

961113we

OBADIAH

Our God of Humility

Between⁶ the Gulf of Akaba and the Dead Sea lies a range of precipitous red sandstone heights, known as Mount Seir. Here Esau settled after he had despised his birthright, and his descendants, having driven out the Horites (Gen. 15: . 6), occupied the whole of the mountain (Dent. 2: . 12). The capital city Selah, or Petra, " Rock," was a city unique of its kind amid the works of man. Perched like an eagle's nest (ver. 4) amid inaccessible mountain fortresses, the dwellings were mostly caves, hewn out of the soft rock (ver. 3, 6), and placed where you could scarce imagine a human foot could climb.

The story of Esau⁷ and Jacob is that of twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. They were not identical twins, actually they were opposites (see Gen. 25:24-34). Esau despised his birthright. The man who had the birthright was in contact with God, he was the priest of his family, he was the man who had a covenant from God, the man who had a relationship with God. In effect Esau said, "I would rather have a bowl of soup than have a relationship with God. "Having seen Esau in the first book of the Old Testament, look now at the last book of the Old Testament and read this strange language: I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, In what way hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau... [Mal. 1:2,3a]. This is a strange thing for God to say - "I loved Jacob and I hated Esau." The explanation is in the little book of Obadiah. It was pride. "Pride hath deceived you," God says to Edom.

I. Christ the Model of Humility

- A. But⁸ there is this to add. It is true that the sin of Edom, long indulged, worked itself into the very character of the people and therefore inevitably flowed on in history. But that same flow of history also brought one who lived by an entirely different standard. There was a day in history when two kings confronted one another for the first time. One was an earthly king. He sat that day at the pinnacle of power. His name was Herod Antipas. Herod was a son of Herod the Great, who was an Edomite or (as the New Testament had it) an Idumean. Herod the Great had slaughtered the babes of Bethlehem in his desire to exterminate Christ. His successor, Antipas, with whom we are concerned, was no better. He had beheaded John the Baptist and had been called "that fox" by Jesus (Luke

⁶ Christ in all Scriptures.

⁷ J. Vernon Magee, p. 268.

⁸ J. M. Boice, Minor Prophets, I, 201.

13:32). Antipas had everything he wanted. His income, expressed in American money, would be in excess of 6 million dollars a year. All the pleasures of life were his. If anyone stood in his way ... well, the life of that person meant as little to him as the lives of the innocents of Bethlehem had meant to his father. The motto of his reign was: "What will it profit me?"

- B. The other king was Jesus. He was the King of Kings, one who, according to the flesh, was the natural heir to David's throne and who, according to His divine nature, was the supreme King over all the kings of this earth. But He did not look like a king. He stood in humble clothing. He had been rejected. Within hours He was to die a felon's death. If Jesus had wished, He could have called forth legions of angels who would have vindicated His cause instantly and have swept the usurper Herod from the throne. But Jesus did not want the throne in that way. He did not want the throne until you and I could share it with Him. To make that possible He would die.
- C. Herod said, "What does it profit me?" Jesus said, "What can I do that will be the greatest possible benefit to My brethren?" God vindicated Jesus! Jesus went to the cross. He died. But His death was followed by a resurrection, and today He lives to enable those who believe on Him to behave as He did and bring a true, supernatural brotherhood to this world. For his part, Herod went on with his revelry but soon was banished to Lyons, France, where he died in misery⁹. This is the choice before you: to go Herod's way or Jesus' way. You cannot do both!

II. **God: Breaker of Pride** Actions that promote the growth of humility:

- A. **REFOCUS:** James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (KJV)
- B. **REMOVE:** Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (KJV)
- C. **REQUEST:** 1 Peter 5:5-6 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble

⁹ I am indebted for this comparison to a small tract written years ago by Joseph Hoffran Cohn for the American Board of Missions to the Jews, entitled "The Man from Petra," No. 65 in the series "What Every Christian Should Know About the Jews" (revised 1961, no original date of publication).

yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (KJV)

Jonah

Our God of Mercy (961120we)

I. Our Merciful God Chastening (1)

A. **He is a God WHO SEEKS (1:1-2a)** Our Lord God Almighty is such a God of Mercy and Grace! Out of the countless lives that have crossed the pages of time we find two small dots, blips on the radar screen of eternity. Seemingly insignificant to all but God. A great storm that swirled around that nameless boat somewhere in the Mediterranean eight centuries before Christ. By all counts it should have swamped that boat and sent the nameless mariners to the black depth of the sea to await judgment day. As Criswell said, "The mystery of God is seen in these thousands of years in which sin and death run riot. There is no village and there is no hamlet without its raging, and there is no human heart without its dark, black drop. There is no life without its tears and its sorrows. There is no home that ultimately does not break up, and there is no family that does not see the circle of the home dissolve in the depths of the grave. There is no life that does not end in death. The pages of history, from the time of the first murder until this present hour, are written in blood, tears and death." But this black night a light breaks forth. Amazingly, these sinking sailors do not perish. They rather are miraculously rescued from harm by the Master of ocean and earth and skies. Of all things, sleeping in the dark, creaking hold is an evangelist. Shaken awake by the terrified captain, questioned by shouted words over the fury of the storm, he speaks. In Jonah 1:9 the disobedient rebel shows his heart. Asked to go east he turns west. Told to rescue inland Ninevah, he seeks the Sea route to the furthest western city known in his day - Tarshish in western Spain!

B. **THE FOLLY OF RUNNING FROM GOD (1:3)**

C. THE POWER OF SPEAKING FOR GOD

(1:4-9) It is almost humorous that, in spite of his persistence in disobeying the Lord and the breach of divine fellowship that must have produced, Jonah gave a powerful testimony. Though Jonah's actions are wrong, his heart can't hide the Word of God for long, it just comes out. And in all His power God will speak to them. You see, the Scripture are God speaking. When you share them, the Voice of God is unleashed. The Bible is the unsheathed sword of the Spirit. So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." (NKJV) NINE WORDS that strike harder than the gale howling about them. It penetrates deeper than the cold sea spraying their faces and stinging their eyes. For you see, the Word can penetrate the very soul of mankind. He may have been endeavoring to resign his commission, but he could not change his heart, which remained that of a true prophet. So he pointed these mariners to the only Lord God.¹⁰

D. THE GOD WHO WILL NOT LET GO

(1:10) James Boice adds this insight: Logically, he might have been able to tell just the bare facts and let it go at that. Verse 10 says that he rehearsed his story, culminating in his running away. But Jonah could not stop at that point, it seems. So even in his state of disobedience and in the trauma of the moment, Jonah told of his background and indicated that he was a servant of the Creator and covenant-keeping God, Jehovah.¹¹ An interesting phrase appears here, for, having been told of Jonah's testimony, we are immediately informed that the sailors were "terrified." We have already been told once that the men were afraid; they were afraid of the storm. We will be told once more that as a result of God's act in calming it they "greatly feared [that is, revered] the LORD" (v. 16). But why, we might ask, were the men exceedingly afraid at this point, more afraid apparently than they were of the storm itself? The reason was that they knew about Jonah's God. These were men who had traveled from port to port around the Mediterranean Sea,

¹⁰ Gaebelein, *Four Minor Prophets*, p. 78.

¹¹ Boice, *Minor Prophets*, p. 223.

hearing many stories of other people and their gods. Are we to think they had never heard of the Hebrew people or of the Hebrew God, Jehovah? Of course, they had heard of Him!

1. He was the God who had brought down the plagues on Egypt so that His people might be led out.
2. He was the God *who* had parted the waters of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape into the desert
3. He was the God *who* had then closed the *waters* on the pursuing Egyptian forces.
4. *He had* led the Hebrews in the wilderness for forty years, protecting them by a cloud that spread out over their encampment during the daytime to give them shade but which turned into a pillar of fire by night to give them light and heat.
5. He had provided manna to eat and water to drink.
6. He had parted the waters of the Jordan River to enable them to cross over into Canaan.
7. He had leveled the walls of Jericho.
8. He had caused the sun to stand still at Gibeon so that Joshua would have time to achieve a full victory over the fleeing Amorites.

E. Why our DISOBEDIENCE HURTS God

(1:11) The great God of the Hebrews and not a weak god, was pursuing this boat and its hapless mariners for the sake of Jonah. And how they were terrified! "What have you done?" they asked. "What should we do to you to make the *sea* calm down for us?" was their next question (v. 11).

F. Our Merciful GOD WHO SAVES(1:16)

What happens? The same incredible result that 5 words spoken later (3:4) by the same prophet would have on Ninevah. The mariners are gloriously converted!

II. Our Merciful God Restoring: A WHALE OF A JOURNEY (2)

III. Our Merciful God Reviving (3)

IV. Our Merciful God Responding (4)

A. THE DANGER OF ANGER (4:1-4)

- B. **THE DANGER OF HASTY DECISIONS (4:5)**
 When we get angry at God we often make the same serious mistakes Jonah made. What were they? He QUIT. He MADE A PRIVATE RETREAT. He BECAME A SPECTATOR.
- C. **THE DEPTHS OF GOD'S MERCY (4:9-10)**
- D. **THE HEIGHTS OF GOD'S MERCY (4:11)**
 What God is going to do, He will do. If He has determined to save Mary Jones, God will save Mary Jones. If He has determined to save John Smith, God will save John Smith. Moreover, those whom He saves will never perish, neither will anyone pluck them out of Christ's hand (John 10:28). But notice, God can do this through the obedience of His children, as He does later with Nineveh through Jonah, in which case they share in the blessing. Or He can do it through His children's disobedience, as here, in which case they miss the blessing. Either way, God blesses those whom He will bless. But the one case involves happiness for His people while the other involves misery. Which will it be in your case? Will you resist Him? Will you refuse His Great Commission? Or will you obey Him in this and in all matters? Perhaps you are not yet a Christian. If not, then learn from God's grace to the sailors. You have not yet perished in your godless state because God, who made the sea around you and the dry land on which you walk, preserves you. Do not remain indifferent to Him. Turn to Him. Approach Him on the basis of the perfect sacrifice for sin made once by His own Son, Jesus Christ, and follow Him throughout your days.
- E. **The Danger of Forgetting God** : Read the Book of Nahum.

Micah

Our God of Righteousness (961204)

Micah was contemporary with the prophet Isaiah¹². But while Isaiah was a court poet, Micah was from a small village. Isaiah was a statesman, a herald to kings. But Micah was an evangelist and social reformer, God's messenger to the misfortunate, oppressed common people. Micah's message, however, like Isaiah's, is one of hope. Both speak of the birth of the coming Messiah and the salvation He would

¹² Edgar C. James, Moody Monthly, pp. 58ff.

bring. And in two of the most remarkable passages in all of Scripture, both speak, almost word for word, of Israel's future and the coming glorious earthly reign of the Messiah (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3). Only seven chapters long, Micah's message contains some of the most familiar passages in all of Scripture. For example, the prophet announces the place of the Messiah's birth: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (5:2).

I. WORSHIPPING CHRIST IN MICAH:

- A. LESSON ONE: LIVE THE TRUTH. One deeply impactful truth Micah points out is that as the leaders go, so go the people. He says Jerusalem's leaders "pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price, and her prophets divine for money" (3:11).
- B. LESSON TWO: LOOK TO JESUS. Micah points to Jesus Christ as the only answer to the world's problems. The poor, the oppressed, and the misfortunate have the "breaker [who] goes up before them" (2:13). The Messiah breaks through the obstacles in the path ahead. In the future He will do this for Israel, when the remnant is gathered into the fold. Today He helps us through our perplexing paths as we trust in Him.
- C. LESSON THREE: PARADISE CHRIST'S PROMISED PEACE IS RETURNING. Messiah's kingdom will come (4:1-8), and Jerusalem will be its center (4:1,2). Peace will reign. Nations "will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war" (4:3). Prosperity will abound, each will "sit under his vine and ... fig tree" (4:4). God will be central as "we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever" (4:5). The same God who brings heaven to earth can bring solutions to our problems today.
- D. LESSON FOUR: CLOTHED WITH CHRIST IS GOD'S EXPECTATIONS. What does God want from us? Micah answers that, too: "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8). No one is exempt.

961211we

NAHUM:

Our God of Judgment

There is one inescapable fact of the Universe: the wrath of God may not be evaded. It is so great that it hunted down and sacrificed no less than the Son of God, Christ Jesus! And if God spared not His Son, what will happen to the rebels at the Day of Judgment? The Assyrian monarch¹³ may have been checked by God in 701 B.C., but these were still great days for Nineveh. Sennacherib more than doubled the city's size, making it the world's largest city for that time. The inner city was surrounded by a wall eight miles in circumference. It was one hundred feet high and so wide that three chariots could race around it abreast. It had twelve hundred towers and fourteen gates. Beyond this was a much longer, outer wall. There was an inner city, an outer city, and what we would call extensive suburbs beyond that. In Jonah this wide expanse was termed a "three days' " journey (Jonah 3:3).

The Prophecy is in three main parts:

1. Judgment on Nineveh Determined (ch. 1)
2. Judgment on Nineveh Described (ch. 2)
3. Judgment on Nineveh Deserved (ch. 3)

I. **WORSHIPPING THE CHARACTER OF GOD** (ch. 1)

- A. **HIS VENGEANCE** Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies; (NKJV) Nahum 1:2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies. (NIV)
- B. **HIS PATIENCE** Nahum 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet. (NKJV)
- C. **HIS OMNIPOTENCE** Nahum 1:6 Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him. (NIV)
- D. **HIS GOODNESS** Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him. (NKJV); Nahum 1:15 Behold, on the mountains The feet of him who brings good tidings, Who

¹³ Boice, p. 59.

proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
Perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass
through you; He is utterly cut off. (NKJV)

E. HIS JUSTICE Nahum 1:8-14

961218WE

HABAKKUK

OUR GOD OF SOVEREIGNTY

God watches us tonight as we live in a nation suffering very much the same disease that ancient Israel suffered. Its a collective societal amnesia about our spiritual heritage. In ancient Israel it had to do with closing the Temple down, hiding the Law of God and neglecting His worship. In America its found in the growing skepticism about objective truth. It is the dismantling of language, texts and history ... to the point that history is eroded, society has no tradition (and disintegrates)!

Now listen to the mighty prophet Habbakuk: In chapter one he says - God raises up Adversaries; in chapter 2 he says, the righteous live by faith but the wicked have no hiding place; in chapter 3 he says, hope in God despite any hopeless situation. However, when a nation turns from its spiritual heritage, Judgment is Inevitable and Inescapable.

- I. **THE BURDENED PROPHET TALKS TO A SOVEREIGN GOD (ch. 1):** Why does God allow evil to continue? Habbakuk asks seven questions:
- II. **THE BENDED PROPHET LISTENS TO A SOVEREIGN GOD (ch. 2):**
 - A. THE PATIENT WAITING (2:1-4) He took his problem to the Lord, and waited.
 - B. THE PERILED WICKED (2:5-20). Five woes are pronounced against sins.
- III. **THE BLESSED PROPHET PRAISES HIS SOVEREIGN GOD (ch. 3):**
 - A. **GOD'S PERSON (3:1-2) IS GREAT.**
 - B. **GOD'S POWER (3:3-15) IS GLORIOUS.**
 - C. **GOD'S PLAN (3:16-19) IS GRACIOUS.**
- IV. APPLICATION
 - A. **TREMBLE AT HIS WORD** Habakkuk 3:16 When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself,

- That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops. (NKJV)
- B. **PRAISE HIS HOLY NAME.** The Scriptures teach us to praise God by two special activities:
 1. ECHOING HIS ATTRIBUTES.
 2. ECHOING HIS ACTIONS.
 - C. **FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF HABAKKUK**
 1. WHEN BURDENED TALK TO GOD.
 2. WHEN BENDED LISTEN TO GOD.
 3. WHEN BLESSED PRAISE GOD.

ZEPHANIAH

“OUR GOD OF HOPE” (970108)

The Minor prophets often seem to have a despairing tone. Evil appears to run unchecked. The wicked die apparently unaccountable for their deeds of cruelty and greed. God's people fail to obey. Death takes them all away. But there is a light in the distance. Rays of hope stream from the promise that the Righteous Judge will make all things right. And on the horizon is a world brand new. Impossible? No, God has already planned the ending. Zephaniah traces a bit of it in his closing words. Remember, because Zephaniah is a summary of the previous prophets, his content and style are very similar to the other eight. So, no matter what your burden and struggle, come to the perfect Hiding Place in Christ! To best learn from Zephaniah, lets back into his book. Turn to the third chapter and discover with me - THE LORD IN THE MIDST. This chapter contains a beautiful lesson, taken spiritually. It describes the sinful condition of a soul apart from Christ (v. 1-2). Those who should have been leaders in righteousness are leaders in iniquity-princes, judges, prophets, priests. Then the Lord Himself takes the place of these leaders, and we see Him "in the midst," fulfilling each office in turn.

- I. **WORSHIPING CHRIST IN ZEPHANIAH**
 - A. **CHRIST OUR PERFECT JUDGE.** First He comes to our hearts as judge, and convicts us of all that is sinful there, bringing His judgment to light (5-7).
 - B. **CHRIST OUR PERFECT PROPHET.** Second, He comes as Prophet, teaching us with pure lips to call upon His name-still "in the midst," dealing with the pride of heart, and bringing us low into the place of blessing, in the presence of His holiness (8-13).
 - C. **CHRIST OUR PERFECT KING.** Third, He comes "into our midst" as King, to reign in undisputed sway in the heart

that is surrendered to Him. When the Lord reigns thus the song begins (14-16).

- D. **CHRIST OUR PERFECT HIGH PRIEST.** Fourth, He is "in the midst " as our Great High Priest, bringing us into the place of communion with Himself.
- II. **TRUSTING GOD IN ZEPHANIAH.** This chapter closes with the six beautiful "I wills" of what the Lord will do for us. Zephaniah 3:18-20
- A. **GOD LOOKS FOR GENUINE CONTRITION OVER SIN.** (3:18) "I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden.
 - B. **GOD DEALS WITH OUR ADVERSARIES IN HIS TIME.** (3:19a) Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you;
 - C. **GOD IS THE DEFENDER OF THE WEAK AND PERFECTS THEIR WEAKNESSES.** (3:19b) I will save the lame, And gather those who were driven out;
 - D. **GOD WILL GIVE BACK TO US A THOUSAND-FOLD ALL WE HAVE LOST FOR HIM.** (3:19c) I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame.
 - E. **GOD HAS HIS KINGDOM PLANS ALL IN ORDER - TIMING, SEQUENCE AND ALL.** (3:20a) At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you;
 - F. **GOD HAS CHOSEN TO RESTORE ISRAEL TO THE HEAD OF THE NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIUM.** (3:20b) For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes," Says the LORD. (NKJV)

Haggai "Our God of Sacrifice" (970115)

There are defining moments that shape the course of history. We remember many of them. When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon River (taking his legions inside the line of no crossing) he set the stage for the Roman Empire as we know it. Young Martin Luther's hammer on the Wittenburg church doors rang out a message that altered the course of the church to this day. When Hitler invaded Danzig at the end of August, 1939 it was England's response that has shaped Western history for the past nearly 60 years. Likewise, in redemptive history (the history of God's work in people) the response of the Jews to a message they heard on September 1st, 520 BC shaped the course of biblical history. In 23 short days what had not happened in 16 long years took place. The Second Temple was started. The First Temple

(Solomon's) was destroyed in 586 BC. Herod later would not build a new temple but expand and embellish the second (Zerubbabel's temple). So this was the beginning of the temple of Christ, the Apostles and of AD 70's destruction. A great turning point in history.

MESSAGE ONE: A Present Need of Completing the Temple (1:1-11) 9/1/520 BC. While the people were waiting before the Lord this first of four messages came.

- I. Before we examine each division of this book, we need to look at the big picture. There are **SEVEN TIMELESS TRUTHS** about God we can trace from the pages of Haggai.
 - A. **THE LORD IS POWERFUL.** The Lord is 14x called by His name of power in this short little book. The Lord of Hosts is Haggai favorite name for God. In using this name our Lord God Almighty reveals the vastness of His control!
 - B. **THE LORD IS JEALOUS** In Haggai God expect the place of priority no matter what is going on in their lives! Haggai 1:2-3 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." ' " 3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, (NKJV). **JEALOUS** is a name the Lord describes Himself by often.
 - C. **THE LORD IS DEMANDING** Haggai 1:9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.
 - D. **THE LORD IS TRUSTWORTHY** Haggai 2:5 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!' (NKJV)
 - E. **THE LORD IS CHANGELESS** Haggai 2:9 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts." (NKJV). The Lord is the same Hebrews 13:8 . . . yesterday, today, and forever. (NKJV). He is not tied to our museums of past greatness! He wants to live powerfully in and through us TODAY!
 - F. **THE LORD IS LOVING** Haggai 2:19 'Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.' " (NKJV). Though He had to judge their past sins, there is blessing on the horizon!

- G. **THE LORD IS PERSONAL** Haggai 2:23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts." (NKJV). After the word of wrath coming on the nations, the Lord assures an individual named Zerubbabel, he will be specially used of the Lord. God has big plans for each of us. Don't miss them!

ZECHARIAH

"OUR JEALOUS GOD" (970122)

The second of the final three prophets of the Old Testament is Zechariah. His name means "God remembers". Because each word of God's Word is inspired, this presents the theme of the book. Unlike the thunder of Haggai his contemporary, Zechariah gives comforting messages of encouragement! Born as the son of a priest during the Babylonian exile, he seems to have been an orphan. He was called the son of Iddo who was his grandfather.

Returning with the faithful remnant numbering 42,360 individuals under Zerubbabel, he joined those who came to restore the Temple worship of the Lord. His ministry dates to the second year of the King of Persia names Darius Hystaspes (521-520 BC). This dates his ministry to 2 months after Haggai stood at the ruins of the Temple and preached his first prophetic sermon. Just as Haggai, God burdened Zechariah for the neglected repair of the Temple. However, God extends his prophetic view far beyond the Jews of his day. God sends him on a prophetic voyage that travels to the very end of redemptive history. He is given such detailed insights surrounding the events of the coming Messiah, the Tribulation, the Golden Millennial Age of Israel and the Reign of Christ that bible teachers of the magnitude of Martin Luther would not even write on some parts of this book. They just couldn't figure it out. Of course they believed God was through with the Jews and all of this had to be describing the church . . .

- I. **PRACTICAL TRUTHS TO CONSIDER:** To maximize our learning, we may begin by gleaning four broad applications from this great Old Testament prophet:
- A. **SIN WILL BRING GOD'S JUDGMENT.** Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (NKJV)

- B. **GOD'S PAST DEALINGS WITH SIN SHOULD CAUSE US TO TURN FROM SIN.** Matthew 12:41 "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. (NKJV)
- C. **TURNING FROM SIN BRINGS BLESSING.** Look at Zechariah 1:3 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. (NKJV). Even the most wicked (Ahab) found mercy in turning. Even the wicked Manasseh was forgiven (II Chr. 33:9-13).
- D. **GOD LIKE HIS WORD CAN NEVER BE EVADED FOR LONG!** See what God said in Zechariah 1:6 Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not overtake your fathers? "So they returned and said: 'Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.' " " " (NKJV)

Malachi

"Our God of Love" (970129)

Last words are very important. Christ's last words contained His legacy for us, His Body. In Malachi we find the last words from God in the Old Testament. His last words are words of His Love! Our God is a God of LOVE. He has shown His love since He came on a search and rescue mission to the Garden of Eden. As soon as Adam and Eve had fallen God came to the rescue. He is the same today.

Because the Last book of the Old Testament opens with God declaring His LOVE. Malachi is a book about Loving God and what He expects from His special people. In just a glance at the book we can see there were many problems among those special people. The Lord points out and questions them about seven key areas of lacking in their lives.

- I. **FIRST LESSON: RESPONDING TO THE LOVE OF GOD (1:1-5)**
- II. **SECOND LESSON: HONORING THE LOVE OF GOD (1:6-2:9)**
- III. **THIRD LESSON: EXPOSING GOD'S UNLOVING PEOPLE (2:10-16)**
- IV. **FOURTH LESSON: TRUSTING THE LOVE OF GOD (2:17-3:6)**
 - A. God promises blessing (3:10-12). Note the elements of a blessing from Numbers 6:24-27. Be sure to often seek ways to ask God's Divine Favor to rest upon those you

come upon in Christ. Sharing a blessing helps others, shows love and models true Christian love!

1. HIS SHELTERING BLESSING v. 24 "The LORD bless you and keep you; (this is God's favor and protection.)
2. HIS SHINING BLESSING v. 25a The LORD make His face shine upon you, (this is showing His pleasure at their actions.)
3. HIS SHOWERING BLESSING v. 25b And be gracious to you; (this is God showing His compassionate mercy.)
4. HIS SMILING BLESSING v. 26a The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, (this was a way of saying He approves of their way.)
5. HIS SANCTIFYING BLESSING v. 26b And give you peace." ' (this is the gift of God for the righteous only.) Isaiah 57:20 But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (NKJV).
6. HIS SIGNING (OUR SOULS) BLESSING v. 27a "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, (this is Divine Ownership, see II Cor. 1.)
7. HIS SECURING BLESSING v. 27b and I will bless them." (this is a promise.)

V. SIXTH LESSON: FEARING OUR LOVING GOD (3:13-4:3)

VI. CONCLUSION: GOD IS COMING (4:4-6)

VII. FIFTH LESSON: ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S LOVING OWNERSHIP (3:7-12)

- A. God calls it Theft (3:8-9). **WHY ARE YOU DISREGARDING GOD'S OWNERSHIP?** Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. (NKJV) The whole tithe was an expression of God's ownership. Anything less would be denying His complete title deed to us. Because He bought us at such a high price (I Cor. 6.19-20) we should give all of ourself back to Him! The Lord is saying if you give all and hold nothing back (unlike Annanias and Saphira of Acts 5) He will pour out such blessings as we could never have experienced. He will shower us with blessings from Heaven. We will not be able to contain all that He has to pour upon us! Think about some of the words we have said to God:

All for Jesus, all for Jesus!

All my being's ransomed pow'rs:

All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours.
Let my hands perform His bidding,
Let my feet run in His ways;
Let my eyes see Jesus only,
Let my lips speak forth His praise.
Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside,
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified.
O what wonder! how amazing!
Jesus, glorious King of kings,
Deigns to call me His beloved,
Lets me rest beneath His wings.