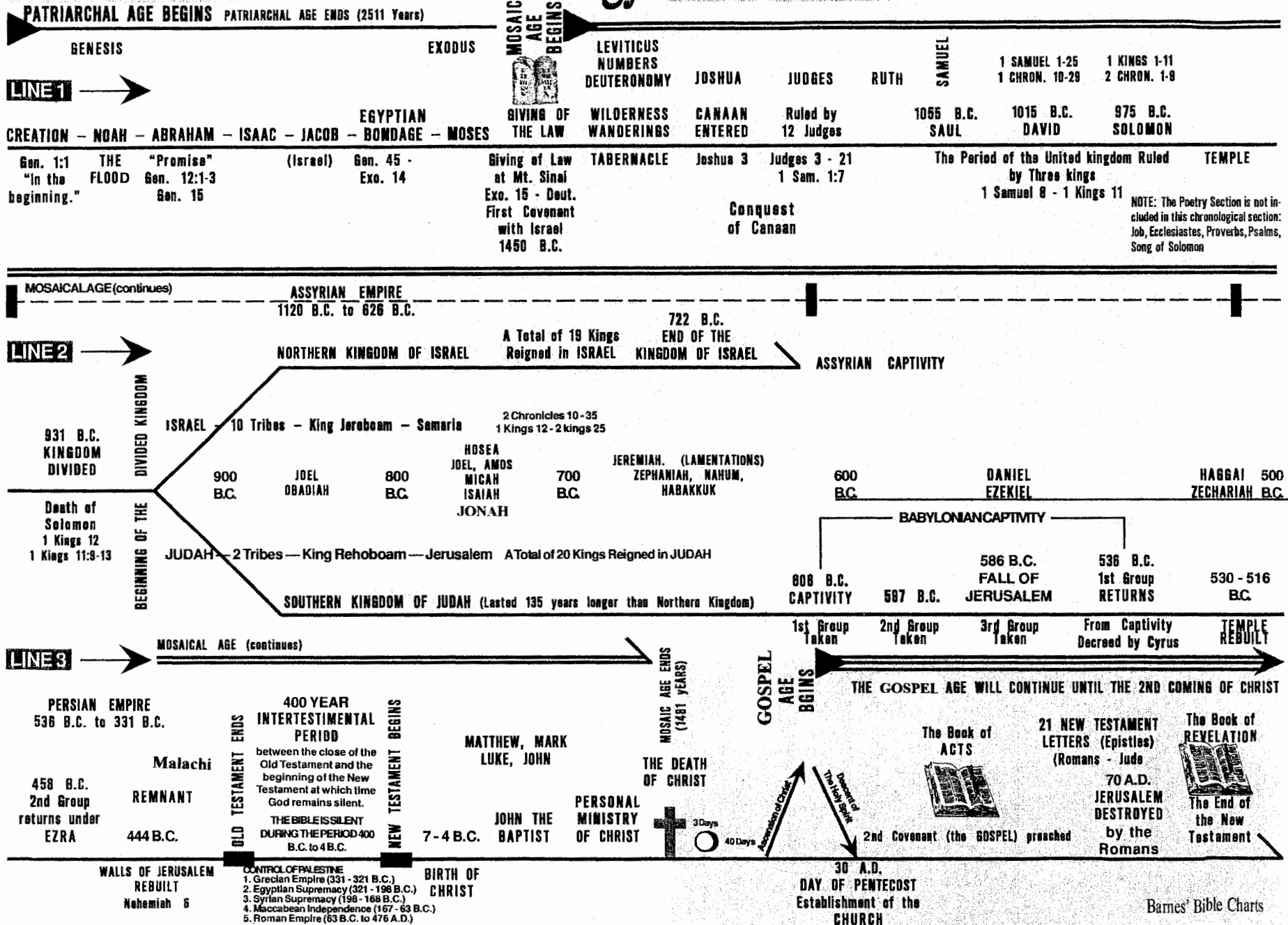


A Brief Chronology of the Entire Bible



A.

THE LITERARY PROPHETS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
(as suggested by Homer Hailey) See other material

Please note: Dating the prophets is not without controversy, and with some it can be very difficult. What I provide below are the estimates among many conservative scholars...

(1). NINTH CENTURY (EARLY ASSYRIAN PERIOD)

1. Obadiah (ca. 845 B.C.)
2. Joel (ca 830 B.C.)
3. Jonah (790-750 B.C.)

-- This is during the period of "The Divided Kingdom" in Israel's history; to the north and east the empire of Assyria was beginning to make its presence known in Israel

(2). EIGHTH CENTURY (ASSYRIAN PERIOD)

1. Amos (755 B.C.)
2. Hosea (750-725 B.C.)
3. Isaiah (740-700 B.C.)
4. Micah (735-700 B.C.)

-- In 722 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity; these prophets were proclaiming God's message as the nation was being threatened from the north

(3). SEVENTH CENTURY (CHALDEAN PERIOD)

1. Jeremiah (626-586 B.C.)
2. Zephaniah (630-625 B.C.)
3. Nahum (625-612 B.C.)
4. Habakkuk (625-605 B.C.)

-- Assyria was eventually defeated by Babylon; these prophets served as God's messengers when the Babylonian empire threatened the kingdom of Judah

(4). SIXTH CENTURY (THE EXILE)

1. Ezekiel (593-570 B.C.)
2. Daniel (605-536 B.C.)

-- Like many of their countrymen, these prophets were taken into Babylonian captivity; from Babylon they served as God's messengers to both captives and kings

(5). SIXTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES (POST-EXILIC PERIOD)

1. Haggai (520 B.C.)
2. Zechariah (520-518 B.C.)
3. Malachi (ca. 440 B.C.)

-- After the Jews were allowed to return home from Babylonian captivity, God used Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to rebuild the temple; later, Malachi was used to reform the priesthood during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah

PROPHETS AND KINGS

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	PROPHETS	YEAR B.C.	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL
1. Rehoboam		975	1. Jeroboam
2. Abijah (Abijam)		957	- - - - -
3. Asa		955	- - - - -
- - - - -		954	2. Nadab
- - - - -		952	3. Baasha
- - - - -		930	4. Elah
- - - - -		929	5. Zimri
- - - - -		929	6. Omri
- - - - -		918	7. Ahab
4. Jehoshaphat		914	- - - - -
- - - - -		897	8. Ahaziah
- - - - -		896	9. Jehoram (Joram)
5. Jehoram		889	- - - - -
6. Ahaziah		884	- - - - -
7. (Athaliah)		883	10. Jehu
8. Joash (Jehoash) } ^{835?}		877	- - - - -
- - - - -	Obediah - 845 ?	856	11. Jehoahaz
- - - - -		840	12. Jehoash (Joash)
9. Amaziah	Joel - 830 ?	838	- - - - -
- - - - -		824	13. Jeroboam II.
10. Uzziah (Azariah)		810	- - - - -
- - - - -		783	ANARCHY.....
- - - - -	Jonah - 790-750	772	14. Zachariah
- - - - -		771	15. Shallum
- - - - -		771	16. Menahem
- - - - -		760	17. Pekahiah
- - - - -		759	18. Pekah
11. Jothan	Amos - 755	758	- - - - -
12. Ahaz	Hosea 750-725	742	- - - - -
- - - - -	Isaiah 740-700	739	ANARCHY.....
- - - - -	Micah 735-700	730	19. Hoshea
13. Hezekiah		727	- - - - -
- - - - -		722 (721)	OVERTHROW OF THE
14. Manasseh		696	KINGDOM
15. Amon		641	BY ASSYRIA
16. Josiah		639	(2 Kings 17)
17. Jehoahaz	Jeremiah 626-586	609	
18. Jehoiakim	Zephaniah 630-625	608	
19. Jehoiachin	Nahum 625-612	599	
20. Zedekiah	Habakkuk 725-605	598	
21. OVERTHROW OF THE	Ezekiel 593-570	588	
KINGDOM....	Daniel 605-536		
Note: Babylon marched	Haggai	520	
on Jerusalem in	Zechariah	520-518	
606 B.C. and	Malachi	440	
allowed puppet			
kings over Judah			
till 588 B.C.			

Judah Returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple and city - 536-445

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE PROPHETS

An analysis of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28

Leviticus 26:

Note that all the promises and threats seem to be oriented to physical blessings or curses. Their land, cattle, homes, children and well-being hinges on honoring God's covenant. (vv. 3-13)

- v. 8: There is an expression of triumph over their enemies using a hyperbolic figure. Cf. Amos 5:3; Dt. 28:7, 27
- v. 11-12: Perhaps here is an allusion to something other than a physical reward. Cf. 2Cor. 6:16
- v. 18,21,24,28: A promise of vengeance executed against them in series of sevens. The series in the book of Revelation answers directly to this reference.
- v. 36: The awful terror they would experience - cf. Luke 21:24-26
- v. 40-45: The terms of restoration are clearly defined in this section. On two separate occasions Israel entirely ignored God and was completely ruined. One instance involved Northern Israel at 721 B.C. and the other involved the Jews at 70 A.D. in the fall of Jerusalem.
- v. 9,25,42,44,45: These verses form the basis for God blessing or cursing Israel. It all depends upon the covenant. There was a strong agreement between God and his people. Ex. 24:3-8

Deuteronomy 28:

The wording is almost identical with that of Leviticus 26, with the difference of length and perhaps more heightened expression in Deut. The seven series are not mentioned as in Leviticus.

- v. 7, 25: The allusion to victory or defeat at the hands of the enemy in hyperbolic form. (cf. Lev. 26:8)
- v. 22: A list of forms of God's vengeance is found here.
- v. 15-19: The calamities are described as physical catastrophies.
- v. 36-46: A foreign king will be ruling over them.
- v. 48: Note the reference to a yoke of iron and then compare Jer. 28.
- v. 58-68: There is no promise of relief in this denunciation as there was in Leviticus 26.

“THE MAJOR MESSAGES OF THE MINOR PROPHETS”

Introduction to the Minor Prophets

I. THE SIGNIFICANTS OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

A. WHO ARE THE MINOR PROPHETS? (12 in number)

1. Name them in the order found in the Old Testament

2. Name them in the chronological order as given by Homer Hailey

B. WHY ARE THESE BOOKS CALLED THE “MINOR PROPHETS” ?

1. There being called the “minor prophets” has nothing to do with their relative importance.
 - a. The Jews had two classifications for the prophetic books: The “Earlier Prophets” = Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, and I & II Kings. Then they had the “Greater Prophets” which they broke down into two categories: (1) Greater Prophets = Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Daniel. (2) Lesser Prophets = today called the “Minor Prophets”.
 - b. They eventually were grouped together and became known as the “book of the twelve”.
 - c. A man by the name of Augustine is believed to be the first person to refer to them as the “Minor Prophets”.
2. The word “minor” only refers to the amount of material they wrote in comparison with the 4 “Major Prophets” such as Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.
 - a. Elijah was regarded as the greatest of the prophets, but he did NOT write anything !
 - b. “minor” is only a relative word. It is unfortunate that they came to be known as the “minor prophets” .

C. WHY STUDY THE MINOR PROPHETS ?

1. They give us great insight into the character of God.
2. They give us great insight into how He deals with His people.
3. They help us grasp the seriousness of sin.
4. They help us understand the nature of repentance.
5. They help us understand the nature of true worship.
6. They point us to the coming of the Messiah.
7. They help us understand the meaning of “prophetic expressionism”.
 - a. The prophets had a language of their own....
 - b. Problems distinguishing literal from figurative, symbolical.
 - c. Phrases and terms such as “last days”, “day of the Lord”, “Zion”, Valley of Jehoshaphat

D.. HOW WE WILL STUDY THE MINOR PROPHETS

1. We will try to understand the conditions existing in Israel at the time the prophet spoke .
2. Try to understand the message the prophet delivered with it's meaning.
3. Then, apply principles taught to us today.

II. THE APPEARANCE OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

A. THERE ARE TWO MAJOR GROUPS OF PROPHETS

1. THE NON-WRITING PROPHETS: No books written by them that we have.
 - a. These would included: Nathan (2Sam. 7), Gad (2Sam. 24:11) Jehu (1Kng. 16:1-7), Hanani, Shemaiah (1 Kng. 12:21-24), Ahijah (1 Kng. 11:29), Elijah (1Kng. 17) and Elisha (2Kng. 2)
 - b. Their writing was limited to the recording of history
(1Chrn. 29:29; 2Chrn. 12:15)
2. THE WRITING PROPHETS: Books written by them
 - a. These would include 4 major prophets and 12 minor prophets = 16

B. THE PROPHETS APPEARED IN 3 MAIN STAGES OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

[Some appeared at earlier times: Moses (Deut. 18:15-ff) Deborah Jud. 4:4), Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Huldah (2Kng. 22:14)]

1. THE PRE-UNITED KINGDOM PERIOD
 - a. The appearance of prophets in this period was rare. (1Sam. 3:1)
 - b. Samuel is the most well known of this time.
 - c. The emphasis of the prophets at this time was to keep the people from following the religious ways of the Canaanites (neighbors).
2. THE UNTIED KINGDOM PERIOD
 - a. Nathan (2Sam. 7:2; 12:1) and Gad (2Sam. 21:11) are the two most prominent. They spoke to David.
 - b. The emphasis of the prophets seemed to be upon personal contact with individuals rather than speaking directly to the people.
3. THE POST-UNITED KINGDOM PERIOD
 - a. This is where the writing prophets appear whose work centered upon speaking out against the nation (Israel & or, Judah).
 - b. FOUR likely reasons for change from non-writing to writing:
 - (1) Destruction was coming. Need for remembrance of why ?
 - (2) There was an increasing historical consciousness.
 - (3) A specific Messianic hope was beginning to dawn.
 - (4) There was an increase in literacy among the people.

C. THEY APPEARED IN TIMES OF CRISIS IN ISRAEL

1. They were not a "standing office" such as the priests.
 - a. The priests inherited their position by birth into the tribe of Levi.

- b. A high priest had to be a direct descendant of Aaron
 - c. Their role was clearly established and described.
 - 2. They did not introduce new law to the people. Their function was to call people back to the law, they already had and were supposed to know.
 - a. There were no official robes and garments, nor codes of conduct for them.
 - b. We have to understand their role through their **activities**.
 - 3. They were called directly by God to be prophets.
 - a. **Jeremiah 1:5**, "Before I formed you in the womb...."
 - b. **Amos 7:14-15**, "Then the Lord took me..."
 - c. **Ezekiel 1:1**, "... as I was among the captives at the river...."
 - 4. Many appeared around the times of two major crisis in Israel.
 - a. THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS [745-720 B.C.]
 - * Capture of Samaria and subsequent fall of Israel
 - b. THE BABYLONIAN CRISIS [606-586 B.C.]
 - * The three successive invasions and deportation of Judah.
 - * Jerusalem & the temple destroyed
 - 5. THE LITERARY PROPHETS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
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III. THE ROLE OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

A. THE DEFINITION OF A 'PROPHET'

1. The **DICTIONARY DEFINITION**: There are two primary ones
 - a. The most common was the Hebrew word "nabhi" which was translated "prophet". Used over 300 times in O.T.
 - (1) It meant literally to "bubble up" or to "boil over"
 - (2) The Arabic root meant "to proclaim" or "to announce"
 - (3) Primarily had reference to the communicating of a message received.
 - b. Second most common was the Hebrew word "Roeh" translated "seer". See 1Sam. 9:9
 - (1) Primarily had reference to the receiving of a message. See Isa. 30:10 for an example of the distinction of the two
 - c. Also used were "man of God", "messenger of the Lord", and "servant of the Lord".
 - d. The etymology of these words is obscure so the key to understanding them is studying their use in context.

2. The CONTEXTUAL DEFINITION

- a. Ex. 4:13-16 & Ex. 7:1 = Illus. in the relationship between Moses and Aaron.
- b. Jer. 1:6-9, "...I have put my words in your mouth..."
- c. 2Pet. 1:21, "...spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

B. THEY WERE THE "PREACHERS" OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The priests had the role of "teaching" the law
 - a. Their first responsibility was to offer sacrifices for the people
 - b. Their second was to teach the law to the people
 - c. Example: Lev. 10:8-11; Mal. 2:7-8; Hosea 4:6; Ezek. 22:26
Neh. 8:4-8
2. The prophets had the role of "preaching" to the people
 - a. While the priests **taught** the law, the prophets **exhorted** the people to obey the law.
 - b. While the priests addressed the **minds** of the people, the prophets addressed the **emotions** and **will** of the people
 - c. They urged the people to **DO** what they already learned (or should have known) **REPENT** and turn back.....
 - d. These prophets were basically "inspired preachers"
3. Examples of the "preaching" role of the prophets...
 - a. Hosea 4:1 & 5:1, Hear the word of the Lord..."
 - b. Jer. 2:2, "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem..."
 - c. Jer. 7:2, "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house..."
4. Their job was to catch the attention of the people !!!

C. THEY WERE PREACHERS OF THE COVENANT

1. There were THREE MAJOR COVENANTS that directed the history of the nation of Israel:
 - a. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT [Gen. 12:1-3]
 - (1) It identified the descendants of Abraham as God's chosen people. (cf. circumcision)
 - (2) It indicated that all nations of the earth would be blessed through his lineage. (Gal. 3:16)
 - (3) To accomplish this goal, God would make Abraham's descendants (through Isaac) into a great nation and give them the land of Canaan as an inheritance.
 - b. THE MOSAIC COVENANT [Ex. 24:3-8]
 - (1) This covenant given by Moses specified the terms (conditions) under which the nation of Israel would be blessed by God.
 - (2) It specified blessings of prosperity IF the nation was faithful to the laws God had given them, and it specified the curses that He would bring upon them if they were unfaithful & disobedient [Lev. 26 & Deut. 28]

- (3) Those cursed indicated that prolonged disobedience would cause them to be rejected by God and forfeit the land promised under the covenant to Abraham !
- (4) It also held out, though, the possibility of repentance and restoration to the land
- c. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT [2Sam. 7:11-16]
 - (1) This covenant spoke of a day when God would establish HIS everlasting kingdom from the seed of David himself.
- 2. THE ABRAHAMIC & DAVIDIC COVENANTS WERE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE MOSAIC.
 - a. They were enacted solely upon the initiative and action of God.
 - b. They did not require any necessary response on the part of Abraham and David themselves. They had already demonstrated their faithfulness to God.
 - c. In fact, they could be considered as much promises as they could covenants.
 - d. The Mosaic covenant was dramatically different though because the blessings and cursings were dependent upon the future faithfulness of the people.
 - (1) It was based upon God's faithfulness and the people's faithfulness to the covenant which they agreed to [Ex.24:7-8].
 - e. It was also a TEMPORARY covenant to be held in place till the time of the fulfillment of the seed promise [Gal. 3:19, 23]
- 3. THE NATION OF ISRAEL NEGLECTED THE MOSAIC COVENANT
 - a. By the later half of the O.T. period, the children of Israel came to see their history only in light of being the seed of Abraham and looking for the promised King (David's son).
 - b. As a whole, they forgot the obligations and responsibilities imposed upon them by the Mosaic Covenant.
 - c. They saw only the promises of blessings and glory for their nation, and ignored the warnings of judgment & punishment for sin !
 - d. They had the attitude of "we're God's people!" What can happen to us? We are special !
 - e. It is during this time of complacency that they were teetering on the brink of national disaster.
 - (1) Within a matter of a few short years the Assyrians and Babylonians would come in bringing destruction !!!
 - f. The prophets were sent to turn them back to the covenant they made with God in order to avoid disaster.
- 4. THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR MESSAGE CENTERED ON THE MOSAIC COVENANT.
 - a. There is only one direct reference to Abraham in the entire 12 books of the minor prophets [Micah 7:20]

- b. There is more, but not many references to the Davidic covenant.
- c. What the prophets did was to confront the people with their sin in view of their covenant with God.
- d. The prophets presuppose the people realize they were under God's covenant.

D. THE PROPHETS USED "COVENANT LANGUAGE" IN PREACHING TO THE PEOPLE !

1. THEY USED LEGAL LANGUAGE.

- a. **Micah 6:1-8** The word "contend" was a Hebrew legal term used in court (v.2) meaning "bring charges against". The hills & mountains that surrounded the people at the giving of the law are called in as witnesses. God tells the people that he has kept his part of the covenant.
- b. **Hosea 4:1** The Lord brings a "charge" against His people. "Charge" in the footnote means a legal complaint. The Lord says there is no knowledge of God in the land. The knowledge spoken of is "covenant knowledge", NOT just factual knowledge !
- c. **Jer. 2:4-9** "bring charges" or "contend" (v.9). A Hebrew legal term for "lawsuit".
- d. **Amos 3:2 & Hosea 13:4-5** "to know the Lord" >> "You only have I known" (3:2) & "you shall know" (13:4-5)
- e. **Joel 2:13** "merciful", sometimes translated "lovingkindness" and is used in the sense of "covenant faithfulness". It describes God's faithfulness to His covenant !

2. THEY INVOKED THE CURSES OF THE COVENANT

- a. In Amos 4:6-ff, we find Amos referring directly back to the curses found in Deut. 28.
 - (1) Famine (v.6) ---- Deut. 28:17
 - (2) Drought (v.9) --- Deut. 28:23-24
 - (3) Crop disease (v.10) ---- Deut. 28:21
 - (4) Pestilence (v.9) ---- Deut. 28:22
 - (5) Overthrow of cities (v11) ---- Deut. 28:25
 - (6) Captivity (v12; 5:3) ---- Deut. 28:48-49
- b. In Leviticus 26, we find the curses coming in progressive severity as we find happening in the prophets.
 - (1) v. 14 >> bad, (2) v. 18 >> worse, (3) v. 23 >> more worse, (4) v. 27 >> terrible ! CAPTIVITY !!!

E. THEY WERE THE INTERPRETERS OF ISRAELITE HISTORY !

- ##### **1. THE PROPHETS PUT THEIR TEACHING IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COVENANTS GIVEN BY GOD.**

- a. They did not reveal **new** laws or instructions to the people, but urged the people to **return** to the law they already had.
 - b. The prophets preached 3 main points in relation to the covenant:
 - (1) They **warned** the people of judgment to come.
 - (2) They **explained** why the judgment was coming upon them.
 - (3) They gave **assurance** to the remnant that a hope of restoration lay beyond the judgment.
 - c. In other words, they provided the nation with a divine interpretation of what was happening in their history .
 - d. They did this by applying all 3 covenants to the events that were unfolding before their eyes and the eyes of the nation.
2. THE MESSAGES OF THE PROPHETS NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS A COLLECTION OF SERMONS.
- a. The prophets can be confusing at times. They appear to have no logical pattern to their messages. EXAMPLES:
 - (1) **Hosea 1:6-9** = Judgment, vv.10-11 = restoration !!
 - (2) **Amos 9:9-10** = Judgment, vv.11-14 = restoration !!
 - b. One help in understanding this confusion is to see the preaching of the prophets as most preaching is today.
 - (1) Preachers do not preach everything there is to know about the gospel in each sermon.
 - (2) The prophetic books are not ONE BIG SERMON, but a collection of messages that were given over a specific period of time.
 - (3) On Sunday = baptism, another = Lord's Supper, another = repentance, another = faith, and so on. Initially this would be confusing to someone coming off the street, but once you hear enough, you begin to put these messages into a framework called the "plan of salvation" that makes everything make sense.
 - (a) How clear would be a book of lessons delivered by two different preachers over a period of 3 months ??
 - (b) After listening for a period of time, the puzzle could be put together.
3. THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS CAN BE PUT INTO A "PROPHETIC PARADIGM".
- a. A paradigm is a **model** by which individual messages can be understood as a whole.
 - (1) It is like an index in a textbook.
 - b. This "prophetic paradigm" can be used to sort and interpret just about all prophetic thought and teaching.
 - c. It can be summed up in these eight points:

“THE PROPHETIC PARADIGM”

1. THE LORD OF HISTORY (**Hosea 4:1**) “Hear the word of the Lord...”
 - a. “Thus saith the Lord” was more than an opening line indicating that God was talking, but a phrase indicating the Lord was working in history. He is the cause of History !
 - b. He is in absolute control of the nations and is working everything out according to his covenants.
 - c. Foreign nations are simply being used to accomplish His purpose in history.
2. ELECTION (**Hosea 11:1-2**) “And out of Egypt I have called my Son”
 - a. This phrase referred to the election of Israel by God for the purpose of fulfilling the promise to Abraham in blessing all nations (**Gen. 12:3**).
 - b. God chose only Israel (**Amos 3:2**)
 - c. The Nation told God they chose to follow Him (**Josh. 24:21-22**)
3. REBELLION (**Hosea 11:2**) “As they called them, so they went”
 - a. This refers to the refusing of Israel to keep their part of the covenant with God.
 - b. **Hosea 8:12**, “... they are regarded as a strange thing”
 - c. **Hosea 4:1-2**, = specific acts of rebellion....
4. JUDGMENT (**Hosea 9:3**) “But Ephraim shall return to Egypt....”
 - a. This refers to the captivity that would come as the result of rebellion. Going back to Egypt would be representative of going back into captivity.
 - b. **Hosea 11:5** says they would not actually return to Egypt but they would go into captivity in Assyria.
 - c. The phrases of judgment were taken directly from the curses of the covenant in **Deut 28** and **Lev. 26**.
5. COMPASSION (**Hosea 11:8**) “How can I give you up, Ephraim ?”
 - a. This refers to God’s remembering His covenant with Abraham and it’s fulfillment through the nation of Israel.
 - b. God indicates He cannot give them up completely but as a part of His character, He will show them compassion !
 - c. Promise to Abraham (**Micah 7:18-20**) He will keep His covenant !!
 - d. God is a God of compassion = a repeated theme in the prophets, not just judgment !
6. REPENTANCE (**Hosea 14:1**) “O Israel, return to the Lord your God”
 - a. Being a recipient of God’s compassion involves repentance.
 - b. **Joel 2:12-13** “Return to me with all your heart....”
 - c. Punishment could be averted by repentance !
 - d. **Lev. 26:40-42** held out the promise of healing if the people repented of their sins.
7. RESTORATION (**Hosea 14:4-5**) “He shall grow like the lily....”
 - a. This is a promise of restoration to their land offered to a **remnant** even though taken captive, would return to Him.
 - b. **Joel 3:1-2** “When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem”
 - c. This restoration took place under **Cyrus** of Persia in 536 BC

8. EXALTATION (**Isa. 42:6**) “As a light to the Gentiles”
- a. The blessings of the Covenant to Abraham would be realized by the Gentiles through the **remnant** of the nation of Israel.
 - b. **Micah 4:-12** “And the peoples will stream into it...”
 - c. **Zech. 9:9-10** “And He will speak peace to the nations...”
 - d. Here the promise to Abraham (**Gen. 12:3**) and the promise to David (**2Sam. 7:12-16**) are fully realized. Out of their **seed** , all nations of the earth will be blessed !!!

*** * * POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THIS PARADIGM**

1. Each minor prophet does not have every point of this paradigm contained within it !
2. You will not find this order in any of the prophets.
3. The point is that 95% of what the prophets said to the people can be categorized into one of the paradigm’s points. Pick a verse !!!!
4. This is like a “**key chart**” to a sermon ! You can interpret at any point, no matter where you came in at !!!!!

IV. THE PREACHING “TECHNIQUES” OF THE PROPHETS

- A. THEY USED IMAGERY ! --- This refers to the striking and vivid comparisons & descriptions used by the prophets
1. Hosea used the image of a jealous husband (Hos. 1-3)
 2. Amos' vividly describes the cruelty of his people (Amos 2:6-8)
- B. THEY USED WORDPLAY ! --- This is the use of repetition of a word for the sake of emphasis.
1. The word “violence” is used 3 times in Hab. 1:2-3 and v.9 referring to the character of the people and the character of the foreign nation coming to judge them.
 2. The word “*paqad*” translated “*visit*” or “*punish*” is used sometimes of coming in judgment (**Zeph. 1:8-9**) and in the sense of “care for” (**Zeph. 2:7**)
- C. THEY USED IRONY --- This involves a difference between the **actual** result and the **expected** result .
1. **Amos 5:5** says that Gilgal will surely go into judgment . What makes this statement ironic is that Gilgal was Israel's first campsite when they came into the promised land. (**Josh. 4:19; 5:12**)
 2. Gilgal had come to symbolize the nation's possession of the land, now it's inhabitants would leave the land.
Illus: a. Philadelphia = freedom !! Independence !!
b. Imagine Russians or Chinese attacking & taking Philadelphia first !!!
- D. THEY USED ALLUSION --- This refers to the prophets' use of the ways of the past being used to describe the events of the future.
1. Hab. 3:1-6 Habakkuk desires God to show mercy now as He has done in the past.

QUESTIONS ON THE INTRO. TO THE “MINOR PROPHETS”

(Read ALL the introduction CAREFULLY and answer these questions)

- 1. Why are these twelve books called the “minor Prophets”**
- 2. Give at least five reasons for studying the minor Prophets.**
 - (1)**
 - (2)**
 - (3)**
 - (4)**
 - (5)**
- 3. What is the difference between an “oral” prophet, and a “literary” prophet.**
- 4. How many writing prophets are there ?**
- 5. What three stages of Israel’s history did the prophets appear ?**
 - (1)**
 - (2)**
 - (3)**
- 6. Give your definition of “prophet” :**
- 7. Did the prophets reveal “new” laws as Israel needed them ?**
- 8. For what basic purpose did God call men to be prophets in the O.T. ?**
- 9. Name the three major covenants in the history of Israel and describe their contents:**
(parts of a covenant may be looked upon as “promises”)
 - (1)**
 - (2)**
 - (3)**

10. Which of the three (#9) did the prophets emphasize in their work with Israel ?

11. What is covenant faithfulness ?

12. What were the three main points in relationship to the covenant did the prophets Preach ?

(1)

(2)

(3)

13. How should we understand the messages of the prophets ?

14. What is a “prophetic paradigm” ?

15. Name the eight points given for a prophetic paradigm:

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

16. What techniques did the prophets use to express their messages ? Explain !!



Christianity Magazine

Theme Editorial

Editor: Dee Bowman

Those Practical Prophets

WHEN I WAS A small boy, I heard a Bible class teacher whom I respected very much answer a man who asked the question, "Why don't we study the Old Testament for a while?"

"I don't even understand the New Testament," he said. "How can I afford to spend time studying the Old?"

Of course, the answer was a faulty one—if you will pardon me, even a foolish one. But, like most people at that time, I assumed the answer to be an appropriate one and, for a time at least, directed my study time accordingly. As a result, I sacrificed some valuable information which is available to the student of the Old Testament in general and the prophets in particular.

Even a cursory perusal of the New Testament should tell us that a consideration of the Old Testament is invaluable in any effort to understand the New. Paul tells us, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and

comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). And again, in 1 Corinthians 10:11, the Holy Spirit caused him to say, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." It behooves us to pay careful attention to the "things written before" since they help us to understand the things written after.

The Minor Prophets (*Minor* refers to length, not importance) are relevant to today. As Jack P. Lewis says, "Men still trust in material strength and delight in wealth and luxury while they forget God. There is nothing particularly new about lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. Oppression and injustice are rampant. Men still tend to heed the speaker who presents the pleasant message and assures them that their deeds are satisfactory. Men prefer to make amends by sacrifice rather than do right" (*The Minor Prophets*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 8).

Times don't change much. And men are about the same in any age. Technology changes. Folks don't.

The Minor Prophets are immensely practical. They show us who we are, recommend urgent repairs, make calls for renewed commitment. They impress us with our need for God's help. They show at once the "goodness and severity of God" (Romans 11:22), while they promote His great benevolence and affirm His need to vindicate Himself as well. Truly, "A study of the prophets will enrich the life of anyone who applies to himself to learn the teaching" (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, p. v).

So prepare for a journey back into time. But one that will surprise you because of that time's similarity to our own. Prepare to be impressed with how very relevant are the various messages of these men of God to our needs today. They truly are amazing... *Those Practical Prophets*.

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Obadiah: The Deceitfulness of Pride

• by Jerry King

REBEKAH WAS pregnant with twins, and their struggle within her womb was a source of extreme discomfort. After questioning the Lord about her condition, she was told, "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger."

The struggle that began within the womb of Rebekah only worsened without. Sibling rivalries can be especially ruthless and brutal, and Jacob and Esau were engaged in a whopper. That rivalry continued in the relationship of their descendants, the Israelites and the Edomites.

Edom hated their stronger brethren. That hatred was first evidenced during Israel's pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan (see Numbers 20:14-21), and only worsened thereafter. Obadiah records Edom's violence against Israel in verses 10-14. Edom stood aloof and gloated as Israel's enemies defeated and plundered Jerusalem. They even joined in the plundering of the Holy City, and they stood as executioners of God's people, killing those who fled as fugitives from the war.

God tolerated Edom's disgraceful conduct for a time, but finally His patience ran out. He gave to the prophet Obadiah a vision concerning Edom—a vision of doom! "O how Esau will be ransacked, and his hidden treasures searched out!" Edom was headed for a great fall.

Edom's undoing was pride. "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you," Obadiah writes in verse 3. Pride fans the flame of self-deception. Edom was deceived about a number of things. They dwelt in the clefts of mighty rocks, convinced that no one could bring them down. They allied with ungodly nations, in whom they trusted for peace and security. They relied on their own men of wisdom, understanding and might, confident that no one could outwit or overpower them.

Obadiah's message was clear: Edom's men of wisdom would be dismayed, their ungodly allies would

ambush and overpower them, and God would bring them down from the clefts of their mighty rocks! God and Israel would prevail; Edom would be destroyed!

The wise man wrote in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." Obadiah gives us clear insight into why that is so. Proud and arrogant men put their trust in things that simply are not trustworthy: they exult in worldly circumstance, worldly friends, worldly wisdom and worldly power. And yet, the Bible brands all these

fessor ever lead me astray? Yet Paul writes, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."

Men become proud when they trust in the might of their own mighty fortresses, foreign alliances, and secular reasonings. Men who trust in such things always fall. Why? Because men who trust in such things never trust in God, never trust the word of God, and never trust the people of God. That is why proud men always seem to have such a difficult time with prayer, Bible study and association with brethren—

"Proud and arrogant men put their trust in things that are not trustworthy: they exult in worldly circumstance, worldly friends, worldly wisdom and worldly power."

things as deceitful and vain, and the man who trusts in them is self-deceived and foolish.

The sad thing is that these things all seem so invincible! How could men of luxurious circumstances ever fall? Yet Paul writes, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God." How could worldly friendships that seem so strong and reliable ever bring pain and sorrow? Yet the psalmist writes, "Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation." How could my biology pro-

all the things that build us up in the most holy faith.

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God . . . that, just as it is written, Let him who boasts, boast only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29,31). Beware the deceitfulness of pride!

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OBADIAH



Consisting of only twenty-one verses, Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It deals with the bitter rivalry between Edom, the descendants of Jacob's twin brother Esau, and the people of Israel. Obadiah, whose name means "Worshiper of Yahweh" or "Servant of Yahweh," pronounces condemnation against Edom and prophesies their total destruction because of their persistent opposition to God's chosen people.

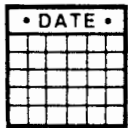
Author



Obadiah was an obscure prophet who probably lived in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Nothing is known of his hometown or family, but it is likely that he did not come from the kingly or priestly line because his father is not mentioned in 1:1.

Thirteen men named Obadiah are mentioned in the Old Testament, but none of these can be identified with any certainty as the author of this book.

Date



There are several views regarding the date of the book. Edom's cooperation with foreigners in sacking Jerusalem (vv. 10–14), which forms the historical background to the prophecy, could refer to a number of incidents, of which two are more likely. It may have occurred c. 850 B.C. in the reign of Jehoram (see 2 Chr. 21:8–10, 16, 17) during a period of revolt by Edom when Judah was also threatened by invading Philistines and Arabians. Also possible is a reference to Edomite complicity in the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. According to Psalm 137:7, the Edomites applauded the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The case for this later date is also strengthened by the fact that Obadiah appears to quote from Jeremiah 49 (cf. vv. 1–4 with Jer. 49:14–16; vv. 5, 6 with Jer. 49:9, 10; v. 8 with Jer. 49:7; and v. 16 with Jer. 49:12). Thus, possible dates for the composition of Obadiah are c. 840 B.C., or between the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 B.C.

Themes and Literary Structure



Though the shortest of the Old Testament books, Obadiah carries one of the strongest messages of judgment. Because of her long history of opposing God's people, Edom's fate is sealed, and there is no possibility of deliverance. God will bring total destruction upon Edom, and there will be no remnant. The book of Obadiah portrays Edom's day in the divine court, complete with arraignment, indictment, and sentence. This prophet of poetic justice describes how the Judge of the earth will overthrow the pride of Edom and restore the house of Jacob. The two sections of this short book are: the judgment of Edom (vv. 1–18) and the restoration of Israel (vv. 19–21).

The prophetic theme of the day of the Lord is prominent in verses 15–21. As in the prophecy of Joel, this climactic day brings both judgment and deliverance. For Edom, this is a pronouncement of doom (vv. 15, 16), but for Judah it will bring deliverance as they experience blessing and restoration to their land (vv. 17–21).

OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

- I. The Predictions of Judgment on Edom vv. 1–9
 - II. The Reasons for the Judgment on Edom vv. 10–14
 - III. The Results of the Judgment on Edom vv. 15–18
 - IV. The Possession of Edom by Israel vv. 19–21
-

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OBADIAH

Assignment: Read the book 3 times and answer the following questions.

1. What problem do we have establishing a historical time reference for this book ?

2. What nation is to receive the judgment announced? How are they described ?
(v. 1-4)

3. This nation traces it's ancestry back to whom ? (v.8-9; Gen. 36:1,9, see other page)

4. How do the following passages indicate a turbulent relationship existed between Edom and Israel (Judah) ?
 - a. Num. 20:14-20

 - b. 2Chron. 20:1-2, 22

 - c. 2Chron. 21:8-10

 - d. 2Chron. 28:16-18

5. To whom did Israel trace it's ancestry ? (v. 10; Gen. 32:22-28)

6. How complete will the judgment be upon Edom ? (v. 5-9)

7. List the specific sins against their brother Jacob (Israel) Edom will be judged for committing. (v. 10-14)

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

8. How will Israel finally triumph over the Edomites (house of Esau) ? (v.17-21)



Joel: Reward and Punishment

• by Russ Bowman

LIFE IS A LEARNING process. To the observant, the curious, the concerned, each day provides its own educational opportunities, whether through vicarious means or personal discovery. In fact, it is experience that provides the most graphic and lasting lessons. While working at a welding shop several years ago, I was cleaning up a work area and picked up a scrap of metal that Eddie had just removed from a trailer frame by means of a cutting torch. While the metal didn't look hot, the immediate blisters taught me two lessons: (1) don't trust appearances; and (2) pay attention to people with cutting torches. And, I go along learning these "living lessons" as I sit regularly at Experience's feet.

God tells us in Romans 15:4 that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." While history has educated many by experience, God has also seen fit to record some of man's difficult lessons so that perceptive folks could learn from the failures of others. And so it is with much of the Old Testament in order that we might gain some practical profit from the experiences of those before us. In the record of the prophet Joel, the land of Judah is (or will shortly be) ravaged by a locust plague, the proportions of which will amaze the people for generations (1:3). The devastation of these invaders is so complete that there will be nothing to even offer to God in sacrifice (1:9), and Joel calls upon the people to understand in this destruction some valuable lessons. It is in God's mind to give the people of Judah a living lesson about reward and punishment—to encourage in them an appreciation for spiritual principles by means of a physical experience. And through this important lesson we are the benefactors of some practical teaching.

God introduces through Joel the nature of "the day of the Lord." While many misunderstand and misapply this phrase, it is not so very difficult, though it is most significant. In reality, the lesson of Joel for both the people of Judah and for us as well is the

"The day of the Lord" signifies any coming of God in judgment, promising both punishment upon God's enemies and reward/deliverance to His people.

significance of "the day of the Lord." This idea is often applied in a very limited sense to the final coming of Jesus Christ in judgment upon the earth (2 Peter 3:10), and while that is indeed an example of this idea, and even the ultimate fulfillment, it is not the sole application. "The day of the Lord" signifies any coming of God in judgment, promising both punishment upon God's enemies and reward/deliverance to His people (see Obadiah 15; Isaiah 13:9f; Joel 3:14-21; Luke 21:28). Thus, we see the day of the Lord in the locust plague, the Babylonian captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem, the day of Pentecost, as God separates the wicked and the righteous. And each of these look to that final distinction (Matthew 25:31ff), and should serve to emphasize some very practical lessons.

Basically, these lessons can be divided into two general statements. First of all, God will punish. As Joel points to the devastation of the locust invasion, he urges the people to see their desertion from God. There is a progression of impending doom, from the plague of locust (chapter 1), to an invading army (chapter 2—probably still the locust, but reminiscent of a true hostile force), and finally calling to mind the implied spiritual devastation promised to the unfaithful. The practical lessons for us should be clear. God is serious about repentance. We can easily overestimate our own importance and righteousness in God's eyes and forget that it is God's own people who are suffering this plague at God's directive. They were in need of repentance, as God instructs them to "turn ye even to me with all your heart" (2:12). And God gave them just

a small taste of His wrath when repentance is ignored. Moreover, we learn that God is serious about justice. In 3:1f, God foretells of His righteous punishment of the enemies of His people. Their injustices toward the people of Judah, whether the literal nation or figurative, will be punished by Jehovah, and He will be just in so doing. In our age, when so many who reject the word of God expect the nature of God's love to encompass their disobedience, it is advisable that we understand the justice of God.

The second general lesson is: God will reward. Again, Joel looks to physical events to emphasize spiritual truth. As the plague ends, the blessings of our Father are poured out upon His faithful (2:18f). The picture is one of abundant satisfaction: corn, oil, wine, peace, comfort, productivity, restoration, plenty, and praise. In fact, Joel goes beyond the implied spiritual parallel to predict the outpouring of God's spirit upon His people in the revelation of His words of life (2:28f), as fulfilled in Acts 2:16f. Of course, there are some practical conditions to remember here as well. Such blessings are reserved for "whomsoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" (2:32), those who look to God for deliverance (1:14,19), and not to themselves in their pride (Ephesians 2:8-9) or to some other man in awe of his knowledge or wisdom (Galatians 1:6-10). Moreover, repentance from the heart is demanded by God (2:12-13)—a turning not simply outward, but a turning of our minds and hearts. And, finally, those who are not ashamed to be called God's people, who praise Him for His wondrous works (2:26)—they shall be rewarded.

The lessons of Joel are simple and practical. We can take the experiences of the people of Judah and learn that we must choose sides in this life, and that decision will determine our eternal destiny. Our standing in the ultimate "day of the Lord"—reward or punishment—is practically ours to determine.

625 Belt Rd., Texarkana, TX 75501

JOEL



Disaster struck the Southern Kingdom of Judah in the form of a cloud of locusts. In a matter of hours, the fields were stripped bare, and the prophet Joel seized this opportunity to proclaim God's message. The plague of locusts is seen as a foreshadowing of the coming day of the Lord. In light of this, the book warns of approaching judgment, calls the people to repentance, and gives God's people hope of the coming day of salvation that will follow judgment.

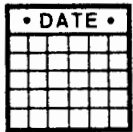
The Hebrew name *Yo'el* means "Yahweh is God," a name appropriate to a book which emphasizes God's sovereign work in history.

Author



Although there are several other Joels in the Bible, the prophet Joel is known only from this book. Joel identifies himself as the son of Pethuel (1:1), and his frequent references to Zion and the house of the Lord suggest that he probably lived not far from Jerusalem. Because of his statements about the priesthood in 1:13, 14; and 2:17, some think Joel was a priest as well as a prophet. In any case, Joel was a clear, concise, and uncompromising preacher of repentance.

Date



Since the book includes no explicit time references, it cannot be dated with certainty. It has traditionally been dated c. 835 B.C., when Joash was placed upon the throne at the age of seven and Jehoiada the priest functioned as the real ruler (2 Kin. 11; 12). This period seems to fit the text of Joel since the influence of the priesthood appears to be strong and there is no mention of a king. Because of this priestly prominence, others argue that Joel is to be dated much later in the postexilic period.

Evidence also points to a sharing of material between Joel and Amos. Although some believe that Joel borrowed from Amos, it is more likely that Amos, an eighth-century prophet, borrowed from Joel. In addition, Joel's style is more like that of Hosea and Amos than that of the postexilic writers. Since Joel does not mention idolatry, it may have been written after the purge of Baal worship early in the reign of Joash under Jehoiada the priest. As an early prophet in Judah, Joel would have been a contemporary of Elisha in Israel.

Themes and Literary Structure



The book of Joel is often considered to be the most polished literary work among the prophetic writings. His careful and well-developed imagery, especially in describing the locust plague in chapters 1 and 2, and the clear structure of the book support this contention. The book of Joel can be divided into two major sections: the day of the Lord in retrospect (ch. 1); and the day of the Lord in prospect (chs. 2; 3).

This brief book develops the crucial theme of the coming day of the Lord (1:15; 2:1, 2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18)—a time of awesome judgment upon people and nations that have rebelled against God. But it is also a time of future blessing upon those who have trusted in Him. The theme of disaster runs throughout the book (locust plagues, famine, raging fires, invading armies, celestial phenomena), but promises of hope are interspersed with the pronouncements of coming judgment.

OUTLINE OF JOEL

- I. The Day of the Lord in Retrospect 1:1–20
 - A. The Past Day of the Locust 1:1–12
 - B. The Past Day of the Drought 1:13–20
 - II. The Day of the Lord in Prospect 2:1–3:21
 - A. The Imminent Day of the Lord 2:1–27
 - B. The Ultimate Day of the Lord 2:28–3:21
-

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MINOR PROPHETS JOEL (830 B.C.) Lesson 2, page 1.

Assignment: Read the outlined information on the book of Joel as an intro.
Read the book of Joel and answer the following questions.

1. What is the probably date and historical background of Joel ?
2. What extreme experience has happened to the people and their land ? (1:2-7)
3. What specific actions are the people called to do in view of what they have experienced ? (1:2,3,5,8,11,12,13....)
4. What apparently is about to happen again as described in 2:1-11 ?
5. What are the people told to do ? (2:12-13)
6. What can we learn from 2:12-14 about:
 - a. The nature of true repentance ?
 - b. The character of God ?
7. After reading 2:18-27, under what category of the “prophetic paradigm” would you classify this section ?
8. How is 2:28-32 used to make a significant point by the Apostle Peter in Acts chapter 2 ?

9. What is the “day of the Lord” as used here and other places ?

10. Did any of the other Apostles in the N.T. use part of Joel’s statement ?

11. Who will receive judgment after the Lord has returned the captives of Judah back to their land? (chap.3)

12. What reasons are given in chapter 3 for why the judgment will happen ?

13. Can you find figures of speech used by Joel that are also used other places in the Bible ? What significance do they have ? Is there uniformity in their message ?



Jonah and the Power of Providence

• by Don C. Truex

THE NARRATIVE OF "Jonah and the Whale" is one of those great Bible accounts that we have relegated to the easily ignored realm of "children's stories." And that's sad, because this is a marvelous account, rich with information for both young and old alike.

You know the story, don't you? Jehovah to Jonah: "I have a job for you." Can't you imagine Jonah's excitement: "Great! It's about time somebody recognized my potential and ability. What's the job?" "Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for its wickedness is come up before me." Nineveh: the capital of Assyria. The breeding-ground of a cruel, militaristic race. The nation that committed horrid atrocities upon its enemies as a matter of course. Why, a prophet would have to have ice in his veins and steel in His soul to want to warn them about God's judgment.

And so Jonah ran: hard, fast, and far. But the problem is, when we run from God, He pursues. Sometimes through a smitten conscience. Sometimes through the influence of family or friends. But in this case through the preparation and use of a "great fish" to allow the reluctant prophet some time to contemplate the foolishness of running from the Father.

Jonah prays (like so many when in distress). God answers (thankfully, He is the God of a second chance). The commission is renewed (because the job was still undone). Judgment is preached (without apology, just as it should be today). And then, in what must be the most successful gospel meeting in history, a nation altered its course and turned to Jehovah.

A "children's story?" Well, yes, in the sense that it's one that every *child of God* needs to hear. And may I suggest just a lesson or two of a practical nature that can be learned from this incident?

First, God knows. I realize that sounds rather trite and yet the Bible goes to great lengths to impress upon us what Jonah learned the hard way: "The eyes of the Lord are in every

place, beholding the evil and the good." Consider the implications of that truth. He knows the works, or lack thereof, of every church as a whole and every member in particular. While we may be able to deceive our brethren, our family, or our fellow-man; God knows. He knows what we are when we leave the church building. He knows how we behave when we are on vacation and away from the scrutiny of our brethren. He knows how we talk at work, how we treat our family in secret, what we think in our private moments. Now, that fact will either scare us to death or give us tremendous satisfaction. Which is it for you?

Second, time and space don't cover sin. The story of Jonah is bizarre in

**While we may
be able to
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God knows what
we are.**

some respects. After all, did this prophet of God actually think that a little time and space would distance him from the sinfulness of his rebellion? Surely, he knew better. But do we? How many Christians have fled to another city or congregation in a metropolitan area hoping that their unforgiven sin will stay behind? How many Christians have some bit of aberrant behavior in their past that they have forgotten and hope that Jehovah has, too? Listen to our Father: "... be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Unforgiven sin relentlessly pursues, not only in this life, but also in the life to come (see 1 Timothy 5:24). As my friend, Bill Cavender, is fond of say-

ing, "Time will make hair white, but not sin!"

Third, the job remains. Given the ordeal Jonah had experienced, you would think maybe he deserved a rest. But instead, God comes to him and, in essence, says, "Now go do what I told you to do!" (see Jonah 3:1-2). You see, God operates upon the assumption that if He tells us to do something, it must be done. In spite of the obstacles that might arise, the work commanded remains. The examples of that are legion. When parents strive to raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" and are discouraged by multiple temptations which militate against success, the simple fact is, in spite of the difficulties, the job remains. When elders attempt to shepherd the flock committed to their care and Satan thwart their efforts through wayward rebellious sheep, the simple fact is, in spite of the impediments, the job remains. When young people at school determine to fulfill their commitment to purity, but are chided by peers who abuse their bodies with alcohol, illegal drugs, or illicit sexual behavior, the simple fact is, in spite of the pressure to conform, the job remains. When we have heard the Father call us to share the good news, but, like Jonah, choose to board the ship of excuses and sail away from responsibility, the simple fact is, in spite of our failure, the job remains.

And, finally, even the worst of men can change, even the worst of men can be forgiven. The list of men whom God has found within His heart to forgive is absolutely amazing: Jonah, the reluctant prophet; David, the adulterer; Peter, the denier; Thomas, the doubter; Paul, the persecutor; and Don Truex, the sinner. And He can forgive you. You see, God hasn't revealed this great story to merely entertain us or to satisfy our curiosity. No, He's preserved it so that we might learn to, as we often sing, "trust and obey." And that, my friend, will change your life—now and forever.

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JONAH



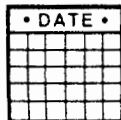
God's loving concern for the Gentiles is not a truth disclosed only in the New Testament. More than seven centuries before Christ, God commissioned the Hebrew prophet Jonah to proclaim a message of repentance to the Assyrian city of Nineveh. Jewish nationalism, however, blinded both the prophet and covenant people to God's worldwide purposes of salvation. The story of Jonah is one of the clearest demonstrations in Scripture of God's love and mercy for all peoples.

Author



The book of Jonah has no stated author, though tradition ascribes it to Jonah, a prophet of the Northern Kingdom during the eighth century B.C. It is reasonable to suppose that Jonah himself would have recorded the unique experiences described in the book. This man, whose name means "dove," was the son of Amittai (1:1) and a native of Gath Hopher (2 Kin. 14:25) in Zebulun, a town about two miles north of Nazareth. Jonah is described in terms that point to his being a real person and his experiences actual and historical.

Date



Jonah was a contemporary of Jeroboam II of Israel (782–753 B.C.) who ministered after the time of Elisha and just before the time of Amos and Hosea. Israel was enjoying a period of resurgence and prosperity, and nationalistic fervor was probably high.

Assyria, a nation which had achieved a near-legendary reputation for cruelty, was in mild decline during these years, but it remained a threat. The repentance of Nineveh probably occurred in the reign of Ashurdan III (773–755 B.C.). Two plagues (765 and 759 B.C.) and a solar eclipse (763 B.C.) may have prepared the people for Jonah's message of judgment.

While some have argued that the book of Jonah was written in the post-exilic period in order to contradict the Jewish particularism of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, the teaching that God's plan includes the Gentiles is by no means unique to Jonah in the Old Testament (Gen. 9:27; 12:3; Lev. 19:33; Is. 2:2; Joel 2:28–32), and other arguments for a postexilic date are not persuasive.

Themes and Literary Structure



The interpretation of the book of Jonah is conditioned by the type of literature it is thought to be. Quite a few scholars, finding the story of Jonah's being swallowed by the great fish incredible, have viewed the book as an example of myth, allegory, or parable. But there is little reason to take the book as other than historical. Apart from the lament in chapter 2, the material is presented in straightforward prose, unlike the legendary poetic stories of the period. Scripture presents the story as historical and the application of Jonah's experience to Christ's resurrection (Matt. 12:39-41) demands that we take the account with utmost seriousness.

From a literary perspective, the book of Jonah displays remarkable structural symmetry and is developed by two parallel cycles that continually call for comparison. In addition, the book is rich in irony: the disobedience of the prophet is contrasted with the surprising faith of the mariners (ch. 1), and Jonah's petty concern for the plant contrasts with God's gracious care and concern for the people of pagan Nineveh (ch. 4).

The book of Jonah may be divided into the first commission of Jonah (chs. 1; 2) and the second commission of Jonah (chs. 3 and 4).

As already noted, the pervading theme in Jonah is God's gracious extension of His mercy to gentile nations, but other important themes are also evident. The sovereignty of God over life, elements, and circumstances is clearly stressed in the descriptions of the storm (1:4), the fish (1:17), the plant (4:6), and the worm (4:7).

The book of Jonah also served to challenge the nationalistic pride of Israel and her failure to comprehend the nature of her missionary task and the purpose of God to bestow his loving-kindness upon all peoples. The change in Jonah's own attitude is symbolic of the change God required of Israel as a whole.

Jonah's three-day experience in the belly of the fish also serves as a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Matt. 12:39-41). Here it should be noted that the Hebrew idiom, "three days and three nights," only requires a portion of the first and third days.

OUTLINE OF JONAH

- I. The First Commission of Jonah 1:1—2:10**
 - A. The Disobedience to the First Call 1:1-3
 - B. The Judgment on Jonah Is Exacted 1:4-17
 - C. The Prayer of Jonah 2:1-9
 - D. The Deliverance of Jonah 2:10

- II. The Second Commission of Jonah 3:1—4:11**
 - A. The Obedience to the Second Call 3:1-4
 - B. The Judgment on Nineveh Averted 3:5-10
 - C. The Prayer of Jonah 4:1-3
 - D. The Rebuke of Jonah by God 4:4-11

MINOR PROPHETS “JONAH” (790-750 B.C.) Lesson 3, page 1

1. Do you find anything unusual or at least unique to the book of Jonah as compared to other prophetic books? If so, what?
2. What does 2Kings 14:23-24 tell us about the historical time period of the book of Jonah? To what other minor Prophet is he a contemporary?
3. What does the Lord instruct Jonah to do? How does he respond?
4. Nineveh is the capital of what country? (see Isa. 37:37) Why did Jonah not want to preach to Nineveh? (Jonah says why in the book)
5. What happened on Jonah's escape “cruise” to Tarshish?

In what ways do the pagan sailors on the ship show more conviction to God (or at least to their “gods”) than Jonah does to God?

6. How do Jonah's words in 1:9 “ring a little hollow” in light of his earlier actions?
7. What ultimately happens to Jonah?
8. Describe the substance of Jonah's prayer. (Ch. 2) What are his primary thoughts?

9. In light of Jonah's actions in chap. 1, does there seem to be a key element missing from his prayer ? if so, what ?
10. How did Jonah respond to his second call to go and preach to Nineveh ?
11. What was the "sentence sermon" which Jonah preached ?
12. What is the first reaction of the people of Nineveh to the preaching of Jonah ?
13. List all the evidence you find in 3:5-10 that the people of Nineveh, including the King, were sincere about repenting ? (use other side if needed)
14. How does the response of the heathen Ninevites contrast to the response of God's own people when called to repent in Amos 4:6-11 ?
15. What is Jonah's initial response to Nineveh's repentance ? (chap. 4) How is *this* response shocking, especially for a "prophet" (preacher) ?
16. How does God teach Jonah about compassion ?
17. How do you think the book of Jonah would be a teaching tool to the Jewish people concerning their view of Gentiles and God's future acceptance of them ?
18. How does Jesus use this story of Jonah in Matthew 12:38-41 ? What is the "sign" ?



Amos: God's Call to Higher Things

• by Wayne Goff

AMOS WAS CALLED by God to be a prophet, though formerly he was not a prophet, nor even the son of a prophet (7:14). His message was delivered to a people of God (3:2) who no longer desired to be His people (8:13-14). The resulting confrontation was suited to a rugged "country preacher" whose back country work as a herdsman and fig dresser had prepared him well for the task. The stark contrast between the preacher and his audience reminds us of John the Baptist, a prophet dressed in camel's hair, nourished on locusts and wild honey, and fitted with a temperament of match! Neither John nor Amos were "reeds shaken by the wind!" Imagine the disdain on the faces of those northern Israelites at the appearance and

ual (4:5). But God was not pleased! The Almighty God who reigns from heaven in justice and righteousness was not pleased with their conduct! Amos spoke plainly of their idolatrous and immoral practices. They served the gods of Dan and Beersheba with religious prostitution and drunken feasts (2:7-8). In their lusty greed for wealth, they trampled underfoot the poor (2:6-7). Even the leaders had lost their sense of "right and justice" (3:10) to a degree that would appear despicable to the uncircumcised Philistine! The rulers had turned "justice to wormwood" (5:7), and the nation despised and destroyed the judge of justice (5:10). Their profligate lifestyle which included summer and winter houses bedecked in ivory had been

mindful them of God's providential chastisement which was designed to lead the people back to God. Famine, drought, fruitless trees and vineyards, locusts, plagues, and earthquake (4:6-11) should have turned their hearts to the Creator and Sustainer of mankind—their Heavenly Father! Who could refuse the appeals of Amos or the judgments of the Lord? But Israel did! Just the same, with great impassioned pleas, Amos cried, "For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek Me and live! . . . Seek the Lord and live" (5:4-5)!

The higher things to which God called His people were based on national integrity: a stance based upon justice, and upon loving good and hating evil (5:15). If they could show this quality of character, and if they could worship God properly from the heart, the nation could be spared and led to greater things. "Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!" Any self-effacing people would gladly surrender Israel's religious degradation and moral depravity for a holy calling like that! But Israel, as a nation, refused.

The people God never found in Samaria, He promised and established in Christ (9:11-15). The new covenant would be instituted on the basis of spiritual, inward birth, not physical descent. The spiritual Israel God sought was established on the basis of knowledge and obedience (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13). In the first century, the promised hope of Amos was realized in the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 15:14-18). The true-hearted for God were found among both Jews and Gentiles. In Christ, the "tabernacle of David" was rebuilt, and in spiritual Israel "the mountains drip with sweet wine, and all the hills flow with it." May we, as God's people, build His kingdom with the "plumb line" of justice and righteousness. The Father has sought and found us in the "heavenly places in Christ." Let us live up to our high calling in Jesus.

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"The higher things to which God called His people was based upon national integrity . . . upon loving good and hating evil."

preaching of Amos! These Jews were accustomed to ivory-lined palaces and the fair words of their accommodating priesthood. And now before them stands an uncouth farmer roaring out God's maxims in coarse and unpretentious fashion! "How dare he call my wife a 'cow'" (4:1), "or suggest that my worship and my son's worship is prostitution!" (4:7). Yet, the religious and moral degradation of the nation demanded the brash words of a "country preacher" to a refined (?) "city folk"!

Israel's religious atmosphere was one composed of outward, ceremonial pomp and ritual. Extravagant religious festivities abounded. Sacred assemblies, burnt- and grain-offerings, peace-offerings and melodious songs of praise were offered in abundance (5:21-24). The people loved to sacrifice and worship in vainglorious rit-

purchased at the expense of the poor (4:1)! Their vain and pompous service to God would not atone for their transgressions! So, God sent the mighty prophet, Amos, to call His people to a higher plane.

Thus, in the days of Amos and because of God's matchless patience, the wide chasm between Israel and their God could be bridged and repaired. Amos first appealed to Israel on the basis of God's bestowed blessings. God had brought them out of Egypt, through forty years of wandering, to possess the promised land. God had faithfully raised up prophets from among them to teach and guide them (2:10-11). They should be God's people. Then Amos implored them to consider their privileged relationship to God. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth!" (3:2). They should nurture their family ties. Furthermore, Amos re-

AMOS

The book of Amos addresses the excessive pursuit of luxury, self-indulgence, and oppression of the poor which characterized the period of prosperity and success in the Northern Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II. Amos's message of doom seemed incongruent with the elaborate trappings of that era. But with divinely given insight, he saw the corruption beneath the brilliantly colored exterior and announced that the nation was rotten to the core. The book stands as an eloquent witness against those who subordinate human need and dignity to the pursuit of wealth and pleasure.

The name "Amos" is derived from the Hebrew terms meaning "lift a burden." Thus, the name means "Burden" or "Burden-bearer." Amos lived up to the meaning of his name by bearing up under his divinely given burden of declaring judgment to rebellious Israel.

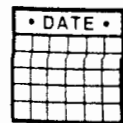
Author



Amos was not a "professional" prophet (7:14) like the more numerous institutional or cultic prophets of his day. From his rustic background at Tekoa, six miles south of Bethlehem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Amos was called by God to go to the Northern Kingdom to be His spokesman (7:15).

The prophet was a common man whose occupation was herding sheep, with supplementary income from tending sycamore fruit (7:14). His moral sensibilities were shocked by the perversions of Israel's worship that he observed at Bethel, one of the great national shrines.

Date



According to 1:1, Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah (767–739 B.C.), and Jeroboam, king of Israel (782–753 B.C.), thus leaving a possible time-frame from 767 to 753 B.C. The prophecy of 7:9–11 seems to indicate a time late in the reign of Jeroboam and a probable date of writing is 760–753 B.C.

Amos ministered after the time of Joel and Jonah, and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. At this time Uzziah reigned over a prosperous and militarily successful Judah. 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. During these years, Assyria, Babylon, Syria, and Egypt were relatively weak. Thus, the people of Israel found it hard to imagine the coming disaster predicted by Amos—a disaster that occurred barely three decades later.

Themes and Literary Structure



Although Amos highlights his rustic roots and his lack of professional status as a prophet, the vivid style and literary character of the book suggests that he was educated. The book of Amos may be conveniently divided into four sections of eight prophecies (chs. 1; 2), three sermons (chs. 3—6), five visions (7:1—9:10), and five promises (9:11—15).

The book of Amos is basically a message of judgment: prophecies of judgment on the nations, oracles and visions of divine judgment against Israel. Amos begins with a series of indictments against the seven neighbors of Israel, including Judah, and upon Israel herself (chs. 1; 2). Each foreign nation is to be punished for specific offenses either against Israel or some other nation. This judgment on the nations teaches that God is a universal monarch and all nations must answer to Him for their mistreatment of other nations and peoples.

The preaching of Amos stresses the righteousness and justice of God and His requirement that the human relationships of His people be characterized by righteousness and justice as well. The rich are condemned because of their oppression of the poor and for their religious hypocrisy. Religion is more than observing feast days and holding sacred assemblies; true religion demands righteous living, and the way people treat their neighbors reveals their relationship with God.

Amos ends the book on a note of consolation. After exile and judgment, God will restore His people to the land and bless them.

OUTLINE OF AMOS

I. Introduction to Amos	1:1, 2
II. The Eight Judgments	1:3—2:16
A. Judgment on Damascus	1:3-5
B. Judgment on Gaza	1:6-8
C. Judgment on Tyre	1:9, 10
D. Judgment on Edom	1:11, 12
E. Judgment on Ammon	1:13-15
F. Judgment on Moab	2:1-3
G. Judgment on Judah	2:4, 5
H. Judgment on Israel	2:6-16
III. The Three Sermons of Judgment	3:1—6:14
A. The First Sermon: Israel's Present	3:1-15
B. The Second Sermon: Israel's Past	4:1-13
C. The Third Sermon: Israel's Future	5:1—6:14
IV. The Five Visions of Judgment	7:1—9:10
A. Vision of the Locusts	7:1-3
B. Vision of the Fire	7:4-6
C. Vision of the Plumb Line	7:7-9
D. Opposition of Amaziah (Historical Parenthesis)	7:10-17
E. Vision of the Summer Fruit	8:1-14
F. Vision of the Stricken Doorposts	9:1-10
V. The Five Promises of the Restoration of Israel	9:11-15

CHAPTER 1:1 - 2:16

1. What historical time reference are we given as to the date of the time of the preaching of Amos ? His profession ? The nation to whom he preached ?
2. What does 2Kings 14:23-25 tell us about the reign of King Jereboam II over Israel ?
3. Instead of pronouncing judgment upon Israel, He pronounces judgment upon what nations ?
4. What sins will Israel be punished for committing ? (2:6-8)
5. What other circumstances made Israel's sin so atrocious ? (2:9-12)
6. How extensive would be the punishment that Israel would receive ? (2:13-16)

CHAPTER 3

1. What specific reason is given for judgment upon Israel (1-2)
2. What cities are told to witness the evil committed in Israel ? (9-10)

3. What would be destroyed on the day of judgment ? (14-15)

CHAPTER 4

1. How are the women of Samaria described ? Why ? (v.1)
2. What does God invite Israel to keep on doing ? (4-5)
3. List the earlier punishments God sent upon Israel to motivate them to repent (6-11)
Did they work ? What can Israel now expect ? (12-13)

CHAPTER 5

1. List the specific sins Israel was committed for which they will suffer judgment ? (7, 10-13)
2. What acts of repentance does Amos instruct the people to follow ? (4,6,14,15)

CHAPTER 6

1. What indications are given as to the overconfident state of the nation of Israel ? (1-6)
2. How traumatic would Israel's impending judgment be upon them ? (9-10)

CHAPTER 7

1. What three visions did God show Amos in this chapter ?
2. Who did Amos have a conflict with ? How did he respond to his Adversary ?

CHAPTER 8

1. What was the message of the vision of summer fruit ? (1-3)
2. How eager was Israel to commit sin ? (5-6)
3. How severe would be the punishment of Israel ? (9-12)

CHAPTER 9

In Acts 15:13-17, James quotes 9:11-12. Study the situation in Acts 15 and state the pertinent truth James found in Amos 9:11-12.



Hosea: Faithfulness and Forgiveness

• by David Posey

THERE IS NOTHING more devastating to a marriage than adultery. There is little left upon which to build after basic trust is destroyed. Few have been able to accomplish total reconciliation because if you can't trust your closest companion, who can you trust? Because of this, Jesus provided an exception to the marriage and divorce law—a spouse is permitted to divorce one who has committed fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Why? Because, while we must forgive, we cannot always forget.

This makes the prophecy of Hosea all the more remarkable and instructive. Chapter 1 records that God commanded Hosea to take a “wife of harlotry” and “children of harlotry” (1:2). So Hosea took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, as his wife (1:3). They had one child together, Jezreel. Gomer then apparently had a series of affairs which produced two more children, neither of them from Hosea, and each with symbolic names (1:6; 1:9). Chapter 2 discusses God's relationship with Israel, but may well symbolize the expulsion of Gomer from Hosea's household.

Hosea had to bear the terrible burden of a home ravaged by the unfaithfulness of a spouse. But it got more challenging for the prophet. God told Hosea to seek out and take back this woman, who had since become a prostitute, a cheap, ravaged whore. He was instructed to “love her who had been loved by a lover” (3:1). As it turned out, he had to *buy* her back and it cost him a sizable sum of money and goods, maybe all he had, to do so.

Hosea became an example to Israel of how much God loved her. Israel had left the Lord and played the harlot (4:12). She had forsaken mercy and truth (4:1) and was destroyed for her lack of knowledge of God (that is, she had failed to walk with Him, choosing the path of idolatry instead: see 5:4-5). While she continued her sacrifices, they had become just a ritual “tipping-of-the-hat” to God, since she denied him by her deeds (see 6:6; 11:7b). She was a “silly dove” looking to Egypt and Assyria for deliverance, instead of the Lord (7:11); her heart was divided (10:2), she was a backslider (11:7), and had become “rich in heart” and blind to her own faults (12:8). Time and time again, Israel prostituted herself and proved unfaithful to

the Lord.

In a change of analogy, God reminds Israel how He had been a Father to them. He had brought them out of Egypt and called them His children (11:1). He had taught them to walk, taking them by their arms and drawing them “with gentle cords, with bands of love” (11:3-4). But Israel rejected God's love, giving it instead to the Baals and eventually becoming like the thing they loved, an abomination (9:10).

Thus, under the figures of the loving husband and the loving father, the Lord describes His love and care for Israel. But like an unfaithful spouse, or a child spoiled rotten, Israel turned her back on the One who cared so much for her.

So, Hosea brings the message from the Lord that Israel will suffer the consequences for unfaithfulness. God is just and He will pour down His wrath on them “like water” (5:10). This judgment on the nation is irreversible, a fulfillment of the curses promised for disobedience found in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 4 and 28-30. But within the same message, God bids Israel to return to Him—His arms are outstretched, He will heal them (6:1-3), He cannot stop caring for them (11:8-9)—God is love (a message for the benefit of the faithful remnant). God is love and God is just: “therefore consider the goodness and severity of God . . .” (Romans 11:22).

But what really *motivates* the Lord? Is it revenge? Would He like to renege on His promises? Most of us have had occasion to witness the ruin of a home due to the unfaithfulness of a spouse. It is always ugly. Usually, the offended spouse has exercised his or her right to get a divorce. Again, we understand the difficulty of trying to rebuild a relationship after such an obvious display of untrustworthiness and we understand why Jesus gave permission in those cases. Unlike God, we can't always forget when we forgive.

But often it seems the unfaithfulness of the spouse just provides the just opportunity that the “innocent” party has been looking for. “Now I can dump this person and get a new one.” Perhaps the husband was not “romantic” enough anymore, or turned out to be something of a slob. Maybe the wife put on a little weight or lost some of her “vivaciousness.” The adulterous affair gives the spouse the scriptural grounds to do what

he or she would like to do anyway—get rid of the love of youth and find someone new.

But God commanded Hosea to go back and love his old, broken down, used “ex-wife” (note that he was commanded to *love* her—care for her, protect her, be loyal to her—not just to grudgingly take her back). His obedience to God's command provides a marvelous illustration of God's love for His people. Like Gomer, Israel was just a haggard old whore. Yet God was not anxious to dump her, He was not looking for an avenue out of His covenant. No, He was most anxious to take her back, restore the relationship, and care for her as only God can.

Did God have a right to “divorce” Israel? Of course. Yet, He constantly provided opportunities for Israel to save herself. And we learn that God is always willing to forgive the repentant, obedient sinner and forget his sins. Nothing pleases him more than for one of His children to return to Him and ask His forgiveness: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9; see Luke 15). More than anything else, it is *love* that motivates God.

If we are wise, we can learn much from God's dealings with His people under the Old Covenant. One thing we learn is that unfaithfulness is inexcusable. God loves us and makes every provision for our care and security, as a good husband does for his wife, or a parent for his child. When we “give our hearts to another,” we commit spiritual adultery and, as a perfectly just God, He has every right to shut us off completely—to “divorce” us, put us away forever. But what God has a *right* to do is not always what He does, or we would all be lost. “Rights” are not pressed by one who loves. Instead, He just keeps on loving us. Reminds me of a wonderful Psalm: “If I say, ‘my foot slips,’ Your mercy, O Lord, will hold me up” (94:18). Note the condition: If I say . . . God rewards humble confession.

It is only God's great longsuffering and mercy that brings us to where we are and keeps us there. If we will only remember and appreciate what it is that motivates God, perhaps we will be motivated to love God in return.

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HOSEA

The book of Hosea was written to a Northern Kingdom of Israel on the brink of disaster. Outwardly, the nation was enjoying a time of prosperity and growth; but inwardly, moral corruption and spiritual adultery permeated the lives of the people. The prophet Hosea was instructed by God to marry an unfaithful woman, and he found in his own life a vivid illustration of the unfaithfulness of God's people and the faithfulness of God. Hosea repeatedly echoes his threefold message: God abhors the sins of His people; judgment is certain; but God's love stands firm.

Hosea, whose name means "Salvation," has the same name as Israel's last king, Hoshea, even though the English Bible spells them differently.

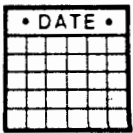
Author



Aside from his calamitous marriage, little is known of the life of the prophet Hosea. His place of birth is not given, but his familiarity with and concern for the Northern Kingdom indicates he lived in Israel, not Judah. He was the son of Beerī (1:1), husband of Gomer (1:3), and father of two sons and a daughter (1:4, 6, 9).

Hosea had a real compassion for his people, and his personal suffering because of the behavior of his wife gave him insight into God's grief over Israel's sin. Thus, his words of coming judgment are passionate but tempered with a heart of tenderness.

Date



Hosea evidently compiled this book during the early years of Hezekiah, and his ministry stretched from about 755 B.C. to about 710 B.C. When Hosea began his ministry, Jeroboam II (782–753 B.C.) was still reigning in Israel. Hosea's ministry spanned the reigns of the last six kings of Israel from Zechariah (753–752 B.C.) to Hoshea (732–722 B.C.).

When Hosea began his ministry, Israel was enjoying a temporary period of political and economic prosperity under Jeroboam II. However, the nation began to crumble after Tiglath-Pileser II (745–727 B.C.) strengthened Assyria. The reigns of Israel's last six kings were relatively brief since four were murdered and a fifth was carried captive to Assyria. Confusion and decline characterized the last years of the Northern Kingdom, and her people refused to heed Hosea's warnings of imminent judgment.

Themes and Literary Structure



The book of Hosea is a story of one-sided love and faithfulness that represents the relationship between Israel and God. As Gomer is married to Hosea, so Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships gradually disintegrate—Gomer runs after other men, and Israel runs after other gods. Israel's spiritual idolatry is illustrated by Gomer's physical adultery. The development of the book can be traced in two parts: the adulterous wife and faithful husband (chs. 1—3), and the adulterous Israel and faithful Lord (chs. 4—14).

Hosea's message reflects the terrible fascination of Israel with Baal worship. Baal means "husband" or "lord," and his worship involved fertility rites that included ritual prostitution. Baal was the other lover to whom the unfaithful Israel often turned.

Hosea provides one of the Old Testament's most eloquent expressions of God's mercy. It is embodied in the Hebrew word *hesed*, variously rendered "mercy," "loving-kindness," or "steadfast love." It involves loving loyalty to covenant commitments, well illustrated by the marriage vow. But from Hosea's perspective, God's faithful love would not permit Him to easily divorce His people.

OUTLINE OF HOSEA

- I. The Adulterous Wife and Faithful Husband 1:1—3:5
 - A. The Introduction to the Book of Hosea 1:1
 - B. The Prophetic Marriage of Hosea to Gomer..... 1:2—2:1
 - C. The Application of the Adultery of Gomer 2:2—23
 - D. The Restoration of Gomer to Hosea 3:1—5
 - II. The Adulterous Israel and Faithful Lord 4:1—14:9
 - A. The Spiritual Adultery of Israel..... 4:1—6:3
 - B. The Refusal of Israel to Repent of Her Adultery 6:4—8:14
 - C. The Judgment of Israel by God 9:1—10:15
 - D. The Restoration of Israel to the Lord 11:1—14:9
-

MINOR PROPHETS Hosea (750-725 BC) Lesson 5, page 1

CHAPTER 1

1. What historical information are we given to establish a time period for the work and writings of Hosea ?
2. What shocking instructions does God give Hosea? What seems to be the reason why?
3. What are the names of Gomer's three children? The meaning of their names:
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
4. What surprising change in tone and name meanings takes place (v.10-11; 2:17)

CHAPTER 2

1. What will Hosea do with his unfaithful wife ? How is her adultery described ? (v. 1-5)
2. How has Israel committed adultery against God? (vs. 6-8)
3. How will God punish His unfaithful wife (Israel) ?

CHAPTER 3

1. What is Hosea asked to do ? Do you think the woman is Gomer or some other woman? How much does he buy her for ?
2. How is Israel's adultery described?

3. How will Hosea's unfaithful wife have to live ? How will Israel have to live ?

CHAPTER 4

1. What are some of the specific sins God charges Israel with committing? (1-10)
2. In what ways has Israel "played the harlot" against God? (11-19)

CHAPTER 5

1. Who does God demand attention from ? What have they done ? (1-7)
2. How will God deal with His sinning people ? What response will He be looking From them ?

CHAPTER 6

1. How do the people indicate a "spirit of repentance" ? What seems to you to be wrong with their desire to repent ? (1-3)
2. What does God think about their desire to repent ? (4-6)
3. What does God see taking place throughout the land ? (7-11)

1. Hosea uses 5 descriptive images to describe the sinfulness of Israel. LIST them and there meaning (esp. "Ephraim is like a silly dove"....")

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

CHAPTER 8

1. For what reason will Israel experience severe judgment ? (11-14)

CHAPTER 9

1. How is the prophet and the spiritual man considered in Israel ?
2. What happened in the days of Gibeah to cause God to compare those days to the present corruption in Israel ? (see Judges 19:16-30)

CHAPTER 10

1. In the book of Hosea, what rare call to repentance do we find in this chapter ?

CHAPTER 11

1. How does God picture the continual care He has shown Israel ?

2. What internal dilemma does God face within Himself ?

CHAPTER 12

1. What sins does God charge Ephraim with in this chapter ?
2. What has God done for Ephraim to urge them to repent ? (v.10)

CHAPTER 13

1. How does God picture the impending judgment He will inflict ? (7-8)
2. How severe will be the attacking armies of the Assyrians ? (12:1, 15-16)

CHAPTER 14

1. What words does Hosea offer the people to say to God ? (1-3)
2. What will God eventually do for Israel ? (4-8)
3. What will the wise and the righteous do ? The transgressors ? (9)



Micah: What Does the Lord Require?

• by Robert W. Goodman

MICAH (short for Micaiah—Who is like Yahweh?) was a prophet who wrote about conditions during the troubled times of about 735-700 B.C. Although he was a contemporary of Isaiah, he was a country prophet and more concerned with the oppression of his people than with events of the great cities or the intrigues of the nations of Assyria and Egypt.

"In an unforgettable passage (Micah 6:1-8), Micah presents a court scene. There is a call to court with the hills of Palestine as the judges. God is the complainant and Israel is the defendant. How has God failed in His great acts of the past? The only possible answer is that He has not. His failure is not the cause of Israel's disloyalty.

"Israel complains in self-defense that God's demands are unknowable." Either questions of ignorance or "rhetorical questions expecting negative answers propose that God wants a multitude of offering of calves or rams; or that God wants rivers of oil, or even the sacrifice of the first child (cf. Lev. 18:21; 2 Kings 16:3; and remember that Ahaz, Micah's contemporary, offered a son)" (Jack P. Lewis, *Living Word Series on the Minor Prophets*, pp. 26-27).

Micah's response: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" In this text, we have the essence of the teaching of contemporaries Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. This passage has been called the "Golden Text of the Old Testament." It is universally recognized as one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament. In just a few words, the prophet set forth the essence of the true religion—*justice, kindness, and walking humbly with God*. It was sorely needed then. It needs to be sounded out today with all fervor.

Despite the requirements for *justice* in the law (as in Exodus 23:1-9), men disregarded them on every hand. Micah 2:1-2 says, "Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice

it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance." (See also 3:1-3, 9-11.)

Despite prevalence of religion and abundance of laws and lawyers, there is much injustice today. Because of injustice, there is labor unrest, a need for consumer advocates, criminals are allowed to go free while law-abiding people suffer fear, the poor do not have the legal protection that the rich have, and marriages and homes are destroyed. Sometimes religious leaders are not just or fair in handling God's word. Texts will be used that do not teach what is asserted of them.

develop the attitude of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:16, "... may it not be charged to them."

There is also a need for kind words. We cannot all speak public words of great wisdom, but all can and ought to emulate the worthy woman of Proverbs 31:26: "... on her tongue is the law of kindness."

Then let us practice kind deeds. Jesus did. All commend the Good Samaritan for this. Dorcas was praised for it. Mercy or kindness is necessary to enter heaven (Matthew 25:34-40).

Finally, to have a religion that is well-balanced and right, we are to *walk humbly with God*. This means, first, that we have a proper knowledge of and respect for the great Crea-

"In just a few words, the prophet set forth the essence of the true religion—justice, kindness, and walking humbly with God."

Some take positions that cause one passage to be arrayed against another, and they take the one desired. God would have us to be just, for He is just and our religion must make us like Him or it is no good, and we cannot have a good influence without justice.

Mercy, or kindness, is a step above justice, for it is an expression of love (1 Corinthians 13:4,13). There are situations where justice would call for punishment, but mercy forgives. Justice can be harsh, but mercy is kind—and kindness is needed in so many ways.

We need to have kind *thoughts*. Some have grown bitter and ruined their lives because they allowed their minds to be poisoned by real or imagined injustices or painful, unpleasant things involving others. How much better to

tor, Sustainer, and Redeemer. The closer we come to our God, the more humility it will help us have. The fact that we are to walk humbly with God indicates that we are to seek His will, learn it and do it without delay, excuse, murmuring or complaining. Our religion will not be simply a public display of the required forms without regard to either our heart or life. Our walk will be by faith as that of Abraham (Romans 4:12). It will be one ever regulated by truth (3 John 3-4), uprightness (Proverbs 2:7), and love (Ephesians 5:2).

I marvel at the practical words of the prophet Micah, but he would not want to take the credit that belong the Spirit (3:8).

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MICAH



Burdened by the abusive treatment of the poor, the book of Micah rebukes anyone who would use social status or political power for personal gain. One third of Micah exposes the sins of his countrymen, another third pictures the punishment God is about to send, and the final third holds out the hope of restoration once that discipline has ended. Through it all, God's righteous demands upon His people are clear: "To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

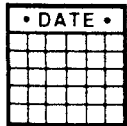
Author



The prophet Micah, whose name means "Who is like the Lord?" was one of the eighth-century prophets, together with Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Jonah, and he is mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18. Micah's home was Moresheth Gath (1:14), a town probably located about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

Like Amos, Micah was a man of the country who had time for thought and clear vision. Blessed with Amos's passion for justice and Hosea's heart of love, Micah's spirit burned with indignation over how the city dwellers oppressed the peasants. Yet his teaching is not entirely unique; he echoes great truths proclaimed by his predecessors and contemporaries, especially Isaiah of Jerusalem.

Date



The first verse indicates that Micah prophesied in the days of Jotham (739–731 B.C.), Ahaz (731–715 B.C.) and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.), kings of Judah. Although Micah deals primarily with Judah, he also addresses the Northern Kingdom of Israel and predicts the fall of Samaria (1:6). Much of his ministry, therefore, took place before the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 B.C. His strong denunciations of idolatry and immorality also suggest that his ministry largely preceded the sweeping religious reforms of Hezekiah. Thus, Micah's prophecies ranged from about 735 to 710 B.C.

During the ministry of Micah, the kingdom of Israel continued to crumble inwardly and outwardly until its collapse in 722 B.C. The Assyrian empire reached the zenith of its power and became a constant threat to Judah. Babylon was still under Assyrian domination, and Micah's prediction of a future Babylonian captivity for Judah (4:10) must have seemed unlikely.

Themes and Literary Structure



The book of Micah is somewhat difficult to analyze because of its loose organization. Nevertheless, certain important themes are clearly evident. Samaria's doom is certain and Judah's is not far behind. The people plan wickedness and oppress the poor without any concern for divine judgment on their behavior. The corruption of the political and religious leaders of Judah is also highlighted (ch. 3). God will restore His people and give them a true Ruler who will lead them in victory, but that hope stands only on the other side of the judgment that is coming because they failed to accept their covenant responsibilities as God's chosen people.

The book may be divided into three sections: the prediction of judgment (chs. 1—3), the prediction of restoration (chs. 4 and 5), and the plea for repentance (chs. 6 and 7).

The prediction of Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in the city of Bethlehem is one of the clearest and most important of all Old Testament messianic prophecies. In addition, Micah 2:12, 13; 4:1–8; and 5:4, 5 offer vivid descriptions of the righteous reign of Christ over the whole world.

OUTLINE OF MICAH

- I. The Prediction of Judgment 1:1—3:12**
 - A. Introduction to the Book of Micah 1:1
 - B. The Judgment on the People 1:2—2:13
 - C. The Judgment on the Leadership 3:1–12
- II. The Prediction of Restoration 4:1—5:15**
 - A. The Promise of the Coming Kingdom 4:1–5
 - B. The Promise of the Coming Captivities 4:6—5:1
 - C. The Promise of the Coming King 5:2–15
- III. The Plea for Repentance 6:1—7:20**
 - A. The First Plea of God 6:1–9
 - B. The Second Plea of God 6:10—7:6
 - C. The Promise of Final Salvation 7:7–20

MINOR PROPHETS MICAH (735-700 B.C.) Lesson 6, page 1

CHAPTER 1

1. Where did Micah live? Under which Kings of Judah did he prophesy? What cities did he address?
2. What kind of image of the Lord does Micah give the people? (2-4)
3. What sinful practices happened at the “high places”? (v.5) see 2Kng. 16:1-4; 23:4-5
4. How will Micah get the attention of the people? (v.8) Who else commanded attention this way? (see Isa. 20:1-3)
5. List all the cities singled out for judgment. (10-16)

CHAPTER 2

1. Describe the extent of the evil planning and practices going on among the people (1-2)
2. What did God say about the sins being committed (v 27)? see Ex. 20:7; 23:1-9; Lev. 19:13
3. What will God eventually do with the people after the captivity? (12-13)

CHAPTER 3

1. What kind of vivid imagery is employed to describe social oppression among people? (1-4)

2. What kind of prophets apparently existed among the people ? (5-6) How could the people decipher between the false and true prophets ?
see Deut. 18:22; 13:1-5; 26:18-20; 28:8-9

3. Who is leading in the sin among the people ? (9-10)

CHAPTER 4

1. What dramatic spiritual change will happen in the "latter days" ? (1-5)
2. What group will God assemble during this period of restoration ? Who will reign over them ? (6-8)

CHAPTER 5

1. From where will the future leader of Israel come ? (v 2) What is significant about this city ? see 1Sam. 16:1-4; Matt. 2:1-6; Jn. 7:42
2. What will this future leader do for His people ? (v 4)
3. What particular sins will be eliminated from Judah ? (11-15)

CHAPTER 6

1. What does the Lord bring against His people ? (1-2)
2. What has the Lord done for His people ? (3-5)
3. What does the Lord really desire from His people ? (6-8)

4. What specific sins have the people been committing ? (9-12)

5. What judgment will be sent upon the people ? 13-16)

CHAPTER 7

1. How extensive is the sinfulness among the people ? Give examples (1-7)

2. What aspect of the character of God will the people experience during the restoration after captivity ? (18-19) How does Micah express this characteristic ?