

# Old Testament Walk Through, Hosea-Malachi

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## Hosea Bible Walk

### Theme: Spiritual Prostitution, Judgment, and Restoration

Tod Kennedy  
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#### Theme

Spiritual Prostitution, Judgment, and Restoration. We can summarize Hosea with four pairs—prophet and prostitute, God and Israel, sin and judgment, forgiveness and restoration. The Northern Kingdom, Israel continues to commit spiritual adultery with the pagan gods. God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute or soon to be a prostitute. The marriage becomes an object lesson of God's relationship with Israel. Hosea remains faithful to Gomer, even to the point of redeeming (buying her back) after she left him for adulterous activities (Hosea 3). As Hosea Loved Gomer, God loves Israel in spite of her deliberate sin. He warns Israel, judges Israel, yet will forgive her and restore her to fellowship with himself.

#### Key Verses

Hosea 4:1, "1 Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land."

Hosea 14:1, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity."

#### Author

Hosea is the author according to Hosea 1:1-2.

1. Very little is said about Hosea. He is likely from Israel, the Northern Kingdom because the primary interest of the prophecy concerns this kingdom. He directs his messages to Ephraim, the largest of the northern Israeli tribes. Ephraim is mentioned 36 times in 31 verses.

2. Hosea means "He (Yahweh) saves" or "salvation." He shares the name with Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom. In the English Bible the king's name has the h in the middle to distinguish the two people.
3. Hosea was the son of Beeri (1:1), the husband of Gomer (1:3). He had a son, Jezreel, "God sows" (1:3-4), a daughter, Lo-ruhamah, "no compassion" (1:6), and a son, Lo-ammi, "not my people" (1:8-9).
4. Paul refers to Hosea as the writer of Hosea 2:23 (Romans 9:25) and Hosea 1:9-10 (Romans 9:26-27).
5. He was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos, and Micah.

## History

Hosea ministered about 760 -715 BC, or about 45 years. He lived during exciting times.

1. Hosea served during the reigns of 11 kings of Israel and Judah, though he only mentions four kings of Judah—Uzziah (792-739 BC), Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC)—and one king of Israel, Jeroboam II (793-753 BC) (Hosea 1:1). These were to him the prominent kings. Why mention more Judean kings when his ministry was to the northern tribes? Probably because he recognized that the Judean kings were the rightful kings in David's line. Uzziah and Hezekiah are the prominent kings during this time of history.
  - a. Uzziah, the first king that Hosea lists (Hosea 1:1 and 2 Chronicles 26), ruled from 792 to 539 BC. He began his rule at age 16. Due to the weakness of Assyria at this time he restored strength and fame to Judah. He followed the Lord during much of his reign, but later he allowed pride to rule him. God punished him with leprosy for attempting to do what God has reserved for the priests—burn incense in the temple.
  - b. Hezekiah (728-686 BC, 2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32) was the last king of Judah mentioned. Hezekiah was a godly king. He threw off Assyria's yoke when the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21). The Lord gave him a miraculous sign that he would live 15 more years—the shadow on the staircase went back ten steps (2 Kings 20:8-11). He foolishly showing off the temple wealth to Merodach-baladan, the king of Assyria (2 Kings 20:12-15). Hezekiah is also famous for the construction of the 1777 foot long underground water tunnel that carried water from the Gihon springs outside the city (which he stopped up and covered over) into Jerusalem. Along with the water tunnel he built the Siloam reservoir to hold the water (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:1-4, 32).
2. Jeroboam II (793 to 753 BC) was the one northern king (kingdom of Israel) that Hosea mentions. He gave Israel a degree of prosperity (2 Kings 14:23-29).
  - a. Jeroboam reigned from 793-753 (Albright begins his reign at 786 and Thiele at 782 BC). He was the strongest of the northern kings of this period. When Hosea began his ministry in the last years of Jeroboam's reign (about 760 BC). At this time Israel was in a period of temporary prosperity. Jeroboam had ended the wars his father began. He took back territory lost earlier. He was able to increase commerce and wealth for Israel. But on the spiritual and moral side, the northern kingdom welcomed idolatry, empty ritualism, lawlessness, and selfishness.

- b. Hosea left out the other six northern kings of this period—Zechariah (753 BC), Shallum (752 BC), Menahem (752-742 BC), Pekah (752-732 BC), Pekahiah (742-740 BC), and Hoshea (732-723 BC).
  - c. The expansion by Israel was primarily due to the fall of Damascus (Aramaea) and the comparative inaction and weakness of Assyria.
  - d. Jeroboam II died in 753 BC and was followed by his son, Zechariah, who was assassinated after ruling for six months. Four of the last six kings of Israel were murdered.
  - e. The last king, Hoshea, the last king of Israel, paid a heavy tribute to Assyria and was spared. But in about 724 BC he revolted against Assyria. Assyria, under Sargon II (r. 721-705 BC), then defeated, uprooted, and exiled Israel, including king Hoshea, to various parts of the Assyrian empire in 721 BC.
3. At the time of Hosea the Assyrian empire was experiencing a resurgence of power.
- a. Jonah preached to Nineveh sometime during the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Nineveh was failing at that time, but possibly due to the repentance of the people of Nineveh, around 745 BC Assyria regained strength and stature under the rule of Tiglath-pileser III.
  - b. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC) was the Assyrian king who began the Assyrian recovery and restored Assyria's glory. He is called Pul in 2 Kings 15:19. TP III conquered Babylon, invaded Israel and deported some of the people, and also broke up the alliance between Aramaea (Syria) and Israel.
  - c. Shalmaneser V (727-723 BC) attacked Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. King Hosea of Israel rebelled against Shalmaneser so Shalmaneser besieged Samaria, the capital. Shalmaneser died before the completion of the war, but Sargon II finished the job.
  - d. Sargon II (722-706 BC) completed the destruction of Israel and exiled the northern kingdom in 722 BC.
  - e. Sennacherib (705-681 BC) conducted the famous siege of Jerusalem during Hezekiah's reign. Sennacherib's army of 185,000 was destroyed by the angel of the Lord. Hosea lived through this defeat of Israel by Assyria.

### **Key People**

1. Hosea was the prophet and author of this book. Hosea ministered about 760 -715 BC, or about 45 years. He lived during exciting times.
2. Gomer was the wife of Hosea. She became unfaithful to Hosea. She illustrated Israel in the nation's relationship to the Lord.
3. Jezreel was Hosea and Gomer's first son. His name means "God sows" and is a sign to Israel that God is sowing or planting the seeds for Israel's discipline at the hand of Assyria in 722 BC.
4. Lo-ruhamah was Hosea and Gomer's daughter. Her name means "no compassion" and is a sign to Israel that God will stop his compassion on Israel for a time.
5. Lo-ammi was Hosea and Gomer's second son. His name means "not my people" and tells Israel that they are not living as his people should live and hence he will send them into exile.

### **Key Words and Phrases.**

*Below are some key words and the frequency of use by Hosea. This should give a sense of the prophet's emphasis.*

1. Adultery, 4 times in 4 verses.
2. Destroy, 4 times in 4 verses.
3. Destruction, 3 times in 3 verses.
4. Ephraim, 36 times in 31 verses.
5. Faithful, faithfulness, 3 times in 3 verses.
6. Forgive, 1 time in 1 verse.
7. God, 29 times in 26 verses.
8. Harlot, 10 times in 10 verses.
9. Holy One, referring to God, 2 times in 2 verses.
10. Idol, 1 time in 1 verse.
11. Israel, 44 times in 41 verses.
12. Judah, 15 times in 15 verses.
13. Judgment, 3 times in 3 verses.
14. Lord, 49 times in 42 verses.
15. Love, 6 times in 5 verses.
16. Murder, 2 times in 2 verses.
17. Prophet, 5 times in 4 verses.
18. Punish, 7 times in 7 verses.
19. Rebelled, 3 times in 3 verses.
20. Rejected, reject, 4 times in 3 verses.
21. Return 11 times in 10 verses.
22. Righteous, 1 time in 1 verse.
23. Righteousness, 3 times in 3 verses.
24. Sin, 6 times in 6 verses.
25. Sin, sinned, 8 times in 8 verses.
26. Wickedness, 5 times in 5 verses.
27. Word of the Lord, 2 times in 2 verses.

### **Overview Outline**

1. The prophet, Hosea, and the prostitute wife, Gomer, Chapters 1-3.
2. Israel is unfaithful to the Lord like Gomer to Hosea, 4-13.
3. The Lord calls Israel to return to him, 14.

### **Chapter Titles**

1. Chapter 1: The prophet and the prostitute
2. Chapter 2: Unfaithful Israel—judged, forgiven, restored
3. Chapter 3: Hosea redeems his prostitute wife
4. Chapter 4: Indictment—Israel is a prostitute and idolater
5. Chapter 5: Verdict—God condemns Israel
6. Chapter 6: Loyalty and knowledge, not sacrifice and burnt offerings
7. Chapter 7: Lord would heal and redeem, but Israel continues to sin
8. Chapter 8: Israel sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind
9. Chapter 9: Israel—wanderers among the nations
10. Chapter 10: False prosperity brings pride and problems
11. Chapter 11: Israel, God's son, rebelled
12. Chapter 12: Ephraim and Judah sin, though the Lord has been their God
13. Chapter 13: Israel sins more and more
14. Hosea 14, Return to the Lord your God; he will heal and love you

## Trace the Theme

1. **Hosea 1, the prophet and the prostitute.** Hosea received this revelation during the reigns of several mentioned kings—798-686 BC. In verse 2 the Lord tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a woman who will become a prostitute. The Lord's reason is that Israel is committing spiritual adultery and Hosea and Gomer's marriage becomes a graphic object lesson of God's relationship with Israel. Hosea and Gomer had two sons and one daughter. The first son was Jezreel. His name means "God sows" and is a sign to Israel that God is sowing or planting the seeds for Israel's discipline at the hand of Assyria in 722 BC. The daughter was Lo-ruhamah. Her name means "no compassion" and is a sign to Israel that God will stop his compassion on Israel for a time. The second son was Lo-ammi. His name means "not my people" and tells Israel that they are not living as his people should live and hence he will send them into exile. These hard predictions will not last forever. The Lord says in verses 10 and 11 that the nations will like the sand of the sea and will be sons of the living God. In the distant future Israel and Judah will come together. They will have one leader. Verse 11 plays on the word Jezreel. God will again sow his people in their land. It will be a place of victory and blessing. Recall that Jezreel also was the place of Gideon's victory (Judges 6:33-8:28).
2. **Hosea 2, Unfaithful Israel—judged, forgiven, restored.** This chapter portrays Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord through Hosea's comments to his children. As Gomer left Hosea and became an adulteress, so Israel has left the Lord. Both Gomer and Israel will be disciplined (2:3-6 and 9-13). Israel has gone crazy after spirituality adultery with the idols of the ancient near east. As the crazed adulteress cannot find love, security, and happiness, so Israel will not find that for which she seeks (2:7). In spite of the sins of Israel, the Lord will chase her down and restore her to himself (2:14-23). Israel will call the Lord Ishi, "my man". He will make a covenant for Israel that will bring peace, safety, and fellowship with the Lord (2:18-23). The Lord will call her "my people" and they will call him "my God."
3. **Hosea 3, Hosea redeems his prostitute wife.** Hosea buys back Gomer from prostitution (3:2). He then restricted her activity (3:3). God will also restrict Israel—most likely referring to exile lasting through the times of the Gentiles. At the end of that period Israel will turn to the Lord and to David their kings. This is a picture of the future kingdom under the messiah's blessing.
4. **Hosea 4, Indictment—Israel is a prostitute and idolater.** Israel is characterized by no faithfulness or kindness, no knowledge of God, they have forgotten God's law, and are without understanding (4:1, 6, 14). They commit all kinds of sin (4:2-5, 7). Idolatry is rampant (4:11-19). God will judge them (4:9-10, 19).
5. **Hosea 5, Verdict—God condemns Israel.** God proclaimed his judgment to the priest, all Israel, and the king. In this chapter his warning goes out from Gibeah, Ramah, and Beth-aven—mountainous areas in Israel (5:8). Both Israel, also called Ephraim, and Judah come under his judgment (5:3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14). In verses 6, 14, and 15 God will withdraw from the people, judge them, and withhold deliverance until Israel repents.
6. **Hosea 6, Loyalty and knowledge, not sacrifice and burnt offerings.** The message in chapter 6 begins with the prophet speaking for the nation and calling them all to return to the Lord (6:1-3). The Lord replies with a question of what shall he do with Ephraim (Israel) and Judah (6:4). They are disloyal (6:4); they offer meaningless sacrifices (6:6); they transgressed God's will (6:7); they murder (6:8-9); and commit spiritual adultery (6:11). Even Judah will be judged before she will be restored (6:11).

7. **Hosea 7, Lord would heal and redeem, but Israel continues to sin.** This message the Lord clearly tells Israel that it is his desire to heal them (7:1) and redeem them (7:13) but the nation continues to sin. For example, iniquity and evil deeds (1), do not consider (2), wickedness (2 and 3), adulterers (4), hearts like and oven (6), none calls on me (7), neither returned to nor sought the Lord (10), silly dove (11), call to Egypt and go to Assyria (11). Israel cannot escape God's judgment, no matter what they do or where they go (12-13). They will not repent (14). They turn away from the Lord (14), devise evil against the Lord (15), and they will not succeed (16).
8. **Hosea 8, Israel sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.** Because Israel has rebelled, sinned, rejected the Lord, and made idols the nation will reap the consequences (7) of destruction and dispersion (8-14). Judah will face the same consequences (14).
9. **Hosea 9, Israel—wanderers among the nations.** The prophet continues to warn Israel. Because of her sin, Israel will be exiled to Egypt and Assyria (3). Her judgment will come quickly (7). The Lord began Israel with a good future, but she soon turned to idolatry (10). Because of Israel's disloyalty to the Lord, he will severely judge her (13-17). God will drive them out and love them no more (15). He will cast them away and they will be wanderers among the nations (17).
10. **Hosea 10, False prosperity brings pride and problems.** When Israel prospered she not only forget the Lord, she turned against him. She built idols and worshipped these. Neither her prosperity nor her idols will help her. She has sinned against God and nothing can help her. It is time to seek the Lord (12) for he is the only hope.
11. **Hosea 11, Israel, God's son, rebelled.** Israel began as the object of God's love and care (1-4). Even though God rescued them from Egypt, they turned against him. He will judge Israel, but will not destroy her (8-9). Israel and Judah's action is all the more terrible because "the Holy One is in your midst" (9).
12. **Hosea 12, Ephraim and Judah sin, though the Lord has been their God.** Ephraim (Israel) and Judah continue to sin even though they have a long history of relationship and blessing from the Lord, the God of hosts (1-5). The Lord calls for them to return to him, to observe kindness and justice, and to wait for God to work (6). In spite of all God's goodness, protection, and revelation, Israel and Judah think that they have done well for themselves.
13. **Hosea 13, Israel sins more and more.** Ephraim continues to worship Baal by making more idols and sacrificing to the idols (1-2). Therefore God's judgment will come upon Ephraim (3). The Lord has been Israel's God since Egypt. There is no God and no savior except him (4). The Lord cared for them, but will now be like a lion, a leopard, a bear, and a lioness (5-8). In the past God even gave them a king, but the king did not help (10-11). God's judgment will hide his compassion (14), and his judgment will be terrible (15-16).
14. **Hosea 14, Return to the Lord your God; he will heal and love.** The final chapter of Hosea's prophecy is the Lord's call to Israel to return to him (1-2). God asks them to come to him for forgiveness and safety and to realize that Assyria and idols cannot help them (3). God will heal them, love them, and turn away his anger (4). God will be the cause for renewal of national life, blessing and protection (5-8). The final verse appeals to those who are wise enough to know that the ways of the Lord are right (9).

### Key Doctrines

1. Divine discipline and judgment on individuals and the nation
2. God's faithfulness to his people
3. God's love for Israel and Judah
4. Idolatry or spiritual adultery, or unfaithfulness to God

5. National restoration of Israel
6. Marriage—grace toward the unfaithful
7. Knowledge of God and his word and fellowship with him is vital to his people

### **Lessons For Us Today**

1. How do I view God? Do I understand his holiness, or do I have a casual attitude toward sin? God forgives sin, but he must, at times, bring discipline.
2. Idolatry is not just kissing a stone or wood image. According to Paul, idolatry includes a number of sins among which are immorality, impurity, lust, and greediness (Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5). These sins turn our attention away from God and focus on our attention on activities that Israel did in her idolatry.
3. God wants his people to return to him, regardless of the sins committed. Do I understand that God is not through with his people if they sin, whether Israel or church believers?
4. Gomer's activity is quite frequent in marriages today, including Christian marriages. Divorce is often a quick way out. The Bible allows divorce in these situations, but Hosea's sacrifice, responsibility, and redemption gives us an illustration of the best way to repair a hurt marriage.
5. Knowledge of God and his word and personally knowing God better is crucial to pleasing and fellowshiping with God. The Jews of Hosea's ministry did not think so. They suffered from lack of knowledge and fellowship. What is my desire about knowing God, God's word, and fellowship with Him and what am I doing about it?

## **Joel Bible Walk**

### **Theme: Day of the Lord**

Tod Kennedy

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#### **Theme**

The Day of the Lord is Joel's theme. The Lord brought an overwhelming locust invasion to get Israel's attention so that they might repent and return to Him. This historical Day of the Lord then becomes the basis for Joel's messages about the prophetic or future day of the Lord that will overwhelm Israel, her enemies, and the world. The prophetic Day of the Lord will happen at the time around Jesus' return to earth.

#### **Key Verses**

Joel 1:15, Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near,

Joel 2:11 And the LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?

Joel 2:31 "The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

#### **Author: Joel**

1. The prophet Joel is the author of this book (Joel 1:1). Some suggest that he might be a priest because he speaks to the priests in three passages (1:9, 13; 2:17), but that seems questionable. His name, יוֹאֵל yoel, means "Yahweh is God." His father's name is Pethuel (1:1). There are eleven other Joel's in the Bible. Otherwise nothing is known about him.
2. He is a prophet to Judah. Notice "to the house of the Lord your God," (1:14), "Zion" (2:1, 15, 23, 32; 3:16, 17, 21), "Jerusalem" (2:31; 3:1, 6, 16, 17, 20), "Judah" (3:1, 6, 8, 18, 19, 20), "house of the Lord" (1:9, 14; 3:18), and "house of your God" (1:13, 16). Joel then ministered at the same time as Elisha.

#### **History**

1. There are no date markers in Joel's book, but content and context of the book best fits the pre-exile ninth century BC (around 830-835 BC), early in Joash's reign. No king is mentioned.



2. Though no king is mentioned, exhortations are given to the priesthood. In 841 BC Jehu killed King Ahaziah. Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab of Israel. She was not of David's line and so not a legal ruler. She tried to eliminate all the legal heirs to the throne in Judah. One of Ahaziah's sons, Joash (grandson of Athaliah), was rescued by the priest Jehoiada, and hidden for six years in the temple. When Joash was seven years old Jehoiada, the priest, overthrew Athaliah (835 BC). Joash became king and Jehoiada was his tutor. Jehoiada tried to remove Baal worship and restore righteousness to the kingdom. When he died he was honored by being buried with the kings in the city of David (2 Chronicles 24:16). See 2 Kings 9-12 and 2 Chronicles 22-24.
3. The enemies mentioned are the Tyre and Sidon (Phoenicians), Philistines, Egyptians, and Edomites (3:4, 19). These were the pre-exilic enemies of Israel.
4. The exilic enemies of Israel and Judah (Assyria and Babylon) are not mentioned, nor is Persian mentioned. Furthermore, no post-exilic people or events are mentioned.
5. Joel is placed second in the Hebrew list of short prophecies known as the twelve (Minor Prophets). This list generally follows a chronology of earliest to latest.

### **Overview Outline**

1. The judgments of the locust day of the Lord and the prophetic day of the Lord, 1:1-2:2:17.
2. The deliverance and restoration from the locust day of the Lord and from the prophetic day of the Lord, 2:18-3:21.

### **Chapter Titles**

1. Joel 1, The locust invasion day of the Lord
2. Joel 2, The prophetic day of the Lord is coming
3. Joel 3, The Lord will restore the fortunes of Judah

### **Trace the Theme**

1. Joel 1, The locust invasion day of the Lord. The Lord speaks through Joel (1:1) and calls to the leaders of Israel (Elders) and citizens (all inhabitants of the land) in verse 2. A horrendous locust storm has invaded and destroyed the vegetation of the land of Judah. Nothing like this had ever happened before in the history of Israel (1:3-12). Not only have the crops been destroyed, but the spirit of the people has been attacked (1:12). The temple offerings cannot even be offered due to the lack of grain and wine (1:13). Joel tells the priest to gather the elders and citizens to the house of the Lord to cry out to the Lord for help (1:14). He then says that the day of the Lord is near and will come (1:15), then continues to describe the present day disaster in 16-20. Note everything that has been cut off: food, gladness and joy, seeds and grains (1:16-17). The cattle and sheep suffer because there is no pasture food and no water (1:18-20). Apparently Joel is saying that the destruction from the locust day of the Lord is like the future or prophetic day of the Lord.
2. Joel 2, The prophetic day of the Lord is coming. After announcing a future day of the Lord in 1:15 followed by the disasters of the present destruction, Joel in 2:1 sounds a warning about the day of the Lord that is coming and is near. Verses 2-11 describe God's present locust judgment: darkness and gloom (2), desolate wilderness behind them (3), like horses (4), they climb the wall like soldiers (7), before them the earth quakes (10), the day of the Lord is indeed great and awesome (11). With verse 12 the Lord exhorts Israel to return to him. This continues through verse 17. Beginning with 2:18 and going through 2:27 the Lord, through Joel, promises Israel that he will replace the devastation with blessing. Woven within this promise the Lord seems to extend promises about blessing to include a distant

and even better time (19, 20, 26, 27). This time is the future kingdom blessings that Messiah will bring. Joel 2:28 builds on this transition from the locust day of the Lord and now promises a future day of the Lord that includes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all mankind— including, especially, the remnant of Israel (29). During this time the Lord will show his great power and sovereignty by miraculous changes in the sky and on earth, and these changes lead into the prophetic day of the Lord in which the Lord will judge the earth and its people (30-31). Anyone who accepts Messiah may call on him for physical deliverance (32).

3. Joel 3, The Lord will restore the fortunes of Judah. In this chapter the Lord promises that he will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (3:1). Note “in those days” and “at that time.” The context goes back to the last part of chapter 2, the great and awesome day of the Lord (2:31). The Lord will gather all the nations (3:2) to the valley of Jehoshaphat (3:2) and will judge them for their vicious treatment of Israel (3:2-6). Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia (3:4) were nations of Joel’s time that pillaged Israel (3:4-6). This occurred in past history. In verses 7-8 the Lord promises what he will do in the near future to Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. This may also stretch out into the distant future tribulation period. In 345 BC, Antiochus III enslaved the people of Sidon. In 332 BC Alexander enslaved the people of Tyre and Gaza. Jews may have had a part in that. The Sabeans (3:8) lived in the ranges of the Arabian Peninsula. The Queen of Sheba came from there to see Solomon (2 Chronicles 9). Israel will apparently sell the Sabeans to the far northwest. Joel 3:9 then instructs the nations about a great battle that will happen in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The word “nations” is mentioned in 3:9, 11, and 12. The Lord will bring his war upon the nations because of their treatment of Israel. The Lord will be the victorious warrior (3:16), his people will be Israel (3:16), and his city will be Jerusalem (3:16-17). He will protect his people, Israel, and will be her refuge and stronghold (3:16). Verses 17 through 21 give details about the prophetic day of the Lord. Israel will be holy (3:17). There will be economic prosperity (3:18). The historic enemies of Israel, Egypt and Edom, will become desolate (3:19), Judah and Jerusalem will be inhabited forever (3:20), and the Lord will dwell in Jerusalem (3:21). This restoration and blessing is predicted many places in the Old Testament. For example, Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:11-16; Jeremiah 16:15 and chapters 30-31; Ezekiel 36-39, but note 37:21-22; Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 3:20; Zechariah 12-14 (“in that day” is used 16 times); Malachi 4 and many other Scriptures. The Messianic Kingdom will have come.

### Key People

1. Joel, the prophet (1:1). He is only mentioned here and in Acts 2:16.
2. Key Words and Phrases
3. Day, 9 times in 7 verses. Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18
4. Day of the Lord. Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14
5. Those days, Joel 2:29; 3:1
6. That time, Joel 3:1
7. That day, Joel 3:18
8. Valley of Jehoshaphat, Joel 3:2, 12. This is the place where God will judge the nations. The place is unknown, but may be the Valley of Jezreel, east of the Mt Carmel range.

### Key Doctrines

1. God governs mankind, and in particular, Israel, through prophets, through nations, and through creation such as “natural disasters.

2. God is always gracious and desires Israel to return to fellowship with him.
3. God works through creation and nations to turn his people back to reverence, obedience, and fellowship with him.
4. When in a national crisis, leadership should rally the people and lead them to the best solution—relationship and fellowship with God.
5. Concentration on God and prayer for God's guidance and deliverance is the biblical approach for a people when they find themselves in a national crisis.

**Lessons for us**

1. God also works through what mankind may call natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, epidemics, plagues, and even warfare.
2. When a crisis comes the leaders should gather the people where God is present and pray for God's deliverance. This leadership will also rally the hopes of people. This can apply to a nation, to a church or mission, to a family, and to any group of believers.
3. History is moving in God's direction. God will judge nations based upon his character and according to their response or rejection of him. He will also judge nations according to their treatment of Israel. In the end time Israel will be restored as head of the nations.
4. God works to bring his people into right relationship with him—faith, reverence, obedience, fellowship, service.
5. Believers are on the winning side, though right now the spiritual battle "seems" to be going against us.

## **Amos Bible Walk**

### **Theme: Chosen for Blessing, Punished for Sin**

Tod Kennedy

April, 2007

#### **Theme**

Chosen for Blessing, Yet Punished for Sin. Theme: God chose Israel (Amos 3:2) to be his priest nation through whom he would redeem mankind and restore rightful authority to himself. Both Israel and Judah departed from the Lord. Amos has a message for both, but especially to Israel. His message is one of judgment to the surrounding nations, to Israel, and to Judah. The Lord repeatedly calls upon Israel and Judah to seek him and live (e.g. Amos 5:4). Though the judgment will be severe, he will in the last times restore and bless the united nation.

#### **Key Verses**

Amos 3:1-2, HEAR this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup> "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities."

Amos 5:4-5, For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel, "Seek Me that you may live. <sup>5</sup> But do not resort to Bethel...."

#### **Author**

*Amos was the man to whom God revealed the messages of this book.*

1. He was from a town five miles southeast of Bethlehem called Tekoa (Amos 1:1). Tekoa was on an important road between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. King Rehoboam, Solomon's son and the first ruler of the southern kingdom made Tekoa a defense city for Judah (2 Chronicles 11:5). Rehoboam's story is in 2 Chronicles 10-12.
2. Amos was a shepherd (Amos 1:1), herdsman (7:14), and a Sycamore fig tree farmer (Amos 7:14). He probably commuted to the Shephelah and Jordan Valley for his Sycamore fig tree work.
3. Amos was not a professional prophet, nor was he a member of the prophet guild. God called him to preach and to prophecy to Israel, especially, and also to Judah (Amos 7:14-15).
4. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, and Isaiah were prophets to Israel during this century (700s BC). Amos ministered after Joel and Jonah, and before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah.

#### **History**

*Amos served during the kingships of Uzziah of Judah (r. 790-739 BC) and Jeroboam II of Israel (r. 793-755 BC).*

1. Uzziah (2 Kings 15 and 2 Chronicles 26) was the ninth king of Judah after Solomon died. He reigned in co-regency from 792 BC until 767 and then ruled alone from 767-740 BC. God

called the prophet Isaiah the year Uzziah died. Another prophet, Zechariah—not the prophet of the book of this name—also served during Uzziah’s time (2 Chronicles 26:5).

2. Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-29) ruled for 41 years. This was a time in Israel of prosperity and stability, yet it was also a time of great injustice, immorality, and idolatry (Amos 1:1; 7:9, 10, 11; and specific condemnations by Amos; Hosea 1:1; and 2 Kings 13:13; 14:16, 23-29).
3. He was the fourteenth king of Israel and the son of Jehoash. He ruled Israel from about 793-753 BC, 41 years.
4. He continued to lead the northern tribes into idolatry, drunkenness, commercial prosperity, oppression, and general immorality.
5. Jeroboam ended his father’s wars, and he defeated Syria to the extent that Israel was no longer subservient to Syria.
6. He restored the earlier northern and southern borders of Israel, and recovered the cities of Damascus and Hamath.
7. The Lord pronounced judgment against Jeroboam and Israel for their idolatry.

### **Key People**

1. Amos. See number 3 above.
2. Jeroboam II. See number 4 above.

### **Key Words and Phrases**

1. “Bashan” is the area east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee (Amos 4:1). It was known for lush pastures and good cattle. Here Amos refers to woman as pampered woman who care only for themselves, like well fed cattle. The women will soon be taken away like cattle with meat hooks and fish hooks (2).
2. “Punish” is used 3 times (Amos 3:2, 14).
3. “Slay” is used 3 times (Amos 2:3; 9:1; 9:4)
4. “Transgressions” is used 10 times in chapters 1-5.
5. “For three transgressions and for four” is used 8 times (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). A poetic way of saying that the nation is guilty of repeated sin. This is also used elsewhere in the Old Testament (Job 5:19; Psalm 62:11-12; Proverbs 30:15-16, 18-19, 21-23, 29-31). God did not judge for one violation, but because of many sins for which they did not repent.
6. “Bozrah” is used in 1:12. This was the capital city in Edom (Genesis 36:33; 1 Chronicles 1:44; Isaiah 34:6; 63:1; Jeremiah 49:13; Amos 1:12).
7. “Seek” is used 4 times in 4 verses (Amos 5:4, “Seek me that you may live”; 6, “Seek the Lord that you may live”; 14, “Seek good and not evil that you may live”; 8:12, “To seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.”)
8. “Yet you have not returned to me” is used 5 times (Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11).
9. “The day of the Lord” is used 3 times (Amos 5:18 and 29).
10. “Will die” is used 5 times (Amos 2:2; 6:9; 7:11 and 17; 9:10).

### **Overview Outline**

1. Indictments announced against nations, Israel, and Judah, 1-2
2. Messages of Amos against Israel, 3-6
3. Visions of Amos: judgments and finally blessing, 7-9

### **Chapter Titles**

1. Amos 1, God indicts the nations

2. Amos 2, God indicts Israel and Judah
3. Amos 3, Israel, chosen and responsible
4. Amos 4, Israel, you have not returned to me
5. Amos 5, Israel, seek me that you may live
6. Amos 6, Judah and Israel will go into exile
7. Amos 7, Locusts, fire, plumb line, Jeroboam
8. Amos 8, Basket of summer fruit; famine for words of the Lord
9. Amos 9, The Lord will shake Israel and later restore Israel

## Trace the Theme

1. Amos 1, God indicts the nations. Amos begins by relating the Lord's revelation to him about the Lord's judgment of the nations around Israel and Judah. He announces judgment against Damascus, Philistia. The phrase "For three transgressions and for four" is used 8 times in Amos (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). It is a poetic way of saying that the nation addressed is guilty of repeated sin. God did not judge for one violation, but because of many sins for which they did not repent. He is simply saying that the nation addressed has come to the end of its rope—no more letting the sin go.
2. Amos 2, God indicts Israel and Judah. Moab will also come under God's judgment (1). Along with judging the nations surrounding Israel and Judah he will severely judge Israel and Judah. They have rejected the law and statutes of the Lord (4); they lie (4); they sell people (6); they oppress the helpless (6); they commit sexual sins in the name of religious (7); they did not return collateral taken for loans (8); they drank wine (probably to the pagan gods) taken from others (9); they compromised the Nazirites and forbid the prophets from proclaiming God's word (12). They did all of this even though God had blessed them throughout their history (9-11). God will judge them and they will not escape.
3. Amos 3, Israel, chosen and responsible. This chapter emphasizes Israel's privilege and blessing from the Lord. He has chosen them from all people of the earth (2). With that special position goes more responsibility. Israel has turned her back on the Lord. She has disobeyed him and flaunted her disobedience. In verses 3-6 the Lord expresses questions which have obvious answers: verses 3-5 require a no answer and 6 expects a yes answer. The Lord is saying that Israel's failure is obvious. In 7-8 God has revealed his will and the prophets must proclaim his will. The Lord announces his judgment for "tumults and oppressions" and "they do not know how to do what is right" (9-10) in verses 9-15. It will be severe: "pull down your strengths" and "citadels will be looted" (11); "shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth a couple of legs" and "sons of Israel...will be snatched away" (12); and "punish Israel's transgressions (14) and so on.
4. Amos 4, Israel, you have not returned to me. Amos condemns the indulgent women of Bashan for their self centered luxuriant living. They will be exiled like animals (1-3). God sarcastically told the people to go to the popular worship sites and sacrifice, tithe, and give offerings. They love to carry out religious ritual without any meaning at all (4-5). In 6-11 the Lord recalls his discipline that had the purpose of bringing his people back to him, but they had not listened and had not returned (5, 8, 9, 10, and 11). They were set in their rebellious and religious ways. Note the warnings: famine (6), drought (7-8), pests (9), disease and war (10), and destruction of the cities (11). Because they refuse to return to the Lord their God, he will bring them to him in judgment—"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel" (12). He is the God who exists, created, reveals himself and his will to man, and he rules (13). Israel is trapped.
5. Amos 5, Israel, seek me that you may live. A dirge is a mournful funeral song. Amos begins chapter 5 with this dirge. God will judge Israel for her unbelief and rebellion against him. And then in verse 4, 6, and 14 the Lord call them to seek him, seek the Lord, and see good and not evil. If they do seek him, they will live. This means that the Lord will withhold the destruction of Israel and bless the people and the nation. Some interpreters take this as only individual deliverance. That may be so, but the house of Israel is addressed. Also, Jeremiah 18:1-10, God talks about nations turning to him and he will relent on his judgment. Regardless, God is calling individuals and the nation to seek him. If they do, they will realize his blessing. Israel is not to worship at Bethel, Gilgal, or Beersheba. Jerusalem is the center for worship (5). Those who long for the day of the Lord (18) do not realize that

that day will bring great judgment—indicating that Israel fails to apply the prophets' messages properly. Israel is very religious, but there is no reality in the outward ritual. The Lord rejects Israel's festivals, offerings, and songs and music. All are meaningless without justice and righteousness. They are acting like the Exodus generation acted (21-26). Therefore exile is in the future (27).

6. Amos 6, Judah and Israel will go into exile. Chapter six begins with a woe (a word that expresses pain and dissatisfaction) toward the prominent leaders of both Judah and Israel, who think that they will survive coming judgment. Samaria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom. Samaria began with King Omri (1 Kings 16:24), who ruled Israel from 885-874 BC. Samaria was an idolatrous city. Calneh, Hamath, and Gath were city-states that had thought themselves great, but were defeated. Israel would do no better (1-3). These lazy, proud, and irreverent leaders will go into exile with Israel (4-9). People in hiding do not want the Lord's name mentioned for fear that he will attack them (10). God will bring Assyria and Assyria will destroy Israel from Hamath in the north to the brook of the Arabah (goes into the Dead Sea) in the south (11-14).
7. Amos 7, Locusts, fire, plumb line, Jeroboam. The Lord revealed three judgments to Amos. The first was a locust-swarm that would destroy the crops (1-3). The second was fire which would dry up the water (4-6). The third was a vision of a plumb line (7-9). A plumb line is a test for accuracy or correctness. Israel did not measure up. In answer to Amos' pleading, the Lord canceled the first two judgments. Due to Israel's idolatry the Lord will not cancel the third judgment. He will judge the idolatry of Israel.
8. Amos 8, Basket of summer fruit and a famine for words of the Lord. The Lord God showed Amos a basket of ripe fruit. Ripe fruit in a basket is fruit that has been harvested. Ripe fruit marks the end of harvest. It will spoil if not used. Israel is like a basket of harvested ripe fruit (1-2). The fruit season is over and in the same way Israel's season of rebellion is over because God will judge her. The Lord's judgment on Israel will bring death and wailing in the palace (3). What kind of activity brought on God's judgment? Oppression of the needy (4), perversion of the God designed days set apart for worship (5), and dishonest business practices are among the reasons for God's judgment. The Lord has had enough. He will no longer ignore their sin (7). The judgment will be prominent like an earthquake and an eclipse of the sun—death dealing and terrifying (9-10). The language could be real or figurative. The effect will be the same. In the midst of this divine judgment, God will send a famine of words from the Lord—no revelation. Because they rejected it for so long, the Lord will not speak to them (11-12). The judgment will cover the entire land of Israel, from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea and from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. Those who had allegiance to the idols of Samaria will die (14). Rebellion against God and his word does not reap good; it only reaps bad.
9. Amos 9, The Lord will shake Israel and later restore Israel. Because of Israel's idolatry which was centered in Bethel, he will break down the columns of the worship place and kill the priest and people. They will not be able to escape regardless of where they try to hide. The Lord is sovereign, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent (1-3). The Lord will even follow them into captivity and judge them there (4). The sovereign and omnipotent Lord God controls the entire planet—the Lord is his name (5-6). Omnipotent God relocated pagan peoples (7), and there is no reason to think Israel can hide from him. He will judge sinful Israel, but he will not totally destroy Israel (8-10). In the future, "In that day," he will restore the dynasty of David and make Israel better than the days of old (11). Israel will be the leading nation on earth (12). Israel will have unparalleled prosperity. Agriculture will flourish; cities will be rebuilt; food will be plentiful; and Israel will be back in her land never



again to be driven out. God has given the land to Israel and he is the Lord her God. No one can challenge him or his plan for history of the world (13-15).

### **Key Doctrines**

1. God holds back his judgment until no other way will accomplish his will and the best for his people.
2. Sin, and especially continual sin after many warnings, brings God's discipline and judgment.
3. The attributes and actions of Israel's God are the foundation for his treatment of his people (4:12-13, 5:8, and 9:1-6).
4. The best life is for those who seek the Lord (5:4, 9, 14).
5. To spurn God's word dangerous. It may not be available in a time when you want it (8:11).
6. Israel's promised future kingdom, named the millennial kingdom from Revelation 20, will come even though Israel has repeatedly sinned. This kingdom depends upon the nature and the promises of God. See Amos 9.

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. The foundational doctrine upon which all life depends is the nature and acts of God. See Amos 4:12-13 for this truth in practice.
2. Obey the Lord. Disobedient people never reap God's blessings and never get away with sin. Why can we not learn this lesson? It is so clear. This lesson is so clear from all of God's word, and especially the prophets. Amos 3:1-2 and many others in Amos state this.
3. Learn God's word while you have the opportunity and before you come to a crisis. God's word may not always be available. And a crisis may short circuit your time, learning, and thinking for understanding and application. Amos 8:11 documents this doctrine for the life of the Israeli people who had rejected God's word.
4. Israel has a blessed future in God's plan, regardless of what current history may seem to say. Amos clearly teaches this in chapter 9. Many other prophets also clearly teach this. The return of Messiah will bring this future into history. That means that Jesus Christ's return to earth to set up the promised kingdom for Israel is a pre-millennial return.

## **Obadiah Bible Walk**

### **Theme: God Will Judge Edom and Restore Israel**

Tod Kennedy

November, 2007

#### **Theme**

God will judge Edom and restore Israel. God judges Edom because Edom treated Israel, his brother nation, out of hate, envy, and revenge. Israel will be restored because God promised that he would fulfill his covenants to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

#### **Key Verses**

Obadiah 15-17: "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. <sup>16</sup>"Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed. <sup>17</sup>"But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions."

#### **Author**

Obadiah is an unknown person. His name means "servant of the Lord." hydb[ 'obadyah. There are 13 people named Obadiah in the Bible. Although there is some disagreement whether this is his name or simply a title, it is most natural to accept Obadiah as the name of a prophet of God. Since the other writing prophets begin their prophecies with their names, why would Obadiah be an exception? His purpose was to communicate the Lord God's message about God's judgment on Edom (Obadiah 1).

#### **History**

*Edom and Israel had a long history of conflict.*

1. This began with the birth of Esau and Jacob to Isaac and Rebekah as recorded in Genesis 25:21-28. Esau was born first. His skin was reddish color and he was hairy. Later on, Esau traded his birthright to Jacob for a pot of red colored stew. Still later, Esau moved southeast of the Dead Sea, to a place called Seir. Esau's people defeated and drove out the Horites (Genesis 36:8-9; Deuteronomy 2:12, 22).
2. When Israel was traveling from Egypt to Canaan, Edom refused Israel passage through their land (Numbers 20:13-21). Do you remember Balaam's oracle (Numbers 24:18)? Israel and Edom were hostile to each other from then on. Saul (1 Samuel 14:47), David (2 Samuel 8:13-14), and Solomon (1 Kings 11:17-22) contended with Edom. Furthermore, the Edomites urged on the Babylonians in their destruction of Jerusalem (Psalm 137:7). The animosity between Edom and Israel continued throughout history until the time of Christ.

3. Edom was attacked and defeated many times. The Assyrians took control of Edom about 735 BC. The Arabs took control of Edom in the 400s. The Nabateans (Petra) around 300 BC defeated the Edomites and drove them out of Edom. Some Edomites remained and became part of the Nabatean kingdom. The Edomites who left settled in Idumea. John Hyrcanus, of the Maccabean family, defeated the Idumeans (Edomites) around 120 BC. Herod the Great, the brilliant but evil king of Judea, was an Idumean (Edomite). The Idumaeans joined in the Jewish rebellion against Rome, and like the Jews were defeated in AD 70. From that time on they passed out of history. Many Scripture references predict Edom's judgment by God. Examples include Jeremiah 49:10, which refers to a judgment future to Jeremiah's time, probably by the Nabateans. Ezekiel 35 is another prophecy about a future destruction of Edom, as does Amos 1:11 and Joel 3:19.
4. The time of the prophet Obadiah is uncertain. The two most favored dates are the time of King Jehoram of Judah (Joram), Son of Jehoshaphat, husband of Athaliah (848-841 BC), or soon after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. Though neither date changes the message of Obadiah, the earlier date seems to fit all the evidence better. During the reign of Jehoram, Edom and Libnah revolted against and invaded Judah (2 Chronicles 21:8-20). Libnah was a Canaanite city, located in the area that came to be Judah, which Joshua defeated. Also during this time, the Philistine and Arabian invasions of Judah took place (2 Chronicles 21:12-20). The city of Jerusalem was not destroyed during these raids as it was by Nebuchadnezzar.

### Key People

1. Obadiah the prophet. The author of this prophecy. Nothing is known of him outside of the Old Testament book that bears his name. Because of the subject of his prophecy, he may be a native of Judah. He was probably a contemporary of Elijah.

### Key Words and Phrases

There are many place names, people names, and technical terms in this short book. See *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* and *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

2. Edom. Obadiah 1, 8. The land southeast of the Dead sea. Also called the land or mountain of Seir. It was named from Edom, another name for Esau, Jacob's brother. Esau's descendants settled there (Genesis 25:30; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 23:7).
3. Esau. Obadiah 6, 8, 9, 18, 19, 21. The oldest son of Isaac and Rebekah and brother of Jacob. His father's favorite. He was also named Edom. Esau was a man of the desert who roamed and objected to restraint (Genesis 25:21-30). He married two Canaanite women Adah, also called Basemath and Oholibamah (Genesis 36:2 and 26:34). His third wife was also named Basemath (Mahalath), the daughter of his uncle Ishmael (Genesis 28:9 and 36:3).
4. Teman. Obadiah 9. The southern part of Edom and was also called the stronghold of Edom.
5. Jacob. Obadiah 10, 17, 18. The second born of twins to Isaac and Jacob. His brother was Esau. His mother's favorite (Genesis 25:21-34).
6. Jerusalem. Obadiah 11, 20. The central city and holy city of Israel. Founded by Amorites and Hittites (Ezekiel 16:3, 44-46).
7. Judah. Obadiah 12. The fourth son of Jacob and Leah. Judah advised that they sell Joseph and not kill him. Jacob's blessing made Judah the ruling line. Also the name of the Southern Kingdom (Genesis 49:8-12).
8. Day of the Lord. Obadiah 15. The day of the Lord is a phrase used by God's prophets in the Old Testament to identify God's soon (historic) or future (prophetic) overthrow of ungodly

powers and to further his kingdom. The prophetic day of the Lord embraces the Tribulation, Second Advent of Christ, Millennial Kingdom, and the final renovation of the earth (Joel 1:15).

9. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002). 10:244 say regarding Obadiah 15, "The day of Jehovah" has been explained at Joel 1:15. The expression was first formed by Obadiah, not by Joel; and Joel, Isaiah, and the prophets that follow, adopted it from Obadiah. The primary meaning is not the day of judgment, but the day on which Jehovah reveals His majesty and omnipotence in a glorious manner, to overthrow all ungodly powers, and to complete His kingdom. It was this which gave rise to the idea of the day of judgment and retribution which predominates in the prophetic announcements, but which simply forms one side of the revelation of the glory of God, as our passage at once shows; inasmuch as it describes Jehovah as not only judging all nations and regarding them according to their deeds (cf. vv. 15b, and 16), but as providing deliverance upon Zion (v. 17), and setting up His kingdom (v. 21).
10. Mount Zion. Obadiah 17, 21. Originally the ridge between the Kidron and the Tyropeoean valleys of Jerusalem. Later on it referred to the whole western ridge of Jerusalem and then later it designated the city.
11. House of Jacob. Obadiah 17, 18. Jacob was in the line of Abraham, Isaac, and then Jacob. The twelve tribes of Israel came from him. In Obadiah it refers to all Israel in contrast to Edom.
12. House of Joseph. Obadiah 18. Joseph, listed as Jacob's eleventh son in the Genesis 49 blessing, was part of the northern ten tribes. He is mentioned here to confirm that all Israel will participate in the future re-gathering and blessing from God for Israel (Genesis 49:22-26)
13. House of Esau. Obadiah 18. This refers to the entire Edom peoples. They came from Esau and will be completely judged. The Edomites disappeared from history after the siege of Titus on Jerusalem in AD 70.
14. Negev. Obadiah 19, 20. The south, or southern wilderness part of Judea. It is about 4500 square miles.
15. Mountain of Esau. Obadiah 8, 9, 19, 21. This is Mount Seir which is the central mountain in Edom. Jews will take control of all of this area in the future. Sela (Petra) is the capital. See Ezekiel 35:15.
16. Shephelah. Obadiah 19. This is in the southern part of Canaan between south of the Dead Sea and the Philistine Plain on the Mediterranean Sea. The cities of Lachish, Debir, Libnah, and Seth-shemesh were in the Shephelah.
17. Philistine Plain. Obadiah 19. This plain is in the southwest area of Canaan. Philistines probably originated in Crete and the Aegean Islands. Their culture is connected with the Mycenae culture (southern Greece). They are probably one of the "Sea Peoples." They adopted the Canaanite language and culture. They lived in this area from as early as the patriarchal age to about 1000 BC. The Judges and David fought the Philistines. The name Philistine is the source of the name Palestine. Palestine and Palestinians have nothing to do with Arab people or Islam.
18. Territory of Ephraim. Obadiah 19. This territory is in central Israel between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Ephraim was the second son of Joseph and brother of Manasseh (Genesis 46:20). Both were born in Egypt.
19. Samaria. Obadiah 19. Samaria is in central Israel to the north of Ephraim. The city was the capital of the Northern Kingdom. It was an idolatrous city. The area included the geography of the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom.

20. Benjamin. Obadiah 19. This is the land that is between Ephraim and Judah. Benjamin was the twelfth son of Jacob (Genesis 49:27).
21. Zarephath. Obadiah 20. This was the hometown of Elijah. It was owned by Sidon or was near Sidon. Zarephath was on the Mediterranean coast north of Tyre.
22. Sepharad. Obadiah 20. Some think that this may have been in Asia Minor. We do not know.
23. Mount Zion. Obadiah 17, 21. This was the natural stronghold of the Jebusites that David captured when he took Jerusalem.
24. Kingdom. Obadiah 21. This refers to all the territory of Israel. The Lord will reclaim it for his people and set up his millennial kingdom.

## Overview Outline

1. God will judge Edom, Obadiah 1-18.
2. God will restore Israel, Obadiah 19-21.

## Chapter Titles

1. Obadiah—God will judge Edom and will restore Israel.
2. Trace the Theme of Obadiah. God Will Judge Edom and Restore Israel.
3. God judges Edom because Edom treated Israel, his brother nation, out of hate, envy, and revenge (Obadiah). God will restore Israel because he promised covenant blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will fulfill those covenants (Genesis 12; 13:14-18; 15:18; 17:19-21; 35:2; 50:24; Exodus 33:1; Deuteronomy 29:13; 34:4; 2 Kings 13:23 and many others).
4. Obadiah has a vision from the Lord God (Obadiah 1). The vision is about Edom. The Lord will bring nations against Edom and will make her small among the nations (Obadiah 2). Edom thinks that she is unbeatable because her nation is perched in the rock city of Petra (Obadiah 3-4). Petra was about 50 miles south of the Dead Sea. It was probably the Old Testament city of Sela, a pagan city. Edom will not just be robbed; she will be ruined, ransacked, betrayed, and destroyed. The whole nation, including the wise men will be slaughtered (Obadiah 5-9). The reason for Edom's destruction was her treatment of Jacob, Esau's (Edom) brother (Obadiah 10). Edom stood by while Jerusalem was invaded (Obadiah 11). Edom rejoiced at the destruction of Judah (Obadiah 11). Edom looted Jerusalem (Obadiah 12-13). When residents of Judah were escaping, Edom imprisoned some and killed others (Obadiah 14). The prophet goes on to say that the overwhelming prophetic day of the Lord draws near. Yet Edom will come under God's wrath in its own day of the Lord even before the day comes upon all the nations that challenge the Lord (Obadiah 15). Like Edom drank (ravaged Israel) at Zion, nations of the world will also ravage Israel, but the nations' attacks will turn into the nations' destruction in the future day of the Lord (Obadiah 16). At that future time known as Jacob's trouble, some of Israel will escape and they will then soon possess all that God promised them (Obadiah 17). This will come about through the Messiah's second coming to earth. Israel (Jacob and Joseph) will be a fire and burn the few returned Edomites (Obadiah 18). The nation of Israel will return from wherever they have been and they will possess the land God long ago promised to them (Obadiah 19-20). The Lord will now reign in his earthly millennial kingdom (Obadiah 21).

## Key Doctrines

1. Abrahamic Covenant
2. Anti-Semitism
3. Day of the Lord
4. Messianic Kingdom
5. Rejection of God and God's word
6. Sin has consequences

### **Lessons for Us**

1. God honors his covenant to Abraham. Obadiah prophecies about all four parts of the covenant: the land, nation, blessing, and cursing. God also keeps his word to us. We can depend upon what he has revealed in the Bible.
2. Israel will, in the future, possess their God given land and blessings. The wars and rumors of wars will continue until Jesus Christ returns to restore Israel in the land he promised to them. Regardless of the political situation today or at any time, Israel's future is secure within God's plan.
3. God will judge anti-Semitic nations. This is a warning to nations even today. Those nations and people who want to destroy Israel are outside of God's will, and he will judge them for their anti-Semitism.
4. Israel will return to her land, and her kingdom will be the Lord's kingdom. Future history has Israel in her promised land and under the reign and protection of Messiah, Jesus.

## Jonah Bible Walk

### Theme: Theme—God's Compassion on Gentile nations

Tod Kennedy

March, 2008, Revised April, 2008

#### Theme

God's compassion on Gentile nations. Jonah took Yahweh's message to the Assyrians at Nineveh. That message was that Yahweh is ruler of all peoples and wants them to turn to him in faith. Jonah's written message was for Israel; God was using Jonah's experience to teach Israel that his love, compassion, and grace are also for Gentiles, and as a reminder that Israel was a priest or missionary nation to the world. Compare Genesis 12:3 (Israel a blessing to all) and Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6 (Messiah the light to the nations).

#### Key Verse

Jonah 4:11, "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

#### Author

*Jonah the prophet (Jonah 1:1; Matthew 12:39-41 and 16:4; Luke 11:29-32)*

1. Jonah was sent by Yahweh (LORD, 1:1) to warn Nineveh that she must repent or be judged, and Jonah did not want God to show grace to the Assyrians. Jonah probably lived before or during the reign of Jereboam II of Israel (793-753 BC), in view of his prophecy, recorded in 2 Kings 14:25, that Israel would expand under Jereboam II (793-753). Jonah was from Gath-Hepher in Zebulun in northern Israel. Gath-Hepher was 3 miles northeast of Nazareth and between Mount Carmel and the Sea of Galilee. We know nothing about Jonah after his mission trip to Nineveh. Jesus verified Jonah and his mission to Nineveh in Matthew 12:41, Matthew 16:4, and Luke 11:32.

#### History

1. Jonah most likely served the Lord during reign of the Assyrian king Adad-Nirari III (810–783 B.C.) or during the reign of Assurdan III (771–754). If during Adad-Nirari, that king worshipped Nebo, and the worship of Nebo was more "monotheistic" than that of the previous kings. If Jonah served during Assurdan, then three striking events might have "softened" the people up for Jonah's message: 765 BC, a plague in Nineveh; June 15, 763, a total eclipse of the sun; and in 759, another plague hit the city.
2. Assyria has three distinct kingdoms or periods: These are called the Old (20th to 15th centuries BC), the Middle (15th to 10th centuries BC), and the Neo-Assyrian (911–612 BC) kingdoms. The Neo-Assyrian period was from Adad-Nirari II in 911 BC, to the fall of Nineveh



in 612 BC. During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (ruled 745–727 BC) Assyria became very strong. We might conclude that the repentance of Nineveh may have played a part in this.

3. There was conflict between Assyria and the Northern Kingdom before Jonah's day. King Ahab (871-851) had joined into an alliance with twelve kings to oppose Assyria.
4. The king of Israel during Jonah's ministry was Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-29). He ruled for 41 years, from 793-753. This was a time in Israel of prosperity and stability, yet it was also a time of great injustice, immorality, and idolatry (Amos 1:1; 7:9, 10, 11; Hosea 1:1; and 2 Kings 13:13; 14:16, 23-29). Jeroboam II expanded Israel's power. He conquered Syria, Moab, and Ammon, and because of his increased power he came into conflict with Assyria.
5. He was the fourteenth king of Israel and the son of Jehoash. He ruled Israel from about 793-753 BC, 41 years.
6. He continued to lead the northern tribes into idolatry, drunkenness, commercial prosperity, oppression, and general immorality.
7. Jeroboam ended his father's wars, and he defeated Syria to the extent that Israel was no longer subservient to Syria.
8. He restored the earlier northern and southern borders of Israel, and recovered the cities of Damascus and Hamath.
9. The Lord pronounced judgment against Jeroboam and Israel for their idolatry.

### Key People and Places

1. Jonah the prophet (Jonah 1:1)
2. Nineveh (Jonah 1:2) was the capital of the Assyrian Empire.
3. Nineveh was on the eastern bank of the Tigris, near what is today the city of Mosul, Iraq. It was an ancient city that was thought to be impregnable. Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-10) founded the city. The great Assyrian king, Sargon (2350 BC), had a palace there. Sargon II (721–705 BC) made it one of the capitals. Sennacherib (705–681 BC.) made it his capital and the main city of Assyria (2 Kings 19:36-37; Isaiah 37:37-38). Nahum prophesied its destruction (Nahum 1:1, 2:8-10). The city was long doubted until A.H. Layard and H. Rassam discovered Nineveh in 1845–1854. Archaeologists have excavated the city. Most of it was excavated a long time ago. They found the library of Ashurbanipal which contained many creation and flood texts, along with economic, political, and other texts.
4. Nineveh was occupied as far back as before 3100 BC. Among the many great finds were Sargon's palace and a cuneiform library. Many smaller cities made up the Nineveh metropolitan complex. The district was 30 to 60 miles across.
5. In Sennacherib's day (about 700 BC) the city wall was 40-50 feet high and ran 2 ½ miles along the Tigris River and 8 miles around the inner city. He created parks, a garden, zoo, and an aqueduct. The city had 15 gates. Sennacherib has a 71 room palace that has been excavated. King Hezekiah paid tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:15).
6. In 614 BC, under Nabopolassar of Babylon and Cyaxares of Media destroyed Ashur and Calah, and in August, 612 they destroyed Nineveh. Nineveh was left to animals for grazing just as the prophets predicted (Nahum 2:10, 13 and Zephaniah 2:13-15).
7. References include Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison and Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995; and Gleason Leonard Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 3rd. ed.]. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998, c1994).
8. Tarshish (1:3) was a city in the western Mediterranean. It is thought to be in southern Spain near Gibraltar. The Phoenicians traded with Tarshish (2 Chronicles 9:21; Psalm 72:10). Tarshish was the great grandson of Noah (Noah, Japheth, Javan, Tarshish. Genesis 10:1-4).

9. Joppa (1:3) was a city 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was the only seaport with a natural harbor between Egypt and Acco. Joppa was Jerusalem's seaport. It was important for shipping in the Old and New Testament times. Timber for Solomon's temple came from Lebanon through Joppa and on to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 2:16). Peter received his sheet vision while he was in Joppa (Acts 9:36 and 43;10:9-16). Today it is part of Tel Aviv.

## Key Words and Phrases

1. Lot (1:7)
2. Hebrew (1:9)
3. LORD and LORD God of heaven (1:1,3,9,10,14,16,17, and more)
4. Great Fish (1:17; 2:1, 10) 1419
5. Those who regard vain idols (2:8)
6. Believed in God (in Elohim בְּאֱלֹהִים) (Jonah 3:5).
7. God relented (4:10) Relents 5162 נָחַם *nahcam*.
8. Gracious 2587 חַנּוּן *channun* (4:2), Compassionate 7349 רַחוּם *rachum* (4:2, 11), Slow to anger 750 and 639 אָרַךְ אֲפִים (4:2), Lovingkindness 2617 חֶסֶד, *chesed* (4:2); Compare Exodus 34:6. These are well known attributes of God.
9. Overview Outline
10. Disobedience and discipline, Jonah 1-2
11. Service and compassion, Jonah 3-4

## Chapter Titles

1. Jonah 1, Jonah disobeys, Yahweh disciplines
2. Jonah 2, Jonah prays, Yahweh delivers
3. Jonah 3, Jonah preaches, Nineveh repents and God does not judge
4. Jonah 4, Jonah complains, God explains his compassion

## Trace the Theme of Jonah

Theme—God’s compassion on Gentile nations. Yahweh demonstrated his grace and compassion. He told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach. Jonah disobeyed and instead went west. Yahweh disciplined Jonah with the storm and fish (1). During the discipline Jonah realized his sin and confessed to God (2). Yahweh delivered Jonah from the fish and Jonah went to Nineveh and preached God’s message. The people believed in God, so God called off his judgment (3). Jonah became angry at this and complained to Yahweh. Yahweh explained his compassion through the plant, worm, east wind, and sun (4).

1. Jonah 1, Jonah disobeys, Yahweh disciplines. Yahweh wanted to present himself to the powerful and dominant power, Assyria, through the people of **Nineveh**, the main city in Assyria. Yahweh chose Jonah to do his work (1:1-2). Jonah decided he did not want to go to Nineveh and so got a ticket to Tarshish in the west. He was trying to escape God’s will (1:3). Yahweh sent a storm that threatened the lives of all aboard, but Jonah slept—likely trying to escape Yahweh’s nudging his conscience (1:4-5). The sailors experience God’s power (1:4-5) and did not want to experience his wrath (1:14). The captain told Jonah to get up and pray to his god. At this point the captain and the sailors thought no more of Jonah’s God than of any other god (1:6). The sailors cast **lots** to determine what to do. The lot identified Jonah as the culprit (1:7). Note Proverbs 16:33 that says God directs the outcome of the lot for those he is working with. The name Yahweh sets Jonah apart. Yaweh is Israel’s God and Israel is his people. Yahweh is used 21 times in 26 verses. Early on the sailors ask Jonah to pray to his God (1:6, elohim). Jonah has been the reluctant witness and the sailors learned that he was a Hebrew and Yahweh was his God. This was Jonah’s testimony. (1:9-12). Jonah recognized **divine discipline** tells them to throw him into the sea (1:13) The sailors are honorable and try to save his life, but soon realize they cannot. They now pray to Yahweh, which is an advancement on their understanding of God, and finally throw Jonah goes into the sea (1:14-15). The sailors feared Yahweh greatly. Jonah was a witness to them without wanting to. How much did Jonah tell them? We do not have

all the details, but apparently he told them enough to trust Israel's God. In verse 17 Yahweh intervened for his will and for Jonah's safety and spiritual recovery. Yahweh planned ahead. He did not give up on Jonah. He appointed the **great fish**. Appoint is manah (4487 מָנָה) in the piel stem. The word means to count or reckon in the qal and in the piel to appoint or ordain. It was a miracle that the fish swallowed Jonah and that he survived. There are many attempts at natural explanations, but this was a divine miracle. Note key ideas in chapter 1: free will of Jonah, disobedience, Yahweh, lot, Hebrew, divine discipline, fear Yahweh, Yahweh's sovereignty over creation, and miracles.

- a. Lot (Jonah 1:7) 1486 גֹּרֶל gowral. Something, usually a stone, used to make decisions. It was dropped, fell from, or thrown. When God wanted a lot thrown he determined the decision (Proverbs 16:33). The lot is mentioned 70 times in the Old Testament and 8 times in the New Testament. Lots served to prevent favoritism by man in determining God's will. Lots were used to choose the scapegoat to be sent into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:8-10), to divide the land (Joshua 14:2 and Numbers 26:55), to choose temple servers (1 Chronicles 24:1-5), for temple gate keepers (1 Chronicles 26:1, 12-13), for temple musicians (1 Chronicles 25:8-9), and even by the pagan seaman to find who was guilty (Jonah 1:7). Lots died out as God's revelation (Bible) became for complete. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, served in the temple by the lot (Luke 1:9). The soldiers divided Jesus clothes by lot when they crucified him (Matthew 27:35). Matthias was added to the eleven apostles by lot (Acts 1:26).
  - b. Hebrew (Jonah 1:9) 5680 עִבְרִי briy This is the name of the people beginning with Abraham and going through Isaac and Jacob. They were the people of Yahweh. Abraham was the first Hebrew. It was first used in Genesis 14:3. The people also became known as Israelites after God gave the name Israel (probably means God fights) to Jacob Genesis 32:28. In Hebrew tradition it means from beyond the river (Joshua 24:2-3).
  - c. LORD and LORD God of heaven (Jonah 1:1,3,9,10,14,16,17, and more) 3068 יְהוָה, Yahweh and yahweh elohim shamayim. The name Yahweh sets Jonah apart. Yaweh is Israel's God and Israel is his people. God's name is used 21 times in 26 verses. Early on the sailors ask Jonah to pray to his God (1:6, elohim). Soon after the sailors pray to Yahweh (1:14, 15). Jonah has been the reluctant witness and the sailors learned of Yahweh (1:10).
  - d. Great Fish (Jonah 1:17; 2:1, 10) 1419 גָּדוֹל gadol, common adjective for great, large in size, number, intensity, sound, age, power, and 1709 דָּג, דָּאג dag or dawg common word for fish. It was a miracle that the fish swallowed Jonah and that he survived. There are many attempts at natural explanations, but this was a divine miracle.
2. Jonah 2, Jonah prays, Yahweh delivers. Verses 1-2 are a summary of Chapter 2. Jonah prayed to Yahweh out of desperation. Yahweh his God is the only way out (2:1). He recognized that Yahweh was bringing **divine discipline** and that Yahweh was his only hope (2:3-4). Just as we often resist the Lord as long as we can, Jonah did the same. Jonah is in the digestive system of the fish along with water and weeds. He was barred from dry land (2:5-6). He would not admit his sin until he was on the edge of unconsciousness (2:7). At that point he prayed. His prayer reached Yahweh. It included the recognition that those who disobey Yahweh are centering their lives on empty (7723 שָׁוְיָ shaweh, empty, nothingness) **idols** and forsaking **hesed** (lovingkindness, loyalty, graciousness) that Yahweh has showered upon them. Jonah had put things—empty idols—before Yahweh. Verse 8 was his **confession of sin** (2:8). He now chooses to do Yahweh's will and knows that any deliverance is from him (9). The chapter ends with Yahweh commanding the fish to

spit Jonah out onto dry land. Yahweh is omnipotent and sovereign. Only he could deliver Jonah from a terrible death. He even controls fish (10). **Key ideas** in this chapter include divine discipline, resistance to confession, prayer, confession of sin, the folly of disobedience, the choice of emptiness of life or Yahweh's lovingkindness, Yahweh's attributes, the source of deliverance out of trouble, and obedience to God.

3. Jonah 3, Jonah preaches, Nineveh repents and God does not judge. . Jonah gets a second chance. This is an expression of God's grace (3:1-2). Jonah has learned to obey Yahweh, but he did not like it (3:3 and 4:1-3). We often are just like Jonah. What message did Jonah preach? Yahweh gave him the message as Jonah traveled and preached (3:2). Nineveh was to turn (3:8, 10. **7725 שׁוּב** shub, to turn back, return. Qal imperfect jussive) from wicked ways and violence (1:2; 3:8, 10). Jonah took three days to walk and preach at many different parts of the city (3:3-4). The administrative district of Nineveh was from 30 to 60 miles across. Furthermore, with a population of 120,000 infants (4:11), the adult population would be much greater. Jonah had a large job to accomplish. What happened? The people **believed in God**, called a fast, and mourned because of the coming divine judgment (3:5). Were they saved in the eternal life sense? The text does not say. The majority of the city appear to have believed in Israel's God, Yahweh, and become possessors of eternal life. The narrative seems to indicate this. If not, why did God go to the "trouble" of sending Jonah to Nineveh, unless Yahweh was just teaching Israel about His compassion and their missionary status. Regardless, the Ninevites did have a moral change of mind under the threat of judgment. Whatever happened, we know that the results did not carry beyond the next generation or so. God provided his message to these Assyrians and showed compassion to them and they responded to his word. Apparently the Assyrians of Nineveh were ready for God's word and God delivered it to them. The governor (king) heard what Jonah was preaching and also mourned the coming judgment. He even proclaimed that each person and each beast—the entire city—should mourn and call on God (Elohim) for help to turn from their wickedness and violence (3:6-8). What was Elohim's response? He relented and withdrew his punishment (3:10). **Relent** in verses 9 and 10 (**5162 נָחַם** nacham in the niphil imperfect plus vav consecutive, 3 common plural) has meanings to repent, be sorry, and to console oneself. Since the people turned from their sin, God held off the judgment. God did not change. He continued to act according to his character. The Ninevites did what he asked. If you will look at Scripture that says God changed his mind, it does not mean that he changes. It simply means that when mankind changes toward God, he then does what is appropriate. Here he did not judge Nineveh because they repented. About a generation after Jonah, Assyria destroyed the northern kingdom (722 BC), Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem (701 BC) during Hezekiah's reign, and Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and Medes (612 BC). Key ideas in chapter 3 are divine guidance in Jonah's message, faith in God by pagan people, repentance, and God's graciousness in withholding judgment.
  - a. Believed in God in Jonah 3:5 is the Hebrew word **אָמַן**, aman Strong's 539, in the hiphil imperfect with waw consecutive (narrative describing the event in the sequence). Aman means in the Qal to support or nourish; in the niphil to be made firm, established; in the hiphil to stand firm, and in the hiphil with the preposition beth to trust in, believe in (as we have in Jonah 3:5). What the Ninevites believed is not defined in the text. They may have believed in the one Elohim, the God of Israel, Yahweh. Jonah was sent by Yahweh (1:1 and 3:1), and Yahweh was the source of his message to the people of Nineveh. Clearly they believed God's message that Jonah preached. They believed, trusted in God. It would appear that Yahweh Elohim granted the Ninevites forgiveness and life. If so, the conversion to Yahweh lasted only a generation or so. Apparently they

had no teaching to support their faith. Or, this could mean they simply believed in Elohim in the sense that he was going to judge them and they had better change. We can go to other Scripture to help us. The phrase "and Abraham believed in Yahweh" (Genesis 15:6) also has the preposition beth, but the object is Yahweh. In Genesis the verb is a hiphil perfect with waw consecutive. The object is clear in the Abraham passage, though the full content of what Abraham believed is not specified except that he believed in Yahweh (the revealed God who created, redeems, and keeps his word) who had promised him the land, nation, and universal blessing in Genesis 12:1-3. Yahweh responded to Abraham's faith by declaring Abraham righteous. Paul quotes this in Romans 4:3 and uses it to show that God justifies and credits righteousness through faith in him.

- b. The verb amen אמן in the hiphil stem with the preposition Beth plus the object of believed, as in Jonah 3:5, can be found in Genesis 15:6 (believed God), Exodus 14:31 (believed in Yahweh), Numbers 14:11 (believe in me=Yahweh), Jonah 3:5 (believed in God), Exodus 19:9 (believe in you=Moses), 1 Samuel 27:12 (believed David), Jeremiah 12:6 (do not believe them), Micah 7:5 (do not trust in a neighbor).
4. Jonah 4, Jonah complains, God explains his compassion. In this chapter Jonah recognizes Yahweh's graciousness to pagan peoples. Yahweh wants all people throughout the world to believe him and obey him. Israel was the vehicle to spread God's revelation during Jonah's time (the dispensation of Israel). We, now in the church (dispensation of the church), are God's vehicle to spread God's revelation. He is righteous and holy, yet he is also compassionate and gracious. Yahweh's compassion and graciousness toward the people of Nineveh made Jonah angry (1-2). Jonah was self righteous, disobedient, and very self centered. He went into **volitional** (Ephesians 4:17-20) **and emotional revolt**. His lack of orientation to Yahweh became evident when he asked to die rather than live and see Yahweh's graciousness and compassion toward Nineveh (4:3). Jonah ignored Yahweh. He was angry, self centered, and hoping Yahweh would judge Nineveh. His attitude was "kill Nineveh or kill me." He had no compassion on the city (4:4-5). In verses 6-11, Yahweh teaches Jonah about his own sovereignty and compassion. Jonah benefited from **Yahweh's compassion and grace** when the LORD provided the shade plant. Jonah had a selfish compassion for the vine. Why could the LORD not have compassion on a large city of many people and animals? Jonah only thought of himself. Yahweh had compassion on people and animals of Nineveh. Jonah only had compassion on himself. Key ideas in Chapter 4 include the out of control believer (volitional and emotional revolt), self-centered believer, God's compassion and grace, and divine discipline.

### Key Doctrines in Jonah

1. Human volition, Jonah 1,2,3,4 (Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Isaiah 1:16-20; Acts 17:26-27; Romans 1:18-32)
2. Mental attitude Jonah 1,2,3,4 (Proverbs 23:7; Romans 14:14; Galatians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 10:5).
3. God's will, Jonah 1, 3, 4 (Galatians 5:13-16; Ephesians 5:1-2; Hebrews 10:22-25).
4. Divine Guidance, Jonah 1,2,3 (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12; Acts 10:19-22, Jude 3-4; 1 Corinthians 9:16-17, Galatians 5:18, Jude 3)
5. Divine discipline, Jonah 1, 2, 4 (Revelation 3:19-20; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 John 5:16).
6. Believer confession of sin, Jonah 1,2 (Psalm 32:1-5; 51:1-9; Jonah 2:7-9; John 13:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; 1 John 19).

7. Ministry or service to God, Jonah 1, 3 (Isaiah 6:6; Jonah 3:1-5; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
8. Spiritual revolt—volitional and emotional by a believer, Jonah 1,4 (2 Corinthians 6:12; Romans 16:18).
9. God's attributes, Jonah 1,2,3,4 (Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 111:4; 135:6; Isaiah 42:8; Jonah 4:2; John 1:14; Hebrews 1:3, 12).
10. God controls all creation, 1,2,3,4 (Psalm 2; Daniel 4.25; 5.21; Acts 17.24-31; Romans 8:28; Matthew 24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).
11. Faith in the revealed biblical God, Yahweh Elohim, Jonah 3
12. Obedience and disobedience to God, Jonah 1,4

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. Do I think biblically or do I think worldly? The basis for my thinking determines my relationship and fellowship with God and his will, what I do, and whether I have contentment and happiness or discouragement, discontent, and unhappiness. Jonah thought worldly—from his fallen nature—and we see what it got him in each chapter of this book. Biblical worldview or cosmic worldview?
2. Do I watch for God's guidance and do I obey that which I am sure is God's will for me? When I disobey God's direct command, I am in danger of divine discipline, and the discipline can be quite severe.
3. What do I understand and apply about God—Yahweh Elohim? He is the only God. His character is unique. He is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness. He not only disciplines, he also forgives and blesses. Jonah experienced God's guidance, God's discipline, God's forgiveness and restoration, God's anger, God's compassion, and God's explanations.
4. Do I watch for what God is teaching me, not only in good times and hard times, but when I think that I might be under divine discipline? Maybe I am missing the obvious lessons. Sadly, Jonah seemed to miss what God was teaching him.
5. Am I careful that I do not revolt against God based on my emotion and my bad choices? Emotion is very powerful. Emotion can provide the energy needed to serve. But emotion can be driven by God and his word or by the world, the flesh, and Satan's forces. Emotion wrongly driven can have disastrous consequences.
6. Do I give up on God and myself after I fail God? He wants to bring me back into fellowship with himself and back into his service. Jonah is a clear example. When I give up on God and myself I am being self-centered and thinking worldly. God will let me know when he is done with me.
7. Am I sinfully proud and do I withhold God's grace from those whom I dislike or fear? Jonah did not want to go and proclaim God's message to the Assyrians because he wanted God to judge the Assyrians.
8. Do I care about what God care's about or what is more is important to me? God cares about people, about his revelation to mankind—the Bible, about his will, and that we please him. Jonah cared more about his own shade from the plant, than God blessing the residents of Nineveh.
9. Do I to watch and observe God working in my life and ministries? God may accomplish his mission through me in spite of my failures, weaknesses, disobedience, and unbelief. Am I ready to pick up and continue with my service for him after I have failed? According to Jonah, this is what God wants of us.

10. How is my attitude when I serve God? Am I happy to please him, even if I may not like what I am doing? Am I resentful about serving him?



## **Micah Bible Walk**

### **Theme: Condemnation, Judgment, Future Deliverance**

Tod Kennedy

September 2008

#### **Theme**

Micah proclaimed God's plan to bless Israel and all the world through Israel, and thus to fulfill his promises to Israel and the world. Micah's prophecy follows three main topics: 1. God's indictment or condemnation of Judah and Israel, 2. God's judgment that will come because of their sins, and 3. God's future ruler who, in the last days, will forgive and deliver all Israel. The indictment was because of Israel's deliberate apostasy, her idolatry, her social injustice, and her corrupt people and leaders including the prophets and priests. Though Micah was weighed down because of the sin and judgment, he watched expectantly for the LORD and waited for the God of his salvation.

#### **Key Verses**

Micah 1:5, All this is for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?

Micah 4:1, And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it.

Micah 5:2, But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.

#### **Author**

*Micah, (Micah 1:1, 14 and Jeremiah 26:18)*

1. Micah was an unknown prophet from Moresheth. Moresheth was about 20 miles SW of Jerusalem, probably near Gath and in foothills of Judah east of the Philistine plain. Micah 1:14 is the only mention of Moresheth. Micah was God's prophet to Judah during the reigns of Jotham (750-733 BC), Ahaz (735-715 BC), and Hezekiah (729-686 BC) (Micah 1:1). The kings reigned for a total of 64 years. Whether Micah ministered for that long is unknown. Assyria was the dominant foreign power during Micah's ministry. Micah's contemporary prophets were Isaiah to Jerusalem and Hosea to Israel, the northern kingdom.

## History

### *Idolatry, Assyria, and Judah's kings.*

1. Throughout the pre-exile history of Israel, the rejection of God as Lord and the rejection of God's word with the resulting idolatry and spiritual, social, and finally national disintegration characterized God's people. The prophets proclaimed God's anger and judgment because of this. But along with this proclamation they also clearly announced God's unchanging promises and love for Israel with the result that in the future he will forgive Israel and restore her to her land and her blessings.
2. Assyria was a power under King Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 745-727 BC), also known as Pul. At this time God's prophets' ministries were under the shadow of Assyrian domination. About 740 BC Judah, Israel, and Aramaea formed a coalition to resist Assyria. This coalition failed. In 734 BC Israel (Pekah) and Syria (Rezin) fought against Judah in order to force Judah, ruled by Ahaz, into another coalition against Assyria. Ahaz refused. Instead, Ahaz went to Assyria for help. This was the background for Isaiah 7-9. Assyria defeated both Israel and Syria. Micah names three kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Along with the specter of Assyria hanging over them, each king had to deal with rampant idolatry.
3. Jotham (r. [750] 740-731 BC) was the eleventh king of Judah and son of Uzziah (2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 27). He was co-regent with his father and then king. He was a good king, but was not able to root out the idolatry of the people. Isaiah and Micah were prophets during his time.
4. Ahaz (r. [735] 731-715 BC) was the twelfth king of Judah, and when besieged by Israel and Syria he asked and received help from Assyria, to whom he became a vassal. Ahab openly brought idolatry into Jerusalem (2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 28; Isaiah 7). He was an evil king.
5. Hezekiah (r. [729] 715-686 BC) was the son of Ahaz and a godly and reforming king. Hezekiah became king of Judah in 715 BC. Though he was anti-Assyrian, he did not revolt against Assyria until later and Judah was spared destruction. Later, when Sennacherib (r. 705-681 BC) came to power in Assyria in 705 BC, Hezekiah revolted against him. Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701 BC (2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36-37). Hezekiah built the famous water tunnel and reservoir that preserved water for Jerusalem when she was under siege. Soon Hezekiah became sick and God healed him and added 15 years to his life. Soon after, he foolishly showed his wealth to Babylon's king Merodach Baladan. (2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-37).
6. Hoshea (r. 732-722 BC), the last king of the northern kingdom, Israel, is not mentioned by Micah. He paid a heavy tribute to Assyria and was destroyed. But in about 724 BC he revolted against Assyria. Assyria, under Sargon II (r. 721-705 BC), then defeated and exiled Israel in 721 BC. The people were uprooted and moved to various parts of the Assyrian empire. This massive defeat and destruction would be repeated by Babylon against Judah about 135 years later (2 Kings 17).

## Key People and Places

*The people are noted in points 3 and 4 above. The cities mentioned here are those which will come under the coming attack by the Assyrians.*

1. Micah the prophet (Micah 1:1)
2. Samaria (Micah 1:1) was the capital of the northern kingdom. It was located in central Palestine, 42 miles north of Jerusalem and 25 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea. King Omri (r. 885-874) built Samaria and named it for Shemer who had owned the land (1 Kings 16:21-28). Omri, and evil and wicked king, was the father of King Ahab (husband of Jezebel).

3. Jerusalem (Micah 1:1). Jerusalem was an old city 14 miles west of the Dead Sea and 37 miles east of the Mediterranean. It was on a rocky plateau 2550 feet above sea level. Jerusalem was founded by the Amorites and Hittites (Ezekiel 16:3, 45). Melchizedek, the king priest in Abraham's day was a king of ancient Jerusalem (Genesis 14:18). Jerusalem was a Canaanite city at the time of Joshua's conquest (Joshua 10:1-5). David captured the city from the Jebusites and made it his religious and political capital of Israel (1 Chronicles 11:4 and 2 Samuel 5:7). David built his headquarters on Mount Zion where the Jebusites had a fort. Because the city was in central Israel, its location helped to unify the people. The geography of the city also made it easily defended. The name is in an Egyptian writing of the 1800s BC and in the Tell-el Amarna letters (1300s BC).
4. Gath (Micah 1:10) was one of the 5 royal cities of the Philistines.
5. Beth-le-aphrah (Micah 1:10) was a Philistine city.
6. Shaphir (Micah 1:11) is a city probably in Judah or Philistia.
7. Zaanen (Micah 1:11) was in the lowland plain of western Judah.
8. Bethzeel (Micah 1:11) was probably a town in southern Judah.
9. Maroth (Micah 1:12) was in the Philistine plain.
10. Lachish (Micah 1:13) was a famous city 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem and 15 miles west of Hebron. It was a royal Canaanite city. Joshua captured this city on the day he fought against the five Amorite kings who had attacked Gibeon. It was during this battle that God caused the sun and moon to "stand still" (Joshua 10). The Lachish Letters are notes written about Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Lachish and Jerusalem in 586 BC.
11. Moresheth-gath (Micah 1:14) was in the Judean lowlands probably near Gath.
12. Achzib (Micah 1:14) was the name of two towns, one in Galilee and one in Judah.
13. Mareshah (Micah 1:15) was a fortified city in the Judean lowlands.
14. Adullam (Micah 1:15) was a city in the lowland Judah. It was southwest of Jerusalem and between Lachish and Hebron.

### **Key Words and Phrases**

1. Lot (Micah 1:7)
2. Overview Outline
3. Condemnation and judgment, Micah 1-3
4. Coming kingdom and king, Micah 4-5
5. LORD asks and Israel answers, Micah 6-7

### **Chapter Titles**

1. Micah 1, The Lord is coming to judge
2. Micah 2, Sins are many and varied
3. Micah 3, Condemnation of rulers, prophets, priests
4. Micah 4, The LORD will reign in the last days
5. Micah 5, Ruler from Bethlehem
6. Micah 6, The LORD's case against Israel
7. Micah 7, Micah will watch and wait

### **Trace the Theme of Micah**

Micah proclaimed God's plan to bless Israel and all the world through Israel, and thus to fulfill his promises to Israel and the world. Micah's prophecy follows three main topics: 1. God's indictment or condemnation of Judah and Israel, chapter 1 (e.g. Micah 1:2; 6:2), 2. God's judgment that was coming because of her sins, chapters 2-3, 6 and 7 (e.g. Micah 2:1-2; 3:1, 5,

9, 11; 6:10-12; 7:2-6), and 3. God's future ruler who, in the last days, will forgive and deliver her, chapters 4, 5, 7 (e.g. Micah 4:1-7; 5:2, 4:7-9; 7:7, 11, 18). The indictment was because of her deliberate apostasy, her idolatry, her social injustice, and her corrupt people and leaders including the prophets and priests. Though Micah was weighed down because of the sin and judgment, he watched expectantly for the LORD and waited for the God of his salvation.

### **Key Verses that trace the theme of Micah**

1. Micah 1:2, Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, And let the Lord God be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple.
2. Micah 1:3, For behold, the Lord is coming forth from His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.
3. Micah 1:5, All this is for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?
4. Micah 2:1, Woe to those who scheme iniquity, Who work out evil on their beds! When morning comes, they do it, For it is in the power of their hands.
5. Micah 3:2 (NASB95)  
2 "You who hate good and love evil, Who tear off their skin from them And their flesh from their bones.
6. Micah 3:5, Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry, "Peace," But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war.
7. Micah 4:1, And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it.
8. Micah 4:7, "I will make the lame a remnant And the outcasts a strong nation, And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on and forever.
9. Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."
10. Micah 5:4, And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great To the ends of the earth.
11. Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?
12. Micah 7:18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.
13. Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.<sup>20</sup> You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old.

### **Key Doctrines in Micah**

1. Rejection of God and God's word—spiritual apostasy (Micah 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)
2. Spiritual and national leadership (Micah 3, 4)
3. Collapse of culture and society including family and business (Micah 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)
4. The Messiah—his birth, deliverance of his people, and his rule (Micah 4, 5, 7)
5. Walk through Israel's history ( Micah 6:4-5).

6. Social sins such as violence, lying, deceit (Micah 2, 3, 6)
7. Leadership failure (Micah 3, 7)

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. What kind of a leader am I—at home, family, job, church, country?
2. What are my cultural values? Sanctity of life, honesty, work ethic, help my neighbor, God in life and culture, personal freedom and responsibility, marriage and family, one's nation or the global nation, patriotism, national defense, producer or simply a consumer—do I add to the society or simply take, and others?
3. Do I willingly sin and then excuse myself like the people of Micah's time?
4. Do I listen to God speak in his word?
5. Do I pay attention to God's communicators of his word today?
6. What is my attitude to Israel—past, present, and future?
7. Who is my God? Is he a god of my own making or is he the biblical God?

## **Nahum Bible Walk**

### **Theme: God Will Judge and Destroy Nineveh**

Tod Kennedy

November 2008

#### **Theme**

God Will Judge and Destroy Nineveh. This destruction will come because of Assyria's rejection of God and God's word and because of Assyria's treatment of Israel. This has always been the pattern of history—God judges those nations that curse Israel. Kings, dictators, and nations have relentlessly tried to defeat and control or wipe out Israel. They have never completely succeeded. We can trace the attempts from Satan, the Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Islamic peoples, Nazi Germany, Russia and the Soviet Union, modern so-called Palestinians, Iraq, Iran, and .... God will not allow the complete destruction. Those who attempt it always lose.

#### **Key Verses**

Nahum 1:1, and 3:5-7 and compare Jeremiah 50:17-18.

Nahum 1:1, The oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

Nahum 3:5-7, "Behold, I am against you," declares the Lord of hosts; "And I will lift up your skirts over your face, And show to the nations your nakedness And to the kingdoms your disgrace. <sup>6</sup> "I will throw filth on you And make you vile, And set you up as a spectacle. <sup>7</sup> "And it will come about that all who see you Will shrink from you and say, 'Nineveh is devastated! Who will grieve for her?' Where will I seek comforters for you?"

#### **Author**

Nahum. He is from Elkosh. The site of this village is unknown, though the most likely place is in Galilee or Judah. Nothing else is known of Nahum. Depending on Nahum's dates, the kings of Judah who reigned during Nahum's time were Manasseh (686-642 BC), Amon (642-640 BC), and Josiah (640-609 BC).

#### **History**

1. Summary of Nineveh and Assyria. By the time of Nahum Assyria had already defeated and exiled Israel (722) and was a continuing threat to Judah. After Jonah's ministry to Nineveh, Nineveh regained some of its stability and power, but Assyria failed to pass on God's message that Jonah delivered. She continued to harass Judah. Jeremiah said that God would punish Babylon as he had punished Assyria because of their treatment of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 50:17-20). Nahum predicted that God would destroy Nineveh. This occurred in 612 BC. The Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar finished off Assyria at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC.
2. Assyrian kings from Jonah (around 760 BC) to the fall of Nineveh.
3. Assur-dan III 773-755 BC.
4. Assur-nirari V 755-744 BC.
5. Tiglath-pileser III 744-727 BC.
6. Shalmaneser V 726-722 BC.
7. Sargon 722-705 BC.
8. Sennacherib 705-681 BC.

9. Esarhaddon 681-669 BC.
10. Assurbanipal from Nineveh 69-626 or 633 BC. There was civil war in Assyria, 652-648 BC with Assurbanipal the victor.
11. Shamash-shum-ukin from Babylon 669-?
12. Ashur-etil-elani 626-621 or 619 BC.
13. Sin-shum-lishir a few months around 619.
14. Sin-shar-ishkun 619?-612 BC.
15. Ashur-uballit reigned from Harran 612-05 BC.
16. Nineveh was founded by Nimrod, a descendent of Ham (Genesis 10:11). It was a large and almost impregnable city. It sat on the eastern bank of the Tigris River opposite modern Mosul. The Tigris was the west and south boundary. A wall eight miles long was the east and north boundary. In Sennacherib's day (r. 705-681 BC) the walls around the city were 40-50 feet high and extended for two and one half miles along the Tigris River and eight miles around the inner city. There were 15 city gates.
17. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* says, "The remains of Nineveh are a silent witness to the glory of Assyria under Sennacherib and his successors Esarhaddon (681-669 BC and Ashurbanipal (669-626 BC). The Kuyunjik Mound yielded not only the vast palace of Sennacherib but also the royal residence and famous library of Ashurbanipal in which were housed 22,000 inscribed clay tablets. These are important for their accounts of the creation and Flood and because they furnish scholars with invaluable background material for OT studies."
18. Nineveh is the location for Old Testament books Jonah and Nahum. The events are about 140 years apart. Jonah shows God's grace to those who obey his call to repentance. Nahum shows God's judgment on those who turn away from God's grace after having experienced it.
19. Jonah went to Nineveh around 750 BC. The prophet preached God's message to the people of Nineveh and they believed God. About 100 years later Nahum predicted the destruction of Nineveh because the Ninevites turned back to their sinful ways after having experience God's grace 100 years ago. The destruction of Nineveh predicted by Nahum about 650 BC took place in 612 BC.
20. Assyria was a power under King Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 745-727 BC), also known as Pul. At this time God's prophets' ministries were under the shadow of Assyrian domination. About 740 BC Judah, Israel, and Aramaea formed a coalition to resist Assyria. This coalition failed. In 734 BC Israel (Pekah) and Syria (Rezin) fought against Judah in order to force Judah, ruled by Ahaz, into another coalition against Assyria. Ahaz refused. Instead, Ahaz went to Assyria for help. This was the background for Isaiah 7-9. Assyria defeated both Israel and Syria. Micah names three kings of Judah (Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah) who had the specter of Assyria hanging over them.
21. Esarhaddon ruled Assyria from 681-669 BC. When he died his two sons took the rule. Shamash-shum-ukin ruled from Babylon and Assurbanipal ruled from Nineveh. In 652 civil war erupted which lasted four years. Assurbanipal won, but this put an end to Assyrian greatness. The Pax Assyrica (721-650) was broken.
22. Assurbanipal had a successful reign. He had peace and order within his empire and with other regions—Canaan, Syria, and Phoenicia. He also had favorable relationships with Lydia, Babylonia, and Sythia.
23. In the last part of Assurbanipal's reign he had to fight wars to maintain his empire. Cambridge Ancient History Vol 3, page 127, "and then suddenly, we know not how, both

- king and kingdom fell on evil days. In a striking passage Ashurbanipal speaks of his last unhappy years." He died in 626 BC. Disorder and defeat would now plague the empire.
24. By 620 BC, Nabopolassar, the new king of Babylon (r 626-605) and Cyaxares of Media allied against Assyria.
  25. In 614 BC, Cyaxares was operating in the Nineveh area. Nabopolassar soon joined him. Then in 612 the Sythians, the Medes under Cyaxares, and the Babylonians under Nabopolassar assaulted Nineveh. According to CAH Volume 3, page 129, "The brief words of the Babylonian Chronicle, 'a great havoc of the people and the nobles took place...they carried off the booty of the city, a quantity beyond reckoning, they turned the city into ruined mounds,' are the counterpart of the picturesque description of Assyria's downfall by the Israelite prophet Nahum."
  26. From May to July there were three unsuccessful sieges, but the city finally fell in August of 612 BC.
  27. A remnant escaped from Nineveh. They went 100 miles west to Harran. Ashur-uballit assumed the throne from there.
  28. In 610 the same coalition went against Harran. Ashur-uballit left the city and withdrew to the west. Now only Egypt remained loyal to Assyria, though Egypt had broken away years before.
  29. In 609 BC the Egyptian king, Necho, proceeded to move up through Palestine to aid the Assyrians. He brushed aside Josiah, King of Judah, and joined the Assyrians. The Egyptians moved east to Carchemish on the Euphrates River. For the next four years Egypt attempted to take Harran without success.
  30. By 605 Nebuchadnezzar had taken over from his father Nabopolassar. He moved north along the Euphrates and defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish. This ended both the Assyrian empire and the Egyptian domination of Canaan.
  31. The Egyptians fled southwest through Canaan with Nebuchadnezzar not far behind. While Nebuchadnezzar was in Canaan he heard of the death of his father, Nabopolassar, so returned to Babylon to take the crown. It was at this time that Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon.

### Key People and Places

1. Nineveh (Nahum 1:1; 2:8), the leading city and capital of Assyria.
2. Key Words and Phrases.
3. Oracle נִשְׁמָה (Nahum 1:1), was a threatening message from God about a person or nation.
4. Overview Outline is the same as the chapter titles.

### Chapter Titles

1. Nahum 1, Sentence of Nineveh's destruction
2. Nahum 2, Description of Nineveh's destruction
3. Nahum 3, Explanation of Nineveh's destruction

### Trace the Theme of Nahum

*God Will Judge and Destroy Nineveh. This destruction will come because of Assyria's rejection of God and God's word and because of Assyria's treatment of Israel.*

1. Chapter one begins with the oracle or sentence against Nineveh. The basis for God's judgment is the character of God. He is holy, just, omnipotent, sovereign, good, and dependable. For those who trust and obey him, he is a stronghold in time of danger, but Nineveh has become his enemy and God will destroy her (Nahum 1:1-8). Nineveh has



devised against the Lord and plotted evil against the Lord. He will prepare Nineveh's grave (Nahum 1:9-14). The chapter ends with a message of comfort to Judah who was struggling under Assyrian domination (Nahum 1:15).

2. Chapter 2 describes the destruction. The Lord will bring the Medes and Babylonians against Nineveh (Nahum 2:1). While announcing this judgment, Nahum also says that the LORD will restore the splendor of Israel in a future time. From other Scripture we learn that this is the time of Messiah's reign (Nahum 2:2). In verses 3-10 the destruction is described. The coming destroyers of Nineveh are unstoppable. The people of Nineveh flee. Their faces have grown pale (Nahum 2:3-10). Nahum questions where has Nineveh "the den of lions" gone. The LORD of hosts is against Nineveh (Nahum 2:11-13).
3. Chapter 3 starts with another woe to Nineveh for her treatment of other people and nations. Pillage, prey, whips, swords, corpses, dead bodies, selling nations—all are part of the reason for the LORD's judgment (Nahum 3:1-4). The LORD will make a spectacle of her and disgrace her (Nahum 3:5-7). No one will help her (Nahum 3:8-10). There is no place to hide; the city walls will not protect her; fire will destroy Nineveh; her military will be like locusts and grasshoppers on a stone wall in the cold—not moving (Nahum 3:11-17). Nineveh's leadership will fail and the people will scatter. There is no help. Everyone who hears of her destruction will be overjoyed (Nahum 3:18-19).

### **Key Doctrines in Nahum**

1. Nahum's oracle begins with God's character and attributes. God is always the basis for what ultimately happens in history (Nahum 1:2-8).
2. God will judge nations who curse Israel (See Genesis 12:3 and Jeremiah 50:17-20). Nineveh was a mighty oppressor of Israel and God will judge her (Nahum 1:1-2, 9, 11, 2:2, 8-10, 13, 3:1, 5, 7, 11-19). Nations curse Israel in many ways—by attacking her, by opposing her biblical position, by taking her land, and by persecuting her people.
3. God is a refuge and is faithful to those who do trust him and obey him (Nahum 1:7).
4. God has chosen Israel for his service and he will ultimately protect and bless her (Nahum 1:15-2:2).

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. Be very careful in our treatment of Israel.
2. God justly judges Gentile nations who "curse" Israel. Our country had better not do that.
3. God is a strong refuge—a comforter and protector of people and nations who trust him and obey him. If we in our country want God's protection we must trust him and obey him.
4. God gives nations time to repent or mend their ways toward him and toward Israel. The United States must be very careful about our attitude and treatment of Israel.

## **Habakkuk Bible Walk**

### **Theme: God will judge Judah and Babylon**

Tod Kennedy

January, 2008

#### **Theme**

God will judge Judah and Babylon

#### **Key Verses**

Habakkuk 1:6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people  
Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.

Habakkuk 2:4, Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous  
will live by his faith.

Habakkuk 3:18, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.

#### **Author and Date of Writing**

1. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:1; 3:1). He identifies himself as a prophet. We know nothing else about him except that he lived after the Chaldeans became a power (Habakkuk 1:6) and just before Nebuchadnezzar defeated Judah.
2. Habakkuk likely wrote his prophecy after Josiah died in 609 BC and before Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in 605 BC.

#### **History**

Habakkuk served as God's prophet during the last days of Judah, prior to when Babylon defeated and destroyed Judah. Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, was a Chaldean governor. Recall that Nebuchadnezzar was the king who defeated, destroyed, and exiled Judah between 605 and 586 BC. God revealed to Habakkuk that He would bring these Babylonians upon Judah as divine punishment for her idolatry, sin, and rebellion against Him. For the history of events around this time see the Jeremiah notes.

#### **Key People and Places**

1. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:1; 3:1), God's prophet and human author of this prophecy.
2. Chaldeans (Habakkuk 1:6, 15; 83 times in the NASB) were one of the people who formed the Babylonian empire under Nabopolassar, a Chaldean governor and the father of Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldean land was at the northwest end of the Persian Gulf. Over the years Chaldea became known as Babylonia, since some of her kings were Chaldean. Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11:28).
3. Righteous 6662 צַדִּיק tsaddiyq (Habakkuk 2:4), means righteous, just, upright, one living by the righteous standard. Here it speaks of experiential or daily life righteousness, one who follows God's word. Note the contrast with the "proud one" whose "soul is not right within him."
4. Faith 530 אֱמוּנָה e'munah (Habakkuk 2:4) is in this prophecy the means by which a righteous person lives his life before God and people. In Habakkuk the reference is to daily

living during life in time, not faith for eternal salvation. The OT righteous person lived righteously by faith in God and God's revelation. This verse is referred to in Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

5. Woe 1945 **הוי** hoy (Habakkuk 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19), is an interjection that expresses pain, dissatisfaction, mourning, and warning.
6. LORD **3068 יהוה, יהוה** Yahweh or Jehovah. This is God's personal name. In the English text it is written in all capital letters.

### Overview Outline

1. Habakkuk asks two questions and God answers (Habakkuk 1-2).
2. Habakkuk asks how long the LORD will allow Judah's sin (Habakkuk 1.1-1.4).
3. The LORD answers that He is raising the Chaldeans to judge Judah (Habakkuk 1:5-11).
4. Habakkuk asks how the LORD use the more wicked Chaldeans to judge Judah (Habakkuk 1:12-2:1).
5. The LORD answers with five woes against the Chaldeans (Habakkuk 2:2-20).
6. Habakkuk praises God with a psalm (Habakkuk 3).

### Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1, Habakkuk's two questions and the LORD'S first answer.
2. Chapter 2, The LORD'S second answer.
3. Chapter 3, Habakkuk's praise psalm.

### Trace the Theme

1. Chapter 1, Habakkuk's two questions and the LORD'S first answer. Habakkuk begins by asking the LORD how long he must cry out for justice in Judah. They are people characterized by violence iniquity, wickedness, destruction, strife, contention, and perversion of justice (Habakkuk 1:1-4). The LORD answered that he will bring the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to conquer and destroy Judah (Habakkuk 1:6). The Chaldeans are fierce, dreaded, violent, mockers of other kings and their defenses, obsessed with their own power, and they will sweep through Judah. But the LORD will hold the Chaldeans guilty (Habakkuk 1:7-11). Habakkuk then asks the LORD why he has appointed such wicked people, the sinful Chaldeans, to judge Judah who is more righteous than they. The Chaldeans will treat the Judeans like fish caught in a net (Habakkuk 1:12-17).
2. Chapter 2, The LORD'S second answer. After Habakkuk finished his condemnation of Babylon, he stationed himself and waited for the LORD's answer (Habakkuk 2:1). When the answer came, Habakkuk was to record it so that people can read the message and obey it—escape the coming danger. The vision is true and will happen in God's time (Habakkuk 2:2-3). The Babylonians are proud and controlled by sin, but the righteous Hebrew—he follows God's word—is one who will live by faith in the LORD and be faithful to the LORD (Habakkuk 2:4). The word translated "faith," the Hebrew word **אֱמוּנָה** e'munah (Habakkuk 2:4), is in this prophecy the means by which a righteous person lives his life before God and people. In Habakkuk the reference is to daily living during life in time, not faith for eternal salvation. The Old Testament righteous person lived righteously by faith in God and God's revelation. This verse is referred to in Romans 1:17 where eternal salvation faith and Christian life faith are in view, in Galatians 3:11 where eternal salvation faith is in view, and in Hebrews 10:38 where Christian life faith is in view. In 2:5-19 the LORD gives 5 woes against the Chaldeans (Habakkuk 2:6, 9, 12, 15, and 19). Woe 1 (Habakkuk 2:5-8), they are proud people who charge unjust interest rates and the conquered peoples will taunt the

Chaldeans and turn against them. Woe 2 (Habakkuk 2:6-8), their evil gains in order to maintain security will accuse them (Habakkuk 2:9-11). Woe 3 (Habakkuk 2:12-14), the Chaldeans who build cities and towns on bloodshed and violence are simply building for a fire to destroy what they do, and their work will come to nothing while the knowledge of the glory of the LORD will eventually spread worldwide and last forever (Habakkuk 2:12-14). Woe 4 (Habakkuk 2:15-17), the LORD will turn the disgrace, devastation, bloodshed, and violence done to others by the Chaldeans back upon themselves. Woe 5 (Habakkuk 2:18-19), their idols will not be able to help them. The Chaldean's idols are man made; there is no life in idols. Idols are nothing—speechless, wood, mute stone, with gold and silver but still nothing. In contrast to the Chaldean idols the LORD lives in his holy temple—heaven. All the earth—the creation—should be silent in reverence before him because he is alive and he is the creator and only God.

3. Chapter 3, Habakkuk's praise psalm. The judgment theme continues. In view of coming judgment Habakkuk penned a praise psalm that he meant the Hebrew people to sing as thankful praise to the LORD. The musical directions are given at the end of the psalm. He begins with biblical history in mind. He pleads that the LORD will 1. revive his work of old for Israel's blessing, 2. make his work known to Israel, and 3. remember mercy even though he will judge (Habakkuk 3:2). Habakkuk first recalls God's activity during the Exodus. Teman is south Edom. Mount Paran is in central Sinai. God guided and showed mercy to his people Israel (Habakkuk 3:3). Habakkuk continued to praise God's glory and his works that were done during the Exodus. The LORD dominated all nations—in fact, he dominated the entire earth. Age and time did not matter to God (Habakkuk 3:4-7). The LORD was not angry at nature. Nature was a tool to show his power and glory (Habakkuk 3:8-12). What the LORD did in the Exodus he did for his people Israel (Habakkuk 3:13-15). Habakkuk continues his praise psalm as he thinks about the coming judgment brought about by Israel's glorious and powerful and loyal God. He knows that he must wait for the judgment, but because of the history of God's deliverances and God's nature Habakkuk rests and waits upon the LORD to judge justly and righteously (Habakkuk 3:16). Habakkuk concludes on a very high and applicable note (Habakkuk 3:17-19). He says "though" (Habakkuk 3:17)... "yet" (Habakkuk 3:18). Though national failure which will include crop failure, livestock failure, and business failure (Habakkuk 3:17), yet he will exult and rejoice in the God of his salvation (Habakkuk 3:18). Habakkuk knows the Lord God is his strength and his stability (like hinds feet and high places). Habakkuk's knowledge of biblical history and Israel's God produces, in him, great faith in God and God's plan no matter how bad the immediate future will be (Habakkuk 3:19).

### **Key Doctrinal Principles Illustrated in Habakkuk**

1. Divine judgment of nations.
2. Sin and evil.
3. Idolatry.
4. God's nature and attributes.
5. The prophet's mission.
6. Living by faith.
7. The place of psalms in spiritual life.
8. Worship.
9. Mental attitude in spite of suffering.
10. Spiritual dynamics in national failure.

## Lessons for Us Today

1. God's timing. God does things according to his own timing. He chose the time and the way to judge Judah and Babylon (Habakkuk 1:5, 6, 12) and works in our lives according to his timing (Psalm 31:14-15).
2. God judges sin. God will not allow national sin or personal sin to continue indefinitely. Though we may think sin wins, sin always loses. The morality of a nation does matter, especially a nation's treatment of Israel. This was demonstrated many time—Cain, Noah's day, Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel, Judah, Assyria, Babylon, and Syrians under Antiochus (Habakkuk 2:2-20; Genesis 12:1-3). In modern times God has judged the communist empire and Nazi Germany. The USA may be under God's judgment now. God also judges believers (Acts 5:1-11; Hebrews 12:4-11).
3. National sins. God judged Babylon for specific national sins. Among those sins are pride, insatiable aggression, taking slaves, unjust economic policies, the devaluing of human life, violence and bloodshed, looting other nations, immorality, disrespectful of others, and idolatry. We in the USA need to guard ourselves against these sins.
4. Faithful living in crisis. What principle should God's people live by during any historical crisis? We are to live by the principle of faith—faithfully adhering to God and God's word (Habakkuk 2:4; see 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:8; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 10:38).
5. Actions to take in national crisis. What specific actions should we take in a national crisis: 1. Recall God's revelation—Bible doctrine (Habakkuk 3:2). 2. Pray for God to revive his work (Habakkuk 3:2). 3. Pray for mercy in the midst of God's wrath (Habakkuk 3:2). 4. Recall God's work for us in history past (Habakkuk 3:3-16). 5. Wait in faith and faithfulness for God's deliverance (Habakkuk 3:16). 6. Rejoice in the Lord no matter how bad things are because he is our salvation and strength (Habakkuk 3:18-19; see Lamentations 3:19-26 and Hebrews 10:19-25).
6. Spiritual joy. We will experience genuine spiritual and national rejoicing only in relationship and fellowship with the Lord God (Habakkuk 3:18-19; see Psalm 70; see Philippians 3:1 and 4:4).

## **Zephaniah Bible Walk**

### **Theme: Judgment, Restoration, and the Day of the LORD**

Tod Kennedy

January, 2009

#### **Theme**

Judgment, restoration, and the Day of the LORD. The Lord told Judah through Zephaniah that he would soon dramatically judge the earth. This judgment would come soon upon Judah, Jerusalem, and Gentile nations. An even greater judgment would come in the future against all nations of the world. Following that future or prophetic great day of the LORD judgment, the Lord will gather Israel, rule as her king, bless her, and restore her fortunes.

#### **Key Verses**

Zephaniah 1:2. "I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth," declares the Lord.

Zephaniah 1:14-15. Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. <sup>15</sup> A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness.

Zephaniah 2:3. Seek the Lord, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the Lord's anger.

Zephaniah 3:20. "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the Lord.

#### **Author**

Zephaniah. Zephaniah served as God's prophet during the reign of Josiah (r. 640-609 BC). The prophet traces his lineage to King Hezekiah (r. 715-686 BC). Both Hezekiah and Josiah were godly kings of Judah, and both were reformers whose reform did not last after they died. Zephaniah wrote his prophecy sometime during Josiah's reign but before the destruction of

Nineveh in 612 BC. According to Zephaniah 2:13, the destruction of Nineveh was still future. The prophet was in Judah's line and likely had access to the court.

### **History**

The events happened in the last days of Judah, prior to when Babylon defeated and destroyed Judah. See the Jeremiah notes for the history of events around this time.

### **Key People**

Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1) and the future God King of Israel, the LORD, Messiah (Zephaniah 3:15).

## Key Words and Phrases

*Words and phrases that we read but often do not pay attention to. Only a few have been selected.*

1. Baal (Zephaniah 1:5) is the Canaanite god most mentioned in the Amarna letters found at Ugarit. The word means lord or master. The name could be a title for a person who owned something or any pagan god. The name came to be associated with the god of fertility and weather. In some Canaanite writings he was known as Hadad. The name Baal also was combined with other names such as Baal-Peor (Deuteronomy 4:3) and Baal-Zebub (2 Kings 1:2-3). Baal worship infiltrated Israel and Judah and was prevalent during Solomon's reign.
2. Milcom was the Ammonite god Molech (2 Kings 23:13). Solomon brought Milcom worship to Israel (1 Kings 11:5, 33). Josiah tore down his altars (2 Kings 23:13).
3. Fish gate (Zephaniah 1:10) is one of many gates into Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 33:14; Nehemiah 3:3; 12:39; Zephaniah 1:10). Gates or near the gates were places for entrance and exit, for public reading, for punishment of criminals, for buying and selling, and for gathering news, among other things. The fish gate probably got its name because fish were brought into the city through that gate or because a fish market was nearby. It likely was on the north wall of the city. Nebuchadnezzar probably entered Jerusalem through this gate. Gates were normal in cities of the ancient world.
4. The Second Quarter (Zephaniah 1:10) was a district northwest of the temple (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles. 34:22; Nehemiah. 11:9).
5. Mortar (Zephaniah 1:11) was apparently a land depression in or near Jerusalem where business was carried out. Zephaniah prophesied that business would fail.
6. Canaan (Zephaniah 1:11). He was the grandson of Noah and fourth son of Ham. His people spread out into several tribes and before 2000 BC moved into and populated the land that God promised Abraham and his descendents. These people became Canaanites, a very pagan people. They became dominant between 2100 BC and 1550 BC. The land stretched from the Jordan to the Mediterranean and from the Sinai Peninsula to Philistia. The area was remarkable for its farmlands and trade routes.
7. Day of the Lord is used seven times in six verses in Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 14, 18; 2:2, 3). The day of the Lord is a phrase used by God's prophets in the Old Testament to identify an immediate or close in time (historic) judgment by God or a future (prophetic) judgment by God. The context of each Bible passage determines whether the day of the Lord is historical or prophetic. The day of the Lord is also used in the New Testament for the future time of judgment. For example, Acts 2:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, and 2 Peter 3:10. The tribulation period will begin this future day of judgment.
  - a. Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near, For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests.
  - b. Zephaniah 1:8 "Then it will come about on the day of the Lord's sacrifice That I will punish the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.
  - c. Zephaniah 1:14 Near is the great day of the Lord, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.
  - d. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the Lord's wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.



- e. Zephaniah 2:2 Before the decree takes effect— The day passes like the chaff— Before the burning anger of the Lord comes upon you, Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you.
- f. Zephaniah 2:3 Seek the Lord, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the Lord's anger.

### Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1, Day of the LORD judgment, future and near.
2. Chapter 2, Seek the LORD during judgment.
3. Chapter 3, Day of the LORD judgment, near and future, then restoration.

### Trace the Theme

The day of the LORD judgment is both historic, that is near to the time of the prophet, and prophetic or in the distant future. The historic day of the LORD judgments are God's judgment against sinful Israel and nations of the world, and these occurred near in time to the prophet's message. They are small previews of the prophetic day of the LORD judgment which will begin in the future tribulation period. The historic day of the LORD judgments have occurred in past history.

1. Zephaniah 1. Chapter 1 introduces what is apparently a future world wide judgment, "all from the face of the earth" (Zephaniah 1:2-3). Then the prophet explains that the judgment will begin with the soon judgment by Babylon against Judah, Jerusalem, idols, idolatrous priests, idol worshippers, and those who have turned away from the Lord (Zephaniah 1:4-13). This great day of the Lord is near and terrible. It will eventually in the distant future engulf all the inhabitants of the earth (Zephaniah 1:18). One exegetical question is whether earth in verses 2, 3, and 18 might just refer to the known at that time middle east. The context and wording seem to make this a world wide judgment that will occur in the future time known as the tribulation—that time of worldwide judgment on the earth just before Jesus returns at his second coming.
2. Zephaniah 2. Chapter 2 continues the warning about judgment against the nations all around Judah, but begins with a call to the Hebrew people for repentance. For those who repent there is hope that the Lord will protect them from judgment (Zephaniah 2:1-5). This soon to come historic day of the Lord judgment against the surrounding nations include the Philistines (Zephaniah 2:5), (Gaza verse 4, Ashdod verse 4, Ekron verse 4) to the west (Zephaniah 2:4-7), Moab and Ammon to the east (Zephaniah 2:8-11), Ethiopia to the south (Zephaniah 2:12), and Assyria (Nineveh, Zephaniah 2:13) to the north (Zephaniah 2:13-15).
3. Zephaniah 3. Chapter 3 begins with a woe to Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:-7). Jerusalem is put for the Hebrew people. They are rebellious, defiled, and tyrannical. They refuse to listen to the Lord or trust him. The princes, judges, prophets, and priests are treacherous (Zephaniah 3:2-4). Zephaniah then pronounces the righteousness and justice of the LORD (Zephaniah 3:5). The purpose of the LORD's judgment was to recall his people (Zephaniah 3:6), but they were eager to corrupt (Zephaniah 3:7). Beginning with verse 8 the LORD expands his judgment to the distant future. This points to the prophetic day of the LORD. The LORD will gather nations, assemble kingdoms, and pour out his indignations and burning anger on all the earth (Zephaniah 3:8). People will come to know God and therefore worship him (Zephaniah 3:9-10). Their attitudes and purposes will have changed from rebellion to humility and trust in the name of the LORD (Zephaniah 3:11-12). The remnant of Israel will rejoice (Zephaniah 3:14). The LORD, the king will have ceased his judgments

and will be in their midst (Zephaniah 3:15-17). The LORD will gather Israel, protect her, bless her, and make her famous and praised by the people of the earth. The LORD will restore Israel and her fortunes right before her eyes (Zephaniah 3:18-20). The long awaited kingdom will have begun. Messiah rules the earth. Israel is in her homeland and blessed.

### **Key Doctrines**

1. God will judge the world (Zephaniah 1:2-3).
2. God will judge Judah for idolatry (Zephaniah 1:4-6), for preoccupation with wealth (Zephaniah 1:11, 13, 18), for apathy and pride (Zephaniah 1:12; 3:11), for corrupt princes and judges (Zephaniah 1:8; 3:3), for corrupt prophets (Zephaniah 3:4) and for corrupt priests (Zephaniah 1:4, 9; 3:4).
3. God will judge nations for taunting arrogance against Israel (Zephaniah 2:8, 10, 15), for oppression of Israel (Zephaniah 2:8-11), and for idolatry (Zephaniah 2:11).
4. The Lord's superiority to idols (Zephaniah 2:11).
5. Protection and deliverance of the faithful (Zephaniah 2:3).
6. The righteous remnant (Zephaniah 3:12-13).
7. The future God King will rule Israel (Zephaniah 3:15-17).
8. Future restoration and blessing of Israel (Zephaniah 3:9-20, especially 3:20).
9. Day of the Lord (Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 14, 18; 2:2, 3).
10. Attributes of God (Zephaniah 3:5).

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. Spiritual apathy ruins one's Christian life and can have serious physical, economic, family, and social consequences.
2. Idolatry about details in our lives can bring disaster to believers.
3. Seek the Lord in national crisis. Only he, from the Bible and from fellowship with him, has the answers.
4. The only hope for any of us is Christ returning for the church and then returning to set up his kingdom.
5. Beware of sin in our lives and especially complacent sin. Divine discipline is very real and can be severe.
6. Leaders—national and spiritual—have a great responsibility for those over whom they exercise leadership.

## **Haggai Bible Walk**

### **Theme: Rebuild the Temple**

Tod Kennedy

February, 2009

#### **Theme**

Rebuild the temple. The Lord spoke through Haggai, in 520 BC, to Governor Zerubbabel and high priest Joshua and through them to all the people who had returned from Babylon. The Lord first admonished them for the 16 year lapse in the temple construction and then encouraged the people to resume construction of the temple that the Babylonians had destroyed in 586 BC. The Lord also reminded the people that He would bless them in the future.

1. The Hebrew prophets of the fifth and sixth centuries BC lived in a time of upheaval, threats, and change for the Israeli people. Under God's inspiration they spoke and wrote out the exile background. After all they had been through many wondered if God was really sovereign, and had He renounced the covenants He had made to them, and would He keep the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and the prophets? When the people moved back to the land they questioned many things: would God reestablish Jerusalem as His capital city; would He reinstate a Davidic king on the throne; would He reestablish temple worship in a new temple; what about the priesthood; and would the promises of restoration under Messiah come soon or come at all?
2. The post-exilic prophets addressed these questions and doubts. The answer was short and simple. Yes, God will restore and bless Israel just as the prophets had said, but first the problem of sin—unbelief and disobedience had to be dealt with.

#### **Key Verses**

Haggai 1:4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?"

Haggai 1:14. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.

#### **Author**

1. Haggai the prophet is the author (Haggai 1:1). There are many clear statements that the Lord spoke through him (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Haggai 1:1, 3, 12, 13; 2:1, 10, 13, 14, 20).
2. Haggai prophesied at the same time as Zechariah (Ezra 5:1 and 6:14). Zechariah 1:1 and 1:7 are both dated in the second year of Darius, the year of Haggai's messages.

## History

*Haggai prophesied in 520 BC. See the Bible walk notes for Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel for the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem many years later.*

1. "Darius I Hystaspes, or Darius the Great, king of Persia [522-486 BCE]. Through his father Hystaspes, Darius belonged to the Achaemenid family, as did [Cyrus The Great](#) and his son Cambyses II, but to a different branch of this family. When Cambyses was in Egypt, during the last year of his reign, a certain Gaumata usurped the throne by pretending to be Bardiya, Cambyses' brother, who had been assassinated secretly before Cambyses started out for his Egyptian campaign in 525 BCE. When Cambyses learned of this usurpation he immediately set out for Persia, but on the way, while in Syria, he died in July, 522 BCE, as the result of either an accident or suicide, leaving no heir. Darius, a distant cousin of Cambyses, at once set out to gain the throne for himself. With some helpers he slew the [Smerdis/Gaumata](#) or false Bardiya in September, 522 BCE, and assumed the kingship. However, he had to fight against a number of other pretenders and rebels. It took more than a year (522-521 BCE) of hard fighting to put down revolts associated with Bardiya's claim to the throne. Almost every province of the empire was involved in the conflict, including Persia and, most particularly, Media. He finally emerged from the struggle the undisputed ruler of the Persian Empire. The story of his successes was engraved in three scripts and languages (Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite), accompanied by a sculptured relief, into a high rock wall of the Bisitun Mountain, a few miles east of modern Kermanshah." (History of Iran, Achaemenid Empire, <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/achaemenids/achaemenids.php>)
2. Herodotus says that Darius was one of seven conspirators who killed Pseudo-Smerdis. Six of the conspirators had to decide who would be the next king. They agreed that the next morning they would ride their horses to the outskirts of the city at sunrise. The one whose horse neighed first after sunrise would be king. Darius' horse, with some preconditioning by the groom during the night, neighed first and so Darius was the new king. (Herodotus Third Book, chapter 84-87). After he had consolidated his power, he studied law, which was significant for what was to follow. Remember that when Tattenai of Syria interfered with the Jew's rebuilding project, Darius ordered the search for Cyrus' decree. After he read the decree, he ordered Tattenai to stay away from Jerusalem and leave the work on the temple alone. In fact, Darius ordered Tattenai to provide the money and supplies necessary (Ezra 4:5; 4:24; 5:5, 6, 7; 6:1, 12, 13, 14, 15).
3. The following are the Gentile kings who dominated Israel from the time of Cyrus into Ezra and Nehemiah's time. Cyrus was the king who defeated Babylon.
4. Cyrus, 559-530 BC (Isaiah 45:1-5; Ezra 1:1-4, 7, 8; Ezra 3:7; 4:3, 5; 5:13, 14, 17; 6:3, 14). Cyrus, King of Persia and Babylon, decreed in 538 BC that the Jews could return to Judah from exile and rebuild the city and the temple. Cyrus allowed the conquered people to take their gods and return to their homes. Furthermore, he decreed that the Jewish people could return home and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1; Ezra 6:3-5; 2 Chronicles 36:21-23).
5. Cambyses, Cyrus' son, 530-522 BC. He killed his brother Bardiya (Smerdis) in 525 and then led an expedition against the Egyptians. While he was gone, in 522 Gaumata (an imposter

of Bardiya-Smerdis) usurped the Persian throne. When Cambyses heard of the successful plot, returned to Persia but died on the way in Syria in 522 BC.

6. Gaumata or Pseudo Smerdis (who posed as Smerdis, the brother of Cambyses whom Cambyses had killed in 525), ruled 6 months in 522 BC.
7. Darius I, 522-486 BC. He was a distant cousin of Cambyses. He killed Pseudo Smerdis in September of 522 BC and took the throne. See above 4.1.
8. Xerxes, 486-465 BC, Darius' son, and king during Esther's life (Ezra 4.6).
9. Artaxerxes I, 465-423 BC, Xerxes' son and the king under whom Ezra and Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and did their work (Ezra 4:7, 8, 11, 23; 6:14; 7:1, 7, 11, 12, 21; 8:1).
10. Xerxes II, ruled for 45 days in 424 BC and was assassinated.
11. The Jewish people returned to their land in three groups. This was similar to the three groups Babylon exiled (606 BC, 597 BC, and 586 BC).
12. The first group returned to Judah in 536 BC. Zerubbabel (Sheshbazzar) led them. Cyrus was king of Persia. They completed the temple in 515 BC, during the reign of Darius I (Haggai 1-2 and Ezra 1-6).
13. The second group returned in 458 BC. Ezra led them. Artaxerxes I was king of Persia (Ezra 7-10).
14. The third group returned in 444 BC. Nehemiah led them. Artaxerxes I was king of Persia (Nehemiah 1-2).
15. Pagan religious leaders who lived during Haggai's time included Gautama Buddha (about 550-480 BC) in India and Confucius (551-479 BC) in China.

### Key People

1. Haggai the prophet (Haggai 1:1, 3, 12, 13; 2:1, 10, 13, 14, 20).
2. Zerubbabel the governor of Judah (Haggai 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4, 21, 23 and many other Bible books). He was a descendent of David. King Cyrus appointed him governor of the exiles returning to Judah. His Aramaic name in Persia was Sheshbazzar. In 520 BC he and Joshua the high priest resumed construction of the temple. It was completed four years later in 516 BC. Zerubbabel was successful in his job. The Lord will honor him in the future (Haggai 2:23). Zerubbabel was the official representative of David's line and was a fore shadow of the coming Messiah.
3. Joshua the high priest (Haggai 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4). He along with Zerubbabel led the rebuilding of the temple from 520-516 BC. God honored him (Zechariah 6:10-11).

### Words and Phrases

1. Temple (1:8; 2:3, 15, 18). The tabernacle and then Solomon's temple were central to Israel's life. Once the temple was completed by Solomon (1 Kings 6:1, 37, 38), it was the focus of the national and spiritual life of the nation. The offerings and sacrifices, priests, teaching, and praise of God centered in the temple. The temple was the symbol of Israel's priest nation status. God lived and guided Israel through the temple. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple Israel's spiritual and national identity suffered. Governor Zerubbabel and high priest Joshua led the rebuilding of the temple, called the second temple (Ezra 6:3 give initial dimensions). Herod later enlarged this second temple. The second temple was destroyed by Rome in the war of 66-70 AD. A new temple will be built for Christ's millennial reign (Ezekiel 40-48).
2. Date notations in Haggai. Here I am following Charles Dyer and Eugene Merrill of Dallas Theological Seminary in *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*.
3. Haggai 1:1, the first day, sixth month, second year of Darius is August 29, 520 BC.

4. Haggai 1:15, the twenty-fourth day, sixth month, second year of Darius is September 21, 520 BC.
5. Haggai 2:1, the twenty-first day, seventh month, second year of Darius is October 17, 520 BC.
6. Haggai 2:10, the twenty-fourth day, ninth month, second year of Darius is December 18, 520 BC.
7. Haggai 2:20, the twenty-fourth day, ninth month, second year of Darius is December 18, 520 BC, and Haggai delivered a second message on this day.

### **Chapter Titles**

1. Chapter 1, the command and work on the temple.
2. Chapter 2, the glory and blessings of the temple.

### **Trace the Theme**

1. Haggai chapter 1. The Lord delivered His message to Haggai in 520 BC. This message was for Governor Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua, the spiritual and political leaders of the returned exiles (1:1). The Lord admonished the people of Judah for paying more attention to details of life for themselves than to serving the Lord by rebuilding the temple. Because of their wrong priorities God withheld his blessings (1:2-11). Zerubbabel and Joshua obeyed the God's message sent by Haggai. The returned exiles also changed their thinking from self-centeredness to fearing the Lord (1:12). They all began work on the temple 24 days later (1:13-15). This intervening 3 weeks may have been taken up gathering lumber for the work before it could start (1:8). The main lesson for us from this chapter is to put the Lord and His will first. What is most important to God's people, fellowship and service with Him or spending all our time obtaining and using details of life?
2. Haggai chapter 2. About 21 days later the Lord gave a second message to Haggai for Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the returned remnant (2:1-2). The Lord asked if anyone was alive who had seen Solomon's temple which was destroyed 66 years before. He then asked if the present building project seems small in comparison (2:3). Sixteen years earlier, in 536 BC, some had wept because the foundation was smaller than Solomon's temple (Ezra 3:7-13). The Lord goes on and tells them to take courage because "I am with you." By identifying Himself as the Lord of host, God is reminding them that He is the all powerful commander of all the earth (2:4). God long ago promised the Hebrew people that He would go with them (Exodus 33:15) and that is still true, so they are not to fear (5). The Lord then promised them that in the future ("a little while") He will shake up and change the entire earth creation and world of nations in such a way that the nations will bring offerings of their wealth to the future temple, or we could say the temple in the distant future, the millennial temple (2:6-9). The glory of the temple in the future will surpass the glory of Solomon's temple. At that time God will give peace to nations. This verse is a statement of the future millennial earth and temple. About 3 months after the Lord's first message in which He admonished and instructed the Hebrew people (1:1-11) the Lord spoke to Haggai for the third time (2:10). The message was a warning that sin in the people harms the nation, the building of the temple, and cuts off God's blessings. This has characterized the returned exiles since they came back in 536 BC. Haggai 1:3-11 summarized the discipline and lack of God's blessing between the time they returned in 526 and the present time, 520 BC (2:11-19). Haggai concludes with another message on the twenty-fourth day of the second month (2:20-23). The Lord promised that in the future he will overthrow the rulers, the power, and the military of nations worldwide. This correlates with Haggai 2:6-9. At that

time Zerubbabel will be made God's signet ring. A signet ring is the sign of a king's authority (Daniel 6:17), and also a sign that one is God's king (Jeremiah 22:24-25), honored by the Lord for his messiah like leadership and work. Zerubbabel will be resurrected and honored in the Millennial kingdom.

### **Key Doctrines**

1. Political and spiritual leadership were vital to the welfare of Israel.
2. Obedience brought blessing and disobedience brought discipline to Israel under the Old Testament.
3. Sin contaminates whatever it touches, but sanctification is personal and individual and is not passed on through physical contact or ritual.
4. God keeps his promises to Israel. Israel does have the future God has promised to her.
5. The abiding or presence of the Holy Spirit was operative with the believing Hebrew remnant in the Old Testament time. This is different from the Holy Spirit indwelling each church age believer.
6. The Temple of the Lord—Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple, and the millennial temple—were central to Hebrew daily life. The millennial temple will operate during the millennial kingdom.
7. The day of the Lord and the millennial kingdom were future to Haggai's time. They are still future to the church age.
8. God is sovereign over all nations. This is evidenced by his judgment and overthrow of nations that oppose Israel even though the other nations are stronger. His sovereignty will ultimately be demonstrated when he returns to earth at his second coming.

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. What is most important to each of us? Is God, His word, His will, fellowship with Him, and serving Him at the top of our priorities or do we, like the returned exiles, put daily details ahead of the Lord?
2. Do we put off God's will in order to do what we want to do? The returned exiles did and it resulted in discipline, unhappiness, and discontent.
3. Is local church assembly important to us today? The center of a believer's Christian life is not the temple as it was for Israel. Local church assembly provides the environment for believers' spiritual growth, encouragement, and service. The local church should encourage occupation with Christ, intake of God's word, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and strengthening of our faith.
4. What are the moral and cultural values for believers today in our country? What are they for me? Are following biblical values? Biblical morality and culture brings national blessing through the application of the biblical laws of establishment and the biblical laws of civilization. God has not promised to prosper Gentile nations, but those nations who follow biblical principles will experience more freedom, peace, social stability, and prosperity.
5. Do we look forward to Christ returning for the church and then returning to set up the millennial kingdom? In that kingdom there will be godly leadership, proper spiritual life, and social stability.
6. Is the Lord strengthening and guiding our service for Him? When we are doing His will in His way, this is happening.
7. When we serve God are we living in fellowship with Him or are we carrying sin with us? Sin contaminates our service and only God's power sanctifies our service.

## **Zechariah Bible Walk**

**Theme: Return to the Lord, build the temple, Messiah is coming or**

*Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future*

Tod Kennedy July-September, 2009

See 2019 Zechariah study

### **Theme**

Return to the Lord, build the temple, Messiah is coming. Zechariah urged the people to return to the Lord. Thoroughly interwoven into these three topics is the repeated refrain that Yahweh God truly rules history and Israel has a blessed future. As a part of their return and obedience they were to rebuild the temple, but Zechariah's larger theme was one of hope—God will preserve a remnant throughout all Israel's trouble and later the Messiah will come and restore Israel's kingdom to them under Messiah's rule. The Israel nation should prepare for that coming. Zechariah is second to Isaiah in the number of Messianic prophecies.

### **Key Verses**

Zechariah 8:3 "Thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.'

Zechariah 12:10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.

### **Guidelines for Interpreting Prophecy**

1. First, it is instructive to realize that prophecies that have already been fulfilled have been fulfilled literally or as plain language would expect. For example, the birth of Jesus. This guides us in interpreting unfulfilled prophecy.
2. Second, the prophet should be allowed to mean what he says. We should take the plain or literal meaning of what the prophet says. For example, the ancient Israelites and prophets



always meant Zion when they said or wrote Zion, and they meant Canaan when they said or wrote Canaan. They meant Israel when they said or wrote Israel.

3. The interpreter must seek, understand, and accept the author's original and intended meaning. The following statement guides us in all Bible interpretation, including prophecy. "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense" (David L Cooper). Therefore we should understand a passage as it stands unless there is something in the text that tells us to interpret it in another way.
4. The principle of double reference (not double fulfillment which is a wrong principle) observes that a passage may speak of two people or two events that are separated by a period of time. Part of the Scripture passage speaks of the immediate people, time, and place and part of the passage goes beyond the immediate people, time, and place. History helps us to determine which is which. Zechariah 9:9 speaks of the coming of Messiah; events of the first coming and the second coming are put together. Psalm 22 also illustrates this for us; David is in view, but certain things in the passage go beyond David to the greater David, Messiah Jesus.
5. Interpret Scripture by Scripture. This means to compare Scripture passages that speak of the same individual or event. There is a caution: Bible revelation is progressive—God gives added revelation as time progresses (e.g. the readers of Isaiah or Daniel did not have Zechariah or Matthew or Revelation during their time). Latter generations can often more fully understand prophecies.
6. Pay attention to the context of the Scripture passage. Read the verses surrounding the particular segment of Scripture and take into account the argument of the book, the history of the time of writing, and the author and reader's viewpoint.

## Author

1. Zechariah, 1:1, 7; 7:1, 8.
2. He was younger (2:4, na'ar, boy, lad, youth, servant) and a contemporary of Haggai the prophet, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.
3. Iddo, his grandfather, was one of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:4). Ezra wrote that "When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel" (Ezra 5:1).
4. Zechariah prophesied from October/November 520 BC to December 7, 518 BC.

## History

See history in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai. Zechariah 1-8 has the same history as Haggai.

Zechariah 9-14 occurred a little later, possibly after the temple had been completed.

Remember that just prior Zechariah's ministry a large number of Jews had returned from their captivity in Babylon.

1. Darius I, 522-486 BC. He was a distant cousin of Cambyses who was Cyrus the Great's son. Darius killed Pseudo [Smerdis/Gaumâta](#) (the false Bardiya and usurper of the throne who claimed to be Cambyses' brother and therefore son of Cyrus) in September, 522 and took the throne. See the Haggai notes.

2. Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 tell us that God raised up Zechariah and Haggai to encourage the returned exiles to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. The returned exiles allowed the enemies to steal their hope for blessing and peace. But Zechariah—his name means “Yahweh (LORD) remembers”—reminded them that God remembers his promises to his people and encouraged the returned exiles to complete the rebuilding of the temple.
3. Though the rebuilding process had begun shortly after the exiles arrived in Jerusalem (Ezra 3:8), the enemies around Jerusalem were able to slow and eventually stop the building process (Ezra 4:1-5). The temple sat unfinished for 16 years from 536 BC until 520 BC.
4. Zechariah had three audiences: Zerubbabel, the governor, 4:6-9; Joshua, the high priest, 3:1-10 and 6:9-15; and all the returnees from Babylon, 7:4-7.
5. The exiles returned to their land in three groups. Zechariah ministered to the first group.
  - a. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel led the first group to Judah in 536 BC.. Cyrus was king of Persia. They completed the temple in 516 BC, during the reign of Darius I (Ezra 1-6). Zechariah was a prophet to this group.
  - b. Ezra led the second group. They returned in 458 BC. Artaxerxes was king of Persia (Ezra 7-10).
  - c. Nehemiah led the third group. They returned in 444 BC. Artaxerxes was king of Persia (Nehemiah 1-2).
  - d. The prophecy came in October-November 520 BC (1:1). The first vision came February 15, 519 BC (1:7). The last date given was December 7, 518 BC (7:1).

### Key People

1. Zechariah the prophet. See above.
2. Zerubbabel the governor of Judah (Zechariah 4:6 , 7, 9, 10; Haggai 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4. 21, 23 and many other Bible books). He was a descendent of David. King Cyrus appointed him governor of the exiles returning to Judah. In 520 BC he and Joshua the high priest resumed construction of the temple. It was completed four years later in 516 BC. Zerubbabel was successful in his job.
3. Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1, 3, 6, 8, 9; 6:11). He along with Zerubbabel led the rebuilding of the temple from 520-516 BC. God honored him (Zechariah 6:10-11). He represents and symbolizes the coming King-Priest, Messiah (6:11-13).

### Key Words and Doctrines

1. “In that day” (Hebrew phrase בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא bayom hahu’ ) is used 20 times in 19 verses in the NASB95. Seventeen times in chapters 12-14, and 3 times in chapters 1-11. This refers to the future intervention by the Lord for judgment and blessing (2:11 [Heb 2:15]; 3:10; 9:16; 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:4, 6, 8, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21). Zechariah 6:10 and 11:11 have the same Hebrew phrase but in a different context.
2. “Angel” and “Angel of the Lord” are used 20 times, (1:9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19; 2:3; 3:1, 3, 5, 6; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10; 6:4, 5; 12:8). The interpreting angel delivers God’s messages. In some passages the angel of the Lord is the Lord, (1:8, 10, 11).
3. “Apple of His eye” in 2:8, refers to Israel.
4. “Branch” tsemach (3:8; 6:12), contains reference to Messiah. Also see Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; and Jeremiah 33:15.
5. “Burden,” massa from nasa, to lift up (9:1 and 12:1) points to a prophetic oracle or serious message from the Lord that the prophet delivered.
6. “I saw,” “lift up eyes,” “he showed me,” “what do you see?” introduce visions delivered to Zechariah (1:18; 2:1; 3:1; 4:2; 5:1, 5, 9; 6:1).

7. "Return" meaning that Israel is to return to the Lord (1:3, 4; 9:12).
8. "Jerusalem" and "Zion" are used 50 times (1:12, 14, 16, 17, 19; 2:2,4,7,10,12; 3:2; 7:7; 8:2,3,4,8,15,22; 9:9,10,13; 12:2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11; 13:1; 14:2,4,8,10,11,12,14,16,17,21). This demonstrates the centrality of Jerusalem in the prophet's messages.
9. "Me whom they have pierced" (12:10) refers to Messiah at his second advent at which time individual Jews will recognize and believe in Messiah Jesus.
10. "My house" or "temple" (1:16; 3:7; 5:11; 6:12,13,14,15; 8:9; 9:8). The tabernacle and then Solomon's temple were central to Israel's life. Once the temple was completed by Solomon (1 Kings 6:1, 37, 38), it was the focus of the national and spiritual life of the nation. Governor Zerubbabel and high priest Joshua led the rebuilding of the temple, called the second temple.
11. "Prophet" (1:4,5, 6, 7; 7:3, 7, 12; 8:9; 13:2, 4, 5).
12. Seventy years is the length of time of the Babylonian exile, 1:12; 7:5. Also see Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10, and Daniel 9:2.
13. "Shepherd" is used 10 times. All but 13:7 refer to bad leaders. In 13:7 the shepherd is Messiah who will be killed when he comes the first time.
14. Stone, eben (3:9), is another prophetic title for Messiah in some passages (Psalm 118:22, David and then Messiah; probably Isaiah 28:16, at least in its extended meaning; New Testament Romans 9:31-33; 1 Peter 2:6-8).
15. The Lord will return to Israel on earth is 1:3, 16; 8:3.

### Outline

1. Eight night visions, 1:1-6:8
2. Joshua crowned, 6:9-15
3. Questions about fasting, 7-8
4. Two burden oracles about the future, 9-14
  1. Judgments associated with rejection of Messiah's first coming, 9-11.
  2. Blessings associated with Messiah's second coming, 12-14.

### Zechariah Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1. Vision 1, the rider and four horses, and vision 2, four horns and four craftsmen.
2. Chapter 2. Visions 3, Surveyor, wall of fire, and LORD returns
3. Chapter 3. Vision 4, Joshua cleansed
4. Chapter 4. Vision 5, the lampstand, olive trees and branches, and the Holy Spirit.
5. Chapter 5. Vision 6, the flying scroll and vision 7, the woman in the basket
6. Chapter 6. Vision 8, the four chariots. Joshua crowned.
7. Chapter 7. Question: ritual fasts without reality.
8. Chapter 8. Promise: the Lord will return to Jerusalem in the present and future.
9. Chapters 9. First burden oracle: Judgment on nations; deliverance of Israel.
10. Chapter 10. First burden oracle: The Lord gathers and blesses.
11. Chapter 11. First burden oracle: judgment in preparation for Messiah.
12. Chapter 12. Second burden oracle: The LORD rescues Jerusalem.
13. Chapter 13. Judgment for the false prophets and unbelieving Israel, restoration for the remnant.
14. Chapter 14. The Lord's second coming, King of the earth, worship at Jerusalem.

### Trace the Theme

Zechariah delivers 8 night visions in chapters 1-6. The first and the last vision focus on God intervening for his people. God will restore his people and this is pictured by the cleansing of the high priest Joshua in chapter 3 and the ministry of the Holy Spirit restoring the temple in chapter 4. Chapters 7-8 answer the question about continued fasting in memory of the destruction of Solomon's temple. Chapters 9-12 contain two prophetic messages. The first is about Messiah's first coming and the second message is about Messiah's second coming, victory, and deliverance of Israel. The entire book clearly stresses that Israel must return to the Lord, build the temple, and Messiah is coming. Thoroughly interwoven into these three topics is the repeated refrain that Yahweh God truly rules history and Israel has a blessed future.

1. Chapter 1. Vision 1, the rider and four horses and vision 2, four horns and four craftsmen. The visions begin in the fall of 520 BC (Marchesran, October-November). The LORD calls the people to return to him and not be like their fathers (1-6). Three months later the Lord gave the first vision of the rider on the red horse with a red, sorrel, and white horse behind him. They scouted the earth. The nations were relatively peaceful (7-11), except for Jerusalem and Judah, whom the nations had scattered. The LORD will restore Jerusalem to peace and prosperity (12-17). The second vision shows four horns (those nations who scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. The four craftsmen symbolize those who will destroy the horn nations (18-21).
2. Chapter 2. Visions 3, Surveyor, wall of fire, and LORD returns. Zechariah continues with his third vision. This depicts a surveyor measuring the size of Jerusalem. The message is that in the future Jerusalem will be larger and without walls because the LORD will be the wall of fire and dwell in her. The LORD further says that the Hebrew people, the apple of his eye, are to flee the Babylonians because He will plunder Babylon. In the future the LORD will restore Judah and Jerusalem. Then, even Gentile nations will follow the LORD.
3. Chapter 3. Vision 4, Joshua cleansed. In chapter 3 Satan accuses Joshua of sin but the LORD forgives and cleanses him (1-3). Then the LORD dresses him in clean priestly clothes and makes him high priest for the returned people. Joshua will be the spiritual leader of the returned people. He symbolizes forgiveness, spiritual leadership of the nation, and Israel's priest nation status (4-7). Joshua's friends symbolized a coming servant of the LORD, the Branch—the Messiah (verse 8, also 6:12 and Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; and Jeremiah 33:15). The next symbol is the stone, another prophetic title for Messiah. This speaks of Messiah's second coming when He cleanses the Land (9, remove the iniquity) and brings peace (10, sit under the vine and fig tree). See also Psalm 118:22 (David and then Messiah), Isaiah 28:16 (at least in its extended meaning), and in the New Testament, Romans 9:31-33 and 1 Peter 2:6-8). In Daniel 2:34-35 and 45 the stone symbolizes the future Messianic kingdom which destroy the ruling kingdoms of the times of the Gentiles and rule the earth.
4. Chapter 4. Vision 5, the lampstand, olive trees and branches, and the Holy Spirit. The angel now gives Zechariah a vision of a lampstand fed oil from two olive trees (3, 11). The trees provided oil for the lamps. They teach that the work to be done must be done by the Holy Spirit through his man, not by human power (1-6). The Holy Spirit's power will remove obstacles (mountain) and complete the temple (7-11). Zechariah then asked what the olive branches were (12). The olive branches were the two anointed leaders, Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor (13-14). Both were instrumental in completing the temple, an almost impossible task, only to be finished through the Holy Spirit.

5. Chapter 5. Vision 6, the flying scroll and vision 7, the woman in the basket. The scroll vision (1-4) symbolized God's righteous standards and his judgments against evildoers in the land. The judgments are specifically directed against stealing (Exodus 20:15) and false swearing (Exodus 20:7). The vision of the evil woman in the basket (5-11) symbolizes that God had restrained evil in Judea at the present time. The woman is then sent to Babylon (land of Shinar, 5:11) where she will rule in her own temple. This pictures the restoration of Babylon in the future as the center of evil (see Revelation 17). Persian, under Cyrus the Great, had defeated Babylon (539 BC) by this time but Babylon will not be totally destroyed until the Tribulation period. See Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51, and Revelation 17-18 for a few of the many Scriptures that discuss Babylon.
6. Chapter 6. Vision 8, the four chariots. Joshua crowned. The eighth vision shows four chariots pulled by four horses. Each represents a judging spirit sent from God (5). They especially judge the nations in the north—probably Babylon. Babylon was defeated by Persia (8). In the future Babylon will revive and be a center of evil. Babylon will subsequently fall to God's judgment. The four chariots conclude the eight visions. After the eight visions Zechariah was instructed to make a crown of silver and gold and crown Joshua, the high priest (9-15). Joshua was now the king and high priest in Judea. He foreshadows Messiah Jesus who will be the greater branch and the final king and priest. The historical reference is to Joshua, but some statements within this section refer to the greater branch, Messiah.
7. Chapter 7. Question: ritual fasts without reality. The question posed by men of Bethel to the priests and prophets in Jerusalem was whether they should continue to mourn in the fifth month (Ab—August) on the ninth day in remembrance of the destruction of the temple and in the seventh month (Tishri--October) in memory of the death of Gedaliah? The Lord's answer was that when they fasted and mourned the past 70 years they were doing it for themselves instead of to honor and seek Him (4-6). A further word from the Lord to Zechariah (8-14) reminded the people that the Lord has instructed the people to practice justice, compassion, and kindness (9). They refused. They hardened their hearts. So, God did the same to them as they did to Him. The people called for help and the Lord did not listen. He exiled the people (13-14).
8. Chapter 8. Promise: the Lord will return to Jerusalem in the present and future. The theme of return to the Lord, build the temple, Messiah is coming continues. In chapter 8 Zechariah gives statement about what the Lord will do in the present and future. These are mixed in the prophecy. Some will happen at that time, but the more complete fulfillment will come when Messiah returns to earth to judge and rule and bless. The Lord says he is jealous for Zion (2). He will return and live in Jerusalem (3). There will be peace and joy (4-5). He will bring them back to their land (7-8). They will be His people and He will be their God ((8). They are to build the temple ((9). Peaceful and productive farming will be the rule (10-12). The house of Judah and Israel will be a blessing to others (13). The Lord will do good for them (15). Peoples and mighty nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord (22). People will want to be identified with the Jew (23). Meanwhile the Lord wants Judah to live righteously (16-17) and their feasts should be joyful instead of mourning (18-19). These promises still await fulfillment when Messiah comes to earth to set up His kingdom.
9. Chapter 9. First oracle: Judgment on nations; deliverance of Israel. With chapter 9 Zechariah delivers a message of judgment brought through Alexander the Great in 333 BC upon Syria (Hatarrika, identified with Tell Afis; Hamath), Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon), and Philistia (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod). God will protect Jerusalem. All of this occurred as predicted (1-8). Coupled with God's protection from Alexander's soon coming military sweep to Egypt, the prophet calls for rejoicing because their Messiah King is coming

and he will bring the peace Israel has long been looking for (9-10). Zechariah then says that God, in keeping with his covenant to Israel, will deliver Israel from attacks (11-17) "in that day" (16). This may refer to the Syrian attack in the Maccabean period and a more complete reference to the final deliverance of Israel in the Day of the Lord, when Messiah Jesus returns.

10. Chapter 10. The Lord gathers and blesses. Judah is to ask the Lord for blessings (1), because the teraphim (house idols), diviners (fortune tellers), and leaders are of no help (2-3). The Lord of hosts (God himself) has visited (He will care for and prosper and bless) Judah (3). The cornerstone, tent peg, and bow—all symbols of strength and support—will come from Judah (4). These ultimately refer to Messiah who will come from Judah. Judah will fight the enemies and win because the Lord will be with Judah (5). The Lord will recall Judah, Joseph, and Ephraim and bless them (6-7). Judah is put for the southern kingdom and Joseph and Ephraim for the northern kingdom. The Lord will strengthen (6), save (6), bring back (6), have compassion (6), answer (6), whistle and gather (8), redeemed (8), bring back and gather and bring (10), strengthen them in the Lord (12). All Israel rejoice (7), be numerous (8), remember the Lord (9), will live and come back (9), pass through (11), and walk in the name of the Lord (12). These statements can only be fulfilled miraculously by the personal intervention of the Lord. This has not happened yet in history. It awaits completion in the Day of the Lord, which we learn from other Scripture.
11. Chapter 11. The first oracle focusing on judgment in preparation for Messiah's return now describes the devastation of Israel's forests (1-3). After this the Lord has Zechariah play two parts, a good shepherd (shepherds are leaders) who the people reject (4-14) and a foolish, destroying, and worthless shepherd (15-17). Zechariah actually did what this chapter says and it appears that what he did as the good shepherd and the evil shepherd portrays the history of Israel, at least from the death of Solomon on (see Ezekiel 34:2-4). The shepherds over Israel had simply used the people for their own gain, while the people were turned over to judgment because of their rejection of the Lord (5-6). Zechariah took up his role as a shepherd. He removed three shepherds (8-9). Who they are we do not know. If real men of his time, Zechariah removed them. If beyond the history of Zechariah they may well stand for the spiritual leadership of prophets, priests, elders or kings (Jeremiah 2:8; Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22). The two shepherd staffs stand for what Israel is rejecting and therefore losing for the time. Favor, *no'am*, means delightful or pleasantness and indicates the shepherds favorable execution of his job. Union, *hobelim*, symbolizes the northern and southern kingdoms. Due to Israel's unbelief, the Lord told Zechariah to break the favor covenant (7, 10-11). Since he was finished with the job of shepherd Zechariah received a slave's pay of 30 pieces of silver (Exodus 21:32, Matthew 26:25), an insulting wage, and threw it to the potter in the temple. He did not want it (12-13). Though this actually occurred with Zechariah in his part as a shepherd, this pointed to the betrayal price paid to Judas (Matthew 27:3-10). Zechariah then broke the staff, Union, symbolizing the breakup of Israel into north and south which occurred at Solomon's death (15). Verses 15-17 symbolize by Zechariah's actions a very evil shepherd. He is described by foolish, does not care, devour, tear, and worthless. This person will be attacked (17). In context this refers to someone who comes and devastates the flock of Israel, a reference to the future dictator, Anti-Christ, Beast (Daniel 9:27; 11:36-39; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13:1-8).
12. Chapter 12. The LORD rescues Jerusalem. The prophet now concentrates on the coming of Messiah to rescue Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel. The LORD, creator of heavens, earth, and mankind now miraculously intervenes in world history. The LORD will use Jerusalem—throughout history the object of scorn, jealousy, terrorist attacks, and wars—to destroy the

anti-Israel armies which have set themselves against the ancient city of God's people. This predicts the future battle of Armageddon (1-3). Jerusalem will be a cup that causes reeling (2), and a heavy stone (3). The Lord will fight for Judah and Jerusalem and destroy the nations besieging Jerusalem. Jerusalem and Judah will know the Lord is fighting for them (1-9). Messiah will return to earth as warrior and ruler. Judah and Jerusalem will at that time recognize their Messiah and mourn because they realize they had rejected Him and crucified Him when He came the first time (10). The people will mourn individually and in groups and also separated by gender as was the custom in the ancient world. This will be genuine mourning, not a media event (11-14).

13. Chapter 13. Judgment for the false prophets and unbelieving Israel, restoration for the remnant. When Messiah returns to earth He will provide forgiveness to those who accept Him (1); see Ezekiel 36:25. He will also judge idols, false prophets, and demons operating in Israel; see Revelation 20:1-3, (2). Parents of false prophets will execute their false prophet sons; see Deuteronomy 13:6-9 (3). Those false prophets who survive the immediate purge will deny their true status (4-6). The hairy robe was worn by some prophets—Elijah in 1 Kings 1:8 and John the Baptist in Matthew 3:4. The prophets of Baal cut themselves to induce Baal to answer their prayer (1 Kings 18:28). Verses 7-9 refer to the first and second coming of Messiah. Verse 7 predicts His death followed by the scattering and discipline of Israel. Sword speaks of judgment and death; My Shepherd and My Associate refer to an equal with the Lord of Hosts, Messiah. Verses 8-9 predict judgment, deliverance, and restoration. At Messiah's second coming to earth He will separate and judge the unbeliever two thirds, and deliver the believing one third (8-9). The delivered remnant will call on the Lord—they are His people and He is their God (9). For the deliverance of the remnant of Israel see Romans 11:26.
14. Chapter 14. Chapter 14. The Lord's second coming, King of the earth, worship at Jerusalem. Verses 1 and 3 are summary statements for verses 1-8. Just as the nations are attacking Jerusalem in the final phase of the Armageddon Campaign, Messiah will come to the city and fight for Israel (1-3). He will stand on the Mount of Olives and cause an east west valley to be formed by splitting the mountain into a north part and south part (4). The Israelite remnant will escape by this valley (5). Azel is probably somewhere east of and near Jerusalem. Darkness will overwhelm the land until evening, at which time the light of the Lord's return will shine (6-7 and Joel 3:15-17 and Matthew 24:29-39). The Lord, Messiah, will cause living water to flow from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean in the west and to the Dead Sea in the east (8). This water will apparently provide lush vegetation and possibly some type of physical or spiritual refreshment for the people who will live in the area. The Messiah will take the rule over the entire earth (9). Psalm 2 was recited when a Davidic king was enthroned. The full fulfillment will come when the final Davidic king, Messiah is enthroned. As part of the new kingdom, Messiah will change the geography around Jerusalem with the resulting prosperity (10-11). More graphic details of the defeat of Israel's enemies by Messiah are related in 12-15. A God sent plague of some kind, fighting each other, and Israel fighting are used to defeat the enemies of God and Israel. After the kingdom is established, those survivors from the nations who fought Israel will submit to Him. Every year representatives from each former enemy nation will go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Booths, commemorating God's blessings (16). God will cause drought on the nations who refuse the yearly worship at Jerusalem (17-19). Remember that people will have children in the kingdom. Not all will follow Jesus Christ. The Lord will be honored throughout Jerusalem and Judah (20-21).

## **Zechariah Chapter Titles and Summary Principles**

1. Chapter 1. Vision 1, the rider and four horses, and vision 2, four horns and four craftsmen. Summary: Yahweh God will restore Jerusalem and avenge her enemies. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
2. Chapter 2. Visions 3, Surveyor, wall of fire, and LORD returns. Summary: Yahweh God will enlarge Jerusalem and make it safe, blessed, and a blessing to nations. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
3. Chapter 3. Vision 4, Joshua cleansed. Summary: Yahweh God cleanses from sin for service, and Joshua and his friends symbolize the coming Messiah Branch Stone. Yahweh God rules in the spiritual war. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
4. Chapter 4. Vision 5, the lampstand, olive trees and branches, and the Holy Spirit. Summary: the ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary to accomplish God's work. Yahweh God give power to his appointed leaders. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
5. Chapter 5. Vision 6, the flying scroll and vision 7, the woman in the basket. Summary: Yahweh God will purge or cleanse the land and meanwhile He has restrained evil in the land, and later will restore Babylon as the seat of evil. Watch for the rise of Babylon. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
6. Chapter 6. Vision 8, the four chariots. Joshua crowned. Summary: in the future God will judge Babylon, the center of evil, but meanwhile Joshua as priest and king represents the future Messiah Priest King. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
7. Chapter 7. Question: ritual fasts without reality. Summary: ritual without the spiritual reality is worthless, and hardening against Yahweh God is dangerous to our relationship or fellowship with Him. He will discipline and judge. Communion and baptism are church rituals with great meaning—do we observe them as reality or empty ritual? Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
8. Chapter 8. Promise: the Lord will return to Jerusalem in the present and future. Summary: Yahweh God will restore and bless His people in their land and great nations of the world will seek blessing by association with the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
9. Chapters 9. First burden oracle: Judgment on nations; deliverance of Israel. Summary: Yahweh God will destroy even the most powerful nations, yet He can protect Israel when He chooses to do so; and though nations continue to battle, Messiah King will come first on a donkey and later He will dominate all nations and save Israel. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
10. Chapter 10. First burden oracle: The Lord gathers and blesses. Summary: Yahweh God will give Judah and Joseph (Israel) victory in the great coming battle (Armageddon) and whistle for His people to return from the nations (restoration). Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
11. Chapter 11. First burden oracle: judgment in preparation for Messiah. Summary: in the future there will be two shepherds, a good one who will be rejected (Messiah) and one bad who will be judged (the one who opposes Messiah). Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
12. Chapter 12. Second burden oracle: The LORD rescues Jerusalem. Summary: Yahweh God, Creator and Lord of all will smash the enemies of Israel when they attack Jerusalem, and the remnant of Jerusalem will recognize Messiah and mourn because they had killed him when he came the first time. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.
13. Chapter 13. Judgment for the false prophets and unbelieving Israel, restoration for the remnant. Summary: in the future there will be spiritual blessing for the nation of Israel—



forgiveness of sin, removal of idols, judgment of false prophets, but before that God's shepherd will be killed and the Jewish people scattered, yet a remnant will be preserved and serve Yahweh God. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.

14. Chapter 14. The Lord's second coming, King of the earth, worship at Jerusalem. Summary: Israel's prophesied future includes an international attack against Jerusalem (Armageddon) at which time Yahweh God will return to the Mount of Olives and will defeat the attacking nations, change the geography, rule the world, and receive international worship. Yahweh God rules history and Israel has a blessed future.

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. We should stay in fellowship with the Lord and when we wander from Him, we should return to Him through confession of sin and renewal of spiritual growth and service.
2. God controls human history, even in the middle of terrible anti-Semitism. Let's not give up on God when historical events are bad.
3. Each of us is dependent upon the Holy Spirit's power and ability to serve God the right way and with God's intended results. Each of us needs to walk by the Holy Spirit—to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
4. The Lord will regather Israel in her land and be her Priest-King. We can rest in the fact that history is moving toward a time of God's judgment followed by God's great blessing and righteousness. Right now it looks hopeless. If the Bible is true, and we know that it is, our hope—our confident expectation—is in the Lord.
5. Ritual for ritual sake did not please God in the past and neither will it please God now. Why do we observe communion? What do we think about during that ritual?
6. Messiah Jesus is coming back to earth. He will judge sin, right wrong, and be the perfect political and spiritual leader. Let's concentrate on what God is doing instead of becoming overwhelmed by the failure of our non biblical political and religious leaders. Let's tell others of our confident expectation and how they can also have that "hope." People want a perfect society in a fallen and sinful world. It cannot happen. Only Yahweh God can bring in a righteous society.

**Malachi Bible Walk**  
**Theme: Rebuke, Return, Remember, Restore**

Tod Kennedy

September, 2009

**Theme**

Rebuke, Return, Remember, Restore. The Jewish people are back in their homeland, the temple has been completed, and the city walls have been rebuilt. They have many opportunities for spiritual and social prosperity, but even after all God's warnings and object lessons they have forsaken Him and His commands. Both the priests and the people are guilty. In fact, they even question God's rebukes. God gives them final warnings and a promise that a messenger will come followed by the Lord Messiah who will be like a refiner's fire. The LORD instructs the people to return to Him, but they refuse. A future day of judgment is coming. Those who fear His name will be blessed. Malachi closes the Old Testament revelation with the LORD's plea to remember Moses' law. Elijah will come before the great day of the Lord and restore the hearts of the people.

**Key Verses**

Malachi 2:17, You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"

Malachi 3:1, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:7, "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

**Author**

Malachi was the human author of the book that bears his name (Malachi 1.1). This is the only place this name is used in the Bible. He was a contemporary of Nehemiah.

## History

*See history in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah.*

1. Cyrus the Great, in 539 BC, authorized the Jews to return to their homeland in Judah. By the time of Malachi's prophecy Jews had been living in Israel for many years. These people had neglected the Lord their God and His Word. Spiritual apostasy was the hallmark of the times.
2. Malachi wrote his prophecy between 435-430 BC and therefore during the Persian period and the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (458-430 BC). The Hebrew people were back in their homeland after the Babylonian captivity. Zerubbabel had led the first group to Judah in 536 BC. Cyrus was then king of Persia. The Hebrew people completed the temple in 516 BC, during the reign of Darius I (Ezra 1-6). Zechariah was a prophet to this group. Ezra had led the second group. They returned in 458 BC. Artaxerxes was king of Persia (Ezra 7-10). Nehemiah had led the third group. They returned in 444 BC (Nehemiah 1-2).
3. At the time of Malachi's ministry the temple had been completed and was again in service (1:7-10 and 3:8-10), the people were apathetic and rebellious toward the Lord and to His Word, and they were distracted by details of life. The result was that they were reaping divine discipline instead of divine blessing.
4. The activities in Malachi correspond to the problems that Ezra and Nehemiah faced: the post-exilic temple was in service (Malachi 1:7-10; 2:11-13; 3:10); the priests failed in their responsibilities (Malachi 1:6-14; 2:1-3, 8); the people did not support the temple with tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-10; Nehemiah 13:10); inter-marriage with Gentiles and divorce had increased (Malachi 2:10-14; Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:1-3, 23-28); and social injustice was prominent (Malachi 3:5; Nehemiah 5:4-5).
5. In Malachi 1:8, Malachi refers to "your governor" (pechah). This word is used in passages about the Persian period (Nehemiah 5:14 and Haggai 1:1). Here it refers to a Persian governor. Since the Persians did not come to prominence until 538 BC, the book was written sometime after 538 BC.

## Key People

1. Malachi the prophet (Malachi 1:1).
2. My Messenger (Malachi 3:1). This is used two times in Malachi 3:1. The term refers to both the herald of Jesus and to Jesus Messiah.
3. Elijah (Malachi 4:5) will return as a warning to Israel of God's soon judgment.

## Key Words and Doctrines

1. LORD, Yahweh, used 46 times in Malachi including the use with LORD of Hosts. This is the personal name of God. He is the always existent one. He clearly revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3).
2. LORD of Hosts, used 24 times. Hosts is tseba'ot. The primary meaning is army, warfare, an organized body. Yahweh has his army, usually an angelic army to fight for him.
3. "You say" (Malachi 1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13). Yahweh raises a point with the people and they object to what He says.
4. Return (Malachi 3:7), Yahweh's call to Israel to return to obedience to his word and he will bless Israel.
5. Law of Moses (Malachi 4:4), the first five books of the Old Testament written by Moses. This section laid the foundation for the existence, purpose, and directions for living.

## Outline

1. God's compassion for Israel (Malachi 1:1-5).
2. God's complaint against the priests (Malachi 1:6-2:9).
3. God's complaint against the people (Malachi 2:10-3:18).
4. God's exhortation to Israel (Malachi 4).

## Malachi Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1. Yahweh's Love, Evil People, Priests, and Sacrifices.
2. Chapter 2. Judah Acts Treacherously.
3. Chapter 3. Tithes, Arrogance, and Judgment.
4. Chapter 4. The Day of the Lord—Judgment, Healing, and Elijah.

## Trace the Theme of Malachi

1. Malachi 1, Evil People, Priests, and Sacrifices, The Hebrews were back in their homeland from exile because God keeps his word and is gracious. The temple has been completed. The city walls rebuilt. The people question God's love because by their own disobedience they do not experience prosperity and happiness (Malachi 1.2). God rebukes the spiritual leadership (priests) for failure to teach God's word and failure to properly serve in the reconstructed temple. The priests dishonor the temple and the altar. They offer sick and injured animals for sacrifices (Malachi 1:7, 8, 14). God rebukes the people for not following the LORD their God.
2. Malachi 2, Judah Acts Treacherously. The priests do not listen to the Lord's instruction (Malachi 2:2, 8, 9). The people mistreat each other (Malachi 2:10). The priests do not teach God's Word to the people (Malachi 2:7-9). The people welcomed idolatry into the temple (Malachi 2:11). Divorce was commonplace (Malachi 2:14-16). The people call evil good (Malachi 2:17).
3. Malachi 3, Tithes, Arrogance, and Judgment. There are two messengers in Malachi 3:1-2. The first "my messenger" refers to John the Baptist. Luke 1:17 says that John the Baptist will come "in the spirit and power of Elijah...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The second messenger is Jesus Messiah: "the Lord whom you seek," "to his temple," "messenger of the covenant," "who can endure the day of his coming?" The only permanent solution to the people's rejection of God will be the Lord's Messiah messenger. The LORD's Messiah messenger will come and when he does he will purify the priests and make right the sacrifices (Malachi 3:3-4). The LORD's messenger will swiftly judge sin (Malachi 3:5). The LORD calls the people to return to Him, yet as in their past history they will not return to Him (Malachi 3:7). Their return should include support of the temple and priests by tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10). If the people return to Him and support the temple, He will bless them (Malachi 3:10-12). Yet, the people's arrogance stands in the way (Malachi 3:13). A small number listened to Malachi's rebuke and did fear the Lord (Malachi 3:16).
4. Malachi 4, The Day of the Lord—Judgment, Healing, and Elijah. The day of the Lord is coming (Malachi 4:1). Those who fear the LORD at that time will experience God's blessing (4:2) and in some way participate in the judgment of the "wicked" (Malachi 4:3). Malachi tells the people to remember and follow Moses' law (Malachi 4:4) because it alone can keep them from apostasy and idolatry. God will send Elijah before the great judgment and restoration of Israel (Malachi 4:5-6). This may have been fulfilled with John the Baptist or will be fulfilled prior to Jesus' return to earth (possibly Revelation 11:3). When the Lord comes, he will judge and restore the nation to right relationships with each other, including removing the many social sins that are tolerated in Malachi's day (Malachi 4:6). Here

compare passages such as Deuteronomy 4:39-31. God keeps his word and will restore Israel to blessing.

### **Lessons for Us Today**

1. The people of Malachi's day had experienced God's protection and blessing, yet they became very apathetic and cynical about God, God's word, and God's delegated ministries. Let's maintain enthusiasm and loyalty to God, to God's word, and to the ministries and opportunities that God gives to each of us.
2. The people of Malachi's time questioned God's evaluation of their way of life. They were apathetic and disobedient. God evaluated them and found them lacking. They continued to question him as to how and why? This was simply not admitting that God was right. Let's accept God's word in its evaluation of us and correct what we need to correct.
3. The Jews of Malachi's time questioned whether God loved them. Of course he loved them. They were his people and he keeps his promises. We may question God's love for us when circumstances turn against what we want or like. God's love never changes. Let's not question God's love and care for us, ever.
4. The "professional ministers" promoted bad doctrine and set bad examples. Today we are all in the ministry. God's word is our manual and authority. We all should do what we do for the Lord with genuine love for him.
5. The priests and people observed the sacrifices and offerings contrary to God's instructions and purpose. We can allow communion and baptism degenerate into a meaningless ritual if we are not careful. Let's appreciate baptism and the Lord's Table and honor God through it.
6. The nation gave up giving. God had commanded that the people were to support the priesthood and the temple. They failed. God has given the same kind of opportunity to church age believers. But there is not set amount such as the Old Testament tithe. In the church age grace giving is the principle, yet under grace giving many give up giving to God's work. Let's not fail in this service.
7. Marriage was under attack. The beginning of marriage was corrupted because Jews married pagans. The end of marriage was corrupted because divorce was commonplace. This is a social sin of our time also. Christians should not marry unbelievers. Divorce should only be a last resort. Today, marriage among Christians is almost as bad as for unbelievers. Let's work on having good marriages.
8. Inconsistency in fellowship with God marked the time of Malachi. This included inconsistency in attending the temple, inconsistency in listening to God's word, inconsistency in giving, inconsistency in service, and inconsistency in family and community relationships. Today we live in a time when Christians are inconsistent and not dependable.
9. The people of Malachi's day questioned the value of following God. They asked what was in it for them instead of realizing that they were not following God and therefore pushing off his blessing. Let's not blame God for problems we bring upon ourselves by our own disobedience and faithlessness.