

Class Schedule: Pre-Exile Minor Prophets
 Day & Time: Sundays from 11:15am to Noon
 Beginning: April 7, 2019
 Ending: September 29, 2019

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
Apr 7	1	Introduction
Part One ~ The Prophets of Uncertain Date (Obadiah, Joel, Jonah)		
Apr 14	2	Obadiah
Apr 21	3	Joel Chapter 1
Apr 28	4	Joel Chapters 2-3
May 5	5	~No Class for Gospel Meeting~
May 12	6	Jonah Chapters 1-4
Part Two ~ The Eighth Century B.C. Prophets (Amos, Hosea, Micah)		
May 19	7	Amos Chapter 1
May 26	8	Amos Chapters 2-3
Jun 2	9	Amos Chapters 4-5
Jun 9	10	Amos Chapters 6-7
Jun 16	11	Amos Chapters 8-9
Jun 23	12	Hosea Chapter 1
Jun 30	13	Hosea Chapters 2-3
Jul 7	14	Hosea Chapters 4-7
Jul 14	15	Hosea Chapters 8-10
Jul 21	16	~No Class for Youth Summit~
Jul 28	17	Hosea Chapters 11-14
Aug 4	18	Micah Chapters 1-3
Aug 11	19	Micah Chapters 4-5
Aug 18	20	Micah Chapters 6-7
Part Three ~ The Seventh Century B.C. Prophets (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk)		
Aug 25	21	Zephaniah Chapter 1
Sep 1	22	Zephaniah Chapters 2-3
Sep 8	23	Nahum Chapter 1
Sep 15	24	Nahum Chapters 2-3
Sep 22	25	Habakkuk Chapter 1:1-11
Sep 29	26	Habakkuk Chapters 1:12-3:19

LESSON 1 ~ INTRODUCTION: APRIL 7TH

I. Who Are The Prophets?

- A. A "Prophet" Was A Spokesman For Another, (Ex 7:1; 4:16)
- Literally the word means "to boil up like a fountain". Under the influence of the Holy Spirit a prophet was the spokesman of God.
 - Deut 18:15-22 ~ God's prophet spoke God's words.
 - Heb1:1 ~ God spoke to fathers by the prophets.
 - 2 Pet 1:21 ~ They spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - Other terms used of prophets.
 - Seer ~ 1Sam 9:9
 - Man of God ~ 1Sam 9:6; 1Kgs 17:18
 - Servant of God ~ 1Kgs 18:36; 1Chron 6:49
 - Messenger (angel) ~ Is 42:19
 - Watchman ~ Ezek 3:17; 33:7
 - A prophet was required by God to speak the words he was given. Ezek 3:16-21
 - Prophets also foretold of future events. This was one of the proofs of their inspiration ~ Is 42:9; Deut 18:21-22
- B. Numerous Figures Are Called Prophets
- Abraham ~ Gen 20:7
 - Moses ~ Deut 18:15-18; 34:10
 - Miriam ~ Ex 15:20
 - Deborah ~ Judges 4:4
 - Samuel was seen as the beginning of prophetic age ~ Acts 3:24; 1Sam 3:1
 - There are numerous unnamed prophets ~ i.e 1Sam 10:5-13; 1Sam 19:18-24; 1Kgs 13:1, 18:13
 - Many oral prophets such as Nathan (2Sam 12:1), Elijah (1 Kgs 17), Micaiah (1Kgs 22:7), Elisha (2Kgs 2), Gad (2Sam 24:11), Ahijah (1Kgs 11:29), Shemaiah (1Kgs 12:21-24), Jehu (1Kgs 16:1-7), Elieze (2Chr 20:37), and others
 - The literary prophets ~ Isaiah – Malachi (16 authors of 17 books)

II. How Are The Prophetic Books Classified?

- A. The Jews Had Two Classes Of Prophetic Books
- The earlier prophets ~ Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
 - The later prophets ~ Which was broken into two parts
 - Greater prophets ~ Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
 - Lesser prophets ~ also referred to as "The Book of The Twelve". According to rabbinical tradition these were put into one book to prevent any from being lost.

- B. We Usually Classify These As "Major" And "Minor" Prophets

- a. The terms major and minor have no reference to chronology or importance simply their relative size. In fact the dates and prophets overlap and are sometimes contemporaries.
- b. Each of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekial are longer than all twelve of the minor prophets put together.

III. How Can We Understand Their Message?

A. Some Things To Keep In Mind As One Studies

- a. Seek To understand the political, moral, social and religious conditions at the time the prophecy was delivered.
 - i. First try to understand what it meant to the people it was delivered to.
 - ii. Then make application to ourselves carefully. The New Testament does this often for us, but we must avoid pure speculation when making application.
- b. Try to understand what repentance God wanted from the people.
- c. Understand the hope God gives them, if they will repent and follow Him. In most cases their hope will be the coming King and His kingdom. Acts 26:4-7; 28:20

B. Some Of The Great Themes Developed By The Prophets

- a. Holiness of God
- b. Sovereignty of God
- c. Dependability of God's Word
- d. Sin
- e. Repentance
- f. Praise & Thanksgiving To God

Recommended Study Books:

A Commentary On The Minor Prophets, by Homer Hailey, Baker Book House

Commentary On The Old Testament, by C.F. Keil & F. Delitzch, Hendrickson Publishers Inc.

Old Testament Survey Series: The Minor Prophets, by James E. Smith, College Press Publishing Company

The Minor Prophets, A Study Workbook For Teachers and Students, by Robert Harkrider, Norris Book Company

Introduction Questions

1. What is the difference between literary and oral prophets?
2. What is the difference between the Major prophets and the Minor prophets?
3. What was the difference between a priest and a prophet?
4. What was the difference between a judge and a prophet?
5. What were the general conditions during the age of the prophets?

LESSON 2 ~ OBADIAH: APRIL 14TH

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

Author

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

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

Date

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

Themes and Literary Structure

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

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

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Understand The Background

¹*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

1. The hatred Edom held for their blood relatives, Israel, goes back as far as the birth of Esau and Jacob (literally means “one who takes the heel”, comes to mean supplanter or deceitful, especially in Edom’s eyes). Read Genesis 25:22-34; and 27:1-46
2. The Edomites dwelt in Mount Seir at the south end of the dead sea. This territory is referred to as Idumea. They constantly were against Israel. When Moses led them up from Egypt and requested to simply pass through their land Edom refused and threatened war. Read Num 20:14-21.
3. Edom rejoiced every time Israel suffered. Read Ps 137:7; Is 21:11-12; Jer 25:15-29; Jer 49:7-22; Ezekial 25:12-14.
4. The Edomites history continues through to the period of the Herods. Herod the Great’s father was Antipater of Idumea. However, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Idumeans disappear from history-certainly a fulfillment of the prophecies against Edom.

The Outline of Obadiah

1. Edom Will Be Totally Destroyed , vv. 1-9
2. The Reason For God’s Judgment Upon Edom, vv.10-16
3. Mount Zion (God’s People) Shall Be Delivered and Possess the Land

Study Questions For Obadiah

1. How had the Edomites exalted themselves?
2. What does the Lord say He will do to Edom?
3. Why was the Lord doing this to Edom?
4. What did Edom stand in the crossroads to do?
5. When the Day of the Lord comes upon Edom, what will be her reward?
6. Thought Question: Why is pride deceitful? (Obadiah 3)

LESSON 3 ~ JOEL: APRIL 21ST

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

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

Author

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

Date

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

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

Themes and Literary Structure

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

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

²*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Understand The Background

1. If we assume that the book was written early in the reign of Joash then we can refer to 2Kings 11:1-12:21 for the background on this period of Judean history.
2. Read Deuteronomy 28 to see what God had told Israel what would happen if they did not obey His commands.

The Outline of Joel

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

Study Questions For Joel Chapter 1

1. Is the locust army figurative for real armies that attacked Judah or is it literal story of a locust plague? Why?
2. Why were the elders told to tell the children about it?
3. What were they supposed to tell their children about?
4. What does it mean to lament? Why were they supposed to do it?
5. Why were the priests supposed to lament, wail and lie in sackcloth? What else were they supposed to do?
6. Research and Thought Question: What is sackcloth and why was it used for mourning?

LESSON 4 ~ JOEL: APRIL 28TH

Understand The Prophecy

1. Read Acts 2:14-24. Notice why Peter is quoting from this passage.

Study Questions For Joel Chapter 2 & 3

7. Why was an alarm supposed to sound in Mount Zion?
8. What Day of the Lord is coming upon Israel? How will it be like the locust plague?
9. “Therefore” what did God call the Israelites to do?
10. What were the weeping priests to say to God when they assemble the congregation?
11. When will the Lord be zealous for His land and His people? Is this restoration conditional?
12. When would the Spirit be poured out on all flesh?
13. Why will God be gathering all nations into the Valley of Jehoshaphat?
14. What is the Valley of decision?
15. In Joel 3:17, how will no aliens ever pass through Zion again? Who are the aliens?
16. Thought Question: In 2:13 God told the people “rend your heart, and not you garments”. What does God mean by this contrast and how can we apply this today?

LESSON 6 ~ JONAH: MAY 12TH

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

Author

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

Date

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

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

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

Themes and Literary Structure

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

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

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

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

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

Jonah's three-day experience in the belly of the fish also serves as a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Matt. 12:39–41). Here it should be noted that the Hebrew idiom, "three days and three nights," only requires a portion of the first and third days.³

Understand The Background

1. The prophet Jonah served God in the northern kingdom while Jerebaom II reigned. Read 2 Kings 14:23-28. We learn that the story in the book of Jonah is not the only prophesying that Jonah did, which is a lesson for us about all the prophets. What is recorded is not necessarily all they said or did.
2. Read about the application of Jonah in the NT. Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-32; Matthew 16:4.

Outline of Jonah

I. The First Commission of Jonah 1:1–2:10

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

II. The Second Commission of Jonah 3:1–4:11

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

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³*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

⁴*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Study Questions For Jonah Chapters 1-2

1. Why did Jonah set sail for Tarshish?

2. Why did he think he could escape the presence of Yahweh, whom he said created the sea and land?

3. How was it determined that Jonah was the cause of the storm?

4. Do you find anything noteworthy about Jonah's response to the sailors?

5. Why did Jonah advise the sailors to throw him into the sea? Why didn't they do it at first?

6. Why did God "prepare" a great fish to swallow Jonah? Note: "prepare" means to count, assign or ordain.

7. What is Jonah basically saying to God in his prayer?

8. Thought Question: Is the story of Jonah historical or myth? Why or why not?

Study Questions For Jonah Chapters 3-4

1. Why do you think Jonah got a second chance to obey God's command, when other prophets did not (1Kgs 13)?

2. What was the message preached to Ninevah?

3. How did the Assyrians respond to the message preached by Jonah?

4. What did the king proclaim for all the Ninevites to do?

5. Why did God relent and not destroy Ninevah?

6. Why was Jonah angry? Why did he flee when first called?

7. Why did Jonah rejoice? Why was he angry again?

8. Research: Describe the city of Ninevah.

9. Thought Question: How does the story of Jonah influence our understanding of God's chosen (elect) people?

LESSON 7 ~ AMOS: MAY 19TH

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

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

Author

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

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

Date

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

Amos ministered after the time of Joel and Jonah, and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. At this time Uzziah reigned over a prosperous and militarily successful Judah. In the north, Israel was ruled by the capable king Jeroboam II. Economic and military circumstances were almost ideal, but prosperity only increased the materialism, immorality, and injustice of the people. During these years, Assyria, Babylon, Syria, and Egypt were relatively weak. Thus, the people of Israel found it hard to imagine the coming disaster predicted by Amos—a disaster that occurred barely three decades later.

Themes and Literary Structure

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

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

The preaching of Amos stresses the righteousness and justice of God and His requirement that the human relationships of His people be characterized by righteousness and justice as well. The rich are condemned because of their oppression of the poor and for their religious hypocrisy. Religion is more than observing feast days and holding sacred assemblies; true religion demands righteous living, and the way people treat their neighbors reveals their relationship with God. Amos ends the book on a note of consolation. After exile and judgment, God will restore His people to the land and bless them.

Outline of Amos

I. Introduction to Amos 1:1, 2

II. The Eight Judgments 1:3–2:16

- A. Judgment on Damascus 1:3–5
- B. Judgment on Gaza 1:6–8
- C. Judgment on Tyre 1:9, 10
- D. Judgment on Edom 1:11, 12
- E. Judgment on Ammon 1:13–15
- F. Judgment on Moab 2:1–3
- G. Judgment on Judah 2:4, 5
- H. Judgment on Israel 2:6–16

III. The Three Sermons of Judgment 3:1–6:14

- A. The First Sermon: Israel's Present 3:1–15
- B. The Second Sermon: Israel's Past 4:1–13
- C. The Third Sermon: Israel's Future 5:1–6:14

IV. The Five Visions of Judgment 7:1–9:10

- A. Vision of the Locusts 7:1–3
- B. Vision of the Fire 7:4–6
- C. Vision of the Plumb Line 7:7–9
- D. Opposition of Amaziah (Historical Parenthesis) 7:10–17
- E. Vision of the Summer Fruit 8:1–14
- F. Vision of the Stricken Doorposts 9:1–10

V. The Five Promises of the Restoration of Israel 9:11–15

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Understand The Background

1. Judah and Israel are prosperous and mighty in war but they trust in themselves and don't care for the needy. See 6:1-8.
2. Read the background for this period. 2Kings 14:23-29; 15:1-7; 2Chron 26.
3. Read the quotes of Amos in the NT. Acts 7:42-43 (Amos 5:25-27); Acts 15:16-17 (Amos 9:11-12).

⁵Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments. electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Study Questions For Amos Chapter 1

1. Name the kings of Judah and Israel during the time Amos prophesied.

2. Why was Damascus (capital of Syria) going to be punished?

3. When and by whom would the Syrians be taken away captive?

4. Why were the Philistines going to be punished?

5. Why were the Phoenicians (Tyre) going to be punished?

6. Why were the Edomites going to be punished?

7. Why were the Ammonites going to be punished?

8. Explain the meaning of “For three transgressions..., and for four,”

9. Research: Locate each of the cities and regions on a map.

LESSON 8 ~ AMOS: MAY 26TH

Study Questions For Amos Chapters 2&3

1. Why was Moab going to be punished?
2. Why was Judah going to be punished?
3. For what was Israel selling the righteous? The poor?
4. What had God done for Israel?
5. What was Israel's response to God's prophets and the nazirites?
6. How has God only known Israel of all the families of the earth?
7. Did anything happen to Israel that God had not warned them of?
8. How will the Great Shepherd snatch Israel out of trouble?
9. Research: Who set up the altars at Bethel?

LESSON 9 ~ AMOS: JUNE 2ND

Study Questions For Amos Chapters 4&5

1. Who are the cows of Bashan?
2. What were they doing that brought God's condemnation?
3. What were they doing at Bethel and Gilgal to multiply transgressions?
4. What did the children of Israel love in 4:5?
5. What five things did God do to correct Israel?
6. What was Israel's response to this discipline?
7. Why was Israel told to prepare to meet thy God?
8. List some of the mighty sins of Israel?
9. How were they supposed to repent?
10. How long had Israel been worshipping idols?
11. What was going to happen to Israel because of their many transgressions?

LESSON 10 ~ AMOS: JUNE 9TH

Study Questions For Amos Chapters 6&7

1. To whom is the woe addressed?
2. Who will be the first captives to be taken?
3. What did God hate about Jacob? Who does Jacob refer to?
4. What was going to happen to Israel?
5. Why was this punishment coming upon Israel?
6. What does the king's mowings refer to?
7. Why did God relent from this destruction?
8. What was God using a plumb line for?
9. What was Amaziah's response to the prophecies of Amos?
10. What would happen to Amaziah's household because of his response?

LESSON 11 ~ AMOS: JUNE 16TH

Study Questions For Amos Chapters 8&9

1. What does a basket of summer fruit represent in Amos' vision?
2. Does this prophecy of destruction refer to Judah and Israel or just Israel?
3. What were they doing in trade?
4. What famine was God going to send upon Jacob?
5. What is the "sin of Samaria"(NKJV) and how were they swearing by it?
6. Why is God seen in Amos' vision as striking the sanctuary?
7. Where could Israel flee to avoid God's wrath?
8. How was Israel like Ethiopia, Philistia, and Syria?
9. What does it mean that Israel would not be utterly destroyed?
10. On the day of this terrible destruction what hope is coming to Israel and the Gentiles?

LESSON 12 ~ HOSEA: JUNE 23RD

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

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

Author

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

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

Date

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

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

Themes and Literary Structure

The book of Hosea is a story of one-sided love and faithfulness that represents the relationship between Israel and God. As Gomer is married to Hosea, so Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships gradually disintegrate—Gomer runs after other men, and Israel runs after other gods. Israel's spiritual idolatry is illustrated by Gomer's physical adultery. The development of

the book can be traced in two parts: the adulterous wife and faithful husband (chs. 1–3), and the adulterous Israel and faithful Lord (chs. 4–14).

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

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

What’s in a Name?

(Hosea 1)

Names play a significant part in understanding Hosea, as the chart describes:

Name	Meaning
Jezreel (Hos. 1:4)	God Scatters
Lo-Ruhamah (Hos. 1:6)	Not Pitied
Lo-Amni (Hos. 1:9)	Not My People
Hosea (Hos. 1:1, related also to <i>Joshua</i> , Num. 13:16, and <i>Jesus</i> , Matt. 1:21)	Yahweh Is Salvation

Outline of Hosea

I. The Adulterous Wife and Faithful Husband 1:1–3:5

- A. The Introduction to the Book of Hosea 1:1
- B. The Prophetic Marriage of Hosea to Gomer 1:2–2:1
- C. The Application of the Adultery of Gomer 2:2–23
- D. The Restoration of Gomer to Hosea 3:1–5

II. The Adulterous Israel and Faithful Lord 4:1–14:9

- A. The Spiritual Adultery of Israel 4:1–6:3
- B. The Refusal of Israel to Repent of Her Adultery 6:4–8:14
- C. The Judgment of Israel by God 9:1–10:15
- D. The Restoration of Israel to the Lord 11:1–14:9

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⁶Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments. electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Understand The Background

1. Read the background for this period. 2Kings 14 – 17; 2Chron 26 – 2Chron 29.

Study Questions For Hosea Chapter 1

1. Name the last six kings of Israel not mentioned in verse 1 during the time Hosea prophesied.
2. How do we know Hosea prophesied while these kings reigned?
3. Why does God command Hosea to take a wife who is a harlot?
4. Does it seem harsh that God would purposely put Hosea through this adultery?
5. Why was Hosea's first born son named Jezreel?
6. What significance is there in the name of Hosea's daughter?
7. What was supposed to be learned by the name of Hosea's last son?

LESSON 13 ~ HOSEA: JUNE 30TH

Study Questions For Hosea Chapters 2&3

1. Why is Israel not God's wife nor God their husband?
2. What did Israel do to commit adultery against God?
3. What is God going to do to Israel?
4. Why is God going to remove Israel's food, clothing, and feasts?
5. How is God going to bring Israel into the wilderness as in the day when they came up from Egypt?
6. What does the Valley of Achor refer to and how will it be a door of hope?
7. How did God say the relationship would change?
8. What would happen to Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi (the names of Hosea children)?
9. Why did God tell Hosea to go get his wife who was committing adultery?
10. Why was Gomer to have no man, including Hosea, for many days?

LESSON 14 ~ HOSEA: JULY 7TH

Study Questions For Hosea Chapters 4 - 7

1. What charge does God bring against Israel?
2. Who's responsible for the lack of knowledge of God's people?
3. Why will the prophets and priests be punished with the people?
4. Why has the LORD withdrawn himself from Israel and Judah?
5. What will it take for Israel to acknowledge their sin and seek God?
6. Who is going to call for a return to the LORD?
7. When is God going to raise the repentant back up?
8. What did God desire from His people? What was He receiving instead?
9. What was making the kings and princes of Israel glad?
10. How had Ephraim mixed itself with the peoples?
11. Who does Ephraim call to for help? Who should they have called to?

LESSON 15 ~ HOSEA: JULY 14TH

Study Questions For Hosea Chapters 8 - 10

1. What does it mean that Israel sowed the wind in 8:7?
2. What would Israel reap because they sowed the wind?
3. Why was Israel told “do not rejoice”?
4. Where will Israel eat unclean food?
5. What does it mean that Ephraim was supposed to be a watchman? What was he instead?
6. Why was God casting Israel away?
7. What does the days of Gibeah refer to in 9:9 and 10:9?
8. What was it time to do for Ephraim?

LESSON 17 ~ HOSEA: JULY 28TH

Study Questions For Hosea Chapters 11 - 14

1. Why would God not execute the fierceness of His anger?
2. What did Ephraim feed on and pursue?
3. Why did Ephraim think they had no iniquity?
4. Why did God speak by the prophets and multiply visions?
5. How was Ephraim sinning more and more?
6. What conditions led Israel to forget God?
7. God's wrath would be like what three wild beasts?
8. Why did God give Israel a king and then take the king away?
9. What words did God want Israel to return to Him and say?
10. Describe the ways of the LORD for the righteous and the transgressor?

LESSON 18 ~ MICAH: AUGUST 4TH

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

Author

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

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

Date

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

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

Themes and Literary Structure

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

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

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

OUTLINE OF MICAH

- I. The Prediction of Judgment 1:1–3:12**
 - A. Introduction to the Book of Micah 1:1
 - B. The Judgment on the People 1:2–2:13
 - C. The Judgment on the Leadership 3:1–12
- II. The Prediction of Restoration 4:1–5:15**
 - A. The Promise of the Coming Kingdom 4:1–5
 - B. The Promise of the Coming Captivities 4:6–5:1
 - C. The Promise of the Coming King 5:2–15
- III. The Plea for Repentance 6:1–7:20**
 - A. The First Plea of God 6:1–9
 - B. The Second Plea of God 6:10–7:6
 - C. The Promise of Final Salvation 7:7–20⁷

Understand The Background

1. Read the background for this period. 2Kings 15:17 - 20:21; 2Chron 26 - 30.

Study Questions For Micah Chapter 1

1. List the kings of Judah and the approximate dates they reigned while Micah prophesied.
2. What sins of Jacob and Israel are primarily responsible for their coming punishment?
3. Why are the wounds of God's people incurable?
4. To what extent had the sins of Israel reached?
5. Why was Israel supposed to cut off all its hair?

⁷Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments. electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Study Questions For Micah Chapters 2 - 3

1. What evil were God's people committing? Who is committing these sins?

2. What does it mean that they would have no one to determine boundary lines?

3. How did the people treat the prophets of God?

4. What kind of prophets did the people want to hear?

5. Who would God assemble and who would lead them?

6. What were the rulers doing to God's people?

7. Why were the prophets going to be ashamed?

8. Why did the rulers, priests and prophets think no harm would happen to them?

9. Who was primarily responsible for the destruction coming upon Zion?

LESSON 19 ~ MICAH: AUGUST 11TH

Study Questions For Micah Chapters 4 - 5

1. When would the mountain of the LORD's House be established?
2. Who would come to it?
3. From where would the law and word go forth?
4. Why would no one make them afraid anymore?
5. Whom would the LORD assemble and what would he do with them?
6. What is the former dominion that would come to the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem?
7. What was the daughter of Zion going to give birth to from her labor pains?
8. Who was going to come forth from Bethlehem Ephrathah?
9. Among whom would the remnant of Jacob dwell?
10. Why would God cut off the horses, chariots, and strongholds from the remnant of Jacob?
11. What would happen to the other nations that do not obey?

LESSON 20 ~ MICAH: AUGUST 18TH

Study Questions For Micah Chapters 6 - 7

1. What charge or contention does God have against Israel?
2. Why did God tell them to remember the story of Balak and Balaam?
3. With what should one come before the LORD?
4. Who has appointed the rod of correction? Why?
5. What two men stand out for the abominations practiced in Israel?
6. What has happened to the good people?
7. From where does a man's enemies come from?
8. What would happen to Israel after they fell?
9. Why would God pass over the transgressions of the remnant but not the rest of Israel?
10. Why doesn't God retain His anger forever?

LESSON 21 ~ ZEPHANIAH: AUGUST 25TH

The book of Zephaniah repeatedly hammers home the message that the day of the Lord, judgment day, is coming when the malignancy of sin will be dealt with. Israel and her gentile neighbors will soon experience the crushing hand of God's wrath. But after the chastening process is complete, blessing will come in the person of the Messiah.

Author

Normally the genealogy of a prophet is traced no further than his father. Zephaniah, however, traces his ancestry back four generations in order to demonstrate his royal lineage as the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah (1:1). Thus, he was a distant relative of King Josiah and those to whom he addresses his prophecy.

Apparently Zephaniah lived in the city of Jerusalem because he refers to the city as "this place" (1:4), and he also describes the topography with intimate familiarity.

Date

Zephaniah fixes the time of his prophecy "in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah" (1:1). Josiah reigned from 640 to 609 B.C., and 2:13 indicates that the destruction of Nineveh (612 B.C.) was still in the future. Thus, the book of Zephaniah can be dated between 640 and 612 B.C.

Because Josiah's religious reforms began c. 628 B.C., and because Zephaniah catalogs lists of sins prevalent prior to the reforms (1:3–13; 3:1–7), the time of Zephaniah may be dated more precisely as occurring c. 635 to 625 B.C. Zephaniah's forceful prophecy may even have been a factor in the reforms that took place.

Themes and Literary Structure

On the whole, Zephaniah is a fierce and grim book of warning about the coming day of the Lord. Desolation, darkness, and ruin will strike Judah and the nations because of the wrath of God upon sin. Zephaniah moves three times from the general to the specific: (1) from universal judgment to judgment upon Judah (1:1–2:3); from judgment upon surrounding nations to judgment upon Jerusalem (2:4–3:7); and from judgment and cleansing of all nations to the restoration of Israel (3:8–20). The two broad divisions of the book are the judgment in the day of the Lord (1:1–3:8), and the salvation in the day of the Lord (3:9–20).

As with Amos some one hundred years earlier, the theme of the coming day of the Lord is central for Zephaniah. This day of the Lord is seen as having two components: judgment that results in the destruction of Judah by foreign armies, but also restoration and hope for the people of God. Zephaniah sees this second aspect of the day of the Lord as a terminal event, bringing history to a close. Thus the message shares some characteristics with apocalyptic literature that portrays the end times.⁸

⁸*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments*. electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

OUTLINE OF Zephaniah

- I. The Judgment in the Day of the Lord 1:1–3:8**
 - A. The Judgment on the Whole Earth 1:1–3
 - B. The Judgment on the Nation of Judah 1:4–2:3
 - C. The Judgment on the Nations Surrounding Judah 2:4–15
 - D. The Judgment on the City of Jerusalem 3:1–7
 - E. The Judgment on the Whole Earth 3:8

- II. The Salvation in the Day of the Lord 3:9–20**
 - A. The Promise of Conversion 3:9–13
 - B. The Promise of Restoration 3:14–20 ⁹

Understand The Background

1. Read the background for this period. 2Kings 21-23; 2Chron 33 - 35.

Study Questions For Zephaniah Chapter 1

1. How is Zephaniah related to Josiah according to 1:1? Who was his great-great grandfather?

2. Name four things God would consume from the land.

3. What did those who were settled in complacency say about the LORD?

4. What does Zephaniah say about the “great day of the LORD”?

5. What was the whole land going to be devoured by?

Application: In Zeph 1:5 we have a description of dual loyalties, to the LORD and Milcom. Does this problem exist today? If so, describe an example?

⁹*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

LESSON 22 ~ ZEPHANIAH: SEPTEMBER 1ST

Study Questions For Zephaniah Chapters 2 - 3

1. What did Zephaniah tell the people to seek? Why?
2. Who are the inhabitants of the seacoast (2:5)?
3. The children of Moab and Ammon are going to be like who?
4. What would happen to the Ethiopians?
5. What will happen to the capitol city of the Assyrians?
6. What did Ninevah once say about itself?
7. Why was Jerusalem going to be destroyed?
8. How does Zephaniah describe:
 - a. Princes
 - b. Judges
 - c. Prophets
 - d. Priests
9. What were the people supposed to do?
10. How would the remnant of Israel going to behave?
11. Who is the King of Israel?
12. Where is the LORD when He gathers His remnant in His holy Mountain, Zion?

LESSON 23 ~ NAHUM: SEPTEMBER 8TH

In contrast to his predecessor Jonah, whose ministry resulted in the repentance of the Ninevites, the prophet Nahum proclaims the downfall of the great Assyrian city of Nineveh. The Ninevites have forgotten their revival and have returned to their habits of violence, idolatry, and arrogance. As a result, Babylon will so destroy the city that no trace of it will remain—a prophecy fulfilled in painful detail.

Author

The name “Nahum” means “comfort” or “consolation,” and his message of doom for Nineveh was doubtless a source of comfort to the inhabitants of Judah who had suffered under the cruelty of the Assyrians.

According to 1:1, the prophet was called the “Elkoshite.” Although the precise location of Elkosh is unknown, many scholars believe that Elkosh was a town in southern Judah (later called Elcese) between Jerusalem and Gaza. This would make Nahum a prophet of the Southern Kingdom and may explain his interest in the triumph of Judah (1:15; 2:2).

Date

Since the message of the book is a prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, it must have been delivered sometime before 612 B.C., when the city was destroyed by the Babylonians. It was clearly written after 663 B.C., the year that the capital of Egypt, Thebes (called “No Amon” in 3:8), was captured by Assyria. Since Thebes regained its independence in 654 B.C., and Nahum does not allude to that event, it may be that the book was written between 663 and 654 B.C.

Themes and Literary Structure

Nahum single-mindedly proclaims the doom of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. Among the reasons for the condemnation of the city are the inhumanities of the Assyrian army (2:12), and the vices of the city (3:4). The nature of God, specifically His wrath, His holiness, His justice, and His power, makes it inevitable that His enemies will perish (1:2–10).

The brief book of Nahum can be divided into three parts: the destruction of Nineveh decreed (ch. 1), the destruction of Nineveh described (ch. 2), and the destruction of Nineveh deserved (ch. 3).¹⁰

Understand The Background

An understanding of how God used Assyria to punish Israel and of Assyria’s arrogant attitude can be seen in Is 10:5-19, & Is 36-37.

¹⁰*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

OUTLINE OF Nahum

I. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Decreed 1:1–15

- A. The General Principles of Divine Judgment 1:1–8
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh and Deliverance of Judah 1:9–15

II. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Described 2:1–13

- A. The Call to Battle 2:1, 2
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh 2:3–13

III. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Deserved 3:1–19

- A. The Reasons for the Destruction of Nineveh 3:1–11
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Inevitable 3:12–19¹¹

Study Questions For Nahum Chapter 1

1. The book of Nahum is about the destruction of what nation?

2. Name five characteristics of God that Nahum describes for us in chapter one.

3. Why was God preparing a grave for the Assyrians?

4. What were the good tidings being brought to Judah?

Application: We are told to consider the goodness and severity of God (Rom 11:22). Consider the passages in Nahum 1:2-3 and Hebrews 10:26-31. Explain God's goodness and severity as if your explaining it to someone who does not know God.

¹¹*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

LESSON 24 ~ NAHUM: SEPTEMBER 15TH

Study Questions For Nahum Chapters 2 - 3

1. Who is the destroyer who has come before their face? Whose face?
2. What will happen to Ninevah?
3. What does it mean that Ninevah was like a pool of water? What would it become?
4. What happened to the dwelling place of the lions?
5. What kind of city was Ninevah?
6. What particular sins did God say Ninevah was full of?
7. Who was going to grieve or comfort Ninevah?
8. What were the strongholds of Ninevah like?
9. How bad was the wound inflicted upon Ninevah?
10. What would be the reaction of surrounding nations?

LESSON 25 ~ HABAKKUK: SEPTEMBER 22ND

The prophet Habakkuk ministered during the death throes of the nation of Judah. Although repeatedly called to repentance, the nation stubbornly refused to change her sinful ways. Asking how long this intolerable situation would continue, Habakkuk is told by God that the Babylonians will be His chastening rod on the nation—an announcement that sends the prophet to his knees. Though perplexed, Habakkuk acknowledges that the just in any generation shall live by faith (2:4), not by sight, and he concludes by praising God’s wisdom even though he doesn’t fully understand God’s ways.

Author

The author of this book is the prophet Habakkuk, about whom little is known apart from his name, which is derived from the Hebrew word meaning “embrace” or “embracer.” The fact that he is called a “prophet” (1:1; 3:1) may suggest that he was a member of a professional prophetic guild. In addition, the musical reference at the conclusion of the book indicates that Habakkuk may have been a priest connected with the temple worship in Jerusalem.

Date

Although the book of Habakkuk includes no reference to the reign of a king, internal evidence indicates a date between the death of King Josiah (609 B.C.) and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (605 B.C.). The only explicit time references in Habakkuk are to the Babylonian invasion as an imminent event (1:6; 2:1; 3:16). The deplorable conditions of the people (1:2–4) imply a date after the untimely death of Josiah at the Battle of Megiddo (609 B.C.) and early in the wicked reign of King Jehoiakim (609–597 B.C.).

A contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah, Habakkuk warned of God’s approaching judgment through the approaching Babylonians. This prophecy was fulfilled in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar deported ten thousand of Jerusalem’s prominent citizens to Babylon.

Themes and Literary Structure

The book of Habakkuk may be conveniently divided into two portions: the problems or perplexity of Habakkuk (chs. 1 and 2), and the praise of Habakkuk (ch. 3).

Realizing Israel’s iniquity and need for punishment, Habakkuk is perplexed with the moral dilemma of how a holy God could employ the even more wicked Babylonians to chastise His children. God’s response is twofold: He reaffirms His basic moral nature which implies that everyone must eventually face judgment for their offenses (2:2–20). God also gives Habakkuk a vision of His infinite glory, a vision somewhat reminiscent of the one given in Job 38–41. These two responses are enough to reestablish Habakkuk’s faith in God.

Habakkuk also stresses God’s sovereign freedom as God to accomplish His good ends in His own way. In spite of appearances to the contrary, God is still on the throne as the Lord of history and the Ruler of the nations.

The book of Habakkuk depicts the prophet’s struggle of faith, and in so doing the centrality of faith in the lives of God’s people is highlighted. This faith which can endure despite unfavorable outward circumstances comes to beautiful expression in 3:16–19.¹²

¹²*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

OUTLINE OF Habakkuk

I. The Questions of Habakkuk 1:1–2:20

- A. The First Question of Habakkuk 1:1–4
- B. God's Reply to First Question 1:5–11
- C. The Second Question of Habakkuk 1:12–2:1
- D. God's Reply to Second Question 2:2–20

II. The Praise of Habakkuk 3:1–19

- A. Habakkuk Prays for God's Mercy 3:1, 2
- B. Habakkuk Remembers God's Mercy 3:3–15
- C. Habakkuk Trusts in God's Salvation 3:16–19

Understand The Background

Read 2Chronicles36:1-21, 2Kings 23:31-24:7.

Study Questions For Habakkuk Chapter 1:1-11

1. What is the basis of Habakkuk's first question?

2. Why was God raising up the Chaldeans?

3. How were the Chaldeans described?

4. What is God's answer to Habakkuk's first question?

Application: Do we ever wonder how God could let such terrible wickedness continue? How does Habakkuk's first question and God's answer help us understand our own questions?

LESSON 26 ~ HABAKKUK: SEPTEMBER 29TH

Study Questions For Habakkuk Chapters 1:12 – 3:19

1. According to Habakkuk's second question, from what was God holding His tongue?
2. To what does Habakkuk compare the people taken by the Chaldeans?
3. What was the reaction of the Chaldeans to their "fishing"?
4. What did the LORD tell Habakkuk to do with His answer?
5. How will the just live?
6. Read Rom 1:16-17, Gal 3:11 & Heb 10:38-39. How is this passage applied in each of these NT passages?
7. What is the LORD's answer to Habakkuk's second question?
8. What is Habakkuk's response to the LORD's answer?
9. Habakkuk wrote he would rejoice even if any of six things happened, name them.