OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY 7

PROPHETIC WARNINGS

Course OT7

(Complete)
**Instructions for this course**

All the reading material for this course is included in this study guide and your Bible. Materials needed are this study guide, your Bible, and answer sheets.

Before each lesson: pray for God to give a teachable heart and understanding. Begin the lesson by reading the related section in the book provided.

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Answer the questions for the corresponding lesson in this study guide.  
*Use the required answer sheet format, putting your name and course information on each sheet (sample after the Table of Contents). Use any standard note paper (or the answer booklets if provided).*  
*Skip a line between answers.*  
*Always use your own words in your answers.*  
*Try to be as clear and concise as possible.*  
*Please do not rush! Meditate on what God wants you to learn.*  
*Don’t go to the next question until completing the current one.*

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*If, and only if,* you are taking the course as **correspondence study** (with written feedback from others):  
After completing lessons 23 to 29, send the completed answer sheets to your course coordinator.  
*Only mail your answers sheets, not other materials.*  
*All sent answers are handled confidentially.*  
*Label the envelope’s lower left with: student ID, course, and lesson numbers.*

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Three months are allotted for course completion.  
*Extensions may be granted upon request.*

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Your answer sheets are returned to you after review.  
*Keep all materials and returned answers together for future reference.*
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(continued from course OT6)

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Lesson 23

God’s Voice to His Covenant Nation

The Prophets

1. What Is a Prophet?

What is a prophet? We have asked this question at various times in the course of our study of the Old Testament. We have given the same answer each time: A prophet is a man who is called of God to receive God’s word and communicate it to the people. There are three parts to this definition. All three of these ideas are necessary to the biblical idea of a prophet. A prophet:

1. Is called by God to his particular task,
2. Receives a revelation from God,
3. Is charged with the task of bringing that revelation to the people.

This definition may be considered a technical one; that is, it explains the precise meaning of the office of prophet. This office was very important in Israel. All the writers of the prophetic books were prophets in this technical sense. They had been called to the office of prophet. But we should recognize that the word prophet is sometimes used in a more popular sense. Abraham and Daniel are called prophets (Gen 20:7; Mat 24:15), yet neither of these occupied the office of prophet.

Through the prophets, God reveals Himself to men. He is God’s representative to man, whereas a priest represents men to God. When the prophet
spoke and said, “Thus saith the Lord…,” it was as if God Himself were speaking. The people’s responsibility was directly to the prophet’s words (Deut 18:15). This mirrors the New Testament preaching of the Word. When the preacher is faithfullly preaching, he is speaking the Word of God to the people.

God’s way is to speak His Word, through an Old Testament prophet or through the Scriptures, whether in preaching or by reading. When He speaks, He requires people to respond. Today many have the idea that God is more liberal and does not expect strict obedience. They even think it acceptable to sin or to be lukewarm toward God. But when God speaks, He expects whole-hearted obedience. He does not need to give further warnings. When we do not obey, the next step may be discipline (of believers) or judgment (of unbelievers)!

2. The History of the Prophets

A. The Early Prophets

Strictly speaking, the office of prophet began in Samuel’s time, but the idea of prophet goes back much further. We find it already in the life of Abraham. There it seems to refer to one who has a close acquaintance with God. In Genesis 20:7, Abimelech is told to restore Abraham’s wife, “for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.”

By the time of Moses, the term appears to designate one who speaks for God. At that time, there were prophets in Israel, but they were inferior to Moses, through whom God spoke most frequently. The difference is expressed in Numbers 12:6-8,

*If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold.*

The difference was in directness and clarity of God’s revelation. Yet God did speak through prophets as well as through Moses. That these prophets were spiritual leaders in Israel is clear from the desire expressed by Moses, “Would God that all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them” (Num 11:29).

B. The Institution of the Prophetic Office

With Samuel something new occurred in Israel: a prophetic order was established. Samuel is often called the first of the prophets. That title is well given. He is the first of a line of prophets who continued throughout the rest of Israel’s history as the theocratic nation. These men were prophets in the technical sense. They were called to the prophetic office, even as today God calls men to the office of minister of the gospel. These men were God’s spe-
cial servants, chosen by Him to be His ambassadors, through whom He would make known His Word.

What brought about this new prophetic movement? The institution of the prophetic office is closely connected with the institution of the office of king. The establishment of the monarchy in Israel is the occasion for the rise of the prophets. Samuel, the first of these prophets, was given the task of anointing Saul and David for the kingly office. The establishment of the monarchy gave rise to the office of prophet.

The connection between kings and prophets is important. That there is a connection is clear from the Old Testament history. The prophets appear before and address the kings far more than the people. Some of them, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, were in very close contact with the palace. But why? Because the kingdom in Israel was a theocratic kingdom. The kings of Israel were to be theocratic kings. When He established the kingdom, God did not thereby resign as ruler of Israel. He simply ruled through the kings. It was the duty of the theocratic kings to rule the people according to the will of God. And it was the duty of the prophets to set forth clearly to the king what was the will of God.

The prophets were never servants of the kings. Both prophets and kings were servants of God. When the kings were truly theocratic, then the prophets acted as their counselors. Thus we see Nathan advising David, and Isaiah counseling Hezekiah. But when the kings forsook their theocratic task and sought to rule without God, the prophets did not hesitate to speak out boldly against them. What Ahab said about Micaiah, “he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1Ki 22:8), expresses the relation between the evil kings and the prophets.

C. The Change in the Prophetic Outlook

If we study the history of the prophets carefully, we will discover two different stages in the activity of the prophets. The first stage includes the earlier prophets, who did not write their messages. These prophets were interested in the development and maintenance of the theocratic kingdom. They helped the good kings, sounded the alarm against sin and apostasy, and called for repentance. They were the watchdogs of the theocratic kingdom. Their task was to preserve the existing order.

In the eighth century B.C., a new type of prophetic activity came to the foreground. This type is found in those prophets who wrote their messages as well as spoke them. Here we also find a change of emphasis. There is still an urgent call to repentance. But these later prophets do not really expect that their call to repentance will be heeded. We find in their prophecies increased emphasis on the judgment that will fall on the people of God. They also point beyond the judgment to a wondrous work of mercy. They point to a new era, to the dawning of a new day. Instead of preserving the existing order, the later prophets look forward to the establishment of a new and
better order. More and more the finger of prophecy points to the Messiah to come, Jesus Christ.

**D. Biblical Sequence**

We will study the prophets in the sequence of their actual ministries. This will help us to link their writings with the time and situations in which they lived. However, our sequence of study will be different than the sequence of the prophets' books in the Old Testament.

It is good for us to memorize the actual sequence of their books in the Old Testament, so that we can find them in our Bibles when we need to. We'll start with the pre-exilic Minor Prophets, since some of their ministries come first. Please memorize the following and be prepared to write it from memory at the end of the study questions.

*Pre-exilic Minor Prophets*
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah

**3. The Message of the Prophets**

The various prophets all had different messages, each adapted to the needs of the audience. As a general rule, we find the focus for the major prophets in their commissioning. God makes clear His mission for them at the time they are called. However, the books of the minor prophets are shorter and do not record their commissioning. We still can discern their particular focus, however, in their first chapter or first message.

Even though there are different messages for each prophet, yet several themes run through all the messages of the prophets:

1) God has greatly blessed, and has promised to continue to bless you.
2) Right now you are not experiencing that blessing.
3) Sin is the reason for your present condition.
4) What you need to do is to repent from your sin, out of love for God.
5) Your future depends upon your response.
6) In the Old Testament, lack of repentance leads to losing the land.
7) Yet, God will be faithful to His covenants.

These themes are presented in many different ways. We find differing figures of speech, differing expressions, and differing approaches. And yet these same themes underlie all the variety of the prophetic messages, because it is one God Who speaks through them all.
Study Questions Lesson 23
God’s Voice to His Covenant Nation: The Prophets

Please read Lesson 23 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

What is a prophet? (1)
1. What are the three essential parts of the definition of a prophet?
2. What does God expect when He speaks?

The history of the prophets (2)
The early prophets (A)
3. In what ways is the word “prophet” used in the Old Testament?

The institution of the prophetic office (B)
4. What brought about the institution of the prophetic office?
5. How was the work of the prophets related to the kings?

The change in the prophetic outlook (C)
6. What two changes took place in the activity of the prophets?
   Use the letters “a” and “b” to mark the two parts of your answer.

The message of the prophets (3)
7. What themes do the prophets develop?

Memory
8. Write the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets from memory. This is the sequence in which they appear in our Bibles.
Lesson 24
God’s Prediction of His People’s Future
Joel

Please review the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets and memorize Joel 2:12. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Introduction

Please read Joel 2.

A. Author

Of Joel the prophet we know nothing except the little we can learn from his book. He identifies himself as the son of Pethuel. We infer from the frequent mention of Judah and Jerusalem that he prophesied in Jerusalem.

B. Date

To determine precisely when Joel prophesied is extremely difficult, since he does not supply much information about the time in which he lived and worked. But we are quite sure that he was the earliest of the writing prophets. Two facts point in that direction.

1. The Jews placed Joel, along with Hosea and Amos, at the beginning of the Minor Prophets. Although the order in the Minor Prophets is not strictly chronological, the books are grouped together in a rough chronological order. So the Jews, who were in a position to know, considered Joel to be an early prophet.

2. Joel is quoted frequently by the other prophets. This means that the prophecy of Joel was considered to be Scripture at the time when these men wrote. Since Amos (one of the earliest writing prophets) quotes Joel, Joel must have been written early.

While this does not give us an exact date, some reliable commentators think that Joel probably prophesied during the reign of Joash, king of Judah (836-797 B.C.).

C. Purpose

The ministry of Joel was intended to turn the sinful people of the southern kingdom back to God. To this end he showed them that God’s judgments were intended to chastise, not to destroy. If His people would return to Him, God would abundantly bless them. For this reason, the future blessings of God’s people occupy an important place in Joel.

We will not ask you to memorize the outlines of the minor prophets, but they are useful for reference. It would be good to mark these divisions in
your Bible if needful, and to memorize them for your personal benefit if you are able to memorize easily. The outline of Joel has just two parts.

I. The present plague of locusts Joel 1:1 – 2:27
II. The future blessing of Israel Joel 2:28 – 3:21

2. The Plague of Locusts

The book of Joel begins with a description of a terrible plague of locusts. The prophet cries out,

Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?—Joel 1:2

Never, as far back as the traditions of the people go, has there been a locust plague such as this one. It takes two years for fig trees to recover and again produce fruit, three years for grape vines, and 15 years for olive trees. This plague was therefore devastating and all men were affected by it, from the drunkards to the priests.

Some students of the Bible have thought that Joel is using the locust plague as a parable; that is, he is not describing a real plague of locusts. He is using the locusts as a symbol of the heathen nations. If this were so, then the whole prophecy would deal with the future. The “locust plague” would not actually take place until the Assyrians came down into Judah in the days of King Hezekiah.

But Joel is describing something that is taking place at the time when he speaks. His language is that of a man who is talking to a people who are in actual distress. We are most likely correct if we take his words literally, as describing an actual plague of locusts.

3. The Day of the Lord

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.—Joel 2:1

Joel calls this plague the “day of the LORD.” It also is used to describe the judgment of the nations in Joel 3. This phrase is a common expression in the Bible. Other prophets use it. The New Testament writers use it also. And they give it one of the meanings that it has here in Joel 3. The great Day of the Lord is the final Day of Judgment, when Jesus Christ will judge the nations and all men (Mat 25:32-46). It occurs at the second coming of Christ.

However, if the Day of the Lord is the final day of God’s judgment at the end of time, how can the plague of locusts be connected to it? There are two answers to this question. First, the “day of the Lord” can refer to any major judgment of God, where He brings His special wrath upon sin in a remarkable way. This certainly is the case when He overthrows whole nations and
empires. It was the case when He deported the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Secondly, the use of the “day of the Lord” has a dual meaning. Its first meaning would be a particular judgment upon a nation to come in the near term. Those prophecies had an immediate context, as Israel and Judah faced enemy nations all around them. However, whenever there is a soon coming judgment upon a nation, the “day of the Lord” also alludes to the final Day of the Lord at the end of time (1Th 5:2). In these cases, the near-term judgment is a type of the final Judgment Day.

This is an example of “prophetic perspective.” Consider this illustration. If you stand on a plain, and look at a hill, behind which is a mountain, it will look as if the hill and the mountain are close to each other. The hill even may seem to be the first rise of the mountain. But when you climb the hill, you discover that between the hill and the mountain there are valleys and other hills. You were fooled because of your perspective. Now, we are not to think that the prophets were fooled. But in their prophecies they often ignore the valleys of time and look only at the hills and mountains of God’s redemptive actions. So they bring together events that are actually separated in time.

In Joel we have an example of this prophetic perspective. The plague of locusts is the beginning of a series of events, actually far separated in time, that culminate in the final judgment of God. Joel does not show the lapse of time. He simply shows how they are connected. Prophecy is primarily intended to tell what God is going to do, not when He will do it.

4. The Results of the Plague

A. Call to Repentance

To Joel, the plague of locusts was a judgment from God. In response, he called the people, one and all, to a solemn assembly where they might pray to God for deliverance from this plague.

Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

—Joel 2:12-13

Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.
—Joel 2:18

repenteth him of the evil – “Repent” means a change of mind that leads to a change in action: turning from sin to God. However, we know that God does not change (Num 23:19; Jam 1:17). This is an anthropomorphism: a human emotion applied to God so that we better can understand His ways. It expresses the assurance that God will withdraw His severe judgment from those who turn to Him. The Hebrew word for evil often refers to disaster or difficulty without any connotation of moral wickedness.
Here we see the heart of God. Even in the midst of judgment, He calls the people to repent from their sin and turn to Him with all their hearts. God in the Old Testament seems like He is always chastening and judging, but it is only because almost no one repents! He is the same God as the God of mercy, grace, and love seen often in the New Testament. In Him, holiness and justice are perfectly balanced with love and mercy.

Through Joel, God gave a promise that He would destroy the locusts and bless the land so that it would produce again. The people would have plenty, and would know that Jehovah is indeed their God.

**B. Promise of Pentecost**

This blessing leads to the promise of a greater blessing. God promises to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, so that they will prophesy. He will do great wonders in heaven and earth before the great Day of Jehovah comes.

*I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten...And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.—Joel 2:25, 27-28, 32*

This prophecy was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Act 2:17-21). He declared that this prophecy was fulfilled at that time. Not all of it, of course. The signs and wonders in heaven and earth will come just before the Day of Judgement at the end times. But God did send His Spirit, and He did open the way of salvation to all who call upon Him (Mat 11:28-30).

**C. Final Judgment**

This promise leads Joel to another prophecy: in the Day of Judgment, God will bring the nations to justice. Joel speaks in figurative terms, but the thought is clear. All those who oppress God’s people will be judged, but God will bless His people with abundant blessings. The Day of Jehovah will mean judgment upon the heathen, but it will be the fullness of blessing for the people of God.

The Old Testament concept is that God is always in control of all things. Mostly, He works behind the scenes, invisibly motivating and leading sinful men in exercising their own decisions, yet always to accomplish His own perfect will. But there are times when God breaks out dramatically to deal with pent-up sin. He then proves that man is not in control—and man’s presumed independence ends. When this occurs, you do not want to be in opposition to God.
Study Questions Lesson 24
God’s Prediction of His People’s Future: Joel

Please read Lesson 24 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Introduction (1)
1. Give two reasons why Joel is thought to be the earliest of the prophets.
2. What is the purpose of the book of Joel?

The day of the Lord (3)
3. a. What is the “Day of the Lord”?
   b. When does it occur?
4. Describe “prophetic perspective.”

The results of the plague (4)

Call to repentance (A)
5. What do we learn from Joel 2:12-13?
6. Why can it seem like God in the Old Testament is always judging?

Promise of Pentecost (B)
7. How was Joel 2:25ff fulfilled on the day of Pentecost?

Final judgment (C)
8. How will people be treated on the Day of Judgment?
9. Describe the Old Testament’s overall concept regarding God’s control versus man’s control.

Read the Scriptures
For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.

10. List five statements from Joel 1 that show how bad the locust plague was.

Memory
13. Write Joel 2:12 from memory.
14. Write the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets from memory (in the sequence in which they appear in our Bibles).
Lesson 25

God’s Denunciation of Israel’s Sins

Amos

Please review the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets and memorize Amos 5:4. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Introduction

A. Author

The book was written by the prophet Amos, whose name it also bears. He was from Tekoa, a small town about five miles southeast of Bethlehem in the kingdom of Judah. He was by occupation a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees. Previous to the call to bring these prophecies to Israel, he was not a prophet, nor one of those known as “the sons of the prophets.” He prophesied to the people of the northern kingdom during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. The book was written more than two years after the prophecies were spoken (Amos 1:1).

B. Purpose

Amos was sent to the kingdom of Israel. The Israelites had departed from the true worship of Jehovah. They worshipped the golden calves made by Jeroboam I. They lived in wickedness and violence, and yet thought that they were safe from calamity because they were the chosen people of God. It was the purpose of Amos’ prophetic ministry to destroy this illusion by warning of the judgment of God that would be visited on them because of their sins. Amos’ tone is that of thunder and wrath.

The outline of Amos has three parts.

I. God’s judgment against the nations Amos 1-2
II. God’s judgment against Israel Amos 3-6
III. Visions of the coming judgment Amos 7-9

C. Historical Setting

During the times of Elijah and Elisha, Israel, with its capital at Samaria, and Syria, with its capital at Damascus just 100 miles (170 km) away, were approximately equal powers and constantly at war with each other. But during this time, Assyria, to the northeast with its capital at Nineveh, was growing in strength. Assyria then conquers Syria, destroys Damascus, and dominates the region. Israel is next on its list to conquer, but the Assyrian king dies. Two Assyrian generals fight a civil war to determine his successor, and greatly weaken themselves. Israel, however, on the major trade routes,
continues to flourish. Its army also had never been stronger, after being strengthened in preparation to fight Syria.

Jeroboam II, fourth in Jehu's dynasty, had the longest reign of any northern king. Peace, prosperity, and optimism characterized his time in power. There was also an outward religious revival (Amos 4:4; 8:5). Jehu had wiped out Baal worship. The people understood Syria's destruction and Assyria's neutralization as the blessing of God. Signs of outward religion were everywhere: drinking goblets have been found that are styled as sacrificial bowls!

2. God's Judgment against the Nations – chapters 1 - 2

Please read Amos 1.

Amos begins his prophecy with a quotation from Joel. "The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither" (Amos 1:2; see Joel 3:16). With this introduction, Amos begins to predict the woes that God will bring upon the nations. This section is very practical. He begins with those nations farthest away from Israel. Then he mentions the nearer nations, which are also distantly related to Israel. He comes then to Judah, Israel's sister nation and southern neighbor.

As Amos spoke of God's judgment on one after another of Israel's traditional enemies, the people must have shaken their heads in agreement. Even the judgment against Judah was agreeable to them. But step by step, Amos draws closer to Israel itself. Finally he boldly denounces the sins of his audience and announces the exile that will be their punishment.

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek…and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.—Amos 2:6-8

3. God's Judgment against Israel – chapters 3 - 6

Please read Amos 3-5.

There was little true faith in Israel. Terrible social injustice and greed were rampant. Greed, as evidenced in dishonest scales in the marketplaces, leads to social injustice, where the poor lose their lands. The rich people are worshipping on the Sabbath, but stealing from the poor the rest of the week! The people had only a superficial outward religion. Everything was fine on the outside. They thought, "You tell me I don't love God, but look at what I do! God must be pleased, because He is blessing us with peace and prosperity." The flesh delights in formal religion. But when the outward practice of
religion does not result in right conduct during the course of our daily lives, God is greatly offended.

Amos declares boldly what God has decreed. The punishment will be so severe that only a remnant will escape.

\[\text{Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch. — Amos 3:12}\]

This punishment comes because they have not returned to Jehovah. He has chastised them for their sins time after time, but never have they repented. Thus their final punishment must come.

\[\text{I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. — Amos 4:9}\]

God is asking them: if they did not think the difficulties were a sign of God’s disapproval, why do they think the blessings are a sign of God’s approval?

In summary, God condemns them in two areas: 1) empty and false worship, and 2) social injustice.

\[\text{For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live: But seek not Bethel. — Amos 5:4-5}\]

\[\text{Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth...They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat. — Amos 5:7, 10-11}\]

\[\text{I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. — Amos 5:21-24}\]

4. **Visions of Coming Judgment** – chapters 7 - 9

In the last section of Amos, we find five visions that picture the judgments to come upon Israel. The plague of locusts and the fire that devours the great deep symbolize the final judgment. Both of these visions picture the terrible destructiveness of that judgment. But God’s mercy is also pictured. After each of these visions the prophet prays for his people, and God promises to spare them.
The next two visions represent the captivity of Israel by Assyria. Here there is no intercession by the prophet, nor any promise that God will spare Israel.

*Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.—Amos 7:8*

A plumbline is an invariable standard that does not compromise; it never breaks or wears down; it is always right. The vision of the plumbline signifies that God has drawn the line of judgment in the midst of His people. He will no longer spare Israel. Even the royal family will be destroyed. The basket of summer fruit shows that Israel is ripe for judgment.

The final vision, the breaking of the Temple upon the heads of the people, illustrates again that God will bring judgment upon Israel. And yet this is not the end of Amos’ prophecy. Jehovah is still the covenant God, faithful to all His promises. And He promises,

*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.—Amos 9:11-12*

God will again show mercy upon His people. This promise is quoted in Acts 15:16-18 by James, the leader of the Jerusalem Council. He quotes it in order to prove that God has prophesied that the Gentiles will have a place in His Church. Therefore we know that this promise of God has been fulfilled through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a characteristic that is common in the prophets. When they pronounce judgment upon the covenant nation, they also announce blessings that will come through Christ. In this way, they remind the reader that the destruction of the covenant nation will not end the Kingdom of God. The theocracy will continue. More than that, it will attain new heights of glory.

**Study Questions Lesson 25**

**God’s Denunciation of Israel’s Sins: Amos**

Please read Lesson 25 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

**Introduction (1)**

1. a. Who was Amos?
   
   b. When and where did he prophesy?

2. What is the purpose of the book of Amos?

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2 *plumbline* – standard tool for measuring a straight line using a taut string.
3. What was happening in the world at the time of Amos?
4. What was happening in Israel at the time of Amos?

**God’s judgment against the nations (2)**
5. How are Amos’ prophecies very practical in the order presented?

**God’s judgment against Israel (3)**
6. Describe the true spiritual condition of Israel at this time.
7. When is God greatly offended by our “religion”?
8. In what two areas does God condemn Israel?
   
   Use the letters “a” and “b” to mark the two parts of your answer.

**Visions of coming judgment (4)**
9. What visions did Amos receive as symbols of the coming judgment, and what does each vision teach?
   
   Use letters “a” through “e” to mark the five parts of your answer.
10. How do we know that the prophecy of Amos 9:11-12 has been fulfilled?
11. a. What is a common characteristic in the prophets?
    b. What does this accomplish?

**Read the Scriptures**

For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.
13. What is God’s attitude toward their feast days (their outward worship)? Amos 5:21
14. Describe those “that are at ease in Zion.” Amos 6:1ff.
15. For what social sins does Amos condemn Israel? Amos 5:10-13; 8:4-6.

**Thought questions**

The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.
17. Why are God’s people punished for their sins more severely than other people? Amos 3:2.

**Memory**
18. Write Amos 5:4 from memory.
19. Write the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets from memory (in the sequence in which they appear in our Bibles).
Lesson 26
God’s Indictment of His Unfaithful People
Hosea

Please review the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets and memorize Hosea 6:1. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Introduction

A. Author
The author of this book is Hosea, the son of Beeri. Of him we know nothing except what we learn from his book.

B. The Times of Hosea
Hosea tells us that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. Jeroboam II must have been the first king of Israel in whose reign he prophesied. But his ministry did not end there. He probably prophesied until the time of the fall of Samaria. His ministry in the northern kingdom paralleled that of Isaiah in the kingdom of Judah.

The ministry of Hosea (and of Amos, whose work began about the same time as Hosea’s) began shortly after the death of Elisha. Hosea and Amos continued God’s call to the northern kingdom. At this time Israel was in a period of prosperity and grandeur. Jeroboam II had extended her borders from the Dead Sea to the Euphrates River. But this was also a time of great sin. The outward splendor of the times was a cloak for the inward corruption that was eating at Israel’s heart. Despite the present prosperity, the nation was deserving of judgment. And that judgment was beginning to take shape. On the eastern horizon Assyria was beginning to grow into a world empire. And Assyria was the rod that God would use to punish His unfaithful people.

C. Purpose
The northern tribes had been given many opportunities to return to Jehovah. But they had continued in sin, especially the sinful worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. Amos had come to Israel with words of judgment. Hosea’s tone is intimate and personal; he brings them a message of God’s love. In the light of that love, Israel’s unfaithfulness is exceedingly sinful. That sin must be punished. And yet after the punishment will come

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blessing. The punishment will be a time of refining, and then God will again show His mercy.

The outline of Hosea has two parts.

I. Hosea’s marriage: A parable of God’s love  Hosea 1-3
II. Hosea’s message: Israel’s unfaithfulness  Hosea 4-14

2. Hosea’s Marriage – chapters 1-3

Please read Hosea 1-3.

A. Jewish Marriage

In order to understand Hosea, we first must understand the Jewish culture of marriage in biblical times. Marriages were arranged. The parents of the daughter chose the husband for her; she had no say in it. These marriages worked: each partner loved by choice. There was no performance or merit to try and earn the love of the other. In these ways, Jewish marriages were pictures of God’s love for His people. His love is undeserved, and it is by choice: it is unconditional. Nothing can change His love for His people because it is based only on His choice to love.

Marriage was the objective of every woman. To be single in the Old Testament meant that something was radically wrong with you, that your parents could not negotiate a partner for you.

There was a progression to your value as a woman. The most important value was 1) to be married. After this, it was 2) to be fruitful in having children, the more the better, often starting at age 14 or 15. To have no children was a disgrace, seen as a curse of God. Children were a source of economic prosperity, and security in old age. The next source of status was 3) to have many sons, and then 4) for the first born child to be a boy. Girls could be a drain on parents financially, but the more boys, the more status: your family’s work potential went up dramatically with each son. A final source of worth in women, although less so than the other factors, was 5) for the husband to truly love his wife.

Biblical love means self-denial. In marriage, each partner chooses to deny every other person the same access to their time, resources, and emotions. This is the same in our relation to God: we give first priority to our God and deny the world access to our affections. When we put other things before Him in our attention, we are breaking our commitment to Him. When we are friends with the world, we are as enemies to God (Jam 4:4)—we are committing spiritual adultery against our God.

B. Relationships Today

What a contrast Jewish marriage in Bible times is with relationships today. Young people in the world are encouraged to find their own spouse, and the basis is rarely spiritual maturity or character. Instead, the center of attention is on feelings of “love,” based on physical, emotional, and sensual
attraction. People talk about “falling in love,” and by this their meaning is totally emotional, as if the person cannot control their feelings. When this is the case, of course, people can even more easily fall out of love! Then society’s solution is to separate or divorce, so that no one is “unhappy.”

So people of all types focus on packaging themselves to be most attractive: promote strengths and cover up weaknesses. The motive for marrying is to get love, security, and satisfaction. Dating in western countries is a prime example; it has become a selfish activity for personal short-term pleasure. Romantic love becomes a performance based on covering up weaknesses and trying to earn the other’s continued interest.³

C. Hosea’s Marriage

God told Hosea to marry a very sinful woman, a harlot, and have children who would be known as “children of harlotry.” These children were given symbolic names. The first was named “Jezreel,” a sign that God would destroy the family of Jehu, which was then ruling. The second child was named “Lo-ruhamah,” which means “that hath not obtained mercy.” This was God’s message that “I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away” (Hos 1:6). And when the third child was born, God said, “Call his name Lo-ammi [meaning ‘not my people’]: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hos 1:9). The three children thus became God’s message to Israel.

Gomer had all five of the sources of worth for women: she was married, she had multiple children, they were sons, the first born was a son, and her husband loved her in amazing ways. That she threw all this away is amazing. She pictures Israel’s foolish choice of idolatry instead of Jehovah—as much so as Hosea pictures God’s unconditional love.

This object lesson leads to a strong condemnation of Israel’s sin. Israel is personified as a faithless wife who commits adultery continually in spite of her husband’s love. Behind this figure of speech lies a thought that runs through Hosea: Israel is married to God by the covenant at Mount Sinai. She is pledged to be faithful to Him, so all idolatry is spiritual adultery. The idolatrous Israelites, who have never put aside the golden calves of Jeroboam I, but have even worshipped the gods of the heathen, are portrayed by the adulterous wife.

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD…and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.—Hosea 2:19-23

³ See Pathway to Christian Marriage by John Thompson, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.
This figure provides a beautiful background on which God's mercy is displayed. God is the loving husband who is willing to receive the adulterous wife back into His love. He promises to receive His people again, even though they must be chastened for their sins. Now Hosea is also commanded to symbolize this. He is told to love the woman even after she commits adultery. When she is sold into slavery, he buys her for half the price of a slave—symbolizing no value or worth in her, but infinite love in God.

This again is fulfilled in the beauty of the gospel of the New Testament. We have no value or worth to offer to God for our salvation. Stained by sin, we cannot earn His favor. He comes to His children by His own choice in unmerited love.

Many commentators believe that this is the same woman Hosea married as recorded in Hosea 1. But now he does not immediately take this woman as his wife. For a time she is isolated. This is to symbolize the captivity that must overtake Israel before God’s mercy will again be manifested.

This is all a picture to Israel of God’s love for His people. Another purpose for the experience is so that Hosea can identify with God’s own heart toward Israel. Hosea experienced this pain for twenty years!

**D. Was Hosea’s Marriage Real?**

There are two schools of thought about Hosea’s marriage. Some scholars believe that he actually married a harlot, or that he married a wife who became a harlot after her marriage. Others believe that this is a prophecy or vision, which was told to the people but never actually occurred.

There are good reasons why some commentators have taken this literally. It reads like history. Even the names of his wife and children are given. One writer says, “The whole account bears the stamp of reality; indeed, only as real history would the prophet’s words have any effect. For his domestic experience served as a living mirror of Israel’s unfaithful relation to Jehovah” (Robinson).

Nevertheless, there is another side to the story. There are problems raised by this marriage that cannot be ignored. Would not the prophet lose his reputation as a servant of God by marrying a harlot? And, if the children were born about a year apart, would not the lessons of their names lose its effect because of the lapse of time? These questions and others have caused many commentators to conclude that the marriage is an allegory, not an actual fact.

In both views, the lesson of the marriage is the same. It demonstrates the great love of God for His people, and the exceedingly great sinfulness of their unfaithfulness to Him. It provides a backdrop for the message that Hosea proclaims.
3. The Sins of Israel – *chapters 4 - 14*

**A. Condemnation**

The latter section of Hosea consists of prophecies uttered by the prophet. There is no clear division of material here, but overall Hosea points to certain sins of Israel. Robinson lists the following sins that Hosea condemns.

1. Lack of knowledge  “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (4:6).
2. Pride  “And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face” (5:5).
3. Instability  “For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away” (6:4).
4. Worldliness  “Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned” (7:8).
5. Corruption  “They have deeply corrupted themselves” (9:9).
6. Backsliding  “My people are bent on backsliding from me” (11:7).
7. Idolatry  “And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, even idols according to their own understanding” (13:2).

These sins are like the unfaithfulness of Hosea’s wife. And idolatry is the worst, for it is spiritual adultery. It is breaking God’s covenant with Israel.

**B. God’s Judgment and Mercy**

*Please read Hosea 14.*

As the picture of Hosea’s marriage included a beautiful portrayal of God’s love, so the message that Hosea preached included mercy as well as judgment. The emphasis is necessarily on judgment. Israel’s sins must bring judgment from a righteous God:

“They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.” (7:2)

“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (8:7).

“He shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return” (11:5).

And yet even in judgment the mercy of God shines forth:

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground:* for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” (10:12)

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel?... mine heart is turned within me, my repentings [i.e., compassions] are kindled together” (11:8).

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*fallow ground* – land left unplowed and unseeded during growing season; uncultivated; therefore, with a hard crust that is difficult to penetrate—symbolizing a hard heart.
It is on this love of God for His unfaithful people that Hosea bases his call to repentance. Hosea 14:1-3 contains a beautiful plea to Israel to repent. And after this comes a final promise of forgiveness from the God Who loves His people so much (14:4-9).

**Study Questions Lesson 26**  
**God’s Indictment of His Unfaithful People: Hosea**

Please read Lesson 26 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

**Introduction (1)**
1. Describe the times in which Hosea lived.
2. What is the purpose of the book of Hosea?

**Hosea’s marriage (2)**  
**Jewish marriage (A)**
3. a. Describe Jewish marriage in Old Testament times.
   b. How does this mirror God’s love for His people?
4. How did Jewish women derive value?
5. Describe biblical love,
   a. Between two people.
   b. Between God and man.

**Relationships today (B)**
6. a. How is “falling in love” today different from Bible times?
   b. In today’s environment, what can be the focus in relationships?

**Hosea’s marriage (C)**
7. Explain the symbolic meaning of the names given to Hosea’s children.
8. How does Gomer mirror Israel?
9. a. Why does God consider all idolatry as spiritual adultery?
   b. How did Israel commit spiritual adultery?
10. a. How does God respond in Hosea 2:19-23?
    b. How does God instruct Hosea to respond?
    c. How does this mirror God’s response to our sin?

**Was Hosea’s marriage real? (D)**
11. a. Explain the two views about Hosea’s marriage.
    b. What does Hosea’s marriage teach?

**The sins of Israel (3)**  
**Condemnation (A)**
12. What sins of Israel does Hosea condemn?
God’s judgment and mercy (B)

13. Making It Personal For each of the following as declared by Hosea, mention which verse stands out to you and why it does so.
   a. Judgments
   b. Mercies

Read the Scriptures
   For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.


15. How is Israel to be punished? Hos 11:5ff.

16. What will happen after Israel is punished? Hos 11:10ff.; 14:4ff.

17. Why is Hosea 14 especially meaningful?

Thought question
   The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.

18. Trace the history of the theocratic nation as it is symbolically portrayed in Hosea 1-3.

Memory

19. Write Hosea 6:1 from memory.

20. Write the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets from memory (in the sequence in which they appear in our Bibles).

Lesson 27
God’s Promise of Judah’s Deliverance
Isaiah, Part One

Please memorize the outline of Isaiah and Isaiah 1:18. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Introduction

A. Author

   The first verse of this book states that it is “the vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” This verse is the intro-
duction to the entire book. It states that Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah who lived in the eighth century B.C., wrote the prophecies that this book contains.

**B. Interpretation**

1. *The View of the Higher Critics*

   For twenty-five centuries practically no one thought to question this statement. But about two hundred years ago, the Higher Critics began to raise many questions about the Bible. The belief that Isaiah 1:1 is true, and that the prophet Isaiah really wrote this book, was seriously questioned. At first there was only one chapter that was thought to be the product of another author. But soon the entire second section of Isaiah (ch. 40-66) was said to be the product of a great unknown prophet who lived in Babylon during the time of the Exile. Since nothing was known about him, this prophet came to be called Second Isaiah. Critics acclaimed him as the greatest prophet who ever lived.

   At the end of the last century, the Critics decided that Second Isaiah had not written all of chapters 40-66. Now it was claimed that he had written only chapters 40-55. The rest of the book was written by a man who lived in Judah during the time of Nehemiah. He came to be called Third Isaiah. Many Higher Critics have followed this point of view. But no theory has been able to answer all the questions. No theory has been accepted by all the Higher Critics; they violently disagree with one another. But they all agree that Isaiah was not written by one man. They view it as a collection rather than a single work.

2. *The Biblical Evidence*

   We have seen that the Higher Critics are willing to disregard the statement of Isaiah 1:1 concerning authorship. Do they do this because other parts of the Bible support their theories? No, indeed. On the contrary, all the biblical evidence points to the prophet Isaiah as the author of the book that bears his name. Over twenty times the New Testament quotes from this book and names Isaiah as the author of the quoted words. The passage in John 12:37-41 is especially significant. In this passage John says that the unbelief of the people is a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:1, which he calls “the word of Isaiah the prophet.” The reason for their unbelief is also found in Isaiah 6:10. Then John adds, “These things said Esaias [Isaiah], when he saw his glory, and he spake of him” (Joh 12:41). John quotes from portions that the Critics attribute to “Isaiah” and “Second Isaiah,” and says that the same man, Isaiah, spoke these words. The New Testament knows only one author of the book of Isaiah. That author is the prophet of the same name.

3. *Why the Critical View?*

   With this evidence before us, we might well ask why the Critics think it necessary to devise theories that multiply the authors of the book. The Critics have several rules of interpretation to which they would point. But one
main rule underlies all the rest in their view: prediction of the future is impossible. The Critics do not believe that a prophet can foretell the future. Since the second part of Isaiah is clearly a portrayal of future events, they do not believe that Isaiah could have written it. The author must have been a man who lived much later. He did not write actual prophecy. He recorded events that had already happened as if they were still to happen in the future.

Why do the Critics deny that the prophets can predict the future? Because they do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. They believe that the prophets wrote their own ideas. Of course, no man can foretell the future on his own. And since they think that the book of Isaiah is the work of man, not God, they do not believe that the prophet Isaiah could have written the predictive passages.

4. The Important Question

This brings us to a very important question. What is the Old Testament? Is it truly God’s Word? Is God the author of it? The Christian Church has always insisted that the whole Bible is the Word of God. God is the true author, though He used men to record His Word. To this the New Testament testifies (2Ti 3:16; 2Pe 1:21). And the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the hearts of all God’s people, convinces us that the Bible is the Word of God. Such conviction the Higher Critics seem to lack.

It is important for us to remember the real difference between those who believe that Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah and those who do not. The view of the Higher Critics is often presented as if it were the only scholarly view. Anyone who believes that Isaiah is actually the author is scorned and considered to be uneducated. But that is not necessarily the case. The Higher Critics view is not the most scholarly. It does not face all the facts. It does not consider that the Bible is the Word of God. When the Holy Spirit witnesses to us that the Bible is God’s Word, then we will gladly confess that the New Testament statements about this book are true. We will believe that God spoke through the prophet Isaiah.

C. Isaiah and His Times

Isaiah’s ministry in the kingdom of Judah paralleled that of Hosea in the kingdom of Israel. However, Isaiah apparently lived and prophesied longer than did Hosea. When Isaiah began his ministry, the nation was at the height of its prosperity. The reign of Uzziah was the closest approach to the glory of Solomon that Judah had ever experienced. But the outward prosperity was no sign of inward prosperity. The spiritual health of the nation was none too good. While the kings Uzziah and Jotham exercised godly leadership, God held the forces of evil and decay in check. But when Ahaz came to the throne, he led the people of Judah away from Jehovah. He also drew Judah into an alliance with Assyria that was to have disastrous consequences. When Hezekiah came to the throne, he sought to undo his father’s folly and
lead the people back to God. He was partly successful. But Ahaz had set in motion some forces that could not be reversed. The latter days of Isaiah’s ministry were quite a contrast to the prosperity that had marked the beginning of his work. Judah was declining, and God’s judgment upon her sin was beginning to appear on the horizon.

There were four national crises, then, that formed the backdrop to Isaiah’s message.

1. Israel and its ally Syria attack Judah for not joining their rebellion against Assyria. God delivers Judah, even with all its sins, because of His promise to David.
2. The Assyrians destroy Samaria in 722 B.C. and deport Israel. Samaria is only 40 miles from Jerusalem, one day’s forced march.
3. Hezekiah started spiritual renewal and stopped paying tribute to Assyria, which then attacks Judah in 701 and lays siege to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is miraculously delivered by God.
4. God would use Babylonia to judge Judah some 100 year later. This was all predictive prophecy, because it happened long after Isaiah’s time.

D. Purpose

The whole book of Isaiah teaches the grand lesson that salvation is completely a work of grace. The first chapter of Isaiah speaks of redemption.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—Isaiah 1:18

That is enlarged upon throughout the entire book. At times redemption is expressed in national terms as salvation from hostile nations. But more often redemption is the salvation of man from the penalty and power of sin. And especially in the latter part of Isaiah, the redemption of God’s Church is the chief subject of the prophet’s message.

The outline of Isaiah is in five parts.

I. The sins of God’s people Isaiah 1-12
II. The judgments of God Isaiah 13-27
III. The future of Judah Isaiah 28-35
IV. The crises of Hezekiah’s reign Isaiah 36-39
V. The blessings of God’s Church Isaiah 40-66

E. Biblical Sequence

It is important to remember that we are studying the Old Testament books in the same sequence as their contents took place. This helps us link each book with its historical context. For the Minor Prophets, this sequence is sometimes different from the order in which they appear in our Bibles. However, for the Major Prophets, of which Isaiah is the first, their historical sequence and the order in our Bibles are the same.
Please memorize this list of the Major Prophets. We will ask you to write it from memory at the end of the study questions.

Books of the Major Prophets
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

F. Sermons

The prophecies of Isaiah cannot be catalogued strictly according to subjects. They are like sermons. As a sermon on sin may and should contain material about salvation from sin, so Isaiah’s prophecies include sin, judgment, and salvation. In a sense, many of these prophecies may be considered as sermons preached to the people of Judah. Now, a good sermon has a theme, and Isaiah’s prophecies have various themes. On the basis of the themes we can catalogue his prophecies. But we should remember that each section will also contain material on other topics. There is a pattern in each section: 1) condemnation of sin, 2) call to repent, 3) promise of deliverance, 4) a song of praise.

2. The Sins of Judah — chapters 1 - 12

Please read Isaiah 1, 2, 6, and 9.

Isaiah 1 is an introduction to the prophecies of Isaiah. It also introduces us to the sins of Judah, the subject of the remainder of the first section.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.—Isaiah 1:2

Judah has two major sins that receive special attention: Judah’s refusal to repent when chastened by God due to pride, and Judah’s formal continuation of religious ceremonies when the hearts of the people were far from God.

Isaiah does not hesitate to spell out the sins by which Judah has provoked God. In addition to lack of repentance and formalism in worship, he points to the practice of foreign customs (2:5-6), idolatry (2:8), oppression of the poor (3:13-15), love of luxurious finery by the women (3:16), greediness (5:8), and love of strong drink (5:11-12).

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple…

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people
Isaiah does not stand apart from the people in their sins. In the vision of Isaiah 6, he sees the holiness of the Lord. It must have been a truly awesome sight, one that literally took his breath away.

God used this vision to teach us of Himself. “Sitting upon a throne.” In the ancient world, the monarch would walk about his throne room, discussing matters with his royal court. Sometimes there would be heated debates about the best way forward. But when the king sat down upon his throne, all discussion was over! The king would then pronounce his final decisions, and no one could speak against them. The king sitting inspired awe and absolute respect for his authority. “High and lifted up.” The height of a king’s throne spoke of his importance. The more important his kingdom, the more elevated was the throne. “His train filled the temple.” The size and length of a royal robe also spoke of the power of the ruler. This train filling the Temple tells us that God has absolute power over all things.

God used this vision not only to teach us of Himself, but to call Isaiah to his prophetic ministry. Notice his immediate response: whenever we see the holiness of the Lord, the magnitude of our sin leaps into our consciousness, and we must confess it. Isaiah begins to do this right away, and also takes his responsibility for the sins of the nation. Thus, when he is told to prophesy to people who will not hear, but will continue in sin until God’s judgment falls, he is able to proclaim God’s word with a sympathetic heart.

To Isaiah was given the blessed privilege of prophesying about the coming of the Messiah of God more than any of the other prophets. His message included both predictions about the Messiah Himself and descriptions of the glorious Messianic Age that He would usher in. These are found throughout the book of Isaiah, but the reign of Ahaz appears to have been a time when many such prophecies were given to Isaiah to proclaim. The peculiar circumstances of that time provided an apt occasion for such prophecies. During Ahaz’ reign, Syria and Israel united to fight Assyria. When Judah would not join them, they turned against her. God sent Isaiah to Ahaz with messages of assurance that Judah would be spared. As a sign to the unbelieving king, God gave the wonderful prophecy of the virgin birth of the Christ (Isa 7:14-17).

But Ahaz had no faith. He preferred to trust in man and called for help from the king of Assyria. This led to other prophecies of punishment for Judah, of the Assyrian captivity of Israel, and of the final destruction of Assyria. Among these are found prophecies of the birth and reign of the Messiah. Isaiah 9:1-7 is a beautiful example of such messianic prophecies. It emphasizes the kingly work of Christ. It shows that God’s kingdom will come to its perfect expression in the future, when God sends the eternal King to be born as a man.
The main part of messianic prophecies occur in chapters 40-66. These are the focus of the next lesson.


Isaiah is primarily interested in Judah—her sins, her judgment, her salvation. But the age in which Isaiah lived was like our own. No nation lived to itself. Judah was involved with many other nations, some of whom were her enemies. Isaiah’s prophecies include oracles of judgment against these nations.

The prophecies of Isaiah often speak of the future. Sometimes this is done in general terms, as in Isaiah 24-27. In these chapters, we have a picture of the judgments that God will send upon the earth.

The people of God are involved in these judgments. But they are judged in order that they may be purified from their sins. On the other hand, the judgments that visit the enemies of God destroy them completely.


Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.—Isaiah 28:16

The future is also presented in more concrete terms, as in the prophecy in Isaiah 28-35. The Lord again clearly points to spiritual pride in the people as the reason for His judgment. He gives them hope, but they will not come:

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold…the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.—Isaiah 29:13-14

That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD…For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.—Isaiah 30:9, 15

The focus in this section is on the relations between Judah and Assyria. Assyria was the dominant power of the day. Judah feared that Assyria would attack her. There was a party in Judah that counseled seeking aid from Egypt. Isaiah denounces the folly and sin of trusting in Egypt. He announces that Assyria will indeed come against Judah, but will be destroyed by the hand of God.

While the enemies of God’s people face total destruction, the future of the people of God is pictured in glowing terms.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.—Isaiah 35:10

5. The Reign of Hezekiah – chapters 36 - 39

Isaiah 36-39 is a historical section that forms a bridge to the last section of Isaiah (covered in the next lesson). These chapters tell of two events, both of which also are recorded in Kings. First is the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib’s 185,000 man army (Isa 37:36; 2Ki 19:35), which is the fulfillment of the prophecy against Assyria contained in the previous section. Hezekiah had extended the fortifications of Jerusalem during this time.

Then comes Hezekiah’s sickness, his prayer, and the miraculous extension of his life for 15 years. This probably occurred before the invasion of Sennacherib, but it is told last so that it can form an introduction to the second part of the book. Isaiah 40-66 assumes that Israel is in captivity in Babylon and will be delivered. But that captivity had not yet occurred when Isaiah wrote. So the story of Hezekiah’s sickness is told, with emphasis on the messengers from Babylon. Chapter 39 ends with a prediction of the Babylonian captivity, and thus prepares for the rest of Isaiah.
Study Questions Lesson 27
God’s Promise of Judah’s Deliverance: Isaiah, Part 1

Please read Lesson 27 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Introduction (1)
Interpretation (B)
The biblical evidence (2)
1. What does the New Testament say about the authorship of the book of Isaiah?

Why the critical view? (3)
2. Why do the Critics question the authorship of Isaiah?
The important question (4)

3. a. What is the important question?
   b. What is its answer?
   c. Why is this the correct answer?

Isaiah and his times (C)

4. Describe the times in which Isaiah lived.

Purpose (D)

5. What is the purpose of the book of Isaiah?

Sermons (F)

6. What pattern do we find in each section of Isaiah?

The sins of Judah (2)

7. a. What are Judah’s two major sins?
   b. What other sins does he also address?

8. What do we learn from Isaiah 6:1-8?

Judgments on the nations (3)

9. In prophesies of judgment when God’s people are caught up in the destruction, how are they treated differently from other nations?

What the future holds (4)

10. What is the subject of chapters 28-35?

The reign of Hezekiah (5)

11. How do chapters 36-39 form a bridge to the last section, chapters 40-66?

Read the Scriptures

For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.

12. Write the key phrases and references for six verses from Isaiah 1-5 that point out Israel’s sins.

13. How does God describe pride in Isaiah 2:11 and 5:21?

14. Evil and good are mentioned in Isaiah 5:20. How does this apply in our day?

15. What was Isaiah commissioned to proclaim? Isa 6:6ff.

16. What was the sign of the virgin-born child intended to teach Ahaz? Isa 7:1-17.


18. What do we learn about the earth in Isaiah 11:1-9?


20. What principles do we learn from Isaiah 26:3-9?
21. How was Hezekiah used to set the stage for the Babylonian captivity?
   Isa 39.

**Thought question**

*The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.*

22. Why is the Higher Critics' view of the authorship of Isaiah a denial of the inspiration of the Bible?

**Memory**

23. Write the outline of Isaiah from memory.
24. Write Isaiah 1:18 from memory.
25. Write the books of the Major Prophets from memory.

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**Lesson 28**

**God’s Promise of Messianic Salvation**

*Isaiah, Part Two*

*Please memorize Isaiah 53:4-6 and 55:11. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.*

1. **Introduction**

**A. Isaiah’s Beautiful Message**

The second section of Isaiah (ch. 40-66) ranks among the most sublime literature in all the sacred writings. For breadth of vision, for beauty of expression, and for presentation of New Testament truths, these chapters from Isaiah’s pen stand out in all the Old Testament.

His contribution to the message of redemption is profound. Even if we did not have the New Testament, there is enough of the gospel of Christ here to meet man’s need of the good news. It is still true, for example, that we go to Isaiah when we want a clear, beautiful, expressive description of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice at Calvary. Isaiah, more than any other Old Testament writer, speaks directly to the New Testament Christian.

In this part of Isaiah, there is much prophecy that is fulfilled in the New Testament. Because of this, we could be tempted to assume that these chapters have no connection with the times in which Isaiah lived. Nothing could be more misleading. These prophecies play an important part in the devel-
opment of the theocracy. They are a link between Israel in the days of Heze-
kiah and the Church of Jesus Christ.

B. Isaiah’s Pertinent Message

Joseph A. Alexander⁵ points out four sins of which the people of Judah
were guilty: idolatry, formalism, spiritual pride, and unbelief. The first two
of these sins had to do with the ritual of worship.
1) **Idolatry** was a perversion of the worship of the true God.
2) **Formalism** was a misuse of the ritual arising from the idea that God would
accept anyone who carried out the ritual, even if his heart was not in it.

The second set of sins revolved around the fact that Israel was the covenant
nation.
3) **Spiritual pride** was evidenced by the prevalent belief that all Gentiles
would be damned and all Jews would be saved—in spite of their contin-
uing sin and lack of repentance.
4) The particular form of **unbelief** that was very common was the thought
that the Kingdom of God was doomed to destruction. Men saw that Is-
rael must be punished for her sins. They thought that the Kingdom of
God was inseparably connected to the covenant nation, and that God’s
purposes were being defeated by the sins of His people.

The latter prophecies of Isaiah deal with these four sins and errors. Both
idolatry and formalism are denounced, and the punishment of those who
indulge in them is set forth. And throughout the section there is clear ex-
pression of the fact that apostate Israel will be punished, but the true wor-
shippers of God will be blessed. Not only so, but God proclaims that the
spiritual Kingdom of God will be separated from the physical nation when
the Messiah comes, and will become the source of great blessing for God’s
true people.

C. Isaiah’s Messianic Message

This section of Isaiah meets the needs of the people of Isaiah’s time. But
at the same time it looks forward to the blessings of the Messiah’s reign. In
this way Isaiah is God’s instrument in preparing His people for the great
change that was to take place in the theocracy. In Isaiah’s time, the nation
was beginning its final decline, and the Exile was clearly visible on the hori-
zon. The Spirit of God enabled Isaiah to look beyond the Exile and to bring
hope to His people through the glorious picture of the Messianic Age.

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⁵ **Joseph Addison Alexander** (1809-1860) – American biblical scholar; born in Philadel-
pia, Pennsylvania, the third son of Archibald Alexander. He graduated from Princeton
University and, from 1838, served in professorships at Princeton Theological Seminary.
2. The Salvation of True Israel – chapters 40 - 43

Please read Isaiah 40-42.

This passage, beginning with the beautiful “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” of Isaiah 40:1, speaks to the true Church, the “spiritual Israel” within the sinful nation. Spiritual Israel consists of all those who had true faith in God. The nation of Israel, consisting of all its citizens, was blessed by God to enjoy outward prosperity and safety as a nation when they obeyed God’s Law, as specified in the National Covenant made at Mount Sinai. But now we see the difference between spiritual and unspiritual, inward and outward, belief and unbelief, faith and no faith. Only those with true faith in God would be saved from their sins. All the people of God, whether in the Old Testament or the New, are saved by faith. The Church consists of all men and women of faith throughout all ages.6

The comfort of the Church lies in the coming of God, Who will “come with strong hand, and his arm will rule for him...He shall feed his flock like a shepherd...and shall gently lead those that are with young” ( Isa 40:10-11). This God is the One before Whom all the nations are as nothing, and the idols of the heathen as less than nothing. Therefore Israel may rest assured that, although the heathen would seek to overthrow God’s Church, they shall not succeed. Israel’s comfort lies in the assuring voice of God,

Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.—Isaiah 41:9-10

In Isaiah 42 we learn of the Servant of Jehovah. He is here introduced as the Savior of mankind, Whose work will be accomplished with the greatest patience and tenderness. But He is also the head of Israel, and the sinful nation has been unfaithful to its head. Therefore, the prophet turns to denunciation of Israel’s sin. But he does not stop here, for the nation of Israel contains the spiritual Israel that is the delight of Jehovah, and so the prophet breaks out with promises of protection and deliverance. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee (Isa 43:2). As God once delivered the Israelites from Egypt, now He will destroy Babylon for their sake. But above all He will redeem from sin those who have faith. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins” (Isa 43:25).

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6 See The True Israel of God by L. R. Shelton, Jr.; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.
3. The Exile and Restoration – chapters 44 - 48

Please read Isaiah 44-45.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.—Isaiah 45:22

In Isaiah 44-48, the restoration from the Babylonian Exile is clearly in view. We have in these chapters a marvelous prediction that Cyrus is to be like a shepherd of God who will “perform all my [i.e., Jehovah's] pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid” (Isa 44:28). Even the heathen rulers are under the sovereign hand of God. As a sign of God’s sovereignty, Isaiah foretells the defeat of Babylon’s idols and the fall of that great and wicked city. These predictions are held before the sinful nation to call her to repentance.

But since God has uttered predictions before and Israel would not hearken, and since Israel now will not turn from her sin, God will put her in the fire of adversity. Israel will suffer because of her sins, but will come out of exile with rejoicing.

4. The Servant of Jehovah – chapters 49 - 53

Please read Isaiah 52-53.

In Isaiah 42 we were introduced to the figure of the Servant of Jehovah, Who will save mankind. In Isaiah 49-53 this figure is brought to the fore several times. Each time we learn more about Him, until the fullest description of the Servant and His work is presented in Isaiah 53. In Isaiah 49 the Servant is told by God that His work will not be limited to the salvation of people of faith in Israel. He is also to be a light to the Gentiles, “that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6). In Isaiah 50, the Servant speaks of His sufferings, but with no indication of the reason for those sufferings.

This leads us to the greatest “Servant” passage: Isaiah 52:13-53:12. This passage is a song consisting of five stanzas of three verses each. Each stanza is essential to the full understanding of the passage. The thought may be best understood if we set forth the teaching of these stanzas in order.

1. The Servant will be exalted in spite of His great suffering, which is for the salvation of the nations (Isa 52:13-15).
2. The Servant is rejected by men who see no beauty in Him (53:1-3).
3. The Servant suffers as a substitute who bears our sins and purchases our salvation (53:4-6).
4. The Servant’s suffering extends even to a substitutionary death (53:7-9).
5. The Servant through His suffering will justify His people and receive His own exaltation (53:10-12).
This passage presents to our gaze the work of the Servant of God, Jesus Christ. There is none other to whom this can refer. One might almost think that it was written by someone who stood at the foot of the cross, rather than by one who lived centuries before. Even today, with the wealth of New Testament teaching at our disposal, we turn to this passage when we want to describe the work of Christ. Here we see that God enabled Isaiah to bridge the gap of time and to present to the ancient Church of God the assurance that Jehovah would provide perfect salvation for His people.

5. The Blessings of the Church – chapters 54 - 56

Please read Isaiah 55.

This wonderful prophecy of Christ naturally leads the prophet to a description of the blessings that He will bring to His Church. Immediately he turns to a description of the glories that will come to the Church, and the confidence that God’s people may have: God will never forsake them.

*For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*—Isaiah 54:7

Then the prophet utters a word of invitation which shows that the Servant will open the doors of the Church to the entire world in free grace.

*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*—Isaiah 55:1

No more shall there be a distinction between Jew and Gentile. All who love God, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be blessed; and all who disobey God, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be punished.

6. God’s Dealings with the Jews – chapters 57 - 59

Please read Isaiah 59.

Isaiah again turns to the relationship of God to the Jews. He spares nothing to demonstrate that the sinful nation will be destroyed. The Jews are especially guilty of hypocrisy. They perform the religious ceremonies, yet continue to engage in all sorts of evil practices. As a result, God turns away from them.

*Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*—Isaiah 59:1-2

Therefore destruction will rush upon them. But for the true spiritual Israel, the Church of God within the wicked nation, “the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD” (Isa 59:20).
7. The Character of the Messianic Age – chapters 60 - 66

Please read Isaiah 60.

Isaiah ends his prophecy by portraying the blessings that await God’s people in the coming age. In that age God will greatly glorify Zion, causing all the nations to come to her. The Servant will be the One through Whom this will be accomplished. It is through His ministry that blessing comes to Zion, greater blessings than ever seen before on the face of the earth. As an example, God tells them that in that time,

*It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer;
and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*—Isaiah 65:24

At the same time, however, the Messianic Age will be a time of destruction for the enemies of God. And the prophet must face the fact that Israel as a nation has broken the covenant God made with her. The Jews therefore are rejected, although God’s blessings upon His people are presented in the picture of the new heavens and the new earth.

8. Conclusion

These latter chapters of Isaiah’s prophecy bring us closer to the New Testament than any other comparable portion of the Old Testament. Indeed, we might say that they place us in the New Testament. We need not be at all amazed that Christians have found these chapters so precious. Martin Luther said that every Christian, at any cost, ought to memorize Isaiah 53. God marvelously used Isaiah, the son of Amoz, graphically to present the truth that the Old Testament exists to point men to the New.

Isaiah’s message also points to the future of the Kingdom of God. In his day, Judah was declining. The captivity was drawing near. Isaiah predicted the Exile. He realized that it would mean the destruction of Israel as a nation. But he was not pessimistic about the future of God’s kingdom. Within the nation Israel, he recognized a godly minority who were the true people of God. They were the Kingdom of God within the covenant-breaking nation. They would not be destroyed. And some day, in God’s time, through the line of David continued in them, the Messiah would come to bring the Kingdom of God into a new and glorious era.
Study Questions Lesson 28
God’s Promise of Messianic Salvation:
Isaiah, Part 2

Please read Lesson 28 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Introduction (1)
Isaiah’s beautiful message (A)
1. How is Isaiah linked to the New Testament?

Isaiah’s pertinent message (B)
2. Define the sin of formalism.
3. How did the following sins show themselves?
   a. Spiritual pride
   b. Unbelief

Isaiah’s messianic message (C)
4. How does this section prepare Israel for the future of the theocracy?

The salvation of true Israel (2)
5. a. What is “spiritual Israel”?
   b. How does it differ from the nation of Israel?
6. Regarding the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 42,
   a. Who is He?
   b. What will He accomplish?

The Exile and restoration (3)
7. Describe the relationship between God and heathen rulers.

The Servant of Jehovah (4)
8. What more do we learn about the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 49-50?
9. What do we learn about the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12?
   Use letters “a” through “e” to mark the five parts of your answer.
10. Making It Personal What is your response to this passage being written ~700 years before Jesus Christ?

The blessings of the Church (5)
11. How will God bless people of faith?

God’s dealings with the Jews (6)
12. a. How will God deal with the nation of Judah?
   b. Why?

The character of the messianic age (7)
13. Describe the character of the messianic age.
Read the Scriptures

For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.

14. According to Matthew 3, to whom does Isaiah 40:3-5 refer?
15. What do we learn about idols in Isaiah 40:19-20 and 44:9-18?
16. What do we learn about God in Isaiah 45:21-23?
17. What does God tell us about Himself in Isaiah 46:9-11?
18. From Isaiah 55, write out the verse and reference, other than verse 1, that promises salvation to those who call upon God.
19. List the characteristics of the new heavens and the new earth.
   Isa 65:17ff.

Thought questions

The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.

18. Why is Christ presented as a servant?
19. Is the picture of the new heavens and new earth in Isaiah 65 to be understood literally or figuratively?

Memory

20. Write Isaiah 53:4-6 from memory.

Lesson 29

God’s Promise of Mercy after Judgment

Micah

Please review the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets and memorize Micah 6:8. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Introduction

A. The Prophet

This book is the work of Micah, a resident of Moresheth-gath, a village about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He should not be confused with the other prophet Micaiah (for Micah and Micaiah are different forms of the
same name), who prophesied to king Ahab on the eve of the battle against Ramoth-gilead (1Ki 22:8). Micah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, although he began his ministry slightly later than did Isaiah and probably ended his ministry somewhat earlier. Thus he faced the same types of situations as Isaiah.

B. The Nature of the Book

The book of Micah is probably a condensation of the messages that Micah proclaimed throughout his ministry. The book is composed of three messages, each of which begins with the word “Hear” (Mic 1:2; 3:1; 6:1). In each part the same general themes occur. There is a denunciation of Israel’s sin, a warning of judgment that is to come as punishment for that sin, and a promise of mercy after the judgment has been fulfilled. But each part has a different emphasis. The first section emphasizes judgment, with only a short promise of mercy at the end. The second emphasizes the blessings that will come in the latter days, when “the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it” (Mic 4:1). The third part places the emphasis upon a call to repentance.

2. Themes

Read Micah 4 and 7.

A. The Sins of Judah

Micah preached to the same people as did Isaiah. He therefore held before Judah and Israel the same sins that Isaiah unveiled. Biting denunciation of the sins of the people came from Micah’s lips. Hear his charge of oppression:

And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage...The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.—Micah 2:2, 9

Hear his denunciation of the perversity of the people:

If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.—Micah 2:11

The grasping prophets of the times are pictured:

Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.—Micah 3:5

Nor does he spare wicked shopkeepers and the rich who are quick to do evil.
The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.—Micah 3:11

Where sin is found in Judah, Micah is there to denounce it. However, God seems to have kept him separate from political matters. Isaiah was the prophet to the kings; Micah is called to reprove the people.

B. God’s Judgment on Sinful Judah

Micah not only points out their sin, he also warns of the judgment of God upon Israel and Judah because of their sins.

Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard...For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.—Micah 1:6, 9

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.—Micah 3:12

This is the first prophecy that Jerusalem will be destroyed, which must have been a shock to the people. They had understood that God would preserve the Temple no matter what (1Ki 9:3). Although the prophecy of Micah contains great strains of mercy, there is no indication that God’s mercy will overlook the sins of His people. God is holy. His holiness requires punishment of sin. Before the final mercy is sent, both Israel and Judah must receive their just punishment.

C. The Latter Days

In the fourth chapter of Micah, we have a beautiful picture of the blessings that will spring forth from the Messianic Age. This picture is presented in Old Testament language. It speaks of Zion and Jerusalem. But the thoughts it presents are New Testament thoughts. The Kingdom of God is for all people. God will judge all nations. Peace shall be universal. God will bring together the outcasts of the world. This is the Kingdom of Christ—a kingdom that is not of this world. It is a kingdom of joy and blessing and peace that reaches to the spiritually poor and needy of all nations. It is the goal toward which the Old Testament theocracy always presses.

The first verses of Micah 4 are also found in Isaiah 2:2-4. It is most probable that Micah originally uttered these words, and that Isaiah quoted them, using them as a text for his prophecy. From this we learn that the words of the prophets were recognized as the Word of God, and could be quoted as authoritative and binding.
D. The Birth of Christ

The best-known prophecy from Micah is that in Micah 5:2.\(^7\)

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

This prophecy of the birthplace of Christ led the Magi to Him many centuries after it was first spoken. In it we see that the Messiah is human, because His birthplace is mentioned. We also see that He is divine, because He is eternal.

From this prophecy, Micah develops his picture of what Messiah will do. “And he shall stand and feed [His flock] in the strength of the LORD...And this man shall be the peace” (Mic 5:4-5). Through the work of the Messiah, the blessing of God shall come upon the people of God.

E. The Call to Repentance

The prophet of God is not satisfied simply to uncover sin, to warn of judgment, and to promise mercy. As a true servant of the God Who loves Israel, he must call to repentance. That call is touching. It comes from the very mouth of God, pleading with His sinful people to consider His works on their behalf. “O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me” (Mic 6:3). This leads to the question of how God’s people shall come before Him. Does He seek many offerings and great actions of atonement?

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah 6:8

This is one of the grandest, most sublime statements of the nature of true religion that we find anywhere in Scripture.

3. Purpose

We can now see that an outline of Micah is difficult to make. The best we can do is show the various emphases of each section.

I. Prophecy emphasizing judgment Micah 1-2
II. Prophecy emphasizing the reign of Christ Micah 3-5
III. Prophecy emphasizing repentance Micah 6-7

The purpose of Micah’s short book is to show God’s complaint against the sin of Israel and Judah, to warn of the judgment that will come because

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\(^7\) See Prophecies and Fulfillments Concerning the Messiah for a list of all Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and their exact fulfillments in the New Testament, complete with Scripture texts; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.
of this sin, and to point beyond the judgment to the salvation that God will provide through His Messiah.

**Study Questions  Lesson 29  
God’s Promise of Mercy after Judgment: Micah**

*Please read Lesson 29 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.*

**Introduction (1)**
1. What does each section of Micah emphasize?

**Themes (2)**

*The sins of Judah (A)*
2. List the people’s four sins condemned in Micah 2.

*God’s judgment on sinful Judah (B)*
3. Why can mercy not remove punishment?

*The latter days (C)*
4. What do we learn about the Messianic Age from Micah 4?
5. What do we learn from Micah 4:1-3 being quoted in Isaiah 2:2-4?

*The birth of Christ (D)*
6. What do we learn about the Messiah from Micah 5:2?

*The call to repentance (E)*
7. How are God’s people to come before Him according to Micah 6:8?

**Purpose (3)**
8. What is the purpose of Micah?

**Read the Scriptures**

*For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.*

9. What judgment will God bring upon His sinful people?
   *Mic 1:5ff.; 3:9ff.*


11. What historical examples does God use in calling Israel to repentance?
   *Mic 6:1ff.*

12. What do we learn about God in Micah 7:18-20?
Thought question

The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.

13. The term “latter days” in the Old Testament refers to both the New Testament age and the time after the return of Christ. Show how “prophetic perspective” explains this broad use of the term. (See Lesson 24 section 3.)

Memory

14. Write Micah 6:8 from memory.

15. Write the list of pre-exilic Minor Prophets from memory (in the sequence in which they appear in our Bibles).

16. Making It Personal
   a. What are the main lessons you have learned during this course?
   b. How valuable has this course been to you?

Thank you for taking this course. Please write now for your next course OT8, to continue your studies of God’s Word.
Memory Verses

Please review all the verses you have memorized on a regular basis: daily for the first weeks after memorization, and weekly for the next few months, and monthly thereafter. If you do not review, they will be forgotten. God will bless His Word hidden in our hearts.

Genesis 6:5  “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Genesis 15:6  “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

Exodus 12:13  “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 19:5  “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.”

Leviticus 20:26  “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”

Numbers 6:24-26  “The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace”

Deuteronomy 6:4-5  “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Joshua 1:8  “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Judges 21:25  “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Ruth 1:16  “And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

1 Samuel 2:3  “Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”

1 Samuel 15:22b  “…Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

1 Samuel 16:7b  “…for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”
2 Samuel 7:16  “And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

Psalm 119:9, 11  “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word…Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Proverbs 3:5-6  “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13  “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Job 1:21  “And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

1 Kings 8:23  “And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.”

2 Chronicles 7:14  “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Joel 2:12  “Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.”

Amos 5:4  “For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live.”

Hosea 6:1  “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.”

Isaiah 1:18  “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Isaiah 53:4-6  “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Isaiah 55:11  “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Micah 6:8  “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”
Old Testament Time Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BC</th>
<th>duration</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>~4000+</td>
<td>(7 days)</td>
<td>Creation (Gen 1-2)</td>
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<td>~3000</td>
<td>(1 day)</td>
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<td>~2000</td>
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<td>Theocratic Beginnings</td>
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<td>~3000 Noah, Flood, Tower of Babel (Gen 8-11)</td>
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<td>~2000 Abraham 100 Gen 12-23</td>
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<td>- covenant (one-way, unconditional)</td>
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<td>Isaac Ishmael 150 Gen 24-26</td>
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<td>Joseph and 11 brothers 400</td>
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<td>slavery in Egypt</td>
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<td>~1500 Theocratic Establishment</td>
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<td>Moses – preparation 80 Exo 1-2</td>
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<td>~1500 The Exodus 1 Exo 3-40</td>
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<td>- covenant (two-way, conditional) Exo 19-24</td>
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<td>Law: Mount Sinai (9 mo.) Leviticus</td>
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<td>Conquest of the land 7 Joshua</td>
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<td>David 40 1-2Sa, 1Ch</td>
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<td>Solomon 40 1Kings 1-11, 2Ch</td>
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<td>Theocratic Decline</td>
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<td>931 The Divided Kingdom 209</td>
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<td>722 Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria Jonah, Amos, Micah, Hosea</td>
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<td>Judah Alone 136 Joel, Zephaniah</td>
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<td>612 Babylon overthrows Assyria Isaiah</td>
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<td>606 - first deportation of Judah Habakkuk</td>
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<td>586 Southern Kingdom falls Jeremiah</td>
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<td>Theocratic Transition</td>
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<td>458</td>
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<td>- captivity in Babylon 50</td>
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<td>536 Return of the Remnant 20</td>
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<td>516 Zerubbabel returns, rebuilds the Temple Haggai, Zechariah</td>
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<td>458 Ezra returns, restores the priesthood Ezra, Esther</td>
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<td>445 Nehemiah returns, rebuilds the wall Nehemiah</td>
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<td>Malachi Malachi</td>
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Overview of Courses OT1 – OT9

In this course series, the books of the Old Testament are covered in the sequence in which they were written, not necessarily in the sequence found in our Bibles.

Course/Lesson

Part One  Theocratic Beginnings

OT1  Overview, Genesis: Creation, Fall, Flood; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

Part Two  Theocratic Establishment

OT2  Exodus: Plagues, Passover, Law, Tabernacle; Leviticus: Sacrifice

OT3  Numbers: Discipline; Deuteronomy: Obedience; Joshua: Warfare

Part Three  Theocratic Development

OT4  Judges; Ruth; 1 Samuel: Samuel, King Saul; 2 Samuel: King David

OT5  Introduction and Psalms; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song; Job

Part Four  Theocratic Decline

OT6  Kings: to Israel’s Captivity, to Judah’s Captivity; Chronicles

OT7  The Prophets; Joel; Amos; Hosea; Isaiah; Micah

OT8
30.  God’s Picture of the Universal Savior  
     (Jonah)
31.  God’s Guarantee of Covenant Faithfulness  
     (Obadiah)
32.  God’s Warning from Nineveh’s Destruction  
     (Nahum)
33.  God’s Warning of Coming Wrath  
     (Zephaniah)
34.  God’s Explanation of Coming Punishment  
     (Habakkuk)
35.  God’s Punishment of Sinful Judah  
     (Jeremiah)
36.  Covenant Nation Mourns Its Destruction  
     (Lamentations)
37.  God’s Assurance of Blessing after Punishment  
     (Ezekiel)

OT9  Part Five  Theocratic Transition

38.  Covenant People under Gentile Dominion  
     (Daniel)
39.  Covenant People under Divine Protection  
     (Esther)
40.  Covenant People Return to Their Land  
     (Ezra–Nehemiah)
41.  God’s Call to Faithful Service  
     (Haggai)
42.  God’s Promise of Future Glory  
     (Zechariah)
43.  God’s Demand for Full Repentance  
     (Malachi)
Detailed Course Instructions

1. **Procedure for Taking the Course**
   a. The reading material for this course consists of the reading text printed at the beginning of each lesson of this study guide.
   b. Before beginning to read, please pray for God’s enabling to learn spiritually.
   c. Before you begin a lesson, please read the reading text completely.
   d. After reading the text, answer the related questions in this study guide. The lessons in this course are “open book,” which often enhances learning by removing unnecessary pressure. In addition, some questions ask for a personal response, where the answer will not be found in the reading material. In this case, we ask only for your honesty and best effort.
   e. The questions are designed to be thought through carefully. Several of the questions are sensitive; they have to do with your heart attitudes. So please do not rush, or you will be defeating the purpose of the course! Answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. The answers are confidential.
   f. Do not go to the next question until you have answered the previous one.

2. **Answer Pages**
   Please write short and clear answers. Please write or type your answers on regular 8.5 x 11 inch (A4 metric) paper, or on the preprinted answer sheets if provided. Please write clearly and neatly, and if possible print. Note each page with Lesson number, each answer with Question number, and skip a line between questions.

3. **Supplies**
   Paper, pen, and Bible are needed to complete your assignments. The King James Version is quoted, but you may use another version if you do not have a KJV.

4. **Completion of Assignments**
   a. If taking this course with a local coordinator, please follow their instructions.
   b. If you are taking this course as individual independent study (non-graded), save your answer sheets for future reference. (Skip instructions 5 & 6 below).

5. **Only if Correspondent Study**
   a. Three months are allotted for the completion of this course. You may be granted an extension by contacting your course coordinator.
   b. Mail your answer sheets to your course coordinator after completing all Lessons 23 to 29. Only mail your answer sheets, not this Study Guide. They will be returned to you by regular mail after grading. Please ensure to write your name, student ID, course title, and lesson number on each answer sheet. Please see the sample after the Table of Contents at front. **Headings should be in the following format.**

   Your name     student ID     course OT7     lesson number

6. **Written Feedback** *(only if correspondent study)*
   Spiritual success is not measured by high grades, but by growth in Christ-likeness to God’s glory. Therefore, the motivation in taking the course is to see God change your life. There are no letter or number grades such as “A” or “100” to be earned. The grader will offer comments or suggestions from Scripture in response to your answers. Some answers have no comments because they are correct or personal.