A Study of

The Minor Prophets

Class notes compiled by

Jason T. Carter
The inspired apostle Peter wrote that “prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The final twelve books in the Old Testament fall under the heading of “Minor Prophets,” simply meaning that the length of their writings was shorter than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The messages they spoke were not minor, and today in the Christian age, we can still learn from the principles espoused by these holy men of God.

Feel free to use these brief notes in your private studies or with a class. Keep in mind this is just a general overview of these prophets and lessons we can learn today; make use of the resources listed at the end of this book for deeper study.

Jason T. Carter
February 19, 2018

I. **Historical context**

A. Hosea 1:1; 800-722 B.C. (Waddey), 790-725 B.C. (Butler), 750-725 B.C. (Hailey), “…in the years following 746 B.C., slightly after the time of Amos” (Lewis)

B. “Thus Hosea was contemporary with Amos, but somewhat later.” (Coffman)

C. “Although Hosea predicts, but does not record, the actual captivity of Israel which took place in 722 B.C., he still may have lived through the event. He would have been very old.” (Butler)

D. “The time of Hosea’s early ministry was a time of material prosperity (cf. 2:8-13), but it was a society falling apart at the seams morally.” (Butler)

E. Some of the more egregious sins were spelled out by the prophet in 4:2, 11-12: swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery, harlotry, wine, idolatry

F. “Religious leaders eagerly joined the masses in their sin. Jehovah’s worship was commonly mixed with the pagan practices of disgusting Baal worship. So widespread was spiritual ignorance that the people thought they were loyal to God when in reality they were but idolatrous pagans.” (Waddey)

G. “When Israel came into Palestine she came into a land already inhabited for more than a thousand years. She learned farming from the peoples she did not drive out. But Canaanite farming was integrally connected with religious customs which Israel adopted….Subtly the religion crept in on them.” (Lewis)

II. **About the prophet**

A. “The name means ‘deliverance,’ or ‘salvation,’ indicating that Hosea himself stands in the prophecy as a type of God Himself, especially in the matter of his unselfish and constant love for his sinful wife.” (Coffman)

B. “Hosea apparently was a resident of the northern kingdom and has been described as ‘The home missionary of North Israel.’…Hosea was an eyewitness of the debaucheries and injustices that were the features of life in Samaria and the northern kingdom.” (Coffman)

C. Married the harlot Gomer at the Lord’s command

D. Gomer bore three children; only the first is known to be Hosea’s child

1. A son, Jezreel, meaning “vengeance” (1:4-5)
   a. “It foretold a day of vengeance which was coming upon the dynasty of Jehu and the nation (1:4-5).” (Waddey)
   b. “…as a threat to the reigning house, which was soon to end.” (Lewis)

2. A daughter, Lo-Ruhamah, meaning “no mercy” (1:6-7)
   a. “This signified that the nation’s day of grace was rapidly drawing to a close.” (Waddey)
   b. “…a threat that God will not pity and forgive the house of Israel.” (Lewis)

3. A son, Lo-Ammi, meaning “not my people” (1:8-10)
   a. “This implied that Israel had forfeited her position as God’s people. It is obvious that by giving his son this name, the prophet doubted whether the child was his.” (Waddey)
   b. “…the threat contained in this child’s name obviously is that of the breaking of the relationship.” (Lewis)

E. “Thus Hosea’s tragedy with a faithless wife becomes a type of God’s majestic, compassionate love for a backsliding Israel.” (Connally)
III. Lessons for today

A. The importance of knowing God’s Word (4:6)
   1. “It is not scientific, secular, or technical knowledge that is meant, but religious knowledge, the knowledge of God through his revealed will, the Bible; and even more than this is meant; it means conformity to the will of God.” (Coffman)
   2. “As always the religious leaders are primarily responsible for the moral, ethical and religious knowledge of a nation….Ignorance of the law, neglect of its adherence or willful indifference and disobedience to its practices are fatal to any people.” (Connally)
   3. “One is led to think of the terrible condition of the Gentiles described in Romans 1:18ff when one sees the knowledge of God rejected. They ‘refused to have God in their knowledge…’ ‘they exchanged the truth of God for a lie…’ and so God gave them up to serve the enslaving and degrading passions of their bodies.” (Butler)

B. The importance of mercy (6:6)
   2. “God was not here repudiating the covenant he had made with Israel, which surely included sacrifice, nor was he changing that covenant. What he did in this verse is to condemn the people, not for offering sacrifices, but for omitting the true devotion, loyalty to God, and integrity of heart that were necessary accompaniments of sacrifice.” (Coffman)
   3. “He does not exclude sacrifices, rather, he stresses that outward ritual without inner goodness is profitless.” (Waddey)
   4. “The people who were offering the sacrifices were not doing it because they had faith in Jehovah—there was no love in their hearts for God. Their offerings were abominable, revolting, sickening to the heart of God.” (Butler)
   5. Today, we must worship God in the right way and with the right attitude, understanding both the “what” and the “why”
      a. When observing the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
      b. When praying and singing (1 Corinthians 14:15)
      c. When giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)
      d. When hearing the Word preached (Acts 2:41; 13:42; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2)

C. The love of God (14:4-9)
   1. “Their sin of apostasy will be considered as a terrible disease which Jehovah will heal. Their reward will be His great love which He will bountifully bestow upon them; at the same time His anger will be turned away.” (Hailey)
   2. “When God’s people shall have humbled themselves and turned to Him in penitent thanksgiving, He will shower them with His love and blessings.” (Butler)
   3. “Thus, our task is clear. We must rebuke sin whenever and wherever it is found. We must labor diligently and untiringly to correct the errors and evils of the people. Yet, through it all our faith and strength must not fail, and we must make men see the love and forgiveness of God to all those who will repent. To this task we are dedicated until Jesus comes or we die, so help us God!” (Connally)
   4. “Jehovah accomplished this redemption under the Messiah, and today the spiritual Israel of prophecy enjoys the favor of Jehovah and acts as the leavening influence for good in a world of wickedness.” (Hailey)
   5. The love of God is on full display today in His care for the church (Ephesians 5:25-32)
I. Historical context
   A. Debate over the date of writing
      1. “The date of Joel is vigorously disputed, the dates assigned by commentators ranging all the way from the tenth century B.C. to the second century B.C.” (Coffman)
      2. A number of scholars in the brotherhood have placed Joel’s life and writing in the time of Joash, who became king at seven years old and reigned 40 years (2 Chronicles 24:1)
      3. 837 B.C. (Coffman); ca. 830 B.C. (Hailey); 830-810 B.C. (Waddey); 840-830 B.C. (Butler)
      4. “Although it must be admitted that the evidence for the late date is impressive, the balance falls in favor of the earlier.” (Hailey)
      5. “If an early date of approximately 835 B.C. is to be accepted, then Joel is quoted or alluded to by Isaiah, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Ezekiel and Malachi. He would thus be the first to speak of the ‘Day of the Lord.’” (McGee)
   B. “Those who would date Joel in the pre-exilic period—often as early as the ninth century to make him among the earliest prophets—point out that the enemies dealt with in the book are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Edomites rather than those of the exilic period. Furthermore there is no reference either to Assyria which emerged as a power as early as 760 B.C. or to Babylon which followed but which had fallen out of the picture by 537 B.C.” (Lewis)
   C. “Politically, both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had recently cast off the devastating yoke of Ahab and Jezebel in the North and Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, in the South. King Joash was a mere child of seven when crowned king of Judah. The nation was guided by the high priest Jehoiada who served as regent for the young king. Jehu was seeking to stamp out the last vestiges of Jezebel’s influence in the North. Spiritually, both nations were at a low ebb.” (Waddey)
   D. “The religious reform instituted by Jehoiada at this same time seems to have been superficial and short-lived. The people turned reformation into formalism.” (Butler)

II. About the prophet
   A. “Twelve men in the Bible bear the name Joel which means ‘Jehovah is God’; however, there is no valid reason for connecting the others with the prophet.” (Lewis)
   B. “He definitely is a man of moral integrity. He was undoubtedly a native of Judah and most likely of Jerusalem itself for he speaks like a native (2:1, 15, 32; 3:16, 17, 21; 2:32; 3:20). He was very familiar with the Temple and the ministry of the priests (1:9, 13, 14, 16; 2:14, 17; 3:18).” (Butler)
   C. “From the internal evidence some have concluded that possibly Joel was a priest or the son of a priest, but this is purely conjectural.” (Hailey)

III. Lessons for today
   A. The importance of loving, yet uncompromising preaching (2:1, 11)
      1. Joel 2:1, “Sound an alarm...Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble...”
      2. “Borrowing the metaphor of war, Joel calls for the watchmen to sound the trumpet of alarm to awaken the people to the imminent danger of invasion.” (Waddey)
3. “No compromise is found in his words as he warns of impending judgment upon the sinners of Israel. And yet Joel is no heartless, pityless preacher. He cries to the Lord for the people (1:19). He reminds them of God’s graciousness and mercy (2:13).” (McGee)

4. “The preaching and the teaching of judgment causes men to live righteously and to love and respect God’s love and will….But often men deceive and rationalize themselves into thinking that judgment is either not near or altogether impossible.” (McGee)

5. Cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11; Ephesians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:2-5

6. The judgment at the time of Joel came by way of a plague of locusts; Joel warned that such natural occurrences were often used as discipline from Jehovah and called the people to repent to avoid further calamity

7. “The natural calamity they faced was so terrible and overwhelming, so far beyond the normal bounds, it could only be explained as a divine judgment.” (Waddey)
   a. This was not the first time locusts were used by God in judgment
   b. The plague in Egypt (Exodus 10:3-6)
   c. Solomon prayed for deliverance from locusts, among other plagues (1 Kings 8:37)
   d. Locusts were used figuratively by John in Revelation 9

8. We must take care that we do not immediately assign the motive of judgment to natural disasters we see today
   a. Remember that Joel was inspired to interpret and identify them as God’s chastisement upon His people
   b. However, we can still trust in the faithfulness of God, even when we face the tragedies that often come with natural disasters
   c. Natural disasters can also serve to remind us of our dependence upon God

B. The importance of internal spirituality (2:12-13)
   1. “God’s people are in grave danger when the outward forms of religion are not accompanied with a spiritual undergirding (see Matt. 22:36-40)….How useless is the Lord’s Day worship if all of the divinely authorized ‘acts’ are correct but the heart is far from God (see Matt. 15:8-9).” (McGee)
   2. “Repentance means a complete turn-about, and not only so, but a turning toward the Lord. Reformation is not repentance! One must not only change by giving up former habits and sinful ways but one must in a positive way turn unto the Lord and do His will and walk in His way! It is all the heart which God demands. The heart, of course, means the dwelling place of the personality—the intellect, the will, the emotions. All of man’s mind, all of man’s will, all of man’s desires are to be turned toward God’s will….This must be a turning of the inner man, not merely an outward, ritualistic ‘ rending of the garments.’” (Butler)

3. Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:5

4. God wants “all men everywhere” to turn to Him (Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9)

C. The establishment of the church foretold (Joel 2:28-32)
   1. “This is that” (Acts 2:16-21)
   2. Verse 29 “refers to the universality of membership in the Lord’s church and the consequent reception of a measure of God’s Spirit in the hearts of all believers during the times of the Messiah. Many of the Christians to whom Colossians and Ephesians were originally addressed were slaves; and in is a most accurate and extensive fulfillment of these very words.” (Coffman)

5
I. Historical context
   A. Amos 1:1; during the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam (son of Joash) in Israel; sometime between 786-742 B.C. (Lewis); 790-749 B.C. (Coffman); 765-750 B.C. (Waddey); 760 B.C. (Butler); 755 B.C., or “somewhere near the end of Jeroboam’s reign” (Hailey)
   B. “Two years before the earthquake”
      1. “There were many earthquakes in that part of the world, and even an unusually severe one would not make any permanent intrusion into the records kept by the people.” (Coffman)
      2. Mentioned 200 years later in Zechariah 14:5
      3. The uninspired Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews, 9:10:4) mentioned an earthquake in connection with Uzziah’s transgression in 2 Chronicles 26:18-21, but this cannot be verified with inspired information
   C. “This was a period of great peace and prosperity during which it seemed that the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. Some lived in opulence and luxury, but often at the expense of the poor and destitute….The people were careful to offer their sacrifices and to perform all their religious functions, but it had become mere formalism and religious ritual which was totally devoid of meaning.” (Highers)

II. About the prophet
   A. “Amos’ means ‘to bear,’ ‘to place a load upon’ (Laetsch), or ‘burdened’ or ‘burden-bearer’ (Eiselen). He lived up to his name; for as Jehovah laid upon him the task of declaring His divine oracles to apostate Israel, he bore the burden and fulfilled his mission.” (Hailey)
   B. Amos 7:14: “a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.”
   C. “The fact that his father’s name is not mentioned suggests that he was probably from a poor, obscure family.” (Waddey)
   D. “God selected a rustic and rough-hewn man of integrity to be a prophet, and he sent him from a small southern village into the wealthy, sophisticated city of Bethel as a messenger of truth and righteousness. Amos may not have had impeccable manners, his fashion of dress may not have been flawless, and his accent of speech may well have been colored by his rural upbringing, but it is unquestioned that he was faithful to that divine imperative which, in essence, placed a farm-boy in the pulpit of the sanctuary at Bethel.” (Highers)
   E. “Although of a common ancestry, in one way he was an outsider, having come from Judah. As an outsider he could view the situation in Israel more objectively than the local residents could.” (Hailey)

III. Lessons for today
   A. The importance of righteousness, wherever and whoever you may be (1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6)
      1. After writing about the transgressions of Israel’s neighbors, Lewis notes, “The significant thing about this series, which in general denounces atrocities of war, is that Amos announces that God is concerned with sin wherever it occurs. God is not merely a god of the hills limited in power and dominion to his own people. He is the
international God of justice punishing sin wherever it occurs, calling the neighbors who do not worship him into account.” (Lewis)

2. “He shows that God is no respecter of persons. If Israelites sin against Him, He will condemn them as readily as other nations.” (Butler)

3. This is why the Great Commission is so important – *ignorance is no excuse for sin!*
   (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)

B. The “omni-” attributes of God

1. “God’s omnipotence may be seen in His acts of creation (4:13; 5:8), in His control over the forces of nature (4:6-11), in His supremacy over the nations (chs. 1-2; 5:9; 9:7), and in the titles by which He is called: ‘Jehovah,’ ‘the Lord Jehovah,’ ‘Jehovah, the God of hosts,’ ‘the Lord.’” (Hailey)
   a. “‘Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name…’ This means that the eternal God has every conceivable power and ability to do as he wills. Blessed be his name forever.” (Coffman)
   b. “God is sovereign over things visible (the mountains), things invisible (the wind), and things rational (man and his thought). He is in direct executive control of the world, as is evident when he makes the morning darkness, brings about the sequence of day and night. No place is beyond his reach, even the heights of the earth being beneath his feet.” (Motyer, quoted by Coffman)

2. “The omnipresence of God is plainly taught (9:2-4) or clearly implied (chs. 1-2).” (Hailey)
   a. Concerning 9:2-4, Butler comments, “These verses sound very much like David’s Psalm 139, praising God for His all-seeing providence.” (Butler)

3. “His omniscience is indicated (9:2-4) and declared in His knowledge of man’s thoughts (4:13).” (Hailey)
   a. “He is the omnipotent Creator; He is the omniscient Revealer; He is the beneficent Sustainer. God is the searcher of the heart (Jer. 17:10; Psa. 139:2).” (Butler)
   b. Revelation 2:23

C. The danger of indifference (6:1-6)

1. “The things listed were not sinful in and of themselves. It was not evil to rest on a bed of ivory or to eat beef and mutton, etc. It was wrong because they were not grieved or concerned about the sad state of affairs in the nation.” (Waddey)

2. “Indifference is a greater enemy of truth than opposition.” (Highers)

3. “Their feasts were characterized by revelry, songs, music, choice meats, and the best of wines to satiate their lusts, and by cushions and silken tapestries upon which to recline (6:1-7). These luxuries were enjoyed by the wealthy, whose eyes were closed to the afflictions and needs of the poor (6:6). For this they would go away into captivity.” (Hailey)

4. “They were blind, deaf and dumb to the spiritual rottenness then prevalent. They were not the least concerned that this nation whose destiny was holiness and truth was sick unto death with the leprosy of sin. The injustice, cruelty, decadence did not bother them. They were perfectly satisfied as long as they had food and drink and were rich enough to satisfy their desires.” (Butler)

5. Revelation 3:15-16
I. Historical context
   A. 845 B.C. (Butler, Coffman, Hailey, Waddey); 586 B.C. (Lewis)
      1. There are several instances of Edom opposing Israel that could fit the events described
      2. Proponents of the late date argue: “Despite all cases made, the calamity here spoke of can hardly be other than that brought about by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (cf. Obad. 20).” (Lewis)
      3. Coffman favors the early date, “during the days of Jehoram after the Philistines and the Arabians attacked and captured the city of Jerusalem. It is true, of course, that the eventual fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians is mentioned; but there is no reason whatever to understand this as anything else but a prophecy.” (Coffman)
      4. Reasons for the early date: “Edom had recently revolted (II Kings 8:20-22; II Chron. 21:8-20). Obadiah does not mention the wholesale deportation of the population as occurred in 586 B.C. Salves are not said to go east to Babylon, but to Phoenicia and the west (Ob. 20).” (Waddey)
   B. “The enmity between these two peoples dates from the birth of Isaac’s twin sons, Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:21-26). The event that triggered the feud was Jacob’s obtaining of Esau’s birthright by deceit (Gen. 25:27-34; 27:1-45). God considered the Israelites and Edomites brethren. Edomites were not to be abhorred by Israel (Deut. 23:7) and Israel was forbidden to take Edom’s land (Det. 2:1-8). Edomites could enter the congregation of Israel after three generations (Deut. 23:8). The Edomites, however, were not inclined to show kindness or tolerance toward Israel. Edom’s anger tore ‘perpetually’ and he kept his wrath forever (Amos 1:11). During the long trek of the Exodus, they refused the weary Hebrews right of passage over their King’s Highway (Num. 20:14-21). Economics were a major cause of strife between the two nations. The border between them, the Arabah, was a major caravan route. Copper ore was found there in abundance.” (Waddey)

II. About the prophet
   A. “His name means ‘servant of the Lord.’ He was a godly, patriotic citizen of the kingdom of Judah who recorded his righteous indignation toward the wicked Edomites.” (Waddey)
   B. “Despite the fact of most scholars denying that Obadiah may be positively identified with any of the others, we are inclined to give credence to the allegation by Josephus that this Obadiah and the devout steward of Ahab’s household (1 Kings 18) who hid the true prophets from the wrath of Jezebel are one and the same person.” (Coffman)

III. Lessons for today
   A. The danger of pride (3-4)
      1. “The Edomites were justifiably proud of their fortress stronghold...Their great error was that of trusting in themselves instead of trusting in God.” (Coffman)
      2. “Edom’s pride and boasting rested on her assumption of strategic impenetrability. One explorer of the territory has stated that a handful of men stationed in the Sik could easily hold off a whole army of invaders....Edom’s presumptuous boasting in her defenses and her wealth reminds us of many nations, both past and present,
whose proud necks have been bowed by the Omnipotent Ruler of the Universe.” (Butler)

3. “Pride is deceitful and ‘goes before a fall.’ Pride, which leads to vanity and a sense of independence from God, must be judged and exposed.” (Hailey)

4. “The pride of the ‘elder brother’ will condemn one. Pride promotes strife, as seen in the disciples (Mark 9:33-37). Pride keeps one from believing God (James 3:13-18). Christians cannot worship with an arrogant heart (James 2:1-6). Strife is often produced by pride, and will prevent one’s worship (1 Cor. 11:20). Christians should be willing to take ‘second place.’ No Christian will resent Christ’s lesson on ‘washing the saints’ feet.’ Pride and strife are sinful!” (Young)

5. “The destiny, doom, and deliverance of nations are in the hand of God...He alone has the power to build up or to debase and cast down.” (Hailey)

6. Proverbs 16:18; 1 Timothy 6:17

B. The danger of siding with the enemy (10-14)

1. “Obadiah is a standing rebuke to the spirit who prefers not to become involved in the problems of others, but it is even more a rebuke to him who finds a sadistic joy in the misfortunes of another.” (Lewis)

2. “Wrong or violence is all the more heinous when committed against a brother and the Israelites (Jacob) were brothers to the Edomites (Esau). We recall others sinning against their own; Joseph and his brethren; Ammon and Tamar; Saul and Jonathan; David and Absalom. The strong ties of blood between the Edomites and the Israelites should have impelled the Edomites to give aid to the oppressed people of Judea, but quite to the contrary, they not only gloated over the plundering of their cities and villages but joined in with the enemies of the Israelites....We should not be surprised at the judgment of shame and ‘cutting-off’ pronounced upon the Edomites for their actions toward their brethren.” (Butler)

3. “Christians cannot compromise with sin and wrong....God’s truth is not to be betrayed. God’s truth is not to be sacrificed. When one stands with the enemy, he is as ‘one of them.’” (Young)

4. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

C. The knowledge that God will avenge evil (15-16)

1. “In the last analysis, the justice of God is retributive. In the final judgment, men shall be rewarded according to what they have done during the present life; and there has never been a true theology that can get rid of this basic truth.” (Coffman)

2. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7-8; Matthew 6:14-15

3. Remember that it is God to whom vengeance belongs, not man! (Romans 12:17-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9)
THE MINOR PROPHETS // JONAH

I. Historical context
   A. 800-750 B.C. (Coffman); “belonging to the reign of Joash...approximately 800 B.C.”
      (Butler); “The date may be fixed at some time in the general period around 780 B.C.”
      (Hailey)
   B. Nineveh was a powerful, fortified city on the Tigris River, 250 miles north of Babylon and
      500 miles east of Jonah’s home
   C. “The Urartu nation threatened Nineveh in Jonah’s day. National repentance helped
      them survive the Urartu threat but soon they reverted to their wicked ways and in 612
      B.C. God delivered the mistress of the world into the hands of the Babylonians, Medes,
      and Scythians. So great was her overthrow that three hundred years later Alexander’s
      Macedonian troops searched for but could not find a trace of her ruins.” (Waddey)

II. About the prophet
   A. “His name, ‘Jonah,’ meant ‘dove’ in the Hebrew; a name strangely inappropriate for a
      man of his hostile temperament.” (Waddey)
   B. Jonah also appears in 2 Kings 14:25, where it is written of Jeroboam, “He restored the
      territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to
      the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the
      son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher.”
   C. Coffman believes that Jonah himself is the author of this book, pointing to the fact that
      he was “in all probability, a great and popular hero to the entire Jewish nation,”
      concluding that “no other person except Jonah would have written a book which casts
      the prophet himself in such unfavorable light....His disobedience, his petulance, and his
      anger over the repentance of the Ninevites, etc., exhibit characteristics and attitudes
      which no later Jew could conceivably have attributed to a national hero.” (Coffman)
   D. “Fairbairn’s interpretation of Jonah’s behavior at the withdrawal of Nineveh’s
      destruction is tied in with this purpose of Jonah’s mission. Mr. Fairbairn is persuaded
      that Jonah is so desperately anxious that his own people, Israel, repent he believes the
      only thing that will bring about this repentance is a terrible manifestation of God’s
      judgment upon this wicked Nineveh. So when Nineveh is spared, Jonah is ‘grieved and
      vexed sore,’ not because he is a sadist and delights in seeing thousands of people suffer,
      but because he is sure that now Israel will not repent.” (Butler)

III. Lessons for today
   A. You cannot run or hide from God
      1. In his futile attempt to flee, did Jonah forget the omnipresence of God? (Psalm
         139:7-11; Amos 9:2-4)
      2. “He was fleeing from the presence of Jehovah—something no one can do. No doubt
         the prophet realized this; but out of his distaste for the work to which he was called,
         he was determined to make the attempt. He was ‘resigning his job’ as a prophet.”
         (Hailey)
      3. “Jonah was simply trying to rid himself of the responsibilities of his official status in
         this one particular task of going to Nineveh. The phrase ‘...presence of Jehovah’ is
         often used to indicate some official capacity (cf. Gen. 41:46; Deut. 10:8; I Kings 17:1;
         18:15; II Kings 3:14; Lk. 1:19). Jonah’s intention was not to hide himself from the
         omnipotent God, but to withdraw from the service of Jehovah.” (Butler)
4. “Jonah learned, and through his valuable experience millions have learned, that when God enjoins a disagreeable duty, it is far easier to go and do it than to run away from it.” (McGarvey)

B. It is the message, not the messenger, that saves

1. The message was summarized for posterity in a mere eight words (3:4), and despite the messenger’s desire to fail (4:1), “the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them” (3:5)

2. While we should do our best to present God’s Word so people will understand, it is not our presentation that convicts them – it is God Himself, through His Word (Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 3:5-7)

3. If we pay too much attention to a speaker’s eloquence, we may overlook omissions (Acts 18:24-25)

C. God cares for the entire world

1. Jonah was sent to Nineveh, a city noted for its wickedness

2. “God is willing and anxious to save even the heathen nations if they repent. His love is infinite and universal; therefore, His concern is for all.” (Hailey)

3. We see in the book of Jonah how God defines “the world” as it is used in John 3:16, and we are shown that the “any” of 2 Peter 3:9 includes those men deem unworthy and undesirable

4. It does not matter where a person is from or what has done in the past, if he is willing to repent and walk in the ways of the Lord, God wants that soul to be saved (Acts 10:34-35)

5. The book of Jonah “illustrates God’s providential concern for all nations of the world, while rebuking the narrow intolerance of the Hebrews who though God only cared for them.” (Waddey)

D. The blessings and warnings of God are conditional upon man’s response

1. The Calvinistic doctrine of “unconditional election” is false and has done great harm to the cause of Christ

2. God’s message through Jonah was destruction, but God changed his mind because of Nineveh’s response (Jonah 3:10; Jeremiah 18:7-8)

3. “Still another purpose of this magnificent book is to demonstrate that there is always an element of contingency in the promises of God, whether of judgment and destruction on the one hand, or grace and salvation on the other. Jonah is a vivid example of the truth revealed by Jeremiah....Of course, this is exactly the truth of which Jonah was ignorant; but the experiences related in the book that bears his name abundantly illustrate it....The whole religious world of our day which receives a ‘once saved, always saved’ doctrine of salvation is dwelling in the same darkness. If a wicked man turns from his wickedness and obeys the Lord, he shall be saved; and, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and disobeys the Lord, he shall be lost.” (Coffman)

4. “It was not until the repentance of the Ninevites was manifested through works that their salvation was effected by God! Works are both necessary for salvation and a result of salvation. This is a very plain doctrine of both the Old and New Testaments. Even belief is said to be a ‘work’ by the Lord Himself (cf. Jn. 6:29...).” (Butler)

5. Still today, God will only save those who are obediently faithful (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 1:7)
I. Historical context
A. Micah 1:1, “in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah”; 740-700 B.C. (Coffman); 735-700 B.C. (Hailey)
B. “Because of the nature of the persons and reigns of these kings, Micah saw the leadership of Judah swing from holiness, peace, and prosperity, to crass idolatry and immorality, and then, almost desperately, back again toward righteousness and national respectability.” (Gill)
1. “Jotham is best described as holy, his reign as peaceful and prosperous. (Cf. II Chronicles 27:2-6)” (Gill)
2. Under Ahaz, Gill writes, “The southern kingdom became a mere satellite nation, a vassal state, tributary to Tigleth Pileser’s Assyrian Empire.” (Gill)
3. “The third king mentioned by Micah is regarded as a reformer. Hezekiah, the thirteenth king of Judah, and the son of the Baal-worshipping Ahaz, became king at the age of twenty-five. Most of his energies were given to attempting to undo what his father had done in the corrupting of God’s people with idolatry.” (Gill)
C. “Although, like all of God’s prophets, he was concerned with social injustice and oppression, it was the religious corruption and their forsaking of the true God which drew the principal focus of his denunciations, that of course, being the cause of the social wrongs.” (Coffman)
D. “Thus Micah spoke in a time of social unrest, national insecurity, and religious turmoil not unlike those of the United States in mid-twentieth century. He viewed evil as a failure to grasp the nature of true religion, and believed that the only remedy was to strike at the source by denouncing the wickedness and demanding repentance upon pain of national annihilation. He would have agreed with James 1:27 completely.” (Gill)

II. About the prophet
A. “Micah is a shortened form of Micaiah, cf. 1 Kings 22, which means ‘Who is like Yahweh?’” (Lewis)
B. “Though contemporary with Isaiah, he appears to have begun prophesying a few years later (cf. Isa. 1:1; Mic. 1:1).” (Hailey)
1. “Micah was a country preacher in contrast with Isaiah, a man of the city.” (Williams)
2. “Micah’s home was Moresheth near Gath, the old Philistine city. It was a rural farming village some 22 miles from Jerusalem...” (Waddey)
3. “Nothing is known of his occupation, although it is usually assumed that he was a man of humble status, much as was the prophet Amos, and quite unlike the prophet Isaiah who was an associate of kings.” (Coffman)

III. Lessons for today
A. The Lord’s church (kingdom) was planned long before Jesus took on the form of man (4:1-5:15)
1. “Micah 4 is a prophecy of the establishment of the church (kingdom of Christ) and shows conclusively that the church was a subject of Old Testament prophecy and was not an afterthought on the part of God....The church existed in purpose in God’s mind (Eph. 3:10), in prophecy (Mic. 4:1-6; Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:44), in promise (Matt. 16:13-18), in preparation (Luke 16:16; Matt. 3:30), and finally in completion (Acts 2:36-47).” (Williams)
2. “In the latter days’ is the English rendering of the phrase which fixes the time when it shall come to pass. The phrase in reminiscent of Hebrews 1:2. There we are told that God, having spoken to the fathers in the prophets has spoken to us in a Son. No more conclusive evidence is needed to connect Micah’s prophecy with the Messianic age. The rabbis so understood this term.” (Gill)

3. This was no general prophecy that could have been interpreted differently under various circumstances; Micah and the other prophets spoke in specifics to prove the truth of their prophecies to future generations (e.g. Bethlehem, 5:2)

4. Waddey points out seven things about the kingdom that Malachi states in 4:1-5:
   a. “It would be superior to all earthly kingdoms (4:1).
   b. “It would be a universal kingdom of many peoples (4:1).
   c. “It would grow by teaching rather than by war and conquest (4:2).
   d. “It would originate from Jerusalem (4:2).
   e. “It would come with a new law from Jehovah (4:2).
   f. “It would be a peaceable kingdom (4:3-4).
   g. “It would last forever (4:5).” (Waddey)

B. God expects His people to be just and kind (6:8)
1. Cf. Matthew 6:33; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 1:7; James 2:13
2. The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
3. Micah 6:8 “is often misinterpreted to mean merely ‘doing good to one’s fellow human beings’; and while God’s true religion certainly does include that, it is a satanic error to proclaim that, ‘Nothing more is needed.’ To be truly forgiven requires acceptance of the revealed will of God and full compliance with the conditions given therein to the fullest extent of human ability. And, although the grace of God will surely make provision for one who falls short while sincerely striving to do God’s will, there is no promise of salvation for the willfully disobedient.” (Coffman)

C. The magnitude of God’s mercy (7:18-19)
1. A vivid description of the scope of God’s forgiveness
2. Cf. Psalm 103:12; Jeremiah 31:34; Acts 3:19
I. **Historical context**

A. Written between 663-612 B.C. (Hailey, Miller); about 614 B.C. (Gill); “just before” 612 B.C. (Lewis); around 650 B.C. (Coffman)

B. Around 100 years after Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching

C. Like Jonah, Nahum only prophesied to Nineveh, but he delivered a message of doom and destruction (1:1)

1. “Two sins, particularly, were the object of the prophecy, these being (1) military exploitation and (2) commercial greed. It may be doubted if there was ever upon earth a more heartless example of cruel, sadistic, savage military lust than that displayed by Assyria. Nahum referred to Assyria as ‘The Emptiers’ (2:2), and a customary synonym for them in ancient history was ‘The Breakers.’” (Coffman)

2. Waddey adds “slavery and witchcraft (3:4-5)” to the sins decried by Nahum

3. “Assyria, of which Nineveh was the capital, was a nation largely geared for aggressive war....Nineveh saw men and nations as tools to be exploited to gratify the lust of conquest and commercialism.” (Lewis)

4. “The character of the Assyrian rulers and people in general was that of excessive cruelty.” (Hailey)

D. The accuracy of the prophet’s message is on display in 1:8, in which he writes about “an overflowing flood”

1. “The enemies of Nineveh had been repulsed for the third time, and the king believed the siege was broken, and ordered a great drunken feast to celebrate the victory! Melting snows sent a terrible flood that swept away miles of the city’s fortifications and walls. Only that, coupled with the drunken feast, led to its fall!”

2. “The Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians united to attack the city under the Median King Cyaxares....So complete was her overthrow that for centuries no one even knew the location of her ruins.” (Waddey)

II. **About the prophet**

A. “The name Nahum means ‘comfort’ or ‘compassion.’” (Lewis)

B. “Little is known of the prophet Nahum, yet he impresses his readers as a man of scholarship and culture. His loft poetic style lends to him this quality and dignity.” (Miller)

C. “He was contemporary with Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Jeremiah.” (Gill)

III. **Lessons for today**

A. Only God’s kingdom will stand forever

1. Few could have fathomed the fall of Assyria while they were in power; the same could be said about the rule of the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans
   a. Yet, as all earthly kingdoms do, they eventually fell
   b. Nahum’s prophecy shows the utter destruction of Nineveh (2:10; 3:7,19)
   c. There is but one kingdom that will never fall, and that was established 2000 years ago during the days of the Roman empire, as prophesied by Daniel 2:44

2. Our love for country must never exceed our love for God
   a. We have a greater citizenship than our American citizenship (Philippians 3:20-21)
b. While we must submit to the laws of the land, let us never forget that God’s law is above all (Romans 13:1-7)
c. Our attitude toward our leaders, whether we agree with their policies or not, should be one of prayer and peace (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

B. Sin infuriates God (1:2, 6, 14)
   1. Jehovah is a jealous God in that He wants preeminence in your heart
      a. “He, being the creator and benefactor of man, will not accede the honor of worship to idolatrous pagan gods. He will not allow man to share affection for Him with another.” (Miller)
      b. Cf. Exodus 20:5; Joshua 24:19-20; Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2
      c. “His jealousy may be compared to that of a husband for his wife; He will brook no rival; He will not be supplanted by another in the affection of His people.” (Hailey)
   2. Jehovah is a vengeful God against impenitent evil
      a. “Only God is qualified to avenge. He does so in complete justice. In the case of Nineveh, He had gone to great lengths (cf. Jonah) to warn them of the consequence of their sin.” (Gill)
      b. “His avenging is not to be thought of as ‘getting even with,’ but of vindicating His own righteousness by inflicting a just judgment upon offenders.” (Hailey)
      c. Cf. Romans 11:22; 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

C. God protects His own (1:7,15)
   1. In the midst of this declaration of destruction against vile Nineveh, the prophet reminds His readers of God’s goodness toward the faithful
   2. “It is a characteristic of all God’s prophets that, in the very midst of the most terrible announcements of doom and punishment, there always appears the word of hope, encouragement, solace, or reassurance for God’s true people. He never forgets them.” (Coffman)
   3. “In love and protective care, He knows fully those that take refuge in Him. His power is as great to protect as it is to destroy.” (Hailey)
   4. “God’s goodness is for those like David whose great desire was to be in subjection to God, humbled in His presence and happy in His fellowship.” (Miller)
   5. Cf. Psalm 46; 91
I. **Historical context**  
A. 612-606 B.C. (Hailey); 612-605 B.C. (Waddey); the middle of the seventh century B.C. (Coffman); “shortly before the rise of the Babylonians to power” (Lewis); 608-597 B.C. (Gill)  
B. “Babylon, formerly a tributary state of Assyria, was rapidly rising to prominence under king Nabopolassar….In Judah, the evil sons of Josiah, Jehoahaz and Johoiakim, reigned. Social, political and religious conditions were deplorable (See. 1:2-4)….For a look at the historical record, see II Kings 23:29-37.” (Waddey)

II. **About the prophet**  
A. “Habakkuk means ‘embrace’ or ‘ardent embrace.’” (Hailey)  
B. “He may have been a contemporary of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. If so, he prophesies shortly after Nahum.” (Gill)  
C. “Nothing is definitely known of the life of Habakkuk, his occupations, parentage, place of birth or anything else. There have been many traditions such as that of his being the son of the Shunamite woman who was raised to life by Elijah, and others; but none of them is considered to have any value.” (Coffman)  
D. “Tradition says that he fled to Egypt when the Babylonians took Jerusalem in 587 B.C.” (Waddey)

III. **Lessons for today**  
A. There is nothing wrong with seeking clarification when we don’t understand why things happen the way they do, so long as we seek in faith (1:2-4,13; Psalm 73:16-17)  
1. “Brief as Habakkuk’s writing is, it contains some valuable insights regarding two questions very much alive in our day. How can God allow, or rather how long will God allow social evil and violence to go unchecked? And how can a just God use the warfare of wicked men to punish those apparently less wicked than the punisher?” (Gill)  
2. The “social evil and violence” of 1:2-4 refer to Judah’s own sin, while the “wicked” of 1:13 is directed more at the Chaldeans  
   a. Habakkuk is not the first of the minor prophets to decry the iniquity of the people of God (Hosea 4:2; Micah 6:12-13)  
   b. “Despite all of the terrible wickedness, God apparently did nothing about it; at least it seemed so to Habakkuk.” (Coffman)  
   c. “His complaint was that Jehovah would not save, but Jehovah does not violate the sovereign will of man by directly interfering.” (Hailey)  
   d. It is not difficult to find evil in our day and age, either – it is everywhere: at work, at school, on the computer, on the television  
   e. “Habakkuk’s question is simply ‘why doesn’t God do something about the situation?’ He has more courage than we moderns. He addresses his questions directly to God Himself. He accuses God of not hearing when he prays. His prayers have lifted the specific sins of violence before God. In return he sees more and more of that about which he has prayed.” (Gill)  
   f. Yet, despite the evil in Judah, Habakkuk is confused why God would use a nation even more evil to discipline Judah
g. “The answer to this lies in the truth that the redemption of anyone on earth was related to the fidelity and perseverance of a remnant of Israel until, in the fullness of time, the Messiah would be delivered upon the earth. Furthermore, the wickedness of Israel had reached a degree that threatened the achievement of that goal; and it was the utmost necessity of preserving a remnant of Israel to remain faithful to God that resulted in their destruction, judged a necessity by the Lord.” (Coffman)

h. It was not that Babylon was more righteous, but that Judah had fallen so far from God’s Word – they needed to be set right

i. When we struggle in life, even at the hand of an enemy, let us take a step back and reexamine ourselves and our spiritual situation and be sure we are doing all we can to live faithfully and set a proper example for others

3. “The key thought of the book is, When we are bewildered at the apparent triumph of the wicked at the expense of the saints, we must trust God’s providential rule and be faithful to Him.” (Waddey)

B. “The just shall live by his faith” (2:4)

1. “The Chaldean shall fall, says, God, ‘because his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him’ (2:4a). In contrast, ‘the righteous shall live by his faith’ (2:4). To Habakkuk, ‘faith’ means much more than our common definition. To him it meant faithfulness, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness!...Thus his message to his people is, Whatever happens, you must believe in God and trust that he is working all things for your good (Rom. 8:28; Acts 27:25).” (Waddey)

2. “It is not a contrast between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ per se but between the haughty soul who sets his will against that of God on the one hand and the one who lives by faith on the other. The New Testament will make this contrast even more sharply in terms of the carnal as opposed to the Spirit-directed. (eg. Galatians 5:16-25)” (Gill)

C. The five woes against Babylon (2:6-19)

1. “The five woes decried against Babylon are interesting to not in light of the concept of a universal moral law. They are plunder (2:6-8); ill-gotten gain (2:9-11); violence and bloodshed (2:12-14); and human debasement (2:15-17); all of which would leave every rational and moral being in an outcry of rage. These things are universally morally wrong. The last charge against them is idolatry, which is, in essence, the rejection of the very God who created them (2:18-19).” (Lusk)

2. “The universal arrogance and conceit which mark the conduct of evil men today is exactly like that of the ancient Babylonians, and shall be as little effective against the will of God, as was theirs.” (Coffman)
I. Historical context
   A. Prophecy came during the reign of Josiah (1:1)
      1. 640-609 B.C. (Lewis); 630-625 B.C. (Hailey); prior to the start of Josiah’s reforms in the 620s B.C. (Coffman; Waddey)
      2. “The most conclusive argument in favor of placing Zephaniah in the pre-reform years of Josiah is found in the fact that when the copy of God’s law was found in the renovated temple, the king appealed to the prophetess Huldah, not to Zephaniah, indicating that by the time of the beginning of Josiah’s reforms Zephaniah was already dead.” (Coffman)
   B. “The fact that Zephaniah denounces foreign customs, worship of the heavenly bodies, religious syncretism, and practical skepticism makes some basis for the claim that the prophet precedes Josiah’s reform.” (Lewis)
   C. “The world order was rapidly changing. The great Assyrian Empire that had dominated the Middle East for 150 years was in a state of disintegration and decay….Savage Scythian hordes were sweeping all across the land….The powerful Babylonian kingdom under Nabopolassar was set to crush under his feet the entire region.” (Waddey)
   D. Manasseh “rebuilt the high places, reared altars to Baal and Ashtoreth, and built altars to the host of heaven. He committed the abomination of making his son pass through the fire, practicing augury and enchantment, and dealing with familiar spirits. To all this he added the sin of bloodshed, filling Jerusalem with innocent blood (see II Kings 21; II Chron. 33:1-9)….Ammon, who succeeded Manasseh, followed in the steps of his father; his reign was likewise one of great wickedness (II Chron. 33:21-25).” (Hailey)
   E. After these two evil kings, Josiah reformed Judah by tearing down the idols and reinstituting the law of God, but his reformation was short-lived and the nation was carried into captivity by the Babylonians

II. About the prophet
   A. “The name ‘Zephaniah’ means ‘He whom Jehovah has hidden.’” (Lewis)
   B. Zephaniah provides a partial ancestry which includes a man named Hezekiah (1:1)
   C. “Many believe this Hezekiah to have been the king of Judah by that name, the great-grandfather of King Josiah. If this is the case, then the prophet Zephaniah was not only of royal blood, but also a relative of the reigning king. Some scholars note that this connection may have given Zephaniah greater influence in the national affairs and closer access to the king.” (McGill)
   D. “His reference to Jerusalem as ‘this place’ (1:4) suggests that Jerusalem was his home. His acquaintance with the conditions of the city (3:1ff.) further confirms this point.” (Hailey)

III. Lessons for today
   A. Zephaniah speaks much about the day of the Lord (1:14-18)
      1. “The day is ‘at hand’ (1:7), ‘near’ (1:14), a day of darkness and of terror (1:15, 16). It comes as a judgment against sin (1:17), accompanied by great convulsions of nature (1:15). It falls upon all creation—man and beast, Hebrews and the nations (1:2, 3; 2:1-15; 3:8). The day of Jehovah is a day of doom! The prophet sees it as a day of terror, imminent and falling upon all creation as a judgment for sin. Only a remnant will escape, but it is a day of deliverance for the faithful.” (Hailey)
2. “In gripping poetry in which one can feel the very foundations of earth quaking, Zephaniah describes the terrors of the day affecting man, beast, bird, and fish (Zeph. 1:2,3).” (Lewis)

B. The danger of complacency (1:12)
   1. “In the stupidity of their hearts they ignored Jehovah and were indifferent to Him. They looked on Him as one would an idol who possessed power to do neither good nor bad.” (Hailey)
   2. “In America, during the Revolutionary War period, it was fashionable among some of the citizens to claim to be Deists. The main tenet of Deism was the very same falsehood that was believed in Jerusalem in the days of Zephaniah—that the Lord would not in any way intervene in the affairs of men.” (McGill)
   3. Deism is refuted by even a cursory reading of the Scriptures; God did intervene on several occasions, executing punishments on the disobedient
   4. If God is not concerned with the affairs of men, why are we commanded to pray? (1 Timothy 2:1-4; James 1:5-8)

C. Warning against trusting in material riches (1:18)
   1. “They would be unable to bribe the enemy even with all the silver and gold they had accumulated and laid up. The destruction had been determined by Jehovah and there would be no escaping the judgment against their sins.” (Hailey)
   2. The riches of this world will do nothing for us in eternity (1 Timothy 6:7)
   3. The riches of this world are “uncertain” (1 Timothy 6:17), susceptible to destruction and theft (Matthew 6:19)
   4. Consider the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)
   5. Where should our treasure be? (Matthew 6:20-21)
   6. In what and in whom must we trust for salvation? (Romans 1:16; 5:8-11)

D. The power of hope (2:3; 3:9-20)
   1. “It is to be noticed that his is not a general call to repentance that can turn aside the calamity. It would seem that the day of grace is already passed. Doom awaits. There is no hope of recovery but only that some may escape.” (Lewis)
   2. “But the call is to the meek, the humble, the lowly, and the submissive who bend their wills to a higher power.” (Hailey)
   3. Concerning 3:11, Coffman wrote, “The only way that the shame from transgressions can be removed is through the forgiveness of sins, to which there is undoubtedly a reference in these words, the same being another characteristic of the Messianic times, as indicated in Jeremiah 31:31-35.” (Coffman)
   4. “When Jesus received in our behalf the judgment of God upon our sin (II Corinthians 5:21), He purged us of all those things for which we need to be ashamed.” (Gill)
   5. “In the closing verse (3:20) God through Zephaniah promised Judah’s return from captivity, even before the Babylonian Captivity began.” (McGill)
   6. “Note the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ in verses 18-20: ‘I will gather,’ ‘I will deal,’ ‘I will save,’ ‘I will make,’ ‘will I bring you in,’ ‘will I gather you,’ ‘I will make,’ ‘when I bring back your captivity before your eyes.’ ...The work of redemption will be the work of the Lord.” (Hailey)
I. Historical context
   A. “In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month” (1:1); 520 B.C. (Coffman, Hailey, Lewis, Waddey)
   B. “Significantly, Haggai did not date his message from the times of any Jewish ruler, for both Israel and Judah had been removed from their homeland and had been enslaved by Assyria and by Babylon. Thus it was necessary to date his prophecy from the rule of a pagan king, contrasting sharply with the custom of earlier prophets.” (Coffman)
   C. The Jews that returned from Babylonian captivity began work on rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3:10)
      1. Their opponents complained to Artaxerxes, who decreed that the reconstruction must stop (Ezra 4:21)
      2. After Darius came to power, the Jews did not attempt to resume their efforts on the temple structure until the Lord spoke through Haggai (1:1)
      3. “The effect that Haggai’s prophetic work had on the Jews is at least partly seen in the fact that, twenty-three days after his first address was made, the work on the temple began (Hag. 1:1,15). Four years, six months and two days after Haggai’s first address, the work on the temple was completed (Hag. 1:1; Ezra 6:15).” (Deaver)
   D. “Concerning the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar’s troops, we read in II Kings 25:9 that it was burned, not demolished. This would explain why so few could do the work of rebuilding in only four years. The original temple built by Solomon was seven years in construction.” (Waddey)

II. About the prophet
   A. “Haggai, as a person, remains obscure. No one else in the Old Testament shares the name, the literal meaning of which is ‘festival.’ He is mentioned in Ezra 5:1 and 6:4 and referred to in Zechariah 8:9. He is named two times in the apocryphal I Esdras and Sirach 49:11.” (Gill)
   B. “Haggai had been in exile with his fellow Hebrews in the land of Babylon. He was among the faithful remnant that returned in 536 B.C. On the basis of 2:3, it is thought by some that he was an old man who had seen Solomon’s Temple before it was destroyed.” (Waddey)
   C. “Jewish rabbis attributed some of the Psalms to Haggai, as did the early church fathers. In the Vulgate he is credited with (Ps. 111); in the Septuagint with Pss. 137, 146, 147, 148; and in the Peshitta with Ps. 145.” (Waddey)

III. Lessons for today
   A. The importance of “thus says the Lord”
      1. “The basis of all successful preaching is ‘saith Jehovah.’ It got results then, and such preaching will get results today.” (Hailey)
      2. “The outstanding feature of Haggai’s style is found in his oft repeated declaration that he was speaking God’s word. ‘Thus saith Jehovah,’ ‘the word of Jehovah of hosts’ and similar expressions ‘are used twenty-six times in the four short addresses of thirty-eight verses.’” (Coffman)
      3. Haggai “teaches that when we heed the teaching of God’s teacher, who faithfully delivers the divine message, we are obeying God. In the words of Christ, ‘He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me...’ (John 13:20). It is worth noting that all
the people obeyed God and began to work on God’s house. None are so great or important that they are excused from obedience and participation in the Master’s Cause.” (Waddey)

4. There are so many false doctrines prevalent in the religious community, we must be diligent in our study of the Word so we can discern between truth and error.

5. Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

B. The importance of proper priorities (1:4,9)
1. Putting first things first
2. We talk about this a lot – why?
3. Hailey quotes Farrar: “When a good work is awaiting its accomplishment, the time to do it is now.” (Hailey)
4. Matthew 6:19-20, 33; Colossians 3:1-3
5. “To be eagerly zealous for one’s own material welfare and house, running enthusiastically to care for it but loitering negligently in his responsibility to the Lord, is to invite retributive consequences.” (Hailey)

C. “Obligations do not disappear merely because opposition appears.” (Deaver)
1. Hailey again quotes Farrar: “Discouragement however profound is not an adequate reason for neglecting duties, even when they seem to be encompassed with difficulty. ‘Be strong and work’ is a glorious motto for human life.” (Hailey)
2. Haggai 2:4
3. “Their strength, like that of God’s saints today, is ‘in the Lord, and in the strength of his might’ (Eph. 6:10). In this power through the strength of the Lord nothing that comes within the promise of God’s will is impossible to His people. While God provides the strength, the believer must do his part; he must work. When strength through faith is combined with work, obstacles vanish….They should be of good courage, for if Jehovah, the God of all forces, is for them, who can be against them?” (Hailey)
4. Did the early church face opposition to the truth? (Acts 4:17-18)
5. Even among the disciples, there were factions that worked against the church’s mission (Acts 20:29-30)
6. What must our response be when we are warned to be silent about God’s grace and peace and love and mercy? (Acts 4:19-20)
7. “The church must continue to support the truth (I Tim. 3:15), help the needy (Gal. 6:10), reach the lost (Matt. 28:19,20), edify herself (Heb. 10:25). And the church must not allow the world to make her over in its image so that she, too, no longer cares about spiritual affairs. The Jews refused to build for a while because the world forced her to that end. The Jews became apathetic for a while because the world influenced her to so become.” (Deaver)
8. 1 John 5:4
I. Historical context
   A. “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius” (1:1); beginning in late 520 B.C. (Coffman; Gill; Howard; Lewis; Waddey); “chapters 9-14, is generally thought to be from a later period of his ministry” (Waddey)
   B. “Darius, after fighting some nineteen battles, put down the rebellious challenges of his authority; and there was nothing to hinder the Jews rebuilding of the Temple except their own lethargy. Zechariah, along with Haggai, whose prophetic career began some two months earlier, successfully led the people in rebuilding it. It is altogether possible that Zechariah saw the rebuilt temple completed in 516 B.C., and that he lived and prophesied long after that event.” (Coffman)
   C. “The first eight chapters consist of the prophecies dated according to the reign of King Darius during his second, third and fourth years of rule....Chapters 9-14, however, find us in an altogether new setting—one of sharp contrast to the first eight chapters. There is no more reference to the construction of the temple; heathen forces not even mentioned before are now detailed; war seems just a breath away and the love and peace and tranquility seems to have vanished.” (Howard)
   D. “The book of Zechariah may be thought of as a sequel to Haggai. The temple was begun and constructed in the midst of conflict, but it would be completed. Zechariah looks beyond the immediate temple to the Messiah and the spiritual temple of God, and to the final consummation of God's purpose in the glory of the Messiah and His rule. This would be accomplished amid great opposition, but Jehovah would fight for His people and give them victory.” (Hailey)

II. About the prophet
   A. “The name Zechariah means ‘Jehovah remembers,’ or ‘Jehovah has remembered.’” (Howard)
   B. “In contrast to Haggai, who was a ‘layman,’ Zechariah was a Levitical priest, and a member of one of the outstanding priestly families.” (Gill)
   C. “The writings of Zechariah reflect an engaging personality, a simple, hearty, practical man. His spirit was dedicated to love, justice and man’s need for freedom and a happy home.” (Waddey)
   D. Some believe Christ speaks of the prophet’s death in Matthew 23:34-35 (Howard), while others believe it is a different Zechariah to whom the Lord refers (Coffman, Hailey, Lewis, Waddey)

III. Lessons for today
   A. It was always in God’s plan to include other nations in His kingdom (2:3-4, 11; 9:9-10)
      1. “Jerusalem shall be inhabited without walls...’ This never applied to the literal Jerusalem, except for part of a century before the people were able to rebuild the walls. The simple meaning is that God’s eventual city, as realized in the Church of Jesus Christ, shall not be a fortified citadel, but a world-wide fellowship that no walls could limit or contain.” (Coffman)
      2. “In that day...’ is a phrase often associated in the prophecies with ‘the times of the Messiah.’” (Coffman)
      3. “This projects the prophecy into that distant day when Messiah would come to dwell among the Hebrews (John 1:14) and would invite all nations to become his
disciples (Matt. 28:19). Gentiles would have access to the divine promise through the gospel (Eph. 3:6).” (Waddey)

4. “The Lord looks beyond the physical descendants of Israel to a nation that includes some from among all the nations, Gentiles as well as Jews. In the midst of such a people Jehovah will dwell.” (Hailey)

B. The importance of following God’s will in worship (chapters 7 and 8)

1. The people had instituted a fast seventy years prior to remember and mourn the destruction of the temple (7:3)
   a. Other fasts had also been established in different months to commemorate other events related to the captivity (8:19)
   b. “The four fasts the Jews have been keeping in memory of Nebuchadnezzar’s coming against Jerusalem (tenth month), of the breach made in the wall (fourth month), of the burning of the house of Jehovah (fifth month), and of the murder of Gedaliah (seventh month)...” (Hailey)
   c. “This preoccupation with weeping, mourning, and fasting represented a radical change in Jewish religious life. Weeping and sorrow replaced hymns and thanksgivings; and Watts affirmed that, ‘The practice has survived into this century at the so-called “Wailing Wall” in Jerusalem.’” (Coffman)

2. The fact is that God only established one fast for the Jews to observe on a continual basis: the Day of Atonement, observed on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:27-32)
   a. The fast mentioned in Zechariah “was not of godly sorrow for past offences, but of selfish regret for loss of their country and their liberty. They pitied themselves, but they had not learned to fear Jehovah.” (Hinckley, quoted by Coffman)
   b. “Zechariah reminds them that this fasting had been done to bewail their exile and ruin. It had not come from divine commandment; therefore, it did not possess the deepest spiritual meaning.” (Howard)
   c. It was instituted by the people for the wrong reasons, not by God nor for God (7:5)

3. We are warned against binding things on others that are not authorized or commanded by God
   a. Matthew 15:9; Colossians 3:17
   b. While we have examples of Christians fasting in Acts (13:2-3; 14:23), we are not commanded to observe a fast collectively as a church at appointed times
   c. When we fast, our motivation must be pure (Matthew 6:17-18), and when done in a marriage relationship, fasting must be done with mutual consent between husband and wife (1 Corinthians 7:5)
   d. It is an individual decision, and should not be bound on others
   e. “Fasting, for the Christian, is strictly a voluntary matter. It should arise out of a feeling of intense need, not as a result of mere formality.” (Jackson)

C. The existence of Christ before He “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14)

1. The Angel of the Lord appears throughout the Old Testament, going all the way back to Genesis; in the NKJV the word “Angel,” when used in this context, is generally capitalized indicating the translators believed Him to be Deity
2. This Angel of the Lord is featured prominently in the book of Zechariah
3. “The following observations will establish that this mighty angel was no less than the Word of God, the preincarnate Christ. The angel of Jehovah told Moses that his name was ‘I AM THAT I AM.’ Jesus also claimed that he was I AM (John 8:58).

“The angel led Israel through the wilderness and provided their needs (Ex. 14:19-20). Moses reported that Jehovah directed Moses to smite the rock that the people might drink in the desert. But Paul tells us that the rock they drank of was Christ (1 Cor. 10:24).

“In the Book of Joshua, the angel is the prince or leader of Jehovah’s host or army (5:14). In Revelation 19, we see the army of heaven and its notable leader. Then John sees his name which is ‘The Word of God’ (19:11-16). In his Gospel, John identifies the Word of God as the only begotten of the Father, who became flesh (John 1:1-4,14).

“The angel told Manoah that his name was wonderful (Judg. 13:16-18). Isaiah, in his famous prophecy of Messiah said, ‘His name shall be called Wonderful...’ (9:6).

“Isaiah calls him ‘The angel of God’s presence,’ which means ‘of his face’ (63:9). The Hebrews writer says Christ is ‘the very image of his (God’s) substance’ (1:3).”...

“The angel of Jehovah can be worshiped (Josh. 5:4). No mere man or created angel can be worshiped acceptably (Acts 10:25,26; Rev. 22:-8-9). But Jesus commonly accepted the worship of men (Matt. 28:17)....

“These appearances of the angel of Jehovah, in ancient times, are called theophanies, i.e., when God assumes the form of an angel or a man in order to speak and act visibly and audibly to men, to provide them some revelation or guidance.” (Waddey)
THE MINOR PROPHETS // MALACHI

I. Historical background
   A. Around 450 B.C. (Coffman); 445-432 B.C. (Hailey); 460-425 B.C. (Waddey)
   B. “The time in which Malachi prophesied is determined by material within the book rather than from the opening lines of the book as has been true with earlier prophets. It is a time of careless priests (Mal. 1:6-2:9), skepticism (Mal. 3:14; 2:17), and of inter-marriage (Mal. 2:11-16). The temple is evidently completed and sacrifices are being offered (Mal. 1:7-10). Judah is under a governor (Mal. 1:8). Edom has been destroyed (Mal. 1:1-5).” (Lewis)
   C. “The book itself does not give the date of its writing. However, most scholars agree that the writer of the book dealt with much the same problems as were prevalent during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah....The Temple was rebuilt about 520-516 B.C. Then about 60 years later (around 456 B.C.) Ezra had come home from Babylon to Jerusalem to help encourage and reorganize the nation. Then, about 13 years later (around 444 B.C.), Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and directed the rebuilding of the wall. This seems to have been close to the time of the conditions and events described in Malachi. Thus it seems that the Jews had been home about 100 years in Malachi’s time.” (Warren)
   D. “For a full picture of the conditions in Judea during the period one should read Ezra 7-10 and the complete Book of Nehemiah.” (Hailey)

II. About the prophet
   A. “Nothing is known of the life of the author of this book. Some scholars even doubt that we know his name. They contend that since ‘Malachi,’ which is the Hebrew word for ‘my messenger,’ appears nowhere else as a proper name it should not be considered to be one in connection with this book.” (Warren)
   B. Some object to the supposed anonymity of the book, including Coffman and Hailey. “No other OT prophecy is anonymous, nor may we reasonably supposed Malachi to be an exception.” (Coffman)
   C. Malachi “might have meant My Angel or Messenger, or it may be taken as an adjective Angelicus. Either of these meaning would form a natural name for a Jewish child, and a very suitable one for a prophet.” (Smith)

III. Lessons for today
   A. God hates divorce (2:16)
      1. Hatred is a strong emotion, but it is applied to several specific sinful attitudes and actions (Proverbs 6:16-19; Deuteronomy 12:29-31)
      2. “Such a vigorous warning and exhortation from the Lord in a former decadent and permissive age should not be silenced; its principle should be heralded to the ends of the earth in our own time.” (Hailey)
      3. Single Christians should take great care in choosing a mate, since God’s intention for marriage is a life-long commitment (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-13)
4. “Disregard for marriage vows is disastrous for the individual, society and the nation.” (Waddey)

B. “God is never satisfied with partial, or incomplete, service.” (Woods)
   1. “Malachi teaches that although ritual may be important in religion, it is not an end in itself. Ritual is only of value when it expresses a deep and sincere spiritual worship unto God.” (Hailey)
   2. The people of Malachi’s day were not doing all that they should or could in giving back to God (1:8; 3:8-10; cf. Leviticus 22:18-20)
   3. “Notice that they were not robbing God in the sense that they were taking money, but they simply were not giving as they had been commanded!” (Warren)
   4. “Every spiritually minded person who ever lived instinctively accepted the principle that, to God one must give the very best….The reprobate priesthood of Malachi’s times were accepting the sick, the lame, and the blind, and doing many other things forbidden.” (Coffman)
   5. Does God expect more us to do or give than we are able? No, but neither should we underestimate how much we are able to do or give! (2 Corinthians 8:9-15)
   6. When we commit to something, we must be sure to follow through once we have the ability (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

C. Our attitude toward correction should be one of repentance (3:16)
   1. Malachi preached against the sins of the people, resulting in a change of heart and life in “those who feared the Lord”
   2. “Malachi foresees the repentance of some, though not all the people. They would speak with one another. No doubt their speaking would concern the need for repentance, for genuine worship. As always, the fear of Jehovah would prove the beginning of wisdom for Jehovah would hear and remember.” (Gill)
   3. Today, we must listen to the preaching of the Word, even when it is uncomfortable to hear (2 Timothy 4:2), and respond appropriately (James 1:21-25)
I. **Hosea**
   A. “Although Hosea is not a Messianic prophecy in the same degree as Isaiah, nevertheless, its ultimate focus upon the kingdom of heaven in the days of the Messiah is plainly evident in those NT quotations of the prophecy which have come down to us. The Saviour himself, as well as the apostles Peter and Paul, all made reference to Hosea.” (Coffman, *Hosea*).
   B. Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1
   C. Matthew 9:13; 12:7; Mark 12:33; Hosea 6:6
   D. Luke 23:30; Hosea 10:8
   E. Romans 9:25-26; 1 Peter 2:10; Hosea 2:23
   F. 1 Corinthians 15:55; Hosea 13:14

II. **Joel**
   A. “Jesus our Lord used the imagery of this prophecy in speaking of his Second Advent and the final judgment; the apostle John used it specifically in his series of trumpet visions; and the apostle Peter ushered in the gospel age with a n appeal to the words of this very prophet. In view of its small size, it is almost incredible how this small prophecy has been quoted and referred to by so many. Surely, there is an indescribably rich mine of significant spiritual truth in the prophecy of Joel.” (Coffman, *Joel*
   B. Acts 2:16-21 – “This is that…”
   1. “In this day men should learn to rejoice and be glad in it, for it was a day when:
      “1. The gates of righteousness are open to men (v. 19).
      “2. Men may enter the gate of the Lord (v. 20).
      “3. The Lord becomes man’s salvation (v. 21) (i.e., ‘the Savior of the world’—see John 4:42. I John 4:14).
      “5. Men would bless the Lord out of the house of God (v. 26) (cf. I Tim. 3:15).”
   (McGee)
   C. Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32
   D. “There are echoes of the book, particularly in the book of Revelation. The moon turned to blood (Joel 2:31; Rev. 6:12); the description of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:10; cf. Matt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24; Lk. 21:25); the judgment as a harvest (Joel 3:13; Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:17ff); and treading the winepress as a symbol of judgment (Joel 3:13; cf. Rev. 14:20; 19:15; Isa. 63:3). The locusts of 2:1-11 may be echoed in Rev. 9:3-11).” (Lewis)

III. **Amos**
   A. Acts 7:42-43; Amos 5:25-27
   B. Acts 15:16f; Amos 9:11-12

IV. **Obadiah – no NT references**

V. **Jonah**
   B. “The proud Pharisees, in rejecting Jesus, because of his Galilean background, overlooked the fact that Jonah had also come from Galilee (John 7:52).” (Waddey)
VI. Micah  
A. Matthew 2:6; John 7:42; Micah 5:2  
B. Matthew 10:36; Luke 12:53; Micah 7:6

VII. Nahum  
A. “Though the N.T. speaks of the beauty of the feet of those who bring good news (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:15), it is more likely an echo of Isa. 52:7 than of Nah. 1:15.” (Lewis)

VIII. Habakkuk  
A. Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38; Habakkuk 2:4  
B. Acts 13:41; Habakkuk 1:5

IX. Zephaniah  
A. “No quotes from Zephaniah are found in the New Testament. His term, ‘day of wrath,’ is reflected in Romans 2:5 and Revelation 12:1.” (Waddey)  
B. “Zephaniah has no prediction of a personal Messiah, although 2:11 and 3:9 seem to speak of Messiah’s age.” (Waddey)

X. Haggai  
A. “The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews furnishes the one clear echo from Haggai which is in the N.T. when he speaks of the ‘shaking of the heavens’ (Hag. 2:6; Heb. 12:26-28) in contrast with the kingdom which cannot be shaken.” (Lewis)  
B. Zerubbabel is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in the gospel according to Matthew.  
C. “Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, was governor under the Persian overlords (Hag. 1:1). He was a direct descendent from David and Jechoniah, the last king of Judah prior to the captivity (Matt. 1:11-12).”

XI. Zechariah  
A. “No other similar portion of the OT affords so brilliant and detailed a presentation of the Christ and Christian times as does the prophecy of Zechariah.” (Coffman)  
B. Matthew 21:5; John 12:15; Zechariah 9:9  
C. Matthew 27:9-10; Zechariah 11:12-13  
D. John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10  
E. Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27; Zechariah 13:7  
F. Ephesians 4:25; Zechariah 8:16

XII. Malachi  
A. Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2-3  
B. Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Malachi 3:1  
C. Matthew 1:13-14; Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5-6
THE MINOR PROPHETS // RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY


