

# Overview Chart of the Prophets

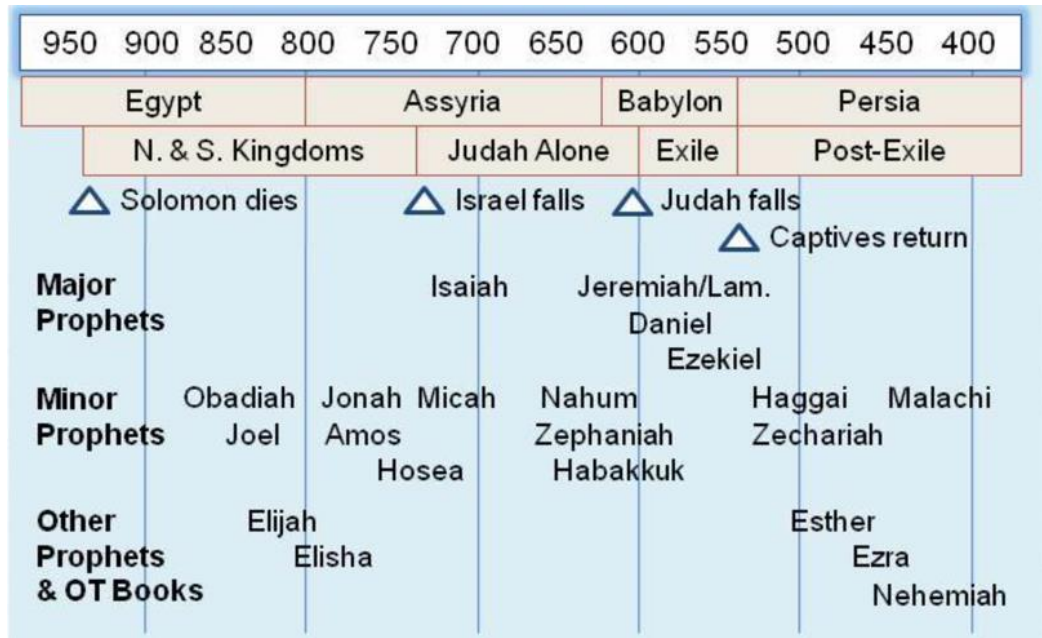


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# Introduction to the Prophets

Amos wrote, “*The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?*” (Amos 3:8).

The prophets began with the call of God during the monarchy of the united kingdom of Israel (about 1000 B.C.). The prophets spoke not theirs but God’s word. They had no political advantage and no permanent institutional power. They were clustered around critical historical events.

After the reign of King David’s son Solomon, Israel was divided into a Northern Kingdom (also called Israel), consisting of ten tribes, and a Southern Kingdom (called Judah), consisting of two tribes. Israel lasted 200 years, and had 19 evil kings, none of which were in the Davidic line. They went into captivity to Assyria in 722 B.C. The prophets warned Israel of this captivity due to their idolatry. Israel, as a nation, did not return to the Land.

Judah lasted about 100 years longer, and had 19 kings, some good and some evil, but all descendants of King David. The prophets warned Judah not only of its idolatry but pointed to the previous destruction of Israel as an example of what would happen to Judah also. Then in 586 B.C., Judah fell captive to Babylon. After 70 years, the Jews returned to the Land. Then the prophets encouraged the rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem, but also foretold the coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom as the hope for the future restoration of the united Jewish nation.

The future was a vital part of prophetic theology. When repentance in the nations did not occur, God’s judgment was unavoidable. The prophetic future was both immediate and remote. Idolatry sums up all that was wrong, primarily the idol Baal. Announcing the judgment justification, the prophets gave the sins of the nation as the reason. They did not have to explain that sin deserved judgment. That was assumed due to the Mosaic Covenant of Deuteronomy 27–30.

The prophets were not social reformers. They were theological reformers. Their motivation was their commitment to the laws of God. Although much of the prophets’ messages were given orally, the written form was the principal form.

By the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., there came into being “false prophets,” who operated in parallel to the true prophets of God. They did not produce literature, and eventually, the events of history proved their message to be false. However, the false prophets made up quite an influential movement. They represented the popular religion. They spoke in the name of God and told the people what they wanted to hear. They often referred to dreams and visions and used divination, which was forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 18:10, 14). The prophets of God did not use divination, and although they did have some dreams and visions, they mostly relied on the direct word from God.

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Much of this background information comes from “An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books,” by C. Hassell Bullock, Moody Press, 2007.

The outlines for individual books are from the “Bible Knowledge Commentary,” edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Victor Books, 1985.

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# Hosea

**Author:** Hosea (whose name means “salvation”)

**Date Written:** about 710 B.C.

**Date of Hosea’s Ministry:** about 752-710 B.C.

## Background

The events surrounding these kings are recorded in 2 Chronicles 26–32. It was a time of relatively economic prosperity in Israel. Hosea lived in and ministered to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, just preceding the fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. He prophesied after Amos, also a prophet to Israel. Hosea’s focus was on the idolatry of Israel.

## Theme and Purpose

The central thought concerns God’s Mosaic Covenant with Israel, where obedience results in blessing and disobedience results in judgment (Deuteronomy 27–30). The major themes can be summarized as sin, judgment, and salvation. In exposing Israel’s sin, Hosea emphasized its idolatry. To illustrate Israel’s spiritual infidelity, Hosea married a woman who would, like the nation, prove unfaithful to her husband. Though Hosea contains some calls to repentance, he did not expect a positive response. Judgment was inescapable. Hosea’s own reconciliation to his wife illustrated Israel’s ultimate restoration, which will be in the Millennial Kingdom.

## Key Verse

*“For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” (6:6).*

## Outline

- I. **Hosea’s Times (1:1)**—*The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah (790-739, co-reigning with his son for 11 years), Jotham (750-731), Ahaz (731-715) and Hezekiah (715-686), kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam (794-753) the son of Joash, king of Israel.*
- II. **Hosea’s Experience: A Portrayal of God’s Dealings with Israel (1:2–3:5)**
  - A. **The symbolism of Hosea’s family (1:2–2:1)**
    1. **Hosea’s marriage: Israel’s unfaithfulness (1:2-3a)**—*...the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.” So he went and took Gomer...*
    2. **Hosea’s three children: Israel’s judgment (1:3b-9)**—*she bore a son, “...Name him Jezreel...I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.” In Jezreel, Jehu killed King Ahaziah, the Judean king in the line of David, and 42 of his relatives (2 Kings 9:27-28; 10:12-14).*
      - ...she gave birth to a daughter...”Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel... and deliver them...*
      - ...she gave birth to a son, “Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God.”*

**3. The symbolism reversed (1:10–2:1)**—*Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured...It will be said to them, “You are the sons of the living God.” And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, ... [with] one leader....Say to your brothers, “Ammi,” [My people] and to your sisters, “Ruhamah” [My loved one]. This will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.*

**B. Restoration through punishment (2:2-23)**

**1. The Lord’s punishment of Israel (2:2-13)**

- a. **Punishment threatened (2:2-4)**—*If Israel does not quit worshipping the idols, God will make her like a wilderness...also, I will have no compassion on her children*
- b. **Punishment initiated (2:5-13)**—*Israel was running after the false gods of the surrounding nations, receiving gifts of food, water, etc. But God will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. God said, “it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil...which they used for Baal.” ... “I will punish her for the days of the Baals when she used to offer sacrifices to them...so that she forgot Me,” declares the Lord.*

**2. The Lord’s restoration of Israel (2:14-23)**—*“I will assure her...” “It will come about in that day,” declares the Lord, “I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth...I will make a covenant for them...and will make them lie down in safety. ...in righteousness...in justice...in lovingkindness...in compassion...in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord....And I will say... ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’”*

**C. The restoration of Hosea’s marriage (chapter 3)**

- 1. The divine command (3:1)**—*Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman...yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods.”*
- 2. Hosea’s obedient response (3:2-3)**—*So I bought her for myself...Then I said to her, “You shall stay with me...You shall not play the harlot.”*
- 3. The illustration explained (3:4-5)**—*For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king...sacrifice...ephod. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days, i.e., the Millennial Kingdom.*

**III. Hosea’s Message: God’s Judgment and Restoration of Israel (chapters 4–14)**

**A. The Lord’s case against Israel (4:1–6:3)**

- 1. Israel’s guilt exposed (chapter 4)**—*“there is no...knowledge of God in the land...have forgotten the law of your God...the more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me...I will punish them for their ways...They will eat, but not have enough...they consult their wooden idol...departing from their God.”*
- 2. Israel’s judgment announced (5:1-14)**—*“Give heed, O house of Israel! ...For the judgment applies to you....On them I will pour out My wrath...Israel [Ephraim] went to Assyria, ...but he is unable to heal you...I will be like a lion to Ephraim...to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces...I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver.”*
- 3. Israel’s restoration envisioned (5:15–6:3)**—*Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek Me. “Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us...let us press on to know the Lord.”*

**B. The Lord’s case against Israel expanded (6:4–11:11)**

1. **Israel's guilt and punishment (6:4–8:14)**—“they do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; they are before My face....they have not returned to the Lord their God, nor have they sought Him...Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me...they speak lies against Me...they have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law.... They have set up kings, but not by Me...with their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves....Israel is swallowed up...like a vessel in which no one delights...For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; And Judah has multiplied fortified cities, but I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume...”
2. **Israel's guilt and punishment reiterated (9:1–11:7)**—“O Israel...they will not remain in the Lord's land...in Assyria they will eat unclean food...The days of punishment have come, the days of retribution have come...He will punish their sins...they will be wanderers among the nations...The sword will whirl against their cities...so My people are bent on turning from Me...”
3. **The Lord's compassion renewed (11:8-11)**—“How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? ...My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled....I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. They will walk after the Lord...They will come trembling like birds...And I will settle them in their houses,” declares the Lord.

**C. The Lord's case against Israel concluded (11:12–14:9)**

1. **A concluding indictment (11:12–13:16)**—“Ephraim surrounds Me with lies...Judah is...even against the Holy One who is faithful....The Lord will punish Jacob according to his ways...” God said, “I have also spoken to the prophets, and I gave numerous visions, and through the prophets I gave parables....and now they [Israel] made for themselves molten images, idols skillfully made from their silver...Yet I have been the Lord your God since the land of Egypt; and you were not to know any god except Me, for there is no savior besides Me....they became satisfied...their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me. ...It is your destruction, O Israel, that you are against Me, against your help. Where now is your king that he may save you...? Samaria [capital of Israel] will be held guilty, For she has rebelled against her God. They will fall by the sword...”
2. **A concluding exhortation (chapter 14)**—“Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. ...return to the Lord. Say to Him, ‘Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, that we may present the fruit of our lips. Assyria will not save us...Nor will we say again, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands’ [the idols].”  
—And God replies, “I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from them...They will blossom like the vine.... O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; From Me comes your fruit.”

**Conclusion:** *Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them (14:9).*

# Joel

**Author:** “*Joel the son of Pethuel*” (1:1).

**Date Written:** No information is given to help date the book. But from within the book, guesses of the dates vary from early preexilic, during the time of Jehoash, King of Judah (835-796 B.C.) or late preexilic, just prior to the Babylonian Captivity (597-587 B.C.). It seems preexilic to Judah because only Judah and Jerusalem are mentioned (but not the Northern Kingdom of Israel). However, it is impossible to be dogmatic regarding the date.

## Background

Joel is not giving new information, per se. Rather, he’s giving a variation on a perspective of history long known to the Jews. As with almost all the prophets, Joel’s prophecy depends on the curses for disobedience (revolving around defeat in war, capture, and exile) and blessings of restoration as stated in the Mosaic Covenant of Deuteronomy 27–30. Nowhere does Joel specify the sin of Judah and Jerusalem. There is more of an emphasis on the end of things.

## Theme and Purpose

Although Zion is mentioned 7 times, Judah 6 times, Jerusalem 6 times, and the *day of the Lord* 5 times, there is an emphasis that goes beyond the Jews.

1. There is Yahweh’s sovereign authority over **all** the peoples of the earth, ending with **all** the nations assembling before God for the final judgment (3:12). Even the invader threatening Judah and Jerusalem is seen as *God’s army* (2:11, 25).
2. Normally, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon special people assigned with special tasks. However, Joel presents the Holy Spirit as coming upon everyone, i.e., an equality of spiritual access to God, not just to selective people. This information would be quite shocking to the Jews. Since the beginning of their nation at Mt. Sinai, Yahweh spoke to them through leaders like Moses and Joshua, priests like Aaron, and prophets like Samuel and Jeremiah. But in the *day of the Lord*, Yahweh will speak to everyone, and through the Holy Spirit, everyone will have spiritual access to God.

## Key Verse

*“Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty”* (1:15).

## Outline

- I. **Introduction (1:1)**—*The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel*
- II. **The Locust Plague (1:2-20)**
  - A. **An opening appeal (1:2-4)**—*O elders...Has anything like this happened in your days?...the gnawing locust...swarming locust...creeping locust...stripping locust.*  
The land of Judah will be completely stripped bare by Babylon, as locusts do.
  - B. **A call to mourn (1:5-13)**
    1. **Drunkards should mourn (1:5-7)**—*Awake, drunkards, and weep...For a nation has invaded my land...it has made my vine a waste*
    2. **The land should mourn (1:8-10)**—*The field is ruined, the land mourns*

3. **Farmers should mourn (1:11-12)**—*O farmers...the harvest of the field is destroyed...All the trees of the field dry up.*
4. **Priests should mourn (1:13)**—*lament, O priests; for the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God*
- C. **A call to repentance (1:14)**—*Gather...all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.*
- D. **The significance of the plague (1:15-20)**—*For the day of the Lord is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty.*
- III. **The Coming Day of the Lord (2:1-11)**
- A. **The nearness of the Lord's army (2:1-2)**—*...sound an alarm...For the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near.*
- B. **The destructive power of the Lord's army (2:3-5)**—*The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them...*
- C. **The relentless charge of the Lord's army (2:6-9)**—*They run like mighty men...when they burst through the defenses...they rush on the city...*
- D. **The invincibility of the Lord's army (2:10-11)**—*The Lord utters His voice before His army...The day of the Lord is indeed great...who can endure it?*
- IV. **A Renewed Call to Repentance (2:12-17)**
- A. **An appeal for a sincere change of heart (2:12-14)**
1. **The appeal (2:12-13a)**—*"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart"...Now return to the Lord your God*
  2. **The motivation (2:13b-14)**—*For God...is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness...*
- B. **An appeal for national involvement (2:15-17)**—*...Gather the people... assemble the elders...let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep...and let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord...Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"*
- V. **Forgiveness and Restoration (2:18-27)**
- A. **The Lord's gracious response described (2:18)**—*Then the Lord will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people.*
- B. **The Lord's promise of restored agricultural blessing (2:19-27)**—*The Lord will answer and say to His people, "...I will remove the northern army far from you...Then you will have plenty to eat...and praise the name of the Lord your God...Thus you will know that I am in the mist of [united] Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and there is no other."*  
—He starts out talking about restoration from the Babylonian "northern army" but goes on to describe the rescue of Jewish saints from out of the tribulation.
- VI. **Promises of a Glorious Future (2:28–3:21)**
- A. **Spiritual renewal and deliverance (2:28-32)**
1. *It will come about after this [when the Jewish people have turned back to God at the Second Coming of Christ, going into the Millennial Kingdom] *that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions...* [see also Ezekiel 39:29; Zechariah 12:10f; Jeremiah 31:31f].*
  2. *I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, the sun will be turned into darkness Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes—the supernatural events during the tribulation, before the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 6–18).*

3. *And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered; for ... in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, ...even among the survivors—Jesus called this the separation of the sheep [saints] from the goats [unbelievers] in Matthew 25:31-34.*

Peter quoted these verses in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, when the people of many nations were hearing the apostles speak in their own languages. They said of the apostles, *“They are full of sweet wine.”* But Peter answered, *“For these men are not drunk, as you suppose ... but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel,* and he quoted Joel 2:28-32. The word “this” is better translated, “the same as” or “the same kind of thing.” That is, what happened at Pentecost is the same kind of thing that Joel spoke of.

Similarities:

1. The Holy Spirit was given to all 120 of those assembled (Acts 1:15), whether young or old, man or woman, free or slave.
2. The Holy Spirit did not come until Christ was glorified (already ascended to heaven to sit at God’s right hand (Acts 1:9-11; 2:33-35).
3. The invitation is to *whoever calls on the name of the Lord*—i.e., a free-will decision.
4. Those who call on the name of the Lord are the ones *whom the LORD calls*, i.e. those who are elect (Ephesians 1:4).

Differences:

1. Today, we believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but in the Millennial Kingdom, there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
2. Today, we do not see visions, dream dreams, etc. i.e., receive new revelation.
3. Christ is glorified in heaven during our age, but He will come again to the earth where He will be glorified as King of Kings in the Millennial Kingdom.
4. Our age is one of persecution, not even a hint of physical deliverance.
5. *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*—During the Tribulation, it is the people who are believers who are both saved spiritually and saved physically to go into the Millennial Kingdom. But here Peter is using the word “saved” only in a spiritual sense, as the rest of his message indicates.

So our church age is not a literal fulfillment of Joel 2. But Joel 2 will be literally fulfilled at the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, and the Millennial Kingdom. However, Peter (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) used this passage to demonstrate that in our age we have the same kind of thing—some details are the same, some are not. However, the literal fulfillment of Joel 2 is still future.

#### **B. The judgment of the nations (3:1-16)**

1. **Judgment is announced (3:1-8)**—*“I will gather all the nations...then I will enter into judgment with them...”*
2. **A call to war: Judgment is described (3:9-16)**—*The Lord roars from Zion...the Lord is a refuge for His people...Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, ...so Jerusalem will be holy.*

**C. Israel’s ultimate restoration (3:17-21)**—*In that day...a spring will go out from the house of the Lord...Egypt will become a waste, and Edom will become a desolate wilderness, because of the violence done to the sons of Judah... But*

*Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem for all generations. And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the Lord dwells in Zion.*

## Amos

**Author:** *“The words of Amos (“burden-bearer”), “who was among the shepherders,” or sheep breeders. He was from Tekoa, 10 miles south of Jerusalem in Judah. He also described himself as a “grower of sycamore figs,” a typical tree of the tropical Jordan Valley around the Dead Sea (see Luke 19:2f). Unique among the other prophets, he said, “I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet.” “...The Lord said to me, ‘Go prophesy to My people Israel’” (7:14-15). He was a ‘layman’ sent by God with His message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.*

**Date Written:** A contemporary of Jonah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**Date of Amos’ Ministry:** *In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (790-740 B.C.), and in the days of Jeroboam II son of Joash, king of Israel (793-753 B.C.), two years before the earthquake (Zechariah 14:5), about 760 B.C.*

## Background

Amos was a southerner from Judah, who ministered in Bethel, the chief center of idolatry, near the southern border of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. His was a message of judgment to Israel, though the Lord would preserve a remnant, holding out hope that God would restore this remnant and draw all nations to Himself. Amos did not argue for God’s universal sovereignty. He assumed it and applied it.

Commerce thrived (8:5), an upper class emerged (4:1-3), and expensive homes were built (3:15; 5:11; 6:4, 11). The rich enjoyed an indulgent lifestyle (6:1-6), while the poor became targets for legal and economic exploitation (2:6-7; 5:7, 10-13; 6:12; 8:4-6). Slavery for debt was easily accepted (2:6; 8:6). Standards of morality had sunk to a low ebb (2:7).

Like many of the prophets, Amos spoke of the day of the Lord. He saw it as a time when God would judge sin, even in His own people (5:18-20). Another day would come, however, when David’s kingdom would be restored, and it would include both Jews and Gentiles (9:13-15).

Amos was a gifted writer. His writing style is rhetorical. He used short, uncomplicated sentences. He often asked questions and provided explanations. He also knew the power of repetition. He illustrated his points well with figures of speech and lessons from nature. Amos’ phraseology illustrates the Mosaic Covenant background against which he wrote.

## Theme and Purpose

The book of Amos is distinctive from other prophetic books because Amos was not a prophet, nor was he recognized as a prophet. He claimed to be a farmer and shepherd. In contrast to other prophets, who referred to God as the God of Judah and Israel, Amos referred to Him as the God of the whole earth, with Judah and Israel as two among many nations that God would judge for the same sins. People who have God’s truth live with greater responsibility than those who live in darkness.

## Key Verses

*Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; ... Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sounds of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:21-24).* Religion does not impress God. He looks for righteousness.

## Outline

- I. **The Author, Date, and Theme (1:1-2)**—note the introductory information. Amos is clear that, like a lion roars before it devours its prey, it is *the Lord* [who] *roars from Zion and from Jerusalem*, who is bringing this judgment against Israel, Judah, and the pagan nations.
- II. **The Messages of Judgment (1:3–2:16)**
  - A. **Judgment against the foreign nations:** Damascus (1:3-5), Gaza (1:6-8), Tyre (1:9-10), and against the blood relatives of Israel: Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15), and Moab (2:1-3)—These pagan nations would go into exile or be destroyed in a judgment from God, for their general wickedness, but the noose was also closing in on Israel.
  - B. **Judgment against Judah (2:4-5)**—Judah was more wicked than the nations because *they rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept His statutes*. They were judged on the basis of the Mosaic Law they possessed, not on the basis of a common moral consciousness the other nations had. But they would have a punishment similar to the nations—destruction by war and exile (when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., in 2 Kings 25:1-12).
  - C. **Judgment against Israel (2:6-16): for the broken covenant** by oppressing the poor (2:6-8), **spurning the grace of God** when He brought them up from Egypt (2:9-12), **and the resulting judgment**, when even the strongest among them will not escape (2:13-16).
- III. **The Reasons for Judgment Against Israel (chapters 3–6)**
  - A. **Sins against God and man (chapter 3)**—*You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth* (v. 2). They have a unique covenant relationship with God. Because they broke that covenant, God must keep His part and bring judgment for disobedience (Deuteronomy 27–30).
  - B. **Economic exploitation, religious hypocrisy, refusal to repent (chapter 4)**—God brought many chastisements against Israel, but they still refused to repent.
  - C. **Injustice (5:1-17)**—They *turn justice into wormwood* [bitterness] (v. 7). God who *changes deep darkness into morning* (v. 8) can and will change prosperity to adversity.
  - D. **Unacceptable worship (5:18-27)**—Their songs are just noise to God (v. 23). From the beginning, when they left Egypt, they worshipped idols (v. 25).
  - E. **Complacency and pride (chapter 6)**—*the Lord God of hosts has declared: “I loathe the arrogance of Jacob, ...therefore I will deliver up the city and all it contains”* (v. 8).
- IV. **Visions that Amos Saw (chapters 7–9)**
  - A. **Three short visions of impending judgment (7:1-9)**
    1. **The swarming locusts (7:1-3)**—*God was forming a locust-swarm*, to strip the land clean of all vegetation. Amos begged God to not do it, so God did not do it.

2. **The devouring fire (7:4-6)**—*the Lord God was calling to contend with them by fire, and it consumed...the farm land. Amos begged God to not do it, so God did not do it.*

3. **The testing plumb line (7:7-9)**—*A plumb line was used to see if a wall was straight. The Lord said to me, "...Behold I am about to put a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel. I will spare them no longer. The high places...will be desolated and the sanctuaries...laid waste. Then I will rise up...with the sword."*

**B. An intervening incident (7:10-17)**—*Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to endure all his words. For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'" Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah [the home country of Amos] and there eat bread and there do your prophesying! But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence." Amos then replied that he was a shepherd, not a prophet. But the Lord took me...and said to me, "Go prophesy to My people Israel...Israel will certainly go from its land into exile." So Amos obeyed and did what God asked him to do.*

**C. Two more visions of impending judgment (chapters 8–9)**

1. **The basket of summer fruit (chapter 8)**—*The Lord said to me, "The end has come for My people Israel. I will spare them no longer." "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. People will...go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find it."*

2. **The avenging Lord (9:1-10)**—*"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the LORD.*

**V. Restoration after Judgment (9:11-15)**

**A. Political renewal (9:11)**—*"In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David...and rebuild it as in the days of old."*

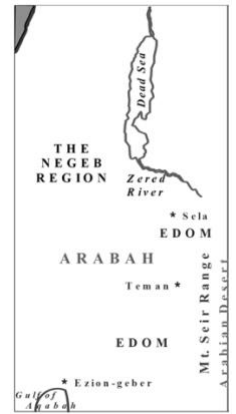
**B. National purpose (9:12)**—*"That they may possess the remnant...and all the nations who are called by My name," declares the Lord who does this.*

**C. Prosperity, peace, and permanence (9:13-15)**—*"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "...I will restore the captivity of My people Israel...I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says the Lord your God. This will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom, when God brings the Jews back into the land He promised to give them, and He will be their God, and they will be His people.*

# Obadiah

**Author:** Nothing is known of the author of this small prophetic book except that Obadiah's name means "worshipper of Yahweh."

**Date Written:** Since the Bible gives no facts about the life or background of the man who wrote the book of Obadiah, the date of his ministry and writing is unknown.



## Background

The conflict between Israel and Edom began with a struggle between Jacob and Esau in the womb of their mother Rebekah (Genesis 25:21-26). Esau moved to the area south and east of the Dead Sea, and his descendants were known as Edomites. This struggle between Israel and Edom continued through the centuries. Herod the Great, king of Judea from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C., was an Edomite, who tried to have the baby Jesus killed. The Edomites (also called Idumeans) joined the Jews in rebellion against Rome in A.D. 70, but were almost obliterated by the Roman Emperor Titus. The Edomites then faded from history.

## Theme and Purpose

The message of Obadiah is one of doom and judgment. (It is not quoted from in the New Testament.) It contains a powerful message about the justice of God. His righteousness demanded vengeance on Edom, the enemy of Israel. Judgment against Edom is mentioned in more Old Testament books than it is against any other foreign nation (cf. Isaiah 11:14; 34:5-17; 63:1-6; Jeremiah 9:25-26; 25:17-26; 49:7-22; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; 9:11-12; Obadiah; Malachi 1:4).

## Key Verse

*"And the kingdom will be the LORD'S" (verse 21)*

## Outline

### I. The Message from the Lord (v. 1)

In this revelation given by God to Obadiah, God says He has sent *an envoy among the nations, saying, "...let us go against her [Edom] for battle."*

### II. The Degradation of Edom (vv. 2-9)

#### A. Edom's Character (vv. 2-4)

1. **Edom's future smallness**—*Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom—"I will make you small [insignificant] among the nations..."*
2. **Edom's present pride**—*The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place*—Edom was situated in a narrow ridge of mountainous land southeast of the Dead Sea. It was "inaccessible" because of the gorges radiating from it towards the west (and Israel) and the desert on the east. *Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'*—Edom had a false sense of security, because of their geographical location.

3. *“Though you build high like the eagle, ...From there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD—From the very place of what they thought was their protection, God would cause calamity.*

## **B. Edom’s Calamity (vv. 5-9)**

1. **Edom’s ransacking**—*O how Esau will be ransacked, And his hidden treasures searched out!*—Whereas a thief might not see something to steal because it is hidden, in Edom even the hidden treasures will be searched out and plundered.
2. **Edom’s entrapment**—*And the men at peace with you Will deceive you and overpower you*—their deception is claiming to be Edom’s friends and at peace with Edom, but instead they overpower Edom.
3. **God’s initiative**—*“Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD—Although Edom’s entrapment will come from her perceived allies and friends, we are reminded once again that it came from God. He will ...Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau—God already said He would destroy Edom (v. 2), now He says He would destroy her wise leaders. So that everyone may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter—Edom’s pride led to her humiliation. Her security and wealth would be gone, her wise leaders and soldiers would fall. Nothing would keep her safe—not her geography, her military power, or her wise leaders.*

## **III. The Charge Against Edom (vv. 10-14)**

- A. The Reason for the Charge**—*Because of violence to your brother Jacob [the Israelites]*—This has characterized Edom’s relations with Israel from the very origins of the two nations. It began with Esau’s hatred for his brother Jacob (Genesis 27:40-41). Then there was the hostility of Edom to Israel after the Exodus (Exodus 15:15; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:4; Judges 11:17-18). Edom is numbered among Israel’s *enemies...who had plundered them* before they were defeated by Saul (1 Samuel 14:47-48). Therefore, *You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever*—destroyed as a nation, as a people (v. 18).
- B. The Explanation of the Charge**—*On the day*—this phrase repeated 8 times in verses 11-14. *that you stood aloof*—rather than helping their *brother Jacob*, Edom was indifferent to the attacks against Israel. *On the day that strangers carried off his [Jacob’s] wealth And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for Jerusalem—You too were as one of them*—From God’s perspective, because of Edom’s indifference (*stood aloof*), Edom was no different than the strangers who went against Edom’s own relatives, the Jews. Indifference was just the beginning, it’s a downward spiral from there in the next verses.
- C. The charge repeated and amplified**—*Do not gloat [to look down on, malignant pleasure] over your brother’s day, The day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice [to feel or show great delight] over the sons of Judah In the day of their destruction. Yes, do not boast [talk with excessive pride and self-satisfaction]. In the day of their distress—“misfortune,” “destruction,” and “distress,” “disaster” (v. 12), “calamity” (v. 13)—All these words heighten the effect of the disaster Judah experienced and “gloat,” “rejoice,” and “boast” heighten the pride, wrong attitudes, and sinfulness of Edom’s response. “Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster. ...do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster”—Edom goes from being spectators who rejoiced over Judah’s misfortune, to actually participating by entering the gates of Jerusalem, looting the wealth of the city (v. 11).*

#### IV. The Day of the Lord (vv. 15-21)

- A. God's Judgment on Edom**—*For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations*—when God intervenes in human affairs to bring all things under His rule. *As you have done, it will be done to you*—the repeating of the verb *done* indicates that the actions that will be done to the nation of Edom will correspond precisely to the actions they have already done. *Your dealings will return on your own head*—the consequences of their own free-will actions, the certainty of it. *“Because just as you drank on My holy mountain”*—Edom had been involved in a drunken celebration in Jerusalem (v. 13).
- B. God's Judgment on All the Nations**—*All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed*—All the nations will experience the judgment of God. They will be a memory. They will no longer exist. This is the difference between the nations and Israel. Edom and the nations will be *as if they had never existed*, whereas Judah will be restored, *there will be those [Jews] who escape* (v. 17).
- C. God's Blessing on Israel**—*“But on Mount Zion [Jerusalem] there will be those who escape*—there will be Jewish people—*And it will be holy*—Israel/Judah will be holy and God's temple will be there—*And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions*—they will possess all the blessings of the covenants God made with them.
- D. The Destruction and Occupation of Edom**—*Then the house of Jacob [Judah, the Southern Kingdom] will be a fire And the house of Joseph [Israel, the Northern Kingdom] a flame*—the two nations will once again be united and will be a flame of fire against Edom.—*But the house of Esau will be as stubble [easily burned]. And they will set them on fire and consume them*—the fire of the united kingdom of Israel will destroy the Edomites, *so that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau*—they will be completely wiped out, destroyed—*For the LORD has spoken*—God said it, so it will be.
- E. Israel's Territory**—*Then those of the Negev [southern wilderness] will possess the mountain of Esau [east of the Dead Sea]—And those of the Shephelah [hills near the Mediterranean Sea] the Philistine plain [Mediterranean coast];—Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria [the Northern Kingdom of Israel], And Benjamin will possess Gilead [trans-Jordan].*
- F. The Jewish Exiles Return**—*And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel*—the Jews will return to the land of Israel—*Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath [in northern Lebanon]—And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad [unknown place]—Will possess the cities of the Negev [southern Judah wilderness]*—In the future Millennial Kingdom, Israel will occupy all the land God promised them (Genesis 15:18).
- G. The Establishment of the Lord's Kingdom (v. 21)**—*The deliverers [Heb. “those who have been delivered”] will ascend Mount Zion [Jerusalem] To judge [Heb. “rule over”] the mountain of Esau—And the kingdom will be the LORD'S*—All will one day be merged into that eternal kingdom over which the Lord Jesus Christ alone will reign in glory (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 11:15; 12:10; 22:1-5).

# Jonah

**Author:** Since all of the book of Jonah is in the third person, some scholars believe this book was written by a prophet other than Jonah soon after the events. He is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, “...according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amattai, the prophet...”

**Date Written:** No one knows exactly when the book was written. But since 2 Kings 14:25 was in the days of Jeroboam, king in Samaria (793-753 B.C.), the book occurred before Israel was captured and sent into exile to Assyria. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was the enemy of Israel. Jonah wanted nothing to do with this enemy.

## Theme and Purpose

Three things that set the book of Jonah apart from other Old Testament books:

1. The person of Jonah and his personal experience are central to the message of the book in contrast to other prophets who bring messages to a king or to a nation.
2. The book is a biography of Jonah rather than about his message (which was only 8 words long!), in contrast to all the other prophetic books.
3. Other prophets were faithful to God’s call. But Jonah was a prophet who ran from God’s word when its implications were unpleasant to him. His last recorded words were anger towards God (4:3, 9).

Jesus considered Jonah to be historically true, and Jonah’s time in the fish was a foreshadow of Jesus’ own burial, both of which were real, actual three-day events (Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-32). Jesus also said, “*The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment.*” Jesus called the people to whom He was speaking *an evil and adulterous generation*. There is no evidence that the Ninevites converted to faith in God, they simply turned from their wickedness (repented) to avoid the consequences. Both of these groups are appearing at the same judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore, both of these groups were unbelievers. *And will condemn it Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here*—meaning, of course, Jesus Christ, who is God Himself. The men of Nineveh repented at an 8-word message from a human prophet. The people Jesus was speaking to had many messages as well as miraculous healings, for three years, from God’s own beloved Son, and they did not repent. With greater revelation comes greater accountability.

## Key Verse

Jonah *prayed to the Lord and said, “...You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity”* (4:2).

## Outline

- I. **The Disobedience of Jonah (chapters 1–2)**
  - A. **The commission of the prophet (1:1-2)**—*the word of the Lord came to Jonah... “go to Nineveh...and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me”*
  - B. **The disobedience of the prophet (1:3)**—*But Jonah...went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish...to go with them from the presence of the Lord.*
  - C. **The consequences of the prophet’s disobedience (1:4–2:10)**
    1. **The great wind (1:4-16)**—

- a. *The Lord hurled a great wind on the sea...so that the ship was about to break up. ...the sailors became afraid.*
  - b. *They cast lots to see on whose account this calamity has struck us...the lot fell on Jonah.*
  - c. *Jonah said, "I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and dry land"...the men knew that he was fleeing from...the Lord, because he had told them.... "on account of me this great storm has come upon you." ...the sea was becoming even stormier.*
  - d. *Jonah told them to throw him into the sea ...so they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.*
  - e. *Then the men feared the Lord greatly, and they offered sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. However, that does not mean they became followers of God. They did not turn around and go back to Joppa and to the temple to worship.*
- 2. The great fish (1:17–2:10)**—*Jonah acknowledged that God ...had cast me into the...seas. Then the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah—not to eat him but to shelter him. Jonah survived there for three days and nights before he finally called out to God. "Water encompassed me to the point of death. ...weeds were wrapped around my head. Then my prayer came to You. Those who regard vain idols [like the sailors in 1:5] forsake their faithfulness. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. Salvation is from the Lord."*

## II. The Obedience of Jonah (chapters 3–4)

- A. The recommissioning of the prophet (3:1-2)**—*The Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh [about 500 miles away in Assyria]...and proclaim to it... [exactly and only] which I am going to tell you."*
- B. The obedience of the prophet (3:3-4)**—*So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord...and he cried out... "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Notice "God" is not even mentioned. Also, there is nothing about repentance. It was all about judgment. But the 40-day warning implied there was hope the judgment would not happen. They had 40 days...*
- C. The repentance of the Ninevites (3:5-10)**
- 1. The action of the people (3:5)**—*Reminding us of the action of the sailors when they were afraid of the storm, every man cried to his god (1:5). So the people of Nineveh reacted in fear of this judgment, and ...called a fast and put on sackcloth ...from the greatest to the least of them—actions indicating a repentance, possibly (and hopefully) to appease this judgment. —the people...believed God— "in God" is not in the text. We know this message was from the true and living God, but they did not know that. What they believed was the message itself that in 40 days there would be judgment. [See the intro.]*
  - 2. The action of the king (3:6-9)**—*"...by the decree of the king...let all men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish."*
  - 3. The action of God (3:10)**—*God had spared Jonah, and now He spared the Ninevites. When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity...and He did not do it. Turning from their wickedness was not a guarantee, even they acknowledged that, but it was a hope. They would find out 40 days later. For a time, they quit their wickedness,*

and God did not destroy them. But then they resumed their wickedness, and God did destroy them in 612 B.C. (see the book of Nahum).

**D. The sorrow of the prophet (chapter 4)**—all is finally explained. It seems like the last section of verses 5-11 happened before the first section of verses 1-4. The book ends out of chronological order but in a logical order.

**1. The displeasure of Jonah (4:1-5)**—Literally, “it became evil/wrong to Jonah as a great evil/wrong.” He was furious, lit. “burn with rage,” with God for not destroying the city. Then *He prayed to the LORD...“Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled ...* Now we know the motivation for Jonah’s flight in chapter 1. This was not expressed before in the book. *“For I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity”*—Jonah was actually expecting God to suppress His own character!!  
—God saved him in the storm and in the water and in the fish—and Jonah prayed with thanksgiving for God saving him. Now he asked God, *“Please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.”* He didn’t want to “suffer” seeing God’s mercy to the Ninevites.

—God asked him, *“Do you have good reason to be angry?”* Lit. it reads, “What right do you have to be angry?” God ignored Jonah’s request to die.

**2. The explanation of the Lord (4:6-11)**—Now we have a flashback, which shows Jonah to be wrong and God to be right. Here we see what happened in 40 days.

—*Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it—There he made a shelter for himself...until he could see what would happen to the city after the 40 days.*

—As God had appointed the fish to give shelter to Jonah from the water, here God appointed a plant to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. *And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.*

—But then *God appointed a worm...and it attacked the plant and it withered.*

—*When the sun came up, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die.* When he was at the point of death in the fish (2:5), he didn’t beg to die. But now he could not stand the heat and the sun—but he will say those words again when he finds out Nineveh is not destroyed (4:3).

—God then asked Jonah, *“Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?”* In verse 4:4, God had also asked Jonah, *“Do you have good reason to be angry?”*

—Jonah replied, *“I have good reason to be angry, even to death.”* God replied, *“You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.”* The plant was really nothing in and of itself, but it was important to Jonah. He gave it meaning. He gave it value.

—If it’s not right for the plant to be struck down, how can it be right for Nineveh to be struck down? Jonah has no answer.

—*Then the Lord said, “Should I not have compassion on Nineveh?”* This was a city of 120,000 people! As well as many animals. The plant was of very little value compared to them.

Jonah liked God’s compassion, even when he was running away from God, but he also wanted to control God’s compassion. Get your definition of God from Scripture. Don’t think your circumstances control or define God. And don’t die angry at God!

# Micah

**Author:** Micah, a shortened form of the name Micaiah, means “Who is like Yahweh?” He was from the Judean town of Moresheth, about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He was a contemporary of Amos and Isaiah, during the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**Date Written:** It was most likely written during the reign of Hezekiah [715-686 B.C.].

**Date of Micah’s Ministry:** *in the days of Jotham [750-732 B.C.], Ahaz [732-715 B.C.] and Hezekiah [715-686 B.C.], kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria [capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel] and Jerusalem [capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah].*

## Background

Micah was primarily a prophet of the poorer, ordinary people. His ministry was more rural, like the ministry of Amos, and Isaiah’s was more cosmopolitan. Micah did not speak these oracles at one time. Chronology is not key either. His prophecy is roughly structured on the basis of alternating messages of threat and hope. Micah’s doctrine of the remnant is unique among the prophets in that it is not simply a residue of people but a force that will ultimately conquer the world (4:11-13). Micah denounced the false princes, priests, and prophets who surrounded him (3:11) and proclaimed the true Ruler, coming in the future to rule and reign properly.

## Theme and Purpose

The book has three messages, each beginning with the exhortation to “hear” or “listen” to what the Lord had to say to the nation, followed by an oracle of doom, and ending with a statement of hope. Although his main audience was Judah, his messages showed Judah was just as guilty as Israel, and they, too, would be disciplined by God. Micah showed how the people failed to live up to the Mosaic Covenant stipulations (Deuteronomy 27–30), so God was just in disciplining them, but he also promised ultimate restoration in view of God’s promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18).

Proportionately, this book has more prophecies about the advent and kingdom of the Messiah, and Israel’s future, than any other prophetic book. Jeremiah 26:17-19 quoted Micah 3:12. The New Testament quoted Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:5-6 and Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:35-36. Micah wrote about the Messiah’s birthplace, lineage, and origin (5:4) and reign (4:1-7), and referred to Him as Israel’s King (2:13) and Ruler (5:2).

## Key Verses

*Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old (7:18-20).*

## Outline

### I. First Message: Judgment Will Come (chapters 1–2)

- A. **Introduction (1:1)**—This heading gives the historical setting of the book [see intro]. Micah “saw” these revelations in visions rather than “heard” them.

**B. Prediction of coming judgment (1:2-7)**—Micah calls on the people of the whole earth to hear God’s charge against His people. God is coming down from “*His place,*” and *He will make Samaria a heap of ruins and all of her idols will be smashed.* The sins of Samaria, the capital of Israel, and Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, typified the sins of the people throughout both nations.

**C. Lament over the people (1:8-16)**

1. **Micah’s lament (1:8-9)**—*Because of this I must lament and wail...*

2. **Micah’s call for others to mourn (1:10-16)**—Micah names towns to which David fled, escaping from Saul, describing the fall of each town, finally fleeing to Adullam for safety, as David did (1 Samuel 22:1), and sees the eventual captivity of the two kingdoms as the dissolution of the Davidic monarchy.

**D. Sins of Judah (2:1-11)**

1. **Sins of the people (2:1-5)**—Many of the people lay awake at night thinking up evil things to do the next day: to *covet...seize...and rob.* As they took from others, so God will take from them. The land that had been Israel’s possession would become the property of her enemies.

2. **Sins of the false prophets and the greedy (2:6-11)**—The false prophets want to silence Micah because they did not like his message of coming judgment. The false prophets preached peace and prosperity. Micah said that will come only in obedience to God, according to the Mosaic Covenant of Deuteronomy 28–30.

**E. Prediction of future regathering (2:12-13)**—God Himself will *assemble...the remnant of Israel.* They will *break out* of their dispersion among the nations, and He will *put them together like sheep in the fold,* back in the Land He chose to give them in the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18.

**II. Second Message: Blessing Will Follow Judgment (chapters 3–5)**—In the first message, only the last two verses dealt with Israel’s future blessings (2:12-13), while everything preceding exposed her sins and guilt. In this second message, about one-third (chapter 3) deals with present sins, and two thirds with future blessings (chapters 4–5).

**A. Judgment on the nation’s leaders (chapter 3)**

1. **Judgment on the rulers (3:1-4)**—It is expected and essential for rulers to know justice, yet these rulers *hate good and love evil.* The people cried out to God, *but He will not answer them...because they have practiced evil deeds.*

2. **Judgment on the false prophets (3:5-8)**—The false prophets *lead My people astray.* When someone feeds them, *they cry, “Peace.”* They told a person what they wanted to hear—for a price. But when devastation comes, they will have no divination. Then the people will realize that Micah had the true message of God, *to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin.*

3. **Judgment on all the naive leaders (3:9-12)**—The leaders led with bloodshed and greed, motivated by their desire for personal gain and denied Micah’s prophecy, saying, *“Calamity will not come upon us.”* But Micah says, *“on account of you...Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins.”* The leaders were leading the people into wicked behavior, and the whole nation was guilty before God.

**B. Kingdom blessings for the nation (chapters 4–5)**

1. **Characteristics of the kingdom (4:1-8)**—the temple site hill will be raised and be the center of the millennial government, all the nations will come to it, not just the Jews, and God’s rule will be one of peace, not war, for security comes from God. At Micah’s time, the nations walked according to their idol gods, but in the Millennium, they will walk according to the Lord our God. The afflicted remnant

(probably from the tribulation) will be regathered to Israel, and they will become a strong nation, with the Lord reigning over them in Mount Zion. Dominion will be returned to Jerusalem.

2. **Events preceding the kingdom (4:9-5:1)**—But *now*...there will be no king, and they will go into captivity. *Now many nations have been assembled against you. Now* gather the troops for the siege will begin.
3. **The Ruler of the kingdom (5:2-15)**—He will come from Bethlehem (about 5 miles south of Jerusalem). *From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from the days of eternity.* The chief priests understood this verse to refer to the Messiah (Matthew 2:3-6). *He will be great to the ends of the earth. This One will be our peace....The remnant of Jacob will be...like a lion...and all your enemies will be cut off. ...in that day, He will cut off sorceries, and you will have fortune-tellers no more. I will cut off your carved images, so that you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands.*

### III. Third Message: An Indictment of Sin and a Promise of Blessing (chapters 6–7)

- A. **An indictment by the Lord (6:1-5)**—The mountains are called as witnesses, who have been witnesses throughout history. God asks: *“My people, what have I done to you, and how have I wearied you?”* God brought them *up from the land of Egypt and ransomed you from the house of slavery.* God gave them Moses, Aaron and Miriam as leaders. He delivered them from the curse of Balak, brought them to Gilgal—into the Land, near Jericho. Why? *So that you might know the righteous acts of the Lord.*
- B. **The response of Micah for the nation (6:6-8)**—Does God delight in the sacrifice of 1,000 rams or 10,000 rivers of oil or even the offer of their firstborn child for their sins? No! He requires them *to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.* Micah painted a purposefully exaggerated picture of the sacrificial system to show that God has no interest in the multiplication of empty religious acts.
- C. **The Lord’s judgment because of sin (6:9-16)**
  1. **The sins (6:9-12)**—deceptive weights and deceitful mouths
  2. **The punishment (6:13-16)**—*because of their sins*—they will be given to the sword. Omri was the father of wicked King Ahab of Israel and his wife Jezebel, and their bringing Baal worship to Israel.
- D. **Micah’s pleading with the Lord (chapter 7)**
  1. **Micah’s bemoaning of the nation’s sins (7:1-6)**—Micah says, *“Woe is me!...the godly person has perished from the land...”*
  2. **Micah’s confidence in the Lord (7:7-13)**—*“But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation My God will hear me....I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him...He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness. Then my enemy will see...”*
  3. **Micah’s prayer that God would again shepherd His flock (7:14)**—*“Shepherd Your people with Your scepter...as in the days of old.”*
  4. **The Lord’s promise to show miraculous things to His people (7:15-17)**—*“As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles. Nations will see...they will be afraid before You.”*
  5. **Micah’s affirmation that God is unique (7:18-20)**—*“Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity...He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us...yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old.”*

# Nahum

**Author:** Nothing is known of Nahum except he is an Elkoshite (meaning “comfort”). Many speculate that Capernaum (“Town of Nahum”) was his home, but there is no proof of this.

**Date Written:** Nahum and Zephaniah both prophesied after Isaiah and Micah, probably about 660-650 B.C., after the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 B.C.

## Background

Nahum’s message was about the destruction of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed and its population deported to Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:3-6). Assyria also destroyed many Judean cities. Nahum was a comforting message for the remaining Jews who were presently living under Assyria’s shadow.

## Theme and Purpose

The wickedness of Nineveh continued against God’s people in Judah, after conquering Israel. Nahum reminds us that God Himself is the ultimate Ruler of the nations. He will have the final word. God’s people will survive.

## Key Verse

*“A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies” (1:2).*

## Outline

- I. **Heading (1:1)**—*The oracle of Nineveh*—An oracle is a threatening message about Nineveh’s doom. It was given in a vision from God to Nahum.
- II. **Nineveh’s Destruction Declared (1:2-14)**
  - A. **The Anger and Goodness of the Lord (1:2-8)**—The justice and zeal of the Lord is exercised on behalf of His people. *The Lord will by no means leave the guilty [Nineveh] unpunished....The Lord is good, ...and He knows those who take refuge in Him [the Jews].*
  - B. **The Lord’s Plans for Nineveh and Judah (1:9-14)**
    1. **The Consumption of Nineveh (1:9-11)**—*Whatever you devise against the Lord, He will make a complete end of it...they are consumed as stubble completely withered.*
    2. **The Liberation of Judah (1:12-13)**—*Thus says the Lord, “though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer....I will break his yoke bar from upon you...”*
    3. **The Termination of Nineveh (1:14)**—*The LORD has issued a command concerning you [Nineveh]: “Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image From the house of your gods. I will prepare your grave, For you are contemptible.”*
- III. **Nineveh’s Destruction Described (1:15–3:19)**
  - A. **The Sovereign Justice of the Lord (1:15–2:2)**
    1. *Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace!*—This is good news to Judah. Paul also quotes this in Romans 10:15, applying it to those who bring the Good News of the Gospel.
    2. *Celebrate your feasts, O Judah...never again will the wicked one [Nineveh] pass through you...He is cut off completely*—So complete was its destruction, years

later Alexander the Great, fighting a battle nearby, did not realize that he was near the ruins of Nineveh [BKC].

3. *For the Lord will restore the splendor of Jacob...* Ultimately in the Millennium.

## **B. Nineveh's Destruction Detailed (2:3–3:19)**

1. **First Description of Nineveh's Destruction (2:3-7)**—*The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. It is fixed [by God]: She is stripped, she is carried away...*

2. **Second Description of Nineveh's Destruction (2:8-13)**—*Now they are fleeing...Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! ...She is emptied! Yes, she is desolate and waste! ... "Behold, I am against you," declares the Lord of hosts. "I will burn up her chariots in smoke, ...I will cut off your prey from the land, and no longer will the voice of your messengers be heard."*

3. **Third Description of Nineveh's Destruction (3:1-7)**—*"Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies and pillage...swords flashing, spears gleaming, many slain, a mass of corpses, and countless dead bodies—they stumble over the dead bodies!"*

—*"Behold, I am against you," declares the Lord of hosts... "I will throw filth on you and make you vile, and set you up as a spectacle. And it will come about that all who see you will shrink from you and say, 'Nineveh is devastated! Who will grieve for her?'"* Nineveh will not be mourned and will be virtually forgotten! According to the Cambridge Ancient History (3:130-31), "No other land seems to have been sacked and pillaged so completely as was Assyria."

4. **Fourth Description of Nineveh's Destruction (3:8-19)**—*[Nineveh] Are you better than No-amon [city of Thebes], which was situated by the waters of the Nile, with waters surrounding her...Ethiopia was her might, and Egypt too...Put and Lubim were among her helpers. Yet she became an exile, She went into captivity...and all her great men were bound with fetters*—This Egyptian city of Thebes was conquered by the Assyrians in 663 B.C., as predicted in Jeremiah 46:25 and Ezekiel 30:14, 16. Thebes had allies south, north, east, and west of her. Yet their combined help was unable to defend her against Nineveh.

—*You too [Nineveh] will search for a refuge from the enemy...the gates of your land are opened wide to your enemies; Fire consumes your gate bars...fire will consume you, the sword will cut you down; it will consume you as the locust does.*

—*Their traders will strip away their wealth. The guards will suddenly vanish. Your shepherds are sleeping, O king of Assyria; Your nobles are lying down. Your people are scattered on the mountains and there is no one to regather them.* The people were either dead or scattered.

—*There is no relief for your breakdown, your wound is incurable*—Nineveh has fallen, never to be rebuilt. *All who hear about you will clap their hands over you.* The nations who suffered from the cruelty of the Assyrians would be full of joy when Nineveh is destroyed. *For on whom has not your evil passed continually?* None of the nations around them had escaped Nineveh's cruelty.

So God has the last word:

***"Behold, I am against you," declares the LORD of hosts (2:13; 3:5).***

# Habakkuk

**Author:** Unlike other prophets who declared God's message to people, Habakkuk dialogued with God about people. Little is known of Habakkuk except he is named a "prophet" in verse 1. The last phrase of the book, *For the choir director, on my stringed instruments*, suggests that Habakkuk may have been a musician of the Levitical office.

**Date Written:** The prophecy is set against a background of the decline and fall of the Judean Kingdom (about 626-586 B.C.) to the Babylonians.

## Background

Jeremiah taught that the wickedness in God's people was doomed. Habakkuk taught the wickedness in the Babylonians was also doomed. There is no direct evidence from the book that Habakkuk lived past the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians.

## Theme and Purpose

Habakkuk's message, the core of which is found in 2:4, forms a basic point in three New Testament books. Paul, in Romans 1:17, introduced the gospel as salvation by faith, not works, and quoted Habakkuk 2:4, *the righteous will live by his faith*. Galatians 3:11-12 sets forth faith as the antithesis of law or legal salvation, quoting Habakkuk 2:4. It is again quoted in Hebrews 10:37-38, identifying those who have faith persevere under pressure. Habakkuk was not told when the end would come, but the righteous ones are to live by faith, awaiting that day when God will have His victory.

## Key Verse

*Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith (2:4).*

## Outline

- I. **A Dialogue with God: Habakkuk Previewed God's Discipline of Judah (chapter 1)**
  - A. **Habakkuk's Distress (1:1-4)**
    1. **Why is God indifferent to supplication? (1:1-2)**—*"How long, O Lord, will I call for help and You will not hear? I cry out to You, 'Violence!' yet You do not save."*
    2. **Why is God insensitive to sin and suffering? (1:3-4)**—*"destruction and violence are before me...the law is ignored...the wicked surround the righteous"*
  - B. **God's Disclosure (1:5-11)**
    1. **God's intention of discipline (1:5)**—*"Look among the nations! ...Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days..."*
    2. **God's instrument of discipline (1:6-11)**—*"I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylonians]...they collect captives like sand...but they will be held guilty"*
  - C. **Habakkuk's Dilemma (1:12-17)**
    1. **Why would God employ a people of iniquity? (1:12-13)**—*"You, O Lord, have appointed them [Babylonians] to judge [Judah]...Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?"*
    2. **Why would God endorse a people of injustice? (1:14-15)**—*the Chaldeans...gather them together in their...net...they rejoice and are glad.*
    3. **Why would God excuse a people of idolatry? (1:16-17)**—*"They whose strength is their god...continually slay nations without sparing"*

## II. A Dirge from God: Habakkuk Pronounced God's Judgment of Babylon (chapter 2)

A. **Habakkuk's Anticipation: "Watch" (2:1)**—*"I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me and how I may reply when I am reproved"*

### B. God's Admonition: "Write" (2:2-5)

1. **God's clear revelation (2:2)**—*Then the Lord said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets that the one who reads it may run"*

2. **God's certain revelation (2:3)**—*"For the vision is yet for the appointed time. It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it, for it will certainly come, it will not delay."*

3. **God's condemnatory revelation (2:4-5)**—*"Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him, but the righteous will live by his faith"*

C. **Habakkuk's Annotation: "Woe" (2:6-20)**—"Woe" is an interjection of distress pronounced in the face of disaster or in view of coming judgment because of certain sins. Habakkuk lists 5 woes against Babylon.

1. **Woe for intimidation (2:6-8)**—*Because you have looted many nations, all the remainder of the peoples will loot you because of... bloodshed and violence...*

2. **Woe for intemperance (2:9-11)**—*You have devised a shameful thing for your house by cutting off many peoples, so you are sinning against yourself...*

3. **Woe for iniquity (2:12-14)**—*Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence...Is it not from the Lord...that nations grow weary for nothing? For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea—As Babylon is overthrown, God will also overthrow the future Babylon of the antichrist (Revelation 17–18). When the Messiah rules in His kingdom, the knowledge of the Lord will be worldwide, like water in the sea.*

4. **Woe for indignity (2:15-17)**—*"You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor ...the cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you...because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land...and all its inhabitants."*

5. **Woe for idolatry (2:18-20)**—*What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it...For its maker trusts in his own handiwork...Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!'...and there is no breath at all inside it. [See also Isaiah 44:9-20.] But the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent before Him. Whereas idols are silent because they cannot speak, before God, all people are silent.*

## III. A Doxology to God: Habakkuk Praised God's Design of Creation (chapter 3)

A. **Habakkuk's Prayer for Mercy (3:1-2)**—*"Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the year...in wrath, remember mercy."*

### B. God's Presence of Majesty (3:3-15)

1. **God's arrival (3:3a)**—*God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran—the geographical references for the general area of Mt. Sinai, reminding them of the revelation of God's Law at Sinai, when God's glory came down to His people, to reaffirm His covenant with them.*

2. **God's appearance (3:3b-7)**—*His splendor covers the heavens [see Psalm 19], and the earth is full of His praise. Romans 1:19-20 says, ...that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made... —His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand and there is the hiding of His power...He stood and surveyed the earth...Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered...His ways are everlasting...*

- 3. God's actions (3:8-15)**—*Did the Lord rage against the rivers...or was Your wrath against the sea?*—God was not angry with nature, but He used nature as a tool to demonstrate His power, as at the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)  
 —*The mountains saw You and quaked*—such as Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:18).  
 —*Sun and moon stood in their places*—Joshua 10:12-13  
 —*In anger You trampled the nations*—crushing sinful nations such as the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Philistines.  
 —*You went forth for the salvation of Your people*—to preserve the nation Israel  
 —*You struck the house of the evil*—God destroyed Pharaoh, He could destroy Babylon. In fact, He will do it in just one night...*the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind, and He sets over it whomever He wishes* (Daniel 5).  
 —*You trampled on the sea with Your horses, on the surge of many waters*—a reference to one of the most spectacular of God's miracles—taking His people through the Red Sea and then delivering the pursuing Egyptians to their watery grave (Exodus 14:15-18; 15:8-10).

- C. Habakkuk's Peace in Ministry (3:16-19)**—*"I heard and my inward parts trembled, At the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, And in my place I tremble Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress"*—the day filled with destruction of the Babylonians against Judah  
 —*For the people to arise who will invade us*—At the beginning of the book, Habakkuk wanted God to do something about the wickedness in Judah. Now he knows that God is doing something. He is raising up the Babylonians, who are *the people...who will invade us*. But Habakkuk is shocked that God would use a people more wicked than Judah to discipline Judah. But he must rest in the power and wisdom of God—that God knows what He is doing, what it will take to discipline Judah. But Habakkuk also knows that God keeps His covenant with His people, and they will be restored, whereas Babylon will be destroyed. But all this will be very painful, a day of distress. He *must wait quietly* for God to act.  
 — *"Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls"*—severe famine  
 — *"Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation"*—Joy is not found in circumstances. Joy is found in a Person, through a personal relationship with the Lord. Habakkuk's faith was in the revealed Word of God, the covenant that promised the curse of the invasion but gave assurance of restoration to God's favor (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; 32:34-43).  
 — *"The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places"*—to climb the mountaintops of victory.

When Habakkuk started this book, he was about to "go under." Destruction, violence, strife, conflict, injustice, and wickedness were all he could see. But he cried out to God. The Lord provided the confidence he needed to lift him from the quagmire. He started in the pits, but ended on the mountaintop. God directed Habakkuk through the dialogue (chapter 1), which revealed His plans for disciplining Judah and destroying Babylon. Then he recorded a woeful dirge (chapter 2) that further justified God's judgment on Babylon. Finally, the prophet reached a pinnacle of praise in which God revealed Himself in all His glory and power. The doxology (chapter 3) concluded with Habakkuk's unwavering trust in the Lord. *The righteous will live by his faith* (2:4).

# Zephaniah

**Author:** Zephaniah, which means “Hidden by Yahweh.” His ancestry is traced back four generations, unique among the prophets. He is “*son of Cush, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah.*” Therefore, he was the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and therefore of a high social standing. So he was a distant relative of King Josiah, in whose reign he prophesied.

**Date Written:** “*in the days of King Josiah*” [640-609 B.C.]

**Date of Zephaniah’s Ministry:** His prophecy was given after the time of Josiah’s revival in 622 but before 612, which was the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyria.

## Background

Before Josiah’s reign, Manasseh (695-642) and Manasseh’s son Amon (642-640) had introduced wicked practices into Judah. They built altars to Baal and worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. Child sacrifice and astrology prospered (2 Kings 21:7). Josiah succeeded Amon at the age of 8. At age 16, Josiah began to seek after the God of his forefather David. In 628, Josiah started a reform movement in which much of the idolatry was purged from Jerusalem and Judah. Then in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah’s reign (622), a copy of the Law was discovered (2 Kings 22:3-8). This reform, however, was superficial. While worship of Yahweh was reestablished, idolatry was not entirely removed. Both Zephaniah and Jeremiah prophesied to a politically prospering people of coming judgment because Josiah’s reform still went unheeded.

## Theme and Purpose

“The day of the Lord” is an expression used more frequently in this prophecy (24 times) than in any other Old Testament book. It is any day when God is clearly in control of human affairs. It is a day of God’s judgment and/or blessing. So the theme of the book is the impending judgment of God on Judah for its disobedience. Though the preservation of the true remnant is assured by the mercies of the covenant-keeping God, no prophet has made the picture of the day of Yahweh more real.

## Key Verse

*“Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near” (1:7).*

## Outline

- I. **Introduction (1:1)**—“*The word of the Lord...*” is also used by Hosea, Joel, and Micah at the beginnings of their books. God is the source of the message, given “*to Zephaniah.*”
- II. **The Day of Yahweh’s Judgment (1:2–3:8)**
  - A. **Judgment on all the earth (1:2-3)**—“*I will completely remove all things [man...beasts ...birds...fish] from the face of the earth,*” declares the Lord. Since Zephaniah later wrote that a remnant would be delivered (3:9-13), this destruction would apparently be limited to the wicked (as in Jeremiah 25:31-33). Therefore, this would be the worldwide destruction of the seven seals of the Tribulation (Rev 6–18).
  - B. **Judgment on Judah (1:4–2:3)**—“*I will stretch out My hand against Judah...*”
    1. **The objects of judgment (1:4-13)**—

- a. **The idolaters (1:4-7)**—“...the remnant of Baal [worshippers]...idolatrous priests...those who bow down...to the host of heaven— those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet and swear by Molech (idol god of Ammon)— combining worship of God with worship of idols and, those who have turned back from following the Lord.”
  - b. **The princes (1:8)**—“...the king’s sons”
  - c. **The oppressors (1:9)**—“...who fill the house...with violence and deceit”
  - d. **The merchants (1:10-11)**—“all who weigh out silver will be cut off”
  - e. **The indifferent (1:12-13)**— “...those who are stagnant in spirit, who say in their hearts, ‘The Lord will not do good or evil!’”
- 2. The description of judgment (1:14-18)**—
- a. **The nearness (1:14a)**—“Near is the great day of the Lord, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the Lord!”
  - b. **The horror (1:14b-18)**...A day of wrath...trouble...distress...destruction...desolation...darkness...gloom... clouds ...thick darkness...I will bring distress on men...because they have sinned against the Lord...Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them...for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth...—This would be the Tribulation, culminating in the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 6–18; 19:11-21).
- 3. The deterrent to judgment (2:1-3)**
- a. **A summons to the nation: Repent (2:1-2)**—before...it’s too late...Before the decree takes effect...Before the burning anger of the Lord comes upon you...Before the day of the Lord’s anger comes upon you
  - b. **A summons to the humble (2:3)**—seek the Lord...seek righteousness ...seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger
- C. Judgment on the surrounding nations (2:4-15)**
- 1. **On Philistia (2:4-7)**—“land of the Philistines...I will destroy you so that there will be no inhabitant...and the coast will be for the remnant of the house of Judah...for the Lord their God will care for them and restore their fortune”
  - 2. **On Moab and Ammon (2:8-11)**—“I have heard the taunting of Moab and the revilings of the sons of Moab...‘Therefore, as I live,’ declares the Lord of hosts...‘Surely Moab will be like Sodom and Ammon like Gomorrah...a perpetual desolation, and the remainder of My nation will inherit them.’” Moab and Ammon are the descendants of the incestuous union of Lot and his daughters, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
  - 3. **On Ethiopia (2:12)**—“You...O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword”—a people who were descendants of Cush, a son of Ham (Genesis 10:6). Cushite kings dominated Egypt until their defeat by the Assyrians in 670 B.C. A fulfillment of this prophecy was when the Babylonians were God’s “sword” (Ezekiel 30:4-5, 9).
  - 4. **On Assyria (2:13-15)**—“He will make Nineveh a desolation...This is the exultant city who says in her heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ Now she has become a desolation.” The Assyrians, with the capital of Nineveh, captured and exiled the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. but then the Assyrians fell to the Babylonians in 612 B.C.
- D. Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-7)**—Although Jerusalem is not specifically named, verse 2 shows that it was meant.
- 1. **The prophet’s indictment (3:1-5)**—“Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, The tyrannical city!... She accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD,

*She did not draw near to her God...Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law...the unjust knows no shame."*

**2. The Lord's judgment (3:6-7)**—God has *cut off nations*. Judah should look at what happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. when they were exiled to Assyria. God cut them off. God said, *"Surely you will revere Me, accept instruction, ' But they were eager to corrupt their deeds."*

**E. Judgment on all the earth (3:8)**—Zephaniah began this section with a summary statement of universal judgment (1:2-3), then he described God's judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1:4–2:3) and on other nations (2:4-15). Then for emphasis, he repeated the judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-7). Now he ends this long section with another general summary of universal judgment. At that time, His grace would take second place to His anger! At the end of the yet-future Tribulation, God will cause the armies of the nations to assemble toward Jerusalem, and in the Battle of Armageddon (Zechariah 14:2; Revelation 16:14, 16), *"My decision is to gather nations... to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger..."*

**III. The Day of Yahweh's Restoration and Blessing (3:9-20)**— The word *"then"* signifies a major pivot in the prophet's message, both in tone and in content. After destroying the nations' armies, God will restore the nations to His favor. These promises look forward to the Millennium when Christ will rule as King on the earth.

**A. The restoration of nations (3:9)**—*"For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him..."*

**B. The restoration of Israel (3:10-20)**

**1. Israel's purification (3:10-13)**—*"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings...and you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain...and they will take refuge in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies...for they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."*

**2. The joy of the nation (3:14)**—*"Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!"*

**3. The Ruler of the nation (3:15-17)**—*"The Lord has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. ...the Lord, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more...A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."*

**4. Israel's regathering (3:18-20)**—*"I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts—They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; ...I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD.*

In the Millennium, Israel will possess her land as God promised (Genesis 12:1-7; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:7-8), and the Messiah, Israel's King, will establish His kingdom and will reign (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:27; Zephaniah 3:15). To emphasize the divine authority of his message, Zephaniah ends his book (3:20) the way he began (1:1)—

*"The word of the Lord.....says the LORD."*

# Haggai

**Author:** Haggai was a post-exilic prophet to the Southern Kingdom and the first prophet to hear “*the word of the Lord*” after the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. Nothing is known of his parentage or genealogy. His name means “festive.” Some believe he was one of the exiles who saw Solomon’s temple destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (2:3). If so, this prophecy 70 years later would make him an elderly prophet. He is unique among the prophets in that the people listened to his words and obeyed. In just four years (515 B.C.), the temple was completed.

**Date Written:** During the year 520 B.C., *in the second year of the Persian King Darius I, on the first day of the sixth month* (1:1). He was later joined by the prophet Zechariah (beginning in the eighth month, between Haggai 2:1 and 2:10). The whole book was written over a period of four months.

## Background

In his two short chapters, 25 times Haggai affirmed the divine authority of his messages. He called himself “*the messenger of the Lord*” and he “*spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people*” (1:13). King David desired to build God a temple in Jerusalem, but God said that his son Solomon would build the temple (2 Samuel 7:13). In 586, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple, and carried the Jews into exile to Babylon (2 Kings 25:9). In 538, the Persians conquered the Babylonians and let the Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem, to rebuild the city and the temple (Ezra 6:3b-5).

## Theme and Purpose

For at least 10 years (from 530-520 B.C.), the people had stopped building the temple and focused on building their own houses. The purpose of the prophecy of Haggai was to tell the people to “*rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,*” says the Lord (1:8; see also Ezra 5:1-2). The whole book is about a sin of omission. It is not about doing what they should not have done but about not doing what they should have done. It is more a historical book than a theological book.

## Key Verse

*“The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,” says the LORD of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the LORD of hosts”* (2:9).

## Outline

- I. **Prophecy #1 (1:1-15), August 29, to Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the High Priest—The Call to Rebuild the Temple**
  - A. **The accusation of procrastination (1:2-6)**—“*the word of the Lord... ‘Is it time for yourselves to dwell in your paneled house while this house lies desolate?’*”
  - B. **The exhortation to rebuild the temple (1:7-8)**—“*Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,*” says the Lord.
  - C. **The explanation of the people’s impoverishment (1:9-11)**—“*You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home...why?*” declares the Lord of

hosts, “because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.”

**D. The response of the leaders and people to the prophet’s message (1:12-15)—**  
*“So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and Joshua...and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God...”*

**II. Prophecy #2 (2:1-9), October 17, to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and “the remnant of the people”—The Promise of the Future Glory of the Temple**

**A. The Promise of the Lord’s Enabling Presence (2:3-5)—***“Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it seem to you like nothing in comparison? But now take courage...and work, for I am with you,” declares the Lord of hosts.*

**B. The proclamation of the future glory of the temple (2:6-9)—***“I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory...the silver is Mine and the gold is Mine...the latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,” says the Lord of hosts, “and in this place I will give peace.”*

**III. Prophecy #3 (2:10-19), December 18, to Joshua, the High Priest—to Illustrate the Present Blessings of Obedience**

**A. A ritual comparison showing the corrupting effect of sin (2:10-14)—***“If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread...will it become holy?” And the priests answered, “No.” “If one who is unclean...touches any of these [bread, etc.], will it become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” “...So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,” declares the Lord.*

**B. A promise of present blessing in contrast with previous chastening (2:15-19)—***“I smote you and every work of your hand with...wind, mildew, and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,” declares the Lord. “But now...yet from this day on I will bless you.”*

**IV. Prophecy #4 (2:20-23), also December 18, exclusively for Zerubbabel—A Messianic Prophecy Concerning Zerubbabel**

**A. A proclamation of the future overthrow of the Gentile kingdoms (2:21-22)—***“Then the word of the Lord came...saying, ‘I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down...”*

**B. A proclamation of the restoration of the Davidic kingdom (2:23)—***“On that day,” declares the Lord of hosts, “I will take you, Zerubbabel...My servant,” declares the Lord, “and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,” declares the Lord of hosts.*

The sovereign covenant-God is able to bring about all He promised through Haggai. The temple will be rebuilt (which is the temple at the time of Christ), but the future millennial temple will also be rebuilt and filled with the glory of the Lord. The final Son of David will rule on the earth in peace and righteousness. Therefore God’s people are to be faithful now to the task of rebuilding the temple, a task which God has called them to do (see Matthew 1:12-16).



# Zechariah

**Author:** Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon (Nehemiah 12:1, 16). His name means “the Lord remembers.” He was a contemporary of Haggai the prophet, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2). He returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with about 50,000 other Jewish exiles.

**Date Written:** Two months after Haggai delivered his first sermon, Zechariah began his prophetic ministry, in 520 B.C. Chapters 9–14 were probably written later.

## Background

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. These Israelites did not return to the Land. The Southern Kingdom of Judah lasted longer. But in 586 B.C., the Babylonians took the people of Judah into captivity to Babylon for seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10). In 539, the Persians conquered the Babylonians, and their King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to the Land and to Jerusalem. A remnant of the Jews returned under the leaderships of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel. These leaders governed the people, built the walls of the city, and re-built the temple, in spite of many obstacles in their paths. God raised up two prophets at this time to encourage the people to finish building the temple. Their names were Haggai and Zechariah. Zechariah 1:1 places Zechariah “*in the eighth month of the second year of Darius*” who reigned in Persia from 522-486 B.C., so verse 1 was the year 520 B.C.

## Theme and Purpose

Zechariah is the most messianic and most truly apocalyptic and eschatological [end times prophecy] of all the writings of the Old Testament. There are 41 New Testament citations or allusions to Zechariah. The book as a whole teaches the sovereignty of God in history over men and nations, both past, present, and future.

## Key Verse

*“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts (4:6).*

## Outline

### I. The Eight Symbolic Visions (chapters 1–6)

#### A. The introduction to the visions (1:1-6)

1. **Preface to the call to repentance (1:1)**—In October, 520 B.C., this Jewish prophet dated his prophecy according to the reign of a Gentile monarch, reminding the Jews they were in the “times of the Gentiles” (Daniel 2:7). “*the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet...*”
2. **Particulars of the call to repentance (1:2-6)**—“*Thus says the Lord...., ‘return to Me...that I may return to you.’ ...‘Do not be like your fathers...*”

#### B. The communication of the visions (1:7–6:8)

1. **The vision of the red-horse rider among the myrtles (1:7-17)**—God sent His angels on horses to patrol the earth. God “*will return to Jerusalem with compassion ...My cities will overflow with prosperity... and [God] will again choose Jerusalem.*” “*I am very angry with the nations who are at ease...*”
2. **The vision of the four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)**—Horns symbolize the strength of a country and its king (Daniel 8:3-8). “*What are these?*”

*“These are the horns which have scattered Judah...”* The four possibly referring to Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Persia.

3. **The vision of the surveyor with the measuring line (chapter 2)**—*“to measure Jerusalem...”* The city will be without walls, overflowing with people. *“I will dwell in your midst,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people.”*
4. **The vision of the cleansing and crowning of Joshua the high priest (chapter 3)**—Joshua was clothed *with filthy garments*. But God said, *“I have taken your iniquity away from you...put a clean turban on his head.”* These men are a symbol. As God cleansed them, so in the future He will cleanse the Land, *“for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch [Jesus (Isaiah 42:1; 49:3-4; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11)] ...I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,”* referring to the Second Coming of Jesus.
5. **The vision of the gold lampstand and the two olive trees (chapter 4)**—The lampstand in the temple had to be filled by humans. But this lampstand was automatically filled with an endless supply of oil. The bowl for storing the oil was above the lampstand, with conduits to the lampstand. It was flanked by 2 olive trees, which had 2 gold pipes through which the unceasing oil flowed. The oil represents the Holy Spirit of God. The first tree is *the hands of Zerubbabel [who] laid the foundation of this house [the temple] and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.* Putting the last vision of Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the king (a descendant of King David, though here as simply the leader of the returned Jews), these two are the two olive trees who *“...are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth,”* to bring the presence of God to the Jews, who have returned to the Land to rebuild. [Some say these may also refer to the two witnesses in the future tribulation period (Revelation 11:3-6).]
6. **The vision of the flying scroll (5:1-4)**—The scroll is 30 feet long and 15 feet wide (the size of the tabernacle). It was not rolled up, but was spread out like a large sheet, so it would be read on both sides (like the two tablets of the Law—Exodus 32:15). And “flying” illustrates its function of rapid entrance into judgment, *over the face of the whole land.* Those who steal (the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment) and those who swear falsely, misusing God’s name (the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment) will be punished [perhaps representing breaking any of the Mosaic Law].
7. **The vision of the woman in the ephah [common large barrel or basket used for measurement] (5:5-11)**—It had a *lead cover*, to assure the security of its contents. Inside the ephah was *wickedness...in all the land* (the Hebrew word is feminine, so here a feminine pronoun is used). Two women, seen as birds, on assignment from God, *lifted up the ephah*, and carried it to *Shinar* [i.e., Babylon]. Not only was this the place of Judah’s captivity, but it is described as the future place of the antichrist during the tribulation (Revelation 17–18). *To build a temple for her [wickedness] in the land of Shinar, ...she will be set there on her own pedestal* (symbolizing the worship of wickedness in the tribulation).
8. **The vision of the four chariots (6:1-8)**—The judgment determined by God on the Gentiles in the first two visions (1:1-17) is executed by divinely commissioned war chariots in this final vision. The charioteers are not mentioned. The mountains most naturally refer to Mt Zion and the Mt of Olives with the Kidron Valley between them. The chariots seem to represent angelic spirits (v. 5). The red horses symbolize war and bloodshed. The black horses symbolize famine

and death. The white horses symbolize victory and triumph, and the dappled horses symbolize death by plagues and other judgments (see Revelation 6:1-8). Zechariah asks what they are. The angel replied, *“These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth”* [the millennial designation describing the universal rule of Messiah over the whole earth during the future kingdom (see Micah 4:13).] The horses of judgment go north (Babylon) and south (Egypt) out of Israel, appropriate to Israel’s location. God was angry with the nations who came against Israel (1:15), but in this vision, God *appeased My wrath in the land of the north* (see Revelation 19:2, 15-19).

**C. The symbolic act concluding the visions (6:9-15)**—the night visions are done.

Now Zechariah is told *the same day to enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon*. A small otherwise unknown delegation of Jewish exiles have arrived from Babylon. They brought silver and gold, probably to aid in building the temple.

- In the fifth vision (chapter 4), Zerubbabel was the governing civil official. Here, the Branch was to rule the government.
- In 4:9, Zerubbabel was to complete the building of the temple. Here (v. 12), the branch would build the temple.
- In 4:14, Zerubbabel and Joshua represented two separate offices. Here, the Branch was to hold both offices (v. 13).

1. **The symbolic crowning (6:9-11)**—Instead of using it for the temple, they were to use the silver and gold to *make an ornate crown and set it on the head of Joshua, ...the high priest*.
2. **The prophetic message (6:12-13)**—*The Branch...will build the temple of the Lord*. The Branch has already been identified as the Messiah-priest, who here is the builder of the temple. A most significant prophecy: *He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices*. A priest had to be from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. A king had to be of the tribe of Judah and the family of King David. But here is prophecy that the two will be in one person, the Messiah. It’s an impossibility. But this was predicted as the Messiah would be a priest according to Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4; Heb 7:11-21), a priesthood that pre-dated Aaron and to which the Aaron priesthood was in submission. And Messiah is a descendant of King David.
3. **The visible memorial (6:14)**—after the crowning of Joshua, *the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the Lord*, when it was finished being built.
4. **The universal significance (6:15)**—*Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord*—these are Gentiles (2:11; 8:22; Isa 2:2-4; 56:6-7; 60:1-7) who will contribute their wealth to the building of the Millennial temple. When this happens, people will know that the Lord sent His Messenger/Messiah to them. The sharing by the Gentiles in the building shows their individual obedience to the rule of the Messiah (see also Isa 60:5, 9, 11; 61:6b; Hag 2:7-8).

**II. The Four Explanatory Messages (chapters 7–8)**—now it’s two years after the night visions (December 7, 518 B.C.), about halfway through the period of temple rebuilding.

**A. The messages required by the question about fasting (7:1-3)**—a delegation of Jews came to Jerusalem from Bethel [the Israelite city 12 miles north of Jerusalem that had been the center of apostate worship for the northern 10 tribes of Israel (1 Kings 12:28-29)] to ask whether the nation should continue to fast in remembrance of Jerusalem’s destruction (as they had done during the Babylonian captivity).

## **B. The messages declared as the answer from the Lord (7:4–8:23)**

1. **A message of rebuke (7:4-7)**—God replied: *“When you fasted...these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?”* ... *“Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited...”*  
God wanted spiritual reality, not empty rituals (Isaiah 1:11-17; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24).
2. **A message of repentance (7:8-14)**—*the word of the Lord came...saying...*
  - a. *“Dispense true justice...kindness...compassion...do not devise evil in your hearts against one another”*
  - b. *“But they refused to pay attention...and stopped their ears from hearing”*
  - c. *“They made their hearts [hard] like flint, so they could not hear...the words which the Lord had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets”*
  - d. *“Therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts”*
  - e. *“Just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the Lord*
  - f. *“but I scattered them...among all the nations whom they have not known”*
3. **A message of millennial restoration (8:1-17)**—*the word of the Lord came...*
  - a. *“I am exceeding jealous for Zion...”*
  - b. *“I will ... dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord...the Holy Mountain”*
  - c. *“Old men and women will sit in the streets...the streets ...will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets”*
  - d. *“If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant...will be also be too difficult in My sight?” declares the Lord*
  - e. *“I am going to save My people from the land of the east...and west; and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem”*
  - f. *“They shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness”*
  - g. In the old days, there was no peace, *“but now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,” declares the Lord*
  - h. *“the vine will yield its fruit...and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things”*
  - i. *“just as you were a curse among the nations...so I will save you that you may become a blessing”*
  - j. *“I proposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath”*
  - k. *“so I have again proposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem”*
  - l. *“these are the things which you should do: speak the truth...judge with truth...let none of you devise evil in your heart against one another...for all these are what I hate,” declares the Lord.*
4. **A message of rejoicing (8:18-23)**—*“the fast...will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace...many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. ...in those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”*

## **III. Two Revelatory Oracles (chapters 9–14)**

### **A. The anointed King rejected (chapters 9–11)**

1. **The intervening judgments on nations surrounding Israel (9:1-8)**—*the word of the Lord is against...Damascus...Tyre and Sidon...Ashkelon...Gaza...Ekron ...Ashkelon...Philistines...Jebusites*

2. **The blessings of the Millennial Messiah (9:9–10:12)**—*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! ...Behold your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey*—prediction of the Triumphal Entry of Christ (Matthew 21:1-5).
    - a. *He will speak peace to the nations...His dominion...to the ends of the earth*
    - b. *“I will save ...and I will bring them back...they will be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the Lord their God and I will answer them”*
    - c. *“They will remember Me in far countries, and they with their children will live and come back”*
    - d. *“And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name they will walk...”*
  3. **The rejection of the Good Shepherd and its consequences for Israel (chapter 11)**—This may be a lament over the destruction of the nation (ch. 10) or it could be a description of the rejection of the Messiah in the rest of chapter 11, and therefore the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.
    - a. Destruction of the Land, from the north to the south (vv. 1-3).
    - b. *“Pasture the flock doomed to slaughter”*—The flock was Judah, which God had designated for slaughter by the Romans (in 70 A.D.).
    - c. *“For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land,” declares the Lord, ...and I will not deliver them...”,* the result of their rejection of their true Shepherd-Messiah (vv. 8-13).
    - d. *“So I pastured the flock doomed to slaughter,”* said Zechariah. *He took for myself two staves:...Favor...and Union.”*
    - e. *“I annihilated the three shepherds”* [identity unknown, but there are over 40 interpretations of verse 8!]
    - f. *“what is to die, let it die...let those who are left eat one another’s flesh”* (v. 9)—Josephus wrote this happened during of the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Romans.
    - g. *“I took my staff Favor and cut it in pieces...but the afflicted...who were watching me realized it was the word of the Lord”* (vv. 10-11). God allowed the Romans to conquer the Jews, but the faithful believers discerned it.
    - h. *“I said to them, ‘...give Me My wages’...so they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord* (vv. 12-13). This prophecy was fulfilled in Judas’ betrayal of Christ (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-10).
    - i. *“Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel”* (v. 14). There will be worldwide dispersion. No nation of Israel until it gets close to the time of the reign of the King.
    - j. *The Lord said, “...a foolish shepherd...I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care...seek...heal...sustain...but will devour...”* (vv. 16-17)—this will be the antichrist during the tribulation, who will attack both the Jews and any believers in God. He will be killed at the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 13 and 19).
- B. The rejected King enthroned (chapters 12–14)**
1. **The redemption of Israel (chapters 12–13)**
    - a. *Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him* (12:1)—The mighty power of God as the Creator has the power for the deliverance in the next verses.

- b. *“siege is against Jerusalem...also against Judah...it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone...all who lift it will be severely injured...the nations of the earth will be gathered against it”* (12:2-3). [*“in that day”* is mentioned 5 times in 12:3-4, 6, 8-9, and 3 times in 13:1-2, 4, and 7 times in 14:4, 6, 8-9, 13, 20-21.]
- c. *“In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem...and I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”* (12:4-9).
- d. *“I will pour out...on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace...so that will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn...”* (12:10-14).
- e. *“It will come about...” declares the Lord “...that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land...and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land”* (13:1-6).
- f. *“It will come about in all the land...that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it”* (13:8). One third is the remnant of believing Jews who will survive the tribulation and enter the Millennial Kingdom.
- g. *“I will bring the third part through the fire, ...test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name,... I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is My God’”* (13:9).

## 2. The return of the King (chapter 14)

- a. *“I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle...and half of the city exiled”* (14:1-2)—this is commonly called the Battle of Armageddon, although the nations will gather at Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley and march against Jerusalem, at the end of the tribulation (Revelation 16:16).
- b. *Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations...in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south* (14:3-4). Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12). Jesus also described this event as, *“...immediately after the tribulation of those days...the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory”* (Matthew 24:29-30; see also Revelation 19:11-16).
- c. *Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him* (14:5)—from Revelation 19:8, 14, these are the believers from the church age in their rewarded, eternal bodies, coming with Christ, possibly angels, too.
- d. *there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light* (14:6-7).
- e. *living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half...toward the eastern sea [Dead Sea] and the other half toward the western sea [Mediterranean]* (14:8).
- f. *And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one* (14:9).
- g. *All the land will be changed into a plain...but Jerusalem will rise...people will live in it, ...Jerusalem will dwell in security* (14:10-11). The land around Jerusalem will be leveled while Jerusalem will be elevated.
- h. *there will no longer be a curse* (14:11), which was put on mankind in Genesis 3.
- i. *There will be a plague on all the people who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand...their eyes will rot in their sockets,*

- and their tongue will rot in their mouth...a great panic from the Lord will fall on them;...and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another (14:12-13).*
- j.** *the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance (14:14). Plunder from the armies.*
  - k.** *plague will be on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps (14:15)*
  - l.** *...any who are left of all the [Gentile] nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (14:16), see also Leviticus 23:33-43. This feast was to celebrate God's deliverance of His people from Egypt, and now from the antichrist.*
  - m.** *...any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts...whichever...does not go up...no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths (14:16-19).*
  - n.** *There will be holiness in public life ("the bells of the horses," v. 20), in religious life ("the cooking pots in the LORD'S house," v. 20), and in private life ("every pot in Jerusalem and Judah," v. 21). ...there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day (v. 21). The Canaanite would represent anyone who is morally or spiritually unclean.*

The final scene of the Book of Zechariah anticipates Revelation 11:15, toward which all history is steadily moving—*"the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever"* and Revelation 19:16, *"On His robe and on His thigh He has the name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."*

# Malachi

**Author:** Malachi's name occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, nor is any background material provided about him. The Hebrew name "*mal'ak*" means "the Lord's messenger."

**Date Written:** around 430 B.C.

## Background

Beginning in 538 B.C., the Jews started to return to the Land from the Babylonian Captivity. In 516, they finished building the Temple (which the Babylonians had destroyed).

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in 445 to rebuild the wall, and returned to Persia in 433. He returned to Judah (about 424) to deal with the sins Malachi described (Neh 13:6). Malachi was likely written during the time Nehemiah was gone, nearly a 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah had prophesied.

## Theme and Purpose

Malachi parallels the book of Leviticus in that both are concerned with how the people and the priests should act in the Temple. In Leviticus, one reads about *how* to worship God. In Malachi, the focus is on the *heart* of those who worship. So Malachi wrote the last prophecy of the Old Testament in which he delivered God's message of judgment on Judah for their continuing sin and God's promise that one day in the future, when the Jews would repent, Messiah would be revealed and God's covenant promises would be fulfilled. There were then over 400 years of divine silence in the inter-testament time, with only Malachi's words ringing condemnation in their ears, before another prophet arrived with a message from God, who was John the Baptist, preaching, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!* (Matthew 3:2). Messiah had come.

## Key Verse

*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name (3:16).*

## Outline

- I. **Introduction: The Burden of Malachi (1:1)**—*the oracle (burden) of the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi*
- II. **First Oracle: Respond to God's Love (1:2-5)**
  - A. **The claim of God's love for Israel (1:2a)**—*"I have loved you," says the Lord.*
  - B. **Israel's question of the claim (1:2b)**—*"How have you loved us?"*
  - C. **The vindication of God's claim (1:2c-5)**
    1. **The election of Israel over Edom (1:2c-3a)**—*"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated [rejected] Esau."*
    2. **The judgment of Edom (1:3b-5)**—*"Though Edom says, 'We will...build up,' thus says the Lord, 'They may build, but I will tear down...'"* [See Obadiah.]
- III. **Second Oracle: Honor God (1:6-2:9)**
  - A. **The charge of disrespect (1:6a)**—*"Where is My honor...My respect?" says the Lord, "O priests who despise My name."*

- B. Israel's question of the charge (1:6b)**—*But you say, "How have we despised Your name?"*
- C. The proof of God's charge: Contemptible sacrifices (1:7-14)**—*"You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. ... You present the blind...lame and sick...I am not pleased with you...nor will I accept an offering from you." "Oh that there were one among you..." "But you...also say, 'My, how tiresome it is..."*
- D. A warning to the priests (2:1-9)**
- 1. The warning stated (2:1-4)**—*"O priests...if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name...I will spread refuse on your feasts..."*
  - 2. The standard for priests (2:5-9)**—*"My covenant...with Levi, ...he revered Me and stood in awe of My name...true instruction was in his mouth...for the lips of priest should preserve knowledge...for he is the messenger of the Lord"*
- IV. Third Oracle: Be Faithful as God's Covenant People (2:10-16)**
- A. The charge of unfaithfulness (2:10)**—*"Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant...?"*
- B. The first evidence: Illegal intermarriage with foreigners (2:11-12)**
- 1. The sin (2:11)**—*Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord...and has married the daughter of a foreign god—Nehemiah wrote, "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things?" (Neh 13:26; see also Judges 3:5-7; 1 Kings 11:1-6; Ezra 9:2-15; 2 Cor 6:15).*
  - 2. The consequence (2:12)**—because marriage to foreigners usually causes God's people to worship the foreign idols brought to the marriage. *"As for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from...Jacob"*—excommunication from the covenant people. In 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Paul says sin among the people of God spreads like leaven, therefore evil needs to be removed.
- C. The second evidence: Divorce (2:13-16a)**
- 1. The consequence (2:13)**—*you cover the altar of the Lord with tears...because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.*
  - 2. The sin (2:14-16a)**—*For what reason? "Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant...for I hate divorce," says the Lord.* It seems the Jewish men were divorcing their Jewish wives in order to marry foreign wives, who then brought in idolatry.
- D. The charge to faithfulness (2:16b)**—*"So take heed then to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."*
- V. Fourth Oracle: Hope in God (2:17-3:6)**
- A. The charge of wearisome speech (2:17a)**—*You have wearied the Lord with your words.*
- B. Israel's question of the charge (2:17b)**—*Yet you say "How...?" In that you say, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them'*
- C. The proof of the charge: No hope for God's justice (2:17c)**—*Yet you say... 'Where is the God of justice?'*
- D. The warning by God (3:1-5)**
- 1. The coming of the messenger in preparation (3:1a)**—*"Behold, I am going to send My messenger [mal'ak], and he will clear the way before Me"—*
  - 2. The coming of the Lord in judgment (3:1b-5)**—*"Behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. "...He will purify the sons of Levi...so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah...will be pleasing*

*to the Lord... Then I will draw near to you for judgment... against... those who do not fear Me," says the Lord of hosts.*

**E. The basis for hope in God (3:6)**—*"For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."*

**VI. Fifth Oracle: Obey God (3:7-12)**

**A. The charge of disobedience (3:7a)**—*"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me"*

**B. Israel's question of the charge (3:7b)**—*"But you say, 'How shall we return?'"*

**C. The specification of the charge: Robbery (3:8a)**—*"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!"*

**D. Israel's repeated question of the charge (3:8b)**—*"But you say, 'How have we robbed You?'"*

**E. The proof of the charge (3:8c-9)**

**1. The sin: Failure to give tithes and offerings (3:8c)**—*"In tithes and offerings*

**2. The curse (3:9)**—*"You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!"*

**F. The promise of blessing (3:10-12)**—*"Bring the whole tithe... test Me now in this," says the Lord, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows... you shall be a delightful land."*

**VII. Sixth Oracle: Fear God (3:13-4:3)**

**A. The charge of blasphemy (3:13a)**—*"Your words have been arrogant against Me," says the Lord.*

**B. Israel's question of the charge (3:13b)**—*"Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'"*

**C. The proof of the charge: The endorsement of evil (3:14-15)**—*"You have said, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge? ...not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape.'"*

**D. The response of the believing remnant (3:16)**—*"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord..."*

**E. The warning and promise of God (3:17-4:3)**—*"On the day... I will spare them... so you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold, the day is coming, ...and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze... but for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings... You will tread down the wicked... on the day which I am preparing," says the Lord of hosts.*

**VIII. Conclusion: Be Prepared for God's Coming (4:4-6)**

**A. The present preparation (4:4)**—*"Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel."*

**B. The future preparation (4:5-6)**—*"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."* The Pharisees asked John the Baptist, "Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not" (John 1:21-23). The angel prophesied to John the Baptist's father about John, saying, "it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient

*to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16-1; see also Matthew 11:1-14).*