
A Bible Survey



A Three Year Course of Study for Adults

Section Seven: The Divided Kingdom
Year 2, Quarter 3

Compiled by Gene Taylor

Preface

These lessons were first compiled over a three year period from April 1988 through March 1991. The then Westside church of Christ in Tallahassee, Florida (Now the Centerville Road church relocated to 4015 Centerville Road in Tallahassee) determined to place all their Sunday morning Bible classes on the *Amplified Bible Curriculum* (Hereafter referred to as *ABC*) developed by JoLinda Crump and Cathy Valdes.

While their curriculum recommended materials from preschool through senior high, we desired to place our college, young adult, and adult classes on the same schedule. The volume of material in L.A. Mott's studies, recommended in the *ABC* for source material and lesson development, did not easily lend itself to a once a week study since he designed his lessons to be studied twice each week.

Considering these factors, I took it upon myself to compile these lessons. We used them successfully while cycling through the curriculum twice in our senior high, college, young adult, and adult classes from April 1988 through March 1994. They were edited and revised prior to the second study of them. They have been revised a second time and reformatted in 1997.

I have tried to parallel the *ABC* as much as possible so that adults and children would be studying the same lesson at the same time only on different levels. But this series, or any one of its twelve study guides, may be used independently.

Each lesson contains a schedule for daily Bible reading. It can be used as a format for family devotionals in the home even if the whole family is not on the curriculum.

I hope you enjoy your study.

Gene Taylor
July 1997

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Lesson One: Jeroboam

Lesson Text

1 Kings 11:1 - 14:31

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 11:1-22

Tuesday

1 Kings 11:23-43

Thursday

1 Kings 12

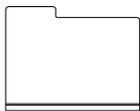
Friday

1 Kings 13

Saturday

1 Kings 14

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE

Knowing God
punishes wrong-doing

Division of the Kingdom (11:1 - 12:33)

1. Was this the first time conflict and division had appeared among the tribes of Israel? (See Judges 8:1ff; 12:1; 2 Sam. 2-5; 19:40-43; 20:1-3).
2. What was the ultimate cause of the division?
3. What was the immediate cause or occasion of the division? (cf. v. 18a and 5:13f)
4. List two big mistakes made by Rehoboam.
5. Name the two kingdoms which resulted from the division. What tribes were included in the southern kingdom? (cf. 2 Chron. 11:12)
6. List the three main innovations introduced into the religion of the northern kingdom by Jeroboam.
7. Identify the following:
 - a. Rehoboam.
 - b. Shechem.
 - c. Jeroboam.
 - d. Ahijah. (cf. 12:15 with 11:26-40)
 - e. Adoram.
 - f. Shemaiah.
 - g. Bethel and Dan.

The Prophecy Against the Altar at Bethel (13:1-34)

8. Where was the prophet in this text from?
9. What was the prophet's message against the altar at Bethel?
10. Did Jeroboam have good reason to believe this message and to repent of his sins?
11. What became of the man of God who spoke against the altar? What was his mistake? What lesson can we learn?
12. How is Galatians 1:8-9 related to this incident?

The Prophecy Against the House of Jeroboam and Against the Kingdom of Israel (14:1-20)

13. Why did Jeroboam want his wife to disguise herself from Abijah? How does 11:38 throw light on this matter?

14. In reference to the prophecy of Abijah, what was the prediction about:

- a. The house of Jeroboam?
- b. The sick child?
- c. Israel?

Lesson Two: Elijah

Lesson Text

1 Kings 17:1-24

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 17:1-7

Tuesday

1 Kings 17:8-16

Thursday

1 Kings 17:17-24

Friday

James 5:16-18

Saturday

1 Peter 1:6-9

James 1:2-12

1 Kings 16:34

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Knowing God provides

1. What brought on the three and a half year drought? (See James 5:16-18)
2. How does the drought relate to Deuteronomy 11:16-17 and 28:23-24?
3. What application does James make of this incident? (See James 5:16-18)
4. List the ways in which God took care of Elijah during the drought.
5. How was the sending of Elijah to a Sidonian woman (vv. 8-10) a rebuke to Israel? (See Luke 4:25f)
6. Even though God would take care of the widow, how was her faith first put to a difficult test?
7. In what two ways was Elijah a blessing to the widow?
8. What effect was there on the widow because of the raising of her son from the dead?

Lesson Three: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

Lesson Text

1 Kings 18:1 - 19:8

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 18:1-15

Tuesday

1 Kings 18:16-24

Thursday

1 Kings 18:25-40

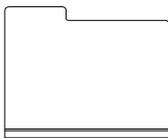
Friday

1 Kings 18:41-46

Saturday

1 Kings 19:1-8

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Requiring
commitment

1. How does chapter 18 reveal the influence and power of Jezebel in the kingdom? (Note vv. 4, 13, 19)
2. Tell as much as you can about Obadiah.
3. What is remarkable about the first part of verse ten? (cf. 16:31 and 17:9)
4. Who was the real “troubler of Israel?” (18:17-18)? What might be a parallel situation today? What lesson can be applied in similar situations today?
5. What challenge did Elijah put to Israel? What is the lesson for us?
6. Describe the contest proposed by Elijah and his great victory.
7. What was the effect of Elijah’s victory on the people?
8. What does 18:41-46, along with James 5:17-28, indicate about how God answers prayer? Does it always involve a miracle in which the “laws of nature” are bypassed? Explain.

Lesson Four: Elijah's Chariot

Lesson Text

1 Kings 19:1-21

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 19:9-21

Tuesday

1 Kings 20

Thursday

1 Kings 21

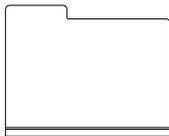
Friday

1 Kings 22

Saturday

2 Kings 1-2

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Teaching and leading
young people to God

1. Describe Elijah's state of mind as he makes his flight from Jezebel.
2. What do you think Elijah means in verses nine and ten in light of Romans 11:2-4? What does he seem to think that God ought to do? Is he ready for the "fire from heaven?" (cf. Luke 9:51-55)
3. How does God go about showing Elijah how He was dealing with the nation? (vv. 11-12) How does verse 18 throw light on these verses? Compare also what seems to be a very similar revelation to Moses at the same locality in Exodus 34:5-7.
4. What three actions was Elijah to take?
5. How would God bring judgment on the nation? Why was it necessary to limit the force or extent of judgment?
6. Of the three actions commanded of Elijah, only one was executed personally by him, the others were carried out through an agent and successor who carried on his work. Explain. In your explanation, refer to verses 19 through 21; to 2 Kings 8:7-15; and 2 Kings 9:1-10.

Lesson Five: Elisha and Naaman

Lesson Text

2 Kings 4:1 - 5:27

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
2 Kings 4

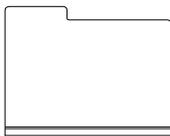
Tuesday
2 Kings 5

Thursday
2 Kings 6

Friday
2 Kings 7

Saturday
2 Kings 8

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE
Following God's
instructions

The Miracles of Elisha

(4:1-44)

1. Generally speaking, what was the purpose of miracles? Why do you think they appear only in certain periods of history?
2. Why were miracles particularly characteristic of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha?
3. List the miracles done by Elisha which are recorded in chapter four.
4. What, specifically, do you think these miracles accomplished for Elisha?

The Healing of Naaman (5:1-27)

5. Who was Naaman? How did he hear about Elisha?
6. List as many as you can of the several mistakes Naaman made before finally being healed.
7. How was Naaman cleansed?
8. What comparison can you make between the cleansing of Naaman and the cleansing that takes place today in baptism? (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Eph. 5:26)
9. Is there power in water to cleanse either leprosy or sin? Where is the power? Where did Naaman understand it to be? What is the relation of water to the cleansing?
10. What effect did Naaman's cleansing have on him? How did he show faith?
11. What was Gehazi's sin? Why was this sin an especially grievous one in view of the conditions of the time? What lesson should be learned by those who would be effective workers for the Lord?
12. Since Elisha, on occasion, did accept some support (4:42), how was that different from Gehazi's sin?

Lesson Six: Israel's Wickedness

Lesson Text

1 Kings 20:1 - 22:40
2 Kings 9:1 - 10:11

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 15-16

Tuesday

1 Kings 20

Thursday

1 Kings 21

Friday

1 Kings 22

Saturday

2 Kings 9:1 - 10:11

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE

Receiving punishment

The War with Syria (1 Kings 20:1-43)

1. Distinguish between Ben-hadad's first demand which Ahab seems willing to accept and the second which, being refused, brought on war. What is the meaning of the proverb in verse 11?
2. What reason is indicated as to why God gives victory to the evil king Ahab? How does the victory reflect God's mercy and longsuffering toward the unfaithful nation?
3. In their first battle, who attacked whom? How did an element of surprise enter into the battle? Who was victorious?
4. What two changes of strategy were suggested by Ben-hadad's advisors?
5. What was there about the second battle that makes it clear that it was God who gave victory to Israel?
6. Was God pleased with Ahab's treatment of Ben-hadad? Explain.
7. Explain, in the light of what follows, why the prophet wanted his neighbor to strike him.
8. Why was God displeased with Ahab?

Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-29)

9. What characteristics of Ahab are seen in this chapter?
10. Is there any indication why Naboth refused Ahab's offer? What did the law of Moses say about the sale of a family inheritance? (See Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 36; cf. Jer. 32:7-10)
11. What does this chapter reveal about the character of Jezebel? What does it show about her power and influence in Israel?
12. How does Elijah describe Ahab in verse 20? How does this chapter illustrate this description?
13. How would Ahab's house be like that of Jeroboam and that of Baasha?
14. What delayed the threatened judgment against Ahab?

The Battle of Ramoth-gilead and the Death of Ahab (1 Kings 22:1-40)

15. What was the reason for this battle? Who was Ahab's ally?
16. Who were the four hundred prophets?
17. At first Micaiah speaks as the other prophets had spoken (v. 15), but, judging from verse 16, what must have been his tone or manner?
18. What was done with Micaiah? How did that change the truth spoken by him?
19. What illustration of Galatians 6:7 is provided by verses 29 through 36?
20. How did the prophecy of 21:19 come to be fulfilled? (vv. 37-38)

Lesson Seven: Rehoboam

Lesson Text

1 Kings 12:1-33
2 Chronicles 10:1 - 12:16

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

1 Kings 12:1-20

Tuesday

1 Kings 12:21-33

Thursday

2 Chronicles 10

Friday

2 Chronicles 11

Saturday

2 Chronicles 12

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Being an example

1. Who was Rehoboam?
2. Upon assuming the throne of his father, what were Rehoboam's two great blunders? (1 Kings 12:6-15, 18)
3. What resulted from Rehoboam's mistakes?
4. What accomplishment of Rehoboam is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 11:5-12?
5. Describe the first three years of Rehoboam's reign. (2 Chronicles 11:13-17) What strengthened Judah in those years?
6. Briefly describe Rehoboam's family. (2 Chronicles 11:18-23)
7. What happened after Rehoboam became strong? What was the consequence of it? (1 Kings 14:22-28; 2 Chronicles 12)
8. What was the ongoing relationship between Rehoboam of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel? (1 Kings 14:30; 2 Chron. 12:15)

Lesson Eight: The Kings of Judah

Lesson Text

1 Kings 15:1-8; 22:41-50
2 Kings 8:16-29;
11:1 - 22:20
2 Chronicles 13:1 - 36:23

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

2 Kings 11-13

Tuesday

2 Kings 14-15

Thursday

2 Kings 16-17

Friday

2 Kings 18-20

Saturday

2 Kings 21-22
2 Chronicles 36:20-23

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Repenting from sin

Abijam: 913-911/10 B.C. (1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chron. 13:1-22)

1. What kind of king was Abijam?
2. Why did God not remove him from the throne?

Asa: 911/10-870/69 B.C. (1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chron. 14:1-16:14)

3. Why, during the reign of Asa, did God provide peace for Judah? (2 Chron. 14:1-8)
4. What seems to have caused the war with Israel that took place during his reign? (1 Kings 15:17; 2 Chron. 16:1; cf. 15:9)
5. List two instances in which Asa failed to show trust in God. (2 Chron. 16:1-14)

Jehoshaphat: 870/69-848 B.C. (1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chron. 17:1 - 20:37)

6. List the important accomplishments of Jehoshaphat. (1 Kings 22:43,46; 2 Chron. 17:1-9; 19:4-11)
7. What kind of man was he? As a consequence, how did God bless him?
8. What was his relationship with Israel? (1 Kings 22:44) List some consequences of that relationship as seen in the following passages: 2 Kings 8:16-18; 2 Chronicles 18:3-4, 28; 20:35-36; 2 Kings 3:7.

Jehoram (Joram): 848-841 B.C. (2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chron. 21:1 -20)

9. What is a "coregency?" How is one indicated in 2 Kings 8:16?
10. Who was Athaliah? What were the consequences of Jehoram's marriage to her? (2 Kings 8:18-19, 26-27; 11:1-3; 2 Chron. 21:6-7; 22:1-5, 10)

Ahaziah: 841 B.C. (2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chron. 22:1-6)

11. What was the most important influence on the reign of Ahaziah?
12. List the two most important consequences of this influence.

Athaliah: 841-835 B.C. (2 Kings 11:1-21; 2 Chron. 22:10 - 23:21)

13. How did Athaliah come to have so power a position in Judah? (See Kings 8:18, 26-27)
14. Why did she seek to destroy “the royal heirs?” (2 Kings 11:1) What would have been some consequences if she had succeeded?
15. How was an end put to her usurpation?

Jehoash (Joash): 835-796 B.C. (2 Kings 12:1-21; 2 Chron. 24:1-27)

16. Since Jehoash was only seven years old when he began to reign (2 Kings 11:21), who was the real “power behind the throne” in his early years?
17. Describe the difference in Jehoash before and after the death of Jehoiada. (2 Chron. 24:2, 15-22)
18. Why, during Jehoash’s reign, did God deliver Judah into the hands of the Syrians? How did Jehoash purchase peace? (2 Kings 12:17-18; 2 Chron. 24:25-27)
19. What was the reason for the conspiracy against Jehoash? (2 Kings 12:19-21; 2 Chron. 24:25-27)

Amaziah: 796-767 B.C. (2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chron. 25:1-28)

20. Describe the general character of Amaziah’s reign. (2 Kings 14:3-4; 2 Chron. 25:2)
21. How does his war with Edom relate to 2 Kings 8:20-22: What foolish mistake did he make following victory over Edom? (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:5-16)
22. How did his reign end? (2 Kings 14:19; 2 Chron. 25:27)

Azariah (Uzziah): 767-740 B.C. (2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chron. 26:1-15)

23. Describe the general character of Azariah’s reign from a spiritual standpoint. (2 Kings 15:1-4; 2 Chron. 26:1-15)
24. What affliction came upon him? (2 Kings 15:5) What sin brought such a punishment? (2 Chron. 26:16-23)

Jotham: 740/739-732/31 B.C. (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chron. 27:1-9)

25. Describe Jotham’s general character.
26. What building activity did he undertake? (2 Kings 15:35; 2 Chron. 27:3-4) What successful war did he fight? What explanation is given of his might? (2 Chron. 27:56)
27. Who began to come against Judah during his reign? (2 Kings 15:37)

Ahaz: 732/31-716/15 B.C. (2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chron. 28:1-27)

28. What kind of king was Ahaz? (2 Kings 16:1-4; 2 Chron. 28:1-4)
29. How did God chastise him? (2 Kings 16:5-6; 2 Chron. 28:5-15)
30. What measure was taken by him to meet the threat from Israel and Syria? What did this action reveal about his attitude toward God? (2 Kings 16:7-9; 2 Chron. 28:16-21)

Hezekiah: 716/15-687/86 B.C. (2 Kings 18:1 - 20:21; 2 Chron. 29:1 - 32:33)

31. What made a great reform so necessary during Hezekiah's reign? (2 Kings 18:1-8; 2 Chron. 29:1 - 31:21)
32. What characteristics made Hezekiah stand out from all of the other kings of Judah? (2 Kings 18:5f)
33. Why did the Assyrians under Sennacherib invade Judah? (2 Kings 18:7, 14) What preparations did Hezekiah make for Judah's defense? (2 Chron. 32:1-8)
34. When Hezekiah became ill, what announcement did Isaiah make to him? What was his reaction? How did God respond? What sign was given to show him that he would recover? (2 Kings 20:1-11; 2 Chron. 32:34; cf. Isaiah 38)
35. What two reasons are suggested for the Babylonian visit to Hezekiah? (2 Kings 20:12; 2 Chron. 32:31) Why was God angry with Hezekiah? How did Hezekiah's action in this incident represent a lapse from his usual trust in God?

Manasseh: 687/86-642/41 B.C. (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chron. 33:1-20)

36. List the evils of Manasseh. Summarize how bad conditions had become. (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chron. 33:1-9)
37. What chastisement brought Manasseh to repent? (2 Chron. 33:10-20) Judging from 2 Kings 23:36 and 24:3f, would you say that Manasseh's repentance had any deep or abiding effect upon the nation? Explain.

Amon: 642/41-640/39 B.C. (2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chron. 33:23-25)

38. Describe the reign of Amon.
39. How did he die?

Josiah: 640/39-609 B.C. (2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30; 2 Chron. 34:1 - 35:27)

40. Summarize the general character of Josiah. (2 Kings 22:1--2)
41. What did he find in the 18th year of his reign? What did it cause him to do? (2 Kings 22:3-23:23)
42. Why was judgment against Judah not averted by Josiah's reforms? (2 Kings 23:26-27; cf. Jer. 3:6-10)

Jehoahaz: 609 B.C. (2 Kings 23:31-35; 2 Chron. 36:1-4)

43. What foreign power dominated Judah following the death of Josiah?

44. What happened to Jehoahaz? What was the political situation in Judah after that?

Jehoiakim: 609-598 B.C. (2 Kings 23:36 - 24:7; 2 Chron. 36:5-8)

45. Describe the character of Jehoiakim. (2 Kings 23:37; Jeremiah 22:13-19; 26:20-24)

46. In relation to Babylon, what did Jehoiakim do? What followed his action? (2 Kings 24:1-4)

Jehoiachin: 598-597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8-17; 2 Chron. 36:5-8)

47. What is the major event that takes place during Jehoiachin's reign?

48. How did he react to the above event? What were the consequences of it?

Zedekiah: 597-586 B.C. (2 Kings 24:18-21; 2 Chron. 36:11-21)

49. What happened in the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign?

50. What two things encouraged him to rebel against Babylon? (Jeremiah 37:1-10; Ezekiel 17:13-18; Jeremiah 28-29)

51. What was the outcome of his rebellion? What became of him?

52. Who replaced him as ruler over Judah? (2 Kings 25:22-26)

Lesson Nine: Isaiah

Lesson Text

Isaiah 1 - 66

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Isaiah 1-2

Tuesday

Isaiah 6:1-8

Isaiah 10

Thursday

Isaiah 11-12

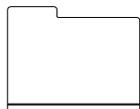
Friday

Isaiah 13 and 53

Saturday

Isaiah 57 and 59

Lesson Concept



INSPIRED SCRIPTURE

Fulfilling prophecy

I. The Man

A. His name: "Isaiah."

1. It means "salvation is of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation."
2. It "indicates that his mission was to point the people to the Lord, the only source of salvation." (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, p. 26)

B. Little is known of his personal life except for his family.

1. He was married to a woman who was a prophetess. (8:3)
2. He had at least two sons who had prophetic names, the first a promise of mercy, the latter of judgment.
 - a. Shear-jashub: "a remnant shall return." (7:3)
 - b. Maher-shalal-hash-baz: "the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth." (8:3)

C. He was a prophet of God who was:

1. A prophet of the future, even though he addressed himself to the Jews of his day.
 - a. He constantly pointed to events to come.
 - b. He prophesied of the future of Judah and the destruction of the heathen nations.
 - c. He spoke of the coming of a King, the Messiah, who would rule in righteousness. (cf. John 12:41)
2. A great statesman who had great insight into the affairs of his day.
3. An advisor to kings meeting them as their equal.
4. A great reformer.
 - a. He condemned the errors of the people.
 - b. He pointed to God as the source of all right conduct.
5. Without peer in relation to his insight into the true nature and character of God.
 - a. He recognized the Lord's absolute holiness and righteousness.
 - b. He emphasized God's control over the nations and their destiny.

D. There is no account of his death.

1. Tradition, based on an apocryphal book, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, says he was sawed asunder on the order of Manasseh.
2. Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, reproaches the Jews with the accusation "whom (Isaiah) you sawed asunder with a wooden saw." (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho 120*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 259)

II. The Date

- A. The probable length of Isaiah's ministry was fifty years, 740-690 B.C.
 - 1. He was a prophet during the reigns of Uzziah (767-740 B.C.), Jotham (740-732 B.C.), Ahaz (732-716 B.C.), and Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.) in Judah.
 - 2. He was a contemporary of the prophets Amos (760-750 B.C.), Hosea (750-725 B.C.), and Micah (735-700 B.C.).
- B. "The book of Isaiah is basically a series of discourses by the prophet delivered at different times and on different occasions. The arrangement of these discourses is generally chronological whenever history is involved." (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, p. 329)
- C. The book of Isaiah in relation to certain historical dates and events.
 - 1. 1:1 (740-690 B.C.). The scope of Isaiah's ministry.
 - 2. 6:1 (740 B.C.). Isaiah's call and commission as a prophet in the year king Uzziah died.
 - 3. 7:1 (734 B.C.). The Syro-Ephraimitic War. Syria and Israel formed an alliance against Assyria and when king Ahaz of Judah refused to join them, they conspired to kill him.
 - 4. 14:28 (727 B.C.). In the year king Ahaz died, Isaiah prophesied against the surrounding nations.
 - 5. 20:1 (711 B.C.). Sargon invaded the region of Palestine and conquered Ashdod, a Philistine city which had revolted against Assyria.
 - 6. 36:1 (701 B.C.). Sennacherib invaded Palestine and besieged Jerusalem. After an angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in their camp, the Assyrians fled.

III. The Setting

- A. Politically.
 - 1. "During the time Judah had become the battleground of the two great powers of the ancient world, Assyria and Egypt...Like the iron upon the anvil, therefore, Judah lay between two hostile forces, one of which (Assyria) was burning with the youthful fires of enterprise and lust of conquest, while the other (Egypt) still remembered its former glories and the empire it had wielded in Asia." (A.H. Sayce, *The Life and Times of Isaiah*, p. 21)
 - 2. Egypt's influence.
 - a. Because Egypt feared the growing power of Assyria, she began to meddle in the politics of Palestine.
 - b. Under the rule of Tirhakah, Egypt sought to form a league with Jerusalem against Assyria. (See Isaiah 30)
 - 3. Assyria's influence.
 - a. When Judah was threatened by a coalition of Israel and Syria because she would not join them in an alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria, king Ahaz of Judah appealed to Tiglath-Pileser for help resulting in Judah paying heavy tribute and losing her independence to Assyria.
 - b. Sargon II, successor to Tiglath-pileser, invaded Judah in 712/711 B.C. to quell a state of revolt. (See Isaiah 20)
 - c. Sennacherib, successor to Sargon II, invaded Judah in 702/701 B.C. to aid in securing his western provinces.

4. There were three political parties in Judah in the time of Isaiah.
 - a. The Egyptian party. It advocated an alliance with Egypt against Assyria.
 - b. The Assyrian party. It advocated submission to Assyria.
 - c. The Nationalistic or “Jehovah” party.
 - 1) Led by Isaiah, it urged loyalty to the Lord as the only way to salvation.
 - 2) It opposed any alliance with either Egypt or Assyria.
- B. Religiously.
1. “The moral and spiritual conditions in Judah were little better than they were in Israel.” (Hailey, 20)
 2. During the reign of Uzziah, Judah enjoyed prosperity and strength not known since the days of Solomon but it brought with it the sins of greed, oppression, religious formality, and corruption.
 3. The reforms of Hezekiah brought sweeping changes. (2 Chronicles 29-31)
 - a. They were not taken to heart by the people.
 - b. They accounted for only a superficial religious fervor among the people but no permanent results.

IV. The Message

- A. According to Melvin Curry in “The Forward” to *A Commentary on Isaiah* by Homer Hailey (pp. 11-12), the book of Isaiah:
 1. “...portrays the tense conditions in Judah during the Assyrian invasions in a gripping way.”
 2. “...contrasts the faith of the few who trusted in the Lord with the unbelief of the many who feared the king of Assyria.”
 3. “...contrasts the gloom of Judah’s present sinful condition with the glory of its future restoration from captivity and the eventual establishment of the messianic kingdom.”
- B. “Amos emphasized the righteousness of Jehovah; Hosea his lovingkindness; Isaiah saw the source of these qualities in the divine holiness...In all his teaching he gives special emphasis to the two phases of the divine character that were burned into his innermost soul during his inaugural vision, namely, the divine holiness and the divine majesty.” (Frederick Carl Eiselen, *Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, pp. 200, 202)
- C. “The central message is—‘JEHOVAH IS SALVATION.’ In part one the key chapter is the sixth, where Isaiah sees the vision of Jehovah as King. In part two the key chapter is the fifty-third, where he sees the Lamb suffering and then triumphing.” (Wilson Adams, *A Survey of the Old Testament* [an unpublished work], p. 115)
- D. “He saw the Lord as King, high and exalted above all creation and absolute in holiness and righteousness...The words righteousness and justice, the principles on which God always acts occur repeatedly in the predominant thought and emphasis in this book.” (Hailey, 27)
- E. The two main divisions of the book are:
 1. Sermons of present judgment and future glory. (chs. 1-39)
 2. Sermons of God’s greatness. (chs. 40-66)

V. The Lessons

- A. Salvation is by faith.
 1. It was on the basis of faith in God that the people would be saved from their guilt and its consequences.
 2. The people are encouraged to wait earnestly, expectantly, and hopefully in faith for the Lord to deliver them.

- B. The oneness of Jew and Gentile under the Messiah's rule.
1. The coming Messiah would bring salvation to people of all nations.
 2. The Messiah's spiritual kingdom would be universal in its scope.
- C. "The Bible in Miniature. As there are 66 books in the Bible, so there are 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah. As the 66 books are divided into 39 (Old Testament) and 27 (New Testament), so the 66 chapters of Isaiah are divided into 39 and 27. Furthermore, as the 39 Old Testament books are mainly concerned with the Law and the judgment that befalls those who disobey it, so the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are concerned with the thought of judgment on the covenant people because of their disobedience to the Law; and as the 27 books of the New Testament are mainly occupied with the message of Divine grace and salvation, so the last 27 chapters of Isaiah speak of the coming day when that grace and salvation will be made available to all men through Christ. Thus, Isaiah is a kind of Bible all in itself." (Adams, 114-115)

VI. Isaiah in the New Testament

- A. "Isaiah presented the most vivid picture of the Messiah and His kingdom of any of the prophets." (Homer Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. 1, p. 143)
- B. References to the Messiah and His kingdom:
- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----------|
| 2:1-4 | 32:1-4,16-19 | 42:1-9 |
| 4:2 | 33:17-24 | 49:1-13 |
| 7:14 | 35:5-10 | 50:4-9 |
| 9:1-2,6-7 | 40:3-5 | 53:1-12 |
| 11:1-11 | 42:1-9 | 55:1-5 |
| 16:5 | 49:1-13 | 60:18-22 |
| 28:16-17 | 50:4-9 | 61:1-3 |
- C. Some fulfilled prophecies.
1. The virgin birth. (7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-28)
 2. The Lord on His throne. (6:1ff; John 12:41)
 3. Every knee bowing to Jesus. (45:23; Philippians 2:10)
 4. Jesus to sit and rule on David's throne. (9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33)
 5. Jesus of the lineage of David. (11:1-2; Romans 15:2)
 6. Jesus, the cornerstone laid in Zion. (28:16; 1 Peter 2:6)
 7. John the Baptist's preparatory work. (40:3-5; Matt. 3:3)
 8. Christ's death on the cross. (53:1ff; Acts 8:32-35)
 9. The Messiah's kingdom established. (2:2-4; Acts 2:16; 1 Timothy 3:15; Eph. 2:13)

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the name "Isaiah?" What, if anything, does it say about his mission as a prophet?
2. What are the names of Isaiah's two sons? What prophetic messages were contained in their names?
3. Who were kings in Israel and Judah during the prophetic ministry of Isaiah? What prophets were contemporary with him?

4. What two nations were the preeminent world powers during Isaiah's ministry? Describe their influence on Israel and Judah during that time.
5. What three political parties existed in Judah in the time of Isaiah? Briefly describe and then state the purpose of each.
6. Briefly summarize the religious condition of both Israel and Judah during the ministry of Isaiah.
7. Briefly state what you believe to be the basic message of the book of Isaiah.
8. Why is it fair to refer to Isaiah as "the Messianic prophet?"
9. What is taught in 2:1-4 that makes it such a key Messianic prophecy?
10. Since it is obvious that 7:14 is a Messianic prophecy, what meaning did it have to the people of Isaiah's day?

Lesson Ten: Jeremiah

Lesson Text

Jeremiah 1 - 52

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Jeremiah 1

Tuesday
Jeremiah 20 and 24

Thursday
Jeremiah 27-28

Friday
Jeremiah 29

Saturday
Jeremiah 31

Lesson Concept



INSPIRED SCRIPTURE

Revealing the scheme
of redemption

I. The Man

- A. His name means “Jehovah will lift up.”
- B. His personal life.
 - 1. He was the son of Hilkiyah, a priest, and may have been a priest himself. (1:1)
 - 2. He lived in Anathoth, his hometown, until he had to escape because of persecution by his own town’s people (11:18-23) and his own family (12:6).
 - 3. He was forbidden by God to marry a wife or have children to symbolize God’s removal of the joy of mirth, gladness and marriage from Judah. (16:1-4, 9)
 - 4. He was a “loner.” (16:5, 8)
 - 5. “He was of a sensitive nature, mild, timid, and inclined to melancholy...He was uncommonly bold and courageous, although it was unpopular and subjected him to hatred and even to suffering wrong...He is also called the weeping prophet.” (J.B. Tidwell, *The Bible Book by Book*, p. 118)
 - a. He describes himself as “the man who has seen affliction.” (Lamentations 3:1)
 - b. “It is noteworthy that when people were trying to account for Jesus, Jeremiah was one of the names put forward (Matthew 16:13-14).” (Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses: A Quest for Life at Its Best*, p. 16)
- C. His prophetic ministry.
 - 1. God chose him before birth to be a prophet. (1:5)
 - 2. He was ordained to be a prophet while still young. (1:6)
 - 3. He seemed constantly torn between his love for God and faithfulness to Him and his love for and patriotic duty to his country. (4:19; 8:20-22; 9:1)
 - 4. He was so totally devoted to his duty as a prophet and so dedicated to his God-given mission that he could not stop speaking the message of God even though at times he felt like giving up. (20:7-9)
 - a. In his forty years of ministry he never once saw any positive response to his message, yet he patiently and bravely persisted in his mission despite the fact that he was unheeded, humiliated and even persecuted. (6:16-19; 25:4-11; 26:12-13)
 - b. Even though at times it broke his heart to do so, he continually declared the whole counsel of God to an unrepentant people.

II. The Date

- A. Jeremiah began his work as a prophet during the reign of Josiah (1:2) in 627 B.C. and prophesied for the next forty years to 586 B.C.
 1. His work spanned the reign of the last five kings of Judah. (1:1-3)
 2. He prophesied during the forty years which led up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its inhabitants to Babylonian captivity.
- B. He was a contemporary of Ezekiel (597-575 B.C.) and Daniel (605-536 B.C.).

III. The Setting

A. Politically.

1. “The tense three-sided contest for world dominion between Assyria, Egypt and Babylon form the background of (Jeremiah’s) prophetic career.” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 571)
 - a. Assyria. Her power and dominion were waning because of revolts throughout her empire, especially that of Babylon. After Ashurbanipal’s death (633 B.C.), she declined rapidly until Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C.
 - b. Egypt. She was growing in power. Pharaoh Necho came to Assyria’s aid against the Medes and Babylonians in 609 B.C., killing king Josiah of Judah in Megiddo when he tried to stop him (2 Chronicles 35:20-35). He took Jehoahaz, Josiah’s successor, captive (Jeremiah 22:11-17) and replaced him with Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:31-34; 2 Chron. 36:1-5). Babylon defeated the Egyptian armies at Carchemish in 605 B.C. and became the dominant world power (Jer. 46:1-26).
 - c. Babylon. She subdued Assyria and then Egypt. She collected tribute and took hostages from Judah under king Jehoiakim in 605 B.C. She also deported Jews from Jerusalem on two other occasions (Jer. 52:28-30) and then in 586 B.C. destroyed Jerusalem (2 Kings 25; Jer. 52).
2. Judah.
 - a. Judah had turned away from God and had made alliances, at various times, with Assyria, Egypt and Babylon.
 - b. Following the death of Josiah, who was the last good king of Judah, all her kings were wicked and led her away from God.
 - 1) Jehoahaz (609 B.C.) reigned three months until Pharaoh Necho carried him away to Egypt. (2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30; 2 Chron. 34-35)
 - 2) Jehoiakim (609-597 B.C.), brother of Jehoahaz, was set up as king by Necho and paid him heavy tribute until Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, overran Judah and he became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 23:35 - 24:7; 2 Chron. 36:5,8) He was taken to Babylon in chains in 597 B.C.
 - 3) Jehoiachin (597 B.C.) reigned three months after which Jerusalem was captured and another group of captives were taken to Babylon. (2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chron. 36:9-10)
 - 4) Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.), Jehoiachin’s uncle, was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. When he rebelled against him, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and destroyed it and then carried Zedekiah and all the people of the city captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 24:17 - 25:21; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 52:1-30)

B. Religiously.

1. Judah had forsaken God and turned to idols. (Jer. 2:13)
2. The extent of the wickedness of the people is seen in the fact that three times in the book it is said that the people are past praying for. (7:16; 11:14; 14:11)
3. The wickedness and impenitence of the people are drawing them closer to the inevitable judgment of God, Babylon being the instrument of His providence.

IV. The Message

- A. The basic message of Jeremiah's prophetic work can be seen in 25:11 and 30:11.
 1. 25:11. "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."
 2. 30:11. "...though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished."
- B. Jeremiah's message can be summarized as "Repent or perish" (3:25 - 4:2) but sadly it went unheeded. (6:16-19; 25:4-11; 26:12-13)
- C. "His was principally a message of stern warning against the inevitable doom of the Babylonian Captivity (25:1-14), if the people did not repent of idolatry and sin. The menacing doom of an (unorthodox) message (1:10) was highlighted, however, by bright Messianic flashes (23:5-8; 30:4-11; 31:31-34; 33:15-18). Final restoration of Israel was to be accomplished after a period of unparalleled suffering (30:3-10), through the manifestation of David's righteous Branch, the Lord (23:6; 33:15)." (*Unger's Bible Handbook*, p. 344)
- D. While his message is basically one of gloom and judgment, there are brief glimpses of the future hope in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. (23:1-6; 31:31-34)

V. The Lessons

- A. "Every concerned Christian in America would do well to ponder long over Jeremiah's book for there are striking similarities between his day and ours on nearly every page—a corrupt leadership (23:1-2), a general condoning of immorality among the populous ('neither could they blush...' 8:12), and even a spiritual breakdown among religious leaders—all find their comparisons in our own day. (See 5:30-31)." (Wilson Adams, *A Survey of the Bible*, [an unpublished work], p. 118)
- B. Devotion to duty to the Lord as depicted by Jeremiah's persistent perseverance. (20:7-9)
- C. National sin brings national judgment. (2:8, 19, 25)
- D. The impossibility of Christ reigning on the earthly throne of David as the premillennial theory demands Him to do. (22:28-30)
 1. Coniah (Jeconiah) would have no descendants on the throne of David who would rule in Judah.
 2. Jesus Christ was a descendant of Jeconiah (Matthew 1:1-11), therefore, He could not sit on an earthly throne in Jerusalem.
- E. Jeremiah speaks of the sorrow, patience, grace and self-sacrificing love of Jesus for His people. Compare 9:11 with Matthew 23:37.

Questions

1. Describe the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet.
2. Why did God forbid Jeremiah to marry and have children?
3. During what time did Jeremiah prophesy?
4. What three nations were world powers during the ministry of Jeremiah? Describe the situation of each and their influence on Judah.
5. What five kings reigned in Judah during Jeremiah's ministry? Briefly describe each.
6. Briefly summarize the spiritual condition of Judah during the time of Jeremiah.
7. Why is it correct to characterize Jeremiah as "the weeping prophet?"
8. What is the basic message that Jeremiah preached? How was it received by the people? What lessons, if any, can be learned from these facts?
9. In what ways can Jeremiah be compared to Jesus?
10. Do you believe the times in which Jeremiah lived could be compared to our times today? If not, why not? If so, what consequences might that have on us or our nation?

Lesson Eleven: Ezekiel

Lesson Text

Ezekiel 1 - 48

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Ezekiel 2:9 - 3:11

Tuesday

Ezekiel 18

Thursday

Ezekiel 24

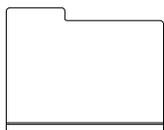
Friday

Ezekiel 37

Saturday

Ezekiel 12

Lesson Concept



**INSPIRED
SCRIPTURE**

Guiding through
the prophets

I. The Man

A. His name: "Ezekiel."

1. It means "God strengthens" or "God will strengthen."
2. He would need the Lord's strength in order to preach the message God had him to speak (3:8-11, 14). Also, his task seemed to be to strengthen the exiles and turn them back to God.

B. His personal life.

1. He was born in 622 B.C., the son of Buzi, a priest, possibly of the lineage of the righteous Zadok. (1:3; cf. 40:46; 44:15)
2. He was undoubtedly a priest himself.
3. He was married to a woman who died suddenly on the day Nebuchadnezzar began to put Jerusalem under siege. (24:2, 15-18)
4. In 597 B.C. at age 25, he was one of the Judeans taken captive to Babylon.

C. His prophetic ministry.

1. At age 30, five years after his exile, he was called to be a prophet. (1:1-3)
 - a. He, it seems, had been preparing for the priesthood. (4:14)
 - b. He should have entered into service as a priest at age 30. (Numbers 4:3, 23, 30) Instead, he became a spokesman for God to an exiled people.
2. He saw the vision of God's glory and God commissioned him to be a "watchman" for the house of Israel. (2:1 - 3:21)
3. His prophetic ministry spanned at least 22 years. (1:1-3; 29:17)

II. The Date

A. The likely date for the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel was 592-570 B.C. (1:1-2; 29:17)

B. "Ezekiel's prophetic ministry falls into two major periods. The first included the years 592-586 B.C., during which the prophet's message—directed toward Jerusalem—consisted of reiterated warnings and symbolic actions designed to bring Judah to repentance and back to her historic faith in God. The second period, which began with the year of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, included the years 586-570 B.C. In the course of these years, Ezekiel was a pastor to the exiles and a messenger of comfort and hope (Ezek. 33-48)." (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 455)

- C. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah (627-586 B.C.) and Daniel (606-536 B.C.).
 - 1. Jeremiah preached to the Jews in Judah before Jerusalem's fall.
 - 2. Daniel spoke God's messages to the royal courts of the kings of Babylon.
 - 3. Ezekiel was prophet to the exiles in Babylon before and after the fall of Jerusalem.

III. The Setting

A. Politically.

- 1. Previous to the exile.
 - a. God refused to defend Judah against Babylon because of her sins.
 - b. Other nations refused to come to Judah's aid militarily.
- 2. During the exile.
 - a. The Jews were captives living in Babylon.
 - b. The Babylonians did not treat the Jews as slaves.
 - 1) They were allowed to buy land, enter into business and accumulate wealth.
 - 2) Some, such as Daniel, attained high political offices with the Babylonian government.

B. Religiously.

- 1. Previous to the exile.
 - a. Even after witnessing two previous deportations to Babylon (606 and 597 B.C.), the people remained impenitent.
 - b. They continued to go even deeper into wickedness and idolatry.
 - c. Two common false notions existed during this period.
 - 1) Those left behind in Jerusalem thought their kinsmen who had been deported were probably being justly punished for their sins while they themselves, since they remained in the city, were still in God's favor.
 - 2) Those already exiled thought their captivity would end quickly and that God would never allow His chosen city, Jerusalem, to burn.
 - 3) Both of these ideas were proven false when Nebuchadnezzar, in 587-586 B.C., destroyed Jerusalem, burning it to the ground and massacring its citizens.
- 2. During the exile.
 - a. The people enjoyed religious freedom.
 - b. During this period they forever gave up idolatry.
 - c. They sought out the law of God.
 - d. It was most likely during this time that synagogue worship was inaugurated.

IV. The Message

A. Ezekiel's message was different to different Jews.

- 1. To those in exile who thought they would shortly be returning to Jerusalem, he proclaimed that they would not be going home.
- 2. To those who blamed God for their exile, he announced that the judgments of God were just and deserved.
- 3. To those who had given up and were filled with despair, he spoke of hope for the future.

B. A summary of the book identifies Ezekiel and his message.

- 1. Section one. (chs. 1-3) It introduces Ezekiel and describes his call and commission to be a prophet.

2. Section two. (chs. 4-24) It details prophecies made against Jerusalem before her fall.
3. Section three. (chs. 25-32) It contains prophecies against foreign nations.
 - a. There were nations happy to see Judah fall.
 - b. The premise: If God was punishing His own nation for her disobedience, how much more would He punish the heathen nations?
 - c. The nations included are Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt.
4. Section four. (chs. 33-48)
 - a. Written after the fall of Jerusalem, it is a message of hope for the future.
 - b. It concludes with Ezekiel's vision of a new city and temple which were to be glorious and splendid. (chs. 40-48)
 - 1) This was not the temple which was to be rebuilt in Jerusalem following the release from captivity.
 - 2) This vision was of the spiritual temple to be built by the Messiah where God would again dwell among men. (48:35)
- C. The overall theme of Ezekiel's message seems to be "They shall know that I am the Lord."
 1. This phrase is repeated over 70 times in the book.
 2. See, for example: 6:7, 10, 13-14.
- D. "The mission of Ezekiel was to save from complete apostasy the group in Babylon that had been carried away in 597 B.C. Also he labored to prepare them against the corruptions of those left in Jerusalem when they should be brought to Babylon. At this point one should read carefully Jeremiah 24. The good figs were the captives taken to Babylon in 597; the bad figs those taken in 586. Out of the first group God would find the remnant that should return to Jerusalem. It was Ezekiel's work to preserve this remnant." (Homer Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. I, p. 188)

V. The Lessons

- A. The importance of preaching. (2:3-7; 3:4-11)
 1. Sent by God into a true "mission field," Ezekiel's work would be disappointing, discouraging and received apathetically.
 2. In spite of adversity, Ezekiel stayed with his God-given task of preaching God's message.
- B. Personal accountability. (ch. 18)
 1. "Ezekiel emphasized the doctrine of personal responsibility for sin in the most vigorous terms. 'The soul that sins shall die' (18:4). The message of Ezekiel in this respect constituted an important turning point in the prophetic message. With the destruction of the nation, the emphasis on national responsibility gave way to an emphasis on individual responsibility." (*Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 456)
- C. No nation is indestructible. (chs. 25-32)
 1. The principle found in James 4:6, while true of individuals, is also true of nations.
 2. God's judgment upon a nation will destroy it no matter how strong it is or seems to be.
- D. Salvation is of the Messiah.
 1. Chapter 34 speaks of a new and glorious day for Israel when God would set a new "David," the Messiah, over them, give them a new covenant, and cause there to be a blessing in the land again.
 2. The vision of the dry bones in chapter 37 speaks of a day when God would cause spiritual life to enter into His people.
 3. The spiritual temple, described in chapters 40 through 47, would be built by God for man providing "living water" (47:9) to man.

Questions

1. What does the name “Ezekiel” mean? In what way does it apply to the work of the prophet?
2. What do you know of Ezekiel’s personal life?
3. With what prophets was Ezekiel contemporary? Compare his mission and message with theirs.
4. Contrast the situation of the Jews before the exile to Babylon and during that exile in relation to the following areas.
 - a. Political situation.
 - b. Spiritual situation.
5. What is the basic message of Ezekiel to his people?
6. How did God describe Ezekiel’s position on behalf of Israel? (3:17-21; 33:1-11)
7. Since God could no longer reach Israel as a nation, how, in Ezekiel, does He reach them? What principle underlies this attempt?
8. What makes Ezekiel’s writing so injurious to Calvinism?
9. What is the significance of Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones? (ch. 37)
10. What did Ezekiel’s vision of the new temple and new city signify? Explain.

Lesson Twelve: Jonah

Lesson Text

Jonah 1:1-4

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Jonah 1:1-16

Tuesday

Jonah 1:17 - 2:10

Thursday

Jonah 3:1-9

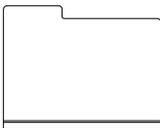
Friday

Jonah 3:10 - 4:3

Saturday

Jonah 4:4-11

Lesson Concept



INSPIRED SCRIPTURE

Revealing examples
of repentance

I. Jonah the Man

- A. His name means “dove.”
- B. His personal life.
 - 1. He was the son of Amittai. (1:1)
 - 2. He was from Gath-hepher. (2 Kings 14:25)
 - a. It was a city of the tribe of Zebulun. (Joshua 19:13)
 - b. It was located four miles northeast of the city of Nazareth.
- C. His prophetic ministry.
 - 1. He was a prophet in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.). (2 Kings 14:23-25)
 - 2. His work which is chronicled in his book is exclusively to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. (1:1-2)
 - 3. He was not, to say the least, God’s most faithful prophet.
 - a. He was a narrow-minded, fiercely zealous patriot.
 - b. He was exceedingly jealous of Israel’s relationship to God wanting no other people to have a similar relationship.
 - c. He became upset when the people of Nineveh repented at his preaching.
 - 4. As a prophet, he and his book are unique in a number of ways.
 - a. His is the only book of the minor prophets that is a book about the prophet instead of being a collection of the oracles of the prophet.
 - b. He is the only minor prophet:
 - 1) Whose major activity is on foreign soil.
 - 2) In whose career the miraculous plays a prominent role.
 - 3) Who preaches exclusively to a foreign people.
 - 4) Who is mentioned by Jesus.
 - c. He is the only Old Testament character who:
 - 1) Is represented as taking a trip on the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 2) Is likened by the Lord to Himself.

II. The Date

- A. The book was written some time around the general period of 780 B.C.
- B. Since Jonah was a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II which was from 793 B.C. to 753 B.C., it is likely the events recorded in his book took place during that time.

III. The Setting

A. Geographically.

1. Tarshish was a city in Spain which the people of Jonah's day believed to be "the end of the world."
2. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria.
 - a. At that time it had a population somewhere between 600,000 and 1,000,000.
 - b. Located on the Tigris River, it was some 80 miles in circumference with a wall around it that was 100 feet high with some 1500 towers each of which was 200 feet in height. It is said that four chariots could be driven abreast upon the walls.

B. Politically.

1. Israel during the time of Jeroboam II.
 - a. Her borders extended farther than at any time after Solomon. (2 Kings 14:25)
 - b. Enjoyed a time of ease and prosperity. "Times were prosperous, money plentiful, and the spirit of nationalism or patriotism was running high. The kingdom of Israel had been expanded and the people were proud and confident." (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, p. 280)
 - c. Was already feeling the influence of Assyria to whom it would ultimately fall in 721 B.C.
2. Assyria.
 - a. Israel's enemy during this time, she would eventually destroy them in 721 B.C.
 - b. The Assyrians were hideously and brutally cruel to the people they conquered.
 - 1) They had a seemingly unquenchable thirst for blood and vengeance.
 - 2) Their atrocities would have been well-known in Israel.
 - c. "...from shortly before 800 until 745 B.C., the time of Tiglath-pileser's accession to the throne, Assyria was torn with internal strife and by wars with revolting provinces...not only were there revolts from within the empire but also the nation was at war with a powerful country (Urartu) near the Caspian Sea. No doubt this depressed state of Assyria contributed much to the readiness of the people to hear Jonah as he began to preach to them." (Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, p. 63)

IV. The Message

A. A summary of the book.

1. God commissioned Jonah to go and preach repentance to Nineveh. (1:1-2)
 - a. Jonah, knowing God's mercy and lovingkindness, knew if they repented God would not destroy them.
 - b. Jonah wanted no part in saving them. (4:1-2)
2. Jonah began to flee to Tarshish. (1:3)
 - a. God caused a severe storm at sea. (1:4)
 - b. The sailors on board the ship on which he traveled were persuaded by Jonah, against their will, to throw him overboard in order to appease God's wrath. (1:4-16)
3. Jonah was swallowed by a great fish prepared by God. (1:17)
 - a. He spent three days and nights in it during which time he penitently prayed. (1:17 - 2:9)
 - b. The fish vomited him on dry land at the command of the Lord. (2:10)

4. Jonah journeyed to Nineveh to preach his message: “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” (3:1-4)
 - a. All the people, from the king on down, repented. (3:5-9)
 - b. God spared Nineveh. (3:10)
5. Jonah was enraged at God’s decision to spare Nineveh. (4:1-2)
 - a. He wanted to die. (4:3)
 - b. God taught him a lesson about love and compassion by causing a plant to grow over Jonah. (4:4-6)
 - 1) Jonah was grateful for the plant.
 - 2) God prepared a worm to damage the plant and cause it to wither. (4:7)
 - 3) Jonah, having lost the cover of the plant and feeling the heat of the sun, again wanted to die. (4:8)
 - 4) God used the plant for which Jonah had pity to tell him how he should have pity on the Ninevites. (4:9-11)
- B. The book of Jonah has been variously interpreted. Some suggested interpretations include:
 1. Mythical. The story is a myth that grew around some incident in the history of Israel.
 2. Allegorical. The story is an allegory of Israel’s captivity, repentance and restoration to its land.
 3. Historical. This interpretation literally views the accounts in the book as happening in the historical context.
 - a. Is the fish historical? If God created all fish found in the seas, could He not create one specifically for the purpose of swallowing and preserving Jonah?
 - b. See the article, “**James Bartley & the Whale.**” (Bob Dickey, *The Pointer*, Vol. 14, No. 20, November 1982)
 - c. Jesus Christ confirms the historicity of the account of Jonah in Matthew 12:38-42 and Luke 11:29-32.
- C. Jonah’s message to Nineveh: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.” (3:4)
- D. God’s message to Jonah.
 1. The love of God is for all mankind. (4:10-11)
 2. The will of God is to be done. (3:2-3)

V. The Lessons

- A. National sin demands national repentance. (See Proverbs 14:34)
- B. The book of Jonah displays the universality of:
 1. God’s presence. A person can neither run nor hide from God. (Psalm 139:7-12; Amos 9:2-4)
 2. God’s concern for man. (Acts 10:34-35)
 3. God’s love for all mankind no matter how wicked. (4:10-11; cf. John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Peter 3:9)
 4. God’s providence. He is able to use all incidents in the life of His servants for their good and His glory.
 5. A preacher’s responsibility. (3:2; cf. 2 Timothy 4:2)
- C. The conditional nature of prophecy. God’s wrath is conditioned on man’s repentance or lack of it. (3:9-10; Jeremiah 18:7-10; Acts 17:30-31)
- D. Opportunity begets challenge.
- E. God, in contrast to man, is more concerned with spiritual matters rather than with material things.

VI. Jonah in the New Testament

- A. Jesus compares His experiences in the grave to Jonah's in the fish. (Matthew 12:39-40)
- B. Jesus contrasts His preaching and the lack of response to it Nineveh's response to Jonah's preaching. (Matt. 12:41-42; Luke 11:29-32)

“James Bartley & the Whale,” (Bob Dickey, *The Pointer*, Vol. 14, No. 20, November 1982)

“The book of Jonah tells the story of the prophet Jonah's disobedience as he attempted to escape from the preaching task that the Lord had enjoined upon him. Having taken his flight in a ship sailing to Tarshish, Jonah was cast overboard and swallowed by a whale prepared by God. Tormented alive in the whale's belly, the prophet repented and promised to do the Lord's bidding; whereupon, he was deposited safely on dry ground.

“Modernists (those who reject the verbal inspiration of the scriptures and especially the miracles of the Bible) scoff at the story of Jonah and the whale. Many of them have said that it is scientifically impossible for a man to be swallowed whole by a whale, let alone live to escape and tell about it. Some of them propose the idea that Jonah is a symbolic, figurative book and we are not to take its meaning literally. Others say it is a product of an overactive imagination, or perhaps it is an ancient children's bedtime story like our modern-day “Three Little Pigs” or “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Many of the modernists just laugh and say, ‘It's a whale of a fish story’ or ‘It's a fish story that's hard to swallow.’ Jesus believed the story of Jonah and the whale. He likened it to His own burial in the earth and the promised resurrection from the dead (Matt. 12:38-40; 16:21).

“Those who think the story of Jonah and the whale impossible should be enlightened and made to reflect further by the account of James Bartley. His story was reported by H.P. Lee and printed in *The Literary Digest* of April 4, 1896:

‘In February, 1891, an English vessel, *Star of the East*, was sailing in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands. The lookout sighted two large sperm whales three miles away. Two boats were launched. One whale escaped. The other was bombed and harpooned.

‘The boat attached to the captured whale reduced to splinters when hit by the powerful lash of the monster's tail during its dying struggle. The men were thrown out of the boat and one of them, James Bartley, was mourned as drowned. It took the crew a day and a half with axes and spades to remove the blubber.

‘At the end of that time they attached some tackle to the stomach and hoisted it to the deck. The sailors were startled to see something jumping in the stomach at irregular intervals. Upon cutting the stomach open James Bartley came rolling out, screaming like a lunatic. He remained in that mental condition for weeks. Within three weeks he recovered from the shock and resumed his duties.

‘Writing of the experience later, Mr. Bartley said, ‘I remembered from the moment that I jumped and felt my feet striking some soft substance. I looked up and saw a canopy of pink and white descending, and the next moment felt myself drawn downward, feet first and realized I was being swallowed by a whale. I was drawn lower and lower; a wall of flesh hemmed me in, yet the pressure was not painful and the flesh gave way before the slightest movement. Suddenly I found myself in a sack much larger than my body, completely dark. Soon I felt a great pain in my head and my breathing became difficult. At the same time I felt a terrible heat; it seemed to consume me, and I believed I was going to be broiled alive. The thought that I was to perish in the belly of the whale tormented me beyond endurance, while the awful silence weighed me down. I tried to rise to cry out. All action was now impossible, but my brain seemed abnormally clear, and, with a full comprehension of my fate, I lost consciousness.’

“This dreadful account of a man swallowed by a whale is all the more remarkable because he lived to tell about it. But whether or not it can be demonstrated that a whale can truly swallow a man, we must remember that God ‘prepared’ Jonah's fish for the task—and with God all things are possible. Those who believe the Bible should have no trouble with the story of Jonah or with any of the other Bible miracles. Your belief in miracles depends upon whether or not you spell your god with a capital ‘G’...” 🐋

Questions

1. What do you know of the personal life of Jonah?
2. To whom was Jonah a prophet?
3. How does the book of Jonah and Jonah himself differ from the other minor prophets?
4. Describe the conditions of Israel during the time of Jonah.
5. Describe the Assyrians.
6. What did God want Jonah to preach to Nineveh? What was his response to the command of God? Why?
7. List the different suggested interpretations of the book. Tell why each is either acceptable or unacceptable.
8. What is the basic message(s) to be found in the book of Jonah?
9. What lessons did Jonah learn while in flight from God?
10. Luke 11:30 says that “Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites.” In what way(s) was he a sign to them?

Lesson Thirteen: The Minor Prophets

Lesson Text

The Minor Prophets

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Hosea 14

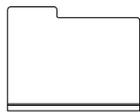
Tuesday
Joel 1 - 3

Thursday
Micah 4-5

Friday
Nahum 1-3

Saturday
Malachi 1 - 4

Lesson Concept



**INSPIRED
SCRIPTURE**
Using figurative
language

The Importance of

Studying the Minor Prophets

- A. “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning,...” (Romans 15:4)
- B. A study of the minor prophets will strengthen one’s faith in God.
 1. In them one is able to see the might and majesty of God and witness His providence.
 2. Noting the fulfillment of the many prophecies, especially those Messianic in nature, deepens one’s faith in the one from whom those prophecies have come—God.
- C. A study of the minor prophets reinforces Jesus as the Messiah.
 1. All of them except Obadiah and Nahum are quoted or echoed in the New Testament.
 2. Many prophecies of the Messiah and His kingdom are found in their books.
- D. When studying the minor prophets, one can learn the message of the prophet to the people of his day.
 1. His message was relevant to the moral and spiritual condition of the people of his day and time.
 2. When similar conditions exist today, their message remains relevant to the same issues.
- E. One should study the minor prophets in order to learn and understand as much of the word of God as he/she possibly can.

II. Some Basic Considerations for Understanding the Minor Prophets

- A. The prophet is a man moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21). A “prophet” is:
 1. Generically, a spokesman for another person. (Exodus 4:10-16; 7:1)
 2. Specifically, a spokesman for God.
 - a. God revealed His will in the Old Testament period through the prophets. (Hebrews 1:1)
 - b. A prophet is variously called:
 - 1) “Seer.” (1 Samuel 9:9)
 - 2) “Man of God.” (1 Kings 13:1)
 - 3) “Man of the spirit.” (Hosea 9:7)
 - c. The Hebrew word for prophet is “nabi.”
 - 1) It occurs about 400 times in the Old Testament as a noun.
 - 2) It occurs about 110 times in the Old Testament in verb form.

- B. The prophets did not introduce:
 - 1. Strange religions. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)
 - 2. A new law. Their function was to call men back to the law of Moses or the law of God already applicable to them such as the Patriarchal law to the Ninevites in the time of Jonah.
- C. The true prophet is one whose oracles come to pass. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)
 - 1. The ability to know the future belongs solely to God.
 - 2. The prophet knows things to come only to the extent that God speaks through him.
- D. Prophecy is conditional. (Jeremiah 18:5-11)
 - 1. One must ask, "Have the conditions of this threat or promise been met?"
 - 2. A threat may be delayed by repentance. (1 Kings 21:29)
- E. The first coming of Christ and the beginning of the church are important subjects in Old Testament prophecy. (Romans 1:2; Acts 3:24-26; 1 Peter 1:10-12)

III. The Place and Setting of the Minor Prophets

- A. The place of the minor prophets.
 - 1. The minor prophets were originally designated as "The Book of the Twelve" or "The Twelve Prophets" by the Hebrews.
 - 2. Consider the term "minor prophets."
 - a. Augustine (354-430 A.D.), Bishop of Hippo, seems to be the source of the term.
 - b. These prophets are not "minor" in the sense of being less important or later in date than the major prophets.
 - c. "Minor" only refers to the length of the books.
 - 3. The minor prophets lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.
 - a. Their messages were mainly to the Northern and Southern kingdoms, Israel and Judah.
 - b. Jonah, Amos and Hosea are primarily concerned with matters of relevance to the Northern kingdom while the others mainly prophesy to Judah.
- B. The setting of the minor prophets.
 - 1. They fit into the history of the Jewish nation during the period covered by 2 Kings 14:23 to the end of the book plus the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - 2. They span a period of approximately four hundred years.
 - a. The early minor prophets.
 - 1) Obadiah. (845 B.C.)
 - 2) Joel. (830 B.C.)
 - 3) Jonah. (780 B.C.)
 - b. The minor prophets of the eighth century B.C.
 - 1) Amos. (755 B.C. [in or near])
 - 2) Hosea. (750-725 B.C.)
 - 3) Micah. (735-700 B.C.)
 - c. The minor prophets of the seventh century B.C.
 - 1) Zephaniah. (630-625 B.C.)
 - 2) Nahum. (625-612 B.C.)
 - 3) Habakkuk. (625-606 B.C.)

- d. The minor prophets of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.
 - 1) Haggai. (520-518 B.C.)
 - 2) Zechariah. (518 B.C. - unknown date for latter part)
 - 3) Malachi. (444-432 B.C.)
- 3. These four hundred years span three basic periods of history.
 - a. The Assyrian period. (883-612 B.C.)
 - b. The Babylonian period. (625-540 B.C.)
 - c. The Persian period. (539-331 B.C.)

IV. The Literary Range of the Minor Prophets

- A. The books show a wide range of literary types.
- B. Amos and Hosea contain a combination of stories about the prophet as well as collections of his oracles.
- C. Jonah is largely taken up with the story of the prophet and has only a small part of its material made up of what the prophet preached.
- D. Nahum is made up entirely of oracles of the prophet.
- E. Zechariah has a large series of visions.
- F. Malachi is made up of a series of arguments between the prophets and his hearers.
- G. Habakkuk raises questions with God, speaking to God rather than the reverse that is customary in the books.
- H. Haggai dates his oracles, while the dating of most of the other prophetic material is involved in considerable conjecture.

V. The Basic Messages of the Minor Prophets

- A. Obadiah: The fall of Edom and the exaltation of Zion.
- B. Joel: An urgent call to repentance, the doom of the nations and the ultimate glory of God's cause.
- C. Jonah: A warning to Nineveh to repent or perish.
- D. Amos: Judgments against the neighboring nations of Israel and an announcement of punishment and doom for Israel followed by an oracle of hope for a remnant of the people.
- E. Hosea: The doom of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians was inevitable.
- F. Micah: Judgment will come from God, Samaria will be overthrown and Judah will fall to Babylon.
- G. Nahum: The downfall of Nineveh.
- H. Zephaniah: The doom of Judah and how she must face "the day of the Lord."
- I. Habakkuk: A cry to God because of the wickedness, injustice and disregard for the law in Judah.
- J. Haggai: A message to those Jews who have returned from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple.
- K. Zechariah: A message of additional encouragement to rebuild the temple.
- L. Malachi: A prophecy designed to encourage zeal and enthusiasm in the hearts of the Jews by seeking to restore an understanding of the value of serving the Lord faithfully.

Questions

1. Why is a study of the minor prophets a relevant study for the Christian today?

2. Why do you think there is so little study of the prophets?
3. What is the basic function of all prophets including the minor prophets?
4. When did the minor prophets live?
5. How were the minor prophets referred to by the Hebrews? Why?
6. Why are the minor prophets called “the minor prophets?”
7. Who, mainly, were the recipients of the messages of the minor prophets?
8. Approximately how many years did the minor prophets span in their activity?
9. What world empires were in power during the period of the minor prophets?
10. After each of the following minor prophets, describe what is unique about its literary style.
 - a. Jonah.
 - b. Zechariah.
 - c. Malachi.
 - d. Habakkuk.

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