

The Book of Obadiah

Lesson 1: Historical Background

1. About the “Minor” Prophets

- A. Our present form of the Hebrew Scriptures is not a chronological arrangement. Rather, it is an outgrowth of the old Hebrew arrangement that was topical:

<u>The Law</u>	<u>The Prophets</u>	<u>The Writings</u>
Genesis	Former Prophets:	Poetical Books:
Exodus	Joshua	Psalms
Leviticus	Judges	Job
Numbers	Samuel	Proverbs
Deuteronomy	Kings	Five Rolls (Megilloth):
	Latter Prophets:	Ruth
	Isaiah	Song of Songs
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Lamentations
	The Twelve	Esther
		Historical Books:
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles

(from *A General Introduction to the Bible*,
Geisler and Nix, p. 23)

- B. Jesus refers to things written in “*the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me*” (Lk 24:44).
- C. The “minor” prophets are minor simply because they are shorter. They are not inferior either in regard to the prophet or his message. They are all inspired of God and thus of equal import to the “major” prophets.

2. Understanding the Minor Prophets

- A. The key to understanding any book is context: setting, history, language, recipients, contemporary works, etc. This background information contains clues which help clarify the message of the author.
- B. Where possible to determine the date of a prophetic book, the history of Kings, Chronicles and other contemporary prophets can be of immense help. It is not always easy, however, to date a prophetic book. Homer Hailey lists the following spectrum of dates from various sources concerning the book of Obadiah:

<i>Davidson</i>	<i>Driver</i>	<i>Eiselen</i>	<i>ISBE</i>	<i>Knudson</i>	<i>Pfeiffer</i>	<i>Sampey</i>	<i>Young</i>
Uncertain	5 th cen.	after 586	586	ca. 460	460-400	ca. 845	before Jer.

- C. New Testament applications of prophetic scriptures are vital to correct interpretation. When Peter says, “*But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel ...*” (Ac 2:16), we should pay strict attention.
- D. Perhaps most crucial to understanding the prophets is a familiarity with the language and types of expressions common to ancient Jewish writers. Especially is this true of apocalyptic language which utilizes highly imaginative and bizarre figures to convey spiritual principles. (Thus crucial to a solid understanding of Revelation is a background in the language of the OT prophets.)

3. Who are the Edomites?

- A. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, and both of whom are sons of Isaac and Rebekah.
1. In Gn 25:22-25 God indicates to Rebekah that a nation would spring from each of the children she was carrying. By His sovereign choice, however, He decreed that the Abrahamic promises would rest upon the younger of the two and that he would have dominion over the older (cf. Rom 9:10-13).
 2. Everything about Jacob and Esau seemed to be at odds, down to their physical characteristics, interests and spiritual outlook. And so it was throughout future generations of their descendants.
 3. Homer Hailey notes: “Throughout the writings of the prophets Edom stands as a symbol of the earthly, nonspiritual people of the world” (*A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, p. 30).
- B. The Edomites settled in the deep valley that extends south of the Dead Sea (the Arabah) to the Gulf of Aqabah. “In Bible times the King’s highway passed along the eastern plateau. The capital, Sela, lay on a small plateau behind Petra. Other important towns were Bozrah and Teman” (*New Bible Dictionary*, p. 298).
- C. Deep animosity existed between Edom and Israel.
1. Num 24:14-21 – Edom refuses passage to Israel on their wilderness journey.
 2. 2 Sam 8:13-14 – Edom is subjugated by David as he establishes his kingdom.

3. 2 Chr 20:10-12 – Edom joins an alliance with Moab and Ammon against King Jehoshaphat.
4. 2 Kgs 8:20-22 – Edom revolts during the reign of Jehoram.
5. 2 Chr 25:11-12 – Amaziah kills 10,000 Edomites in battle and brutally makes an example out of 10,000 others by throwing them off a cliff.

4. The Edomites in Prophecy

- A. All this bad blood caused Edom to rejoice at Judah’s downfall – Ps 137:7.
- B. Jeremiah, in a prophecy reminiscent of Obadiah’s message, foretells the downfall and desolation of Edom – Jer 49:7-22.
- C. Ezekiel also prophesies doom upon Edom for its opposition to Israel – Ezk 25:12-14.

Questions:

1. Find two other NT introductions to OT quotations (viz., “*For David says concerning Him ...*” – Ac 2:25, citing Ps 16).
2. Does Rom 9:10-13 mean that God chose to condemn Esau regardless of what he did or didn’t do? Explain.
3. What offer does Moses make to the Edomites relative to passing through their land? How do the Edomites respond?
4. What does 1 Kgs 11:15-17 say about David’s conquest of Edom?
5. What blessing does God bestow upon the Edomites in Dt 23:7-8?
6. What line of kings on the NT were of Edomite descent?

The Book of Obadiah

Lesson 2: The Text of Obadiah

1. The Judgment to Come Upon Edom – vv. 1-9

- A. vv. 1-4 – The pride and arrogance of Edom would be humbled by nations that God would raise up against it.
1. Much of Edom was a deep, desolate valley that ran between the southern end of the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah. The rugged terrain and numerous caves provided a natural defense that made Edom hard to defeat (see the modern challenges of Afghanistan, for example).
 2. This impregnability created a smugness among the Edomites; they thought they would always be safe and beyond the reach of invaders. What they didn't count on was the hand of God to bring them down from their lofty strongholds.
- B. vv. 5-7 – Edom would eventually be totally plundered. Those with whom Edom was militarily and politically allied would turn on her and destroy her.
- C. vv. 8-9 – Jehovah, as He does in other places, declares that He will remove the wisdom of a people. Nations and cultures often self-destruct because they lose their ability to make sound, prudent decisions. Pragmatic choices compound the situation; fleshly passions are stirred by incompetent and ill-conceived policies; corruption and self-interest become the order of the day. This is the natural consequence of casting off the precepts of God and adopting attitudes foreign to His character.

2. Edom's Crime: Hatred of Israel and Participation in Its Demise – vv. 10-16

- A. vv. 10-14 – Edom is guilty of aiding and abetting Israel's enemies. Whatever the historical context, when calamity befell Jerusalem the Edomites were gleeful and gloating. They had a hand in plundering Israel's goods and capturing those trying to escape.
- B. vv. 15-16 – The "day of the Lord," a common prophetic phrase indicating a time of judgment and retribution upon His enemies, is soon to befall the nations who have been opposed to God and His purposes through Israel. The drunken indulgence in the aftermath of Jerusalem's fall will be replaced with drinking the wrath of God in full measure. *"They shall be as though they had never been."*

3. Messianic Triumph of Israel – vv. 17-21

A. This picture of Israel's triumph contains strongly Messianic language.

1. "Mt. Zion," the literal hill whereupon God manifested His presence in the temple, becomes a symbolic reference to the spiritual rule of Christ in His kingdom. Christians "*have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*" (Heb 12:22; cf. Is 2:2-4). Deliverance, holiness and ultimate triumph ("*the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions*") will be found in spiritual Mt. Zion.
2. The notion of inheriting or possessing lands is also an idealized application of Israel entering physical Canaan. Jesus said, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (land)*" (Mt 5:5). The homeland for which the people of God long is heavenly, "*the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Heb 11:9-10; cf. 11:14-16).

B. Another key to understanding this section is comparing Am 9:11-12 with its fulfillment in Ac 15:15-18.

1. Amos says that the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt from its ruins "*that they may possess the remnant of Edom.*"
2. James makes reference to this verse in speaking of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the kingdom. Thus, by recognizing the authority of Christ as sovereign Lord and King, Christians enjoy victory and triumph over all enemies – not politically and militarily, but through truth leading to eternal life.

Questions:

1. What brought Edom a false sense of security? (Research: What did they not learn from the Jebusites?)
2. How is Edom's fate contrasted with robbers and grape harvesters?
3. How does God feel about those who take their own vengeance?
4. How do you think the figurative images of Ob 19-21 are fulfilled in the NT?

1. The Assyrian Empire

- A. From a human perspective, the Assyrian Empire was a voracious, enterprising series of rulers bent on subjugating distant lands and siphoning tribute and natural resources for its own welfare. Edward J. Young notes:

As never before in the history of the world the idea of conquest gained ground, and one nation sought to subdue other nations and tried to make them a part of itself. Thus, the Assyrian king appeared upon the horizon, and his appearance signaled the striving for a new order of things. A reaching for universalism such as the world had never before known now began to appear, and a reaction against the old order took place. Again, the spirit of Babel was present, and again man began to exalt himself as ... at Babel. There would be no tower to reach into the heavens, but there would be a world empire. Mankind would not be concentrated in one spot; he would cover the earth but would belong to one kingdom, the kingdom of man. Man was to rule and extend his sway, and man's kingdom was to cover the world so that man alone would be exalted through such universalism (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, p. 5).

- B. From a divine perspective, however, in Assyria God was preparing a nation that would be His instrument of punishment against Israel. This was what Jonah feared would be the outcome of his preaching to Nineveh and thus was his reason for attempting to flee to Tarshish (cf. Jonah's prophetic work relative to the reign of Jeroboam II, 2 Kgs 14:25).

- C. The Assyrians, however, took cruelty and inhumanity to new heights. As a people who survived upon brutal suppression, dissolution of cultural identity (through expatriation or scattering) and outright thuggery, God's hand would also fall upon them. Homer Hailey cites the following observation of Farrar regarding the character of Assyria:

Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed on the way to ruin. The kings of Assyria tormented the miserable world. They exult to record how "space failed for corpses"; how unsparing a destroyer is their goddess Ishtar ... how they made pyramids of human heads; how they burned cities ... how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders as with chaff ... (*Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, p. 251).

2. Profile of Assyrian Kings

Tiglath-Pileser III (aka Pul) – 745-727 BC. Tiglath-Pileser led Assyria out of a period of weakness during which time Jeroboam II had strengthened Israel and Jonah had preached in Nineveh. In ca. 743 BC Menahem, king of Israel, paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kgs 15:19-20). King Ahaz of Judah later appealed and paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser for assistance against Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria. On another occasion Tiglath-Pileser refused assistance to Ahaz against the Philistines and Edomites and distressed him (cf. 2 Chr 28:16, 20-21). In ca. 732 BC, Tiglath-Pileser took several Israelite cities captive (2 Kgs 15:29). In his annals he claims to have replaced Pekah with Hoshea (cf. 2 Kgs 15:30).

Shalmaneser V – 727-722 BC. After the vassal Hoshea withheld tribute and sought alliance with Egypt, Shalmaneser besieged Samaria for three years (2 Kgs 17:1-6). After Samaria's fall, the greater portion of the population was carried away to the upper Euphrates region.

Sargon II – 721-705 BC. In his annals Sargon claims credit for the fall of Samaria. Perhaps he was a general in the besieging army and took over the Assyrian throne during the operations. There is no record that he entered Judah though he did fight against Egypt and Philistia.

Sennacherib – 705-681 BC. Sennacherib besieged Lachish and took all the fortified cities of Judah during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:13). Hezekiah paid tribute (2 Kgs 18:14-16) but was still threatened by the Assyrian army until God struck 185,000 of them dead. Reference to this action against Hezekiah is found on the Taylor prism in the British Museum. Sennacherib withdrew to Nineveh and was later assassinated by his own sons (2 Kgs 19:36-37).

Esarhaddon – 681-668 BC. Esarhaddon had a difficult time establishing his throne, but once he did so he spent his 13 year reign putting down revolts, securing the loyalty of vassal kings (only temporarily) and subjugated Egypt (again temporarily). Esarhaddon was God's instrument against the idolatrous Manasseh (cf. 2 Chr 33:10ff).

Ashurbanipal – 668-625 BC. The last great Assyrian ruler, Ashurbanipal subjugated Egypt again, quelled various uprisings and defeated his twin brother in the humbling of Babylon. Ashurbanipal also sacked the Egyptian city of Thebes (No Amon), referred to in Nahum 3:8. Ironically, Nahum is saying that Nineveh would reap the same fate it exercised on Thebes.

Assur-etil-ilani – 625-620. Of little consequence in history.

Sin-shar-ishkeen (or Sin-sar-iskun, or Esarhaddon II) – 620-612 BC. During his reign Nineveh lost its grip on the vassal kings and subjugated peoples. The Medes and Babylonians (Persians) gradually advanced from the south and besieging Nineveh from June-August, 612 BC. They were able to invade and conquer Nineveh only when the Khasr River flooded and eroded the city's defenses.

3. The City of Nineveh

- A. As noted, Nineveh had been previously spared by the intervention of Jonah some 150 years before its downfall. The ruins of ancient Nineveh are now in the modern city of Mosul, Iraq.
- B. Nineveh was brought to its most glorious zenith by Sennacherib. Part of the revitalization involved hydro-engineering – cutting channels from the Gomel River, some thirty miles distant, and building dams and aqueducts. Ironically, this advanced development likely contributed to Nineveh's demise when the Tigris and surrounding rivers flooded in 612 BC, giving Nineveh's enemies access.
- C. R.K. Harrison notes regarding the downfall of Nineveh and Assyria:

As Taylor has pointed out, the prophecy (of Nahum, jj) constitutes a classic rebuke of militarism, for it demonstrates clearly that the kind of ruthless tyranny that characterized the Assyrian empire carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction. In this small prophecy of doom the author demonstrated in vigorous and memorable language that the God of the nation whom the Assyrians had despised was in fact the artificer and controller of all human destiny. To His justice even the greatest world power must submit in humility and shame (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 930).

Questions:

1. What does God call Assyria in Isaiah 10:5?
2. What does God call Assyria in Isaiah 8:78? How is this description ironic relative to Nineveh's destruction?
3. What characteristic did Assyria share with Edom (cf. Isaiah 10:12)?
4. When Assyria was a threat to Israel, with whom did the kings of Israel and Judah make alliances (cf. Isaiah 30:1-5; 31:1-3)? How did God feel about this?
5. Who had even turned to Assyria for help at one point (cf. 2 Chr 28:16-21)?

The Book of Nahum

Lesson 4: Nahum 1 – “I Will Dig Your Grave”

1. Nahum 1:1-8 – The Fearsome Power of God

A. 1:1-3a: As ferocious and frightening as Nineveh and the Assyrians, they will be no match against Jehovah. Consider the descriptive words of God: jealous, avenges, furious, vengeance, wrath, indignation, fierceness of his anger, fury. In His own time God will punish those who perpetrate evil.

1. Though it may not seem so at any given moment, i.e., when God’s enemies appear to prosper in their wickedness, *“the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies”* (1:2).
2. Men’s expectations are sometimes disappointed because they fail to appreciate God’s divine nature: on the one hand He is *“slow to anger”*; on the other hand He *“will not at all acquit the wicked.”*

B. 1:3b-6: Several earthly expressions are used to describe God’s control over the forces of nature. Implication: if God controls the very elements of the earth that so often are beyond the power of man, can Nineveh stand against Him?

1. *“Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?”* (1:6). This kind of warning/assurance is given in various places: cf. Rev 6:12-17.
2. Truly it is a frightening thing when God’s patience finally runs out and His fury is fully unleashed. There will be no place to hide, no placating His righteous judgment by sophistry or emotional plea.

C. 1:7-8: As ferocious as God is against His enemies, He is equally protective of those who trust Him. There is refuge to be found in Him. It may sometimes appear from a human perspective that alliance with God is weakness, that we should pursue another course than the one prescribed by God. But those of faith trust in the power and revealed will of God. They know that ultimate protection comes from obedience and submission to the great power of God regardless of the temporal consequences of so doing.

2. Nahum 1:9-14 – The Overthrow of Nineveh

A. This section appears to address both Nineveh and Israel. The words of warning

are against Assyria; the comfort is for God's people who will now be vindicated.

1. 1:9-11 – The Assyrians, like so many others opposed to God, are arrogant and overestimate their abilities on the basis of a few victories. The reference to drunkenness suggests a lack of vigilance and alertness that springs from overconfidence. This has been the downfall of many (cf. 1 Kgs 16:9; 20:12, 16).
2. 1:14 – Though Nineveh had the appearance of strength and impregnability, and undoubtedly attributed its victories and conquest to its gods, Jehovah will utterly destroy the city and the nation of cruelty it represents. God promises to dig the grave of Nineveh, and this He does through another instrument in His hand – the Babylonians and Medes.

B. God's people will be freed from the yoke of fear and oppression – 1:12-13. Nineveh had been the instrument of God to punish rebellious Israel. The northern nation was eventually overrun by these heathens, and the populace was deported. The threat extended even to Jerusalem, but God granted miraculous deliverance in the course of a single night (2 Kgs 19). The Assyrians, however, later became a constant threat to Judah and the people lived in fear of the ever-present threat.

3. Nahum 1:15 – The Herald of Good News

Isaiah uses this terminology to describe the proclamation of salvation (Is 52:7). Paul quotes this prophecy in Romans 10:15 in reference to the preaching of the gospel by the authority of Christ. But Nahum refers to the figure as the broadcast of good news that Nineveh has fallen. How the world will rejoice when this evil scourge is wiped out!

Questions:

1. Discuss God's patience. Do we perceive Him as patient or "quick on the trigger?"
2. Can you find a similar thought to Nah 1:7b in the NT? What is the context of the NT scripture?
3. How might oppressive, unrighteous government hinder faithful service to God?
4. When threatened by Assyria, what did Hezekiah remember about God (Is 37:16)?

The Assyrian Empire



The Book of Nahum

Lesson 5: Nahum 2 – Behold, I Am Against You

1. The Fortunes of Nineveh Change

A. Nineveh before ...

1. *“Nineveh of old was like a pool of water”* (2:8). The Assyrian capital had long been central to world events; nobles and treasures of the world were gathered to Nineveh as animals to a watering hole or caravans to an oasis. Though evil and treacherous in its dealings, Nineveh animated the world because of its political and military power.
2. The dwelling of the lions (2:11-12). Lions, prominent in Assyrian art and architecture, depict the dominant role it sustained over the nations. Nineveh is described as a lion’s den. The Assyrians devoured other people in order to satisfy its own voracious appetite.

B. Nineveh after ...

1. Swarming invaders create pandemonium in the streets (2:3-6, 13). Racing chariots, confused defenders, wailing maidens, slaughtered soldiers ... these images of terror replace the security and tranquility of a former dominant city.
2. *“She shall be led away captive”* (2:7). As she has done to others, so she will suffer the same fate.
3. *“Now they flee away ...”* (2:8). Those formerly drawn to Nineveh as a pool of water now flee it like a house afire. No one can stop the panicked citizenry long enough to mount a defense against the invading army.
4. The arrogant and self-assured Ninevites are now in abject terror: *“The heart melts, and the knees shake; much pain is in every side, and all their faces are drained of color”* (2:10).
5. *“The voice of your messenger will be heard no more”* (2:13). What terror it struck in the hearts of Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem to have the messengers of Sennacherib stand outside the city walls and pronounce their threats against Judah. But now this threat is gone, and the Assyrians would no longer be able to intimidate and manipulate weaker nations.

2. Points to Ponder

A. God's punishment of Nineveh doesn't absolve Israel of its disobedience.

1. There may have been euphoric joy in Jerusalem when the news of Nineveh's demise came, but it would have been folly to conclude that such vindicated the Jews.
2. In just seven years (605 BC), Nebuchadnezzar would ascend the Babylonian throne after the death of his father, Nabopolassar, and he would take the first group of captives (including Daniel) back to Babylon.

B. Judgment and restitution may or may not come in this life.

1. Nineveh was wicked for a long time and prospered at the same time. Surely there were many people who wondered when and if the city would ever be humbled for its treachery.
2. But whether or not we see God's patience run out and exercise temporal judgment upon evil men, we must rest assured that He is still in control and His enemies will be dealt with eventually.

C. Material wealth doesn't necessarily suggest God's approval.

1. Nineveh, once full "*like a pool of water,*" basked in the glory of what her "gods" had given her. But Ashur, Nabu, Anu, Adad, Ishtar and other heathen deities had nothing to do with Assyria's wealth. Instead, God had raised up Assyria for His own purposes, and He held Nineveh accountable for acting with extreme wickedness and cruelty.
2. When God got through with her, "the destruction of Nineveh was so complete that for centuries its original location was unknown. It was not until the turn of the nineteenth century that archaeologists were able with certainty to identify it" (Hailey, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, pp. 262-263).
3. In like manner, Nineveh's successor as world power, Babylon, was overseen by the great oriental potentate Nebuchadnezzar. When he observed the great capital city of Chaldea, he congratulated himself on his great accomplishment. God, however, took offence at this arrogance and humbled Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:30-37).

The Book of Nahum

Lesson 6: Nahum 3 – Woe to the Bloody City!

1. Nahum 3:1-11 – The Pronouncement of Doom Continues

- A. Scholars praise Nahum for his poetic and picturesque description of the horror of invasion and massacre: the cracking of whips as chariots careen through the cobblestone streets, swords and spears glinting in the mid-day sun, stumbling over countless corpses littering the streets, etc.
1. All this because of Nineveh's lies, robbery, harlotry and sorcery – enticing the nations through unscrupulous means to sate her voracious appetite.
 2. What is to become of Nineveh is described as exposing her nakedness. The once-proud city will be held up to public humiliation, and the nations that had been in awe of Nineveh will not mourn or bewail its fate.
- B. The example of No Amon or Thebes.

1. Jehovah calls upon Nineveh to consider her own conquests and think about what is to transpire. The Egyptian city of Thebes, lying so far from Nineveh, naturally fortified by its proximity to the Nile (and other canals, levees and water defenses), as well as being deep in the heart of Egypt and Ethiopia, nevertheless fell to the Assyrians in 663 BC.
2. The Assyrians undoubtedly marveled at their ability to engineer such a conquest. Did they think, in the flush of arrogance, that Nineveh was impregnable? Were *they* the only ones who had military expertise, creativity and conquering will?
3. The horrible fate of Thebes – children slain mercilessly in the streets, nobles sold into slavery and chained as captives – will likewise befall Nineveh.

2. Nahum 3:12-19 – The Unimaginable: Nineveh Will Be Breached

- A. Nineveh's walls, reportedly eight miles in circumference, one hundred feet high and almost as thick (Hailey, p. 268), would not keep out the Medes and Persians.
1. When the enemy would be darkening the skies with arrows, scaling the wall, setting fire to the gates, the men of valor would turn into women (fearful), locusts (fly away), sheep with slumbering shepherds (without leadership).

2. From the hustle and bustle of commerce and trade, the streets of Nineveh will be silent, empty. *“Your nobles rest in the dust. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them.”*

B. Rather than pity the one who has suffered such tragedy, the people will rejoice over Nineveh’s downfall, *“for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?”*

3. Points to Ponder

A. Sooner or later, we will meet our match.

1. We might be “king of the hill” for a while, but the time will inevitably come when a younger, stronger, hungrier rival will take advantage of our laziness, indifference or over confidence.

2. This is true in sports, business, politics – virtually every walk of life.

B. God holds the heathen world accountable.

1. The Assyrians were guilty of bloodshed, robbery, idolatry, etc. They did not live up to the standards of God as they knew them from ancient times.

2. Men in our own society are accountable for “missing the mark,” because their ignorance of God’s will is voluntary. Access to God’s revelation is abundant, yet men continue to plunge deeper and deeper into immorality having deliberately turned away from God.

C. If we live by the sword, we will die by the sword.

1. If we live by peace, we may still die by the sword. But it is virtually guaranteed that if we choose violence and treachery, the same will be returned upon our own head.

2. So Jesus warned Peter and His disciples as they drew swords to protect Him. And so Paul writes that we will reap what we sow (Gal 6:7-8).

Conclusion: *Could this be the United States some day?* Do we have a deeply ingrained sense of impregnability? No, we are not brutal conquerors like Assyria, but we advocate the slaughter of millions of unborn children; we set the guilty free to commit more crimes against the innocent; we legalize the breakup of homes; we distribute sexual education and paraphernalia which encourages perversion. ***Has God lowered His standards of national accountability? Will His patience run out?***

The Book of Habakkuk

Lesson 7: Introduction and Background

1. The Author/Date

According to God's plan, very little is known about the prophet.

- A. His name means to "ardently embrace" or "press to the heart"
- B. The language of the book seems to suggest he lived in or near Jerusalem, but this is not certain.
- C. We are not told anything about his occupation or family.
- D. Various dates are given for his writing, but it is generally accepted that he wrote somewhere in the period in or around 620-606 B.C.

2. Suggested Outlines for the Book

OUTLINE ONE

I. Habakkuk's Problem

- A. First problem of Habakkuk (1:1-4).
- B. God's first reply (1:5-11).
- C. Second problem of Habakkuk (1:12-2:1).
- D. God's second reply (2:2-20).

II. His Praises

- A. Habakkuk prays for God's mercy (3:1-2).
- B. Habakkuk remembers God's mercy.
 - 1. Glory of God (3:3-4).
 - 2. Power of God (3:5-15).
- C. Habakkuk's trust in God's salvation (3:16-19).

OUTLINE TWO (Hailey)

Title and name of author, 1:1

I. God's judgement upon Judah through the Chaldeans, 1:2-2:3

- A. The first perplexity, and Jehovah's reply 1:2-11.
 - 1. The prophet laments the rule of wickedness and violence, vv. 2-4.
How can Jehovah justify indifference to wickedness and violence?
 - 2. Jehovah's reply: He is not indifferent; He will raise up the Chaldeans to execute His judgment, vv. 5-11.
 - a. Their rise is of Jehovah, vv. 5-6.
 - b. Their character is of themselves, vv.7-11.

- B. Second perplexity, and Jehovah's reply, 1:12-2:3.
 - 1. How can a holy God employ and impure and godless agent? 1:12-17.
 - a. The confident hope that God's people will not perish, v. 12.
 - b. The perplexity" God's use of so wicked a nation as Chaldea, vv. 13-17.
 - 2. Jehovah's reply; The judgment is sure, but not immediate, 2:1-3.
 - a. The prophet's decision: wait. v.1.
 - b. The command: write plainly, for the promise is certain, vv. 2-3.

II. God's judgement on the Chaldeans, the ungodly world power 2:4-20

- A. Fundamental principle in world government, vv. 4-5.
 - 1. The righteous—live by faith, v. 4.
 - 2. The wicked--drunken on pride, power, greed—will not continue, v. 5.
- B. Woes upon the Chaldeans: a taunt song, vv.6-20
 - 1. Woe upon lust of conquest and plunder, vv. 6-8.
 - 2. Woe upon effort to build an empire through cruelty and godless gain, vv. 9-11.
 - 3. Woe upon the building of cities with blood, vv. 12-14.
 - 4. Woe upon cruelty in the treatment of conquered kings and nations, vv. 15-17.
 - 5. Woe upon idolatry, vv. 18-20.

III. Prayer for compassion in the midst of judgment, ch. 3.

- A. Petition, vv. 1-2
 - 1. Title: author and melody, v. 1.
 - 2. Revive thy works, v. 2a.
 - 3. In wrath remember mercy, v. 2b.
- B. The mighty works of Jehovah in the past: judgment and salvation, vv. 3-15.
 - 1. Jehovah's terrible approach, vv. 3-7.
 - 2. Question: Why did Jehovah appear? Vv. 8-12.
 - 3. Answer: For salvation of His people, vv. 13-15.
- C. Implicit confidence in Jehovah, the God of salvation, vv. 16-19.
 - 1. Fear and trembling at the tribulation, vv. 16-17
 - 2. Joy and confident trust, vv.18-19.

3. Key Lessons to be Learned From the Book

- a. The universal supremacy of Jehovah's judgment upon the wicked.
 - 1. God rules among the nations—all nations good and bad.
 - 2. Faithfulness is the guarantee of permanence.
 - 3. Evil in all its forms is self-destructive.
 - 4. No nation or individual will escape God's justice.
 - 5. Faithful living is the only way to please God.
 - 6. God's ways are above our ways and past our understanding.
 - 7. God is shown to be the only true and living God when compared with vain, powerless, useless idols of the peoples.

4. Unique Features of the Book

- a. The book is structured as a dialogue between Habakkuk and God.
 - 1. The book is not specifically directed to any particular group or individual.
- b. The last chapter is a prayer that is set to music to be used in worship
 - 1. Musical notation and instructions are included in the text.
- c. The book begins with perplexity, confusion and frustration, but ends with statement of complete trust and confidence in God's power to save the righteous and punish the wicked.

5. Historical Setting and Political Background (See the timeline chart attached)

- a. Josiah King of Judah had brought about a partial/superficial spiritual revival when he came to the throne in 622 B.C.
- b. The Assyrian Empire falls.
 - 1. The power and global reach of Assyria grew under Ashurbanipal and Shalmaneser, Tiglath-Pileser, down through Sennacherib who came up against Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day.
 - 2. In 612 B. C. The capital city of Nineveh fell just as Nahum and others had prophesied.
 - 3. The remains of the Assyrian Empire was in steady decline for that point forward.
- c. The Babylonian Empire begins its rise to power.
 - 1. Merodach Baladan was a Chaldean and the father of Nabopolassar and
 - 2. the grandfather of Nebuchadnezzar
 - 3. Nabopolassar joined with others in destroying Nineveh during 612 B.C.
 - 4. During the few years after 612 B.C., Judah was somewhat autonomous, but Josiah was killed by the Egyptians on the plain of Megiddo.
 - 5. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and established themselves as the dominant world power.

6. In 606 B.C. the first group of captives, which included Daniel, Hannaniah, Azariah and Mishael.
7. In 597 B.C. the second group of captives, including Ezekiel, was taken away into Babylonian captivity.
8. In 586 B.C. the city of Jerusalem was destroyed.

6. Habakkuk and His Contemporary Prophets

- a. Nahum who spoke the doom of Nineveh and eventually the Assyrian Empire.
- b. Jeremiah who remained in Jerusalem until the very end to plead with the people of Judah to return to the Lord
- c. Zephaniah who spoke about God's universal span of judgment on all men and nations and gave several examples of judgments on the nations near to and far from God's people geographically.

The Book of Habakkuk

Lesson 8: Habakkuk's Dialogue With God

1. Hab 1:1-4 --Habakkuk's first perplexity or set of questions:

- A. Habakkuk expresses the attitude that many righteous people have. He is perplexed at the violence and injustice he observes in his society and it seems to be unchecked by the Lord. Habakkuk gives a laundry list of evil he sees and wonders why God has not responded (from Habakkuk's limited viewpoint) to his cries for Him to take action.
1. Habakkuk's list includes sins, violence, strife, injustice, conflicts of all kinds, the courts are perverted by bribery, destruction, the law of God is ignored, and the wicked surround or hem the righteous in on every side. Does this sound familiar to you? Have you ever heard of a place where these things abound?
 2. Habakkuk's description of the situation in his day shows that not only were the people sinful personally, but the institutions that were put in place by God to check evil behavior (government/courts) were adding to the problem.
- B. Pay special attention and observe how the tone of the book changes from the opening verses to the verses at the end of the book.

2. Hab 1:5-11 --God Answer's Habakkuk's First Perplexity:

- A. God tells Habakkuk that He does see what is going on and He is doing something about it, even though men may not be able to see it.
1. God tells Habakkuk to "open his eyes" and observe what He is doing among the nations that Habakkuk would not believe even if he were told.
 2. God is raising up the Chaldeans to punish the evil among His people.
- B. God goes on to describe those who would be sent to punish the people of Judah for their sins.
1. They are described as ruthless, impetuous, feared, dreaded, swifter than leopards and wolves that hunt at night, bent on violence, devouring, gathering captives like sand.

2. They are arrogant boastful, they scoff at kings, they laugh at fortified cities, they sweep past like the wind and move on to the next victim.
- C. God did not choose the Chaldeans for their worthiness, but for their effectiveness for the task of punishing nations including Judah. In fact, God says they had forgotten they came to power through God's hand (Nebuchadnezzar re-learned this lesson by direct experience) and their own might/strength had become their god.

3. Hab 1:12-17--Habakkuk's Second Perplexity or Set of Questions:

- A. Habakkuk cannot understand how a Holy God can send the evil Chaldeans to punish the people of Judah, but he still expresses confidence the nation will not perish completely even though punished.
1. Habakkuk acknowledges that God has chosen the Chaldeans to be the agent of God's justice, but he is still perplexed as to why the evil (Chaldeans) are used to punish the righteous (Judah). He was doing a "relative righteousness" comparison of Judah versus the Chaldeans, but God's thoughts are not man's thoughts.
 2. Habakkuk's next question (using the allegory of the fisherman's net) is: will there be any end to the destruction brought on by the Chaldeans? God's answer to this question comes in the next chapter.

Questions:

1. What lessons should we learn from Habakkuk's two sets of questions and how should this effect our approach/attitude in our prayers to God?
2. What can we learn about the attitude of King Nebuchadnezzar (the ruler of the Chaldeans) from reading Daniel 4:28-30?
3. We can see God may not answer our prayers in the way that we want or expect. How do we react in these situations?

The Book of Habakkuk

Lesson 9: God's Answer To Habakkuk's Second Perplexity

1. Hab 2:1—Habakkuk Determines He Will Wait For God's Answer

A. The prophet turns to God in times of perplexity and doubt.

1. He waits in faith for an answer to his confusion.
2. He waits to understand/see the justice of God actions.

2. Hab 2:2-20 God's Answer to Habakkuk's Second Set of Questions

A. Habakkuk is told to write down the answer to the questions.

1. This was done so that all could plainly see God's answer.
2. This was to be revealed immediately (as opposed to other things that were to be kept for later revelation) so that all would know that God has done it.

B. A Critical Statement of Conflicting Attitudes Is Seen in Verse 4.

1. The haughty one will be brought low in this life and/or the next.
 - a. This law applies to nations as well as individuals.
 - b. The Psalms and the Book of Proverbs deal with this same idea.
2. The just or humble will endure by faithful living.
 - a. The Beatitudes describe those whose heart is fit for the kingdom.
 - b. An appropriate evaluation of ourselves will cause us to be humble and turn to God in faith (as Habakkuk does).
3. God gives a further description of the invading army (and others like them) and their attitude in verse 5. Does this sound like anyone you know?
 - a. Consumed with greed for more and more of everything.
 - b. Must take from other to sate their voracious appetites.

C. The Taunt Song or The Song of Five Woes (Warnings) Begins.

1. Woe to them whom increases goods by things that are not his.
 - a. The people who have been oppressed will rise up against them.
 - b. Those whom you have plundered will return the favor to you.
 - c. This all begins with an inappropriate attitude of heart.

2. Woe to him who gets evil gain to set himself above others.
 - a. The Chaldeans would take from their subjects to elevate themselves.
 - b. The conquerors would live lavishly off the backs of their subjects.
 - c. Their wealth (e.g., the walls and beams) would cry out against them.
 - d. The things in which we take pride are often our downfall.

3. Woe to them that establish a city by bloodshed and crime.
 - a. The end does not justify the means; all will be called into account for their treatment of their fellowmen.
 - b. Their efforts are futile (like changing deck chairs on the Titanic) because God has determined their destruction.
 - c. The glory of God will cover the earth, because He has determined and He will bring about the destruction of Babylon.

4. Woe to them who cause others to sin so that they may have an opportunity to exploit them for their own selfish pleasure.
 - a. Babylon had not only become intoxicated with power, but they had caused other nations to be intoxicated with them (e.g. alliances, treaties).
 - b. God will exchange their glory for shame.
 - c. The cup of God's wrath will be poured out on them.
 - d. God will visit them with the humiliation they forced upon others.

5. Woe to him who turns to idolatry (Uselessness idols versus the Omnipotent, True, Eternal and Living God)
 - a. The source of the idol is from within man's imagination (selfishness)
 - b They must be created by man's hands, either carved/cast/formed.
 - d. They do not have any life in themselves "Stone awake", "Come to Life"
 - e. The only guidance they "give" are thoughts that men provide to them.
 - f. BUT GOD is in HIS HOLY TEMPLE. Let all the world keep silence before Him. Vain/useless idols could not speak even if they wanted to do so, but before God men who can speak should be reverently silent.

Questions:

1. What are some ramifications of the statement "the just shall live by their faith"?

2. How can the principles established in the " five woes" be applied to our world today?

3. How do we apply the lesson of verse 20 as we live our life each day?

The Book of Habakkuk

Lesson 10: Habakkuk's Prayer (Song) of Praise

1. Hab 3:1-2 Habakkuk's Prayer of Praise/Theme Introduced

- A. Habakkuk's prayer is set to a highly emotional poetic form, an impassioned and triumphant strain (Deane).
 - a. "Upon Shigionoth" was a form that was used throughout the Psalms.
 - b. Habakkuk begins his prayer with a statement of reverence for God.

- B. Habakkuk calls on God to revive His works as he has done in the past
 - a. The prophet gives a preview of the subject of the prayer of praise.
 - b. Habakkuk remembers that God's righteousness causes Him to be both wrathful to the wicked and also to grant mercy to the righteous.
 - c. Where do we see the ultimate example of God's unbounded love and unbounded holiness perfectly blended?

2. Hab 3:3-15 Habakkuk's Theophany/God's Works Recounted

- A. Description of God's Coming in Power and Glory.
 - a. God comes from Teman and Paran; These are both notable mountains in the land of Judea. God descends in power to dwell among His people.
 - b. His radiant splendor covers the heavens, which he made (Moses after he came down with the Law from Sinai)
 - c. His creation cries out with His glory and praise.

- B. God's awesome power is demonstrated over His creation and the nations.
 - a. God surveyed (stood over and viewed) the earth and is in total control of all aspects of nature.
 - b. God's salvation of Judah from Egypt is recalled (plagues and pestilence)
 - c. All the mountains quake in His presence, God ways are everlasting.
 - d. God uses the forces of nature to cast down the enemies of His people; two examples (Cush and Midian) are listed.

- C. God's Control Over His Creation and History is Shown.
 - a. God controlled and overcame the rivers, a possible reference to Egypt
 - b. The sun and moon stood in their place, possibly a reference to Joshua 10:12ff and the battle of Aijalon
 - c. It can be problematic trying to assign each of these references to a specific event in Judah/Israel's history: Seems more likely to be general description of God's omnipotence.

- D. All Who Oppose God's Purposes Will be Utterly and Completely Destroyed/Humiliated/Left Desolate.
- God goes forth for the salvation of His people.
 - God also goes forth to destroy the wicked.
 - God uses the arrogance of the wicked to destroy them.
 - "Striking of the head" is used to describe a crushing death-blow (Curse of the serpent in Genesis)
 - The wicked come in among God's people to scatter and harm.
 - The pride and arrogance does not last because God will bring them down from their lofty position in His time and according to His purpose.

3. Hab 3:16-19 Habakkuk's Magnificent Statement of Unwavering Faith in God

- A. Habakkuk trembles when faced with the review of the almighty works of God.
- His lips tremble and his inward parts (often referenced as the seat of the emotions) are sorely troubled.
 - This reaction was what would be expected when one comes "face to face" Creator of the Universe. See Isaiah 6:1-7 and Ezekiel 1:24-2:1.
 - Habakkuk acknowledges that destruction is coming from God's hand by the nation of the Chaldeans.
 - Habakkuk knows that very sore punishment was coming to the people of Judah and he sees the desolation of the land in very graphic terms.
 - Habakkuk is resolute in his praise and exultation of God, even though the circumstances in which he finds himself may be dire.
 - He is the God of salvation to the righteous just as He is God of judgment to the wicked.
 - God's righteous ones will not only survive but they will thrive because of His work of salvation.
 - Habakkuk concludes with instructions to the choral director, this prayer should be used as part of the music in worship to Jehovah.

Questions:

- What can we learn from the structure and elements used in this magnificent prayer to God?
- How can we apply the lessons from this chapter to our efforts to deal with the problems that arise in our lives?

The Book of Zephaniah

Lesson 11: Introduction and Background

1. The Author/Date

According to God's plan, very little is known about the prophet.

- A. His name means "Jehovah Hides" or Jehovah has hidden/treasured".
- B. The language of the book seems to suggest he lived in or near Jerusalem, but this is not certain.
- C. We are not told anything about his occupation.
- D. We are told that he was the great great grandson of Hezekiah.
- E. Various dates are given for his writing, but it is generally accepted that he wrote somewhere in the period in or around 633-623 B.C.

2. Two Suggested Outlines for the Book

(CLARK)

I. GOD'S JUDGMENT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Judgment on the whole earth (1:1-3)
- B. Judgment upon Judah
 - 1. The causes (1:4-13)
 - 2. Description (1:14-18)
 - 3. Call to repentance (2:1-3)
- C. Judgment on the surrounding nations of Judah
 - 1. Judgment against Philistia (2:4-7)
 - 2. Judgment against Moab and Ammon(2:8-11)
 - 3. Judgment against Ethiopia (2:12)
 - 4. Judgment against Assyria (2:13-15)
- D. The judgment on Jerusalem
 - 1. Jerusalem's injustice (3:1-4)
 - 2. The Lord's justice (3:5-7)
- E. The judgment on the whole earth (3:8)

II. SALVATION IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The promise of conversion (3:9-13)
- B. The promise of restoration (3:14-20)

(HAILEY)

Title and Inscription. 1:1

- I. Judgment upon the whole world—Judah in particular, 1:2-18.
 - A. A world judgment, vv. 2-6
 - 1. Prelude: judgment on the whole world, vv. 2-3.
 - 2. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem for idolatry, vv. 4-6.
 - B. Judgment on sinners of every rank, vv. 7-13
 - 1. On princes, vv.7-8.
 - 2. On thieves (or idolaters), v. 9.
 - 3. On traders, vv. 10-11.
 - 4. On the indifferent and the wealthy, vv. 12-13.
 - C. The imminence and terrible nature of the judgment, vv. 14-18
 - 1. Imminent, v. 14.
 - 2. A terrible dark day, vv.15-17.
 - 3. There will be no deliverance, v.18.
- II. Exhortation to repentance and perseverance, 2:1-3:8.
 - A. Call to repentance and to seek the Lord, that they may be hidden in the day of the Lord, 2:1-3.
 - B. Reason: God will judge the nations near and far, 2:4-15
 - 1. Judgement upon the nations that are near, vv. 4-11
 - a) Upon Philistia, vv. 4-7.
 - b) Upon Moab and Ammon, vv.8-10.
 - c) Upon all the gods of the earth, v. 11.
 - 2. Judgment upon powerful nations afar, vv. 12-15.
 - a) Upon Ethiopia, v 12.
 - b) Upon Assyria and Nineveh, vv.13-15.
 - C. If God punishes the heathen, He will not spare Judah, 3:1-8
 - 1. Woe to the polluted city—classes of sinners and sin, vv. 1-7.
 - a) Princes, judges, prophets, priests, vv. 1-4.
 - b) Jehovah's constant reminder of sovereignty, vv. 5-7.
 - 2. God has called; they have refused—therefore, Woe! v.8.
- III. After the judgment, salvation and glorification for the remnant, 3:9-20.
 - A. From among the heathen will God's remnant come. vv. 9-10.

- B. Israel restored will be cleansed and sanctified, vv. 11-13.
- C. Israel comforted and exalted to honor, vv. 14-20.

3. Key Lessons To Be Learned From The Book

A. The Day of the Lord

1. Judgment will be beyond description.
2. Judgment will fall on all including the unfaithful among God's people.
3. Although the day will be terrible, a remnant of the faithful will be delivered.
4. Jehovah is God of the Universe.
5. The true joy will only come through the eventual blessing of God's people through Jesus, the Messiah.
6. All people, regardless of rank or station will be called to account for sins.

4. Unique Features of the Book

- A. The prophet is the only one of royal blood; in the line of Hezekiah.
- B. The nation that would bring about the judgment is not named.
- C. The prophet does not mention any of the reforms that were brought about by Josiah.

5. Zephaniah and His Contemporary Prophets

- A. Nahum spoke of the destruction of Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire.
- B. Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem to plead with those remaining to turn to God.
- C. Habakkuk came along a few years later, to reveal the judgment on Judah.

The Book of Zephaniah

Lesson 12: God's Judgments—On Judah and Others Chapters 1 and 2

1. Zeph 1:1-6 God's Judgment In Preview

- A. The ancestry of the prophet is explained, the only prophet of royal blood.
- B. The extent of the judgment is described, none will be unaffected.
- C. Jerusalem and Judah are singled out for their divided heart.
 - 1. Those that “follow” after God, but yet are partially loyal to idols.
 - 2. Those who worship the host of heaven, stars/moon/astrology, etc.
- D. Condemnation for those who have turned from God by action or apathy.
- E. Judgment begins with those who should know God, but turned away.

2. Zeph 1:7-13 Judgment In The “Day Of The Lord”

- A. The entire world is to be silent before the Lord God.
 - 1. Silence is demanded for His day of judgment is at hand.
 - 2. He has prepared His sacrifice (Judah) and consecrated His guests.
- B. The judgment of God will reach throughout all social/economic strata.
 - 1. The princes will be judged for their unfaithfulness.
 - 2. The priests/prophets who fill the Lord's house with violence.
 - 3. Those who take advantage of the powerless to feed themselves.
- C. Businessmen and merchants will be devastated by the judgment.
 - 1. Loud cry from the Fish Gate, wailing from the Mortar.
 - 2. All who weigh out silver and gold will be in distress.
- D. All who falsely accuse God of leaving His people, “doing neither good or ill” will see all their work come to naught when judgment comes upon them.

3. Zeph 1:14-18 The Day of The Lord Is Dreadful/Inescapable

- A. The Day of The Lord is near and is coming quickly and strong men of war will be greatly distressed by it.
- B. The Day of The Lord is described as:
 - 1. A day of wrath, anger expressed in a strong way.
 - 2. A day of trouble and distress.
 - 3. A day of destruction and desolation.
 - 4. A day of darkness and gloom.
 - 5. A day of clouds and thick darkness.
 - 6. A day of trumpet and battle cry.
- C. Sin is the cause of the judgment, sin among any people is always destructive.
- D. Wealth and prosperity will not be a shield against God's wrath.

4. Zeph 2:1-3 God Graciously Call His People To Repent

- A. Gather together for repentance and prayer for restoration.
 - 1. Repentance and turning to God when convicted of wrong must always be a “same hour of the night response”.
 - 2. God’s anger could have been turned away from Judah if they had repented (e.g., remember Hezekiah’s prayer with the Assyrians at the gates).
- B. Seeking righteousness is the key to pleasing God.
- C. An attitude of humility is required to turn to God for salvation.
- D. Obedience is the natural outgrowth of humility and faith.

5. Zeph 2:4-15 The Judgment Of The Nations Around Judah--An Example Of God’s Wrath Upon Sin

- A. The Philistines (South) and their major cities were destroyed.
 - 1. Gaza will be abandoned, Ashkelon will be a desolation, Ekron will be uprooted, Ashdod will be driven out at the noon day hour.
 - 2. The “word of the Lord” is against you, God speaks and it is done.
 - 3. They were an enemy that Judah could never completely destroy.
- B. Moab and Ammon (East) will be destroyed.
 - 1. They will become like Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - 2. Their pride and arrogance will be their downfall.
 - 3. These once proud nations would be a salt pit and a place of nettles.
 - 4. They will a place of perpetual desolation.
- C. God’s judgment nations far away from Judah should also be a lesson.
 - 1. Ethiopia in northern Africa will feel God’s wrathful judgment.
 - 2. Assyria and its capital city, Nineveh, will be destroyed.
 - a. Flocks will lie down in her midst.
 - b. Birds will nest in the tops of the buildings.
 - c. The pride of their heart, “I am and there is no one beside me” will cause their great city/nation to be desolation and source of contempt/hissing.

Questions:

1. Why does Zephaniah go to such lengths to describe the terror and extent of the wrath revealed in the “Day of the Lord”?

2. What was the only hope for escaping God’s wrath in the days of Judah and also for us today? What attitudes/actions are required?

The Book of Zephaniah

Lesson 13: God's Promised Restoration and Minor Prophets Review

1. Zeph 3:1-7 Further Reproof For The Sins of Judah

- A. God condemns Jerusalem for its rebellion and spiritual pollution.
- B. The leaders of the people are condemned for being a corrupting influence.
 - 1. Princes were roaring lions, they fed themselves.
 - 2. Judges are ravaging wolves; they used power to oppress the helpless.
 - 3. Prophets were liars and reckless, they proclaimed from their own heart.
 - 4. Priests have profaned the sanctuary of God by irreverence for Him.
- C. God is shown to be holy, just and righteous as contrasted to the leaders of Judah.
- D. God says ironically, they will surely hear Me and be saved, but they choose to make themselves and the ones who follow them impure and defiled.

2. Zeph 3:8-13 God Tells The People to “Wait For Me”

- A. God's judgment will be poured out on the nations, including Judah.
- B. God will “treasure or hide” a remnant for Himself from among the peoples.
- C. The character of the people will be changed for the better.
 - 1. They will be a people of purified lips or language toward Him.
 - 2. They will be humble and lowly, (see the Beatitudes Matt 5).
 - 3. They will take refuge in the name of the Lord, a stark contrast to the proud and arrogant attitude seen in the nations around them.
 - 4. They will speak truth to one another.
- D. God will feed/bleed them and they will be free from fear.

3. Zeph 3:14-20 Promises of Blessing For The Future

- A. God will shower His people with blessings now and through the Messiah.
- B. God will remove their enemies and sorrow from them.
- C. God will allow them to worship Him again (feasts are used to illustrate the point) and remove the shame of exile from the people.
- D. God will dwell among His people and be their God.
- E. God will turn their shame to praise and renown.
- F. Their fortunes will be restored before their eyes.
- G. God will heal the lame and gather those who are outcasts back unto Himself.
- H. This passage seems to refer to the blessings through the Messiah and His kingdom, but there may be some reference to their return for Babylonian captivity.

Review Questions:

1. Give a one or two sentence summary of the key messages/topics in each one of the Minor Prophets we have studied:

Obadiah—

Nahum--

Habakkuk--

Zephaniah--

- 1) Make a list of lessons (at least four or five) we can learn about the nature of God and His character from studying these books. What impact should these lessons have on our lives?

- 2) Make a list of lessons (at least four or five) we can learn about the nature of sin and its short-term and long-term consequences. What impact should these lessons have on our lives?

- 3) Make a list of the sinful acts (at least four or five) we see being condemned by God through these prophets. What trends can we see in society today that will lead many people into these same sins?

THANKS YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE MINOR PROPHETS CLASS