

BIBLE OUTLINE: PROPHETS

BIBLE OUTLINE OVERVIEW

- The Bible is a very large collection of writings that can be confusing to read. We have created these outlines as way to give you an overview of each section of the Bible and to remind each reader that the Bible is a story that points to God and is fulfilled in Christ.

WHAT WAS THE MESSAGE?

- The prophets were called and commissioned by God to relay specific messages to God's people.
- The message they spoke contained the following parts:
 1. Yahweh (God) is holy, just, and faithful to His Promises.
 2. The world and humanity are sinful, and judgment will fall on sinful, unrepentant people.
 3. If people repent, God will forgive, restore, and bless them.
 4. The people of God are not excluded from God's judgment or need for repentance. God's blessing is not withheld only to Israel.
 5. The people of God are called to faithfully uphold God's ways, specifically carrying out justice.
 6. There will be a Promised One who comes to offer forgiveness, restoration, and blessing to all.

WHAT ARE THE PROPHETS?

- The "prophets" are a collection of stories and writings that detail the prophets of God's people in Israel relaying "prophecies" before, during, and after the exiles. These prophets include:
 - Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
 - Minor Prophets: Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- The prophets of God were called by God to proclaim the word of God to God's people.
- The prophets prophesied from about 800-450 BC and gave visionary messages to God's people.

HOW DID THE MESSAGE COME?

- The prophets spoke oracles or words through a variety of methods, including:
 - Forthtelling - proclaiming realities about present life
 - Foretelling - predicting future events
 - Eschatological - end times events connected to "the day". We will unpack this on the next page.
 - Messages - like a speech
 - Visions - divinely inspired images
 - Symbolic Actions - divinely inspired works
 - Woes - messages of destruction/ruin
 - Legal Disputes - dialogues to show God as Judge and the people as lawbreakers
 - Funeral Songs - eulogies sung in advance of judgment and death
 - Parables & Riddles - stories that keep the meaning hidden, offering reflection

SETTING

The prophets prophesied in the Old Testament setting of the Ancient Near East. This included the regions of the Nile River Delta, the Mesopotamian Valley, and Syria-Palestine. The prophecies and stories happened during the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empire reigns, and their connection to the people of God during those times.

COMMON PATTERNS

The prophetic books include some common patterns such as:

- Judgments Against Israel
- Judgments Against Nations
- Proclamations of Salvation

In this pattern, the prophets give God's word to God's people and/or the surrounding nations with a call for them to be aware of the sin and injustice they have perpetrated on others. There is an announcement of forgiveness, restoration, and hope for those who will turn to God in repentance and begin to carry out God's ways of righteousness.

THE MAIN THEMES

The prophets include many main themes throughout their writings and messages. These include:

- Covenant - Yahweh is the Creator of all things who made covenants with Abraham, Israel, the priesthood, and King David. His "new" covenant reveals the inability of Israel to fulfill the "old" covenant and Yahweh's promise of a future where they are transformed to live in covenant with God.
- Repentance - Israel and the nations are accused of rebelling against God through breaking covenant, idolatry, social injustice, and foreign alliances. They are called to repent and return to Yahweh with faithful obedience.
- Judgment/The Day - Yahweh will address the injustice and sin through bringing judgment on evil. This is announced through "the day of the Lord" or similar phrases. Ultimately, these judgments happen, but they point to the day in which the Messiah comes to overcome evil and bring justice and mercy through taking judgment on Himself. This is often referred to as "eschatological" and is used to describe future events connected to the Messiah, The context of these themes is massively important to us, and we must refrain from using these texts to prove our points (prooftext).

HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

The collection of prophetic books in the Old Testament includes many confusing and confronting messages. As you read them, we highly suggest the following guidelines for interpretation:

- What is the literary type you are reading in this section of the prophets, and how does that impact its meaning?
- What are the key symbols, themes, and figurative language used in the passage, and how does that impact its meaning?
- Who is the original audience & what might be the author's intent from the message of the text?
- How is this passage pointing to the future hope we have in Christ Jesus?
- What injustice and sinful rebellion is the text bringing to awareness in our OWN lives? How can we repent and turn to God with faithfulness?
- What can we learn about God's call to justice in our lives and surroundings?
- Is the passage dealing with fulfilled prophecy, partially fulfilled prophecy, or unfulfilled prophecy?

The prophets should be read in connection with the larger story of God and its fulfillment in Christ. As we read the prophets, we should see the invitation to acknowledge our sin and God's mercy to offer forgiveness, restoration, and salvation to those who repent and respond to God's call for justice.

ISAIAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Isaiah is the first of the prophetic books and the first of the “major prophets”. Isaiah is the prophet for Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah prophesied to the people of God during the threat and exile brought about by the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. Many scholars believe there are three different Isaiahs who prophesy due to the length of the words and book, but the message remains the same: judgment will come because of sin and rebellion, but God will bring about redemption and salvation through a Promised Savior.

The content of Isaiah can be broken into the following parts:

- Rebellion and Judgment - 1:1-39:8
- Redemption from Babylon - 40:1-55:13
- Salvation for All - 56:1-66:24

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Isaiah - the prophet of God whose name means “the Lord is salvation”- He prophesies God’s message to Judah about their rebellion, God’s coming judgment, and God’s promised deliverance and salvation through a Promised Redeemer.
- Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah - these kings reigned in Judah during the time of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry. Each king played a pivotal role in leading God’s people into bad foreign relations that led to idolatry, wars, exile, and the destruction of land and temple. We see these kings warned by Isaiah not to engage in foreign alliances, but after they do, both Israel and Judah fall to Assyria (721BC) and Babylon (586BC).
- Zion - this name refers to the city of Jerusalem, but more so, the spiritual promise of God’s “new Jerusalem” as a city of blessing, refuge, restoration, and salvation for all who turn to the Lord.
- The Day of the Lord - this day of terror and destruction is a prophetic term used to explain the way in which God would bring judgment upon the evil, rebellion, and injustice of humanity.
- Remnant - this prophetic term describes a faithful group of people that God would preserve in the midst of the oncoming judgment. His promise was to maintain His people for their future purpose of remaining faithful to His covenantal ways.
- Immanuel - the promise of restoration and salvation for all comes through a promised child named “Immanuel”. This Promised One promises to establish a peaceful and eternal Kingdom, is part of David’s lineage, and is the Suffering Servant of the Lord who will bring light to God’s people and all nations through taking their sins upon Himself and providing deliverance and redemption for those in captivity. Although some of these prophetic meanings point to physical deliverance given through the means of earthly rulers (Cyrus of Persia), they also, and more importantly, point most directly to the Messiah, Christ Jesus, who fulfilled these prophetic words for not just Israel and Judah, but all people.
- Salvation for All - this important theme is explored in Isaiah’s prophecies from Isaiah 56-66. The working of the Anointed One reveals a restoration of worship that leads to justice and righteousness for all nations. The restored people of God are therefore called to meet the cries for help from the needy in their midst as they shine their light of salvation to the nations. God’s promise is that He would offer this salvation and redemption to all people, filling them with everlasting joy and welcoming them into the new heaven and new earth. This new creation is inhabited by Jews and Gentiles alike and is known by worship that leads to justice and righteousness because of the saving and redeeming work of God for all.

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Jeremiah is the second major prophet who prophesied about and during the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian Empire. This weeping prophet continually called for God's people to turn from their sin and rebellious acts of injustice so that God could redeem and restore them. He prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. He lived through the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586BC, and was taken into captivity. His prophecies detail God's judgment on sin, hope for God's people, and God's promised new covenant and judgment on the surrounding nations. He also wrote Lamentations, which is a book of mourning used in Jewish practices of worship as a lament for losing the temple and Jerusalem.

The content of Jeremiah can be broken into the following parts:

- Judgment - 1:1-28:17
- Hope and New Covenant - 29:1-33:26
- Historical Accounts - 34:1-45:5
- Judgment for the Nations - 46:1-51:64
- Historical Appendix - 51:1-34

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Jeremiah - The weeping prophet prophesies to the people of God before and during their fall to Babylon. Called by God from an early age, Jeremiah was given visions from an early age about how his ministry would be part of the tearing down of the current conditions and building up of a new way and world. We see this through his prophetic ministry, mentioning words of judgment on Judah because of their idolatry, unjust actions towards foreigners, widows, and orphans, and corrupt political alliances. He prophesies about God being the Potter who would break the clay (God's people) if they remained unrepentant, but promised full life to those who turned to God. He often prophesied hard words, and leaders in the people of God would arrest or speak poorly of Jeremiah. But throughout his ministry, he couldn't remain silent and had to speak the words God gave him, even if it was difficult, led to persecution, or was the opposite of what other false prophets spoke (such as Hananiah).
- Hope and New Covenant - Jeremiah also spoke of God's promise of hope and a new covenant. This was not only connected to God restoring Judah after the Babylonian exile, but also to the fulfillment of the new covenant offered to all in Christ Jesus - the righteous branch of David (ch. 31-33). This is all because of God's faithfulness, mercy, and compassion.
- Historical Accounts - As Jeremiah was taken into captivity, he provides details from this time about the accounts that took place during the Babylonian exile. These accounts show examples of faithfulness and loyalty as prophetic calls to God's people to remain faithful. However, most of the accounts detail the unfaithfulness of Judah's kings and royals to the ways of God.
- Judgment for the Nations - Although God's people are unfaithful, God is still perfect in faithfulness and declares His faithful remedy to the wickedness and evil of the world. Jeremiah is part of declaring God's sovereignty and judgment on the surrounding nations that were lost in sin and unrepentant.
- Appendix - The book concludes with a release of Jehoiachin from prison, symbolizing God's releasing of His people from captivity and His covenant faithfulness to bring redemption.
- Lamentations - This book is made up of five poems that use Hebrew acrostic structures to portray a message of lament in the midst of Jerusalem's destruction due to sin and rebellion. In the midst of the laments, there is a glimmer of hope that shines forth, anchoring hope in the love, compassion, and faithfulness of God, even in the midst of destruction, turmoil, and sin. The Lamentations give us a guide of how we can lament our sinfulness and experiences with hope in God alone.

EZEKIEL OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Ezekiel is the third major prophet and prophesied during the Babylonian exile of Judah. He was one of the many Judeans taken out of Jerusalem into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. During his time in exile, God calls him to be a prophet and his prophetic ministry is marked by extreme prophetic actions, symbols, and words, including the death of his wife, lying on his side for long times, eating bread baked in human excrement, and proclaiming God's promises of restoration for not only Judah but all people through the reviving and saving work of God's Spirit. This is depicted through a promised new Jerusalem, both a symbol of Judah's return from exile and a new creation for all people who turn to the Lord.

The content of Ezekiel can be broken into the following parts:

- Ezekiel's Call - 1:1-3:27
- Judgment on Judah - 4:1-24:27
- Judgment on the Nations - 25:1-32:32
- Promised Restoration - 33:1-39:29
- New Jerusalem - 40:1-48:35

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Ezekiel - this prophet of the Lord is called by God through a supernatural vision while in exile in Babylon. He is addressed as "son of man" (referring to his humanity) and commissioned to speak to the rebellious people of Judah. Ezekiel prophesies words of judgment and restoration through the faithfulness of God and His reviving work.
- Scroll - Ezekiel is commissioned by being told to consume a scroll filled with judgment words. The scroll was sweet when he obeyed, and it symbolized a call for God's people to be obedient to God's word.
- Symbolic Actions - Ezekiel prophesies through symbols such as lying on his side, eating unclean food, and shaving his head and beard. Each of these actions shows the intensity of God's judgment on Judah and all sinners.
- God's Glory Leaving the Temple - this prophetic vision symbolized the idolatry and injustice that had filled the temple of God, and God's judgment on His people through lifting His glory from this sacred space.
- Judgment - God's promised judgment was not only on Judah, but on other nations due to their immense arrogance, opulence (wealth), pride, and mistreatment of others through idolatry, injustice, and violence.
- Shepherds and Watchmen - Ezekiel prophesies of failed leadership in Israel and Judah. Political and religious leaders neglected their faithfulness to God and led the people of God astray. Because of this, judgment was coming through impending destruction and exile. God's promise was to be their good shepherd who would rule as Messiah in the Kingdom of God's peace.
- Pictures of Restoration - Ezekiel prophesies about God's restoring work for His people and all people through hearts being transformed, dry bones coming back together and being filled with life, and a new Jerusalem being built as a city for all people where God's presence would dwell (the city named Yahweh Shammah - the Lord is there). All of these promises of restoration point to the physical return to the land of Judah, but also, and more importantly, the promised restoration of all things through the work of the Messiah who would enter graves and bring all from death to life.
- Apocalyptic and Prophetic Imagery - the visions and prophetic words of Ezekiel are very similar to the book of Revelation. This style of writing is referred to as apocalyptic literature and utilizes vivid visions to portray a prophetic message to people in context. We can learn much from this message by understanding its context, seeing its fulfillment in Christ, and applying the lesson to our daily lives.

DANIEL OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Daniel begins the “minor prophets” and includes the stories of the prophet Daniel, who lived in Babylon during the exile. Daniel held high positions in the Babylonian government and prophesied through his faithfulness to God, interpretation of dreams and visions, and calling for all people to turn to God as God promised to bring judgment on sin and restore those who repented through the coming “Son of Man”. Although many have interpreted the visions of Daniel to infer “end times” prophecies, we would like to suggest interpreting these visions in context and in connection to their fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

The content of Daniel can be broken into the following parts:

- The Stories of Daniel - 1:1-6:28
- The Visions of Daniel - 7:1-12:13

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Daniel - this prophet of God lived in Babylon during the exile of Judah and had the gift of interpreting dreams and visions, and carried immense wisdom. As a Hebrew, he held high-level positions in the Babylonian government, earning favor and speaking God's words to kings such as Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.
- Daniel's Stories - as a Jewish exile in Babylon, Daniel remained faithful to the Lord. Despite death threats and political plots against him and his friends, God delivered them all from death by the hands of royals, the fiery furnace, and a lion's den. In each account, their faithfulness to God spoke a prophetic call to God's people to remain faithful while in exile. It also spoke to how those opposing Daniel and his friends witnessed God's powerful work and turned to God through their faithfulness. This was another prophetic message of the power of faithful witness.
- Daniel's Visions -
 - Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams - King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a statue made of four metals, which Daniel interpreted as four nations that would arise but not last. He proclaimed that only God's Kingdom would last forever, and in connection with his warning of humbling that would come to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, explained God's reign over all.
 - Daniel's Dream - Daniel had a dream of four beasts coming from the sea and God's judgment on them. This judgment takes place through the reign of one like the “Son of Man” who represents the Promised Messiah. Many believe these nations to be Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Greece. The main idea of this dream is to declare God's reign and promised victory over all.
 - Daniel's Visions - Daniel has other visions that depict similar prophetic declarations of nations rising to power, such as Persia, Greece, and others. However, none of these empires lasted, and praise is given to the anointed and promised One who would come to bring forth a lasting Kingdom that reigns over all with peace, justice, and righteousness.
- Apocalyptic and Prophetic Imagery - the visions and prophetic words of Daniel are very similar to the book of Revelation. This style of writing is referred to as apocalyptic literature and utilizes vivid visions to portray a prophetic message to people in context. We can learn much from this message by understanding its context, seeing its fulfillment in Christ, and applying the lesson to our daily lives.

HOSEA OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Hosea is one of the minor prophets, and his book details prophecies to Israel during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. Hosea includes narratives about his call to marry a prostitute named Gomer and conceive children who were named for words of judgment against God's people. Through this and Hosea's oracles/words to Israel, the people of God are called to acknowledge their sins, be aware of their coming judgment, and to repent with God's promise of forgiveness, healing, love, and mercy.

The content of 2 Samuel can be broken into the following parts:

- Hosea, Gomer, and Their Children - 1:1-3:5
- Sin, Judgment, and Repentance - 4:1-8:14
- Coming Judgment - 9:1-10:15
- Prodigal People - 11:1-11
- A Call to Repent and Promise of Healing - 12:1-14:9

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Hosea, Gomer, Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi - Hosea is the prophet of God to Israel during Jeroboam II's reign. His name means "Salvation," and he was called to prophesy to the northern kingdom by taking a prostitute named Gomer as his wife. She bore children who were named as words of judgment against Israel. They were named Jezreel (meaning "God scatters"), Lo-Ruhamah (meaning "not pitied"), and Lo-Ammi (meaning "not my people"). These words came because of Israel's idolatry, and it led to the end of God's covenant relationship with them. However, there was a promise to restore the covenant with Israel once again.
- Baal Worship - Baal was a false god who was worshipped in the Ancient Near East. Baal would bring fertility and agricultural blessings to his followers as they would worship. Baal worship was also connected to Asherah worship, which included grotesque sexual expressions that were "an abomination" to God. Israel syncretized their worship of God with their worship of Baal and Asherah, and experienced judgment for these forms of idolatry. Often, when Hosea prophesies about idolatry, he references Baal, and this is a direct call out to the type of worship that Israel had engaged in.
- Assyria - Israel experienced defeat and exile at the hands of Assyria. This was God's judgment on them for their idolatry and disregard of God's words and ways.
- Bethel and Beth Aven - Hosea spoke to the people of God about how they had turned God's house (Bethel) into sin's house (Beth Aven - literally means 'house of iniquity').
- Prodigal Son - Israel is referred to as a prodigal son who was taken out of bondage and given compassion, but who ultimately chose to rebel against God's love. Although this prodigal son deserved death, their Faithful and Loving Father would not allow them to be completely destroyed. As the Holy One, He would bring judgment, but also promise restoration and grace to those who deserved death.
- Repentance - Israel was called to repent for their idolatry and rebellion against God. The call to repentance was not just one of speech, aka, saying "I'm Sorry," but rather one of faith that is evidenced through actions. God's call to Israel was to repent for their wrongdoing and repent through loving God alone, carrying out justice, and staying faithful to God.
- Promised Healing - Hosea concludes his prophecies by declaring that if Israel would repent, they would be healed, restored, and experience great blessing through God's provision. Hosea leaves the Israelites with a wisdom statement to discern the ways of God and live in them alone.

JOEL OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Joel is one of the minor prophets from the Old Testament. Joel, the son of Pethuel, prophesied to Judah, addressing their idolatry and calling them to return to the Lord, worship Him alone, and live according to His Word and ways. Joel's writing contains major emphasis on the work of God's Spirit and points directly to the events that unfolded during the Day of Pentecost, as Peter quotes from Joel 2 and the Spirit moves in powerful manifestations, just as Joel prophesied. Like many other prophets, Joel prophesies to God's people calling them to repent for their idolatry, injustice, and unrighteousness through returning to God, loving God alone, and extending His justice to all.

The content of Joel can be broken into the following parts:

- Lament over the Land - 1:1-20
- The Day of the Lord, Call to Repent, and The Holy Spirit's Work - 2:1-32
- Judgment of the Nations - 3:1-21

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Joel - the son of Pethuel, Joel, prophesied to Judah in connection with their exile by the hands of Babylon. Joel, which means "Yahweh is God", prophesied through calling for the people of God to lament what happened in the form of a drought that devastated their land. His call for them was to weep and wail because of the locusts that had destroyed their crops, fruits, and pastures. This was a sign of God's judgment on God's people because of their idolatry, injustice, and unrighteousness.
- The Day of the Lord- Joel prophesies about judgment through using the term "the day of the Lord". This term is repeated throughout the Old Testament to represent God's judgment against evil and injustice. From the tower of Babel to Egypt to Israel and Judah to other nations, "the day" is a promised judgment from God toward those who rebel against Him. This also comes with the promise of restoration and salvation for His people through the work of His Spirit and His Messiah. Joel uses this term to point to the judgment coming on the nations that rebel against God and the promised salvation coming through the work of the Spirit.
- Repentance - Joel calls for God's people to repent and return to God through a holy lament, filled with weeping, wailing, and a sacred assembly. Through these repentance actions, they are called to seek God with their whole hearts and are promised God's gracious and compassionate response to restore and save them by His Spirit.
- The Spirit of God - the promise to God's people through Joel is that as they seek God, His Spirit would be poured out on them and restore them. There would be the coming of "the day of the Lord", the symbol of God's judgment on evil and rebellion, but there would also be promised salvation to "all who call on the name of the Lord."
 - It is important to note that the day of the Lord is also referenced by other prophets and is fulfilled through the work of Christ Jesus, who came to take "the day" upon Himself through His crucifixion and pour out salvation and His Spirit upon all who call on His name. This is seen in the Gospels and Acts, and continues to be witnessed today through God's ongoing saving grace at work in our world.
- The Valley of Jehoshaphat (Valley of Decision) - The book of Joel ends with judgment against other nations, and the valley of Jehoshaphat is referenced to symbolize God's final judgment on the wicked. Joel prophesies God's reign and God's justice coming to all, as well as the coming blessing and forgiveness to God's people (all who call on His name).

AMOS OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Amos is another minor prophet who prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. Amos was a herdsman and farmer whose name meant “burden-bearer”. He prophesied about the coming judgment on nations that had rebelled against Him. Israel was the primary target of judgment because of their idolatry and pursuit of prosperity under King Jeroboam, and Amos calls them to act in accordance with God’s holiness and justice.

The content of Amos can be broken into the following parts:

- Judgment on Israel’s Neighbors - 1:1-2:3
- Judgment on God’s People - 2:4-16
- Judgment Against Israel - 3:1-6:14
- Amos’ Visions - 7:1-9:10
- Restoration - 9:11-15

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Amos - Amos was the prophet of God who prophesied to Judah, Israel, and the surrounding nations during the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. Amos describes God as a roaring lion who would bring about judgment and justice on all the evils of the world.
- Israel’s Neighbors - Amos spoke words of judgment against the surrounding nations that included Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Judgment would come to them because of their incredible number of war crimes, ruthless behavior, and victimizing God’s people. They were told that God would show those who show no mercy no mercy.
- Judah and Israel - Amos told Judah that her sin was the rejection of the Torah (God’s Law), and he told Israel that their sins included slavery, oppression of the marginalized, sexual immorality, injustice, not caring for the poor, widow, and orphan, and disregarding God’s faithfulness, word, ways, and deliverance. Israel had deteriorated its society and was completely unethical, deserving of the coming judgment from God.
- Israel - Amos highlighted the concern for justice and righteousness among God’s people, especially because of how far Israel declined from both of these callings in their nation. Their idolatry, injustice, and painful oppression of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner were all the reasons for God’s coming judgment. Yet, even with this divine judgment coming, Amos prophesied that if they would seek the Lord by seeking good and not evil, God would be gracious.
- The Day of the Lord - Amos uses the phrase “the day of the Lord” to refer to God’s judgment on evil and wickedness, with a promise of salvation and restoration to all who would repent and turn to Him.
- Amos’ Visions - Amos has visions that continue the prophet’s theme of coming judgment. He envisions fire and locusts that portray complete and total judgment coming for those in rebellion towards God. Amos intercedes for God’s mercy toward His people when he receives these visions. He also has a vision of a plumb line, which shows how Israel had not aligned itself with God’s ways and standards of His covenant. Lastly, Amos saw a basket of ripe fruit, which was a prophetic symbol of how Israel was ripe for judgment.
- Amaziah - This priest did not allow Amos to speak such prophetic visions and words at Bethel, but Amos responded by standing firm in God’s calling and prophesying regardless of the attempted silencing of God’s prophetic message to Israel.
- Restoration - Although Amos is filled with judgment, the book concludes with a promise of hope as Amos prophesies the future of God’s restoration of Israel.

OBADIAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Obadiah is one of the minor prophets. It is the shortest book in the Old Testament and contains prophecies from the prophet Obadiah, whose name means “the servant of the Lord”. Most scholars believe this book took place during or right after the Babylonian exile of Judah in 586. Obadiah proclaims words of judgment against the Edomites (descendants of Esau). In addition to their pride and arrogance, their hatred of and violence toward Israel led to a word of judgment through Obadiah. Like other prophets, Obadiah also concludes with a word of comfort and a promise of restoration to those who turn to the Lord.

The content of Obadiah can be broken into the following parts.

- Judgment on Edom - 1-18
- Hope for God's People - 19-21

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation
- Obadiah - there is no mention or reference to his family or history, but we know Obadiah is a prophet of the Lord who speaks to God's people during or right after the Babylonian exile. His words mainly focus on correlating judgment to the Edomites and hope to the people of God.
- Edom - the Edomites were descendants of Esau and held a long-standing hatred for Israel. They are judged because of their prideful arrogance and because of how their hatred of Israel led to their not intervening as Jerusalem was being attacked by Babylon. They even went as far as to plunder and destroy the city with the enemy. It's because of these sins that God was going to bring about judgment upon them.
- The Day of the Lord - Obadiah refers to “the day” language as a symbol of judgment on the evils and wickedness of Edom, and the hopeful salvation and restoration of God's people.
- Restoration and God's Reign - the promise to God's people is that as Edom falls, they would rise and be restored once again. This is all connected to God's reign and His Kingdom being established in the world. There can be seen as both a word for God's people in that time and for all people through the working of the Messiah who brought about God's reign and Kingdom.

JONAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Jonah is one of the minor prophet books that contains a narrative/story about the prophet, Jonah, being called to Nineveh in Assyria to deliver a word of judgment and offer of repentance. At first, Jonah resists this call and finds himself caught in a storm, caught in a fish's belly, and after 3 days and nights, he pledged to fulfill the call God had given. He prophesies to Nineveh, and they repent. This leaves Jonah angry, and God questions his anger by pointing Jonah to his fairness and justice. This book is well-known, but many miss the point of its writing. It was given to the people of God to show them that God is willing to extend mercy to all who will repent, as well as bring judgment on all who don't repent. This happened to Israel, as Assyria (the capital city was Nineveh) brought Israel into exile. It was a call for them to consider God's justice and mercy, and to turn back to God.

The content of Jonah can be broken into the following parts:

- Jonah in Rebellion and God's Call - 1:1-16
- Jonah in the Storm and Fish and God's Response - 1:17-2:10
- Jonah in Nineveh and Their Response - 3:1-10
- Jonah in Anger and God's Response - 4:1-11

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blessing, and Redeemer of Creation
- Jonah - Jonah, son of Amittai, was the prophet of God who was called to travel to Nineveh to preach against these people because of their wickedness. He resists this call by sailing from Joppa in the opposite direction from Nineveh. While onboard, a storm hits the ship, and the sailors believe it is Jonah's fault for this occurrence. He is thrown overboard and swallowed by a large fish as the storm is stilled. While in the fish for 3 days and nights, he prays to God with thanksgiving and commitment to fulfill God's calling to preach to Nineveh. He traveled to Nineveh, proclaimed God's word to them, and amazingly, the pagan city and all of its inhabitants responded to the message with fasting, prayer, and repentance. God responded with compassion and forgiveness, cancelling the once-pending judgment. After this event, Jonah went away in anger because God had offered these Assyrians his compassion and mercy. Outside of the city, he sat in the scorching sun and God gave him a vine that provided shade one day and was eaten the next day. In frustration, he called out to God who responded by speaking to Jonah about the vine, reminding him that he did nothing to cultivate this and nothing to destroy it. In the same way, God could provide concern for anybody and anyone. He provides this all through a question, which Jonah does not answer, and leaves the reader with the message to consider: who are we to limit God's mercy?
- Context - Jonah more than likely prophesied in the years leading up to the Israelite exile by the hands of the Assyrians. This is highly important to consider as a way to better understand how God brought about judgment to Israel (God's chosen people) through the Assyrians (pagan and not chosen, but repentant in this story). It shows a prophetic message that God can bring about mercy and justice as He will, and He is able to extend these to all who respond and turn to Him. The call from this story presents the people of God (including us) today with an important question to ponder: who are we to limit God's mercy and justice?

MICAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Micah is part of the minor prophetic books and includes details of the prophet Micah (name means “who is like Yahweh”) as he prophesied to Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (between 742-687). As a grieving prophet, he spoke to God’s people and the surrounding nations about the coming judgment for their corrupt societies and leadership, their mistreatment and oppression of the poor, idolatry, and false confidence in God’s protection and safety, despite their injustice and sinful postures. Micah called the people of God to the requirements of God (mercy, justice, humility) and directed them to know about the coming judgment, but also the hope they could have in God’s restoration coming through a promised Messiah.

The content of Micah can be broken into the following parts:

- The Case Against Samaria and Jerusalem - 1:1-16
- Judgment on Corrupt Leaders - 2:1-13
- True Leaders - 3:1-12
- Restoration and Defeat of Enemies - 4:1-5:15
- God’s Case Against Israel - 6:1-16
- Micah’s Lament and Prayer - 7:1-20

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blessing, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Micah - the prophet of God to Judah during the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Micah (whose name means “Who is like Yahweh”) was from Moresheth (a town that was very close to Jerusalem). He was filled with the Spirit of the Lord (3:8) and empowered by God to declare God’s Word about Israel’s sin, judgment, restoration, and their invitation to repent and live according to God’s requirements.
- Samaria and Jerusalem - Micah prophesies about the Lord coming to bring judgment on all the earth, and specifically speaks about the devastation of Samaria and Jerusalem because of their idolatry.
- Corrupt Leaders - Micah prophesies with woes to those who are corrupt in their leadership. They not only plan evil, but carry it out through robbing people of their fields and possessions. Because God had given the land as a gift, and people were stealing it from one another, the coming judgment would be through the exile from that land.
- False Prophets and True Leaders- As Micah spoke these words, false prophets told him NOT to prophesy them because God was not angry with His people for their idolatries. However, Micah did prophesy the Words of God, pointing out the corruption and wickedness of these false prophetic voices. Micah prophesied of one who would come to break through and called the leaders of Israel to embrace justice. He did this by pointing out the false prophets and leaders who would be judged for their false words of “peace” and acts of cruelty. In contrast, true leaders and prophets would speak God’s Word, just like Micah, the grieving prophet, was doing.
- Restoration - Micah prophesied of the judgment that would come upon Judah, but also the restoration that would come as they returned to God’s Word and ways. God’s deliverance would come through defeating the people’s enemies (Assyria, idolatry, etc). This would take place for these people and also for all people through the promised Ruler who would be born in Bethlehem (Jesus the Messiah).
- God’s Lawsuit Against Israel - Micah used a lawsuit against Israel to explain God’s prophetic declaration to them about their wicked ways. The people had forgotten their deliverance from Egypt and had pursued idols, mistreated the poor, and disobeyed God. Judgment was coming, but Micah also prophesied to them about what is truly required: mercy, justice, and humility.
- Micah’s Prayer - Micah laments the sin of God’s people and calls them to remember God’s goodness to forgive and pass over the rebellious acts they committed.

NAHUM OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Nahum is one of the minor prophetic books that details the prophecies of Nahum against the people of Nineveh. Jonah explains God's compassion and forgiveness to the people of Nineveh as they repented, but Nahum shows God's judgment on them for their cruelty and violence. Many scholars believe Nahum prophesied between 663-612 while Judah was overcome by Assyria. His message provided comfort to Judah with hopes of God's coming judgment on the Assyrians, who dominated them at the time.

The content of Nahum can be broken into the following parts:

- God's Anger Towards Nineveh - 1:1-15
- Nineveh's Coming Judgment - 2:1-13
- Woe to Nineveh - 3:1-19

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Nahum - Nahum the Elkoshite (near Capernaum) prophesied against Nineveh while Assyria controlled Judah sometime between 663-612. Nahum (whose name means "comforter") prophesied about the coming judgment for Nineveh's wickedness, violence, and cruelty. While this word was troubling to Assyria, it was comforting to the people of God who found themselves under the oppressive reign of the Assyrians. Nahum prophesied this all through the following oracles and announcements:
 - God's Wrath on Nineveh - Nahum starts with a focus on God's power to carry out His wrath on those who plot evil against God and God's people. This was directed towards Nineveh, which would be judged and destroyed.
 - God's Mercy and Good News - Although this was bad news to Nineveh, Nahum called for the people of God to see this coming judgment as good news that proclaims peace to them. They were called to depend on God's faithfulness and know God would preserve, protect, and restore them.
 - Battle - Nahum warned Nineveh of their coming judgment through the prophetic declaration of a coming battle. God's judgment would happen through an army sent to destroy their city. Nahum tells them that even if Nineveh were to put all their military might to stop this attack, they would not be able to face the power and judgment of God.
 - Woe - Nahum gives a woe to this city filled with blood, lies, plunder, and victims. God would reveal this city to be filled with shame, idolatry, and filth as it lies in ruins. Nahum tells them that no one would mourn this city's losses including the death of their troops, pride, and king.

HABAKKUK OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Habakkuk is one of the minor prophetic books that details the prophecies of Habakkuk. Habakkuk correlates a message to the people of God about their coming judgment at the hands of the Babylonians. Habakkuk tells them that due to their immense wickedness and violence, Judah had a breakdown of law and justice in their land, and the Babylonians would be raised up against them in judgment. In the midst of these judgment oracles, Habakkuk calls the people of God to live by faith, trusting in God's judgment on all evil and restoration for those who were righteous and faithful to the Lord.

The content of Habakkuk can be broken into the following parts:

- Habakkuk's Questions and God's Answers - 1:1-2:4
- Woe to Oppressors - 2:5-20
- Habakkuk's Prayer - 3:1-19

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Habakkuk - Habakkuk was a prophet to Judah before the Babylonian exile. He prophesied to the people of God through a series of questions to God, answers from God, woes to oppressors, and a prayer to God that called for God's people to live by faith and trust in His justice on evil and restoration for the righteous.
- Habakkuk's First Question - The book begins with Habakkuk asking God, "How long must I call for help?" He is surrounded by violence, injustice, wrongdoing, and conflict, and longs to see God make things right.
- God's First Answer - God responds by telling Habakkuk that He is raising up the Babylonians to sweep across the earth and bring judgment on many nations, including Judah. God is clear in telling Habakkuk that He is bringing justice, even if it means using the wicked to bring that justice to the "righteous".
- Habakkuk's Second Question - Because of this coming judgment, Habakkuk asks why God would do such a thing: using the wicked to overcome the people of God. In the questions, he tells God that he will stand as a watchman on the wall and wait for God's answers to come.
- God's Second Answer - God answers again and tells Habakkuk to write down the revelation, which is God's prophetic answer and word to His people. He tells Habakkuk that even if the enemy is puffed up, the righteous will live by faith, calling both Habakkuk and God's people to remain faithful and live righteously.
- Woes - God gives woes to the oppressor, Babylon, and speaks against their empire that steals, extorts, plunders, sheds blood, and commits violence.
- Habakkuk's Prayer - Habakkuk ends with a prayer from the prophet asking God to remember His mercy. He prays through the depiction of God coming as a deliverer, full of might and splendor, able to destroy the forces of evil and restore His people. Habakkuk grieves the losses of many things, but still rejoices in God, who is His strength. The questions, answers, woes, and prayers reveal a major theme: the invitation for God's people is to live by faith and rejoice in the Lord, who will be their strength as they wait on His justice on evil and restoration for the righteous.

ZEPHANIAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Zephaniah is one of the minor prophetic books that details the prophecies of Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah in Judah (between 640-609). Like many other prophets, Zephaniah speaks about the coming “day” of judgment known as the “day of the Lord.” This day was marked by God’s judgment on and justice for evil. It was also connected to a hopeful restoration for God’s people. This is shown through Zephaniah’s oracles against various nations, including Judah, and a call for all to return to God with purified lives.

The content of Zephaniah can be broken into the following parts:

- The Day of the Lord - 1:1-2:3
- Judgments Against the Nations - 2:4-15
- Judgment Against Jerusalem - 3:1-8
- God’s Promised Restoration - 3:9-20

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Zephaniah - The prophet known as Zephaniah, son of Cushi, prophesied during the reign of King Josiah in Judah between 640-609. Many scholars believe he prophesied sometime before the fall of Nineveh in 612, as he proclaimed the judgment of this nation among many others. Zephaniah brought the word of God’s judgment coming through the “day of the Lord” to various nations, including Judah, and called the people of God to recognize the promise of God to restore those who returned to God.
- The Day of the Lord - This “day” is a prophetic symbol of God’s judgment on the evil and wickedness of God’s people and all people. God’s judgment would come on this day and was also always connected to the hopeful restoration promised to God’s people. Zephaniah portrays this through language connected to ritual worship because of the people’s idolatrous worship practices. He proclaims that God would come like a warrior to bring this destruction, but if the humble and righteous in the land turned to God, he suggests that God would spare this coming day.
- Judgment Against the Nations - Zephaniah proclaims this same judgment to the nations of Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Cush, and Assyria for their hostility toward God and God’s people.
- Judgment Against Jerusalem - Zephaniah calls Jerusalem a city of oppression, rebellion, and defilement. He portrays the effects of evil and wicked kings who have led their people and city astray from a covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Because they had neglected God’s call to righteousness and justice, God would enact justice and judgment upon them, just like the other nations.
- Restoration - The ending of Zephaniah focuses on God’s promised restoration of His people through a process of purifying their lips so that they could once again call on His name. As with many other prophets, Zephaniah begins his prophecies with words of judgment and justice, and concludes them by pointing the people of God to their future hope of God’s promised salvation through restoring His people. Ultimately, this continues to build upon the prophetic voices of the Old Testament in urging the reader to recognize our need for God’s justice and mercy that only comes through the Messiah.

HAGGAI OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Haggai is one the minor prophetic books the details the prophecies of Haggai during the second year of King Darius the Great of Persia (520). He prophesies specifically to the governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, with encouraging speeches motivating them towards rebuilding the temple that was once destroyed before the exile of Judah due to their sinful prioritizing of idols and neglect of God's ways. Haggai anchors all of these words in a pointed hope for the coming Messiah who would usher forth God's Kingdom on earth.

The content of Haggai can be broken into the following parts:

- The Call to Rebuild and The People's Response - 1:1-15
- Discouragement and God's Word, Glory, and Promise - 2:1-9
- God's Blessings and Chosen King - 2:10-23

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Haggai - The prophet of God during the reign of King Darius the Great of Persia, Haggai (whose name means "my feast"), proclaimed prophetic encouragement to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest, during a time of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Haggai spoke after Persia had conquered Babylon, and the people of God were allowed to return home by King Cyrus. Haggai speaks encouraging and motivational words to them in their rebuilding, discouragement over available resources, and in their future hope of God's faithful and covenantal promises.
- Call to Rebuild - Haggai reminds the people of God that the exile, the destruction of the temple, and the overcoming of their land were due to their lack of prioritizing God and God's ways. Therefore, because God had graciously allowed them to go back to this land, they should rebuild the temple as a way of honoring God. The immediate response of the people and leaders was to start this work, and God's response was to declare that He was with them in this process.
- Discouragement and God's Promises - Haggai calls for the people to reflect on how much smaller their new temple was compared to Solomon's temple. Although they had returned to the land and were rebuilding, they were met with discouragement due to the lack of resources available and the lack of grandiosity that once was on display through their temple. God's Promise to them was that He would empower this new temple to far outshine the previous one by filling the house with His glory.
- God's Blessings - Haggai declared God's encouragement to His people that they would once again experience His blessings through crops and an undefiled land. The temple would be a marker of new era filled with God's blessings.
- Chosen King - Haggai speaks to Zerubbabel about God calling him a signet ring and chosen servant. As God would shake the nations and earth, there would be a rebuilding of the temple that Zerubbabel would oversee so that the people of God would once again experience blessing and righteous worship. Ultimately, Zerubbabel was the lineage of David, and points the reader to look for the coming Messiah who puts His glory in us as the new temple, blesses us, and orders us for righteous worship.

ZECHARIAH OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Zechariah is one of the minor prophetic books that details the prophecies of Zechariah to the people of God in Judah while they rebuilt the temple during the reign of King Darius in Persia. Zechariah proclaimed messages of affirmation for their building project as well as visions calling them to remember, reflect, repent, and remain hopeful in the joy and promise of the coming Messiah. Zechariah is used heavily in the book of Revelation in the New Testament, and it is important for the reader to recognize the context of Zechariah's writings as apocalyptic writing to a specific group at a specific time.

The content of Zechariah can be broken into the following parts:

- A Call to Return and Repent - 1:1-6
- Zechariah's Visions - 1:7-6:8
- A Symbol of the Priestly King - 6:9-15
- The Coming Joy of the Messiah's Age - 7:1-8:23
- The Messiah's Triumphs - 9:1-14:21

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blesser, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Zechariah - the prophet Zechariah (whose name means "the Lord remembers"), son of Berekiah, prophesied to the people of God in Jerusalem during their efforts to rebuild the temple of God after their exile in Babylon. He spoke during the reign of King Darius in Persia and proclaimed messages that called God's people to remember, repent, and remain hopeful of the coming Messiah and His age.
- The Call to Return and Repent - Zechariah begins his prophecies by reminding the people of God of their ancestors who did not repent and how it led them to exile. In contrast, he calls them to return to the Lord through repentance and turning to God.
- Visions - Zechariah has and proclaims eight visions that speak directly to God's reign and power in the world, God's care for His people, God's defeat of His people's enemies, God's justice and judgment on evil, and God's empowerment of leaders for His purposes. Zechariah sees a vision of four horsemen that patrol the earth and show God's power over the world. This vision ends by affirming God's restoration of Judah and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem as a response to the people's question of how long mercy will be withheld from them. Zechariah sees a vision of four horns that represent leaders of nations that opposed God's people, whom God would overcome. His third vision details a man with a measuring line who was rebuilding Jerusalem and promising God's Presence to dwell in Zion once again. Fourth and Fifth Visions - Zechariah proclaims a vision of God defending the high priest, Joshua, from the attack of Satan and cleansing him from his filthy clothes, representing God's empowerment of Joshua and the priesthood through which He will raise up a "branch" to bring salvation. Zechariah also proclaims a vision of declaring Zerubbabel's selection by God to lead and ultimately to point to God's power to accomplish His purposes not by human might, but by His Spirit. Zechariah proclaims God's war on sin through a flying scroll that would end lies and wickedness, and a basket full of sin that would be carried by two women to be dumped on Babylon. Once again, Zechariah sees four horsemen who roam throughout the world symbolizing God's Spirit at work in all of the earth.
- Priestly King - Zechariah prophetically places a crown upon the head of Joshua, the high priest, as a symbol of God's merging of the political and spiritual offices in Jerusalem, and pointing to the future merging of these roles in the Messiah.
- The Coming Joy of the Messianic Age - Zechariah asked the religious leaders why they were fasting and mourning for the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. He asked if it was for God or for themselves? In response, he reminds them of God's judgment through exile because of their lack of justice and mercy, and calls them to return to these righteous practices. He then points their eyes to God's care, blessing, and Presence with the people in Judah as they rebuild the temple. Because of these markers, the fasts would be sources of joy for them that make the nations look at them with desire to join them and God.
- The Messiah's Triumphs - Zechariah prophesies about burdens that face God's people and the promised triumph of God's Messiah and Kingdom. He proclaims this through declaring judgment against Israel's enemies and the arrival of the Messiah who would bring unity and blessing by establishing God's Kingdom. He also proclaims this through God's care and protection for His people through various attacks. Finally, Zechariah prophesies directly about Christ Jesus through specific words pertaining to His life, death, and resurrection (being pierced, the shepherd struck, standing on the Mount of Olives, etc.). Zechariah's words point God's people throughout time to remember God's reign, repent of their sin, and remain holy and hopeful in the Messiah who comes for all nations

MALACHI OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Malachi is the last of the prophetic books in the Old Testament and details the prophecies of Malachi to the people of God in response to their poor spiritual leadership, marriage practices, injustice, lack of tithing and Sabbath keeping, and overall sense of lazy worship and hopelessness. Malachi calls for the people of Jerusalem and Judah to return to God's ways through a series of disputes with His people. In each dispute, Malachi names the issue God has with His people, the people's response, and God's response to His people. Ultimately, Malachi called the people of God to remember God's faithfulness and love for them, and to respond with repentance and return to the Lord.

The content of Malachi can be broken into the following parts:

- Dispute over God's Love - 1:1-5
- Dispute over Corrupt Worship and Leaders - 1:6-2:9
- Dispute over Unfaithful Marriage Practices - 2:10-16
- Dispute over Injustice and Justice - 2:17-3:5
- Dispute over Tithes and Offerings - 3:6-12
- Dispute over Worship - 3:13-4:6

Key Characters, Themes, Terms, Locations, and Stories:

- God the Creator, Blessing, and Redeemer of Creation.
- Malachi - the prophet, Malachi, prophesied to the people of God in Judah after their exile in Babylon. He called these people to remain faithful to God through a series of disputes that revealed God's ways and their invitation to repent and return to God.
- Dispute over God's Love - God's people questioned His love for them, and Malachi prophesies God's love for them through His faithful promise to His elect (Israel).
- Dispute over Corrupt Worship and Leaders/Priests - God's people had corrupted and defiled their worship practices, and offered half-hearted worship to God. Malachi prophesies and calls them to honor God as a father, master, or governor. He specifically calls the Levites and Priests to honor God and keep His ways.
- Dispute over Unfaithful Marriage Practices - God's people were divorcing their Jewish wives to marry women who worshiped the pagan gods. Malachi proclaimed that God hated this practice because it was a sign of their lack of covenantal faithfulness and commitment to God's ways of integrity, fidelity, and covenant relationships.
- Dispute over Injustice and Justice - God's people were convinced God was not just because they saw the wicked prospering while the righteous suffered. Malachi proclaims God's response to come make things right through the Messiah. A messenger would prepare the way (John the Baptist) by calling people to repentance, and then the Messiah would separate the evil and righteous by a "refiner's fire". This Messiah would dwell in the temple of God and put on trial those who did injustice to the oppressed (widow, orphan, poor, and foreigner).
- Dispute over Tithes and Offerings - Malachi called God's people to repent and told them they could do this through giving to God was due to God: tithes and offerings. Rather than continuing to rob God by withholding their generosity, they are called to bring their whole tithe to the Lord and see how He would bless them for it.
- Dispute over Worship - Because the people of God saw no advantage to being God's people, they believed worship was futile, and their future was hopeless. Malachi prophesies to them to remind them of the promise of God to bring about a day (the day of the Lord) in which judgment and justice take place on evil, and salvation comes for all of God's people. Once again, Malachi prophesies a messenger (John the Baptist) who would announce how this would happen: through the Messiah, Christ Jesus.
- Malachi concludes the prophets and Old Testament by reminding God's people of their call to remember God's faithfulness, repent of their injustice and sin, and remain hopeful of the Messiah who would establish God's Kingdom of justice, righteousness, and salvation for all who call upon His name.

BIBLE RESOURCES

You will find that there are many challenging passages to understand and apply to your life in Christ. We suggest the following resources to aid your study and application of Scripture.

- **Scripture Reading Practices:**

- SOAP
- Discovery Bible Study
- Lectio Divina
- Communal Reading of Scripture

- **Websites:**

- The Bible Project
- Bible Gateway

- **Commentaries:**

- New Beacon Bible Commentaries
- Word Biblical Commentaries
- Anchor Bible Commentaries

- **Books:**

- *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* by Fee and Stuart
- *Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew About the Bible* by Bird
- *Discovering the Old Testament* by Alex Varughese
- *Reading the Pentateuch* by John McDermott
- *Left of Matthew* by Norman Hubbard
- *Bruce and Stan's Guide to the Bible* by Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz
- *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets* by J. G McConville