

SESSION 5

Prophets to Judah

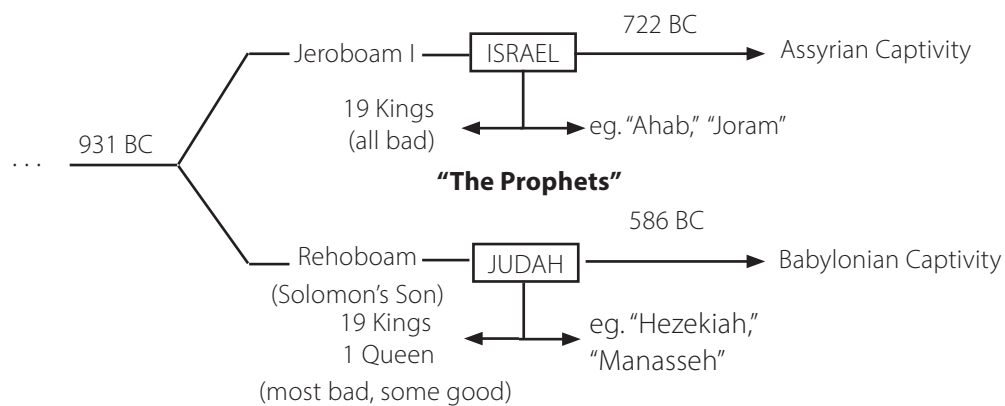
I. PRAYER

II. PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE

A. Movements of the Old Testament (9)

1. Prologue Genesis 1-11
2. Patriarchs Genesis 12-50; Job
3. Redemption/ Exodus, Leviticus
Wanderings Numbers, Deuteronomy
4. Conquest Joshua
5. Apostasy Judges, Ruth
6. Kingship: United 1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11
- 7. Kingship: Divided 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings**
8. Exile Ezekiel, Daniel
9. Return from Exile Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
10. Life of Christ Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
11. Church Age Acts and Epistles
12. Final Consummation Revelation (Daniel)

B. Movement 7: Timeline



III. WRITING PROPHETS

A. Chart of Writing Prophets

THE WRITING PROPHETS		
Name	Dates (BC)	Objects
Obadiah	ca. 840-830	Edom
Joel	ca. 830-820	Judah
Jonah	785-775	Nineveh
Amos	765-755	Israel
Hosea	755-715	Israel
Isaiah	739-690	Judah (Israel)
Micah	735-700	Judah (Israel)
Nahum	ca. 650-620	Assyria
Zephaniah	635-625	Judah
Jeremiah	627-575	Judah
Habakkuk	620-610	Judah
Daniel	605-536	Judah
Ezekiel	593-560	Judah
Haggai	520-505	Jews (Judah)
Zechariah	520-490	Jews (Judah)
Malachi	435-415	Jews (Judah)

* Taken from Eugene Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, 268

B. Writing Prophets to Judah (Southern Kingdom)

1. Pre-exilic prophets (before Babylonian Captivity)
 - a. Joel 9th century BC
 - b. Isaiah 8th century BC
 - c. Micah 7th century BC
 - d. Zephaniah 7th century BC
 - f. Habakkuk 7th century BC
 - e. Jeremiah 7th-6th century BC

2. Exilic prophets (during Babylonian Captivity)
 - a. Jeremiah 6th century BC
 - b. Ezekiel 6th century BC
 - c. Daniel 7th-6th century BC
3. Post-exilic prophets
 - a. Haggai 6th century BC
 - b. Zechariah 6th-5th century BC
 - c. Malachi 5th century BC

IV. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT: WRITING PROPHETS TO JUDAH

A. Joel (ca. 830-820 BC)

1. Author

While there are many Joels (eleven others) in the Biblical record, the prophetic author, Joel, is only found here in the prophetic book. His name means “Yahweh is God.” He is the son of Pethuel (“persuaded of God”) of whom nothing is known.

Joel’s frequent references to Zion and the house of the Lord might point to his living in or near Jerusalem but this is conjecture at best.
2. Date and Setting

There are no sure chronological markers in the book. Scholars differ widely as to when the book was penned. This study will follow the dating suggested by Eugene Merrill, namely around 830-820 BC (during the kingship of Joash).
3. Theme and purpose

The major theme of the prophecy is the “day of the LORD.” God’s covenant people had rebelled and turned away from the Lord. This obstinacy would invite God’s disciplining hand of sure and harsh judgment. But there was an escape possible. “Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning” (2:12).

The expression, “day of the Lord,” suggests a time when God acts in a decisive, sovereign way to accomplish His

purposes. It often has a far view (i.e. eschatological or last days) fulfillment and can be referred to as “that day” or “the last days.” Joel will make particular use of the phrase/concept.

Also in Joel is the predicted outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:28-32). This major event will be discussed briefly in the Biblical development.

4. Distinctives
 - a. Joel contains three visions: locust plague (literal—ch. 1), locust plague (metaphorical—ch. 2), and Day of the Lord (future—chs. 2-3).
 - b. Joel speaks of “that day” or “Day of the Lord” several times.
 - c. Joel speaks of the coming (yet future for the prophet) outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:28^{ff}).
 - d. Joel is not cited by any other Old Testament book.
5. Chart

THE PROPHECY OF JOEL		
Vision 1 1:1 1:20	Vision 2 2:1 2:27	Vision 3 2:28 3:21
Natural Disaster (locusts)	Military Disaster (locust-like)	Judgment Disaster (Day of the Lord)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to Remember (1:2-4) • Call to Mourning (1:5-13) • Call to Repentance (1:14-20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear! Day of Lord Coming (2:1-11) • Repent! (2:12-17) • Answer! From the Lord (2:18-27) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pouring Out—Holy Spirit (2:28-32) • Future Judgment: Nations (3:1-16) • Future Blessing: Israel (3:17-21)
Past “Day”	Near Present “Day”	Far Future “Day”

B. Joel: Biblical Development

The Biblical development will follow an outline suggested by the preceding chart. Key passages will accompany the outline with some brief comments. For the student with time and opportunity, reading the entirety of the Book of Joel with careful attention to the chart provided will prove most helpful.

1. Vision #1 (Joel 1:1-20): Natural Disaster (locusts)

a. Call to remember (1:2-4)

Joel 1:2, 4

Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors?...⁴ What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.

The natural disaster of literal locusts swarming in waves (4) indicates an unusual phenomenon. This devastating plague will precede and foreshadow a greater, more devastating “military-type” plague (Joel 2).

b. Call to mourning (1:5-12)

In light of the locust plague and its dire effects, the prophet (speaking the Word of the Lord—cf. 1:1) called out to four groups to mourn this calamity.

(1) Drunkards (5-7)

Mourn because your source of intoxicating wine is destroyed.

(2) Virgin (or young woman): likely representing the land and/or Jerusalem (8-10).

Mourn because the fields and vineyards of the land are destroyed.

(3) Farmers (11-12)

Mourn (despair) because your livelihood is destroyed.

(4) Priests (13)

Mourn because this disaster directly affects you (and appropriate worship: grain and drink offerings).

c. Call to repentance (14-20)

(1) The call (14)

Joel 1:14

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly.

Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

(2) The significance (15-20)

Joel 1:15

Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

The natural plague foreshadowed the coming (yet future) “day of the Lord.” The literal plague was a warning of a future “plague.”

(a) Locusts were the 8th plague in Egypt (before “darkness” and “death” –cf. Ex 10-11).

(b) Locusts were predicted as curses (harsh discipline) for Israel’s disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:38-42

You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it.

³⁹ You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. ⁴⁰ You will have olive trees throughout your country but you will not use the oil, because the olives will drop off. ⁴¹ You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep them, because they will go into captivity. ⁴² Swarms of locusts will take over all your trees and the crops of your land.

2. Vision #2 (Joel 2:1-27): Military Disaster (“locust-like”)

The natural disaster (“locusts”) foreshadowed the military disaster (using “locust-like” imagery in vivid, metaphorical language). This was briefly referred to as the coming “day of the Lord” (1:15).

Insight: “The Day of the Lord”

As used in the Hebrew Bible, this is “used to emphasize the swift and decisive nature of the Lord’s Victory over His enemies on any given occasion” (Chisholm, “Joel” in BKC, 1412). It could refer to judgment upon nations or upon Israel (north and south). It often refers to the end-times judgment (called the “eschatological” judgment). This is a period of a final, future time where God brings purifying and restorative judgment to Israel and the world on a universal scale. This “day” will commence after the Rapture, include the Tribulation, the Second Coming of the Messiah, the establishment of the Millennium and the future “new heavens and earth.”

a. Fear! Day of the Lord Coming (2:1-11)

Joel 2:1-2

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come.

Continuing with verses 3-11, an invading army is described in “locust-like” language. In a vivid, colorful way this army brings “fire and flame,” they have the appearance of horses and cavalry and chariots. But in verses 6-9, note the “locust” language.

Joel 2:6-9

At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.⁷ They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course.⁸ They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks.⁹ They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.

Joel 2:10-11

Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.¹¹ The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty is the army that obeys his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

The “near” judgment of this military invasion upon Israel also prophetically foreshadows a “far” judgment yet to come (Joel 3). This is the eschatological “day of the Lord.”

b. Repent! (2:12-17)

Joel 2:12-13

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

c. Answer! From the Lord (2:18-27)

If, in fact, Israel does not repent, God will act. “Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people” (18).

Joel 2:25-27

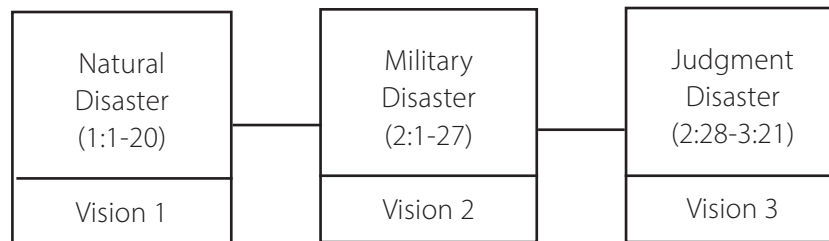
"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm— my great army that I sent among you. ²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. ²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.

3. Vision #3 (Joel 2:28-3:21): Judgment Disaster ("Day of the Lord")

a. The eschatological (end-times) "day of the Lord"

This timing is suggested by the use of keywords related to this far event/day: "and afterward" (2:28); "the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (2:31); "In those days and at that time" (3:1); "day of the LORD" (3:14); and "in that day" (3:18).

b. The thematic climax in Joel



c. Pouring out—Holy Spirit (2:28-32)

(1) The prophetic prediction

Joel 2:28-32

*"And **afterward**, I will pour out **my Spirit** on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out **my Spirit** in those days. ³⁰ I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of*

smoke.³¹ *The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful **day of the Lord**.*³² *And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.*

- (a) There will be an unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit (28-29). This is also referred to in Ezekiel 39:29 and Zechariah 12:10.
- (b) There will be unusual celestial displays (30-31). Note Ezekiel 32:6-8 for literary parallels (cf. Matt 24:29-31).
- (c) There will be salvation/deliverance (32).

(2) The New Testament quotation

Acts 2:17-21

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- (a) Peter referenced the prophecy of Joel 2 during his Day of Pentecost sermon.
- (b) The interpretive question is this: Does Peter's quotation mean that Joel 2 has been fulfilled in the Holy Spirit demonstration at Pentecost?

Insight:

Scholars debate the Joel 2 fulfillment at the Day of Pentecost. The primary views are:

1. **Pentecost fulfillment:** the Joel 2 prophecy was completely, fully fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.
2. **Continued fulfillment:** the prophecy was partially fulfilled, is today being fulfilled, and at the Second Advent will fully be fulfilled.
3. **Partial fulfillment:** the prophecy was fulfilled in part at Pentecost (2:17-18) but will be completely fulfilled in the Second Advent (2:19-21).
4. **Eschatological fulfillment:** the prophecy was not fulfilled at Pentecost at all. Peter only used the Joel 2 passage as a homiletical device. The phenomena at Pentecost is reminiscent or similar to what will be fulfilled in the future.

d. Future judgment: nations (3:1-16)

Joel 3:1-2

*"In those days and at that time,
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
² I will gather all nations
and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
There I will put them on trial
for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel,
because they scattered my people among the nations
and divided up my land.*

Joel 3:14-16

*Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord is near
in the valley of decision.
¹⁵ The sun and moon will be darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.
¹⁶ The Lord will roar from Zion
and thunder from Jerusalem;
the earth and the heavens will tremble.
But the Lord will be a refuge for his people,
a stronghold for the people of Israel.*

- e. Future blessings: Israel (3:17-21)

Joel 3:17-18

“Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. ¹⁸ In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD’s house and will water the valley of acacias.

C. Isaiah (739-690 BC)

- 1. Author

The author identifies himself as Isaiah, the son of Amoz (1:1). Over a dozen times in the book, Isaiah’s name is attributed to the prophecy. Further, Jesus and the Apostles quote him as the writer some 21 times in the New Testament.

He was married (8:3), may have been a priest, and likely lived in or near Jerusalem. Tradition notes that he was a cousin to King Uzziah.

Some scholars believe that Isaiah only penned the first 39 chapters while a second and/or third author completed the last 27 chapters. This study accepts the unitary, one-author composition of this key prophetic book. For a concise defense of this position, consult John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah: The NIV Application Commentary*, 33-40.

- 2. Date and Setting

Isaiah ministered in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the ninth through twelfth kings of Judah (1:1). This highlights the long ministry of the prophet, some sixty years.

Although Judah was a primary recipient of the prophetic book’s message, Isaiah also spoke to the northern kingdom (Israel) with impending Assyrian invasion at hand.

Major Biblical Events Leading to Isaiah

- Creation, fall, spread of sin (Gen 1-11)
- Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12,15,17)
- Exodus Event → Mosaic Covenant (The Law)
- Mosaic Covenant Warnings (Deut 28-30)
- Conquest of Canaan (Joshua)
- Transition from judges to kings (Judges, 1 Sam)
- Kingship: United Monarch
- Kingship: Divided Monarchy
- Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)
- Split of the Kingdom (931 BC)
 - Israel in north
 - Judah in south
- Ministries of the prophets

3. Theme and Purpose

- a. Harold Willmington (see select Bibliography) suggests five major themes in Isaiah:
 - (1) The glory and greatness of God
 - (2) The sin of both Israel (nation as a whole) and Gentile nations and subsequent judgment
 - (3) The dispersement and regathering of Israel
 - (4) The first and second coming of Christ (Messiah)
 - (5) The coming Tribulation and Glorious Millennium
- b. Constable (*Notes on Isaiah*, 7) quotes Oswalt:

“Is God truly the Sovereign of history if the godless nations are stronger than God’s nation? Does might make right? What is the role of God’s people in the world? Does divine judgment mean divine rejection? What is the nature of trust? What is the future of the Davidic monarchy? Are not the idols stronger than God and therefore superior to him?”

- c. Charles Dyer, *The Old Testament Explorer*, notes that the purpose of Isaiah is “to display God’s glory and holiness through His judgment of sin and His deliverance and blessing of a righteous remnant.”
4. Distinctives
- a. Isaiah’s magnitude of scope is impressive (from Isaiah’s own day, to Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, to the comings of the Messiah, to the blessed Millennium).
 - b. Isaiah focuses upon the majesty and splendor of God such attributes as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, holiness, love (lovingkindness), mercy, grace, so forth.
 - c. Isaiah repeatedly contains the names of God, namely YHWH (LORD in most English translations) and Holy One of Israel.
 - d. Isaiah looks confidently to a future kingdom, a Messianic Kingdom during the latter days (“in that day” or “that day” or similar terms).

But how can prophets predict the future? From Isaiah 46 the answer comes:

Isaiah 46:9-10

“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’”

- e. Isaiah is the fourth longest book in the Scriptures (1292 vv) behind Psalms (2461 vv), Genesis (1533 vv), and Jeremiah (1364 vv).
- f. Isaiah speaks to four major comprehensive doctrines: God, man (and world), sin, and redemption.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH			
Chapters 1-39		Chapters 40-66	
Rebellion		Righteousness	
Judgment (Blessing)		Blessing (Judgment)	
On Judah		Theology Proper "God's Majesty"	
1	12	40	48
On Surrounding Nations		Soteriology "God's Messiah"	
13	23	49	57
On all the Earth		Eschatology "God's Millennium"	
24	35	58	66
Prophecy (Poetic)		Prophecy (Poetic)	
Condemnation		Consolation	
1	35	40	66

*HP = Historical Parenthesis (Narrative) (chps 36-39)

*H = History (chps 36-39)

*C = Confrontation (chps 36-39)

D. Isaiah: Biblical Development

This section will summarize the flow of the Book of Isaiah. The previous chart will be modified and utilized as a guide. Note that the treatment of the book will be necessarily brief for this study.

1. Judgment: On Judah (Isa 1-12)
 - a. Preview: Judah's personal sins (Isa 1-5)

Isaiah 1:4,18

Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy

One of Israel and turned their backs on him...¹⁸ "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Isaiah 5:1-7

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.⁴ What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?⁵ Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.⁶ I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it."⁷ The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

b. Call: Isaiah's cleansing and calling (Isa 6)

c. Political sins: "Messianic Cycles" (Isa 7-12)

(1) Political sins (backdrop)

Judah was faced with a dilemma. The powerful Assyrians were on the horizon (in fact, they would conquer Israel in the north in 722 BC). Will they (Judah) put their trust in alliances or will they trust YHWH?

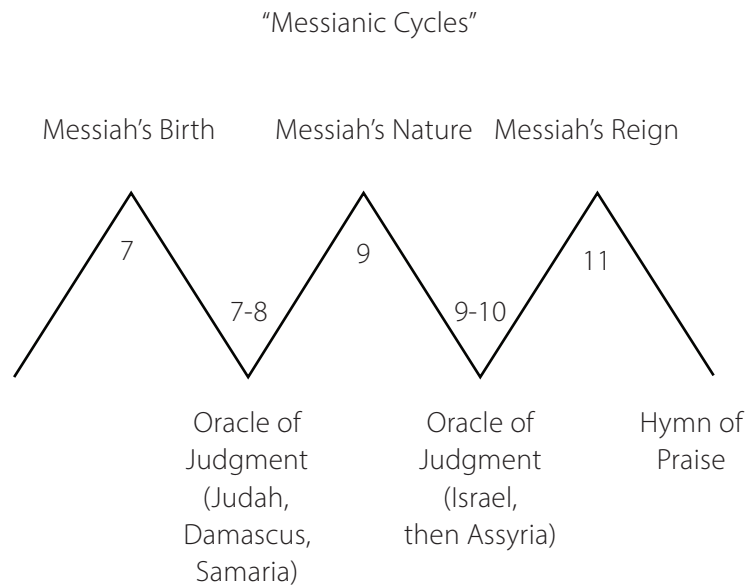
Isaiah 8:5-8

The LORD spoke to me again:⁶ "Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah,⁷ therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates—the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its

channels, run over all its banks⁸ and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, Immanuel!"

(2) Messianic Cycles

Within chapters 7-12 is what some call the Book of Immanuel (or the "Messianic Cycles"). Pending judgment and prophetic promise are wedded together as illustrated in the following structural diagram.



Note: numbers relate to appropriate chapters in Isaiah.

Isaiah 7:14 (Birth)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (Nature)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ Of the

greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 11:1-5 (cf. Rev 19; Dan 2) (Reign)
A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD— ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

2. Judgment on surrounding nations (Isa 13–23)

The structure of this section can best be seen in the following chart.

ORACLES AGAINST SURROUNDING NATIONS			
13:1-14:27	Oracle against Babylon	21:1-10	Oracle against Babylon
14:28-32	Oracle against Philistia	21:11-12	Oracle against Edom
15:1-16:14	Oracle against Moab	21:13-17	Oracle against Arabia
17:1-18:7	Oracle against Damascus/Israel	22:1-25	Oracle against Jerusalem
19:1-20:6	Oracle against Egypt	23:1-18	Oracle against Tyre

*Taken from J. Moyer, *Isaiah: IVP*.

3. Judgment on all the earth (Isa 24-35)

Isaiah 24:21

In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below.

4. Historical Parenthesis (Narrative Interlude) (Isa 36-39)

5. Blessing (or Comfort) (Isa 40-66)

a. Through "God's majesty" (Isa 40-48)

Isaiah 40:9-11

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Isaiah 40:18-31

This is a particularly important passage. The student is urged to read and meditate upon its praiseworthy truths about God.

b. Through "God's Messiah" (Isa 49-57)

Isaiah 49:1-7

Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. ² He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor." ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God." ⁵ And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and

my God has been my strength—⁶ he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

⁷ This is what the LORD says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: “Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

c. Through “God’s Millennium” (Isa 58-66)

(1) Broad overview

Insight: Key Texts on the Millennium	
1. Isaiah 2:1-5 2. Isaiah 11:1-16 3. Isaiah 32:1-20 4. Isaiah 35:1-10 5. Isaiah 60:1-22	6. Jeremiah 31:1-40 7. Jeremiah 33:1-26 8. Ezekiel 37:14-28 9. Amos 9:11-15 10. Zechariah 14:6-21
from Mark Hitchcock, <i>The End</i> , 400	

(2) Isaiah contributions

Isaiah 60:1-3

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Isaiah 61:1-4

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up

the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

E. Micah (735-700 BC)

1. Author

The name Micah, a shortened form of Micaiah, means “who is like the Lord.” He was from Moresheth–Gath (1:1, 14) in Judah about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

Micah’s family and occupation are unknown. His home was agriculturally based and surrounded by other small towns and villages.

2. Date and setting

The prophet, Micah, was a contemporary of Isaiah. Like him, Micah prophesied the downfall of Israel to the Assyrians and Judah to the Babylonians. His prophetic ministry occurred during the reigns of Jothan (#11), Ahaz (#12), and Hezekiah (#13) of Judah.

3. Theme and purpose

Micah prophesied a period of judgment and a period of hope (blessing). The prophet was highly sensitive to idolatry, injustice, disobedience, and false (empty) worship—all condemned by the Lord. But he prophesied that God would one day fulfill His covenant promises as well.

4. Distinctives
 - a. The prophecy is composed in poetic form.
 - b. The prophet is sensitive to the social ills of society.
 - c. The prophet uses the Mosaic legislation (as other prophets) as the standard of righteousness expected for God's covenant people.
 - d. A certain prophecy found in Micah is quoted twice in the New Testament (Matt 2:5-6 and 10:35-36). Micah spoke of the Messiah's birthplace (5:4), reign (4:1-7), and spoke of the people's King (2:13) and Ruler (5:2).

5. Chart of Micah

BOOK OF MICAH						
Judgment		Hope			Lawsuit	
1	3	4	5	6	7	
On Israel and Judah (Ch.1)		Exaltation of Zion (Ch. 4)			Indictment (Ch. 6)	
Over Sins of Wealthy and False Prophets (Ch. 2)		Shepherd-King of Zion (Ch. 5)			Lament (Ch. 7)	
Over Leaders' Sins (Ch. 3)						
Condemnation		Consolation			Confrontation	
Punishment		Promise			Pardon	

6. Biblical development
 - a. Judgment on Israel and Judah (Mic 1)

Micah 1:2-5

Hear, you peoples, all of you, listen, earth and all who live in it, that the Sovereign LORD may bear witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. ³ Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down

and treads on the heights of the earth. ⁴ The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope. ⁵ All this is because of Jacob's transgression, because of the sins of the people of Israel. What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah's high place? Is it not Jerusalem?

- (1) The prophet summons the people (as in a court summons) to gather to hear the Lord's complaint.
- (2) The focal point is both Israel and Judah, Samaria and Jerusalem (5).

b. Judgment over sins of wealthy and false prophets (Mic 2)

Micah 2:1-2 (wealthy)

Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. ² They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud people of their homes, they rob them of their inheritance.

Micah 2:6-11 (false prophets)

"Do not prophesy," their prophets say. "Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us." ⁷ You descendants of Jacob, should it be said, "Does the LORD become impatient? Does he do such things?" "Do not my words do good to the one whose ways are upright? ⁸ Lately my people have risen up like an enemy. You strip off the rich robe from those who pass by without a care, like men returning from battle. ⁹ You drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes. You take away my blessing from their children forever. ¹⁰ Get up, go away! For this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all remedy. ¹¹ If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' that would be just the prophet for this people!"

- (1) The false prophets preached a positive (though false) message.
- (2) The true prophet, Micah, preaches a truth message to the upright.
- (3) The true prophet points out the sins of the people.

Micah 3:1b-3 (sins of the leaders)

"...Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel. Should you not embrace justice, ² you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; ³ who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?"

Micah 3:9-12 (fate of the leaders)

Hear this, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; ¹⁰ who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness. ¹¹ Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORD's support and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us." ¹² Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

- d. Hope: the exaltation of Zion (Mic 4)

Micah 4:1-3

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. ² Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³ He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

(1) "In the last days" must refer to the time of the Millennium.

(2) The Messiah-King will reign from Zion.

e. Hope: Shepherd-King of Zion (Mic 5)

Micah 5:2-4

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

(1) The coming Shepherd-King would be born in Bethlehem (2).

(2) The coming Shepherd-King would be a ruler over Israel (2).

(3) The Shepherd-King's origins are from ancient times (lit. "days of eternity"), thus an assertion of deity (2).

(4) The Shepherd-King will rule and reign in peace (5); (cf. Isa 9:6; Jn 10:14-16 and 2 Sam 7—Davidic Covenant).

f. Lawsuit: Indictment (Mic 6)

Micah 6:1-2 (court summons)

Listen to what the LORD says: "Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say."² "Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.

Micah 6:6-8 (lawsuit expectations)

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with

burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul. ⁸He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

g. Lawsuit: Lament (Mic 7)

Micah 7:1-4 (the prophet's misery)

What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave. ²The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood; they hunt each other with nets. ³Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire—they all conspire together. ⁴The best of them is like a brier, the most upright worse than a thorn hedge. The day God visits you has come, the day your watchmen sound the alarm. Now is the time of your confusion.

Micah 7:7 (the prophet's trust)

But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Micah 7:18-20 (the prophet's hope)

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. ¹⁹You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. ²⁰You will be faithful to Jacob, and show love to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our ancestors in days long ago.

F. Zephaniah

1. Author

Zephaniah (“hidden by Yahweh”) was a prophet during the reign of King Josiah (16th king of Judah). His personal pedigree was outstanding, a descendant of the celebrated King Hezekiah. As such he is the only prophet of known royal (Davidic) descent. His prophetic work may have contributed to the “revival” during Josiah’s reign, however brief the “revival” may have been.

2. Date and Setting

According to the Biblical text, Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC–Zeph 1:1). The writing likely preceded the “revival” under Josiah (ca. 622BC–cf. 2 Kgs 22-23) by several years, perhaps around 630 BC. However, some scholars believe the prophecy was written after the “revival” (thus, a 622-612 BC date).

Prior to the reign of Josiah, the evil kings of Judah, Manasseh and Amon, had introduced and promoted Baal worship in Judah. This entrenched idolatry scarred the religious life of Judah so much that even a brief revival would not have lasting effect. After Josiah the people would return to their abominable false worship. Zephaniah was an “eleventh hour” (near the end) prophet to Judah. Repentance or judgment was the decision of the hour. The prophet prophesied the coming judgment upon Jerusalem, Judah, and the nations.

3. Theme and Purpose

Zephaniah addressed major themes:

- a. Judgment on Judah was pending. Immediate repentance was needed (2:1-3).
- b. The “day of the Lord” was coming both in its near and in its far aspects. This “day” would bring calamity and judgment.
- c. The far future would also come with joy and hope promised (3:9-20).

4. Distinctives
 - a. Zephaniah stresses “the day of the Lord” more frequently in his prophecy than any other Biblical writer.
 - b. Zephaniah stresses the wrath and judgment of God (1:18; 3:8) in fierce tones, perhaps the strongest of all the writing prophets.
 - c. Zephaniah also includes at the end of his writing a prophetic look at the far, future millennium (3:9-20).
5. Chart

ZEPHANIAH
Theme: God’s Wrath and Restoration in the “Day of the Lord”
Judgment: Outlined in Chiastic Structure
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">A Judgment of the World (1:1-3)</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">B Judgment on Judah (1:4-2:3)</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">C Judgment on the Nations (2:4-15)</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">B’ Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-8)</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">A’ Judgment on the Nations (3:8)</div> </div>
Blessing: Far Future “Day”
Salvation, Security, Restoration, Return (3:9-20)

6. Biblical Development

The serious student is encouraged to read all of Zephaniah using the above chart as a reading guide. Following are a selected few verses from Zephaniah reflective of the spirit of the book.

a. Warning of Coming Destruction

Zephaniah 1:2-3

"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the LORD. ³ "I will sweep away both man and beast; I will sweep away the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea—and the idols that cause the wicked to stumble." "When I destroy all mankind on the face of the earth," declares the LORD...

b. Warning Against Judah

Zephaniah 1:4-6

"I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will destroy every remnant of Baal worship in this place, the very names of the idolatrous priests—⁵ those who bow down on the roofs to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the LORD and who also swear by Molek, ⁶ those who turn back from following the LORD and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of him."

c. Call to Repentance

Zephaniah 2:3

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.

d. Warning of Far Judgment: Day of the Lord

Zephaniah 3:8

"Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them—all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.

e. Blessing of Far Future: Day of the Lord

Zephaniah 3:14-17

Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with

you; never again will you fear any harm. ¹⁶ On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

G. Habakkuk

1. Author

Little is known about the author. Twice in the book he is referred to as "Habakkuk, the prophet" (1:1; 3:1). He may have been a priest as suggested in the priest-like hymn for worship (cf. Hab 3). His name means "embraced." He appears to be thoughtful and a man of vigorous faith.

2. Date and Setting

The text of Habakkuk clearly indicates that the Babylonian invasion was imminent. The text does not indicate which of Judah's kings was reigning at the time of this prophecy. Some have suggested that the writing came during the kingship of Manasseh (696-642 BC), or Amon (642-640 BC), or even the reformer, Josiah (640-609 BC)—yet the "revival" during his days do not match the description in Hab 1:2-4). But these suggestions are not as strong as that of the kingship of Jehoiakim (608-598 BC). This godless king's reign fits the context of Habakkuk well (cf. 2 Kgs 23:34-24:5). Further, the Babylonians' rise to dominance was established at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC. Here, the Babylonians defeated the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance and began to look further south (to Israel/Judah) for further conquests.

3. Theme and Purpose

Habakkuk, the prophet (and priest?), addressed the Lord with his concern over the moral and spiritual breakdown of the people of Judah. He was surprised to learn from God that God indeed had heard his prayers and was preparing to judge Judah with the instrument-in-His-hands, Babylonia.

Ellisen (254) describes the purpose of the book.
 “The purpose of Habakkuk was to emphasize God’s holiness in judging violent Judah for her sins, even though He used a more wicked nation to accomplish it, whom He would later destroy for their greater wickedness and idolatry.”

4. Distinctives

- a. Habakkuk (2:4) contains a key theological phrase twice quoted by the Apostle Paul (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; also see Heb 10:37-38): “the righteous will live by faith.”
- b. Habakkuk uniquely contains a prayer-praise hymn at the conclusion of the book. (Hab 3).
- c. Habakkuk records an ongoing dialogue of prophet with God.
- d. Habakkuk’s structure is a memorable 2-2-5-1:
 - 2 questions
 - 2 answers
 - 5 “woes”
 - 1 hymn

5. Chart

HABAKKUK		
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Question #1 (1-4) “How long?”	Answer #2 (2-4) “Live by faith”	God’s Faithfulness (1-15) “I stand in awe”
Answer #1 (5-11) “Babylonians are coming”	5 “Woes” (5-20)	Conclusion (16-19) “Sovereign Lord my strength”
Question #2 (12-17) “How can You?”		
Wondering	Observing	Exalting

6. Biblical Development

To overview Habakkuk's basic message, the 2-2-5-1 structure will be followed along with appropriate, selected passages.

a. 2 Questions / 2 Answers

(1) Habakkuk 1:2-4 (Question #1)

How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?³ Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.⁴ Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

(1) Habakkuk 1:5-6 (Answer #1)

"Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.⁶ I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own.

(2) Habakkuk 1:12-13 (Question #2)

LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you will never die. You, LORD, have appointed them to execute judgment; you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.¹³ Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

(2) Habakkuk 2:2-4 (Answer #2)

Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.³ For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.⁴ "See, the enemy

is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness...

- b. 5 Woes: “Taunt Songs” Against Babylonians
- (1) Woe #1: against exploitation (2:6-8)
 - (2) Woe #2: against greedy conquest (2:9-11)
 - (3) Woe #3: against bloody oppression (2:12-14)
 - (4) Woe #4: against arrogant humiliation (2:15-17)
 - (5) Woe #5: against lifeless idolatry (2:18-20)
- c. 1 Hymn: Exalting God (Hab 3)
- (1) Praise (1-2)
Habakkuk 3:2
LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.
 - (2) God’s faithfulness (3-15)
Past faithful acts (in history) will foreshadow God’s future faithfulness.
 - (3) Conclusion: the response of faith (16-19)
Habakkuk 3:16-19
*I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.
¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,
¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.*

H. Jeremiah

Although Jeremiah is considered a pre-exile prophet, his prophetic book will provide the prelude to the next study, "Panorama Plus 8: The Exile." Therefore, Session 8 will begin with an overview of Jeremiah and the account of God's exacting judgment on Jerusalem/Judah.

V. TAKEAWAYS

Due to the length of this session, several "takeaways" or applications have been highlighted in the body of the lesson.