**The Minor Prophets Notes LASMM**

**John Oakes**

Note: I have included notes on all twelve of the “minor” prophets here, but put the six I am teaching about first. Notes on Hosea, Joel, Amos, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah are further down the document for this reason.

Resources I am using:

*The Prophetic Imagination*    Walter Brueggemann.

*The Prophets* Fortress Commentary Gale Yee, Hugh Page, Matthew Coomber

*Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries Andrew Hill

*The 12 Minor Prophets* George Robinson

*The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* The New International Commentary of the Old Testament, Leslie Allen

*The Message of Hosea*  J. A. Motyer

Prophet = spokesperson, one who speaks for another Exodus 4:16, John the Baptist is “the voice of one calling in the desert”

Ex 4:16;7:1 Aaron was Moses’ “prophet”

A prophet is a speaker of and for God

A prophet does more forth-telling than fore-telling

Jer.20:9 It is like fire in my bones.

*nibba*: One who has been called or appointed to proclaim as a herald the message of God.

*roeh*; Seer. One who receives special visions and who conveys spiritual realities others cannot see.

Seer. 1 Samuel 9:6,9

Man of God 1 Kings 13:1

Servant of God 1 Kings 18:36 Elijah

Watchman of Israel Ezekiel 3:17-19

Messenger of Jehovah Haggai 1:13

Chosen of God Jeremiah 1:4-7

Marks of a Prophet: (noting that the preacher is the closest equivalent in the NT church to the prophet)

An uncompromising individualist

Conscious of a divine call

Access to the inner counsel of God

A man of action with a strong character

A man of prayer

An outspoken critic of social and religious evils

Message of the Prophets;

I. Repentance Joel 2:12-14 Zechariah 1:2-6

II. The Day of the Lord Doom, Judgment. Obadiah 4, Amos 5:2, Amos 3:2, Micah 3:12 Zephaniah 1:14-18

III. Salvation and Deliverance Amos 9:11-14, Hosea 2:14-23 Micah 4:1-2 Joel 2:32, Nahum 1:15

God is creating a remnant.

The Messiah is coming. Zech 1:2-6, Micah 5:2

IV. Advocates for social justice. Micah 6:1-8

Audience of the Prophets:

Prophets to Israel- Amos and Hosea

Prophets to Judah pre-exile- Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

Prophets to Gentiles/other nations Jonah, Obadiah, Daniel

Judah during the exile- Jeremiah, Ezekiel

Judah post-exile-Haggiah, Zechariah, Joel? and Malachi

**Obadiah**

The shortest book in the OT.

Message: God Rules the Nations (like that of Daniel)

Submessage: Judgment on God’s enemies and deliverance for God’s people.

Outline:

I Judgment on Edom. v 1-16

II Deliverance for Israel. v 17-21

Historical context: Edom has allied herself with Babylon and taken part in the defeat and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

(another possibility is 2 Kings 8:20-22, 2 Chron 21:8-10 in the time of Jehoram, in the mid 800s BC but this is less likely)

v. 3 You who live in the cleft of the rocks = Edom (Petra, Bozrah for example)

Synonyms: Edom, Esau, Teman (chief clan of Edom at that time)

Edom and Israel have a sibling rivalry that goes all the way back to Jacob and Esau (who, according to Genesis, founded Edom) Gen 25:19-34, 27:1-28:22, 32:3-33:17.

As exemplified by Obad 10 “Because of violence against your brother Jacob.”

Edom had failed to let Israel pass through on their way to the Promised Land. Numb. 20:14-21, Deut 2:2-13.

[aside: God commanded Israel not to regard an Edomite with abhorance, because he is your brother.” (Deut 23:7)

The sins of Edom:

Pride v. 3, ridicule of God’s people. v. 12

Violence against God’s people v. 10

Standing aloof while others suffer The sin of neutrality. v. 11

We cannot be silent when a brother is attacked or when Jesus is criticized.

v. 12,13 Mockery, gloating. Psalm 137:7 “Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. ‘Tear it down’ they cried, ‘tear it down to its foundations.’”

v. 13 Edom took part in sacking Jerusalem. v. 14 they set up roadblocks for refugees fleeing.

God’s message to the arrogant: Obadiah 4 “Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down.

What will happen to the arrogant; those who oppose God’s people? v. 8-16. Destruction.

v. 15 The Day of the Lord: a constant theme in the twelve. Judgment. Theodicy. God will make all things right.

**The Day of the Lord signifies “The moment when Jehovah grasps the reigns, which he seems to have held slackly before, when the currents of his moral rule, which have been running sluggishly, receive a mysterious quickening, and the Lord’s work on the earth is at last fully performed.”**

**Or “The Day in which Jehovah will manifest himself as God.”**

In fact eventually the Nabatean Arabs completely ended Moab.

The Day of the Lord is a day that God’s kingdom comes with power to build up or to destroy.

Do you ever feel insecure when you look at prosperous, cool, sharp, confident non-Christians? Know their true fate. Be confident in God. He will make everything right.

It looks bad for Israel right now but; v. 17 But on Mt Zion (Jerusalem) will be deliverance.

v 17-21. Despite the defeat, God will judge, we will have victory and “The Kingdom will be the Lord’s” v. 21

Folks, we will “be a fire and a flame” Our enemies “will be stubble”

We will “occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria” and “possess the land as far as Zarephath.

And the kingdom will be the Lord’s!

**Jonah**

Theme: The grace of God.

Subtheme: Repentance and salvation is for the Gentiles too!

Subsubtheme: You cannot run from God.

Subsubsubtheme: Our loyalty should be to God, not our country.

Historical setting: About 782 BC Assyria was in a fairly brief period of partial decline. Assyria itself was in a time of failure and disappointment—open to the “gospel?” Prepared to repent?

But do not forget, Assyria was the avowed and hated enemy of Israel!

Nineveh: The greatest city in the world at that time. 1800 acres, 100 ft. high walls. 7.5 miles around. 120,000+ inhabitants? Chariots could drive three across on top of the wall. Jonah 3:3 “a visit required 3 days”

Jonah: a prefigure of the Messiah.

Jonah is like Jesus:

1. Matthew 12:39-41 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the

belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights

in the heart of the earth.”

2. John 7:52 “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find

that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.

Actually, Jonah, the prefigure of the Messiah, came from Gath-Hepher, about 3 miles north of Nazareth. (2 Kings 14:25)

It is amazing that Jonah even made it into the OT.

3. Sleeping in a boat during a massive storm which could very well kill all

those in the boat. (Luke 8:23) “As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall

came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they

were in great danger.

4. Right before he offered his life, they were gambling at his feet. (Jonah

1:7 and Luke 23:34)

5. Calmed the storm. (Jonah 1:15 the raging storm grew calm, Mark 4:39

“Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm)

6. Most important of all, he willingly offered his life to save the Gentiles

Jonah 1:12 “Pick me up and throw me into the sea.”

Outline of Jonah:

Ch 1 Running from God

Ch 2 Running to God

Ch 3 Running with God

Ch 4 Running ahead of God.

**Jonah 1**

Jonah 1:1-3 Go and preach against Nineveh.

Jonah went in the exact opposite direction—to Tarshish which is in Spain.

Q: Why did Jonah flee from the Lord? (v. 3) (We will see in Ch 4)

Point: It is possible to hate what God hates, but not love what God loves.

Q: How might we be like Jonah? It is more difficult than you think to “hate the sin, but love the sinner.” Suggestion: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Matthew 9:13, quoting Hosea 6:6.)

Our primary posture ought to be mercy, not sacrifice. But Jesus was hard-line about sin in certain cases (like those who did not show mercy)

Jonah 1:4-17 God is in control. (note, the lot fell to Jonah!) You cannot escape from God. Jonah is busted!

v. 4 The Lord sent a great wind…

v. 7 The lot fell to Jonah

v. 4 A familiar scenario in the OT. A group of people are all under a death sentence. The only solution is for God’s messiah/prophet to die.

v. 5 Like Jesus, Jonah is sleeping.

v. 7 Of course, as a prophecy, the lot falls to Jonah.

v. 8 Jonah, fleeing God, has not been sharing his faith.

v. 12 Jonah, the prefigure of the Messiah volunteers to give his life to save the Gentiles. He takes the fault (sin) on himself.

v. 15 Like Jesus, Jonah calms the storm.

Message: God may ask you to do something you desperately do not want to do. Do it anyway!

For me, it is public evangelizing and confronting sin in certain circumstances.

Notice 1:14 Please do not hold us accountable. You have done as you pleased. A lot like us and the death of Jesus.

**Jonah 2** Repentance, Grace and Salvation.

Rhetotical Q: Why did Jonah wait three days to repent?

Remember, we too, like Jonah have been lost—tossed by the waves and destined to be swallowed up and die.

My speculation: Jonah actually died in the big fish and was raised on the third day as a foreshadow.

V 8,9 to paraphrase. Those horrible heathens do not deserve to be saved, but if you INSIST, I will go.

You would think Jonah would be humbled and very grateful.

You would think he would get the idea that God loves these people too.

Q: Again, how might we be like Jonah?

**Jonah 3**

v. 1 Apparently, Jonah had reneged on his promise of 2:9. God had to tell him one more time. Us: OK fine, I will share my faith, but do not expect me to do it with a good attitude!

3:1-9

v. 3 Jonah obeyed. Did he really?

Q: What was Jonah’s message? Doom!

Did he preach repentance? Did he preach salvation?

Jonah must have been a really awesome preacher!!!!

But remember (as you evangelize) their hearts were prepared.

v. 6 Look what the most hated, violent, arrogant man in the world did!!! Get a vision!!!

v. 8-9 The Assyrian king taught himself to repent and that God might save.

3:10 God relented bringing disaster on them.

Jonah is fired up that his work has brought about the salvation of 100,000 people, right?

**Jonah 4**

4:1-3 Jonah having a self-pity party. Why is Jonah angry? Again, how might we be like this?

I am so mad that you are gracious and slow to anger (towards my enemies, of course, please be gracious and slow to anger toward me!)

v. 3 The ultimate pity party.

4:4-5 Jonah waiting for the destruction, wanting to be the first to bring the happy news to Israel.

These Catholics or Muslims went to hell. Cool! These gangsters… or fill in the blank.

The key passage in Jonah is 4:6-12 The Grace of God.

v. 6 Q: How has god provided a vine for our own shade?

v. 7-9 Now, God is disciplining us rather than showering blessings on us. How will we react to that? (Hebrews 12:6 The Lord disciplines those he loves)

Q: Are you more concerned with your own comfort than with the salvation of souls?

v. 10-11 Summary: God even cares about the cattle! Should we not have deep concern for this city?

**Micah**

Micah = Who is like Jehovah?

1:14 from Moresheth Gath, near Gath, 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. From Judah to Judah.

Micah is from the countryside and sees for himself the results of the rapacious acts of the greedy Jerusalemites.

Mentioned in Jeremiah as a bold prophet, speaking truth to power. Jeremiah 26:18

“He had Hosea’s loving heart and Amos’ heart for social justice. “Amos of the Southern Kingdom.”

Younger contemporary of Isaiah, but not a courtier like Isaiah. More a prophet of the people than Isaiah. Isaiah: national issues. Micah: personal worship and social morality.

There is some parallel in the text of Micah and Isaiah, specifically Micah 4:1-3 is very similar to Isaiah 2:2-4.

Not a city guy. Micah 1:5 What is Jacob’s transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah’s “high place?” Is it not Jerusalem.

Micah 1:1 During the reigns of Jotham (742-735), Ahaz (735-715) and Hezekiah (715-687)

About 740-710 BC. Both before and after destruction of Samaria (722 BC). Judah begins to decline. Both rich and poor suffer during deprivations under Sargon. Much abuse of the poor by the rich. Judges accepting bribes. Judah waffling between trusting Egypt and Assyria. The wealthy think their wealth and power will protect them from danger. (Micah 3:11).

Theme: Those who live luxurious lives and seek to placate God through offering money are vampires in the sight of God—sucking the life out of the poor.

Micah has scathing attacks against those who use their wealth and power to placate God and abuse the poor.

Micah’s character Micah 3:8 A prophet of the poor and a friend of the oppressed who calls out the sins of the wealthy.

Themes in Micah:

Opposes social injustice, oppressive social structures

Against the powerful of the land (especially the capitals of Samaria and Jerusalem)

Hope for restoration: A new Jerusalem and a new king—the Messiah!

Outline

Ch 1-3 Judgement.

Ch 4-5 Comfort. Glimpses of future glory

Ch 6-7 God’s justice and mercy

Ch 1-3 Judgment

Judgment on Judah and Samaria for the evils described above.

Ch 1 Scathing indictment of Judah and Samaria (mainly Samaria in this case) (but the specific sins are not necessarily clear)

v. 3 A theophany. God is coming down to the earth to exercise judgment on Samaria.

1:6 Samaria will be a heap of ruins… Her stones will be rolled into the valley. (This happened in 722 BC when Assyrian King Shalmanezer completely destroyed Samaria.

1:7 Idolatry and prostitution in Samaria.

1:8 Howling like a jackal. Near Eastern mourning over death.

1:9 Samaria’s plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah. (where Micah is prophesying)

v. 10-16 Hebrew puns. Tell it not in Gath = Tell it not in tell

Beth Ophrah means house of dust, etc. (p. 105 George Robinson)

v. 15 A hint of the sin of Samaria. The nobility of Israel will come to Adullam.

Ch 2 More specific about the nature of the sin of Judah and Samaria. This time principally Judah.

2:2 They covet fields. They steal inheritances. The sin here is the wealthy taking advantage of the small landholders through debts to acquire massive landholdings. This violates the Mosaic covenant, but these people do not care.

2:3 You will no longer walk proudly.

His enemies tell him to stop speaking (2:6) “Do not prophesy.” The people are listening to false prophets.

“Disgrace will not overtake us.”

We have such false prophets today who occupy the pulpits of so many evangelical churches, preaching prosperity gospel and easy believism, when the majority of their congregants are on the wide road to hell.

v. 11 If a liar and a deceiver comes and says, “I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,” that would be just the prophet for this people!

2:12-13 Interlude about the remnant. v. 12 I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel.

v. 13 Their King (Messiah) will pass through before them. He will “break open the way.”

Ch 3 More oracles of doom

v. 1 Jacob should know better.

v. 2 You tear of the skin of people and strip their flesh from their bones. Hyperbole to describe how the rich are abusing and stealing from the poor.

v. 5 The prophets declare “peace” for the wealthy, but war on the poor. Shameful!

Any parallels today?

v. 6 It will be night for you (the false prophets and the wealthy abusers)

3:8 Already mentioned.

3:9 They abhor social justice. v. 11 It is all about money for the leaders, priests and prophets.

3:12 Summary. Zion will be plowed like a field; Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble. (587 BC)

This is what happens to those who talk a religious game, but do not practice humility and justice.

Ch 4-5 But…. Glimpses of future glory.

Messianic and Eschatological (end-times) hope.

4:1-5 A prophecy of the Kingdom. Judah to become the spiritual metropolis of the entire world (parallel Is 2:2-4).

v. 2 Many nations

v. 2 Instruction will go out from Zion (Jerusalem). A prophecy about the church/Pentecost.

v. 3 They will beat their swords into plowshares. Peace to be found in the prince of peace. Black will befriend white. Palestinian will befriend Israeli. Russian will befriend Latvian. Progressive will befriend conservative.

v. 4 Apocalyptic/Eschatological view of the future. Forever and ever. Fast forward to Rev. 21.

v. 6-7 On that Day. On the Day of the Lord. (Pentecost?) The lame will become a remnant.

4:10 Judah will go into captivity in Babylon, but will be rescued by Cyrus.

5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephthrah,…

v. 3 A woman (Mary) gives birth. “Then the rest of his brothers will return to the people of Israel.” Many nations will come to the Lord through the Messiah.

5:4 Messiah will shepherd them.

“His greatness will extend to the ends of the earth!”

5:5-6 He will rescue us (Judah?) from Assyria, when it invades our land. (701 BC Sennacherib took all the towns of Judah (Isaiah 36:1), and besieged Jerusalem under Hezekiah. But in the night his entire army of 185,000 was destroyed. (Isaiah 37:36-38, 2 Kings 19:35-37)

Ch 6-7 God defends his justice and mercy.

In this chapter God is calling us to do what he does and to feel what he feels. 6:8 God has SHOWN (not told) us what is good.

To quote from my paper on Micah 6:1-8: What are moral, economic and religious integrity? What do they mean to us as a community? They mean that we are to embody the qualities of God which are justice and mercy. Every engagement we have with one another and with those in the world should be redemptive. We are to be the hands and the feet and the heart of God to our community.

The people say God is hard and unmerciful. v. 1 Plead your case against me.

v. 2 My witness will be the mountains and the hills and the foundations of the earth. The whole world is watching.

v. 3 How have I wearied you? What did I do wrong that you are bored with me?

v. 4 I saved you from slavery in Egypt. That is what I did.

Remember, you were slaves at one time. How will you act when you are on top?

God defends his character against the people. “And what does Jehovah require of you? To act justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Micah 6:6-7 What should I bring?

Burnt offerings (as little as a pigeon that the poor could afford)

A year-old calf (a middle class peasant could afford this)

A thousand rams (a very wealthy person could afford this)

Ten thousand streams of oil no one could afford that!

My firstborn child Heaven forbid!

What can I give to atone for my sin? The implied answer: Nothing!!! God wants our heart, not our money.

So, what can I do?

The most famous social justice passage in the Bible?

Act justly. Has to do with social obligation. Treating people the way they ought to be treated. Caring for the poor and the outcast.

To act justly is to work toward a world where things are “right.”

For Micah, it is a world where the rich do not take advantage of the poor, where the non-Israelite is treated with dignity, where women are given respect as equals.

Love kindness (hesed) Show covenant love, loyal love. Kindness, faithfulness to people, compassion. Hesed is a big word. It is Hosea’s favorite word.

We need to create justice, to make things right, but we need to do it with compassion, kindness, a sense of community (covenant-love)

Walk humbly. Do all of this, remembering your place with respect to God. Phil 2:3-4. Consider others better than yourselves. Have the mind of Christ.

Not just a humble attitude, but a humble walk. A humble life. A life that oozes humility for all to see. 1 Sam 15:22, Hosea 6:6, Matthew 9:13

God envisions a society—a church—where theology and ethics are one. (quoting Leslie C. Allen). A people he can call “my people” (Hosea)

Hosea 12:6 an almost identical list.

God contrasts himself with the cruelty and injustice of Judah’s rich. “The best of them is as a brier.”

Micah 6:9-7:20 Some of the previous themes repeated here.

6:9-16 Ill-gotten treasures, unfair ephah measures, violence of rich people against the poor.

Therefore you will be destroyed.

Ch 7 Judah will be vindicated.

Micah 7:18-20 A very encouraging end. “Who is a God like you, who pardons sins and forgives the transgression of remnant of his inheritance.” And we—the kingdom of God—are that remnant.

You do not stay angry forever, but delight in showing mercy (hesed)! You will hurl all our iniquities into the sea! So encouraging.

v. 20 You will show hesed to Jacob and to Abraham.

**Haggai:**

A Jewish leader and a prophet (Ezra 5:1). Probably fairly old (unlike Zechariah) from Haggai 2:3.

The Message of Haggai: Build up the house of the Lord, not your own house. (Matt 6:19-21)

Submessage: Discouragement is not sufficient excuse to neglecting the work of the Lord.

Haggai 1:1-4

v. 1 In the second year of King Darius 520 BC

v. 2 “The time to build has not yet come.” We are too discouraged. We need to be strengthened first. The leadership is not what it needs to be. We do not have the budget.

The song, “Excuses”

The Lord’s answer: v. 3 Hmmm…… This is very suspicious. You have been building up your own houses, yet you do not have the ability to build up my house?

When the church is doing well, we are fired up, but when things are not going so well we use it as an excuse to attend to our own affairs.

Q: Is it wrong to have paneled houses? Answer: Yes, if it means that the temple has no paneling!!! Yes, if it takes you away from the more important thing, which is building the temple.

Q: What is “the temple” for us?

Q: What are some applications?

Q: Have you been like this?

Is it wrong to pursue an advanced degree? Is it wrong to put an addition on your house? Is it wrong to move to another city simply for a better job? Answer: Maybe.

Haggai 1:5-11

Message: You sought personal wealth and gain. You received the opposite. If you want blessings in your life (Q: Who here wants blessings?) It is through giving first to the Temple. “Indifference to the things of God produces calamity.”

“You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little.” Can anyone relate?

So, what should we do? V. 8 “Go up into the mountain and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored.”

v. 11 God will withhold blessings if it will help us to repent, return, be restored and have the temple rebuilt.

Application???

1:12-15. So the people set to work building the temple! God says to us, I am with you!!! That is what I want! (Matthew 28:20)

They wanted blessings, but they had forgotten how to get them.

Haggai 2:1-9 and 20-23 Encouragement from God for doing the work.

Read Haggai 2:1-5

God knows that doing the work can be tiring and discouraging. God knows that we can be discouraged by the size of the task and by our limited resources.

v. 3. This new temple seems puny. We remember the glory days. Our self-image is taking a nose dive here.

v 4,5 My spirit is with you just like it was in the glory days. Do not fear. Whether the beginnings are big or small means nothing to God. We can do amazing things if we will put off our materialism, do the work of the temple and rely on God. Do not be deceived by the outward circumstances.

Haggai 2:6-9 I love 2:6 “In a little while, I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry lands.”

Let’s say it together out loud!!! Do you believe it?

v. 7 All nations will come. A kingdom prophecy. If we repent, return….

v. 8 The silver and the gold….. the things you are giving up to the temple…. The things all your neighbors think is valuable. They are mine.

Oh, and I love v. 9 as well….

The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house.

Historical side note. If you look at the temple, you might not agree, but the second temple period was far more spiritual and glorifying to God.

Aside: Haggai 2:10-19.

“parable” of consecrated and defiled flesh.

Does coming into contact with clean meat make you clean? No!

Does coming into contact with defiled flesh make you defiled? Yes!

Defilement is a thing. Holiness is a lack of a thing. Holiness is purity and lack of defilement. (heat is a thing, cold is not a thing)

The message: sin in general, but especially materialism are contagious. Holiness in not contagious. We need to deal with materialism before God will bless our work.

Haggai 2:19 The good news: If we will repent, then GOD WILL BLESS US!

Final encouragement: Haggai 2:20-23 v. 23 a messianic prophecy

**ZECHARIAH**

• Dated prophecies: Nov. 520 BC – Dec 518 BC

• Contemporary of Haggai

• Mentioned in Ezra 5:1-2 6:1-10, 13-15 516 BC temple completed.

• Jerusalem is in ruins. The foundation for the temple has been built. However, the

exiles who returned from the captivity have stopped work on the temple to build their

“paneled houses.” There is serious need for a revival.

The practical goal of Zechariah is similar to Haggai, but the methodology is very different.

• The book is apocalyptic (it contains vivid symbolism which represents spiritual truths).

• The book contains many predictive prophecies, especially of the Messiah.

• The book is eschatological in nature (it includes material about end times).

Quote: “It is no exaggeration to affirm that of all the prophetic compositions of the Old Testament, Zechariah’s visions and oracles are the most messianic and, accordingly,, the most difficult, because it is mingled and intermingled with so much that is apocalyptic and exchatological.

Theme of Zechariah: The Messiah is coming; get your house in order.

Message of Zechariah: It is time to build the temple. Repent, Return, Restore, Rebuild a constant theme.

Obviously similar to Haggai, but the style is very different. Haggai: Repent. Get off your butt and build the temple, you lazy, thankless people.

Zechariah: much more subtle.

Q: Is your (spiritual) house ready for guests right now? If Jesus knocked on your spiritual door, would you secretly be scurrying around, putting everything which is out of order into order so as to create the (false) impression that everything is in order?

What if you mother-in-law showed up unexpectedly? Zechariah: Are you ready for Jesus to come back?

**Outline of Zechariah:**

I. 1:1-6 Prologue: Repent, Return, Restore and Rebuild

II. 1:7-6:8 Eight visions. Highly apocalyptic, not so prophetic

III. 6:9-15 Coronation of Joshua/Jesus

IV 7:1-8:23 Two Sermons

V. 9:1-14:21 Two Oracles concerning Jerusalem. More prophetic, less apocalyptic. More Messianic.

**I. Prologue**

Zechariah 1:1 November, 520 BC

1:2-6 Repent!

v. 2 Q: Why was God so angry with their forefathers?

V. 3 Q: What is the solution? Repent and return Return to me so I can return to you (Revelation 3:20)

Q: Do you need to repent and return? How so?

v. 4-6 What is God saying here? These faithless Jews are no longer around, but my Words are still around and what I decree will happen, will happen.

vs. 6. Good news. They repented and rebuilt the temple. What about you? Are you building God’s temple? The temple was actually completed in April, 516 BC. They repented, returned, were restored and were rebuilt.

Zechariah 1:1-6 tells us the end of the story before it tells us the story. The rest of the book is like a flashback.

**II. Eight Visions**

1:7-17 The first vision: A messenger on a red horse.

v. 11 All is quiet. Is that good? The messenger reports the world is at peace, which is bad news to Israel as that means they will stay in bondage to Persia.

Is peace God’s goal? Matthew 10:34-36. But isn’t Jesus the prince of peace?

v. 14 Q: Why is God so upset? (because Jerusalem is still not restored)

v. 15 Doesn’t God want people to feel secure? (Amos 6:1-7)

Zech 1:16-17 This, in essence, is the theme of Zechariah. Q: How would the Jews in the time of Zechariah envision this being fulfilled?

Q: How is it fulfilled in our day?

The Messiah is coming: Get your house in order!

God’s reply: (v 16) I will return to Jerusalem and rebuild my house! Do not look at outward appearances.

Application: If your situation or church seems stagnant, do not look at the outward appearance. God can and will work in your life.

1:18-21 Vision #2: The vision of four horns.

The four horns are four nations which scattered Israel. Assyria, Egypt, Babylon and Persia. The message: God used these nations to judge his people. Now they will get their come-uppance: God will judge these nations. Trust in God.

Question: How do you feel about the fact that God is a God of judgment on his enemies?

Who are these four “craftsmen”? I am not sure. Angels?

2:1-13 Vision #3 The man with a measuring line.

God will make his kingdom into a city without walls.

The church will become very great and will spread across the world. God will protect his kingdom like a flame around a wall-less city.

2:1-2 Q: What is measuring a city about? Rev 11:1-6. Ezekiel 38:7-16 It is about relying on God, not on ourselves, for our protection and security.

2 Sam 24:1f David takes a census of the church. God is very angry! Why?

We should not rely on statistics. We should rely on God.

2:3-5 No walls. God is our wall? Question: Is God your wall, or is your 401K your wall?

Q: What are the worldly “walls” we tend to build to protect us from the troubles of life?

2:6 Repent and return! The “North” is Babylon/captivity. We were all once in the “North.”

Only come back, escape Babylon (sin) and come into my city (the kingdom of God). This scripture is being fulfilled before our very eyes in this day.

2:8 How does it feel to be the “apple” of God’s eye?

2:10-13 Kingdom prophecy. I will live among you (in the form of the Holy Spirit) Many nations (v. 11) Be in awe of what God is doing. Close parallel here with Ezek 36:24-38 and Ezek 37:11-14

Kingdom Prophecies in Zechariah:

Zech 1:16-17 I will return to Jerusalem with mercy. My towns will overflow with prosperity

Zech 2:10-13

Zechariah 6:15 Those who are far away will come and help build the temple of the Lord.

Zechariah 8:1-7 I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:10-13 His rule will extend from Sea to Sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Zech 12:7-8 The Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 13:1-3 On that day…. Pentecost.

Zechariah 14: the whole thing!!!

And many more….

3:1-10 Vision #4 Joshua (the high priest) accused by Satan and exonerated.

3:1-2 Q: Who does Joshua represent here? Joshua = Jeshua in Hebrew = Jesus in Aramaic. This is a vision concerning Jesus himself.

Q: What do we see about Satan here? Are you accused (Zech 3:2, Rev 12:10) Or are you the deceived type (Jn 8:44)?

Q: What would Satan say to you? What would he accuse you of? What would he deceive you about?

In case you were not sure: The branch (3:8,9) is Jesus. (Jeremiah 23:5, Jer 33:15-16) The Messiah is coming to Jerusalem!!!

Zech 3:3-10 The symbolism could be a bit confusing here.

Is this about Joshua and Judah? Yes

Is this about the Messiah? Yes

Is this about us and about the church? Yes

v. 6-7 God: If you will repent and return, I will restore and rebuild.

v. 8-9 The Messiah is coming. Get your house in order.

3:10 Have you invited your neighbor to sit under your vine by sharing your life and faith with him yet?

4:1-16 Vision #5 The golden lampstand with a bowl and seven lamps and the two olive trees.

4:1-4 What is he seeing? He is seeing, figuratively, the Mehorah in the temple, with an olive tree on either side.

Oil = the Spirit of God = annointing by God (Heb 1:9, Ps 23, etc.)

Memory verse: Zechariah 4:6. Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.

The twin olive trees represent the permanent, unending, river of power which can flow into our lives if we remain tapped into God.

[4:7 The capstone is Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10,11)]

Q: How does this make you feel? John 7:37-39 Streams of living water!

4:10 The seven channels are the seven “spirits” of God (Rev 2:1)

Stressed? Harried? Worried? Think about the two olive trees and the seven lamps!!!

4:12-14 The two trees, are symbolically, the priesthood and the kingship/governorship, which were combined forever in Jesus Christ. Jesus is priest and king! (Messiah is Hebrew for annointed).

5:1-4 Vision #6. The flying Scroll.

Judgment on sinners and the enemies of God’s people.

5:5-11 Vision #7 The woman in a basket. Judgment on sinners.

Measuring basket = judgment. 2 Cor 5:10 We will all appear before the judgment seat to account for deeds done in the body.

v. 7 Who is this woman? The woman = “sin” = Babylon (Revelation 18:2)

Sin has fallen, Judgment has come

v. 10-11 Those who choose evil are taken to “Babylon”/captivity.

6:1-8 Vision #8 The four chariots. Judgment! (again)

See Revelation 6:2-7 for a parallel passage about judgment on sinners and on the enemies of God’s people

**III Coronation Scene**

6:9-15 The coronation scene. The Messiah is coming!

v. 9-11 Q: Why is this odd? You do not give a crown to a priest!

v. 12 What/who is this about? Branch = nazer = Nazarene (like Zech 3:8, Zech 4:14 note Matthew 2:23 Nazarene) It is not Joshua literally, because he never sat on a throne.

v. 13 “harmony between the two” means between the priesthood and the government/king/governor (between Joshua and Zerubbabel). This was accomplished in Jesus who is both high priest and king

Q: Is there normally friction between the king and the priest? Yes!

The ruler (Jn 18:33-37) and the mediator (1 Tim 2:5) will be the same man.

vs. 15 A great picture of the kingdom of God.

**IV Two Sermons Zech Ch 7-8**

7:1-14. Religious observance versus true worship of God.

7:1 4th year of Darius 518 BC People of Bethel come to ask a question.

v. 3 Should I mourn? Do you detect an attitude. Do I haavvveee to fast? (note: for so many years) Do I haaavvvveee to serve the poor, to share my faith, to go to Bible group, etc.

There were three fasts begun as a remembrance of God’s punishment on Judah:

1. The 5th month: to remember the destruction of the temple in 586.

2. The 7th month: to remember the assassination of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25:25)

3. The 10th month: to remember the capture of Jerusalem in 597.

Their question is, to some extent, a good question. Now that the temple is well on the way to being completed, does it even make sense to continue to mourn over the earlier destruction of Solomon’s temple.

God’s response Zech 7:4-7

Should we stop fasting in the fifth month? God: you were doing it as a hypocrite anyway, so what use were your fasts?

God: Give me your heart, not your religion. This is not an uncommon biblical teaching.

Zech 7:8-10 God’s solution to legalistic religion: *Act like God* (Exodus 34:6-7). Show social justice. (Note: in Isaiah 58:6 God also connects fasting and social justice)

Q: Are you struggling with lack of motivation in your walk with God? Solution: Go out and help a needy person. Practice social justice.

A great memory verse: Zech 7:9-10.

By the way: God’s answer to their question is found in Zech 8:18-19 No. Stop fasting. It is time to celebrate

(like JTB’s disciples fasting but Jesus’ disciples partying. Mark 2:19)

What you need to do is to repent and not act like your earlier countrymen Zech 7:11-14. Look where it got them!

Zech 7:13 They would not listen to me, so I will not listen to them.

Like Mark Wilkinson would say: “How’s that working for you?”

8:1-9 The Messiah will come to Jerusalem.

8:1-2 God can’t wait for it to happen. I am jealous for my people until the temple is built. God is zealous. Are we?

God says to his people, after you repent, you will be restored to me and I will rebuild Zion.

v. 3 I will return to you. We are the “city of truth (or Faithful City).” What a thought. This prophecy was partially fulfilled in April, 516 BC when the temple was completed, but to a fuller extent in about 30 AD when Jesus came to Jerusalem.

v. 4 men and women of ripe old age…. Each with a cane I hand… Safety security

Q: Is he talking about restored Judah and Jerusalem or is he talking about the church? (from the countries of the West?)

v. 9 (like Haggai) Build the temple!

(Skip v. 10-17)

8: 18-23 Did this happen at the time of the restoration? Not exactly. It is about the church.

God will bless our evangelism v. 23. A great Bible group.

**V. Two Oracles Zech Ch 9-14**

**Ch 9-11 First Oracle.**

9:1-8 Judgment on Phoenecia. After disciplining his people he will now judge those who attacked his people.

9:9-17. The Messiah is coming to Jerusalem. (do you see a pattern here yet?)

Messianic Prophecies in Zechariah:

Zechariah 3:8-9 My servant the branch (The Branch of Jesse Isaiah 11:1,10)

Zechariah 6:11-13 Crowning of the Messiah/Branch

Zech 9:9 Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Matt 21:2-7, Mark 11:4)

Zech 11:7-13 30 pieces of silver Matt 26:14-15 The potter Matt 27:3-10

Zechariah 12:10-14 The one they have pierced (John 19:31-37)

Zech 13:7 Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. (Mark 14:27)

9:9 A great Messianic prophecy. Fulfilled in Mark 11:4-10

Q: What do you see about Jesus here?

Gentle Jews? Probably not.

Righteous Jews? Yes!

Bringing salvation Jew? Yes!

9:10-13 A kingdom prophecy. waterless pit = us before salvation

9:10 Q: What do you see about the kingdom of God here?

Q: How will God create peace without war-horses?

9:11 We were freed from a waterless pit. Q: What waterless pit were you freed from?

9:13 Judah (Judea) → Ephraim (Samaria) → Greece That is exactly how the church spread. A very specific prophecy.

9:13 Judah/The Church will be bent like a bow. God will use us to do great things. He will prepare us for spiritual battle.

9:14 A kingdom prophecy cont. Doesn’t this contradict 9:10? Is God a God of peace? Isn’t Jesus the prince of peace? Matthew 10:34-36

God’s desire is for peace and the Kingdom is a place of peace, but with the world there will be war because the kingdom of God is at war with the world (spiritually). Only in heaven will there be peace.

Victory for God’s people in apocalyptic language.

9:16 We will sparkle!!!

9:17 We will be attractive and beautiful!!! (To those who love and are seeking God, to others we are the aroma of death 2 Cor 2:16)) We will be a city on a hill Matthew 5:14-16

What will be the grain and new wine for you? How will God make you thrive?

Zech10:1-12 As you read this, how would Zechariah’s hearers see this? How might we see this differently?

Zech 10:6 I will restore them… Q: to what?

Return, Restore, Rebuild.

Q: What is 10:5 to you? How will God do this

Zech 11:9-14

God will judge unfaithful Israel for rejecting his appearing to them (fulfilled in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed). Favor = (old) covenant Union = unity of God’s people.

11:9 As prophesied in Leviticus 26:29.

This was literally fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus gives a dreadful detail respecting a woman named Mary, who, in the extremity of the famine, during the seige, killed her sucking child, roasted, and had eaten part of it, when discovered by the soldiers.

v. 10-11 the old covenant will be revoked. Staff called favor = Old Covenant

v. 12, 13 A very specific prophecy about the Messiah. Fulfilled in Matt 26:14 and 27:1-10 where a literal potter’s field was bought for a literal 30 pieces of silver.

v. 14 Staff called Union: The Jew’s dream of a reunited Israel and Judah is dead.

(Note: Ezekiel 37:15-23 describes the joining of two sticks: Judah and Ephraim, but this passage is not about physical Judah and Ephraim, but is about the Church/Kingdom, as can be seen from Ezekiel 37:24-28 …my servant David will be king over them and they will have one shepherd…. David my servant will be their prince forever.)

11:10-14 must have been a bit confusing to the Jews who received Zechariah’s prophecy.

**Zech 12-14 Oracle #2**

12:1-9 God will bless his kingdom.

Who is this about?

Restored Judah?

The church?

Heaven?

Any individual who has fallen into sin and slaver, repented and returned and who is now being restored and having their spiritual life rebuilt?

v. 1-5 We will be persecuted but God will protect us. Reminds of Zech 2:3-5 where God says he will be our wall.

v. 6 Like a firepot in a pile of wood. Not consumed when all around us are.

Like a torch among sheaves On the contrary, we will set all of them on fire.

v. 7-8 very encouraging. A kingdom prophecy. This is us! Luke 7:28 The least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist because we have the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of God!!!!

12:10-14. A prophecy about the Messiah and about the church.

Pour out spirit = Acts 2: Pentecost. Joel 2:28-31

pierced = the sword in Jesus’ side John 19:31-37. Note, God says, “they will look on ***me***” Here we see the deity of Jesus.

12:11 Hadad Rimmon This is where Josiah, the most righteous of all the kings of Judah, and the last good king, was killed in battle in 609 BC and where there was great mourning in the land. (2 Kings 23:29-30, 2 Chron 35:24-25 Jeremiah composed a lament for this occasion).

When Jesus dies and his apostles abandon him it will be a time of great mourning, but…..

13:1-9 Further prophecies about the kingdom of God.

v. 1. On that day… The day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41) (more on that fountain in Zech 14:8, also see Ezek 36:25 about this cleansing water)

v. 2-6 I will bring prophecy to an end. Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke through the prophets… but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son. This is a specific prophecy that prophecy will cease in the church age.

v. 7 The sheep will be scattered. Fulfilled in Mark 14:49

v. 8-9 A prophecy about the persecution of the church. 2/3 struck down = those who were not able to remain faithful during the horrible persecutions under Rome. Would you be among the 2/3 who lost their faith, or would you be among the 1/3 who remain faithful even though your life was threatened? (a parallel to Ezek 5:1-4—the hair—1/3 buned, 1/3cut with sword, 1/3 scattered in wind?)

v. 9 Even if you survive, you will be refined 1 Peter 1:6,7 This is a good description of the church in the first three centuries.

Zech 14:1-21

This passage has many parallels in Revelation 20:11-22:5 (especially Rev 22:1-5), Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Daniel 12. It is about final judgment and the final place of both those who obey God and those who do not. It is principally a vision of heaven and our final restoration to God.

However, like Matthew 24:4-35 it is a mixed prophecy, with some application to AD 70 (by the way, this sermon was preached on the Mount of Olives (see Zech 14:4) and Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives)

The key to understanding this chapter: 14:1 A Day of the Lord is coming…. This is an eschatological vision of God coming in judgment. Used many ways in the OT, both as a day when God comes to deliver his people and when God comes to judge his people or his enemies.

On that day… v. 4,6,8,9,13,20

The Day of the Lord in the OT:

***Is. 2:12 Is. 13:6-9Is. 13:10-13 Is. 34:4, 8-10 Jer. 46:10 Lam. 2:22 Ezek. 13:5 Ezek 30:3 Joel 1:15 Joel 2:1 Joel 2:11 Joel 2:31 Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.***

***Amos 5:18-20 Obad. 15 Zeph. 1:8 Zeph. 1:14 Zeph. 1:18-2:3 Zeph. 1:15-17 Zech. 14:1 Malachi 4:5***

Zech 14:2-7 has more affinities with AD 70.

Zech 14:8-21 is more about end times.

v. 5 earthquake in the time of Uzziah (Amos 1:1)

v. 8 Parallel to Ezek 47:3-12, Rev. 22:1-5 John 4:14, 7:38 Jesus claims to give this stream of living water. An allusion to heaven—the ultimate expression of the kingdom of God.

v. 10-11 Jerusalem will be secure

v. 12-15 But God’s enemies will be judged. Look at v. 12.

v. 16-19 Feast of Tabernacles imagery. To the Jews it was “the feast.” Tabernacles = living in safety with God. All the tents faced inward toward the Tabernacle where God dwelt. The feast was a remembrance of living in intimate fellowship with YHWH.

Here is the picture: All those who choose not to have a relationship with God will get their wish. They will be shut out forever from fellowship with God.

But….

v. 20-21 A picture of heaven. The main image here is holiness. “HOLY TO THE LORD” was inscribed on the gold medallion on the front of the High Priest’s turban. Even the unimportant items in the temple—even the cooking pots and bowls—will be holy. No Canaanites = no merchants? (either that or it means there will be no foreigners… all will be citizens of the kingdom of God) . All your needs will be provided by God.

**Malachi**

Last book in the Old Testament: What are God’s last thoughts to us?

Theme: Covenant.

Message: Having faith in God vs being faithful to God.

Malachi = “my messenger” Malachi may not be an actual name of a prophet, but most likely he was a real person.

According to Jewish tradition, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were members of The Great Synagogue who assembled the OT canon.

Date: between 458-432 BC Between the two visits by Nehemiah.

The situation: The temple is rebuilt, but the people are relying in themselves. They are cynical and skeptical of God working. They are accusing God of not fulfilling the promises to Jeremiah Ezekiel and Zechariah of a blessed and prosperous restoration. They have faith in God, but their faith is in what God will do for them. They have faith in God but they are not being faithful to God.

Outline:

Introduction: God still loves Israel. God has been faithful to Israel. 1:1-5

I The Priests have been unfaithful 1:6-2:9

II The People have been unfaithful 2:10-3:15

III The Day of the Lord is coming Malachi 3:16-4:6

Style: Socratic. Make a point, Propose a question from a theoretical person, Answer the question.

You have robbed God.

How have we robbed you?

In tithes and offerings.

**Introduction: Malachi 1:1-5**

God: I still love Israel.

v. 2 God: “I have loved you.”

The people: “How have you loved us?” We do not feel you have loved us. You have not loved us the way we wanted to be loved by you. If you really loved us, We would have more blessings in our life right now. What God has to offer them is not good enough for them.

Jacob have I loved, Esau I have hated. (quoted in Romans 9:13) chose you. Look at how Edom is doing even today. I have every intention to bless Israel (if you will let me)

God: I made a covenant with you. Do you really believe I will not be faithful to my covenant?

This sets the tone for the entire book. In view of my love….

Aside: He uses Esau/Edom as an example. The Edomites were allies of Babylon when Jerusalem was sacked in 597 and even during the Persian period they occupied parts of southern Judea. God assures them (v. 4-5) that he will take care of Edom.

**I. Malachi 1:6-14 The Priests have been unfaithful.**

(and don’t forget that we are all priests)

1:6 “It is you, O priests who show contempt

Remember, that we are the “priests” of Christianity

1 Pet 2:5 a holy priesthood

1 Pet 2:9 a royal priesthood

Exodus 19:6 A kingdom of priests.

It is time for us to look at our hearts!!!!

v. 6 What does God want from us? He wants our honor and respect.

Does he want our money? Not really…. He wants our honor and respect.

v. 6 It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.

v. 6 How have we shown contempt? These people were clueless about the fact that they had shown contempt for God.

Lesson: We could be religious think we are honoring God, yet in his eyes we could be showing contempt.

Me: I do not want to show contempt for God!!!

v. 7 You put defiled food on my altar.

The people: We have? How have we defiled you? When? Again, they are clueless.

v. 7-8 By giving me your second best.

Illustration from last night: We asked what was the worst gift you ever got?

Jennifer: A half-filled bottle of shampoo which was diluted with water.

They gave crippled or diseased animals. They gave the stuff they didn’t really want anyway.

Priests: Isn’t it only logical to give a crippled animal? We are going to kill it anyway.

Q: What do we give in a canned food drive? Do you give second-hand clothes to your parents as a gift?

We give our used clothes to the poor or our unwanted canned goods to the poor.

For us: We give our “left over” time our “left over energy” our “left over” money

God (sarcastically) to the people: Try giving that to your governor.

Many of us give more of our discipline, our effort, our heart, our attention to our jobs, our vacations, our education, our hobbies, etc.

Q: How might we be like this?

v. 9 Rhetorical Q: Will God accept that?

Q: Is it because God is a spoiled brat?

v. 10-11 God: If you are going to give me your second best, do me a favor: just stay home.

Q: Is God exaggerating here?

Q: Isn’t a little better than nothing at all? Answer: No!!!!!

Isn’t it better to put $5 into the plate than to put nothing in?

Isn’t it better to be religious than to be a pagan?

Q: Why is God so upset about such half-hearted gifts? Is it because he is an egotist and wants us to stroke his pride?

No!!!!! He gave his absolute best to us. It is because it represents ungratefulness.

I do not want to be in this position!!!

v. 12-14 The key issue.

v. 13a “What a burden.” Like Zechariah 7:2-3 “Should we keep mourning as we have done for so many years?”

Is that you? Special Contribution: “What a burden.”

Leader’s meetings: “What a burden.”

Staying pure: “What a burden”

v. 13b When you say “What a burden” God sees you sniffing at it contemptuously.

Q: How have we been like this?

v. 14 If you give half-hearted service (like a blemished animal), God calls you a “cheat.”

Malachi 2:1-9 Admonition for the priests.

A. Malachi 2:1-4 The priests have not honored me.

Very tough words. v.3 I will spread the bloody innards from the sacrifice on your faces. Malachi is alluding to the curses in Deuteronomy 28 You can keep your “worship”.

Why? Because you have not honored God (v. 2).

v. 4 I have kept my covenant with Moses…. This calls for reverence.

B. The Priests have not taught the truth. 2:5-9 Faulty instruction.

You have not taught the truth. You have compromised/watered down the message. You have made it too easy to be righteous.

True instruction should be in your mouth (v6)

Your lips should be preserving knowledge.(v7)

But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble (v8) violated the covenant. You have shown partiality.

Quoting Tyndale commentary: “Right behavior on the part of the people of Israel in covenant relationship with Jehovah was dependent on sound priestly instruction in the Torah and the virtuous example of the priests as covenant-keepers themselves.

**II Malachi 2:10-3:18 The People have been unfaithful**

A. They have been getting divorces. 2:10-16 (a metaphor for spiritual divorces)

2:10 Breaking faith with one another is breaking faith with God.

It is likely they were marrying foreign women to gain access to economic success—they were not trusting God to give them physical blessings.

v. 11-12 Marrying a non-Jew is desecrating the sanctuary.

v. 14 You have “broken faith” with a marriage covenant. In doing so they have broken faith with God.

v. 16 God sees divorce as a kind of social violence against the wife.

B. The people have stopped trusting in God 2:17 Where is God’s justice?

They are accusing God of not living up to his side of the bargain. They do not trust God’s justice.

Q: How have we been like this?

Malachi 3:1-5 The Day of the Lord Part I. (a previes of Malachi 3:16-4:6)

Malachi 3:1 “my messenger [my Malachi] who will prepare the way before me = John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:3, 10, 14)

v. 1 The Lord you are seeking will come to his temple. The Messiah is coming.

v. 1 “the messenger of the covenant whom you desire” = the Messiah.

v. 2-5 Do not let God’s mercy and patience cause you to believe he will not judge those who are not faithful to him. They will get what they asked for (for God to come), but not what they wanted (a free ride without judgment).

Are you ready for the Day of the Lord? Amos 5:18 “Woe to those who crave the day of the Lord.”

**Malachi 3:6-15 The people have been unfaithful.**

God is speaking here to the people, rather than the priests, so he keeps it simple. He encapsulates their spiritual issues in the question of giving the tithe.

3:6-7 God: Only return to me

The people: What do you mean we left you? When did we leave? What are you talking about? Who???? Me??????

[note: they had already returned. How can we return? They had returned to the land, but had not received the blessings of covenant relationship had not yet materialized because they were not faithful to God]

v. 8 You have robbed me.

The people? Who, me?

I imagine them trying to think what they had stolen from God….

Q: What about us?

How have we robbed you?

v. 8b In tithes and offerings. You have been stingy. You are under a curse!!!!!

Why? Stinginess = unbelief.

Bring in the whole tithe (Deut 12:6).

Q: Why is a partial tithe robbing God?

v. 10 Test me in this. [the word could be translated as tempt]

You have not trusted me to take care of your things.

**This is not about money**. It is about trusting that God will take care of us. You have held back. In your heart of heart, you did not really believe that God has your back. That’s why you gave better stuff to your boss than to me.

It is about being **faithful.** “Test me in this”

How? Trust fully in me.

v. 10b-12 Q: Do you **REALLY** believe God will bless you if you bring in the full tithe of your effort, your heart, your love, your money?

“the floodgates of heaven” = rain, abundant crops (Deut 28:12 blessings)

v. 13 You have said harsh things against me.

People? I have??? Did I say I hate God? Did I say that I refuse to worship God?

What have we said against you?

v. 14-15 Here is the key: You said It is futile to serve God.

What are we getting out of this? (Having faith vs being faithful again)

Do you trust God to give you a spouse if it is best for you? Do you trust God to take care of you financially if you give generously to the work of the church? Do you believe that if you give generously to Special Missions, your gift will produce an abundant harvest in your life?

Finish: 1 Timothy 6:6-10

**III The Day of the Lord Malachi 3:16-4:6**

3:16 A scroll of remembrance. The Lamb’s book of life.

3:17 They will be mine… I will spare them…

This section summarizes everything we have learned in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi

v. 1 The day is coming. For sure. Will the Day of the Lord be a bad day or a good day for you? It depends. It is a day of disaster and deliverance.

a. Every evildoer will be stubble. Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

b. Those who revere my name… The sun of righteousness (the Messiah) will rise with healing in its wings. You will leap like a calf in its stall. Like Bella when we open up her can of dog food. All the covenant promises and all the promises of Zechariah will be fulfilled.

God’s final words of the OT:

Summary:

1. Remember my law—remember Moses (v 4)

2. Be ready. I will send Elijah before that day. (Luke 1:17 John comes in the spirit and power of Elijah, Matt 11:14 He [John] is the Elijah who is to come)

Matthew 17:11 To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.

Repent, Return, Restore, Rebuild. All this is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

**Hosea**

Hosea about 750-735 BC. Contemporary of Isaiah and Micah. In the period immediately before the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Sargon of Assyria in 722 BC.

A prophet to Samaria (the North, Israel)

Hosea the name comes from the same root as Joshua and Jesus. It means salvation/deliverance. Is Hosea a prefigure if Jesus Christ? Yes!!!! He sacrificed every pleasure and comfort for the sake of Israel.

The situation: Israel, due to its depravity and worship of Baal is in terrible shape. Hos 4:1-3 Sounds a lot like Romans 3:10-18

Theme: Our unfaithfulness to God and God’s grace for us. God wants a relationship with us very badly!!! God is love!

Hosea’s life is a symbol.

Hosea and Gomer is a symbol of God and Israel.

It is also a symbol of God and each of us, individually.

1:2 Go and marry an adulterous wife and even accept children the result of her adultery.

Hosea marries Gomer.

1:4 Gomer bears Hosea a son named Jezreel = the place where the final battle occurred which destroyed Samaria/Israel.

Jezreel = vengeance

1:6-7 Gomer conceived again (but not by Hosea?) a daughter, Lo Ruhamah

Lo Ruhamah = not loved. There is no more forgiveness!!

What a name! Hosea was obedient!

1:8-9 A son Lo-Ammi = Not my people

A depressing situation. Yet…

1:10-11 A messianic prophecy.

2:1 Those who are now unloved and are not God’s people will become My people and My loved one.

What a wonderful picture of the grace of God!!!

2:2-13 Judgment for unfaithfulness. Us before we were saved.

Esp v. 5-8

This was Israel. This was us. Completely ungrateful. Completely unfaithful.

2:14-16 God looks at his unfaithful people who have sold themselves as harlots, and all he can think of is how to get them back. Amazing!!!

God’s love is irrational; it is unquenchable; it is unfathomable.

Reminds me of Romans 5:6-8

Hosea 3:1-5 As with God, so with Hosea.

v. 1 Go, show your love to your wife again (despite the fact that she has been throwing herself sexually at anyone who will respond). Love her like I love Israel.

v. 2 Hosea bought her back. (as did God) for 6 oz. of silver and ten bushels of barley.

Hosea now understands the nature of God’s love.

3:5 A messianic prophecy.

Hosea 4-end. The message. What to repent of and how to make it right. Kind of like a letter of Paul. First, the theology, then the practical application. Very emotional. Almost as if disorganized because of the emotional state of Hosea.

4-8 Israel’s guilt

9-11 Israel’s doom/judgment

* 1. Prospects for change.

A few points:

Israel’s problem

1. Hosea 4:6-9 Lack of knowledge of the Word of God.

The leaders ignored the Law and did not feed the people.

“And it will be like people like priests” As go the leaders, so go the people.

2. Hosea 5:2-5 Spiritual prostitution, pride and arrogance.

3. Hosea 6:4-6 Fleeting love, rather than faithful love. Their love was the exact opposite of God’s.

v. 6 I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Real love, not show.

4. Hosea 7:8-13 Worldliness. Foreign alliances. They have gone after power by worldly means as if the world can solve their problems.

Hosea 8:7 You sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind.

12:8 Ephraim boasts, “I am very rich.” God has blessed me, therefore I am righteous. Righteousness is not found in wealth and success!!!

God’s love

11:1 I called you out of Egypt. (Matthew 2:15)

11:8 How can I give you up? My compassion is aroused. Reminds me of Matthew 23:37.

12:9 I brought you out of Egypt. I spoke to you through the prophets. Will you not acknowledge and accept my love?

13:4-6 Very emotional. I cared for you, but you became satisfied. May this never happen to us. (Matthew 5:6)

Hosea 14 Words of hope and deliverance.

14:1-2 Repent and return.

14:3 Repent of worldliness

14:4-7 I will forgive you and love you

Note: An exegesis of Hosea 11:1-12:6 is at the end of the notes.

**Joel**

Fairly obscure date. Jo-el means Jehovah is God. Preached to Southern Kingdom.

1:2-2:17 Plague of four kinds of locusts. Old locusts, newly hatched, crawler, flier.

Describes an actual, literal plague of locusts and makes an application to the future.

1915 plague in Jerusalem. Nat Geographic. From border of Egypt to Taurus Mts. Loud noise first, then sun darkened, showers of excrement fell. April 15, every male 16-60 had to collect 5 kilograms of locust eggs daily. Every green leaf disappeared.

Introduces the idea of The Day of the Lord. Mentioned 5 times (1:15, 2:1,11,31, 3:14)

The Day of the Lord signifies “The moment when Jehovah grasps the reigns, which he seems to have held slackly before, when the currents of his moral rule, which have been running sluggishly, receive a mysterious quickening, and the Lord’s work on the earth is at last fully performed.”

Or “The Day in which Jehovah will manifest himself as God.”

The Day of the Lord is one before which one ought to consider repenting. (2:12-17)

Describes prophetically the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Acts 2:16f.

**Amos**

The most quotable book in the OT. 755 BC (two years before the earthquake)

Name means burden or burden-bearer.

Lived among the herdsmen of Tekoa (1:1). From the desert mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea.

A shepherd and a tender of sycamore-fig trees. A rustic. Many farming references (2:13 Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain 3:4-5 Does a lion roar in the thicket when he has no prey? Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground where no snare has been set? 6:12 Do horses run on rocky crags?)

From Judah, but a prophet to the North.

In days of Uzziah and Jereboam II. 2 years before the earthquake (760 BC?)

Golden age of wealth and power from Samaria.

“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion. That is us!! The rich oppressed the poor. All the luxury was especially shocking to Amos.

Message: Samaria is doomed (because of its sinfulness and lack of social justice)

5:2 Virgin Israel is fallen. She shall rise no more 722 BC.

Why? Luxury, frivolity, opulence, oppression, corruption, summer and winter palaces, ivory-inlaid beds, revelry and wine. Victimizing the poor, confiscating their garments for debt, sexual sin under the guise of religion, hollow, hypocritical Sabbath-keeping and religious observance.

Outline:

1:3-2:16 Judgment on nations, especially Samaria.

Damascus will fall because of cruelty to Gilead. (she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth)

Gaza will fall because of cruelty to Edom (took captive whole communities and sold them).

Tyre will fall for the same reason as Gaza.

Ammon will fall because they ripped open pregnant women of Gilead

Moab will fall because they burned the bones of Edom’s king.

Judah is in danger for idolatry (least said about her)

Now that I have denounced the denominations and the legalistic brothers, let’s talk about you.

Israel/Samaria is doomed for a litany of cruelty, greed and social injustice.

God has done a lot for his people. He has every right to expect far greater return from us than from others.

2:10-16 I did great things for you, Israel. Is it not true? But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy. Now I will crush you.

3:2 You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.

From him to whom much has been given, much will be expected. Luke 12:48

Q: Have you been given much?

Ch 3: Hear this word: Doom is coming to Samaria.

3:12 Only a remnant will be saved. This is a constant theme throughout the prophets. God will judge his people for their unfaithfulness, but a remnant is always saved. This is true when God judges his church.

Ch 4 Hear this word

Why? Let us see what the cows of Bashan on Mt. Samaria are doing:

4:1 You women oppress the poor, crush the needy and say to your husbands, “Bring us some drinks.” This sounds EXACTLY like America today.

God’s reaction: v. 2 You will be taken out with hooks. Not very dignified! The things you trust in you will lose.

What did they do? They played the religious game 4:4-5

4:6-as far as you want to read. The message: I tried to get your attention by causing harm, but it did not work.

Message: God will do anything to get us back except force us.

There are two ways to be humbled by God:

1. By having him pour blessings on you.

2. By having him take away your blessings. (Daniel 4:37 those who walk in pride he is able to humble)

Summary:

4:12 Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.

Hear this word: Fallen is Virgin Israel, never to rise again. We can get to a point at which there is no hope. There is no coming back from captivity. The Northern Kingdom never came back!

So, what is the solution?

1. Amos 5:4 Seek me, not the world and live

2. Amos 5:14 Seek good, not evil Hate evil love good. **MAINTAIN JUSTICE**

**Demonstrate social justice at every level.**

(5:7 you turn justice into bitterness. 5:10 you hate him who reproves in court and despise those who tell the truth. 5:11 You trample on the poor, while you build stone mansions 5:12 you oppress the righteous and take bribes. You deny justice to the poor.)

**Q: What is social justice?**

3. Amos 5:21-27 Offer God true worship, not hypocricy. (also Amos 8:5-6) God detests

hypocricy

4. Amos 6:1f Do not be complacent. Do not rely on your riches, but on God. Complacent in what? That God is surely with you. And in your things.

5. Amos 6:8-13 Be humble before God. Do not say “Did we not take Karnaim by our own strength? (1 Cor 4:7 What do you have that you did not receive?)

Ch 7 A vision of judgment on Israel. Amaziah the priest confronts Amos, telling him to stop prophesying. Amos’ reply: (7:17) Your land will be measured and divided up and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile away from their native land.” This is exactly what happened in 722 BC.

Ch 8 & 9 More apocalyptic visions of doom for Samaria.

Encouraging end. A promise of restoration (which did, indeed occur)

9:11 A prophecy of a restored messianic kingdom. (Acts 15:16)

(9:13) Behold, the day will come, says Jehovah, when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed.)

Themes:

1. Insincere worship is an insult to God. :I despise your feasts… assemblies (5:21-23)

2. God”s servant must demonstrate social justice. (James 1:27)

Corollary: Privelege brings responsibility. (3:2) You only have I known of all the families on the earth. Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.”

Very quotable passages

Amos 3:2 Amos 5:14 Amos 6:1

**Nahum**

Nahum the Elkoshite. From Elko? Nothing known. Nahum = “comforter.”

Carried away in the deportation of Sargon? (722 BC) or Tiglath Pileser? (734 BC)

Setting: Nahum 3:8-10 After fall of Thebes to the Asyrians under Assurbanipal (663 BC) but before the destruction of Nineveh (612 BC). Probably closer to 663 BC. Assurbanipal boasted of his excessive cruelty. He describes tearing off the lips and limbs of conquered kings., forced three captured Elamite kings to drag his chariot through the streets, compelled a prince to wear the severed head of his father around his neck. No other king, EVEN of Assyria boasted of such outrageous war crimes. Assyrians the cruelest of Near Eastern empires. They had boasted “space failed for corpses.” They made “pyramids of human heads” They “covered pillars with the flayed skins of their rivals.”

Nineveh. Opposite the Tigris from modern day Mosul, founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:11). Capital of Assyria 1100-880 and 705-612 BC. 7.5 mi circumference walls; three chariots abreast wide.

**Exegesis of Hosea 11:1-12:6**

**Introduction to Hosea**

Hosea is an eight century BCE prophet to the Northern Kingdom of the Israelite people. According to the prolegomena of the book, the son of Beeri prophesied during the reign of the Judahite kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and during the reign of Jeroboam II of Samaria. George Robinson estimates his career as spanning 750-725 BCE,[[1]](#footnote-1) whereas Duane Garrett proposes a more likely but broader range of 760-710 BCE[[2]](#footnote-2)—more likely because it includes the end of the reign of Uzziah and the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah. Jeroboam II, son of Joash ruled Israel from 793-753 BCE.[[3]](#footnote-3) Hezekiah ruled from 716-686 BCE. The internal evidence suggests, but does not prove, that parts of Hosea both precede and come after the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-733 BCE). Shalman (Shalmanezer of Assyria) is mentioned (Hosea 10:14), which puts at least part of the prophecy after 722 BCE. If we take the prolegomena at face value, then the prophetic career of Hosea spanned from a time of great political and financial prosperity for Samaria/Ephraim, through political instability and near-constant warfare, with five of six kings murdered in office, down to the complete destruction of Samaria under Shalmaneser and Sargon II of Assyria. In this sense, Hosea is much like Jeremiah, whose prophetic career began in prosperity under the reforming king Josiah, through four disastrous rulers, to the utter destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. The date of the book is of some relevance to the interpretation of our passage.

The set of prophetic writings we call the Book of Hosea are not easily outlined. Although many have suggested emendations and later additions to the book, all agree that at least significant parts of the work can be attributed to the 8th century prophet Hosea. It does no violation either to the evidence or to the content of the book to proceed on the assumption that the entire book was written by the prophet to the Northern Kingdom, Hosea. As for writing style, as we will see in our analysis of the text, Hosea is often purposefully oblique. Hosea is one of the most difficult to translate in the Hebrew Bible, using many obscure words and unusual turns of phrase.

I will make a few general comments about the book as a whole, so that we can see where the passage to be studied fits into the entire document. First, I will briefly mention the main themes of Hosea, all of which, by the way, are expressed in Hosea 11:1-12:6. The themes of Hosea include the following:

1. Apostasy of Israel, especially due to idolatry.

2. The coming judgment of God.

3. The call to repentance.

4. The irrational and undying covenant-love (*hesed*) of God for Israel.

5. Hope for restoration of Israel and Judah.

If Israel’s sin can be distilled down to one thing, it is that she has violated the covenant and failed to show covenant-love (*hesed*) to God. “There is no truth, no faithful love (*hesed*) and no knowledge of God in the land.” (Hosea 4:1 Holman Christian Standard Bible HCSB) Israel is guilty of gross sin. Robinson[[4]](#footnote-4) lists some of the sins of Ephraim as follows: lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), pride (Hosea 5:5), instability (Hosea6:4), worldliness (7:8), backsliding (11:7) and idolatry (13:2). Many of these are in view in our passage, especially idolatry. God’s wrath and his judgment have been aroused, and they are coming from the North.

However, one gets the sense, in spite of all God’s bitter criticism of Israel through Hosea, that Yaweh’s love for his chosen people is greater still than his wrath and his judgment. In the end, Hosea, despite all the predictions of judgment, is a book of hope. Because of his covenant-love, his *hesed*, God cannot and will not give up on his people. Of course, this theme is memorably expressed in the first three chapters of Hosea. Here God tells Hosea to take back his adulterous wife—one of the most powerful images in the entire Scripture. Less famously, but equally powerfully, this theme is revealed in Hosea 11:1-12:6.

The saving grace of God is illustrated in the very name of Hosea—a cognate of Joshua/Yeshua, which means “salvation,” “help,” “deliverer.”[[5]](#footnote-5) In fact, the inescapable love of God is so prevalent in Hosea that he has been called the “St. John of the Old Testament.” [[6]](#footnote-6) Alice Keefe[[7]](#footnote-7) says that “While the book includes several oracles offering hope of reconciliation and redemption, the overall tone is dark, with warnings of impending national catastrophe.” The political facts on the ground in the eighth century and over half the actual written words in the book support Keefe’s view. However as one that is not involved in the political turmoil of the day, I find myself not agreeing with her overall assessment of Hosea. The message and tone of Hosea are more of hope and love than of rebuke and judgment.

Another way to think of the tone of the book of Hosea is that of Robinson. Hosea’s message is “one long impassioned monologue, broken by sobs.”[[8]](#footnote-8) In Hosea we have a God who shows compassion and undying love for his people. God is no platonic, dispassionate observer of human beings. God is desperately in love with his people, and he will do anything to get them back. If there is any part of Hosea which illustrates this tone, it is Hosea 11:1-12:6.

**The Text to be Studied**

Hosea 11:1-12:6;

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

[The more] they called them, [the more] they departed from me.

They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them in my arms,

But they never knew that I healed them.

I led them with human cords, with ropes of kindness.

To them I was like one who eases the yoke from their jaws: I bent down to give them food. Israel will not return to the land of Egypt and Assyria will be his king, because they refused to repent.

A sword will whirl through his cities; It will destroy and devour the bars of his gates, because of their schemes.

My people are bent on turning from Me. Though they call to Him on high, He will not exalt at all.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I surrender you, Israel?

How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

I have had a change of heart; My compassion is stirred!

I will not vent the full fury of My anger; I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim.

For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you; I will not come in rage.

They will follow the Lord; He will roar like a lion. When he roars, His children will come trembling from the West.

They will be roused like birds from Egypt and like doves from the land of Assyria.

Then I will settle them in their homes.

This is the Lord’s declaration.

Ephraim surrounds me with lies, the house of Israel, with deceit

Judah still wanders with El and is faithful to the holy ones.

Ephraim chases the wind and pursues the east wind. He continually multiplies lies and violence.

He makes a covenant with Assyria, and olive oil is carried to Egypt.

The Lord also has a dispute with Judah.

He is about to punish Jacob according to his ways; He will repay him based on his actions.

In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel, and as an adult he wrestled with God.

Jacob struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor.

He found him at Bethel, and there he spoke with him.

Yahweh is the God of Hosts; Yahweh is his name.

But you must return to your God. Maintain love and justice and always put your hope in God.

(HCSB)

General Considerations

The literary genre of the text is prophetic poetry. It can be described as an oracle of God to his people. Here is an outline of the passage:

I. God has always loved Israel. He has always maintained covenant love/*hesed*. 11:1-4.

II. But God’s people have stubbornly broken faith and must be judged. 11:5-7.

III. Although judgment is called for, God cannot give up his treasured child. God will call back a remnant. 11:8-11.

IV. Ephraim and Judah have repeatedly broken covenant love/*hesed*. 11:12-12:2

V. Analogy of Ephraim to Jacob: sin and restoration. 12:2-5.

VI A call to repent. 12:6.

A quick comparison of this outline to the themes of the entire Book of Hosea, listed above, will inform that this passage is, in a sense, the entire book of Hosea in miniature. This is the reason that I have chosen this particular passage to exegete.

Another way of viewing Hosea 11:1-12:6 is that in this section, Hosea is doing for a second time what he did in the first three chapters of the prophecy. In the first three chapters, the themes of the book are brought out through the metaphor of God as husband and Israel as unfaithful wife. God made a covenant with a people who would be unfaithful, yet he cannot give his people up. He will buy them back. So, God has Hosea marry Gomer. She is, predictably unfaithful, but Hosea goes to his unfaithful wife and buys her back to serve him again. God will not give up on his people.

In Hosea 11:1-12:6 Hosea is doing almost exactly the same thing, but through the use of a second metaphor—one thoroughly immersed in the history of Israel. This is the metaphor of God as the Father and Israel/Jacob as the unfaithful son. God loved his people when they were enslaved “children” in Egypt. So, he called them out and made a covenant with them. Predictably, they were unfaithful, yet God, like the father in the Parable of the Lost Son, cannot give his people up. Instead, like a lion, he roars and calls his son back to live with him again.

**Analysis of the text**

I. Hosea 11:1-4.

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

[The more] they called them, [the more] they departed from me.

They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them in my arms,

But they never knew that I healed them.

I led them with human cords, with ropes of kindness.

To them I was like one who eases the yoke from their jaws: I bent down to give them food. (Hosea 11:1-4 HCSB)

In this section, Hosea uses the analogy of God, as a father, calling his people out of slavery in Egypt. Else Kragelund[[9]](#footnote-9) notes that this metaphor is of a youthful son (Hebrew: *ben*), “taken from the sphere of family life.” It is not a unique use of this metaphor, as it is also found in Jeremiah 2:2 and 3:4. There is great rhetorical power in Hosea’s appeal to the deepest historical memory of the Jewish people. “When Israel was a child” is a reference to a much younger Israel. Hosea reminds God’s people that he has always loved them. Despite appearances to the contrary—even when the expected blessings that come with sonship are not in evidence—God has always kept *hesed*. This reminds us of Malachi 1:2-3. “I have [always] loved you.” The people challenge this claim in Malachi: “How have you loved us?” “Yet I have loved Jacob, but I hated Esau.” As Hosea is echoed in Malachi, so Paul uses Malachi 1:2-3 for slightly different purposes in Romans 9:10-13. Here he reminds Jewish Christians that, even if he is currently blessing Gentiles, he will never stop loving his elect people. God never breaks faith with his beloved children.

God uses many powerful metaphors for his relationship with his people. In Hosea 1-3 it is that of a husband who loves his unfaithful wife, in Hosea 11:1-4 it is of a father and his wandering son. In Ezekiel 16 the metaphor is of a loving adoptive father with an orphaned female child, thrown out to die. In Isaiah 49:15 the picture is of a mother and a child nursing at her breast. Every trait God has he has, that trait intensely. This is no less true of his passionate and emotional love for his people.

It should be noted that in Matthew 2:15 Hosea 11:1 is used as a passage with messianic implications. Matthew notes that Jesus’ journey with his family into Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod and his subsequent exodus from Egypt back to Galilee is a fulfillment of the historical foreshadow of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. Skeptics dismiss this use of Hosea 11:1 by Matthew, noting (accurately) that Hosea is not talking about Jesus but Israel. However, in his commentary on Mathew, R. T. Francis has an excellent response to this criticism.[[10]](#footnote-10) “Matthew’s quotation thus depends for its validity on the recognition of Jesus as the true Israel, a typological theme found elsewhere in the New Testament, and most obviously paralleled in Matthew by Jesus’ use of Israel-texts in the wilderness. There too it is as God’s son that Jesus is equated with Israel. Israel’s exodus from Egypt was taken already by the Old Testament prophets as a prefiguring of the ultimate Messianic salvation, and Matthew’s quotation [from Hosea 11:1] here thus reinforces his presentation of the childhood history of Jesus as the dawning of the Messianic age.” We can add Joseph and Moses, as well as all who are saved by Christ to the list of those who were called out of Egypt as God’s son. In Hosea 11:1 and 11:5, but also in Revelation 11:8, Hebrews 3:16 and elsewhere, Egypt is used as a metaphor for sin and slavery. Out of Egypt I called my son, means that God calls Israel as well as us out of slavery to sin through the saving call of the new Moses, Jesus of Nazareth. It is not an accident that Egypt is mentioned five times in the short passage we are studying.

Hosea 11:2 presents some interpretive difficulties. Here the NIV has, “But the more they were called, the more they went away from me.” This makes the difficult Hebrew of the text relatively easy for a modern reader to understand, but, unfortunately, this is not the sense of the original. The original Hebrew, literally, has “they [Israel] called to them [Egypt], that is how they [Israel] went from them [Egypt].”[[11]](#footnote-11) “Me” is not found in the Hebrew. The correct sense of this passage is that, even as Israel was wandering in the desert, under the protection of Yaweh, their minds and hearts were still lingering in Egypt. They never truly left slavery behind. Their hearts were still in Egypt. God was always fully committed to his people, but his people were *never* fully committed to Him.

This makes sense with the rest of the section. God says through Hosea that, even when, as a doting father, he was teaching them how to walk (v.3a), and even when he loved them with human-like cords of kindness (v. 4a), and even as he gave them manna every morning to eat (v. 4b), at a time when most children would still be completely innocent; Even then, they were already worshipping the Baals (v. 2b) and forgetting who had healed them (v. 3b). This fact that Israel never stopped looking back is well-illustrated by Numbers 11:4-6 and Numbers 21:4-9.

Hosea’s mention of Baal (v. 2b), the storm-god of the Phoenicians and Canaanites seems at first to be anachronistic when applied to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, but it is likely an oblique reference to the bull-worship on Sinai (Exodus 32, with its current equivalent bull-worship at Dan and Bethel), or it may be a reference to Baal of Peor (Numbers 25:1-18). Hosea is using the different sort of Baal-worship of their forebears to bear witness to their continued worship of the Canaanite Baal as more mature adults. They have never changed! However, before we move on, let us not forget the main point here. God has always loved his people and he has never failed to keep his covenant of love to his people. He has always maintained *hesed*.

II. Hosea 11:5-7.

Israel will not return to the land of Egypt and Assyria will be his king, because they refused to repent.

A sword will whirl through his cities; It will destroy and devour the bars of his gates, because of their schemes.

My people are bent on turning from Me. Though they call to Him on high, He will not exalt at all.

God has never broken faith with his people. However, because they have continually gone after the Baals, and because they have not faithfully kept the covenant they made at Sinai—because they have not kept *hesed*, God will bring judgment on the people he loves. This is the mournful cry of a passionate God in these verses. Hosea points out that the return to a place of shame and slavery in this case will not be to Egypt (v. 5a), instead, this time around, the slavery will be to Assyria. “A sword will flash in their cities” is a prophecy of the destruction of Samaria under Sennacherib in 722 BCE. It is also a fulfillment of the curses prophesied in Deuteronomy (Deut 28:25, 36-37, 49-50, 53-54) There is an interesting play on words in v. 11. Hosea laments here that the hypocritical claim of the citizens of Ephraim that they believe in a God Most High. Their hypocrisy will not result in their being exalted on high. “By no means” will God exalt those who “are determined to turn from me.”

III. Hosea 11:8-11.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I surrender you, Israel?

How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

I have had a change of heart; My compassion is stirred!

I will not vent the full fury of My anger; I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim.

For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you; I will not come in rage.

They will follow the Lord; He will roar like a lion. When he roars, His children will come trembling from the West.

They will be roused like birds from Egypt and like doves from the land of Assyria.

Then I will settle them in their homes.

This section is a beautiful and compelling emotional cry of a God who, as a father, cannot bear to punish his children. “How can I give you up Ephraim?” God recounts in his mind what he was compelled to do to the citizens of Admah and Zeboyim (v. 8). Here is a poetic and obtuse reference to the destruction of their sister cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is also the second use by Hosea in this section of what we can assume was a very familiar story from Israel’s past. Hosea is being purposefully indirect as a rhetorical device to catch the attention of Ephraim and of those of us who know enough Bible to “get” the oblique reference to Genesis 19. This use of the first book in the Torah may not prove that Genesis in its current state existed in the eighth century BCE, but it is compelling evidence that much of the source material for Genesis not only existed at that time, but was part of the deep historical self-knowledge of the Jews in the eighth century BCE.

“How can I treat you like Admah?” Here we see a God of great compassion and pathos. As Garrett puts it, “It is precisely in texts such as this that the love of God becomes vivid reality and not a barren abstraction.[[12]](#footnote-12) What kind of God does Ephraim have to do with? “For I am God, and not a man—the Holy one among you.” God is not human, yet he has very human-like qualities here. Yaweh is a relational God. In this he is not like the self-seeking gods of the Phoenicians, the Assyrians or the Canaanites. The mournful cry in Hosea 11:8 reminds us of the heart of Jesus as seen in Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem… How often I wanted to gather her chicks under her wings, yet you were not willing.” Yet, like the citizens of Jerusalem, on whom Jesus pronounced judgment in spite of his fierce love, Ephraim will be judged and sent to Assyria.

In 11:9 Hosea has God declaring that, unlike with Sodom and Gomorrah, he will not vent the full fury of his wrath on his people Ephraim. He will not destroy them again. Here, “I will not again destroy” is preferrable to the HCSB “I will not turn back to destroy.” Why does God not do what justice seems to call for him to do? “For I am God and not man.” That is why “I will not come in rage.” (Hosea 11:9) Like Jonah complained, “You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to become angry, rich in faithful love (*hesed*), and One who relents from sending disaster.” (Jonah 4:2 HCSB) Indeed, God will roar, but when he does so, it will be to call a remnant, “trembling from the west.” They will come out of Egypt and Assyria as well, which can be a reference to the return of Israel and Judah during the time of the Persian kingdom, or can be an allusion to a future call of a remnant of all nations to the Church after Pentecost. We would do well not to limit the allusion to one application, as this is the pattern in Old Testament kingdom prophecies. This section is concluded with great comfort for the remnant of God. “Then I will settle them in their homes.” (Hosea 11:11)

IV. Hosea 11:12-12:2.

Ephraim surrounds me with lies, the house of Israel, with deceit

Judah still wanders with El and is faithful to the holy ones.

Ephraim chases the wind and pursues the east wind. He continually multiplies lies and violence.

He makes a covenant with Assyria, and olive oil is carried to Egypt.

The Lord also has a dispute with Judah.

He is about to punish Jacob according to his ways; He will repay him based on his actions.

Here is why, in spite of his unfailing love and father-like devotion to Samaria, judgment is coming, not only on Israel, but eventually on Judah as well. Israel is full of lies, but Judah is not much better at keeping *hesed*. She, like Ephraim is a spiritual wanderer, wavering in her expression of covenant devotion. There is some interpretational difficulty with Hosea 11:12. This is because in some contexts El is used for the God of the Jews, but El is also the name for the highest God in the Canaanite pantheon of gods. To make it more confusing, El was also a generic name for deity. Because in the context Judah is being accused of apostasy, we would do well to take the third option. Judah wanders after deity and various “holy ones.”[[13]](#footnote-13) She is Oholibah and Samaria is Oholah (Ezekiel 23).

Hosea 12:1-2 reflects the facts of history during the ministry of Hosea. Both Israel and Judah were not trusting in Yahweh for deliverance. Instead, they were like the wind, switching back and forth between relying on the two dominant worldly powers in the Near East, Assyria and Egypt. We, too, can find ourselves seeking comfort and economic support from worldly power and from “olive oil… carried out of Egypt.” This is a deadly error.

V. Hosea 12:3-5.

In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel, and as an adult he wrestled with God.

Jacob struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor.

He found him at Bethel, and there he spoke with him.

Yahweh is the God of Hosts; Yahweh is his name.

In a fascinating allusion we have our third reference to the history of Israel in this relatively short passage. Hosea uses the tempestuous relationship between Jacob and Yaweh as a metaphor for Ephraim’s relationship with God. Else Holt[[14]](#footnote-14) calls Hosea 12:3-7 a *rib-*statement—an indictment against Israel. She sees nearly all the descriptions of Jacob, the patron-saint of the Northern Kingdom, as negative. Holt says with good reason that “Jacob is used as an example for Israel. Just as Jacob surrendered himself to Yaweh of Hosts in Bethel, so must the people come back to the proper cult of Yaweh… They should learn from Jacob.” However, I agree with Garrett,[[15]](#footnote-15) who gives a more positive spin on the career of Jacob and his relationship to Yaweh (and therefore also to Israel and Judah). He says that in these allusions, “Jacob the struggling conniver became Israel the recipient of grace.” In this passage we see the sin of youthful Jacob who grasped his brother’s heel, but we also see the mature Israel who zealously “struggled” with and ultimately found God at Bethel. Like Moses, he spoke with God.

The allusions to historical Jacob are reason for concern, but also for hope. If Israel will, like their namesake, zealously seek God, perhaps they will, like Jacob, receive God’s blessing. It is not too late for Jacob’s descendants.

VI. Hosea 12:6 A call to repent.

But you must return to your God. Maintain love and justice and always put your hope in God.

We complete our study of Hosea 11:1-12:6 with what is the most common call of all the prophets. It is time for Israel, it is time for Judah, and it is time for the reader of Hosea to repent of their sins, both corporate and individual. For Israel, to repent is to return to what they had under Moses in the wilderness. The call to repentance in Hosea is the call to recommit to *hesed*—to a faithful covenant love. To return to God means to behave like God. No longer can Ephraim hope in the power of Egypt or of Assyria to save them. They must put their hope in the God who loves them like a son, who calls them out of slavery in Egypt.

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12. Garrett*, Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary, Vol. 19a (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997), 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In this I am not quoting, but I am using Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary, Vol. 19a, 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Holt, *Prophesying the Past: The Use of Israel’s History in the Book of Hosea*,142. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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