

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 37

Christ in Jeremiah

March 9, 1998

Intro: In our study of the prophecy of Isaiah, and specifically in Isaiah 11, we came upon a title of the Messiah which carries over into the prophecy of Jeremiah. That title was the “Branch.” This is the way Isaiah introduced chapter 11 and that section going through Isaiah 12 which has to do with the yet future appearance of our Lord:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots (Isa. 11:1)

And farther down in the same chapter we find these words in verse 10:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious (Isa. 11:10).

Jesse, you will remember, was the father of David. And to David were given great promises regarding the future of his house. The first place that we find these promises given in detail is in 2 Samuel 7.

David had wanted to build the temple, and the prophet initially told him to go ahead with his plans. But in the night the Lord appeared to Nathan and told him that he was not to build the temple, but that his son, who would be king after him, would build the temple. But that is not all that the Lord had Nathan tell David. In verses 12 through 17 we find the very surprising message that Nathan had for David from the Lord. This is what these verses reveal:

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David (2 am. 7:12-17).

Notice especially verses 15 and 16. (Re-read.)

What followed was David’s prayer responding to the promise of God, and he was obviously overwhelmed with the message that Nathan brought to him. Let me take the time to read his response to you. We find it in 2 Sam. 7:18-29:

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem

for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever (2 Sam. 7:18-29).

We have seen in our studies of “Christ in the Old Testament” that the promise of a Redeemer goes back as far as Genesis 3, but the revelation of this great truth was given more and more detail the farther we get into the Old Testament. And here it becomes clear that the Messiah would be a king, and that he would be a descendant of David.

And so when Isaiah spoke of the coming reign of the Messiah, he spoke of Him as “a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch” which would grow out of his roots, i.e., Jesse’s roots” (Isa. 11:1). Of course, Isaiah had to be writing under the direction of the Spirit of God in order for him to have that knowledge.

Isaiah and Jeremiah appear next to each other in our Bibles, but it is only because by their very length, and also because of their content, they are considered to be Major Prophets. Isaiah prophesied about 700 years before Christ, but Jeremiah prophesied about 100 years later. Both were prophets to Judah, but Jeremiah prophesied just before Judah’s captivity, and on into the period of the captivity. At that time, as Delitzsch wrote, “the house of David...because of its apostasy, is like the stump of a felled tree...like a root without stem, branches, or crown” (Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, I, 281). It looked like there would be no nation of Israel or Judah, and that the house of David had most certainly come to an end. And even as stems or small branches often grow out of a stump, yet even they gave little hope that the tree would ever grow again. But in spite of the unfaithfulness of the Lord’s people, God’s promises stand and His purposes do not change. God told David that He would establish His kingdom forever, and that is exactly what the Lord intended to do. It was surely a dismay time for Jeremiah, but he was permitted to see by the revelation of God that the promises of God were not dead. And even though he was taken in Egypt where he died, the promises of God still stand.

Now to tie this in with the teaching of our Lord in the NT, let us turn and read from Matthew’s prophecy, chapter 24, verses 29 through 31:

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:29-31).

This age in which we live is going to be followed by the coming of the Lord and the rapture of the Church.

And then there will be the time of the Great Tribulation. That period will be followed, as our passage in Matthew tells us, but the appearing of “the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” And then He will regather His people from all of the nations of the earth, and will establish His kingdom on the earth. And at the close of the Great Tribulation nothing would appear to be more impossible than the re-establishing of the throne of David upon the earth. But it will be, and it will see David’s greatest Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, ruling over all of the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is exciting even to think about it, isn’t it?

Isaiah and Jeremiah were permitted to see this by faith in the revelation which God gave to them. And only Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke of the Lord as a Branch. The tree of Israel will flourish again, and when it does, the glory will all belong to God Himself and to His Son Who will occupy David’s throne.

The number of classes that we have left before we discontinue for the summer months, is not many. And so I am not going to spend a lot of time in Jeremiah dealing with this subject. I want to get to as many of the other prophets as time will permit so that we can have at least a taste of this great subject in most of the books which remain.

The two chapters in Jeremiah which speak of our Lord as the Branch are Jeremiah 23 and 33. So let us begin our consideration of Christ in Jeremiah by looking first at Jeremiah 23. You will see how closely related these two chapters are to each other.

Let us begin by reading Jer. 23:1-8. (Read.)

I. JEREMIAH 23:1-8.

23:1-2 The Lord made it clear as far back as the days of Moses, that the only thing that could lead to judgment upon the people of Israel, and their scattering out of the land, was their own sin. Time and time again they were warned by the prophets, but for the most part their messages were not received. And when Jeremiah spoke of the pastors of the people, he was speaking of the priest and especially the kings who were unfaithful, but also of the false prophets who lulled the people to sleep in their sins. And consequently they were to suffer the judgment of God upon themselves.

Last Sunday night I spoke to our people here at Trinity on 2 Chron. 7:14. It was the Lord’s response to Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple which Solomon had constructed. In Solomon’s prayer, he tried to anticipate every difficulty that the children of Israel could get into in the days to come, and he asked the Lord to forgive them when they would pray to him. But the point that the Lord was making in 2 Chron. 7:14 was that it was what was happening in the lives of His people that made the difference between blessing and judgment. And the leaders of the Lord’s people, whether we are talking about Israel or the Church, carry much of the responsibility for the judgment when it comes. But the people carry their share of the responsibility at the same time. *But it is important for us to remember this principle in our country today as well. We have corrupt leaders, and they are answerable to God for what they do, but the point we all need to remember is that blessing or judgment ultimately depends upon how we as the Lord’s people are living. And beyond that, we need to remember the faithfulness of God. If we need judgment, we will get it. But God is not going to give up His promises. His purposes stand! That was Israel’s hope, and that is ours today as well.*

What was the purpose of God for Israel, a purpose which is yet to be completely fulfilled?

We see it in verses 3 and 4 of our chapter.

23:3-4 We have here three important statements where the Lord said “I will” in these two verses, and then in both verses we see what the results will be:

- 1) “I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them.” The word “remnant” speaks of *the elect of Israel*. And this is what our Lord said according to Matt. 24:31.
- 2) “I...will bring them again to their folds,” where it is understood that they will be safe from their enemies.
- 3) “I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them.”

The results are these:

- 1) “And they shall be fruitful and increase,” speaking of numerical growth and spiritual prosperity.
- 2) “And they shall fear nor more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.”

This is what the Lord said that He would do in the verses we read in Matt. 24. It is not that His people will be sent back, nor that they will go back on their own, *but He will bring them back!* And great blessing will follow.

But this is not the greatest part of the future purpose of God. The greatest part is given to us in verses 5 and 6. (Read.)

23:5-6 “Behold” is a word calling attention to something very important, and it is something the that Lord has put His Name to: “Saith the Lord.” And this makes it absolutely certain. There is no possibility that this will fail. “The days come.” Those long-awaited days, days which many, many times in Israel’s history, have been forgotten, or rejected as never to be fulfilled. “The days come.”

What days? “This I will raise unto David a righteous Branch.” This is our Lord. The Father will “raise” Him. This word raise speaks of *a promise fulfilled, a purpose confirmed*. It is as though God said, “I told you that I would, and I will. The promise was given to David, and He will rise up from David’s family. The throne was destroyed, but I will establish it again. The stump suddenly becomes a tree again, and the stem becomes a strong Branch. But contrary to most of the kings of Israel and Judah, and yet like some, He will be “a righteous Branch, and a King.” The Apostle John called our Lord, “Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). He is One Who is totally righteous both in His character and in His work. He is the One Who defines the word *righteous*. He measure up fully to every requirement of God. There is no way in which He falls short. And, like David before Him, He is “a King.”

He shall “reign and prosper.” In the word “reign” as it relates to our Lord Jesus Christ, we see *absolute sovereignty!*

Psalm 72 gives us David’s prayer for Solomon, but it speaks prophetically of that which would take place in the reign of the Messiah. (Read.)

And it was Isaac Watts who caught the meaning of this Psalm, and gave us the word of the hymn we love to sing:

Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

And then verse 5 ends with the statement, “And [He] shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” These words should be “justice and righteousness.” What a day that will be! And what a departure from what we have had from the kings and presidents and dictators of the earth. The Lord is called “a righteous Branch, and

a King.” And bringing that description of our Lord together with what He does, we learn that in order to rule righteously, the King must be righteous—and this is just where we have our problems today. Unrighteous men will not rule in righteousness.

But let us go on to verse 6.

Verse 5 begins, “Behold, the days come”; and here in verse 6 they are called “His days.” When the Lord dwells on earth there will be both salvation and security for the people of Israel and Judah. This is what Moses taught the children of Israel to expect in the blessing he pronounced prophetically upon the children of Israel before he died. His words are found in Deut. 33:26-29:

26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

“Jeshurun” means “the upright one,” describing in a symbolic way her ideal character.

27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

“And this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Do you see the progressive revelation that we have here concerning our Lord and righteousness?

- 1) First, He is righteous, “a righteous Branch,” in verse 5.
- 2) Second, he rules in righteousness, the word “justice” at the end of verse 5 is *righteousness*.
- 3) Third, He is “OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” in verse 6. Cf. Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21.

If we were to transliterate the Hebrew words for “JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” into English, it would be *Jehovah Tsidkenu*. As we saw in the Messianic sections of Isaiah’s prophecy, there was a definite Gospel emphasis, so the same is true in the prophecy of Jeremiah where He spoke of the Messiah.

(Read Robert Murray M’Cheyne’s poem on this title of our Lord. It is in his biography pp. 632, 633.)

Fausset said about this title,

“Our” makes His *manhood*, which is also implied in His being a *Branch raised unto David*, whence His human title, “Son of David” (cf. Matt. xxii. 42-45). “Righteousness” marks His *Godhead*, for God alone can justify the ungodly” (IV, 79).

And we can add that only the Members of the Godhead are perfectly righteous.

May each one of us make sure that Jehovah Tsidkenu is truly our righteousness. What a glorious picture Jeremiah was given of our Lord to pass on to us!

But let us go on to the last two verses of this Messianic passage: verses 7 and 8.

23:7-8 If you turn to Jer. 16 you will find these two verses in verses 14 and 15. The repetition is for emphasis, and to call it to the attention of the readers, so amazing will be the final gathering of the children of Israel. Up to the present God’s gathering of Israel to Himself from Egypt was the greatest deliverance. It surpassed any

other deliverance in miraculous sign and judgments, as well in the numbers of people who were delivered. But the judgment which is to come will make the exodus from Egypt seem to be nothing in comparison. This will be from all nations of the earth, and it will come within an instant of time. In one moment the elect will be scattered among all nations of the earth; the next, they will be in the land.

We must realize what an encouragement this must have been to Jeremiah. The present was nothing but depressing to him. That is why he is known as *the weeping prophet*. But he took his encouragement from the character of God and of the Messiah, and from the promises God had given to His people in the past. He died without seeing these promises fulfilled, but he died in the certainty that someday they would be fulfilled, and that he would share in the glory of the fulfillment of the promises.

II. JEREMIAH 33.

This chapter gives us basically the same truth that we have seen in chapter 23. See, e.g., Jer. 33:15-16. But additional details are given as to what it will mean to the people of God in Israel when God restores them to His favor. We need to remember that between the promises that had been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the promises that had been given to David and renewed to Isaiah and Jeremiah, and their ultimate fulfillment, was the work of the Messiah on the Cross. That was when He came the first time. But when He comes the second time to the earth to reign, then all of these promises of the past will be fulfilled, and our Lord will reign upon the earth in His glory.

(If time permits, read Jeremiah 33.)

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 38

Christ in Ezekiel

March 23, 1998

Intro: All we know of Ezekiel is what we have in this prophecy which bears his name. He was a prophet of the captivity in Babylon, and a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel. And so this was a time of great prophetic activity. The only time that was greater was the time of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah. In round numbers we can remember, as I mentioned in our study of Jeremiah, that Isaiah ministered about 700 years before Christ, and Jeremiah, 600 years before Christ. And so the same can be said of Ezekiel: some 600 years before Christ.

The book can be divided into three parts:

- 1) Prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction (Ezek. 1-24).
- 2) Prophecies against Seven Gentile Nations (Ezek. 25-32).
- 3) Prophecies of God's Final Blessings upon Israel (33:48).

This does not mean that there are no predictions of hope for Israel in the first thirty-two chapters, but it does mean that the emphasis upon Israel's restoration and glory is reserved for the latter part of the prophecy.

As an illustration of a passage in the first part of Ezekiel's prophecy which speaks of hope, please turn to Ezekiel 11:13-21. (Read.)

The prediction in this passage (Ezek. 11:13-21) of the regathering and salvation of Israel, is repeated in Ezek. 36. (Read from verse 16 to the end of the chapter, verse 38.) Nothing is said in these passages about the Messiah, but just of the final regathering and salvation of Israel.

However, we get into Messianic passages in Ezek. 34 and 37, and these are the passages I am going to consider with you today.

I want you to look first at Ezek. 34:23. (Read.)

This verse, and the other which we will look at in a moment, has led some to say that the Messiah will be King David resurrected and reigning again over the nation. But this is not the case. The Messiah is called in Matthew 1:1 both “the son of David” and “the son of Abraham.” So Ezekiel speaks of the Messiah as David to show that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Heir of the promises which were given to David. Christ is David's greatest Son, according to the flesh.

You will probably remember that the Apostle Paul emphasized this about our Lord in some of his introductory words with which he began his epistle to the church at Rome. This is what Paul said:

- 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
- 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
- 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
- 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:1-4).

So the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became the Son of David according to the flesh, and so became the Heir of the throne of David. And this is how the Spirit of God caused Ezekiel to speak of the Messiah.

The other passage is in Ezekiel 37:24-25. (Read.)

These passages should take us back to the establishing of God’s covenant with David in 2 Sam. 7. We considered this passage some time ago, and I have referred to it at least once since then. But let us read again what the Lord told David through the prophet Nathan. It was a message with eternal significance attached to it. (Read 2 Sam. 7:12-17.) David’s prayer which followed shows that he understood the far-reaching significance of the message that the prophet gave to him from the Lord.

But now let us turn to the first of these two Messianic passages.

I. EZEKIEL 34:20-31.

34:20-21 In order to understand fully this passage, we really should read the chapter from the very beginning, but let me very briefly summarize what the prophet Ezekiel had to say in that first part. The shepherds of Israel (their pastors, i.e., priests and the false prophets) has been unfaithful. It was like the people had no shepherds at all. And so the people had suffered terribly. The emphasis in this section seems to be not only against the shepherds and their failure to care for the sheep, that is, the people. But there was also contention among the people. It is always true that when shepherds are unfaithful, the relationship of the people to each other is affected. And this was always true throughout the history of Israel. And so beginning with verse 20 the Lord declares what He will do to meet the needs of the people.

He will be their judge. And He will judge between them. And this thought continues on into verse 22.

34:22 It is the Lord’s purpose to “save” His “flock.” Judging “between cattle and cattle” shows what the Apostle Paul brought out in Rom. 2:28-29:

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The Lord will save His flock, but not all Israelites are in His flock, the remnant, the elect of Israel. But the Lord will make it clear who are His own as compared with those who are not.

But notice the statement in the middle of this verse: “And they shall no more be a prey.” This would exclude the application of this passage to any return from Babylon, or any other subsequent return of the Israelites to the land. What we are dealing with here is a final restoration, the ultimate fulfillment of the promises God has made to Abraham and to David and to their descendants who are of faith. Fausset in the JFB commentary said, “The full and final fulfilment of this prophecy is future” (IV, 335).

34:23 And here we come to the Messianic reference. Here Ezekiel was speaking of our Lord, the Messiah. God will set up “one Shepherd over them.” “Set up” means “*by divine appointment*” (*Ibid.*). “One Shepherd” is “the only One of His kind, to whom none is comparable” (*Ibid.*). And Fausset said, and he was right, that the Lord was referring to this passage when He declared that He was “the good shepherd.” That is, He is the One Who had come in fulfillment of all of those prophecies which speak of the Messiah being the Shepherd, the Pastor, of the redeemed of Israel. As we can say about so many terms and titles which are used by our Lord, *He is the One Who defines what a good shepherd is*. From eternity past it has been the will of the Father that some day His Son would be the Shepherd of His people. He will be that to Israel, and He is that to the church.

“He shall feed them.” He will shepherd them. He will do all that a shepherd is supposed to do. He will feed them. He will care for them. He will protect them from those who would harm them. He will guide them. And most important of all, He will, and He has, “laid down His life for the sheep.” It is not for everyone, but for the sheep.

Twice it is said that He will feed them, to show the certainty of this promise. There is no way that this promise would not be fulfilled.

Anything that God say He will do, He will do. There must be no question in anyone’s mind about this. But to add to the assurance that it will eventually take place, we have added confirmation in the following verse.

34:24 Isn’t it interesting that it is said by God in verse 23 that He would give them “one Shepherd” before God said in this verse that He would “be their God”? This emphasizes the fact, as it was stated by our Lord in John 14:6, that the only way we can come to God is through Christ. Israel is going to continue to face troubles of all kinds until they recognize that Jesus of Nazareth, born almost 2,000 years ago from the virgin Mary, is their one and only Messiah.

But, being “My Servant David,” He will also be “a Prince among them.” Fausset says that this implies “fitness for ruling in the name of God, not pursuing a self-chosen course, as other kings, but acting as the faithful administrator of the will of God ... so He is the fittest person to wield the world-scepter, abused by all the world kings” (IV, 335). Jesus Christ will come as a Prince, but at the same time He will always carry the title of a Servant, the Servant of the Lord. This is what we read in Psa. 40:7-8:

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Cf. also Isa. 42:1-4:

1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.
2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.
4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

And if this all seems unlikely, the Lord, in effect, added His signature to these glorious promises: “I the Lord have spoken it.” For the believer, this settles it.

The results of the Messiah’s work will be felt throughout all creation. This is described in the following five verses.

34:25-29 Never since the sin of man has there been peace upon the earth. But peace will come with the coming of the Messiah as the one Shepherd, as the Servant of the Lord, and as the Prince Who shall reign. The governmental leaders of the world talk about peace, and seek for peace, but to this very hour there is no peace except in Christ. The world is without peace, and all of nature demonstrates that. But God has promised peace. This is “the covenant of peace.” And look at how it is described in these verses.

In verse 25 “the land” spoken of is the land which God has promised to the people of Israel. And we know how in the past wild animals were a threat to the people of Israel in their own land. And it is very likely that the same will be true in coming days.

But Ezekiel, speaking by the Holy Spirit, undoubtedly had in mind the conditions which Isaiah described in Isaiah 11:6-10:

- 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
- 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
- 10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

This also is what the Apostle Paul was speaking about in Rom. 8:20-25:

- 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
- 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,
- 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
- 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
- 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.
- 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?
- 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

We can't dwell safely in the deserts now, nor “sleep in the woods,” but the day is coming when the curse upon creation will be lifted, and the present enmity which is visible everywhere, will be a thing of the past, and it will never return again.

Israel is a land which is especially dependent upon rain from heaven. Verse 26 promises “showers of blessing,” literal showers of rain which will make the land productive.

Verse 27 tells us that the land will once again be fruitful, and yet the land will be safe from their enemies because God will deliver His people from all of their enemies. Today Israel is in constant danger from her enemies all around her, but when the Lord is their Shepherd and their Prince, they will be “safe in their land, and they (the redeemed of Israel) “shall know that” the Lord is the Lord.

Verse 28 continues the same ideas. But be sure to notice the words at the beginning of this verse, again showing the permanence of what the Messiah will do: “And there shall no more ... “

Dr. Feinberg takes the reference in verse 29 to “a plant of renown,” as a reference to the Messiah, and links this phrase to Isa. 11:1 and the way the Messiah is spoken of as “the stem of Jesse” and “a Branch.”

And notice how the latter part of verse 29 suggests the permanence of all that the Messiah will do. So these terms may have been partially fulfilled in past days when the Jews have returned to the land, but it has never been to the extent described here, nor has it been permanent. Notice the words, “and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.”

34:30-31 We learn in these last two verses of the chapter what the redeemed of Israel will “know” in that day. Then they will *understand in their hearts* and *have confirmed in their experience*, “that the Lord their God “ is “with them.” This does not just mean present with them, but it means *on their side, taking their part, meeting their needs*. And, secondly, they will understand that they are truly the Lord’s people. Thirdly, in verse 31, they will understand that they are but men, but that God is God, their God.

And again we have the confirmation given by the Lord because all of this has the assuring words, “saith the Lord God.” Ezekiel was speaking by the Spirit of God, but how encouraging it is to have that added word, “saith the Lord God.”

March 24, 1998

Now let us go to the second passage.

II. EZEKIEL 37:15-28.

In this passage which closely resembles the passage in Ezek. 34 which we have just examined, I want you to notice in particular the expressions which indicate that the blessings which are spoken of here are final, not temporary. This emphasis helps us to realize that Ezekiel was speaking about blessings which Israel will experience in the end times when our Lord comes to reign upon the earth. Let me point these out first, and then I will read the entire passage.

The first is in the latter part of verse 22:

And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

The second is in verse 23:

Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions.

The third is in the latter part of verse 25. After speaking of the fact that they will dwell in the land which has been promised to them, then we read:

And they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

The fourth is verse 26, the entire verse:

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

The fifth and last is in verse 28, but verse 27 belongs with it:

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore (Ezek. 37:27-28).

And so we are speaking here about final blessings for the people of God in Israel, a regathering that is greater than the people of God have ever experienced before, and a restoration to the Lord under the reign of the Messiah which will never be changed! It is very important for us to notice what the Holy Spirit revealed here through the prophet Ezekiel. In the larger context which would include the first fourteen verses of the chapter, we are told about the resurrection of the nation in what Ezekiel had to say about the valley of dry bones.

Now let me read the entire passage: Ezekiel 37:15-28. The first part of this passage has to do with how Ezekiel was told to take “two sticks,” and what he was to do with them to illustrate how the Lord would bring the whole nation together once again, to be one nation (no longer Israel and Judah). We have this illustration in verses 15 through 20. (Read.)

I don’t think that the passage necessarily means that these two sticks were miraculously made one in the hand of Ezekiel, although that is a possibility, but it seems to me that the very fact that he held them together in one hand indicates sufficiently the message that the Lord wanted to convey to His people.

In the interpretation of prophecy as well as of all other Biblical truth, I believe it is right for us to begin with a literal interpretation of the words given by the Holy Spirit. If that does not make sense, then we can look at the possibility that a particular text has some figurative meaning. Some people are always inclined to look for some meaning behind the literal, and this can lead to all kinds of fanciful interpretations. One expositor has said, “When common sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.” That is sound hermeneutics, sound exegesis, the proper explanation and interpretation of Scripture.

On this basis there is no reason why we cannot take verse 21 literally. When Ezekiel wrote these words, Israel as a nation was in captivity. They experienced a partial restoration afterwards, but it was nothing like what is described for us here.

In favor of a literal interpretation, they were scattered, and still are, “among the heathen,” or Gentile nations. The Lord will gather them, “and bring them into their own land.” There is no need to spiritualize anything here.

The same is true of verse 22. The Lord will not only regather His people, but He will make them one nation again, nevermore to be divided.

However, this regathering will mark a very great transformation in the lives of the people. The nation which has repeatedly defiled itself with idolatry and all kinds of “transgressions,” will be cleansed from their sins, and the result will be as stated here in verse 23, “So shall they be my people, and I will be their God.” This is all in harmony with what Isaiah had preached almost a hundred years before. Cf. Isa. 11:11-16:

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.

16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

But what is most important for our present study is given to us in verse 24. As I explained in considering Ezek. 34, the Messiah, David’s greatest Son, the Servant of the Lord, will become the King over this united and

redeemed people, and they will finally have a Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will give them the care that they need. He will be their only Shepherd.

And then the people will show the reality of their salvation because “they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and so them,” is what the Lord says. And so we see, as we learn also from the NT, that one of the indications that people are redeemed, is that they will live in obedience to the Word of God. Cf.

1 John 2:3-5:

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

So verses 23 and 24 give us a great description of a people who have truly been saved. They break with sin in their daily living, and seek to be obedient to the Word of God.

Verse 25 give positive proof that when all of this takes place under the reign of the Messiah, those who have been redeemed of the nation Israel, will never again go back to be like they had been before. And the verse concludes with these words concerning the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ: “And My Servant David shall be their Prince for ever.” This means that there will never be anyone who has the authority over Israel that the Messiah will have.

Verse 26 gives further evidence that we are learning about conditions which will never be reversed. This is the Lord’s “covenant of peace” with His people. The Lord will not only regather His people, but He will multiply them, and, as is stated here, He “will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” This is a reference to the Temple which is to be rebuilt, and which many expositors believe is described in the last nine chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

Verses 27 and 28 give us the glorious conclusion.

“My tabernacle” speaks of God’s presence because that is where the Lord dwelt among His people in OT times. And God will finally have the relationship with His people that He sought in OT times. He will be their God, and they will be His people.

And the conclusion will be that Israel will be sanctified, set apart and made holy, and there will be no more broken fellowship between the Lord and His people in Israel. The purposes of God will finally be realized by His own power at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign upon the earth.

Concl: Expositors differ greatly over prophetic truth, and this has led many to feel that it is best to leave prophecy alone and just wait to see how the end times will shape up. But if we forget about prophecy, we will be forgetting about a major portion of Scripture. We can’t do that, and it certainly would not be pleasing to the Lord for us to set aside such a major part of Scripture. Each of us needs to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and yet we need to remember, as Paul said in 1 Cor. 13, that “now we see through a glass darkly.” I don’t believe that any of us has a full understanding of all that will take place when the Lord returns to the earth. We know that there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and that conditions will exist in the eternal state which will be very different from the way things are now. Now the present heaven and earth are separated. They may not be in the eternal state. So let us rejoice in these glorious promises. Let us not spiritualize away what the Lord promised to Israel. If we do, what is to keep others from taking God’s

promises away from the church. We know that the Lord, according to Eph. 1, is going to fulfill all of the counsel of His will. Here are the words which the Holy Spirit gave to the Apostle Paul:

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ (Eph. 1:9-12).

So let us be gracious to each other. God never intended for the truth to divide us, but it is to unite us. The promise is that the Lord is coming. Our hope is in Him. And however things may work out in the eternal state, we know that we shall be like Him and be with Him for all eternity – and with each other also forever.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 39

Christ in Daniel

March 30, 1998

Intro: In the Hebrew Bible Daniel is not arranged with the OT prophets. This is because the Jews did not consider him to be a prophet even though the book of Daniel is full of prophecies. They believed that the main function of a prophet was that he should be a preacher, a forthteller. Daniel was like Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was involved in government, but neither was a preacher. And so we find the prophecy of Daniel after the book of Esther in the Hebrew Bible, and after Daniel comes Ezra and Nehemiah (which the Jews considered as one book), and then the Hebrew Bible closes with 1 and 2 Chronicles.

However, in our Bibles Daniel is considered to be on the Major Prophets because of the very predictive nature of his book. But we need to keep in mind that to the Jews a true prophet was first of all a preacher, a forthteller, and then a foreteller. The preaching ministry came first.

For a long time expositors of this book have recognized that the book is divided into two divisions, each with six chapters. The first six chapters are historical; the last six chapters deal with the future. The first six chapters cover the period from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus; the last six chapter from Belshazzar to Darius and then to Cyrus.

And so Daniel lived during the reign of four kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus.

E. W. Hengstenberg, whose two volumes called *Christology of the Old Testament* have been a major reference work for me in this study, had this to say about Daniel and his prophecy as it relates to our study:

Daniel had to revive the faith of his nation in *Christ* and his kingdom, and to warn the people against impatience, by impressing deeply upon their minds the words of Habakkuk (ii. 3,) “though it [the prophecy] tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not tarry.” For century after century the changes in the kingdoms of the world would bring nothing but a change of masters to Israel – the nation which, at its very first commencement, had been designated “a kingdom of priests,” called to universal supremacy on account of its inward connexion with the God.. To counteract the offence, which this was sure to cause, was one important design of prophecy. Let empire follow upon empire, and the world continue for ages to triumph and exalt itself; at the end comes Christ, and with him the world-wide dominion of the people of God. But let not the hope be abused so as to give support to false security. This is strongly urged by Daniel, after the example of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and in harmony with his [Daniel’s] immediate successors Zechariah and Malachi. The anointed one confirms the covenant with many, comes with forgiveness, righteousness, salvation, and brings the whole world into subjection to the kingdom of God; but his appearance brings with it at the same time a judgment upon those, who do not place themselves in the right attitude toward it. It is followed by a fresh destruction of the city and the temple. This announcement is made in chaps. ii, vii., and ix (II, 793-793).

So the book of Daniel is of special importance when we think of “Christ in the Old Testament.” But my purpose is not to be exhaustive in any of the books we have covered, but to point out some of the outstanding ways in which we see Christ in the Old Testament. And this we will do today with Daniel’s prophecy, concentrating on five chapters: 2, 3, 6, 7, and 9. And then, if time permits, I will close with just a brief comment on Daniel 12. Perhaps at a later time we can go into greater detail in these prophecies, but for the present we are concerned to see how they speak about our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first Messianic reference is in Daniel 2. And this had to do with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which he

forgot, but which God revealed to Daniel, and Daniel was able to interpret its meaning:

I. DANIEL 2.

(Review the contents of the chapter, leading up to verse 14 where Daniel asked Nebuchadnezzar for time before the King would put all of the wise men of the kingdom to death.)

The report that Daniel was prepared by God to bring to Nebuchadnezzar begins in verse 24 where Arioch takes Daniel into the King. The dream itself is told beginning with verse 31. It was a revelation that there would be four great kingdoms, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's. Expositors have recognized that the Lord was speaking to Nebuchadnezzar about his own kingdom first, Babylon, which would be followed by the Medo-Persian kingdom, then the Greeks, and finally the Roman. But the significant part has to do with “the stone” mentioned in verse 37; the explanation follows in verses 44 and 45. This is a prophetic picture of the sovereignty of God over the Gentile nations, and of the coming of the Messiah who brings to an end the times of the Gentiles, and establishes His kingdom on the earth which “shall stand forever.”

It is important to note the truth which Daniel expressed in his prayer of thanksgiving to the God of heaven after his prayer had been answered.

11. DANIEL 3.

This is the familiar story of Daniel's three friends who refused to fall down to worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. They were, as they had been warned, cast into the fiery furnace. But we see Christ in verses 24 and 25 where Nebuchadnezzar said that he saw four men instead of just the three who had been cast into the furnace, and he said that “the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Dan. 3:25b). This statement could be translated, “a son of the gods.” But we have to remember that we are reading the words of a heathen king, and that he knew that the person had to be superhuman although his expression may not have been theologically accurate.

Earlier in our studies we had several lessons in which we saw certain *theophanies*, or *Christophanies*. These are appearances of Christ before He came in the flesh. And we know that those appearances of God had to be appearances of Christ because of John 1:18. (Quote.) Christ is the One Who revealed God in OT times, just as He is the One Who revealed God when He became a Man and ministered here on earth.

This incident in Daniel 3 is meant to be an encouragement to all of the Lord's people in times of persecution and trial. The Lord may not appear visibly to us, but nevertheless He is with us, to protect us, to deliver us, and to give us the encouragement we need to keep us trusting Him.

Now let us go to Daniel 6.

III. DANIEL 6.

The reference in Daniel 6 I am not going to be dogmatic about, but in the light of what we learned about Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace in chapter 3, I am inclined to believe that here we have another *Christophany*

We all know the story well. There were one hundred and twenty princes over the whole kingdom of Darius. And over these princes there were three presidents. Daniel was one of these. In fact, he was the main

president. See verse 3.

The others, the presidents and princes, were jealous of Daniel, and so they sought to find some accusation that they could bring to the king against him. But they could find none. See verse 4. And so verse 5 tells us that they realized that the only way they could possibly find anything wrong with Daniel would be, as they said, “except we find it against him concerning the law of his God” (Dan. 6:4). So they devised the plan which is described in verses 6 through 8. They submitted this to King Darius, and he signed it.

In verses 10 and 11 we find out what Daniel did. He continued to pray to God (and this is very important), “as he did aforetime.” It was not something that he started to do when he heard about the decree of Darius, but he simply continued to do what he had been doing before. And his enemies found him, and reported him to the king. See verses 12 and 13.

King Darius was very unhappy “with himself” that he had issued such a decree, seeing too late what the purpose of the princes and the other presidents had been, and so he did everything to let Daniel off. But his enemies kept after the king until all he could do was to have Daniel cast into the lions’ den.

What followed is described for us in verses 18 through 23.

The part that is important in our study is verses 21 and 22, and the reference to “his angel” in verse 22.

We had this expression once before in Daniel. Cf. Dan. 3:28 where we have Nebuchadnezzar’s words describing what God had done, and in Dan. 3:25 he had described this “angel” as “like the Son of God.”

Now “his angel” fits in with what we have seen previously with Hagar, in Gen. 16, and to Abraham in Gen. 22, and to Moses in Ex. 3, to cite a few references, where we see that Deity is connected with “the angel of the Lord.” So I am suggesting that the One Who came to shut the mouths of the lions was none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing once again as *the angel of the Lord*.

Next let us go to Daniel 7.

IV. DANIEL 7.

We have a passage here which is very similar as to its message to Daniel 2 where we had Nebuchadnezzar’s dream – the prediction of four kingdoms – only here the kingdoms are represented as first a lion (7:4), then a bear (7:5), then a leopard (7:6), and the fourth is described in 7:7-8.

Beginning with verse 9 and going down through verse 14 we have the passage that has to do with our study of “Christ in the Old Testament.” God is described as “the Ancient of days.” This is a title which describes the eternal character of God, and the great honor in which He is to be held as the eternal God. But when we get down to verses 13 and 14 we see a second one appearing with the Ancient of days who is described as “the Son of man,” or as *a Son of man*, Who can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ because of what is said about Him in verse 14. (Read.)

We need to remember from the Gospels that this title, “the Son of man,” was what we might call our Lord’s favorite, or one of His favorite, title for Himself. In fact, He is the only One Who used it. And the title seems to have had its roots back here in Daniel 7.

Finally, for our study of Christ in Daniel, we go to Daniel 9.

V. DANIEL 9.

We have seen that the prophecy of Daniel is very strong in its emphasis upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and Daniel 9 is no exception. But I want to consider this chapter with you in a slightly different way from that which is usually emphasized. Usually the focus is put upon the seventy weeks which are spoken of in verse 24, but very little is said about Daniel’s prayer at the beginning of the chapter, and which actually occupies the greater part of the chapter. Daniel was prompted to pray for the restoration of the city and the temple because of what he had learned from Jeremiah’s prophecy. Listen to the words that we find in Jer. 29:8-14:

- 8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.
- 9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.
- 10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.
- 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.
- 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.
- 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.
- 14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

We can see from this why Daniel could have expected that with the completion of the seventy years of captivity, the final kingdom of Messiah would be ushered in. And this is what made Daniel’s prayer so significant. *His prayer was a prayer seeking the forgiveness of the Lord upon the nation, and the bestowal of righteousness upon the people. And we know that this has to be Messianic in character because it is through Christ and His death on the Cross that anyone could ever hope to be declared righteous in God’s sight. Daniel firmly believed in the future blessing of Israel, but it was not to come as soon as he thought that it would. And so we have the revelation given at the end of the chapter concerning the “seventy weeks” which confirmed the ultimate blessing of the Lord, but indicated that it was not as close as Daniel hoped. However, the return of the people to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah was a partial fulfillment, and it was intended to be an encouragement to Daniel that the kingdom of the Messiah would ultimately be established upon the earth. And yet before that day arrived, Israel would experience the greatest time of suffering that she as a nation had ever experienced.*

Notice that the Messiah is mentioned in verses 25 and 26 of Daniel 9.

Concl: Our Lord helped to pinpoint the prophecies given to Daniel when He gave what we call *the Olivet Discourse* in Matthew 24 and 25, and especially when He referred to Daniel 12:11 and “the abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15) which will lead to the very time which we read about in Dan. 12:1-3. (Read.) And then listen to Matt. 24:29-31:

- 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his

elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Daniel’s prophecies concerning the future have to do with God’s promises to Israel, and they have nothing to do with the Church. There was no Church at that time. The Church came into existence after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. See 1 Cor. 12:13. And so what Daniel looked forward to, with all of the OT saints, was the coming back to earth of the Messiah to rule and reign, not only over Israel, but over all of the nations of the earth.

God’s purposes are unchangeable and irrevocable. And it should encourage us to believe the promises of God as they relate to us today. On the other hand, to deny that there is a future for Israel, would be to throw doubt upon all of the promises of God. If God can forget about some of His promises, what is to keep Him from forgetting about them all? But He doesn’t forget His promises. And as Joshua declared that God was faithful to Israel in his day, so we can be sure that God will be faithful to all of His promises.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 40

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Hosea

April 6, 1998

Intro: I want to begin today by reading a couple of pages to you from E. W. Hengstenberg’s book, *Christology of the Old Testament*. He wrote back in the middle of the last century, and his work even today is considered to be one of the best resources on this subject. I think you will find this very helpful. We may wonder sometimes, not only about prophecy, but about any of the great doctrines of Scripture, why God hasn’t given us a complete statement of each doctrine in one place in Scripture, much like men do when they write a theology. One reason, I am sure, is that the Lord wants us to read all of His Word, and that is what we have to do if we are going to be able to find all that is written on any subject. Hengstenberg helps us to understand why the Lord has given us His Word as He has. (Read Vol. I, pp. 115d-117c.)

Today I want to consider with you the prophecy of Hosea. I wish I had the time during this hour to read the entire prophecy to you. I have read it through at one sitting, and there really isn’t anything that will impress upon us the message of Hosea, or of any book of the Bible, like reading it all at one time. It is difficult to do this with the longer books of the Bible, but we should take advantage of the opportunity with the shorter books, and make it our objective to read as much of the longer ones at one sitting as we can. And then when we have finished reading them through once, we need to do it all over again. This is the way, under the Lord’s blessing, that we can be brought under the power, the living power, of the Word of God.

Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah, but Isaiah and Micah ministered to the southern kingdom of Judah, while Hosea’s ministry was mainly to the northern kingdom of Israel. Hosea had a long ministry, but it was at a most trying time just prior to the time when Israel fell before the Assyrians. No prophet spoke with stronger language against the sins of Israel (and of Judah) than he did, and yet at the same time no prophet did more faithfully declare the great love that God had for His people. His name, like Joshua in the OT and Jesus in the NT, means *salvation*, or *Jehovah is salvation*.

Everyone should read through this prophecy at one sitting to get the full impact of his message. The first three chapters tell of Hosea’s experience in marriage, which sets the tone for presenting to the people of God their sin, which was to God like a wife who has become unfaithful to her husband. From chapter 4 through 14 we have the prophetic utterances of Hosea. These chapters bring out what I have mentioned before, that the prophets of the OT were primarily preachers, although preachers with an eye to the future and a message of hope for the people of God. George L. Robinson, in his book, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, has pointed out *seven sins* which Hosea condemned:

- 1) Their lack of knowledge (4:6).
- 2) Their pride (5:5).
- 3) Their instability (6:4).
- 4) Their worldliness (7:8).
- 5) Their corruption (9:9).
- 6) Their backsliding (11:7).
- 7) Their idolatry – which is where Hosea place his major emphasis in his preaching (13:2).

Hosea gives us a clear picture of the sins of Israel (and also of Judah), and we can see that the nation was deserving of the terrible judgment of God. She deserved to be cast forever from God’s presence, and she would have been if it had not been for God’s great love for her.

It seems that it was characteristics of most of the prophets to begin with their messages of judgment, and to

conclude with a message of hope. But we hardly get started into the book before we come to predictions which have to do with the Messiah, promises which will be fulfilled when our Lord comes to reign. And so let us look first of all at:

I. HOSEA 1:10-2:1.

Dr. Charles Feinberg pointed out five specific blessings that we see in these verses:

- 1) National increase (1:10a).
- 2) National conversion (1:10b). This is the first out of four times that the prophecy of Hosea is quoted in the NT. You will find it in Rom. 9:26 where it is applied to the Gentiles. But here in Hosea's prophecy the original statement made by Hosea applied to the nation Israel. It shows that the sin of Israel had made her look no different from the Gentiles in her alienation from God.
- 3) National reunion (1:11a).
- 4) National leader – which has to be a reference to the Messiah (1:11b).
- 5) National restoration (2:1). We learn from the first chapter and the naming of Hosea's children, or, as some think especially of the second and third children, children of his wife's unfaithfulness, Lo-ruhamah meant *no mercy*, and Lo-ammi meant *not my people*. So when we read in 2:1 Ammi and Ruhamah, the negative Lo has been removed indicating that God was again claiming them as His people, and that He was showing mercy in the salvation that the redeemed of Israel will experience in a future day. And the name of the first child of Hosea appears at the end of chapter 1, meaning that in 1:11 and in 2:1 we have a reference to all three children. Jezreel. And this means that God will rout Israel's enemies under the reign of the Messiah.

A second Messianic passage is chapter 3.

II. HOSEA 3:1-5.

In what Hosea does here at the command of the Lord is an expression of the amazing love that God has for His people. Although through all the years of her spiritual adultery (idolatry) she persisted in her disobedience and unfaithfulness to the Lord, yet the Lord will take her back. We see Israel now, not in idolatry (because that is not a problem in Israel today as it was in OT times, but neither do they have their King, the Messiah. But the day is coming when they will return and seek the Lord “and David their King,” which we have learned in our study is a reference, not to David, but to David's Son, the Messiah, Who will yet rule over His redeemed people.

III. HOSEA 6:6.

There were two times when our Lord Himself quoted from Hosea's prophecy. You will find these quotations in Matt. 9:13 and 12:7. In both of these instances the Lord Jesus was quoting from Hosea 6:6. This makes that passage extremely important. It shows also that the truth originally expressed by Hosea concerning Israel, still applied to Israel in our Lord's day, a truth which continues today to be of special importance for all who are concerned about pleasing God. (Read Hosea 6:6.)

In the first of these passages, Matt. 9:13, the Lord was addressing the Pharisees who were critical of Him because He and His disciples were eating with “publicans and sinners.” Both Mark and Luke related that this dinner was given by Matthew in his home after the Lord had called him to be a disciple, but neither Mark nor Luke gave the quotation from Hosea. We can only assume that because of his humility Matthew did not say that he was the one who had given the dinner for the Lord, and had invited other publicans as well as “sinners,” meaning most likely Gentiles. But it is evident that Matthew had already started on a mission to bring others of

his friends to the Savior.

What is the meaning of Hosea 6:6?

Derek Kidner in his commentary on Hosea which he called, *Love to the Loveless*, had this to say about Hosea 6:6:

Verse 6 was a saying highly treasured by our Lord: see Matthew 9:13; 12:7. Like the two great commandments which He picked out as the ruling principles of the law, it pinpoints the supportive relationship to our fellows and the filial relationship to God that are the heart of true religion. It is a theme of all Hosea's great contemporaries, stirring them to some of their most powerful pronouncements: e.g., Isaiah 1:12-17; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8 (p. 67)..

(Read these three passages.)

We also find the same emphasis in Jeremiah's prophecy who wrote approximately 100 years later. See Jer. 7:22-24.

Hosea did not mean that the Lord did not desire sacrifices because He did. But sacrifices to God without a corresponding mercy toward man, made the sacrifices unacceptable. So it is obedience to the Lord that makes sacrifices acceptable, and, on the other hand, disobedience makes all sacrifices unacceptable to God.

We need to remember this today. Often we are guilty of preaching, or of doing good works, when our lives are not pleasing to God. In such cases, the Lord usually withholds His blessing.

Matthew Henry made this comment on Hosea 6:6:

Mercy here is the same word which in v. 4 is rendered *goodness – chesed – piety – sanctity*; it is put for all practical religion; it is the same with *charity* [love] in the New Testament, the reigning love of God and our neighbor, and this accompanied with and flowing from the *knowledge of God*, as He has revealed Himself in His Word, a firm belief that He is, and is the *rewarder of those that diligently seek Him*, a good affection to divine things guided by a good judgment, which cannot but produce a very good conversation [life]; this is that which God by His covenant requires, and *not sacrifice and offering* (IV, p. 1154).

This is a very important principle for every child of God to remember. It is our love for God and our fellowship with Him which renders what we do by way ministry to be acceptable to Him. This was the big problem of the Pharisees in our Lord's day, and it has been the problem of all of who profess to be the people of God in every generation. The Lord told people to do what the Pharisees told them to do (most of which was evidently good), but they were not to do what the Pharisees did, because “they say, and do not” (Matt. 22:3b).

The full account given by Matthew is found in Matt. 23:1-3:

- 1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
- 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

A fourth Messianic passage is in chapter 10.

IV. HOSEA 10:11-12.

Hosea has been called an OT evangelist. He, in coming again and again to speak of the Messiah, after pointing

out to Israel and to Judah their sins in great detail, holds before them the hope that they have from God in their Messiah. The promises of God for salvation have been scorned through the years. Many of Israel's years in their rebellion against the Lord were, by the goodness of God, good years, prosperous years. And this made the people of Israel feel secure in their sins. In fact, they often felt that when they were worshiping idols, things went better for them than when they were walking with the Lord. But the judgments which came upon them proved that they sense of welfare and security was altogether false. Time and time again God brought the heathen nations of the Gentiles upon them.

But having pointed out their sins, he pointed out their hope in verses 11 and 12 of chapter 10. (Read.)

Some students of the Hebrew have objected to the translation “rain righteousness,” saying that the true meaning of the word is *to teach*. Listen to these words in the NASB, and I will add verse 13 to the reading:

- 11 And Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh, but I will come over her fair neck {with a yoke} I will harness Ephraim, Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself.
- 12 Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD until He comes to rain [teach] righteousness on [to] you.
- 13 You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors (Hosea 10:11-13).

God's dealings with the nation Israel in the past have very important lessons for Israel today, as well as for all of the nations of the earth, especially for our own nation which has had the Word of God for so many years. We feel very secure right now. The stock market is higher than it has ever been. We are experiencing prosperity. Unemployment is low. And we are inclined to close our eyes to the problems that we have. Many of our large corporations are down-sizing their employees. Crime has become a way of life. It seems like daily we hear of murders right here in our area, and you can go to any other city in our country and find that it is the same. It can almost be said that we have no moral standards anymore. Language has gotten so vile on the television that it is really a sin to listen to it. Adultery is accepted by more and more people. Dishonesty in business has become more and more of a problem. Our government is corrupt, and our leaders put their stamp of approval on things that we know from the Word of God are abominable in God's sight, and will inevitably bring greater and greater judgment upon us. Oregon has set an example for a new low in voting in our doctor assisted suicide law. The fact that we are having so many catastrophes in nature, doesn't seem to have awakened people. We call it El Nino when in reality it is God. God is a good God, and His patience with all of us is most amazing. But the time comes when God says, “It is enough!” And then there is no question about where the judgments come from. For a long time it has been true that “it is time to seek the Lord.” It is that time today! We have been plowing wickedness for many, many years as a nation. God has been speaking to us, but we haven't been listening. Our only hope as a nation rests in the mercy of God, but where are the Hoseas today who are telling us this? We need the messages of the prophets, and we need to see how they sought to turn the people of their day to God and to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be sure about our own lives, and earnestly seek the Lord every day, making ourselves so acquainted with the Word of God that we will know what pleases Him, and what displeases Him, trusting God to harness us so that we will plow for righteousness, and open our hearts so that He can teach us righteousness. Severe judgments may be nearer than any of us can possibly realize.

But let us go on in our study of Christ in Hosea.

V. HOSEA 11:1.

In the first verse of this chapter we have a verse which Matthew used in the NT to refer to the Messiah, our

Lord Jesus Christ. The primary reference here in Hosea is to Israel and the Lord’s deliverance of the nation from Egypt in the days of Moses. But Matthew quoted this passage in Matt. 2:15 and applied it to our Lord when Joseph and Mary were told to take our Lord when He was just a young child down into Egypt to escape from Herod who had ordered that all children “from two years old and under” (Matt. 2:16) were to be killed. And so, although the purposes were different, yet our Lord as a child was called out of Egypt after the death of Herod just as Israel was called out of Egypt in the days of Moses.

It is interesting to see the liberty which the Spirit of God takes in His use of the OT in the NT.

VI. HOSEA 14:1-9.

We have to remember in reading any of the prophets that the people’s knowledge of God and the Messiah and the purposes of God, was not limited to the message of a single prophet. They had a wealth of knowledge to which they had been exposed from the writings of Moses on down to the particular day in which they lived.

And so when we come to a passage like the one we have here in Hosea 14, let us remember that the sacrifices of the people who lived under the Law conveyed a message to them that they could not turn to the Lord just on the basis of their repentance. Even from Moses himself they learned that they always needed a Mediator when coming to God because their sins kept them from God, separated them from Him. So if the Messiah is not mentioned directly in this passage, by implication He is here. There is not way anyone can turn to the Lord, or return to the Lord, except through the one true Mediator between God and man, “the Man Christ Jesus.” Listen to the words Paul wrote to Timothy about this:

- 1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;
- 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
- 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
- 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
- 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
- 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
- 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (1 Tim. 2:1-7).

So at the close of this prophecy we see Hosea preaching for the repentance and conversion of the people of Israel.

(Read Hosea 14, emphasizing especially verse 9.)

Concl: Again, quoting Derek Kidner, we have these words:

The *whoever* of this verse suddenly exposes us to the same searching encounter, for the Word of God goes on speaking; it never slips safely into the past. The rightness of God’s ways as revealed in this book is so far above us both in holiness and love, as to leave self-sufficient man without excuse, self-condemned, while those who turn into the way of righteousness find themselves met more than halfway (*Op. cit.*, p. 126).

And then Kidner concluded his own commentary by quoting G. A. F. Knight, a man I am not acquainted with. Here is what he said,

Therefore, dear reader, so runs the content of this Epilogue, ask yourself the question – how would you apply this message of Hosea to your own knowledge and experience of Israel’s God? (Kidner, *Love to the Loveless*, p. 126).

We should never read or study the Word of God just to find out what the writers of Scripture had to say, but it should always be that *plus* with the intention of reading any book of Scripture as we would read it if its message were directed especially to us –*because it is!* Let us always make the application to ourselves.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 41

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Joel

April 13, 1998

Intro: All that we know about Joel is what we find in this prophecy which carries his name – which is practically nothing. He does mention that he was “the son of Pethuel,” but since that name appears nowhere else in the Bible, it gives us no help at all. Nor does his prophecy give us any satisfactory information about the time in which he wrote. He mentioned no kings, but it does seem that he was familiar with Jerusalem, and so it may be that he was a prophet to Judah. Biblical scholars differ very widely in the time they set for Joel’s prophecy, but it seems to be the consensus among conservative scholars that he wrote very early. One argument which many consider to be very strong is the fact that Joel appears early in the arrangement of the Minor Prophets, and it is felt by many that the time of the prophet was indicated by the order in which the prophets appeared in the Bible. This, of course, is not conclusive. In my Hebrew Bible Joel appears just where it does in our English translations.

It undoubtedly would help us to understand the message of Joel if we knew more about the background, but evidently the Spirit of God did not think that the background was that important, or we would have known conclusively when Joel wrote. *As with all of the prophets, that which is primarily important is the message that they contain, and so that should be our main objective in studying any book of the Bible.*

As far as the division of the book is concerned, it seems that there are two major parts. In 1:1-2:11 we have the prophet speaking (of course, under the direction of the Holy Spirit). Then from 2:12 to the end of the book, 3:21, the Lord is speaking.

Dr. Merrill Unger, in his *Bible Handbook*, pages 403-406, outlines the book by chapters:

- 1) The Locust Plague – the Day of the Lord (1:1-20)
- 2) The Events of the Day of the Lord (2:1-32).
- 3) The Judgment of the Nations (3:1-21).

It seems clear that Joel was concerned about the end times for Israel and Judah. The book begins with judgment, but moves on to blessing the farther Joel moved along with his message.

But what we are concerned about is how Joel spoke of Christ, the Messiah. And we can say that there are at least seven ways in which we see our Lord in this prophecy.

I. CHRIST, AND THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The expression, “the day of the Lord,” is found four times in Joel’s prophecy: 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:14. But look also at 2:2 and 3:18.

The NT helps us on this point. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:1-3:

- 1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
- 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
- 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

So even when Paul wrote this epistle, that “day” was obviously still future. And even today we know that it is still future.

The Apostle Peter also mentioned this day, and he did it in connection with the return of the Lord Jesus. Cf. 2 Pet. 3:10:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Peter was not trying to give us an order of events that was all-inclusive, but he was pointing to the coming of the Lord Jesus as a time that would be connected with great judgments, and this is exactly the same emphasis that Joel made in his prophecy.

This Day will be the time of the Great Tribulation. Notice how Joel described it in **Joel 2:2**. (Read.) And then turn to Matt. 24:21-22 to see how the Lord described the Great Tribulation:

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matt. 24:21-22).

Since there could not be different days described in this way, Joel and our Lord must have been speaking about the same day. The prophets show that the Day of the Lord contains both judgment and blessing, and so it must be the Great Tribulation followed by the millennial reign of our Savior.

So quite clearly Joel was speaking of the time leading up to the return of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, to reign upon the earth.

But there is another place where Joel spoke of Christ.

II. CHRIST, THE LEADER OF HIS ARMY (Joel 2:11).

This ties in with the Apostle John's description of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ which we find in Rev. 19:11-16:

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

And then as the Lord was telling His people about the blessings that He would bring upon His people in those days, or “in that day,” we have a clear statement of the Lord's presence with His people.

Cf. also 2:18-20, especially verse 20.

III. CHRIST, THEIR GOD, AND THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE (Joel 2:27).

What does this verse indicate if it is not the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth, and to the land of Israel in particular.

But one of the clearest references to Christ is what we find in Joel 2:28-32).

IV. CHRIST, THE SAVIOR (Joel 2:28-32). (Read.)

Charles Simeon, a man greatly used of God back in the 1700's, and whose ministry was identified with Cambridge University and the city of Cambridge, lamented the fact that the Minor Prophets were for the most part neglected by the people of God in his day. Once, when he was preaching on this text, Joel 2:28-32, he made the following comment:

It is much to be regretted that the obscurities which occur in the prophetic writings (especially those of the lesser prophets [his title for the Minor Prophets]), deter many from reading so large a portion of the inspired volume. If there are some parts hard to be understood, there are some parts plain and highly instructive: and the very figures, which from their boldness and sublimity appear intricate, will be found easy and intelligible, through the light reflected on them in the New Testament. The passage before us would, on a cursory perusal, be deemed incapable of any sober construction, or at least, any proper application to ourselves: but plainly it declares to us, the signs of the Messiah's advent (Vol. 10, pp. 176, 177).

And then he went on to say, “Numberless were the signs by which the world were taught to know the true Messiah” (*Ibid.*). And we are learning that that is true, and that the more we search out the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament, the Minor Prophets as well as the Major Prophets, *the more we see of Christ!* I have been impressed by that many, many times in my own study of the Prophets. And, as Mr. Simeon said in what I have read to you, the greatest help that we receive in learning of Christ in the Old Testament is to be found in the references to the Old Testament which we find in the New Testament.

Most of you will probably remember that the Apostle Peter used these words on the Day of Pentecost when he preached in Jerusalem. Cf. Acts 2:17-21. And when he got down to what is Joel 2:32, and the words, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,” Peter applied this to our Lord Jesus Christ. And he was not only saying that Joel was speaking of Christ, but you will notice that he gave the Name, JEHOVAH, to our Lord.

Joel was not only speaking of Christ, calling Him Jehovah, but He was indicating that the Messiah was to be the Savior. And Joel knew that there was only one Savior, and only one way of salvation, through faith in the coming Messiah. *But do not miss the fact that we have here an evidence of the Deity of the Messiah. Often people ask if the Jews expected their Messiah to be Deity. Many of them surely did, but for those who did not it certainly was not because the evidence was not there! He couldn't had been called Jehovah if He were not God.*

This same text, Joel 2:32, was cited by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 10:13. So with the Apostle Paul, as with the Apostle Peter, Joel 2:32 was a key text in preaching the Gospel.

What does it mean to “call on the Name of the Lord”? The first time this word “call” is used in the OT is in Gen. 4:26 where we are told that in the days of Enos, a grandson of Adam and Eve, and the son of Seth, that “then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26). We read the same expression describing what Abram did when he first got into the land of Canaan:

And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the

name of the LORD (Gen. 12:8).

In Joel’s prophecy it must have a twofold meaning. First, the people “in that day” will call on the Lord to deliver them from their enemies, but, secondly, what is more important from the way this verse is used in the NT, it means that they will call upon the Lord for the salvation of their souls. But we must remember that Joel was a preacher to his generation, and not just a prophet of the future. So this passage would have had a direct appeal to the people of his own generation, that they would turn from their sins and turn to the Lord.

But calling upon the name of the Lord meant that the Lord, and now we are talking about the Messiah, was the only One Who could possibly save them – save them from their enemies, and save them from their sins, and from the Devil, and from death, and from hell!

However, there are some details given to us in this passage, from verse 28 of Joel 2, down to the end of the chapter. And these are details that have to do with the great doctrine of salvation which is expounded even more clearly in the NT.

The first has to do with the ministry of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Spirit in verse 28 should be capitalized, and so should it be in verse 29. It is by the work of the Holy Spirit that the work of salvation is initiated in the heart of every person who is ever saved. Perhaps it was because of this very passage that our Lord was referring when He was speaking to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit, that He said, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” (John 3:10). We are yet to see the final and most complete fulfillment of verses 28 and 29 in the Day of the Lord, but it was partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. And we have the teaching here that salvation comes to people through the Holy Spirit.

But then there is the responsibility that is placed upon people to call upon the Name of the Lord, to recognize that Jesus Christ, Israel’s Messiah, is the only Savior, and that each one must call upon His Name, to call upon Him by Name, seeking the salvation, the deliverance, which only He can give.

And yet I cannot leave these verses without pointing out to you the evidence in verse 32, a double evidence, of the sovereignty of God in salvation.

Look at the expression at the end of verse 32: “And in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” Who are “the remnant”? They are the elect of Israel, those whom the Lord has appointed for salvation. And they are the ones “whom the Lord shall call.” We call upon Christ because He calls us first. As the Apostle John said in 1 John 4:19, “We love Him, because He first loved us” (Tom Palsgrove’s verse). “There is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11b), and so no one would come to Him if he were not called.

So here we have not only the sovereignty of God in salvation, but also the doctrine of election, and the doctrine of the irresistible grace of God, the effectual call, that work of the Holy Spirit which caused us to see our need, and to turn to Christ Who alone could meet that need. As the hymn so accurately reminds us,

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Savior true,
No, I was found of Thee.

So make sure that you have called on the Name of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is salvation in “none other,” as Acts 4:12 tells us. And all of us who know the Lord should have our hearts filled with praise to the Lord that He has called us, and that we, by His grace, have responded to His call by calling upon Him.

And now let us move on to Joel 3:12 where we see:

V. CHRIST, THE JUDGE (Joel 3:12). (Read.)

In the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will judge the Gentile nations. We don't know just what Joel was referring to here, but perhaps the emphasis is upon the meaning of the name, and not the place. Jehoshaphat means, *the Lord judgeth*. For added confirmation that this is a reference to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, we have the words of our Lord recorded for us in John 5:22-23:

- 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:
 23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

On this judgment we need to read **Matt. 25:31-46**. Please turn to this passage so you can follow it as I read it to you.

It is interesting in this connection to think of what is going on among the nations today. Men are doing as they please without any thought that it is our Lord Who is the Judge. But, whether they know it or not, every man will answer to Him. There will be different rewards given to the people of God, and different degrees of punishment meted out to those who do not know the Lord. But even Joel knew that the Lord would be the Judge.

There are probably many other verses which we could include, but let me mention just two more.

VI. CHRIST, THE HOPE OF ISRAEL (Joel 3:16).

And He will not only be their “hope,” but also their “strength.”

The word “hope” which Joel used here means *a place of refuge from danger, a shelter*. Not only is the Lord the place of safety from their enemies (a fact that they forgot time and time again when they sought protection from the nations, but He is the One in Whom they have come to trust. And as this verse goes on to say, He becomes their “strength.” This is why it is written in the NT that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

VII. THE MESSIAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL (Joel 3:17).

This is very similar to what we had in Joel 2:27, but there are added details that are given here. The Lord is holy. Zion will be His holy mountain. And Jerusalem, His people, will be holy.

Read the last four verses of the prophecy, and note the final words of the book: “For the Lord dwelleth in Zion.”

Concl: It is with us as it was with Israel. Future blessings are secure for God's people, and secured by the promises of God to which He will always be faithful. But at the same time we have the need to walk with the Lord, and when we depart from Him, the need to return. See the Lord's words to His people in 2:12-18. How amazing is His mercy and His forgiveness. Joel was looking ahead to that day when the redeemed of Israel would no longer rebel against the Lord, nor wander away, but would turn to the Lord and find in Him their joy, their hope, and their strength. Let us make sure that the message of the book of Joel speaks to our hearts as well.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 42

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Amos, Obadiah, Jonah

April 20, 1998

Intro: In this lesson I hope to cover three of the Minor Prophets – the next three following the prophecy of Joel. None of them is as full of passages dealing with the Messiah as Hosea and Joel, but what they do say, and the evidence that they give, adds to the total emphasis that we have in the Minor Prophets. And so we begin with Amos.

I. Amos.

We have the main information about Amos in the first verse of his prophecy. (Read 1:1.)

Tekoa was evidently his birthplace. It was five miles south of Bethlehem and ten miles from Jerusalem – so it was in Judah, the southern kingdom (Israel being the northern kingdom). We have another reference to Amos in 7:14-15 we have some additional information about his call, plus a few more details about his occupation before he became a prophet. This passage also tells us about Amos’ preaching, and that it was not well received in Israel. I am going to read Amos 7:8-17

8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

13 But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit:

15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land (Amos 7:8-17).

So Amos was not born into a prophet’s family, but he was a cattleman and a grower of fruit. Some believe that the sycamore tree to which he referred was a fig tree; others say that it only meant a fig tree. But we can see that Amos’ ministry was to the northern kingdom of Judah, and especially to Bethel, which was the religious center at that time, in Israel. So he had two strikes against him in his ministry. He was from the southern kingdom going to the northern kingdom, and he had a message of judgment for Israel which, of course, was completely unacceptable to the people of Israel. So here was another case where the Lord chose “a nobody” to convey his message by preaching to a people who were naturally averse to him and the judgments he preached.

But he fearlessly persisted in his obedience to the Lord, and delivered the message he was called by God to give.

The days in which Amos preached were days very similar to our own. Both in Israel and in Judah there was great prosperity, especially in Israel under Jeroboam II, but, at the same time, the moral standards of the people of Israel were very low. And, what was particularly abominable to God, was their idolatry. And, as in our days there were some evidences already of God’s judgment among the people. Cf. 4:1-12

Amos was a contemporary of Hosea, but while Hosea preached the love of God, Amos was called to proclaim the glory and righteousness of God, and his judgment against sinners. And his denunciations included several Gentile nations as well as Judah and Israel, and nations which were related by blood to Israel, such as Edom and Moab and Ammon. His date has been set at about the middle of the 700’s B. C.

We can see from reading through Amos’ prophecy that he was primarily a forthteller, a preacher, speaking of immediate judgments against the nations he addressed, especially Israel. We know now that Assyria was to be the nation that would take Israel into captivity, but Amos did not mention the nation by name even though he predicted the exile. Although we know nothing of how the Lord trained Amos for the ministry he had, yet it is clear from this prophecy which carries his name that he was deeply taught in the knowledge of God. For some examples, cf. 1:2; 4:13; 5:6-8; 8:4-14.

His message was one warning the people of Israel of imminent judgment, and yet he also held out to them the hope that ultimately the Lord would regather them, bring them back to their land, from which they would never be scattered again. While the Messiah is not mentioned in Amos’ prophecy, yet the work that is to be done by the Lord we know from other prophecies of other prophets, will come about under the personal ministry of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Messianic passage in Amos’ prophecy is reserved for the very end of the book: Amos 9:8-15. (Read and comment.)

We have seen how the judgment of God fell upon Israel. They were carried into captivity by Assyria in the year 722 B.C. And this should give us confidence in the promise of their regathering to the land, never to be scattered again!

How amazing that Amos would be able to predict that which did take place, and then that which is yet to take place in the plan and purpose of God. Of course, he could only do it because he was “carried along” in his understanding of the will of God by the revelation given to him by the Holy Spirit.

Before we leave the prophecy of Amos, let me point out that it is quoted twice in the NT, and both of those quotations are in the book of Acts:

- 1) Acts 7:42b-43 is a quotation of Amos 5:25-26. This is not a reference to the Messiah, but to the idolatry of the nation.
- 2) Acts 15:16-17 is a quotation from Amos 9:11-12, and this is from the Messianic section of Amos’ prophecy.

But now let us go on to the prophecy of Obadiah.

II. Obadiah.

Amos is one of the longer books of the Minor Prophets; Obadiah is the shortest. Obadiah is the only one-chapter book in all of the OT.

In the prophecy of Amos, Edom is singled out for special mention as suffering the judgment of God. And we find that Obadiah's prophecy is also direct against Edom. That nation, while undergoing God's judgment, is representative of all of Israel's enemies. But it also seems to have been a nation which was outstanding for its constant persecution of the people of Israel. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. However, according to Amos 9:12, there will be a remnant saved even from among the Edomites.

John R. Sampey, in an article in ISBE on Obadiah, lists 13 men in the OT, from the days of David to the end of the OT, who were named Obadiah. And so this gives us no help in identifying the writer of this prophecy.

We don't really know when Obadiah prophesied. Good men vary in their dates from very early, in the 800's B.C. to very late, in the 500's prior to the Babylonian captivity. Some of the verses in Obadiah seem to indicate that Edom saw the doom of Jerusalem, rejoiced in it, and later was judged for it. If so, this would indicate a late date, even after 586 B.C., the date of the Babylonian captivity. So I would be inclined to choose a late date, but it is only a guess.

Looking for references to the Messiah, and after going through the prophecies which we have already covered, we have to notice the reference to “the day of the Lord” in verse 15, and so it would seem that verses 15-21 must refer to the coming of the Lord. And if the Messiah is referred to in addition to “the day of the Lord,” it has to be the very last word of the prophecy: “And the kingdom shall be the Lord's.”

(Read vv. 15-21.)

III. Jonah.

The book of Jonah is different from all of the other Minor Prophets. In fact, it is different from *all* of the Prophets, Major and Minor. It is history. There is no need to discuss whether or not it is allegorical because we know from 2 Kings 14:25 that he was a prophet in Israel, and that during the reign of Jeroboam II, Jeroboam restored certain territories to Israel according to Jonah's prophecy. But as Dr. Charles Feinberg remarked, “This statement as to the fulfillment of his [Jonah's] prophecy does not give us any certain clue as to the time of its utterance, nor as to the time of the ministry of Jonah” (*Jonah, Micah, and Nahum*, p.11). It seems to be generally agreed that Jonah wrote very early, sometime in the eighth century before Christ. Hugh Martin, in his commentary published by the Banner of Truth, said, “Speaking generally, the prophet Jonah lived about midway between the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam [II] and their fatal and final captivity by Assyria” (p. 1). But then he went on to say that in his opinion Jonah ministered about 150 years after Israel was divided into two nations, or about 825 years before Christ. But it seems to be commonly agreed that we cannot be too specific about the exact date.

The account given us in this prophecy, especially of Jonah being swallowed, and then preserved alive, by a great fish, called in the NT “a whale,” has been the subject of much ridicule by people who do not believe the Bible to be the Word of God. But our Lord Jesus put the genuineness of the book of Jonah beyond question when He said,

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:39-40).

The only prophetic utterance in the prophecy had to do with Jonah’s preaching in Nineveh. See 3:4. However, we see in the preaching of Jonah a ministry that was to open up following the death and resurrection and ascension of our Lord. *That was the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Jonah was called of God to take the Gospel to the Gentile city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.* The Lord introduced a special ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 1:8 just before His ascension.

Most expositors have outlined the book by the four chapters. George L. Robinson’s outline has been adopted by many:

- 1) Chapter 1, Jonah’s disobedience; “running away from God.”
- 2) Chapter 2, Jonah’s prayer; “running to God.”
- 3) Chapter 3, Jonah’s preaching to Nineveh; “running with God.”
- 4) Chapter 4, Jonah’s complaints; “running ahead of God.”

It seems to me that a better title for chapter 4 would be, “running against God..

Dr. Feinberg’s outline is:

- 1) The disobedient prophet (ch. 1).
- 2) The chastened prophet (ch. 2).
- 3) The successful prophet (ch. 3).
- 4) The instructed prophet (ch. 4).

Our chief authority for saying that the prophecy of Jonah speaks of Christ, is our Lord Himself in the passage which I quoted a few moments ago from Matt. 12, and from another quotation in Luke 11:29-30:

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation (Luke 11:29-30).

And then in verse 32 of the same chapter our Lord added these words.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here (Luke 11:32).

Our Lord was indicating very clearly that Jonah was a type of Himself. In one way Jonah was a type like the Lord; in another way, in his preaching, he was unlike the Lord because Jonah’s preaching was accepted by the Gentiles in Nineveh, but our Lord’s ministry was, for the most part, rejected by the Jews of His day.

Let me repeat what we saw a moment ago in Matthew 12:

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:39-40).

Therefore, Jonah’s time in the belly of the whale was a type of what was going to happen to the Messiah when He came. Many have pointed out that although Jonah did not die when he was cast into the sea, yet as a type what happened to him pictured death, and a resurrection. The Lord brought Jonah back from what would have been certain death to preach the Gospel to the people of Nineveh. So that in this respect Jonah was “a sign” to the people of our Lord’s generation, and to all succeeding generations. And so Jonah’s experience confirmed our Lord’s death and resurrection, and our Lord’s death and resurrection were pictured by what happened to Jonah. This is the first place that we see Christ in the book of Jonah.

But I want to emphasize also what the Lord said in the words we find in Luke 11:32 which I have also read to

you. Let me read that verse again:

The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here (Luke 11:32).

The part of the verse which I want to call to your attention is the statement, “And, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” Types are a most wonderful study in Scripture, and there are many types of Christ – of Whom Jonah was but one. *But we must always recognize that no one type is sufficient* to be either a complete portrayal of Christ, nor is any type a picture of Christ in every respect. While Jonah’s experience in the whale was a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, yet it is not a type in every respect. For example, Jonah did not die in that experience. And there were many things about Jonah which were not a type of Christ. And that is why the Lord could say, as He did, that “a greater than Jonas is here.”

Now it is often very instructive to point out the contrasts between a type of Christ and Christ Himself. In what respects was Christ, is Christ, greater than Jonah?

First, our Lord was greater than Jonah in His obedience to God. Our Lord said many things that Jonah could not have said, but one of our Lord’s claims was that He *always did what was pleasing to the Father*. Cf. John 8:29. As the book of Jonah opens, we are immediately told about the disobedience of Jonah. Many feel that Jonah was leaving the ministry altogether when he bought a ticket to go to Tarshish, which was in Spain. But read all of Matthew, all of Mark, all of Luke, and all of John, *and you will not find a single instance in the life of our Lord on earth, when He was disobedient to the Father!* That is most remarkable. And in that sense the Lord is greater than all of us, greater than anyone who has ever lived.

Second, our Lord was greater than Jonah in His relationship with the elements of nature. Was the Lord ever involved in a storm which He could not stop? Do you remember when His own disciples said after the Lord had calmed a storm in which they thought they would all die? Luke recorded for us that “being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him (Luke 8:25.).

Jonah was just as helpless in the storm as any other man on board that ship. But all the Lord had to do in any storm was to say, “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). And Mark went on to say that when the Lord spoke those words, “the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” Jonah was just a creature like you and I are, but our Lord was the Creator Who continues to exercise absolute authority over when men are inclined to call “the forces of nature.” And by the way, there is no indication that the Lord ever gave this power to His disciples, and most certainly Jonah did not have it. And so we see that even in this respect, when our Lord came, One had come Who was greater than Jonah.

Third, the Lord was greater than Jonah in His compassion for sinners. Jonah was willing to preach to His own people, but he refused to preach to the Gentiles in Nineveh. Prejudice was stronger in his heart than any desire to see those Gentiles saved. The Lord, on the other hand, preached to publicans and sinners throughout His ministry, and commissioned His disciples at the time of His ascension to “go into all the world” to “preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). And He was even more specific in Acts 1:8 where it is recorded that He told His disciples to bear witness of Him to the Samaritans “and to the uttermost part of the earth.” The Apostle Paul even record that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

And so we have to say that our Lord was greater than Jonah is His compassion for sinners. No one who comes to Him will be cast out. Cf. John 6:37.

A fourth way in which our Lord was greater than Jonah was in His preaching. But you might come back at me

and point out that we have no record of as many being converted under our Lord’s ministry as were converted under Jonah’s ministry in Nineveh. And you would be right! But there is much more to preaching than in counting the results. The fact that so many were saved in Nineveh does not confirm that Jonah’s heart was right. It simply confirms that God was gracious, and that God blessed, as He often does, when the heart of His servant was still against the salvation of those Gentiles. Chapter 4 in Jonah’s prophecy confirms that he still felt about the Ninevites like he did when he boarded that ship going for Nineveh. Our Lord was never guilty of such hypocrisy. If He had been, He would have been guilty of sin. When the Lord called sinners to Himself, it was always with the sincere desire for them to come, and for them to be saved. And so I say unequivocally that the Lord was a greater preacher than Jonah.

Fifth, the Lord was greater than Jonah in His wisdom. The prophecy of Jonah concludes with the Lord teaching Jonah. In our Lord’s humanity it is said that He “increased in wisdom” (Luke 2:52). But all through His ministry, our Lord was always the Teacher, never the one being taught. Even the officers who had been sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest our Lord, came back saying, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). The Apostle Paul called our Lord Jesus what never could have been said about Jonah, not about any of us: “Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Cf. 1 Cor. 1:23-24:

- 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The Apostle Paul asked a couple of questions which are found in the book of Romans. We all would do well to consider them. They are found in Romans 11:34: “For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?” No one even comes close to the Lord in His infinite wisdom. And so even in this, when our Lord came, a greater than Jonah appeared on earth.

Sixth, and finally, the Lord was greater than Jonah in His Person. Jonah was just a man, even though he was a child of God. But Jesus Christ was the Lord from heaven. And though He also was a Man, yet He was “without sin” having been born of the virgin Mary, but conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. Jonah demonstrated more than once that, although he had been redeemed, he will still a sinner. And he would never have dared to ask, as our Lord did of His enemies, “Which of you convinceth [convicteth] me of sin?” (John 8:46).

Concl: And so having looked at Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah, we have seen that each one speaks of Christ, but each in a different way. As we go on to look at the remaining Minor Prophets, we will see that the wealth of truth in Scripture about Christ increases, and that all of these prophets, who at different times and in different ways, spoke of the Savior, all agreed that He is the only Hope that men have, not only for life beyond the grave, but of a life of joy and peace here and now which goes beyond anything that the world can possible offer us.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 43

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk

April 27, 1998

Intro: In our lesson today we are going to deal with three prophets who were separated by approximately one hundred years each. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah about 700 years before Christ. Nahum ministered about the same time. Habakkuk was probably as much as 100 years later, about 600 years before our Lord was on the earth. All were preachers to their generation, all were prophets, and all had a message of the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is our privilege, and, I trust, our blessing, to take a brief look into these three prophecies to see how they spoke of Christ.

I. MICAH.

Micah is the one prophet of the OT whose message was directed to both Israel and Judah. The first verse of his prophecy gives us his name which means, Who is like Jah?, or Jehovah. The ISBE lists eight different men in the OT who had this name, but we have no trouble identifying the Micah who was the one who wrote this prophecy.

Interestingly, Jeremiah referred to Micah in his prophecy. Cf. Jer. 26:16-18, but he was quoting what some of princes and the people as well as the elders of Israel remembered about the prophecy of Micah. This is what we read in that passage:

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

18 Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest (Jer. 26:16-18).

They were quoting Micah 3:12.

Micah was born in Moresheth-Gath which was about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. So he belonged to Judah. The dates that are given to his ministry vary a little, but generally they run between 735 B.C and 695 B.C. So in round numbers it would be like Isaiah – around 700 years before Christ. This would mean that he prophesied just before and just after the Assyrian Captivity of Israel, or Samaria. From the kings who are mentioned in 1:1, and comparing that verse with the kings mentioned in Isa. 1:1, it appears that Micah began his ministry after Isaiah had started his, but then the rest of the time they were both ministering to the people of God.

Many expositors have divided Micah's prophecy by his use of the word, "Hear." You find it in 1:2, in 3:1, and in 6:1. It is true that this word is used also in 3:9 and in 6:2, but the subject does not change at these verses, and so expositors feel that in these last two verses Micah was simply emphasizing his message.

Like the other prophets Micah raised his voice against the corruption of the day. Ron Rhodes says in his book, *Christ Before the Manger*, p. 38, that "corruption was at an all-time high." And, like the other prophets, Micah proclaimed the judgment of God, but, at the same time, he held out hope to the people if they would turn to the Lord. Micah is very strong in his Messianic passages and predictions.

His first message (chs. 1-2) was mainly a message of judgment in which he was warning the people to turn from their sins. And from 1:2 we can see that his message was intended for all of the nations of the earth. Sin is always sin whether it is Jewish sin or Gentile sin, and God will judge all sin. So the Gentiles were repeatedly warned by the prophets of God concerning their sins just as the Jews were. But even in a message of judgment the prophet held out hope to the people. We see this in his reference to the gathering of the remnant in 2:12. Micah's second message (chs. 3-5) begins also with the denunciation of the sins of the people, and show how deserving the people of Israel were for the judgment of God. But at the beginning of chapter 4 we come to a very strong message of hope, a message which has to do with “the last days,” which are the days of the Messiah. *The first three verses are almost word for word like Isa. 2:2-4.* (Compare the two.)

The big question is, Was Micah quoting Isaiah, or was Isaiah quoting Micah? Faithful expositors are divided on this subject, and it seems best to say that we do not know. But what we do know is that both men were writing under the direction of the Spirit of God, and the fact that both prophets included the same passage in their prophecies, is not only a proof of their truth, but a tremendous testimony to the importance of this words which they wrote. The passage in Micah's prophecy goes down through verse 7 which may be an indication that the verses were quoted by Isaiah from Micah. But again, we cannot say for sure.

(Read and explain 4:1-7.)

However, this does not conclude the references to Christ in this second message of Micah. In chapter 5 we have one of the most familiar of all OT prophecies concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. And should there be any doubt in anyone's mind as to whether or not this refers to Christ, a NT quotation puts it beyond any doubt. I am referring to Matt. 2:6. I am going to read the first six verses of Matt. 2 so you will remember the context:

- 1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
- 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
- 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
- 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,
- 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel (Matt. 2:1-6).

The prophet whom the chief priest and scribes were quoting was Micah.

Micah 5:2 is full of truth concerning our Lord.

We have both His first coming and His second coming in this one verse. We see His humble birth – in Bethlehem, but He would eventually be “ruler in Israel,” that is, Israel's King-Messiah. But we have evidence of His Deity and His eternal nature in the last statement of this verse: “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” This could only be said of One Who was God. And here it is God, the Son. Dr. Feinberg said, and most evangelical expositors agree with him, that “these goings forth were in creation, in His appearances to the patriarchs, and throughout the Old Testament history of redemption” (*Jonah, Micah, and Nahum*, p.95).

The remainder of the chapter is also Messianic where we see the vengeance that the Messiah will take upon the Gentile nations because of their treatment of “the remnant of Jacob,” the elect of Israel who are to be gathered back into the land when the Messiah returns in glory.

The last message in chs. 6-7 is in many respects *a call to repentance*. Cf. 6:6-8. And this, too, is Messianic because it will only be when the Lord returns and the remnant is regathered, that the remnant will realize what it is that pleases the Lord, and what is required can only be possible through the regenerating power of the blood of Christ, the sacrifice He made at Calvary.

The prophecy concludes on a note of high hope. See 7:8-20. (Read.) Note especially vv. 18-20. The final restoration and salvation of the remnant will be in fulfillment of God’s promise to Jacob, and before him, to Abraham.

So as hopeless as Israel’s condition is today, there is hope, a hope not to be found in alliances with nations, but a hope that is to be found in the coming of the Messiah.

II. NAHUM.

This is the second prophecy which is devoted to Nineveh. Jonah’s was the first; this is the second. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, the nation which took Israel into captivity.

Jonah and Nahum lived approximately 100 years apart – Jonah coming first. Again in round numbers we can say that Jonah ministered early, probably 800 or more years before Christ, while Nahum ministered about 700 years before Christ. Some say that he was even later than that. But whatever may be the exact date, it is very clear that all evidence of the work that God did through the preaching of Jonah, was gone. The city had reverted to its former idolatry and sin. And so Nahum was raised up to proclaim judgment upon Nineveh, not a judgment that would take place in 40 days, as Jonah preached, but Nahum’s message was of the final overthrow of Nineveh. All through the prophecy we have the terrible note of Nineveh’s ultimate doom from which she would never recover. The last verse of the prophecy is a summation of what Nahum has had to say in his prophecy. (Read 3:19. “Bruit” means *a report*.)

In most of the works which I have consulted to confirm what seems to me to be passages which refer to Christ, they have left Nahum out of their consideration, evidently feeling that Christ is not in this prophecy. But I am not sure that they are right. It is true that we do not find the kind of clear references that we do in the other prophecies (with one exception), but surely Christ is here.

The book has two sections:

- 1) After an introductory word, the first 8 verses give us a revelation of the character to God.
- 2) The remainder of the book speaks of God’s final judgment upon Nineveh.

It is very likely that God’s judgment upon Nineveh was to serve as a warning to all nations that treat God as He was treated in Nineveh.

Thinking of Christ, I was struck by the use of the word “vengeance” in 1:2. And it reminded me of a passage that is found in 2 Thessalonians 1. Let me read to you what the Apostle Paul said in that passage:

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day (2 Thess.1:7-10).

And let me add to this a passage from the Gospel of John, chapter 5:

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Is it not possible that when Nahum said in verse 2 of chapter 1 that "God is jealous," that he was speaking of the Father, and that he changed in the second statement to "the Lord avengeth," that this was a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ?

Let me call your attention to another statement that is made in Nahum 1. It is in verse 7. (Read.) I am referring to the last statement: "And He," *i.e.*, the Lord, "knoweth them that are His." Now let me take you to 2 Tim. 2:19:

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Here again you have "God" used first, and then "the Lord." Now I know that "the Lord" can be used of God, but when you remember that God has given us to Christ, and that Christ is charged with keeping us, I wonder if "the Lord" in both of these passages is not a reference to Christ! I believe it is, and if I am right, then this first part of Nahum 1 is speaking of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

But now let us look at a second passage: Nahum 1:15. (Read.) Where have we read this before? Well, this is a quotation from Isa. 52:7:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Of whom was the prophet speaking here? The Apostle Paul quoted this verse in Rom.10:15 where he used it of anyone who preaches the true Gospel. But of whom was the prophet Isaiah speaking when he wrote this?

In answering this question let me read Isa. 52:1-10. (Read.) Look at verse 6. And then as you go on to read the rest of the passage, is it not the Lord Jesus Who shall in that day bring the Gospel, publish peace and salvation? Is this not when Jerusalem shall be redeemed? See verse 9. I think that Nahum was saying that while Nineveh as a city was doomed, yet those individual Ninevites who turned to the Lord would be saved. And that is the way it will be when our Lord returns to reign!

So I hope I have convinced you that Nahum did speak of Christ.

III. HABAKKUK.

Like as is so often true of the Minor Prophets in particular, we are left to the information that they give us in their writings to gather the details that we can about them, about the times in which they lived, and the message they proclaimed. Habakkuk was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah -- although he did not mention either Judah or Jerusalem. He was concerned about the Chaldeans (Babylonians). See 1:6. This would mean that he ministered before the Babylonian Captivity which began in 586 B.C. The last statement of the book seems to indicate that Habakkuk took part in the temple services, and so was from the tribe of Levi, but this cannot be confirmed. But if this were true, then Habakkuk would have been both a priest and a prophet. He must have been a contemporary of Jeremiah.

Dr. Feinberg's comment about the book of Habakkuk is as follows:

The book of Habakkuk differs from the regular addresses of the prophets who ministered to Israel. His is a record of his own experience of soul with God. Prophets spoke for God to men; he expostulates with God about His dealings with men. We are reminded in this regard of Jonah among the prophets

and of Job among the poetical books. Primarily and essentially he is the prophet of faith. The keystone of the whole book is 2:4. His main theme (like Psalm 73 and other passages of the Old Testament) was the affliction of the godly and the prosperity of the wicked. He dwells on the perfect dealings of God and the development of faith in His own [people]. All concede to Habakkuk a very high place among the Hebrew prophets (*Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi*, p. 12).

Dr. Feinberg’s outline of the book is:

- 1) In chapter 1 he dwells on the invasion of the Chaldeans.
- 2) In chapter 2, God’s judgment on the Chaldeans.
- 3) In chapter 3, “the coming of the Lord and the destruction of the hostile world powers.”

Our main interest in our present study is not the entire message of the book, but how Habakkuk may have referred to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. And we are not disappointed.

In Hab. 1:5 Habakkuk issued a warning to the people of his day, and the Apostle Paul, in Acts 13:41 quoted the same verse as a warning to the Jews in his own day as he preached about Christ in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. And basically this was the reason for the Babylonian captivity of Judah, as it was with the Assyrian captivity of Israel, the people had refused to believe the prophets and the promises given to the fathers about the salvation which God would provide for them through the Messiah.

But there is another verse which we find in the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 37. This is a definite reference to the coming of the Messiah, and the writer of Hebrews related it to the coming of Christ which is yet future.

Immediately following this quotation from Habakkuk 2:3 we have another statement in Hab. 2:4 which is quoted three times in the NT, making it one of the most important statements to be found in the OT. The statement is, “The just shall live by faith.” It is found in:

- 1) Rom. 1:17.
- 2) Gal. 3:11.
- 3) Heb. 10:38.

The emphasis upon this statement in each of the NT books is different:

- 1) In Romans it is that “the just shall live by faith.”
- 2) In Galatians it is that “the just shall live by faith.”
- 3) In Hebrews it is that “the just shall live by faith.”

How would these be Messianic? Well, all we need to do is to ask, “‘The just shall live by faith’ IN WHOM?” And we have to come back with the answer, “It is by faith IN CHRIST!” We are not justified by faith in God, but by faith in Christ. And Paul in Galatians tells us that it is “by faith” in Christ, not by any works that we do. Going on to Hebrews we see that the same faith is Christ by which we are saved is the same faith in Christ by which we live in this world while we await the return of the Messiah.

Hab. 2:20 is Messianic. While God’s presence was manifested in the Holy of Holies, yet He was always revealed by Christ. Cf. John 1:18. And the day will come when the Lord will take His place upon the earth, and the whole world will feel the glory of His presence so as to be struck speechless.

In Charles Briggs book, *Messianic Prophecy*, he makes this statement concerning Hab. 3: “The prophet concludes with a sublime representation of the advent of Jahveh for judgment and salvation.” He called this chapter, “The Advent of Jahveh in Glory,” and then continued, “Habakkuk describes the advent of Jahveh for the redemption of His people and the destruction of their enemies” (all quotes on p. 233). Dr. Feinberg said

that the prophet Habakkuk pictured the future glory of Israel from past events in her history. And Dr. Feinberg also made this comment concerning Hab. 3: “It is admittedly one of the most majestic and sublime portions of the Word of God” (*Op. cit.*, p. 31). Evidently as Hebrew poetry, it is unsurpassed!

Concl: The reading of God’s Word always brings blessing to the devout child of God - some sections more than others. But nothing can quicken our hearts more than to see Christ in the Word, and that applies to both the Old and New Testaments. It is no wonder that it is recorded of those two disciples the Lord met on the road to Emmaus when they said, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32). Truly Christ is the Key Who opens to us the treasures of the Word of God.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 44

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi

May 4, 1998

Intro: In our lesson today we come to the last of the pre-exilic minor prophets, *i.e.*, those who ministered before Judah was finally taken into captivity by Babylon. This took place in 586 B.C. Israel was taken into exile in 722 B.C. by Assyria. This prophet's name was Zephaniah. The other two prophets we will consider today are post-exilic, Haggai and Malachi. Because of the length of Zechariah I am reserving our study of his prophecy until next week, but, as all of you know, Zechariah comes between Haggai and Malachi in our Bibles.

I. ZEPHANIAH.

The first verse of Zephaniah's prophecy links him with Hezekiah, which meant that he was a member of the royal family. He ministered during the reign of Josiah which, in round numbers, extended from 640 B.C. to 610 B.C., give or take a few years on each end of his reign. So he ministered, as I have said, *after* Israel had been taken by Assyria, but before Judah was captured and taken into exile by the Babylonians. He was a prophet to Judah. Zephaniah seems to have ministered before Josiah's reforms, and so dates which many accept for his ministry are around 626 or 625 B.C. Zephaniah was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Habakkuk.

The prophecy of Zephaniah shows, as do some of the others, the hardness of the human heart. Israel had been given many warnings before she was conquered and taken into exile. But Judah had not only the warnings of prophets like Zephaniah, but also the example of Israel. Perhaps the delay between the two exiles, from 722 to 586, probably made Judah feel that she was secure. Historically people have misinterpreted the silence of God, and have used that as an excuse for going on in their sins, thinking that God will not judge them. *And we in the United States are making identically the same mistake today.* What a tragedy that we learn little or nothing from history.

The theme of Zephaniah is “the Day of the Lord.” And so his message is similar to that of Joel who probably ministered as much as 200 years before Zephaniah. I say “probably” because we do not have any way of knowing the exact time of Joel's ministry. Zephaniah has been called *a confirmer of prophets who ministered before him or in his generation.* This would include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, and Habakkuk—all of whom spoke of “the Day of the Lord.”

The outline of Zephaniah's prophecy is easy to see:

1) The first chapter is devoted to his warning of the coming Day of the Lord. It is mentioned first in 1:7 and then continues throughout chapter 1. Note especially vv. 14-18. (Read.)

We need to recognize that there was an immediate, or near immediate, fulfillment of these predictions of judgment in the Babylonian Captivity, but the description we have of the Day of the Lord also shows that there would be a more future judgment, a time like the world has never seen, and a time the likes of which would never be seen again. And we have seen in our study that this is a prediction of the Great Tribulation, spoken of by our Lord, and described in detail in the book of the Revelation. The future aspect of the Day of the Lord is seen in Zephaniah's prophecy in the greatest Messianic statement of the book: 3:15. And we can see from the last statement of the verse that Zephaniah was speaking of a blessing that would follow the judgments of the Day of the Lord which would never be seen again. (Read 3:15, noting the last statement of the verse.)

But let us return to the outline.

- 2) Zephaniah, the preacher, and his appeal for Judah to repent (2:1-3).
- 3) The prediction of judgment on the nations which were around Judah (2:4-15). We have seen in our studies that this also as a part of the Day of the Lord.
- 4) God’s Denunciation of Judah (3:1-7).

Then the prophecy closes with

- 5) The Promise of Blessing upon the Nation of Judah (3:8-20). This will include God’s judgment on Judah’s enemies, the Gentile nations. The Lord spoke specifically of this in Matt. 25:31-46. (Read.) This is followed by the salvation of Judah and Israel. Notice the reference to “the remnant of Israel” (speaking of the entire nation) in 3:13. And then the prophecy ends with a picture of the joy the people of Israel will experience when their Messiah is among them.

Note again the reference to our Lord in 3:15. You have the Lord mentioned as being “in the midst” of His people both in v. 15, and again in v. 17. But this last part clearly speaks of the time when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will return to redeem His people, and, as verse 15 says, they will be redeemed never to “see evil any more.”

So with the references to the Day of the Lord, and the reference to “the King of Israel,” in this last part of chapter 3 (vv. 14-20), we have a very strong emphasis upon Christ in this short, but very important, prophecy of Zephaniah.

This book teaches us that God will eventually punish His own people as well as the nations of the earth for their sin. And we in our country have no reason for thinking that we will escape. But we also see how amazing God is in His patience, and that He always gives people both the time and the opportunity to repent. We also see that God has a special place in His heart for the people of Israel, especially the remnant, and that finally He will in total grace fulfill the promises that He has given to His ancient people going back to what He said to Abraham early in Genesis.

II. HAGGAI.

It seems that the correct pronunciation of this prophet is Hag-gai, with the emphasis on the first syllable.

Haggai was a prophet to Judah and Jerusalem after their return from Babylon. His prophecy occupies just three months and twenty-four days. There are five dates given in the prophecy which divides the book into five distinct messages. They are:

- 1) Hag. 1:1-11.
- 2) Hag. 1:12-15.
- 3) Hag. 2:1-9.
- 4) Hag. 2:10-19.
- 5) Hag. 2:20-23.

All were spoken in the second year of Darius. The first on the 1st day of the 6th month; the second on the 24th day of the 6th month; the third on the 20th day of the 7th month; the fourth on the 24th day of the 9th month; and the fifth on the same as the fourth: the 24th day of the 9th month. McGee lists these months as September to December. The year was probably 520 B.C. So there was a gap of about 100 years between Zephaniah and Haggai, and between them ministered Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Haggai’s theme was the re-building of the temple. George L. Robinson made this comment about Haggai:

The rebuilding of the temple is the center of interest around which all that Haggai preached revolves. For it was his supreme mission to arouse the Jews of Jerusalem to rise up and rebuild the temple of Solomon, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 586 B.C. No prophet ever preached more directly or earnestly to his own contemporaries, and no prophet was ever more successful (p. 138).

The rebuilding of the temple was for the purpose of re-establishing fellowship with the Lord after the people had returned from captivity. Fellowship with the Lord provided greater security for the people than all of the walls and armies and weapons of warfare could possibly provide for the people. But it typified a greater regathering when the Lord will bring His people back to their land from all of the nations where they have been scattered. And it is significant that the two men who were prominent in Haggai’s prophecy filled the two positions which the Lord Jesus will eventually have, both King and Priest. Zerubbabel is mentioned in both NT genealogies of our Lord in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Many expositors link the rebuilding of this temple in Haggai to the temple which is described in Ezek. 40-48. If this is accurate (and it very well can be), then we have this as a type also.

Haggai did some very impressive and persuasive preaching, but we note that it was the Lord Who moved upon both the leaders and the people to do the work in building the temple. See 1:13-15.

The one passage from Haggai which is quoted in the NT is Hag. 2:6, quoted in Heb. 12:26. This seems to refer to the signs in the heavens which will accompany the return of the Messiah. This statement in Haggai is followed by verse 7 (ch. 2) which tells us that “the desire of the nations shall come, and the Lord said that He would “fill this house with glory.” There has been much discussion about the meaning of the statement, “the desire of the nations.” Is this a good interpretation, or not? If it is, then we can see how this can easily be a title of the Messiah, and it is clear that He would be the glory in the temple that is yet to be established. Some would translate that expression as *the desirable things of the nations shall come*. The old ASV translates it this way; those who revised the ASV, giving us the NASB, have translated it, “the wealth of all nations.” But Dr. Charles Feinberg, in his commentary on Haggai, says that the translation given in the KJV can be the correct one.

The last four verses of Haggai’s prophecy are Messianic as well. Jewish commentators have characteristically linked this with Messianic predictions. And it seems that Zerubbabel is mentioned here as David has been in other Messianic predictions which we have studied. Our Lord is related to Zerubbabel just as He is related to David. The predictions about the overthrowing of the kingdoms fits right in with what we have learned about the judgment that will fall upon the nations when the Lord returns. “Servant” we know is a title given to our Lord Jesus Christ. He will receive the signet ring, a sign of His divine authority given to Him by God. Our Lord is the One chosen for the work that He is yet to do.

So the prophecy of Haggai certainly adds to the prophecies we have found in the other books of the OT which point to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. MALACHI.

I am skipping over Zechariah and going on to Malachi because Zechariah is longer and can easily take up our last class session. However, concerning “Christ in the Old Testament,” Malachi, although much shorter than Zechariah, is a very, very important prophecy.

Malachi is the last of the OT prophets. His date is about 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah. He had the same relationship with Nehemiah that Haggai and Zechariah had with Zerubbabel and Joshua. The date was a

little over 400 years before Christ. In Malachi we see that the enthusiasm which the people felt when they first returned from captivity, was gone! Spiritual declension had set in. The people were involved in many things that were displeasing to the Lord. One reason for the low state of the people was that they had not seen the great hope set before them by Haggai and Zechariah had not been fulfilled. Malachi spoke strongly against both the priests and the people, and yet, like the other prophets, he held out hope to the nation, hope which was particularly focused upon the coming Messiah.

The divisions of Malachi’s prophecy are as follows:

1) His condemnation of the people and the priests (Mal. 1:1-2:17).

A. First against Judah and Edom (1:1-5).

B. Against the priests (1:6-2:9).

C. Against Judah again (2:10-17).

2) The Messianic hope (3:1-4:6).

This begins with the prophecy of John the Baptist, followed by the coming of the Messiah, the Lord’s judgment upon the wicked. This is followed with an appeal for the people to repent by bringing their tithes to the Lord. For either Jews or Gentiles to bring their money to the Lord was meant to indicate the reality of the change of heart which they had experienced after the Lord returns. Mal. 3:17-4:6 is again Messianic.

We might call Malachi *the prophet of the people who talked back to “the Lord of hosts.”* Over and over again in the prophecy when God brings a charge against them, the prophet recorded their response by introducing it with, “Yet ye say,” or some very similar expression. Cf. 1:2, 6, 7; 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13, 14-15. This shows the impudence of the people as, in effect, they are denying the charges which the Lord has brought against them. It is a sad commentary on the spiritual condition of the people as the OT comes to a close, and yet it is characteristic of the way the people have been from the beginning of sin in the human family. This is proof of what the Psalmist said, and which the Apostle Paul repeated, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Psa. 36:1; Rom. 3:18). And yet even in those days when the spiritual life of the people of Israel was either at a low ebb, or with some, completely non-existent, yet throughout the prophecy we have evidences of hope and indications that the Lord had not, and would not, forsake His people. Cf. 3:16. Even in those days there were those who were faithful to the Lord. God always has His own; the light is never completely extinguished.

Notice that the sins of Israel in Malachi’s day are listed in 3:5 in addition to those which the Lord of hosts had directed Malachi to mention up to that point – the offering of sacrifices which were unacceptable to God, etc. Other sins mentioned were that they had robbed God by failing to bring their tithes to the Lord (3:8-10) – yet even here we see the grace of God to His people – and added to this was their sin in speaking against the Lord as was pointed out by the prophet in 3:13-15.

Note the evidences of hope which is tied in with the promise of a coming Messiah and Redeemer::

1) Mal. 1:5.

2) Mal. 1:11.

3) The main Messianic emphasis begins in 3:1 where we actually have the Lord Jesus speaking and giving the prophecy of John the Baptist. This verse is quoted by Matthew (11:10; cf. vv. 7-15), by Mark (1:2; cf. vv. 1-8), and by Luke (7:27; cf. vv. 19-35).

4) Mal. 3:2-4 speaks of Christ.

5) Mal. 3:6 indicates that God would not change His purposes for Israel because He is an unchanging God. His purposes cannot be changed even by a disobedient people.

6) Mal. 3:12.

7) Mal. 3:17-18.

8) In chapter 4 Malachi spoke, as many before him, about “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (v. 5). It seems that in speaking of Elijah, Malachi was speaking of John the Baptist whose coming had been typified in the OT by the prophet Elijah. But the day mentioned in 4:1 is the first mention of that Day. It is also spoken of in 4:3.

9) Mal. 4:2, “the Sun of righteousness” is a clear reference to the Messiah. Isaiah had predicted about 300 years before that which we find in Isa. 60:1-3:

1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Truly the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is, not “a” Light, one among many, but “the” Light, the one and only Light.

10) Mal. 4:6 is quoted in Luke 1:17 (cf. vv. 13-17) where we see this verse is a prediction of the ministry of John the Baptist in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. (Read Luke 1:13-17.)

11) Mal. 4:3 anticipates the coming of the Messiah when He will put down sin and rule with a rod of iron during the Kingdom Age which will be after the Tribulation, as we have seen before in our studies.

Thus, the OT closes with a strong emphasis upon the coming of the Messiah. Next week we will conclude our studies of this subject by looking into Zechariah’s prophecy.

In Malachi’s prophecy we see:

- 1) The depravity of man in not being afraid to talk back to God.
- 2) God’s hatred for sin in every form, and His intention not only to judge it but to remove it from the earth.
- 3) God’s grace to sinners, and His faithfulness to His purposes as expressed in His Word.
- 4) That the hope of the world is Christ.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 45

Christ in the Minor Prophets

Zechariah

Intro: Zechariah began to write his prophecy two months after Haggai began to write his prophecy. So the historical background for the two prophecies is the same. The date is 520 B.C. The exiles had returned, and the work on the Temple was continuing.

Zechariah's prophecy is difficult to interpret because much is symbolic. It has been called *the Apocalypse of the OT*. But in connection with our study of *Christ in the Old Testament*, it is extremely important because, as Dr. McGee said in his notes on this book, “He [Zechariah] has more Messianic prophecies than any of the other minor prophets” (p. 307). Dr. Feinberg called Zechariah, “the Epitomist of Messianic prophecy” (p. 7). He said this because Zechariah was fond of summarizing and abbreviating prophecies of the Messiah which had been given before. Hengstenberg (whom I have quoted many times in our study) said,

The Messianic prophecies of Zechariah are only second to those of Isaiah in distinctness and importance. In this, the last prophet but one [meaning that Malachi came after him], the prophetic gift once more unfolded all its glory, as a proof that it did not sink from the exhaustion of age, but was withdrawn according to the deliberate counsel of the Lord (p. 264).

So we come to Zechariah to learn much more about our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be reminded of some of the prophecies which we have had before. It is good to see what others have done in locating these Messianic passages, but nothing will bring us greater blessing than to read through Zechariah's prophecy for ourselves, noting the passages which speak of Christ.

One thing that is simple about the prophecy is the way it is divided. And so it is easy to come up with an outline.

1) The first six verses of chapter 1 give us the Introduction. George L. Robinson in his book on the Minor Prophets says about these verses:

It strikes the keynote of the entire book, and is one of the strongest and most intensely spiritual calls to repentance to be found anywhere in the Old Testament (p. 150).

We must always remember that the prophets were preachers. We see this throughout Zechariah's prophecy not only in his rebukes of the people because of their sin, but the marvelous way he set before the people the character of God.

2) From 1:7 to the end of chapter 6 (v. 15) we have a series of eight night visions given to Zechariah in one day. This was just two months after the cornerstone of the Temple had been laid. I won't take the time to list the visions, but you will find two in chapter 1, one in chapter 2; one in chapter 3; one in chapter 4; two in chapter 5; and one in chapter 6. This last vision (6:1-8) is followed by one of the Messianic passages of the book (6:9-15).

3) Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to a question which the exiles asked of the prophets and the priests. The question is given in verse 3. All during the exile the people had mourned on four months commemorating the time when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem; secondly -- the time when the temple was burned; third, the time when Gedaliah was killed; and finally the month when Nebuchadnezzar began his siege which resulted in the fall of Jerusalem. The answer to the question is given in 8:19.

4) The rest of the book is given over to two burdens (9-14). The first is in chapters 9-11, and the second in chapters 12-14. Burdens are usually connected with judgments, and judgments are included in these chapters, but they are mainly prophecies of hope and blessing for the people of God, especially in connection with the coming of the Messiah.

But the main concern we have in our present study of Zechariah is to see how he spoke of Christ. These have

to do both with His first coming and His second coming. Zechariah’s purpose is to provide present comfort for the people of God by speaking of future blessings, and, of course, these blessings, as is seen all through the OT have to do with the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. It did not take long for the people to become what Dr. Robinson called, “apathetic,” that is, no longer excited about being back in the land. And so the ministry of the prophets was to rekindle the fire in their hearts. The exiles who had returned needed the truth which the Apostle Paul gave to the Galatians many years later when he wrote to them,

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Gal. 6:9).

Messianic Passages.

- 1) Zech. 2:10-13. The Lord had just given Zechariah a vision which spoke of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and this was to be the response of the people. Verse 10 predicts the coming of the Lord. Verse 11 speaks of the salvation of Gentile nations. And verse 12 speaks of the blessing of God restored upon Jerusalem and Judah. This will all take place at the Second Coming of our Lord. This is one of those passages which made the people expect that the Lord would come to reign over His people, saving some of the Gentiles (although this was not prominent in the thinking of the people when the Lord came the first time), and making Jerusalem the capital of the world. And so they were to sing and rejoice because of this glorious prospect. And what the Lord was doing in their day was to be encouragement to them that all of God’s promises would be fulfilled.
- 2) Zech. 3:8-10. This is the chapter which deals with the vision of the cleansing of Joshua, the high priest. The last three verses of the chapter give us a prophecy of Christ. Like Isaiah, Zechariah spoke here of the Messiah as ‘My Servant,’ *i.e.*, the Servant of the Lord. And this is the first of two times that Zechariah referred to the Messiah as “the Branch.” And in this Zechariah was following the emphasis first made by Isaiah, and later by Jeremiah. You will always find some differences among Bible teachers as to the significance of types in the OT. Some say that Joshua represented the people of Israel. Others say that he represents Christ. One thing is certain: his cleansing pictures that day when the Lord shall come to the earth to “remove the iniquity of the land in one day” (v. 9). And verse 10 pictures the prosperity, the blessing that will follow.
- 3) Zech. 4:6-10. This comes as the explanation of the first of the two visions that are recorded in this chapter. Remember that Zerubbabel was in the line leading to Christ. And that just as some times when David is mentioned, the reference is to David’s greater Son, our Lord, so we saw in our study of Haggai that the same seems to be true of Zerubbabel, *i.e.*, that his name is used but it points ahead to his greater Son. The task facing Zerubbabel was enormous. It looked impossible. But the prophecy here is that the headstone, the last stone which would finish the building, would be put in place, but the work would all be attributed to the grace of God. That is the reason for the statement in verse 6 of this chapter. The work in Zechariah’s day would not be completed by the “might” of one man, nor by the combined “power” of the whole nation, but it would be by the Spirit of the Lord working through Zerubbabel and all of the people. In the same way the predictions that the prophets were making about Jerusalem and Judah not only sounded impossible, but ridiculous, because of all of the obstacles which stood in the way. But the Lord will see to it that every promise is fulfilled, and that would be proof that these prophecies were from “the Lord of hosts.” See 4:9.
- 4) Zech. 6:12-13. This chapter gives us the last of the eight night visions. And it includes the crowning of Joshua, the high priest. Thus we have him as a king-priest. Joshua here is definitely a type of Christ Who will be both a King and a Priest, and this is brought out clearly in verse 13. Although this is a very brief reference to our Lord, yet George L. Robinson spoke of this as the closing scene of all of the visions. And then he went on to say this:

These visions are followed by a coronation scene (6:9-15) in which Joshua, the high priest, is crowned

and made typical of the Messiah-Branch-Priest-King – *the most composite and complete portrait of the Coming One to be found in the Old Testament* (p. 151, italics mine).

So we need to realize what a key passage this is when we are considering “Christ in the Old Testament.”

I am going to skip the two chapters which have to do with the question the people asked (7 and 8), and go on to chapter 9 which is definitely Messianic.

5) Zech. 9:9-10. These verses look back to the prophecy of Isaiah, and ahead to the Gospel of Matthew. The passage in Isaiah is Isa. 62:10-12:

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

The passage in Matthew is Matt. 21:1-9:

1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

The passage that the multitude was shouting is a quotation from Psa. 118:25-26. Let me read this to you but I will begin reading with verse 22 so you can get the whole context:

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD (Psa. 118:21-26).

There is no question but that the multitude thought that the Lord was the Messiah and that He had come to deliver the people from Rome. They did not understand the prophecies of the OT which spoke of Him as the Redeemer and Savior. We have been looking at many passages which point to the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, but here is one which speaks of His First Coming.

In verse 10 of Zech. 9 we have a prophecy of the reuniting of the northern and southern kingdoms, spoke of here as Ephraim and Judah, and that the Messiah will bring peace to the Gentile nations as the Messiah reigns over the nations of the earth “from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:10b).

6) Zech. 11:13. This chapter speaks of the judgment of God upon the covenant people because they have rejected the true Shepherd in preference for false shepherds. And verse 13 takes us to the Gospel of Matthew again, chapter 27, verses 9-10, but I will read the whole context:

- 1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:
- 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.
- 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
- 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.
- 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.
- 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.
- 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.
- 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.
- 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value (Matt. 27:1-9).

The reference in this last verse to Jeremiah is a problem, but the best textual references support that Matthew said, “Jeremiah.” It may have come from non-canonical writing of Jeremiah which has been lost, but we can be sure that somehow this same amount had been revealed to Jeremiah. In the preceding chapter in Matthew’s Gospel we see what Judas did to get the thirty pieces of silver:

- 14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,
- 15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.
- 16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him (Matt. 26:14-16).

7) Zech. 12:9-13:1. We really need to read this whole twelfth chapter of Zechariah to get the connection, but this part of chapter 12 leading into the first verse of chapter 13 will be sufficient to show us that this is another Messianic passage. This predicts the time when, after the Lord pours out upon the elect of Jerusalem “the spirit of grace and supplications,” that the Lord’s people realize for the first time that their Messiah really is the One Whom their nation rejected and crucified. This will be a great time of sorrow for the nation. But this leads to their salvation as we learn from verse 13. This all will take place at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes to reign upon the earth at the beginning of the Millennium.

8) Zech. 13:7-9. For the third time we go to the Gospel of Matthew for confirmation that this, like the others before it, is a Messianic passage. The text in Matthew is chapter 26, verse 31. Again I will read the context. The Lord and His disciples had just finished observing the first Lord’s Supper. And then we are told the following:

- 30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
- 31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad (Matt. 26:30-31).

And so this is another passage pointing to Christ which has to do with His first coming. As Isaiah said some two hundred years before Zechariah’s day, “Yet we did esteem Him, smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isa. 53:4b). And what is even more amazing is the statement with which Isa. 53:10 begins, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him” (Isa. 53:10a). And in confirmation of the latter part of this passage in Zech. 12:7 we are told the following in Matt 26:55-56 when the Lord’s enemies came to arrest Him:

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

9) Zech. 14 is all Messianic, but let me point out in particular verses 1-4, 9, 16, and 20-21. In the first verse we meet again with “the day of the Lord,” and this is the only time this expression is found in the entire book although the phrase, “in that day,” occurs many times. Verses 1-4 of this chapter speak of Israel’s sufferings just before the Lord returns. His return is predicted in verse 4. Verse 9 speaks of our Lord’s reign over all of the earth. Verse 16 with verses 17-19 tell how the Lord will be worshiped by the Gentiles at that time, and the punishment which will be upon those who do not come to Jerusalem to worship Him. The prophecy closes in verses 20 and 21 by telling how “HOLINESS” will prevail everywhere thought Jerusalem “in that day.”

Concl: Thus we see that Zechariah was truly a prophet of the Messiah. He spoke of the character of our Lord. He spoke of His first coming and His second coming. And so we have a very comprehensive revelation of the work of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. Twenty-five hundred years have passed since these words were spoken. All of Zechariah’s predictions concerning our Lord’s first coming were fulfilled 500 years later. Since then 2,000 more years have passed. But we can be assured that since the Lord came the first time to be pierced for our sins, He will surely come to the earth the second time to fulfill all that has been prophesied that He will do.

Zechariah taught the sovereignty of God. He also taught the grace of God. But, like all of the other prophets, he taught the righteousness of God. We can be sure that the day is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ will receive the glory and honor which belongs only to Him. What better response can we have than that which the people said so long ago as our Lord entered the city of Jerusalem riding upon a donkey. Only with us, let it be from the heart. “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matt. 21:9).

Let me leave you with a good word from Dr. J. Vernon McGee. He had this to say about the name of Zechariah, his father, and his grandfather:

Zechariah, whose name means *whom Jehovah remembers*, is identified (1:1) as the son of Berechiah, which means *Jehovah blesses*, and his father was the son of Iddo, which means *the appointed time*. Certainly this cluster of names with such rich meanings is suggestive of the encouragement given to the remnant—*God remembers and blesses in the appointed time* (Notes on Zechariah, p. 307, italics mine in this last statement).