

spirit... As a Messianic prophet he looked for the full and glorious restoration of the Jews under a theocracy with a complete national system centered in the temple, which has the services of both priest and Levites... Both as priest and as prophet he desired to promote popular holiness and to correct some of the abuses that endangered the nation. In doing this he denounced Judah's sins and predicted the downfall of Jerusalem..., and proclaimed coming judgments over foreign nations..." [Kidwell, p.124]

## DANIEL

Daniel, like Ezekiel, labored during the time of the Jews' captivity in the land of Babylon. Unlike Ezekiel, Daniel became a prominent figure in the government of the Babylonians and later in the government of the Medes and the Persians. In this facet of his life he was like Nehemiah. The book of Daniel contains the same sort of figurative language that we noticed in the book of Ezekiel. Daniel makes specific <sup>reference to the</sup> restoration to the future history of Israel and the Jews, paying specific attention to the kingdom which was to come through the Christ. In this regard he emphasizes the role that God plays in the establishing of nations and the demise of those same nations. The faithfulness of Daniel and his friends contains numerous lessons in themselves.

### CHAPTER ONE

1. The opening verses of the book of Daniel set the stage for the remainder of events to be discussed later. Daniel was a Jew in captivity in the hands of the Chaldeans. He was among the children of Judah (vs.6) that were found in the favor of the king and subsequently was in a greater position than most of the Jews. Incidentally, Daniel is the Jewish name of the main character of the book. His Babylonian name was Belteshazzar. The other three names listed in verse 6 are the Hebrew names of the three men that we know better as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
2. In verse 8 of this chapter we note that the character of Daniel is similar to that of the priest Ezra (cf. Ezra 7:10). Daniel didn't have to wait to decide whom he was going to serve. He already determined to serve the Lord regardless of what might come his way.
3. We learn in this chapter that the people who served in the court of the king were expected to eat of the king's food. Because these things were not allowed to be eaten by the Jews, Daniel and his friends refused to eat them. When the steward informed them that the king would find out about this matter, Daniel and his friends asked that they be tested. They went for a period of ten days eating some sort of cereal mixture and their countenance (appearance) did not diminish, but rather it improved.
4. We also learn from verse 17 that God gave these four Hebrew men wisdom and knowledge which even exceeded the wisdom of the court of the king (cf. vs.20).

### CHAPTER TWO

1. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream that disturbed him, but when he awakened he could not recall what it was that he dreamed. He called for the magicians and astrologers of his court to bring these things to his remembrance, and when they could not do so the king threatened to kill all of the wise men of the nation.
2. When Daniel learned of this he was about to be slain for he was one of the wise men of the court. He informed his three friends of the matter and they all beseeched the Lord that they might learn of this matter so that their lives would be spared. In verse 19 we learn that the Lord revealed the contents and the meaning of the dream to Daniel in a night vision.
3. Daniel, therefore, went before the king of Babylon and informed him of the dream which he had and the significance of that dream. The dream was of an image composed of different elements, each of which represented a kingdom and the first standing for the present kingdom of Babylon.
4. In addition to the image, Nebuchadnezzar beheld a stone that was cut without hands (of miraculous origin) which smote the image and destroyed it. The stone went on to become a great mountain (cf. Is.2, Mic.4).

5. The significance of the dream is, of course, the interpretation of the dream. The four components of the image represented the four successive kingdoms that would reign upon the earth prior to and up until the coming of the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands. This stone (the Christ) would establish a mountain (cf. Is.2:1ff; Mic.4:1ff/mountain=kingdom=church), which would last forever (vs.44). We know, from secular and Biblical history, that the church was established during the days of the fourth and final kingdom, that of the Roman Empire.
6. Note that in verse 45, Daniel assures Nebuchadnezzar of the certainty of the interpretation of this vision.
7. As a result of interpreting this vision for the king of Babylon, Daniel, and his three friends, were rewarded by being placed in prominent positions in government.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. In the opening seven verses of this chapter we learn of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar erected for all men to worship.
2. It soon became apparent that not all people in the kingdom were willing to worship this image. A specific reference is made to the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who because they were in high places of government, drew the attention of some Chaldeans. There is no indication that all of the Jews who were held in captivity were required to worship this image. It seems as if the requirement to worship was restricted to government officials.
3. For their failure to worship the golden image, these three men were cast into a fiery furnace. Note that they steadfastly refused to worship the image, even in view of their ultimate punishment of death. They trusted that God would protect them eternally, if not physically too.
4. The king commanded that the furnaces be prepared and heated seven times hotter than normal. The intensity of the heat was so great that the men who cast them into the fire were consumed, yet the three faithful Jews did not perish. As the men were in the midst of the flames the king beheld four images in the fire, the fourth bearing a likeness to the Son of God (vs.25).
5. When the three Jews came forth they were not harmed in any way. Not a hair of their heads was singed, nor was there even a smell of the fire upon their clothing. As a result of this manifestation of the power of God, the king of Babylon made a decree that forbade anyone in the kingdom to speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

### CHAPTER FOUR

1. In the opening section of chapter four we note yet another vision of the king of Babylon. In this vision Nebuchadnezzar beheld a great and mighty tree. The tree grew tall and flourished fruitfully, but in the midst of the vision there came a voice commanding that the tree be cut down, its leaves be shaken, and its fruits scattered. After all of these events, all that remained of the tree was a stump.
2. As with the previous dream (ch.2), the magicians of the court of the king could not interpret the meaning...but Daniel could. Daniel gave the meaning to be as follows: 1) the tree represented the Babylonian kingdom, specifically Nebuchadnezzar himself; 2) his kingdom grew mighty and became the sustainer of many people and even other nations lesser than himself; 3) but because he exalted himself to the point that he took all of the credit for his success the kingdom was to be taken from him; and 4) Nebuchadnezzar would later regain control over his kingdom. According to verse 25 of the chapter, this was done that the king might know that it is God who retains the right to rule in the affairs of men and of nations; this right is not given to any other, regardless of how great they esteem themselves to be.
3. Note that verse 33ff of the chapter emphasizes that this vision was fulfilled as it was made.
4. One of the most important lessons learned from this chapter is the emphatic impact that the dream and the interpretation and the fulfillment had upon the king of Babylon. In the opening verses of the chapter we note that he seems to be giving praises unto the Lord (cf. vs.2ff), and in the closing verses of the chapter we note that Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson concerning God's sovereignty (cf. vs.34-37).

CHAPTER FIVE

1. As this chapter opens we note that a different king is now ruling in the nation of Babylon. His name is Belshazzar, and he is the son of Nebuchadnezzar. The chapter opens during a feast which this new king gave to the people of his court. We are told that many of the utensils and vessels that were in use at this feast were those which had been stolen from the temple at Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and destroyed it.
2. While the king was at this feast he beheld the fingers of a man writing upon the wall of the palace. The king's countenance changed and he shook so much that his knees smote one another. In order to learn the meaning of this event the king promised the third part of the kingdom to the man that could interpret this sign. All of the wise men of the court came in before the king, but they were unable to tell the interpretation of the handwriting upon the wall. The queen informed the king that there was a man by the name of Daniel in the kingdom who had been able to help the king's father with just such signs.
3. The king called for Daniel and asked him to tell of the meaning of this sign. Daniel told the king that he did not need the gifts which were promised to the interpreter of the writing, but he would still inform the king of the meaning.
4. Daniel told Belshazzar of the pride and arrogance of his father (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) and of the subsequent punishment which came upon him. (See chapter 4 re. the vision of the tree.) Belshazzar, though he was aware of all these things that occurred unto his father, was still vain and full of pride in his own right (vs.22ff). Verse 23 specifically states: "But has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessel of his [i.e. God's] house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:..."
5. He then informed him of the meaning of the words upon the wall. His kingdom had been numbered; it had been weighed in the balances and found lacking. Therefore, the kingdom would be divided unto the Medes and the Persians. The fulfillment of the writing upon the wall was made that very night when the king died and Darius the Median (vs.30ff) took the kingdom.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Because Daniel found favor in the sight of the new king Darius (vs.3), he was exalted in the kingdom. We learn in the following verses, however, that not everyone was so attracted to Daniel. Some of the princes of the nation sought to work against Daniel, and, because they could not convict him of any wrong, they persuaded the king to pass a law which prohibited praying to any God for a period of 30 days (vs.7). The penalty for breaking this law would be death in the lion's den.
2. Daniel, a faithful Jew, was accustomed to praying regularly (vs.10) and did not forsake his faithfulness to the Lord even though the breaking of the king might cost him his life. The princes of the kingdom caught Daniel praying to God and brought him before the king. Because of the nature of the laws of the Medes and the Persians, the king could not suspend judgment. Daniel was to be cast in the lion's den.
3. The king, upon casting Daniel in the lion's den, told Daniel that his God would deliver him. He (i.e. the king) went back to his palace and remained awake all night due to his concern for his friend Daniel. When he came the next morning he was glad to find Daniel still alive. He then commanded that those who accused Daniel be thrown into the midst of the lions. A new law was passed that created respect for the God of Daniel and the Jews, and Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and Cyrus.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. In this chapter we note another vision, but this time the vision was seen by Daniel and not by any king. The vision consisted of four great beasts which came up out of the sea. Their description is given in vs.4ff of the chapter.
2. The interpretation of the vision is provided within the same chapter beginning with verse 15ff. Verse 17 says: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." The vision, therefore, is parallel to the vision seen

by Nebuchadnezzar in chapter two of the book of Daniel. Each of the parts of the image in chapter two, and each of the beasts in chapter seven, correspond to the passage in Revelation 13:1-8. The meaning of each of the visions centers around the time which would pass prior to the coming of the Lord's kingdom, the church. The fourth part of the image and the fourth beast both refer to the Roman Empire. The persecution which came upon the Saints of God at the hand of that empire is documented in Revelation and in secular history (cf. Barrett, Bruce, & Bettenson).

3. The "Ancient of day" that is referred to several times in the chapter is a reference to God, the eternal ruler of nations and men. The role which he plays in the coming of the kingdom of Christ is most significant to say the least. [For a further discussion of the meaning of Daniel 2 & 7 cf. A TEXTUAL STUDY OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL by Don Simpson & McGuigan's work. cf. also K&D, Barnes, Clarke, et al.]

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

1. In this chapter we learn of another vision which Daniel saw. This one involved a ram and a goat. The ram had two horns, one long and one short. He is said to have done according to his will and as a result he became great (vs.4). In the same vision Daniel saw a goat which had a great horn between his eyes. The goat came against the ram and broke his two horns. The goat continued to get stronger, but there came a time when the great horn broke and four smaller horns grew in its place. Out of one of these horns grew yet another horn which became great.
2. In verse 15ff of the chapter the meaning of the vision is given. The ram with the two horns represented the kings of Media and Persia. The rough goat was the king of Greece and the great horn was the first king. The meaning of the other horns is also given in the chapter. The meaning of this chapter follows that of chapters 2 & 7. The reference is to those kings and kingdoms which would hold control over the earth until the coming of the kingdom of God (Daniel 2:44). Note that one of the kings is described as making war against the Prince of princes (i.e. the Christ). This element of the vision is quite abundantly brought forth in the book of Revelation. [NOTE: The visions of Daniel are only briefly presented. Numerous articles and books have been written which give a full explanation of the symbols, visions, and dreams of this book. Keep in mind that we are just previewing the Bible in order to see the continuity of its theme/s. It will be to your advantage to being an exhaustive study of the Bible book by book and verse by verse after we have concluded this preliminary examination.]

#### CHAPTER NINE

1. The introductory verses of this chapter inform us that Daniel was aware of the time limit that the prophet Jeremiah spoke of concerning the desolations of the city of Jerusalem. After this statement is made, we note that Daniel turned to the Lord in prayer. The bulk of the chapter (through vs.19) contains the prayer and the confession the Daniel to God. We note: 1) that Daniel confessed sins, 2) that Daniel mourned, 3) that the Jews did not hearken unto the prophets send by God, 4) that the Jews did not follow the laws of the Lord, 5) that their disobedience came back upon them, and 6) a petition for the Lord to hear and respond to their prayers. In the midst of the prayer an allusion is also made to the restoration of the temple (vs.16-17).
2. The conclusion of chapter nine (vs.20-27) deals with Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks. Note that this was revealed unto him because he was "greatly beloved". Daniel just finished praying for the restoration of the nation of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the holy temple. What was revealed unto him in these concluding verses was an even greater promise. Yes, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were going to be rebuilt, but the ultimate redemption and deliverance of Israel would not come throught the Jewish system of worship or the temple. Hence, a reference to "the Messiah the Prince" in vs.25ff. The vision of the 70 weeks relates to the time of the coming of the Christ. The vision discusses his coming, his death, and the persecution which would come at the hands of the Romans. For a fuller discussion of the intricate details of this passage see 1) CHRISTIAN COURIER, Sept., Oct., & Nov. 1979 "Daniel's Seventy Weeks 1-3 by Wayne Jackson, 2) Zerr, and other.



CHAPTER TEN

1. In the tenth chapter of Daniel we are made aware of another vision which the prophet sees. This one takes place by the place of a great river identified as the Hiddekel (generally considered to be the Tigris River).
2. There Daniel saw a vision of a man clothed in linen. In the presence of this man Daniel is said to have felt fear and weakness. Some scholars rightly conclude from this passage that this is an indication of an epiphany. We are informed through this chapter that the kingdom which would follow the Persian (Medo-Persian) would be the Grecian kingdom. These things were revealed to Daniel because of his diligence to seek the way of God (vs.12ff) [cf. Clarke, p.606ff]

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. This chapter continues the same general theme of prophecies and visions regarding the coming kingdoms and their role in God's scheme of things. More specifically speaking, this chapter picks up where chapter eight leaves off (cf. Clarke) and further explains the development of the four horns which grew out of the Grecian empire.
2. Those kingdoms, or divisions, of the Greek empire would war against one another. A full discussion of this is seen in Simpson's book, p. 125ff. The wars that took place eventually were fulfilled following the death of Alexander the great. His kingdom was divided among four of his generals (the four horns pointing in different directions).
3. Much of the fulfillment of these prophecies is found within the records of secular history. In addition to the reference to these four kings of the Grecian empire, it is most likely that vs.21ff refers to the time of Antiochus Epiphanies, a contemptible person indeed. He set forth to conquer the land of Egypt but turned back when he found Egypt and her allies too strong for him. As he returned, he passed through the land of Palestine and brought destruction upon the Jews. (cf. Tenney's book and Shelly's notes on the intertestamental period.)

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. This, the last chapter of Daniel, continues a bit further with the prophecies of the coming kingdoms. This chapter picks up where chapter 11 leaves off and discusses the Jews in their relationship to the kingdom of Rome, and then their (i.e. the Jews) ultimate destruction as a nation with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
2. The time of the end that is constantly being discussed in this chapter is not the final coming of Christ and the subsequent judgment upon all of mankind. It is a reference to the end of Judaism. Notice that verse 11 makes allusion to "the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away". Following the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. there have been no sacrifices offered by the Jewish people. For all intensive purposes, that was the date that the Jews were finally and completely cut off for their rejection of the Messiah.

DANIEL: A REVIEW

According to the Dickson Bible:

"While Jeremiah was being persecuted by the people and priests in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and carried away Daniel and others (606B.C.). In the following year he ascended the throne of Babylon. Daniel was then about eighteen years of age and could not have been much younger than Nebuchadnezzar himself. Thus this prophet lived through the entire period of the Captivity and was an old man when placed in a high position in the Persian Empire." [p.989]

If this is a correct assessment, then Daniel provides us with a most unique view of the period of exile. Remember, he and Ezekiel were the only two prophets whose books we have in our Bibles that worked during this most crucial period of Israel's history. As we studied the book of Ezekiel we noted that many of the prophecies of that prophet dealt with the future restoration of Israel during the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel. Daniel's work centers around a quite different theme. Though reference is made occasionally to the return to Jerusalem and the restructuring of the nation of Israel (cf. ch.9),

the greater emphasis is given to predictive prophecies that are going to be fulfilled well beyond the coming restoration. Beginning with the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, we note that reference is made numerous times to the coming spiritual kingdom of the Christ. (cf. Dan.2:44; John 18:36; Luke 17:21) The images, visions, and symbols that are found throughout the book of Daniel make it seemingly difficult to interpret, but the main gist of the book is easier to be seen. At a time in the distant future, after the rise and fall of four successive kingdoms and their tributaries, there would come a kingdom which would never end. This kingdom is identified as being founded by God in the second chapter of Daniel (vs.44). The theme of Daniel shows that God is still in control, in much the same way that the theme of the book of Revelation made known to the Christians described God as over-ruling in the affairs of men. The vision of the great tree (ch.4) by Nebuchadnezzar made an exclusive reference to the fact that God is alone Most High. He reserves the right to set up and to pull down those people and those kingdoms which he so desires. This thought was/is intended to be a source of encouragement to those Jews who were in the midst of captivity. Yes, things looked extremely dismal while they were helpless and being held captive by the Babylonians and then by the Medes and the Persians, but God had a plan for them that far outweighed their great expectations to return to the land of Israel. The greatness of the Lord's plan involved the restoration of Israel, the rebuilding of the temple, and the resurrection of the Jews as a great nation once again, but these elements did not constitute the greatest facet of God's plan. One day a kingdom would be established that would be greater than even the kingdom of the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. That kingdom would come out of the Jews and would be a kingdom everlasting in God's plans. Daniel's visions, therefore, lifted the hopes of the Jews in captivity past the restoration of the nation of Israel to the coming of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. In like manner, the book of Revelation lifted the hopes of the spiritual Jews (Christians) well beyond the victory over the Roman Empire and gave them a glimpse of the eternal reward which awaited in heaven. In each case, Daniel and Revelation, give a hope and a promise far greater than that which the sufferers were even considering. (cf. Eph.3:20) In this sense God was able to and did perform exceedingly above that which they even hoped for. In Daniel they were to be heirs of an even greater kingdom than that which currently held them captive; they were to be heirs of the promises through the church. In Revelation the sufferers were not only to be victorious over the Romans, but were to be ultimately victorious in heaven above. In addition to these majestic thoughts we learn basic lessons concerning faithfulness. These promises did not just come to dreamers, but they came to those who were willing to stand up for their faith. As a great example of faith, Daniel is virtually unexcelled. His willingness to refuse the king's dainties in order to maintain his faith is noteworthy indeed. His persistent prayer which could have cost him his life had the princes of Persia had their way is worthy of our imitation. The faith of his three friends manifests the same sort of willingness that we should have today. They refused to acknowledge what everyone else seeming recognized as the thing to do. As a result they were cast into the furnace, but the providence of God enabled them to live. This great faithfulness not only shows the great character of these men, but it also served to produce faith in others. Nebuchadnezzar, though a king with too much self-pride, at least recognized the power of God, if indeed he did not fully submit to it. The Persian king who took such an interest in Daniel did so because of his respect for this faithful Jew. In the face of opposition he stood firm and the king, though he made a foolish decree, hoped to see him live. The influence which we can have can be just as great if we are willing to suffer whatever persecutions that come. Daniel did not receive a position of prominence because he was a "wheeler and a dealer", but because he was rewarded for his faithfulness. The book of Daniel teaches great lessons regarding: 1) the sovereignty of God, 2) the plan of God, 3) the providence of God, 4) the prediction and the fulfillment of prophecies regarding future kingdoms (a marvelous apologetic), 5) steadfastness, faith, endurance, etc. in the midst of persecution, 6) the blessings of God are always greater than we can imagine, 7) the influence that we can have on others. The book of Daniel is a book with a message of hope, hope beyond imagination. In the midst of our consideration of the depths of the valleys of trials, we can always take courage in the majestic beauties of the lofty heights of the awesome mountains that we will one day stand on.

HOSEA

As we noted before (pg. 181 of your notes), Hosea was a prophet that labored among the ten northern tribes of Israel prior to the time of the exile. He was, therefore, a pre-exilic prophet. The nature of the book of Hosea is that of an extended allegory, in which the relationship between Hosea and his wife corresponds to the relationship sustained between Israel and God. The greatness of God's love and patience is a dominant theme in Hosea.

CHAPTER ONE

1. In the initial chapter of the book we learn that Hosea is commanded to take an unfaithful wife, a wife of whoredoms (vs.2ff). In obedience to the commands of the Lord, Hosea marries Gomer and began to bear children by her.
2. We learn the names of the children borne to Gomer in the first chapter and we must take note of the significance of their names. As we mentioned in our brief introduction, the book of Hosea takes on the appearance of an allegory, in which the events between Hosea and his family parallel to the relationship that exists between Israel and the Lord.
3. The name of the first child was Jezreel. The name of the child meant: "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." (vs.4-5)
4. The second child was called Loruhamah: "for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utter take them away."
5. The name of the third child was Loammi: "for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." (vs.9)
6. All of the names of these children had a particular meaning that applied to the nation of Israel's relationship to God. Like Gomer was unfaithful, so was Israel unfaithful to God. She would one day cease to be the kingdom of God, cease to receive the blessings of God, and cease to be the people of God.
7. In spite of all this, there would one day be a time when Israel would be restored and gathered together with the children of Judah. [Note: This reference is an obvious refutation of the theory that the ten tribes of Israel went into oblivion following their Assyrian captivity. In order to be restored with the tribes of Judah, they must of necessity be in existence. That is simply self-evident.]

CHAPTER TWO

1. The first eleven verses of this chapter depict the patience and long-suffering of the Lord for Israel. He pleads for Israel to return to her faithfulness as Hosea pleads for Gomer to be faithful to him.
2. He threatens to remove blessings and privileges from Israel if they continue to abound in their sins. Israel is depicted as pursuing after her lovers, yet unable to find them; her sins benefit no one. She failed to recognize the blessings that the Lord provided (see Isaiah 1). As a result they would be removed.
3. The later part of the chapter (vs.14-23) depicts a scene of reconciliation between Israel and God. When this time came the blessings would return. God would provide for Israel as he did during the days after she came up out of the land of Egypt. He will again "betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." (vs.19-20) The Lord would again be "married" unto Israel, who formerly played the harlot. The Lord is shown to be the faithful partner, a partner willing to forgive the erring one of her sins and willing even to have her returned to him. Such shows the greatness of the love which God had for the nation of Israel.

CHAPTER THREE

This brief chapter contains the Lord's commands to Hosea to take Gomer back. In like manner Israel would seek to be taken back by the Lord, but they would first remain without a king, without a prince, and without the Lord (i.e. apart from the Lord).

Just as Gomer loved another, so did Israel "look to other gods" (vs.1). Just as Gomer was rebuked for her sins, so was Israel. Just as Hosea maintained his love for his wife, so did the Lord maintain his love for the nation of Israel.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

1. In this the fourth chapter of the book of Hosea we note that the sins of Israel and the Lord's controversy with that nation are discussed.
2. Verse one tells us that 1) there was no truth, 2) mercy, or 3) knowledge of God in the land. The people of the land were guilty of swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, etc. (vs.2ff). Verse 6 re-emphasizes the "lack of knowledge" that was so characteristic of the people. In the first chapter of Isaiah we noted that the author (Isaiah) rebuked the people for being worse than animals. The wild animals and the domesticated animals know where their food comes from, but Israel had forgotten that her provisions came from the Lord. In this sense they had no knowledge. Compare this to the first chapter of Romans and the first chapter of I Corinthians. In each of these two accounts we learn that the people of the world considered themselves to be wise, but it was only the wisdom of the world. It was not the wisdom from above...in this sense they were ignorant of God's knowledge. Such an ignorance contributed to the downfall of Israel during the Old Testament.
3. As the people continued to increase and prosper, they also continued to involve themselves in sin (vs.7). The Lord informed them that they would perish because of these sins. They would be taken into captivity, ashamed, and stripped of their former blessings. God informed them for years of the coming judgment, but they did not hearken to the voice of the prophets, the voice of the Lord.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

1. This chapter further enumerates the sins and the offenses of the nation of Israel. All Israel became guilty because of the sins of the priests, the false prophets, and the princes. They all acted as if "they have not known the Lord". (vs.4) Israel dealt treacherously with the Lord, therefore the Lord would pour out his wrath upon them.
2. The last verse is parallel to the train of thought exhibited by the prophet Ezekiel. The presence of the Lord left the holy of holies in the temple and moved outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Then the presence of the Lord moved off even further, and, finally the presence of the Lord totally left the city and the temple. That same imagery is depicted in this verse. God left...but only until Judah and Israel received their just reward and finally turned unto the Lord. Note that the last part of the verse says "in their affliction they will seek me early." (cf. Ps.119:67) When trouble comes we are usually quick to turn to the Lord. The faithful man leans and trusts upon the Lord not only when the times get tough, but all of the time. The faithful child of God is in constant communion (via prayer) with the God of heaven and earth. That person does not need to have the earth move underneath his feet to be driven to the Lord. [NOTE: It is good that troubles come in this life just for this reason. Sometimes adversity is needed to turn to the Lord. We, however, have the responsibility of encouraging the lost to seek the Lord regardless of their particular situation. The lost can turn to the Lord in obedience at any point in life, good or bad. Don't just wait for the bad times to seek God's help.]

#### CHAPTER SIX

1. This chapter emphasizes the mercy of the Lord, that mercy which yearns for Israel to return unto her Maker. When the time of the return came, the Lord would once again richly bestow the special blessings which obedience brings. The last verse of the chapter speaks of the harvest which would be Israel's when they returned from the land of captivity.
2. The chapter also indicated the depths of depravity to which the Jews had gone prior to their time of bondage in the land of Babylon. The Lord said that because of their sins (i.e. Israel's sins), the prophets were sent to slay them by the words of His (i.e. the Lord's) mouth. The Lord desired mercy and not sacrifice (cf. I Samuel 15). This did not mean that the Lord never required sacrifice, but it simply meant that the sacrifice was of no spiritual value whatsoever unless the heart of the offerer was right

in the sight of God. But Israel, rather than being steadfast in her obedience to the Lord, transgressed the covenant of the Lord. Her priests became as robbers and the land of Ephraim (Israel) was whoredom and was defiled. Yet...God planned to accept them with open arms once again, if only they would come back to him.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

This chapter simply continues the picture of the sinful state into which Israel had fallen. Their hearts yearned for evil; that is all they seemed to be prepared for (vs.6ff). They became entangled with the affairs of this world and with the worldliness of the nations about them. They depended and trusted on other nations (Assyria and Egypt) that had not the strength to deliver them. They fled from the strong arms of the Lord, the only one who had the necessary power to deliver them and the only one who cared for them as a special people. Because of their sins and transgressions they would be duly punished.

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

1. This chapter further details the sinful state of Israel. The very first verse of the chapter gives the reason for their punishment. The "have transgressed against my covenant, and trespassed against my law."
2. Israel claimed to know the Lord, but as Titus 1:16 states "they profess that they know God; but in works they deny him...". Such practical atheism is/was no better off than denying that the Lord even existed. Both shortcomings lead in the same direction; that of eternal condemnation. We must always be careful not only to believe in the Lord and in the word of the Lord, but also to act on that faith by living out in our lives what we claim to believe in our hearts. This is Christianity in practice, and not just in principle of theory. Christianity is meant to be live out and not to be lied about.
3. We further note that Israel only brought upon themselves those things which they rightly deserved. Verse 7: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind:..." This same principle is advocated in Galatians 6. We should, therefore, not be surprised when the day of judgment comes and some are standing there condemned because of the unfruitful works of darkness which they performed in this life. We may not be punished, or even found out about concerning the sins of this life, in the day of judgment...true and perfect justice will be meted out by the Lord. At that time nothing will be hid; we must then give an account for all of life's actions.
4. Like several of the previous chapters of Hosea, this chapter also emphasizes the forgetfulness of Israel. "For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof." (vs.14)

#### CHAPTER NINE

This entire chapter attests to the certainty of the punishment which would come upon the sinful nation of Israel. She had gone a whoring after other gods (vs.1), her glory, therefore would fly away like a bird (vs.11). The days of her visitation were coming and she would know it when they did. The Jews had deeply corrupted themselves. They loved to engage in abominations. They separated themselves unto their own shame. For all of these sins the prophet Hosea says: "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations." (vs.17)

#### CHAPTER TEN

1. This chapter is a further continuation of the punishments which would come upon Israel.
2. Israel became like an empty vine, and empty vines are not worthy of remaining. They are cast out and burned (cf. John 15). Israel, rather than prospering in good, was increasing in idolatry and images of foreign gods. They swore falsely and failed to keep the covenant of the Lord. They were told of the impending judgment and were afraid. They pled for the mountains and the hills to fall upon them, so that they might be saved from having to suffer the wrath of a jealous God...but they would still suffer.
3. Chapter eight and verse seven tells the poor planting which Israel was guilty of, but in this chapter (vs.12) we note the proper prescription for Israel: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to see the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; he have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." As a result of improper sowing Israel would

be "utterly cut off." (vs.15)

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. This chapter epitomizes the love which the Lord had for Israel and Judah. Israel, like a child, was called out of the land of Egypt by God, her loving father. He "taught Ephraim also to go" (i.e. how to walk), just as a father might teach his youngster how to take his first steps. God, like a father, watched over Israel, but Israel still went astray.
2. They began to backslide away from the Lord (vs.7). They "called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him." (cf. ch.8:2 and Titus 1:16) Though they turned away from God, Israel was not going to be totally destroyed by him (vs.10ff), but rather they would be spared.
3. Note that vs.12 teaches that at this point in time (i.e. the time of Hosea's prophecy), Israel was unrighteous but Judah was faithful. This condition would later change, as we have already learned from our study of Kings, Chronicles, and many of the preceding prophets.

### CHAPTER TWELVE

1. The sins of Israel (Ephraim) are again mentioned in this chapter. She is described as 1) feeding upon the wind, 2) daily increasing in lies and desolation, 3) loving to oppress, etc.
2. The Lord therefore encouraged and admonished Ephraim to "turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually." (vs.6)

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. This chapter speaks of the coming destruction of Israel (Ephraim; the northern kingdom). They had sinned exceedingly by making images and idols according to their own understanding. Yet God was still the same God who led them out of the land of Egypt and who sustained them in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. There was no other saviour for the people of Israel. Yet they exalted their own hearts and forgot God in the process.
2. As a result of their iniquities, Israel would be punished by the Lord. In effect they had brought it upon themselves: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." (vs.9) God would punish Israel, but he would also work toward their future restoration. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (vs.14; cf. I Cor.15:55)
3. Though they (Israel) would not be completely destroyed (annihilated), they would receive a severe punishment. They would be cut off from the blessings of God. Their land (Samaria, Israel) would become desolate, they would perish (some of them) by the sword, and their children and wives would be slain.

### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. This the last chapter of Hosea is the last call for Israel to repent by Hosea. They were told not to trust in Assyria (vs.3), nor in their own strength. They were admonished by the Lord to return unto him.
2. If they did indeed return to the Lord, then He (i.e. the Lord) would heal their backsliding, he would love them freely, and his anger would be turned away from them. They would return into the land to receive the great blessings of the Lord. Those who are wise, prudent, and knowledgeable of the ways of the Lord are those who "shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." (vs.9)

### HOSEA: A REVIEW

The message of the book of Hosea is indeed a rich one. God is telling Israel, through the story of Hosea's love for Gomer, that he (i.e. the Lord) still loves Israel. Israel, like Gomer, had played the harlot; but the Lord still cared for them and still waited for them to return unto him. The long-suffering of the Lord, that which demonstrates the love and the concern, is amply manifested in this prophet's book. The Lord, though he is a God of love and justice, mercy and grace; is also a God that will punish those that turn away from him and unto some false image/idol or some false way. That does not, however, mean

that the Lord has stopped loving his people. Does a parent cease loving his child when he has to discipline that child for disobedience? The answer is, of course, a simple NO! The parent disciplines and instructs the child, thus correcting the child, because of love that he/she has for the child and not in spite of it. Likewise, God punished Israel, not because he stopped loving them, but because he was in hopes of the nation of Israel of seeing their sins and coming back to the Lord. John 3:16 emphasizes the love that the Lord had for the world. That world is made up of all people, black and white, rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots. God loves them all, even while in the midst of sin (Romans 5:6, 8). While we were in the midst of that sin God sent his Son to die for us upon the cross of calvary. Then, those who accepted and obeyed the commands of the Christ were cleansed of their passed sins; they were redeemed. Those, who having been obedient to the commands of the Lord, now sustained a different relationship to their redeemer. Did the Lord still love them? Yes! But now the love was of a different sort. Note the following passage in Romans: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. MUCH MORE THEN (emp., jla), being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, MUCH MORE (emp., jla), being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom.5:9-10) The thought presented here is this: if indeed it is the case that the Lord loved us while we were yet in sin, then it is also the case that the Lord loves us "MUCH MORE" now that we have been receptive of his terms of pardon and grace and acted in obedience to them. This is the same way that the Lord felt about Israel in the book of Hosea (and all through the Old Testament), but in this passage (Romans 5) the application is to the church of our Lord. In the days of the Old Testament, God loved all men, but in a very special way the Lord loved and cared for Israel. That same principle is seen today. The Lord love all inhabitants of the world, but in a very special way the Lord loves those who have been obedient unto the gospel of His dear Son, that is those who are Christians, members of the church. The Lord loved Israel so much, that he was willing to bear their reproach in hopes that they might one day turn to him. The long-suffering of God, therefore, is the love of God waiting for the love of man to return toward him, to make Him the object of their affections. In Matthew 5:46-48 we read: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The point the the Christ was making is this: it is easy to be friendly unto those people that are friendly unto us, but it is the true test of a disciple of Christ when it is necessary to show his friendliness to those who are his enemies. This same attribute was manifested by our God when he dealt with Israel. Though Israel turned away from the Lord, though they forsook his right ways and teachings: yet the Lord continued to love them, even when they seemed "unlovable". The command of God to love one another is a command that can be and must be obeyed. God manifested to all the world, we can do the same by obeying the commands of the Christ to take the gospel unto the world. If God can endure our sins, and if Hosea could put up with the sinful wife he had and yet love her and be willing to forgive her, then we too can exhibit patience, endurance, and compassion for the souls of the lost...as God has done for us.

## JOEL

Joel was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah, and according to most Bible scholars, was quite possibly the first of the prophets to come to the people and proclaim their sins and then to have those messages recorded as part of the inspired word of God. Joel warns of a plague to come upon the nation, but there is also a glimmer of the future blessings which would come upon the nation in the distant future.

## CHAPTER ONE

1. Joel came to inform the nation of Judah of the punishment that was due to come upon them in the future. Note that in verse 3 of the chapter that reference is made to the method of dissemination of this information. "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." The responsibility of teaching the children falls upon their parents. Far too often the responsibility is delegated to others, schools, churches, day-care centers, etc.



God has ordained that the parents of children bear the primary responsibility for the religious education of their children.

2. Joel calls for the nation of Judah to awake to the troubles that were coming upon them. He describes a time of famine, waste, shame, and destruction.
3. Israel is encouraged to prepare themselves for these future disasters by preparing now. If they would have previously prepared by living righteously in the sight of the Lord, then these times would not threaten them...but they did not live in such a way.
4. As a result, the day of visitation (destruction) was at hand (i.e. coming soon).

## CHAPTER TWO

1. The second chapter of Joel calls the Jews to repentance in view of the destruction which is to come if they do not. In an allegorical fashion, Joel speak of a series of plagues (locusts, drought, etc.) that would come upon the nation of Judah as a result of her sins. These plagues were not the grave punishment which he spoke about previously, but were "lesser" punishments that were to come upon Judah serving to typify the "greater" punishment that they would receive in the future when they would be taken into the land of captivity. [see comments by Lewis and Tidwell on this subject]
2. The attitude of the people needed a change, and Joel spoke of just what was needed. "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." (vs.13) "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that such the breasts: let the brigeegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them:..."
3. If Judah would repent, then the Lord would refrain from bringing punishment upon them. The blessings were conditioned upon continued righteous living, and the punishments were conditioned upon continuous unrighteous living. When the condition changed, so did the consequence. The Jews, due to their change of heart, would indeed receive a reprieve from their previous sentence. God would restore them to their former position. Then they "shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else" and my people shall never be shamed." (vs.27).
4. The last part of chapter two (vs.28-32) is a prophetic utterance which was ultimately fulfilled in Acts 2:14ff. The manifestation of the works of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost fulfilled the times that Joel spoke of in this passage.

## CHAPTER THREE

1. The final chapter of the book of Joel speak of judgment which is to come upon all the nations of the earth. Not only would Judah and Jerusalem come under the judgment of the Lord, but the rest of the nations of the earth as well.
2. All of these nations were gathered into the valley of Jehoshaphat ("Jehovah judges") for judgment. Though the nations of the world would be severely punished, Judah, because "the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" was not so punished. Instead of ultimate punishment, Israel would receive a new strength and a new hope. "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I WILL cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelled in Zion." (v.20-21)

## JOEL: A REVIEW

The book of Joel, though short in length, is anything but lacking in strength. The prophet came to Judah informing them boldly of their sins and the consequences to come if they did not repent of those sins. The Lord, through the prophet, informs Judah that they would suffer physically for their sins. Threats of plagues, droughts, destruction, etc. appear several times in the book, but these are not the severest form of punishment that will come upon the Jews in Judah if they continue in their wicked ways. These are but a shadow, a type, of the judgment to come. If, however, they repented of their sins, then they would free themselves of the burden of this "greater" punishment. The outcome depended upon their obedience or dis-obedience. The choice was there to make and their's to make; no one else

could do it for them. God promised the nation of Judah that they would be restored fully to their former position if only they would repent of their transgressions. Going beyond even their wildest dreams, the Lord would not only maintain those blessings, but he would also provide even greater blessings in the kingdom to come. Though no specific reference is made to the church of the Christ, the application of Joel 2:28-32 to the fulfillment of Acts 2:14ff is sufficient evidence to link Joel with the church and the Christ. Peter, as he stood up before the Jews on the day of Pentecost, quoted from this passage and said that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...". Though this future day of blessing was certain and though it was given to give hope and patience to the Jews, it did not preclude any judgment that would come upon Judah and the rest of the nations for their current or their future sins. Judah and the world would be judged. Israel and Judah both went into captivity. The nations around them were judged for their own sins and for those specific sins which they committed against Judah and Israel. These judgments, however, were only typical of those judgments which the Lord has in store for the disobedient when the final day of judgment comes. Joel makes several references to the "day of the Lord". The phrase has numerous references and could mean: 1) the time of a specific judgment upon a specific people, 2) the coming of destruction, 3) the coming of the Messiah, 4) the coming of the Spirit, 5) the coming of the destruction of Jerusalem (or some other city of country), 6) the ultimate (i.e. the final) judgment upon all men, and 7) other uses. From the book of Joel we learn 1) that the Lord uses natural calamities to bring judgment upon men, 2) that sins do not go unnoticed and unpunished by the Lord, 3) that teaching is a responsibility of parents (i.e. religious teaching), 4) that repentance is necessary to stave off the wrath of God, 5) that God will bestow blessings upon us if we will repent and be obedient, 6) that God has greater blessings in store for those who are obedient, even blessings greater than we can think about or ask for, 7) that judgment is sure, and 8) that GOD IS OUR ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION.

### AMOS

Amos was a prophet that labored prior to the period of Israel's captivity. His work was conducted in the northern kingdom, Israel, but he was a native of Tekoa, a city near Bethlehem, which was in the southern kingdom. Amos labored during a time of great prosperity in Judah and Israel. He therefore did not receive the greatest reception from the people. Who would believe that a nation as great as Israel (both kingdoms) which was prospering so much could ever be taken into captivity by some heathen nation? At the time of Amos, few would believe such a story.

### CHAPTER ONE

1. We have noted in other books of prophecies (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, et al.) that the writer made numerous references to the judgments which would come upon other nations besides the nation of Israel (including Judah). Amos begins his work by pronouncing just such judgments.
2. In vs.3-5 we note that judgment is pronounced upon Damascus, the capital city of Syria. In the following verses we note that punishment and judgment would also come upon: Gaza (Philistia), Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, and others. The punishment which was here predicted was due to two general transgressions: 1) the sins of each nation named, and 2) the specific sins involved in the way each given nation treated the nation of Israel. In Genesis 12:1ff the Lord informed Abraham of the great blessings which would come through his seed (descendants). In addition to that, we note that the Lord told Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed, and that those who blessed them (the seed) would receive blessings, but that those who cursed them would likewise receive cursings. The latter element is manifested here. These nations, though guilty of their own shortcomings, were also guilty of "cursing" Israel. Because this people existed as the chosen people of God, these transgressions received a "just reward".

### CHAPTER TWO

1. This chapter continues the judgments due to more nations. The first section of the chapter informs us of the judgments that were due to come upon Moab. As with the nations

mentioned in the previous chapter, we note also the reasons for the judgment upon the land of Moab (cf. vs.1-3).

2. The second section of the chapter deals very briefly with the sins of Judah and the justice that would come upon them (cf. vs.4-5). Amos, because he primarily was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, did not dwell at length upon these prophesies. In addition to that, we must remember that it was Israel and not Judah that first went into captivity. Judah, therefore, was not the subject of the work of Amos for these two reasons: 1) he was sent primarily to Israel, and 2) Judah's judgment was coming later.
3. In accordance with that fact, we note that the remainder of the chapter (and the book) deals almost exclusively with the judgment to come upon the northern kingdom of Israel. Note the reasons for the coming wrath of God: 1) they sold the righteous for silver; 2) the poor were sold for a pair of shoes (both of these first two expressions simply serve to illustrate the extent to which the self-righteous and the prominent would go to in order to bolster their gains); 3) they profaned the name of the Lord; 4) they engaged in immorality (sexual); 5) they forgot their responsibilities to the poor; 6) they abused the system of prescribed worship; 7) they abused the priesthood and the Nazarites; 8) they refused to hearken to the prophets and chose to silence them rather than listen to them; and 9) in general, they became a burden (a sorrow) to the Lord.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. The opening section of chapter three emphasizes that the Lord will do something about the serious and sinful condition of the nation of Israel. The same people which the Lord had guided out of the land of Egypt and which became a special people in his sight, had now engaged in numerous sins. They were "walking" with those who reveled in unrighteousness...and they were agreeable to it and even involved in it themselves. The Lord did not miss these actions. "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (vs.8)
2. The last few verses of the chapter then begin to depict the judgment which would come upon the city of Samaria. Remember that Samaria was the capital of Israel just as Jerusalem was the capital of Judah. Judgment proclaimed against the capital city of any nation was usually given as an indication of the judgment which would come upon the whole nation.
3. Samaria (Israel) was involved in the following sins: 1) "they know not to do right", 2) they "store up violence and robbery in their palaces", 3) they engaged in idolatrous practices at the cities of Bethel, Dan, etc.

### CHAPTER FOUR

1. The first verses of chapter four (vs.1-3) continue the proclamation against the idols of the nation. God said that the days of his vengeance would soon come upon them (i.e. the idols and those using them) and they would be destroyed.
2. The Lord, infinite not only in justice but also in mercy, endeavored to turn the hearts of the people back to him. Numerous times God punished the children of the northern kingdom in an effort to draw them back to their former ways of righteousness. In the closing verses of this chapter we note that these efforts failed. Note the number of times this phrase is used: "yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord". (cf. vs. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11) The Lord granted ample opportunity to repent, but the children of Israel refused to take advantage of this opportunity. Many times it has been said that God would not condemn someone who never had the chance to become a Christian...that is true. The false concept comes when people think that God has punished or will punish those who never received just such an opportunity. We learn from the book of Revelation (ch.2:21) with regard to Jezebel that "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." If God gave this Jezebel the opportunity to repent of her sins, and if God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11), then it must be true that all people would be granted this same opportunity. Yes, this is true, but it is sad to hear that some deny this truth. God brought punishment to bring righteousness. When that failed, and several times at that, we can fully see and understand that God was fully just in bringing upon the perpetrators their "full reward".

CHAPTER FIVE

1. This chapter is a further explanation of the Lord's entreaty for the nation of Israel to repent of their sins. A lamentation (song of sorrow) is taken up for them because they had fallen and were without any means to rise again due to their rejection of the Lord's ways and his pleas for repentance.
2. The Lord gave them the way to repent and live correctly. "Seek ye me, and ye shall live" (vs.4) and "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live." (vs.8; cf. Mt.6:33) If Israel would only turn from their wicked ways unto the Lord, their troubles would fade. If they would "seek good, and not evil, that ye may live" (vs.14) all would be right with them. If they would "hate the evil, and love the good" (vs.15), they would be restored in the sight of the Lord. But rather than engage in righteous living, the children of Israel: 1) worshiped in Bethel, 2) abhorred those who live uprightly, 3) afflicted the just, 4) took bribes, 5) refused to help the poor, 6) tried to buy the Lord through numerous offerings, and 7) worshiped the Lord with instruments of noise and forgot the instrument of the heart. (see these sins listed in the text)
3. For these transgressions: 1) Israel would become 1/10th what she used to be. Only a remnant of righteous Israel would remain. The rest would be destroyed. (cf. vs.3) 2) Israel would go into captivity beyond Damascus (vs.27) in the land of the Assyrians.

CHAPTER SIX

1. As a further explanation of the last verse of chapter five, we note the judgment which came upon Israel to be due to their condition. The first several verses inform us of that condition.
2. Israel: 1) was at ease, 2) they trusted in something other than the Lord, 3) they refused to realize the judgment which was on its way was going to be real and not just words, 4) they encouraged violence and trouble, 5) they languished in liberty and rich excesses, 6) they engaged in improper worship (vs.5ff). [NOTE: In the verses just mentioned we read: "That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;..." From all indications in the Old Testament the concept of instrumental music in worship was introduced by David. A complete study of the books of Chronicles and Kings will reveal that such is mentioned several times. Why, therefore, is it the case that such was allowed if indeed it is the case that it was not intended by God? Generally speaking, God allowed (not commanded, but suffered: cf. Mt.19:1-9) some things which were not specifically prohibited. We learn that God allowed divorces during the days of Moses, but we learn that God did not desire putting away (Malachi 2). At the days of this ignorance, God overlooked some sins, not because he saw that it was his desire, but because of the nature of the law. During this time multiple marriages were tolerated, and even rules were given concerning the relationships inherent in such a situation (cf. Deut. 21:15), but it was not to be abused to the extent that Solomon later did abuse it (cf. I Kings 11). In any dispensation of Biblical history, we must realize that the people living during that time were under the laws and statutes of that era and no other. Today we live in quite a different time period. We are no longer under that system of dispensation. Today we have more specific guidance concerning the use of such. The New Testament expressly authorizes the use of voices in worship to God. Only that which is authorized (commanded, allowed, etc.) may be used. No exceptions are tolerated. There is simply no authority in the New Testament for the use of instruments of music in the worship of the church today (in the Christian age).
3. As previously mentioned (cf. ch.5) Israel was going to receive punishment for these sins. She would go captive (vs.7), she would be reduced in size and strength (vs.9), and another nation would come up against her to afflict her (vs.14).

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Chapter seven deals with a series of three plagues which were going to come upon the nation of Israel due to her sins. The initial one centers around a plague of grasshoppers. The second was one of fire, and the third was one that centered around the destruction of the high places (pagan places of worship). The use of the plumbline in the third plague signifies that Israel was measured to see how straight (level) they were. When they were found out of harmony with the measuring instrument, they were

subsequently destroyed.

2. The second and last section of the chapter deals with the controversy that arose between Amos and Amaziah, apries of the city of Bethel. [NOTE: Remember that Jeroboam I established a completely different system of worship in the northern kingdom when the division occurred. This was done in order to keep the children of Israel from going to the city of Jerusalem where the temple was. Amaziah was a priest of the idolatrous practices common to Israel at that time. He was not a true priest after the order prescribed by the Lord through the law of Moses.]
3. The dissension came about due to the fact that the house of Israel was "not able to bear all his (i.e. Amos') words." (vs.10) Amaziah informed the current king of Israel, Jeroboam II, that Amos told the people of the land that he (i.e. Jeroboam II) would be slain and that the people would be lead away captive out of their own land. Amaziah told Amos to leave and go where the people would support (i.e. pay) him to hear such news. Amos informed Amaziah that he (i.e. Amos) was not a professional prophet; no one paid him to preach certain things. He was a prophet sent by God with a specific message to bear. He would preach the truth and let things fall where they may. He could not be "bought off" and influenced to preach anything but the truth. As a result of Amaziah's attempts to persuade Amos to leave, he (i.e. Amos ) made a prediction of those things which would come to pass in the house of Amaziah. [NOTE: One of the reasons given by Amaziah for Amos to quit his preaching is seen in vs.13: "it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." Presumably Amos was to weaken his message because he was in a place of religious and political prominence in Israel. Such reasoning did not sway Amos from his divinely given mission.]

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

1. In the opening verses of this chapter Amos is shown a basket of summer fruit by the Lord. The essence of the message is this: summer is here, the fruits are ripe, and harvest time is coming. Likewise, the harvest of the sins of Israel was about to bear its fruit, which was destruction. The time would come soon.
2. The following portion of the chapter shows the real desires and interests of the Jews in Israel. They were so involved in the making of more money that all they wanted to know was when they would be allowed to buy and sell their wares on the day of the sabbath. By the removal of the restrictions that came as part of the law of Moses they would have one more day to buy and sell and therefore that much greater of an opportunity to make themselves rich. This shows their real interest. Because of such vain pursuits, Israel was to be punished. The Lord said that days of mourning would come upon them, and that a famine would also come. The famine, however, was not due to a lack of food, but rather due to a lack the knowledge of God's word (vs.11ff).

#### CHAPTER NINE

1. The message that needed to be imbedded within the hearts and minds of Israel was that these things (i.e. the prophecies and messages) were sure to come to pass. Their future punishment was inevitable and inescapable. Like the message to the Hebrews (cf. Heb.2:3): "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;...: The answer to that question is borne out in the latter part of the book: "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:..." (Heb.12:25). The point that the writer was making is abundantly clear; there is no way of escape from the judgment of the Lord when a people has clearly refused to follow his ways. This same message applied to Israel in the last chapter of the book of Amos. Their punishment was certain to come. If they hid themselves in Carmel, they would be found. If they went to the bottom of the sea, they would still be brought forth to meet their doom.
2. Note, however, that though their punishment was sure to come, it was not to be likened to the punishment that was to come upon the remaining nations. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saying that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the L .. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." (vs. 9-10) Though Israel would receive punishment, they would one day be restored. This

thought forms the basis of the final five verses of the chapter.

3. In these concluding verses we note the hope which was going to be Israel's in the restoration to come. Note that this alone shows that the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel were not lost after they went into Assyrian captivity. If they were, then the words which Amos prophesied by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet.1:19f) were false. In that day the restoration of the tabernacle of David occurred. [Remember that David was responsible for the transportation of the then temporary tabernacle to the city of Jerusalem where the temple (the permanent home for the ark and the presence of the Lord) was later constructed by his son Solomon.] These events would occur during the time of the restoration. First Israel would go into captivity, second, Judah would go into captivity, and then the restoration would begin.

### AMOS: A REVIEW

In a very real way the book of Amos is paralleled by the account of the Laodicean church that we learn of in the book of Revelation (ch.3:17). "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:..." This same sort of condition was characteristic of the nation of Israel during the days of Amos. The economy was booming; they were quite prosperous indeed. To hear that some prophet was in their midst proclaiming doom and gloom would not have set well with the Jews of this day. "We have what we want and need nothing" would have been the attitude of the children of Israel at this time. But, we are well aware that the Lord "seeth not as man seeth" (I Sam.16:9). In this case, the Lord was well aware of the fact that Israel was very prosperous physically, but definitely not prosperous spiritually. The Jews were offering sacrifices, but they were in vain. Their hearts were not in them; they were, therefore, only token offerings to the Lord. Into the midst of this sort of situation came the prophet Amos, a keeper of sycamore trees from a small town six miles south of Bethlehem in Judah. He was fearless in his duties as a prophet of the Lord. To what extent the general populace took heed to his warnings is unknown, but we do know that they created a bit of a stir in the city of Bethel where the idolatrous priest Amaziah sought to have him expelled. Amos stood his ground and refused to be a "puppet prophet"; no one paid him to speak the word of the Lord and no one could pay him to speak anything else either. From the book of Amos we learn: 1) that the Lord rules in the affairs of men (a common theme found in several books of the Bible); 2) that the sins of nations brings punishment just as the sins of individuals; 3) nations are judged by the way that they treat God's chosen (Jews then/Christians now); 4) the judgments of the Lord are sure; 5) the Lord provides ample time and opportunity for men and nations to repent and compassionately pleads for them to do so; 6) outward piety without the inward sacrifice of the heart is worth nothing in an attempt to please the Lord; 7) the forces of nature are at the controls of the Lord; 8) people do not like to be disturbed when they are "comfortable"; 9) men are always desirous to fulfill their own selfish desires; 10) the Lord is patient; 11) the Lord is merciful; 12) the Lord is rich in his blessings; 13) the Lord is faithful to his word and keeps his promises. This is only a partial listing of the teachings that are found in the book of Amos. Though the primary purpose of the work of Amos was to inform the Jews of the judgment to come, we note that it also serves to inform them of the future restoration that would follow the wrath of the Lord. This same general theme, punishment and subsequent restoration, forms the "story line" of a good number of the prophets.

### OBADIAH

Because of the brevity of the book of Obadiah it will serve out purposes well to include the introduction, analysis, and summary all at once and under the same heading.

1. Obadiah was a prophet that uttered the words of the Lord prior to the coming captivity and one who worked among the people of the southern kingdom of Judah.
2. The theme of the book, however, deals almost exclusively with the coming judgment of the Edomites, rather than dealing solely with the nation of Judah. It must be noted that the nation of the Edomites descended from Esau (called Edom). At different points in the history of Israel we are made well aware of the presence and the conflict which Edom presented. 1) In Numbers 20 the nation of Edom refused to grant the fledgling nation of Israel passage through their (i.e. Edom's) land as the Israelites left the

land of Egypt on their way toward Canaan. 2) David later fought against and subdued the nation of Edom (cf. II Sam.8:14). 3) Edom revolted against that dominion (II Kings 2:20-22), and 4) Jeremiah made a prediction concerning their future destruction (cf. Jeremiah 49:7-22). In addition to that prophecy there are numerous other references to the nation of Edom throughout the prophets and throughout the Old Testament in general.

3. Obadiah, therefore, as the subject of this short book, is bound for destruction. One of the major reasons for this consequence was the pride of the Edomites. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" (vs.3) "Though they may have seemed impregnable to themselves, such was not the case in the sight of the Lord. "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." The Lord informs Edom that she would be surely judged.
4. In addition to an over-exalted pride, Edom was subject to judgment due to her rejoicing during the misfortunes of Judah. Verse 11 in Berkeley's Version reads: "On the day when you stood aloof, as foreigners carried off his (i.e. Judah's) possessions and aliens came into his gate, and for Jerusalem they cast lots, yes, you were as one of them." Though they were not directly involved in the direct downfall of the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah, they were indirectly responsible because they simply stood by and watched, offering no assistance at all. But that is not all that they were guilty of, for we learn in vs. 12 that they not only stood idly by while Jerusalem and Judah were taken, but they also rejoiced in the day of their destruction. Remember again, that the blessings which the Lord spoke about to Abraham would not only come to his seed, but also to those who blessed his seed...but in addition to that, cursings came upon those who cursed them. Edom, by refusing to help Judah, and by rejoicing in her downfall, subsequently received a "curse" from the Lord.
5. As a result of these actions on the part of the Edomite, they were to be punished. Verse 15 informs us that "they day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been." The book of Galatians teaches that we should not be surprised, for we shall certainly reap just as we have sown. Hosea 8:7 speaks of those who sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. The harvest is always larger than the planting. When the planting is the sowing of "wild oats", the harvest will be destruction.
6. The concluding verses of the book speak of the ultimate triumph of the nation of Israel.
7. From the book of Obadiah we learn these lessons: 1) "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov.14:34); 2) the Lord's word is sure; 3) the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham came to fruition in the further events of history; 4) when the Lord prophesied judgment, there was no use in depending upon other nations for help; 5) vain-glorious pride quite often brings destruction (cf. Proverbs 16:18); 6) nothing is hid from the Lord; 7) non-involvement does not equal "non-responsibility"; 8) rejoicing in iniquity and the misfortunes of others is sin and therefore worthy of judgment; 9) the righteous are ultimately rewarded; 10) no one is unconquerable; 11) there is always hope for the righteous.

## JONAH

Jonah, like Obadiah, is mainly addressed to a different theme than other books of prophecies. The mission of Jonah was to proclaim the word of the Lord to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the nation of Assyria. Jonah initially rebelled against the will of the Lord, but we learn that he finally relented and submitted to it.

## CHAPTER ONE

1. We are informed in the very first verses of this book what the mission of Jonah was. Verse 2 states that he was to "go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."