



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

Old Testament Survey
Lesson 31 – Five Early Writing Prophets
(Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea)

The Writing Prophets: God’s Spokesmen to a Wicked World

The prophets were men chosen by God to receive and reveal God’s Word to the people. Moses was the greatest of God’s prophets in the Old Testament and so he was a picture or type of **JESUS** the Christ, the greatest Prophet of all. After the time of Moses God supplied His people with prophets only occasionally. For example, in the time of the Judges we read of only two prophets: Deborah (Judges 4:4), and an unnamed prophet (Judges 6:8). Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of a new line of prophets. Nathan and Gad succeeded him. During this time schools of prophets were founded. By the time of Elijah and Elisha, the great miracle-working prophets, there were hundreds of prophets in Israel and Judah. These prophets were responsible for the writing of the books of Samuel and Kings and for preserving the records from which Chronicles was later written.

In the last days before the fall of Israel in 722 BC God provided a new kind of prophet for His people: the writing prophet. These prophets wrote and thus preserved their messages to Israel, and we still have them in our Old Testament. There are sixteen such writing prophets: four so-called “major” prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel) and twelve “minor” prophets. In the history covered by the previous lesson, Lesson 30, seven of these prophets were at work: six minor prophets (Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah) and one major prophet (Isaiah). In this and the next two lessons (Lessons 32 and 33) we shall examine the writings of these prophets. Remember that these prophets were not only predicted the future but proclaimed God’s truth and condemned every kind of sin and falsehood.

The writings of the prophets are not always easy to understand. Sometimes they jump from one topic to another so that their line of thought is not always easy to follow. Knowing the context of their prophecies helps us to understand them. Much of what they say is a condemnation of sin – both the sin of the nations around Judah and the sins of God’s own people. But interspersed with the threats of God’s well-deserved judgment are wonderful prophecies of the coming Messiah, whom God will send out of love for His people and in keeping with His previous promises.

Read the entire book of Jonah, and as much as you can of the rest of these prophets. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

OBADIAH

Obadiah is a short prophecy against Edom spoken most likely in the reign of Jehoram of Judah (853-841 BC).

1. Obadiah predicts the complete destruction of Edom (1-16).

“Though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down” (v. ___)

Note: This prophecy was fulfilled by the time of the prophet Malachi (430 BC).

2. Obadiah announces safety and victory in Judah (17-21).

“On Mount Zion there shall be deliverance...and the kingdom shall be the LORD’s” (vv. _____)

Note: the people of Edom were the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob.

JOEL

Joel prophesied in the land of Judah in the days of Joash of Judah (835-796 BC).

3. Joel predicts a great plague of locusts (1:1-12).
4. The priests are urged to proclaim a solemn fast, because it is God's day of judgment (1:13-20).

"Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand" (v. ____)

5. Joel calls the people to repentance as this plague draws near (2:1-17).

"Rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God" (v. ____)

6. Joel predicts good times to come in response to their repentance (2:18-27).
7. Joel predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Messiah (2:28-32).

"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (v. ____)

Note: On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the apostle Peter declared that the prophecy of Joel about the coming of the Holy Spirit was being fulfilled. He said: **"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel"** (Acts 2:16ff).

8. Joel predicts total victory for the Church over all its enemies (3:1-21).

"Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (v. ____)

JONAH

Jonah prophesied in Israel and Assyria in the day of Jeroboam II and later (793 BC - ?). He is the prophet that prophesied the success and prosperity of Jeroboam II of Israel.

Jonah's preaching to the heathen Assyrians shows that God is not only the God of the Jews but a God of all peoples. Jonah did not want to preach in Nineveh, because he was afraid that they would repent. Jonah did not want them to repent and be saved because they were Israel's enemies. He would rather that they be destroyed by God's wrath.

Jonah's preservation in the belly of the great fish for three days is a picture of Christ's burial in the earth for three days before His resurrection. Many people today regard the story of Jonah to be fiction, but Jesus certainly accepted it as factual account (see Matthew 12:39-41), and so should we.

9. God calls Jonah to preach His Word in Nineveh, but Jonah runs away to sea (1:1-3).
10. A great storm comes up, and Jonah is blamed for this and thrown into the sea (1:14-16).
11. Jonah's life is preserved in a great fish, not necessarily a whale (1:17).

"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah" (v. ____)

12. Jonah prays to God from the belly of the fish and is vomited out (2:1-10).

"Salvation is of the LORD" (v. ____)

13. Jonah preaches God's Word in Nineveh, and the people repent (3:1-10).

"God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them" (v. ____)

14. Jonah is bitter because the people of Nineveh repent (4:1-3).

"I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God" (v. ____)

15. God teaches Jonah to be a true missionary through a plant (4:4-11).

"You have had pity on the plant... Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city?" (vv. ____)

Note: Jonah was like many of the Jewish people in the days of Christ and Paul, for he did not want to share the Savior of the Jews with the people of Nineveh, just as the later Jews did not want to share their Savior with the Gentiles. Jesus referred to the sign of Jonah as the sign of His resurrection. He said: **“As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”** (Matthew 12:40). As Jonah showed himself to be alive on the third day, so also Jesus showed Himself to be alive on the third day.

AMOS

Amos prophesized in the land of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC). He was a shepherd from Tekoa in Judah sent by God to prophesy God’s judgment on Israel. The time of Jeroboam II was a time of material prosperity but a time of moral decay and oppression of the poor, similar in many ways to our own times. Amos speaks of the ivory houses and beds of the wealthy in Israel. Some of this ivory has been discovered.

16. Amos announces God’s judgment on Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel (Chapters 1-3).

Judah: **“They have despised the law of the LORD and have not kept His commandments”** (v. 2:___

Israel: **“He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets”** (v. 3:___

“The houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end” (v. 3:___

17. Amos denounces the corrupt, luxury-loving, indifferent Israelites for ignoring God’s judgments (Chapter 4).

“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel” (v. ___

18. Amos calls for repentance and predicts the Assyrian Captivity of 722 BC (Chapter 5).

“I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus” (v. ___

19. Amos denounces the complacency, luxury, and pride of Israel’s leaders (Chapter 6).

“Woe to you who are at ease in Zion...and are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph” (vv. ___

20. God has saved them from locusts and drought but now judgment will come (7:1-9).

21. The false priest of Bethel forbids Amos from preaching in Israel (7:10-17).

22. Amos predicts the worst of all God’s judgments: the removal of God’s Word (8:1 – 9:10).

“I will send a famine on the land...of hearing the words of the LORD” (v. 8:___

23. Nevertheless, God will preserve His promise to David’s house in His mercy (9:11-15).

“I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down” (v. ___

Note: James, the brother of Jesus, refers to this prophecy in Acts 15:15-17.

HOSEA

Hosea prophesized in Israel and Judah in the days of Jeroboam II and beyond (793-730 BC)

24. God commands Hosea to marry a faithless wife as a symbol of Israel unfaithfulness to God (1:1-3).

God considered Himself married to Israel, but now Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery by worshipping other gods, such as Baal.

25. God gives Hosea’s three children symbolic names (1:4-9).

Jezreel: God will wipe out Jehu’s dynasty because of his cruelty in Jezreel.

Lo-Ruhamah (Unloved): God will remove His love from Israel.

Lo-Ammi (Not My People): God has rejected His people.

26. Hosea predicts the glory of the New Testament Church, as a bride courted by her Husband, the LORD (1:10 – 3:5).

“I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD” (v. 2: ___)

“I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy” (v. 2: ___)

27. Hosea denounces the dishonesty, idolatry, and adultery of Israel’s leaders (Chapter 4).

28. Hosea predicts God’s judgments on faithless Israel and Judah (Chapters 5-8).

“I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (v. 6: ___)

“They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind” (v. 8: ___)

29. Hosea predicts the Assyrian Captivity of 722 BC (Chapter 9).

“My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (v. ___)

30. Hosea predicts terrible disaster unless Israel repents (Chapter 10).

“They shall say to the mountains, ‘Cover us!’ and to the hills, ‘Fall on us.’” (v. ___)

31. Hosea shows the great contrast between God’s past love for Israel and Israel’s present wickedness that demands God’s judgment (Chapters 11-13).

32. Hosea predicts that God’s faithful grace will restore some of them” (Chapter 14).

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely” (v. ___)

A Table of Prophets and Kings

<u>Prophets</u>	<u>Kings of Israel</u>	<u>Kings of Judah</u>	<u>2 Chron.</u>	<u>2 Kings</u>
Obadiah	(6) Jehu (841-814)	Athaliah (841-835)	23-24	9-11
Elisha		Joash/Jehoash (835-796)		11-13
Jehoiada (priest)				
Zechariah, his son				
Joel	(6) Jehoahaz			
a man of God	(6) Jehoash	Amaziah (796-767)	25	13-14
Zechariah	(6) Jeroboam II (793-753)	Azariah/Uzziah (790-739)	26	14-15
Jonah				
Amos				
Hosea				
	(7) Shallum (752)			
Isaiah	(8) Menahem (752-742)			
Micah	(8) Pekahiah (742-740)	Jotham (750-736)	27	15-16
Oded	(9) Pekah (752-732)	Ahaz (743-728)	28	
	(10) Hoshea (732-722)			17
ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY (722 BC)		Hezekiah (728-686)	29-32	17-20

Questions

1. What is the function of a prophet of God?
2. What is the source of all the teachings of a true prophet?
3. Against what nation did the prophet Obadiah foretell God's judgment?
4. What kind of plague was the prophet Joel discussing in his book?
5. Why did Peter quote from the book of Joel on the day of Pentecost?
6. What was Jonah's assignment from God? Why did he disobey God?
7. How did the sailors learn about the true God from Jonah?
8. Why was Jonah unhappy after God blessed his preaching in Nineveh?
9. How did God try to correct Jonah's understanding?
10. What did Jesus mean when He referred to the sign of Jonah?
11. According to Amos, what is often God's purpose in allowing tragedies?
12. What is the worst disaster that God can send to a nation? Why is this the worst?
13. Why did God command Hosea to marry an unfaithful wife?
14. In what way is the Gospel of Christ found in the writings of Hosea?