



DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

# *Minor Prophets*

*George Guthrie, General Editor*

# THE ABC'S OF SALVATION

Some people think a personal relationship with God is something only theologians can comprehend. Actually, God's plan of salvation is simple enough for everyone to understand. Here are the ABC's of salvation.

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## **Admit**

Admit to God that you are a sinner. All persons need salvation. Each of us has a problem the Bible calls sin. Sin is a refusal to acknowledge God's authority over our lives. Everyone who does not live a life of perfect obedience to the Lord is guilty of sin. "Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23). Since none of us is perfect, all of us are sinners (Romans 3:10-18).

The result of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death means eternal separation from God. By God's perfect standard we are guilty of sin and therefore subject to the punishment for sin, which is separation from God. Admitting that you are a sinner and separated from God is the first step of repentance, which is turning from sin and self and turning toward God.

## **Believe**

Believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness from sin. God loves each of us. God offers us salvation. Although we have done nothing to deserve His love and

salvation, God wants to save us. In the death of Jesus on the cross, God provided salvation for all who would repent of their sins and believe in Jesus. "God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

## **Confess**

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to others. After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, share your decision with another person. Tell your pastor or a Christian friend about your decision. Following Christ's example, ask for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith. "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we declare with our mouths, and so we are saved" (Romans 10:9-10).

# CONTENTS

## »» FEATURES

Bible Reading Plan .....	3
Accepting Christ .....	4
Introduction to the Minor Prophets .....	5
Word List .....	110
Leader Guide .....	113
Prayer Journal .....	144



## »» SESSIONS

	Title.....	Page
Session 1:	<b>God Is</b> (Nahum 1:1-8) .....	7
Session 2:	<b>God Will Judge All People</b> (Zephaniah 1:1-3). ....	14
Session 3:	<b>Our Great Salvation</b> (Zephaniah 3:8-17) .....	21
Session 4:	<b>Compassion for Lost People</b> (Obadiah 1:1-4,10-17) ..	28
Session 5:	<b>The Promised Messiah</b> (Zechariah 8:1-8; 9:9-12) .....	35
Session 6:	<b>Angels Announce the Resurrection of Jesus</b> (Luke 24:1-12) .....	42
Session 7:	<b>God Kept His Promise</b> (Luke 24:19-35) .....	49
Session 8:	<b>God's Pure People</b> (Zechariah 13:1-9) .....	56
Session 9:	<b>Hard Questions, Harder Answers</b> (Habakkuk 1:1-6,12-13; 2:1-4) .....	63
Session 10:	<b>Our Awesome God</b> (Habakkuk 3:1-6,11-13,16-19) .....	70
Session 11:	<b>Seek God First</b> (Haggai 1:1-11; 2:5-9) .....	77
Session 12:	<b>True Hope</b> (Malachi 1:1-11) .....	84
Session 13:	<b>Faithful</b> (Malachi 2:10-17) .....	91
Session 14:	<b>A Pure People</b> (Malachi 3:1-7; 3:16-4:2) .....	98



## » GENERAL EDITOR



The prophets are all about relationships—our relationship with God and how it should shape our relationships with others. The Minor Prophets call for faithfulness to God's covenant and impending consequences if people don't

repent. They speak as the freshest, the wisest of counselors, for they ultimately point us to Jesus, the promised Messiah, the Prince of peace.

My prayer for you and me is that we will hear the messages of these prophets for their day, so that we might hear God speak to us and shape us to be world changers in our day.

To Him alone be glory!

***George Guthrie***

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# BIBLE READING PLAN

## MARCH

- ☐ Nahum 1:1-6
- ☐ Nahum 1:7-15
- ☐ Nahum 2:1-6
- ☐ Nahum 2:7-13
- ☐ Nahum 3:1-7
- ☐ Nahum 3:8-18
- ☐ Joel 1:1-4
- ☐ Joel 1:5-14
- ☐ Joel 1:15-20
- ☐ Joel 2:1-2
- ☐ Joel 2:3-14
- ☐ Joel 2:15-17
- ☐ Joel 2:18-27
- ☐ Joel 2:28-32
- ☐ Joel 3:1-13
- ☐ Joel 3:14-21
- ☐ Zephaniah 1:1-7
- ☐ Zephaniah 1:8-13
- ☐ Zephaniah 1:14-18
- ☐ Zephaniah 2:1-7
- ☐ Zephaniah 2:8-15
- ☐ Zephaniah 3:1-8
- ☐ Zephaniah 3:9-13
- ☐ Zephaniah 3:14-20
- ☐ Obadiah 1-4
- ☐ Obadiah 5-9
- ☐ Obadiah 10-14
- ☐ Obadiah 15-21
- ☐ Zechariah 1:1-6
- ☐ Zechariah 1:7-17
- ☐ Zechariah 1:18-2:5

## APRIL

- ☐ Luke 23:32-34
- ☐ Luke 23:35-43
- ☐ Luke 23:44-46
- ☐ Luke 23:47-49
- ☐ Luke 23:50-56
- ☐ Luke 24:1-8
- ☐ Luke 24:9-12
- ☐ Luke 24:13-17
- ☐ Luke 24:18-24
- ☐ Luke 24:25-27
- ☐ Luke 24:28-31
- ☐ Luke 24:32-35
- ☐ Zechariah 2:6-13
- ☐ Zechariah 3:1-5
- ☐ Zechariah 3:6-10
- ☐ Zechariah 4:1-7
- ☐ Zechariah 4:8-14
- ☐ Zechariah 5:1-4
- ☐ Zechariah 5:5-11
- ☐ Zechariah 6:1-8
- ☐ Zechariah 6:9-15
- ☐ Zechariah 7:1-7
- ☐ Zechariah 7:8-14
- ☐ Zechariah 8:1-8
- ☐ Zechariah 8:9-17
- ☐ Zechariah 8:18-23
- ☐ Zechariah 9:1-8
- ☐ Zechariah 9:9-17
- ☐ Zechariah 10:1-7
- ☐ Zechariah 10:8-12

## MAY

- ☐ Zechariah 11:1-6
- ☐ Zechariah 11:7-14
- ☐ Zechariah 11:15-17
- ☐ Zechariah 12:1-9
- ☐ Zechariah 12:10-14
- ☐ Zechariah 13:1-6
- ☐ Zechariah 13:7-9
- ☐ Zechariah 14:1-5
- ☐ Zechariah 14:6-11
- ☐ Zechariah 14:12-21
- ☐ Habakkuk 1:1-11
- ☐ Habakkuk 1:12-17
- ☐ Habakkuk 2:1-8
- ☐ Habakkuk 2:9-14
- ☐ Habakkuk 2:15-20
- ☐ Habakkuk 3:1-15
- ☐ Habakkuk 3:16-19
- ☐ Haggai 1:1-11
- ☐ Haggai 1:12-15
- ☐ Haggai 2:1-9
- ☐ Haggai 2:10-19
- ☐ Haggai 2:20-23
- ☐ Malachi 1:1-5
- ☐ Malachi 1:6-10
- ☐ Malachi 1:11-14
- ☐ Malachi 2:1-9
- ☐ Malachi 2:10-16
- ☐ Malachi 2:17-3:6
- ☐ Malachi 3:7-12
- ☐ Malachi 3:13-18
- ☐ Malachi 4:1-6



## ACCEPTING CHRIST

I grew up in a home where we did not talk about Jesus or God. Or maybe because I was Deaf, I could not understand if my parents talked about Jesus. We did not go to church.

When I started school, I went with my brother to the public school. Since I was Deaf, the teacher told my mother that I needed to go to the Deaf School.

Even at the Deaf School, nobody told me about Jesus.

One day, my mother and I were in a store. A man and woman that knew sign language came and talked with us. They invited us to their church. They interpreted at the church.

At first, my mother took me to the church. But later she stopped taking me. The interpreter would pick me up and take me with her on Sundays. One Sunday, in the Sunday School class, the teacher asked a question that I didn't really understand, but I raised my hand because the other children in the class raised their hands. Then I was baptized in that church. There was no real change in my life. Later, I stopped going to church.

Many years later, after I finished school and got a job in the post office, a Deaf co-worker talked with me about Jesus. I finally began to understand. Two Bible verses became important to me:

- John 3:16 - "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life."
- John 14:6 - "Jesus answered, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me.'"

I asked Jesus to come into my life and forgive me. He changed my life and has given me purpose. I began to learn more and more. I went to Puerto Rico on my first mission trip. I go to the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf where I learn more about Jesus, too.

I pray that you will have Jesus in your heart. He loves you very much and has a wonderful life for you. You can have a new life. All you need to do is:

- Tell God that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23).
- Tell God that you believe Jesus died for you, and ask Him to forgive you and come into your heart to live (Romans 10:9).
- Rejoice and thank God for His gift of salvation (Romans 3:22).



***Elaine Maher***

## INTRODUCTION TO MINOR PROPHETS

- »» **Bible scholars have divided the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament into five sections.**
- »» **The first five books are called The Law.**
- »» **The next twelve books are called History.**
- »» **The third section has five books that are called Poetry/Wisdom.**
- »» **The fourth section has five books. It is called Major Prophets. The word *major* only means these books are larger than the others.**
- »» **The last twelve books of the Old Testament are called the Minor Prophets. The word *minor* means these books are small. They are as important as the longer Major Prophets.**

## » BACKGROUND

This quarter we will study the writing of seven of the **Minor Prophets**. Some of the Minor Prophets worked at the same time as other major and Minor Prophets.

The **prophets** began their work before the Jews were taken captive. The first is Obadiah. He wrote the shortest book in the **Old Testament**. The last prophecy was written by Malachi. His **prophecy** ended the Old Testament with God's promise to the people who returned from captivity. His message was God's promise of the **Messiah** to come.

About 700 years before the Minor Prophets, God's people prayed God would not let them hear His voice or see His fire. They were afraid. God answered their prayer. God said He would send prophets. He told Moses about the work of the prophet. He told Moses the things His prophets must do. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-22 to see God's instructions. Some prophets had other jobs in addition to being prophets. Most were prophets only. They formed groups called a School of the Prophets.

What was the work of a prophet? The prophet spoke the words God gave him. The prophets talked most about four things: 1. The sins that made God angry. 2. Warnings about God's judgment. 3. God's command for the people to **repent**. 4. God's promise for a way to be saved.

Use the Minor Prophets Time Line on pages 142-143 and the Minor Prophet resources on pages 106-109 to help you understand the times, message, and work of the prophets. You should look at these resources each time as you study a lesson.





# Session 1

## GOD IS

We are safe with God during any dangerous time.

### NAHUM 1:1-8

#### FIRST THOUGHTS

God is strong about His own holiness. He is against everything that is **unholy**. He is a safe place for everyone who trusts Him.

Only God is worthy enough for us to worship. He is in control of everything He made. He causes everything that happens to bring Him glory. Our only hope is to depend on Him for salvation. We know God will bring judgment on people who dishonor Him.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Look at the charts on pages 106-109 to understand more about Nahum.

The nation of **Assyria** defeated **Judah** and Israel about 730 **B.C.** Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. Nahum started prophesying against the city of Nineveh about 650 B.C. He told them God would defeat them because of their evil actions.

One hundred years earlier, Jonah prophesied against Nineveh. That time, the people repented. God did not destroy them. They did not obey God when Nahum prophesied against them.

Today's lesson is an introduction to the Book of Nahum. Some Bible students believe it is a song. It gives us a good description of God. The name *Nahum* means "comfort or encouragement."

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. God Is Jealous (Nahum 1:1-3a)

The word *jealous* has several meanings. When we say God is a *jealous* God, we do not mean He is selfish. The word used in these verses means two things:

1. God will not allow His people to worship other gods.
2. God will protect His special people. They are the people He loves. Those people are the **Jewish** nation.

These verses describe the things that will happen to people who sin against God.

### DID YOU KNOW: ... *Worship God Only*

Read: Exodus 20:3 and Deuteronomy 5:7.

What does God say about other gods?

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## VERSE 1.

*This is the message for the city of Nineveh. This is the book of the vision of Nahum, who was from the town of **Elkosh**. The Lord is angry with Nineveh.*

Bible students do not know where Elkosh was located. Some think it was in the southern part of **Judah**. It no longer exists.

## VERSE 2.

*The Lord is a jealous God who punishes; the Lord punishes and is filled with anger. The Lord punishes those who are against Him, and He stays angry with His enemies.*

God will not allow anyone to try to take attention and love away from Him. He will punish anyone or anything that is against Him. He becomes very angry against evil people.

## VERSE 3a.

*The **Lord** does not become angry quickly, and His power is great. The Lord will not let the guilty go unpunished.*

God does not have a hot temper. He does not become angry quickly. He is patient, but His patience will end. When He becomes angry, He stays angry until people return to Him. He will stay angry until He punishes evil people. God will not allow His enemies to go without being punished. People cannot succeed with evil acts forever.

**What things try to take your attention away from God? Name a few of those things.**

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## 2. God Is Powerful (Nahum 1:3b-6)

God has mighty power over everything. No one can stand against His anger. In verses 3b-6 Nahum lists four ways God can punish. He has control over all of these things.

## VERSE 3b.

*Where the Lord goes, there are **whirlwinds** and storms, and the clouds are the dust beneath His feet.*

First, God is like a *whirlwind* or *tornado*. On television, we have seen terrible tornadoes in our country. We see them destroy everything in their path. We cannot control the wind. People cannot stand against tornadoes. No one can stand against God.

## VERSE 4.

*He speaks to the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. The areas of **Bashan** and Carmel dry up, and the flowers of **Lebanon** dry up.*

Second, God causes droughts. A **drought** is a time with no rain. Rivers and seas become dry. Everything dries up because there is no water. Only God can send rain to make crops grow.

## VERSE 5.

*The mountains shake in front of Him, and the hills melt. The earth trembles when He comes; the world and all who live in it shake with fear.*

Third, God is like an *earthquake*. When the earth starts to shake, no one can stop it. People are afraid when they feel it. Only God has power over an earthquake.

## VERSE 6.

*No one can stay alive when He is angry; no one can **survive** His strong anger. His anger is poured out like fire; the rocks are smashed by Him.*

Fourth, God's anger is like *fire*. Fire can destroy everything. God's anger is like a fire out of control. No one can live through a major fire. Only God can protect us when fire comes.

Tornadoes, droughts, earthquakes, and fire are not always punishment. God made the laws of nature. Often these things are just part of nature.

Sometimes our lives may have emotional or physical problems that feel like droughts, earthquakes, tornadoes, or fire.

What do you do when these times happen?

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### 3. God Is Good (Nahum 1:7)

#### VERSE 7.

The **Lord** is good, giving protection in times of trouble. He knows who trusts in Him.

After these four warnings, Nahum describes God in a different way. God is completely good. He offers salvation to people who go to Him for protection. He will protect us when we **repent** and return to Him.

Write about a time when God protected you.

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#### BIBLE SKILL: *God Is Good*

God shows His goodness to people who ask Him for forgiveness. Read Joel 2:12-17. In each verse write the things God tells people to do.

Verse 12. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 13. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 14. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 15. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 16. \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 17. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. God Is Fair (Nahum 1:8)

Another word we use to mean fair is *just* or *justice*.

#### VERSE 8.

*But like a rushing flood, He will completely destroy **Nineveh**; He will chase His enemies until He kills them.*

God will bring judgment on Nineveh, the capital city of **Assyria**. It was one of the most evil kingdoms in history. They acted against all of God's commandments. He promised He would destroy Nineveh. He destroyed Nineveh a short time after Nahum wrote this book.

We can be sure God will punish those people who go against Him today.

**Do you think God is fair to punish those who go against Him? Write a few words about why you think that.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions.

**1. Do I need to stop doing some things that are against God's will?**

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What are those things?**

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**3. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**4. Who can I share this lesson with?**

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**5. How can I prepare better for worship next week?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*The Lord does not become angry quickly, and His power is great.*

—Nahum 1:3a



## Session 2

# GOD WILL JUDGE ALL PEOPLE

One day in the future, God will judge all people.

## **ZEPHANIAH 1:1-3**

### **FIRST THOUGHTS**

One day we must all face God's judgment. Some people think they can serve God and other things at the same time. We must serve God only. We must always keep our faith that Jesus Christ is the way, truth, and life (John 14:6). Jesus is the only Savior.



## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Look at the resources on pages 106-109 to understand more about the prophet named Zephaniah.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. God Will Judge Everyone (Zephaniah 1:1-3)

#### VERSE 1.

*This is the word of the Lord that came through Zephaniah while Josiah son of Amon was king of **Judah**. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, who was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Hezekiah.*

This is the word of the **Lord** that came through Zephaniah while **Josiah** son of Amon was king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, who was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Hezekiah.

This verse introduces Zephaniah and his family background.

Judah had a new king named Josiah. His father and grandfathers were evil kings. They led the people to do evil things. They led them to worship false gods. Zephaniah was the prophet during King Josiah's rule. Zephaniah prophesied against Judah, **Nineveh**, and **Assyria**.

#### VERSES 2-3.

*"I will sweep away everything from the earth," says the Lord. "I will sweep away the people and animals; I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish of the sea. I will ruin the evil people, and I will remove human beings from the earth," says the Lord.*

God will destroy everything on earth. He will remove evil human beings. It will be the same as in the time of Noah.

Look at verse 3. List the things God will remove from the earth.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### **BIBLE SKILL:** *Read Genesis 6:11-13.*

What things were the same in Noah's time and in Zephaniah's time?

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## **2. It Is Dangerous to Agree with False Beliefs (Zephaniah 1:4-6)**

Some people think they can believe in Jesus and also believe in **Buddha**, the Muslim god (**Allah**), or other false gods. God does not want His people to worship other gods.

### **VERSES 4-6.**

*"I will punish Judah and all the people living in Jerusalem. I will remove from this place all signs of **Baal**, the false priests, and the other priests. I will destroy those who worship the stars from the roofs, and those who worship and make promises by both the Lord and the god **Molech**, And those who turned away from the **Lord**, and those who quit following the Lord and praying to him for direction."*

- God will punish the city of Jerusalem and all of Judah because they turned away from Him. The prophet listed eight things the Lord will destroy.
1. All things that remind people of the false god named Baal. People believed Baal helped them have children.
  2. All the things people used in the worship of Baal, such as altars and candle sticks.
  3. The priests of Baal.
  4. Other priests who led people to worship any other false god.
  5. People who worship the stars, moon, or sun.
  6. People who worship Him and the god named Molech at the same time. People sacrificed their children to Molech.
  7. People who never believed in God or worshiped Him.
  8. People who quit following Him and quit praying to Him for answers to their problems.

**Name one or two things you need to do to give your full attention back to God. Things that take your attention away from God are like false gods. Be honest.**

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### **3. A Day of Judgment Is Coming (Zephaniah 1:7-11)**

The Bible speaks often about times when God judged people. In Noah's time, God destroyed the earth. Later God allowed the Jewish people to become slaves to other nations. The greatest day of judgment, *The Day of the Lord*, will be at the end of time when Jesus comes back to earth. At that time, God will judge all people.

#### **VERSE 7.**

*Be silent before the **Lord** God, because the Lord's day for judging people is coming soon. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has made holy His invited guests.*

People must show respect and honor to God because His day of judgment is coming soon. God made a way for us to be saved from His anger. He prepared a sacrifice—Jesus. Faith in Jesus causes us to be clean or holy when we stand before His judgment.

## DID YOU KNOW: ... *God's Plan*

God will judge everyone. He gives us a way to be saved.

Read John 3:16, Romans 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8.

What way does God give people to be saved?

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## VERSES 8-9.

*“On the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, I, the Lord, will punish the princes and the king’s sons and all those who wear foreign clothes. On that day, I will punish those who worship **Dagon**, those who hurt others and tell lies in the temples of their gods.”*

Zephaniah said God has prepared a sacrifice to save His faithful people. God lists five groups of people He will punish.

1. Princes and king’s sons, because they led people away from God.
2. People who wear foreign clothes. In **Old Testament** times, people of each **tribe** and nation wore the same kind of clothes. They knew what tribe or nation the other people belonged to by the clothes they wore. A **Jewish** person who wore the clothes of the enemy was going against God’s special people.
3. People who worship the false god named Dagon. People believed Dagon could make crops grow and cause clouds to bring rain.
4. People who hurt other people.
5. People who teach false ideas in the temple of their gods.

## VERSES 10-11.

*“On that day,” says the Lord, “a cry will be heard at the Fish Gate. A wail will come from the new area of the city, and a loud crash will echo from the hills. Cry, you people living in the market area, because all the merchants will be dead; all the silver traders will be gone.”*

No one can escape God’s judgment. It does not matter if they are rich or poor. People living in the old part of Jerusalem and the new part of Jerusalem will cry loudly because they have nothing to eat and no money to use.

**Will you be saved when God’s Day of Judgment comes?**

**YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Write a few words that explain how you know you are saved.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life.

Many people think they can disobey God. They think God will not do anything about their sins. This lesson taught us that God will judge everyone. He will not accept sin.

God will not accept people who believe in false teachings. One day He will judge everyone. We should ask ourselves:

**1. Will God judge Christians for their sins?**

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**2. Do I really believe God will judge me for my sins?**

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**3. What are some things I think God will judge about me?**

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**4. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**5. Who can I share this lesson with?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*Be silent before the Lord God, because the Lord's day for judging people is coming soon. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has made holy His invited guests.—Zephaniah 1:7*



Session

3

# OUR GREAT SALVATION

We must trust the One who can save us from judgment.

**ZEPHANIAH 3:8-17**

## **FIRST THOUGHTS**

God is strong about His holiness. He calls His chosen people to be holy. He judges all people. His judgment will save all people who come to Him. He will save all people who worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The **Jewish** people and people from other nations sinned against God. There will be a day when God will judge all people. That day is called the *Day of the Lord*. Zephaniah warned people about God's judgment. Today we will learn about God's salvation for people who trust Him.

A prophet who is not included in the lessons in this quarter is Joel. He prophesied about the *Day of the Lord*. He also prophesied about the salvation God will provide. The Book of Joel is a very small book. Read the Book of Joel as you study this lesson.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Wait in Faith (Zephaniah 3:8)

#### VERSE 8.

*"Just wait," says the Lord. "Someday I will stand up as a witness. I have decided that I will gather nations and assemble kingdoms. I will pour out my anger on them, all my strong anger. My anger will be like fire that will burn up the whole world."*

Sometimes God's people are persecuted. They know God will save them at the judgment time. Often they are not patient. God said to be patient and wait. God has strong anger against people who disobey Him. His anger is like a fire. It will destroy everything.

As believers we do not want anyone to be destroyed. We want all people to worship and love God. Not everyone will come to Him. He will bring punishment to people who do not **repent** and turn to Him.

**Read John 3:36b. Fill in the blank space. "Whoever does not obey the Son does not have life. God's \_\_\_\_\_ stays on him."**

### 2. Call on God (Zephaniah 3:9-13)

#### VERSE 9.

*"Then I will give the people of all nations pure speech so that all of them will speak the name of the Lord and worship me together."*

After God destroys everything, people will be ashamed of their actions.

God will change the way people talk. He will give pure speech to believers of all nations. Their words will be pure. They will use their language to worship Him. In several places in the Bible, this is called a new song. This does not only mean music. A new song can mean a poem, words of praise, or feelings in our hearts. Everyone will be using the same language.



## BIBLE SKILL: *Read About a New Song*

Find these verses in your Bible.

Psalms 40:1-3

Psalms 149:1-6

Psalms 96:1-7

Revelation 5:9-10

Psalms 98:1-6

Revelation 14:2-3

Psalms 144:9

In your own words, tell what the song was about.

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### VERSE 10.

*“People will come from where the **Nile River** begins; my scattered people will come with gifts for me.”*

More than 100 years earlier, the Jewish nation was defeated. The Jewish people were carried off to many other countries. They became slaves there. God said His people in foreign nations would come back to Jerusalem. They would bring gifts to Him. The **New Testament** says all people will worship Jesus at the final *Day of the Lord* (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:9-11).

### VERSE 11.

*“Then Jerusalem will not be ashamed of the wrongs done against me, because I will remove from this city those who like to brag; there will never be any more proud people on my holy mountain in Jerusalem.”*

Proud people will be removed from Jerusalem. People who brag about themselves will be gone. The people who are left will be ashamed of their sins. God will take away their shame when they repent.

## VERSE 12.

*“But I will leave in the city the humble and those who are not proud, and they will trust in the Lord.”*

The people left in Jerusalem will be the humble ones. They are the people who put their trust in the **Lord**.

## VERSE 13.

*“Those who are left alive in Israel won’t do wrong or tell lies; they won’t trick people with their words. They will eat and lie down with no one to make them afraid.”*

God will cleanse and purify His people. The people who are left will have lives that please the Lord.

**Do you think it is wrong to brag about yourself? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Write a few words about why you think that.**

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## 3. Celebrate Salvation (Zephaniah 3:14-17)

### VERSES 14-15.

*Sing, Jerusalem. Israel, shout for joy! Jerusalem, be happy and rejoice with all your heart. The Lord has stopped punishing you; He has sent your enemies away. The King of Israel, the Lord, is with you; you will never again be afraid of being harmed.*

God will save those who turn to Him. He will rejoice about the people He **redeemed**.

These two verses should be read together. After God’s judgment is over, His people will rejoice again. They will shout for joy. God will be their King. The King of Israel will never let His people be harmed.

This is the way we will feel when Jesus comes back to earth. He will be our King. He will never let anything harm His followers.

## VERSES 16-17.

*On that day, Jerusalem will be told, "Don't be afraid, city of Jerusalem. Don't give up. The Lord your God is with you; the Mighty One will save you. He will rejoice over you. You will rest in His love; He will sing and be joyful about you."*

**DID YOU KNOW: . . . On the Day of Judgment, God provides salvation for people who have called on Him.**

Read John 3:16.

Explain this verse in your own words.

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Finally, on that last day, God said Jerusalem must not be afraid. He told them not to give up. Why? The prophet gave us five reasons why they should not be afraid.

1. The Lord is with you.
2. The Mighty One will save you.
3. He will rejoice over you.
4. You will rest in His love.
5. He will sing and be joyful about you.

When we read these things we can know this is the way Jesus will act when He comes back to earth.

Are you a follower of Jesus? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Can you put your name on each of the five reasons you should not be afraid? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Write your full name in each blank.

1. The Lord is with \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The Mighty One will save \_\_\_\_\_.

3. He will rejoice over \_\_\_\_\_.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ will rest in his love.

5. He will sing and be joyful about \_\_\_\_\_.

## IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:

1. Have I repented and returned to God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

2. What things in my life do I need to get rid of?

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3. Do I sing and give praise to God for my salvation? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

4. Write a few words about the new song in your heart.

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5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?

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6. Who can I share this lesson with?

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## MEMORY VERSE

*The Lord your God is with you; the Mighty One will save you. He will rejoice over you. You will rest in His love; He will sing and be joyful about you.—Zephaniah 3:17*



## Session 4

# COMPASSION FOR LOST PEOPLE

Mercy wins over judgment.

**OBADIAH 1:1-4,10-17**

### FIRST THOUGHTS

We must be kind and caring to people who are experiencing God's **discipline**. We should remember we will face the results of our sin also.

Faithful believers can face life with hope. We know God will reward us. Believers have received God's grace.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Obadiah was a prophet from **Judah**. The Bible has no other information about him.

Obadiah prophesied against **Edom**. The **Edomites** were descendants of **Esau**. Esau and his twin brother, **Jacob**, were the sons of **Isaac**. Isaac sent Esau away from the family. Esau's descendants wandered around in the desert and lived in the mountains. Read about this in Genesis 25:19-34.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Do Not Be Proud (Obadiah 1:1-4)

The word *proud* means to “think you are better than everyone else.” The Edomites thought they were safe because they lived high in rocky mountainsides. Obadiah warned them God would show them they were not safe from His judgment.

### VERSE 1.

*This is the vision of Obadiah. This is what the **Lord** God says about Edom: We have heard a message from the Lord. A **messenger** has been sent among the nations, saying, “Attack! Let’s go attack Edom!”*

Obadiah told the Edomites God was against them. God was sending a messenger to nations around them. God told the nations to get ready to attack Edom.

### VERSE 2.

*“Soon I will make you the smallest of nations. You will be greatly hated by everyone.”*

God said He would make Edom the smallest nation. All nations would hate them. Before that time, Edom was friends with many nations. God said He would destroy their friendship with other nations.

## VERSES 3-4.

*“Your pride has fooled you, you who live in the hollow places of the cliff. Your home is up high, you who say to yourself, ‘No one can bring me down to the ground.’ Even if you fly high like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, I will bring you down from there,” says the Lord.*

God told the Edomites their pride fooled them. How did their pride fool them? They thought they were better than everyone else. They lived high in the mountains in caves. Edomites could kill their enemies as they tried to climb up the steep mountain.

God told them no matter where they went, He could bring them down. This meant He would destroy them totally. The Edomites were completely destroyed by A.D. 70. That happened 500 years after this **prophecy**.

**Do you know what the New Testament says about pride? Read Romans 12:3. Write the verse in your own words.**

## 2. Show Mercy and Grace (Obadiah 1:10-14)


God told **Edom** to show sympathy to people suffering because of the results of their sin.

## VERSES 10-11.

*“You did violence to your relatives, the Israelites, so you will be covered with shame and destroyed forever. You stood aside without helping while strangers carried Israel’s **treasures** away. When **foreigners** entered Israel’s city gate and threw lots to decide what part of Jerusalem they would take, you were like one of them.”*

Edom did five things to make God angry. God told them they would pay for their sin. He would destroy them completely.



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1. They hurt the Israelites.
  2. They stood and watched while strangers robbed Israel.
  3. They did not help their brother Israel.
  4. They joined Jerusalem's enemies after the city was defeated.
  5. They helped the enemies divide the city to see what part of Jerusalem each nation would take.

## VERSES 12-14.

*"Edom, do not laugh at your brother Israel in his time of trouble or be happy about the people of **Judah** when they are destroyed. Do not brag when cruel things are done to them. Do not enter the city gate of my people in their time of trouble or laugh at their problems in their time of trouble. Do not take their treasures in their time of trouble. Do not stand at the crossroads to destroy those who are trying to escape. Do not capture those who escape alive and turn them over to their enemy in their time of trouble."*



### BIBLE SKILL: *Matthew 5:43-44*

What does Jesus say about the way we should treat our enemies?

"\_\_\_\_\_ your enemies. \_\_\_\_\_ those who  
\_\_\_\_\_ you."

God told Edom six things they must not do:

1. Laugh at Judah and Israel when God punished them.
2. Brag when cruel things happened to God's chosen people.
3. Go inside the city gate of Jerusalem when Jerusalem is in trouble.
4. Take the valuable things out of the city.
5. Destroy people who are trying to escape.
6. Capture people and make them become slaves.

Are you able to help someone who does not like you? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

List at least two ways you can help.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Know You Will Be Punished (Obadiah 1:15-16)

#### VERSE 15.

*“The Lord’s day of judging is coming soon to all the nations. The same evil things you did to other people will happen to you; they will come back upon your own head.”*

God promised to bring punishment on Edom and all nations for their actions.

God’s *Day of Judgment* is coming. No one can escape His judgment. He will judge all the enemies of Israel.

#### VERSE 16.

*“Because you drank in my temple, all the nations will drink on and on. They will drink and drink until they disappear.”*

Edom celebrated when Israel was defeated. Other nations celebrated against Israel also. Nations working against Israel are not in Bible times only. They are nations today and in the future. God will bring judgment on all nations who are against His chosen people.

**Who do you think are God’s chosen people today?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you think that?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Live in Hope (Obadiah 1:17)

God is a loving and just God. He will judge people and nations who disobey Him. But He always makes a way of salvation for people who turn to Him and obey Him.

#### VERSE 17.

*“But on Mount Zion, some will escape the judgment, and it will be a holy place. The people of **Jacob** will take back their land.”*

God promised to save some of the people on Mount Zion. Bible scholars believe Obadiah is talking about the last days of earth. God’s people will take back their land. They will remove nonbelievers from His holy place. This verse refers to the **Jewish** nation and to all people who are God’s children because they believe in Jesus as their Savior.

**What do you think you must do to receive God’s mercy?**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Answer these questions:

1. Am I happy when bad things happen to people who do not like me?  
YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

2. Am I ever greatly proud of myself? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

3. What do I find prideful in my life?

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4. Has God ever disciplined me for my wrong actions? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_  
What happened?

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5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?

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6. Who can I share this lesson with?

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7. How can I prepare better for worship next week?

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## MEMORY VERSE

*The Lord's day of judging is coming soon to all the nations. The same evil things you did to other people will happen to you; they will come back upon your own head. —Obadiah 1:15*



## Session 5

# THE PROMISED MESSIAH

God will save His people.

**ZECHARIAH 8:1-8; 9:9-12**

## FIRST THOUGHTS

The **Lord** is strong about His glory. He shows His glory through mercy to all who come to Him. He will save and restore them.

God can be trusted to provide a sure salvation. Jesus is the promised **Messiah**. We find salvation, peace, and freedom from sin through Jesus.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Zechariah was a prophet and a priest. He was probably born in **Babylon** while the **Jewish** people were captives there. He returned to Jerusalem with one of the first groups from Babylon. He worked with **Nehemiah** to build Jerusalem and the temple. He helped **Ezra** teach the law to the people who were in Jerusalem.

In this book, God calls Himself the “Lord All-Powerful.” He told Zechariah He was angry with the people’s ancestors because they turned away from Him. That is the reason He allowed them to be taken captive.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. God Is Faithful (Zechariah 8:1-8)

The relationship between God and His people was broken. He promised to bring His people back to Him. They did not obey Him in the past. He will forgive them and save them from their enemies.

In the first seven chapters, God talked about His judgment on His people. The prophet Zephaniah said God would bring judgment. That is why Israel became captives in Babylon.

### VERSES 1-2.

*The Lord All-Powerful spoke His word, saying, “This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: “I have a very strong love for Jerusalem. My strong love for her is like a fire burning in me.”*

In chapter eight, Zechariah told about God’s mercy and salvation for His people. It is the opposite of His judgment. He will make His people strong. His people turned away from Him, but God still loved them.

## VERSES 3-8.

*This is what the Lord says: "I will return to Jerusalem and live in it. Then it will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord All-Powerful will be called the Holy Mountain." This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Old men and old women will again sit along Jerusalem's streets, each carrying a cane because of age. And the streets will be filled with boys and girls playing." This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Those who are left alive then may think it is too difficult to happen, but it is not too difficult for me," says the Lord All-Powerful. This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "I will save my people from countries in the east and west. I will bring them back, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and loyal God."*

God made five promises to His people. Why? Because He still loved them.

1. God left Jerusalem because the people disobeyed Him. He will return and live in Jerusalem in the future (verse 3).
2. When Jerusalem was destroyed, only a few people were left in the city. They were afraid to go outside because of their enemies. God promised when He returns to Jerusalem, things will change back to normal. Children will play in the streets. People will live to an old age. They will not be afraid. People who were left in Jerusalem alive were poor and weak. The ones who returned saw the city was destroyed. They thought it would be too hard to rebuild (verses 4-5).
3. God promised them nothing is too hard for Him (verse 6).
4. The Jewish people were scattered throughout countries in the East and West. He promised to bring them back to live in Jerusalem. Today when many Jewish people leave each other, they say they will meet "next year in Jerusalem" (verses 7-8).
5. God promised them they will be His people and He will be their God. The relationship between God and His people will be fully healed (verse 8).

Have you faced a time when your relationship with God was broken?  
YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

What did God do to bring you back to Him?

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2. Jesus Is King (Zechariah 9:9)

VERSE 9.

*Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem! Shout for joy, people of Jerusalem! Your king is coming to you. He does what is right, and He saves. He is gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey.*

This verse is very clear that the **Messiah** will not be rich. He will not be proud. He will not lead an army. He will be humble. He will be riding on a donkey. He will bring salvation.

The prophet told the people to rejoice. They should shout for joy. Why? Their king is coming. He is a king who does what is right, and He saves.

**BIBLE SKILL:** *Matthew 21:1-11 and John 12:12-16*

List three ways the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. The Messiah-King Brings Peace (Zechariah 9:10)

#### VERSE 10.

*“I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the horses from Jerusalem. The bows used in war will be broken. The king will talk to the nations about peace. His kingdom will go from sea to sea, and from the **Euphrates** River to the ends of the earth.”*

The King has the power to take away all things needed for war. The King will bring peace to the nations through His words. All nations on earth will bow to Him because He is King.

### 4. The Messiah Is Victorious (Zechariah 9:11-12)

#### VERSE 11.

*“As for you, because of the blood of the agreement with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”*

God’s agreement with Israel required blood sacrifices. Jesus’ blood is the agreement in the **New Testament**. It is through His blood we are saved.

#### VERSE 12.

*“You prisoners who have hope, return to your place of safety. Today I am telling you that I will give you back twice as much as before.”*

People who were prisoners in **Babylon** can have hope. They must go to the place they will be safe. When they were taken into captivity, they lost everything. God told them He would give them double what they lost. Jesus, the Messiah, is our place of safety. His salvation will give us more than we ever had before.

**DID YOU KNOW:** . . . *Jesus will come back to earth. He will be King. All nations will bow to Him.*

Read Philippians 2:5-11.

In your own words, explain what Paul meant in these verses.

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**List a few things Jesus gives you when you accept Him as your Messiah (Savior).**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. God can be trusted to provide a sure salvation. Jesus is the promised **Messiah** in whom we find salvation. We can only find peace, freedom from sin, and restoration through faith in Jesus.

**Answer these questions:**

**1. Is Jesus my King? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**2. How do I show others He is my King?**

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**3. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**4. Who can I share this lesson with?**

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**5. How can I prepare better for worship next week.**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem! Shout for joy, people of Jerusalem! Your king is coming to you. He does what is right, and He saves. He is gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey. —Zechariah 9:9*



# Session 6

## ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The Savior's followers learn that He rose from the dead.

**LUKE 24:1-12**

### FIRST THOUGHTS

God the Father gave Jesus the right to give up His own life and then come back to life. Faith in Jesus means we trust Him. He is the resurrected and living **Lord**. We can be strong when we tell others about the resurrection of Jesus.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus was crucified. He was buried in the tomb owned by a man named Joseph. Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. The tomb was a cave in a hillside. The opening to the tomb had a large solid stone rolled in front of it. This lesson begins after Jesus was crucified and buried in the tomb. The disciples were gathered in a house.

Early Sunday morning, the women who were followers of Jesus took spices and perfumes to put on His body.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. The Empty Tomb (Luke 24:1-3)

The women returned to the tomb and discovered the stone was moved. Jesus' body was gone. They were very surprised.

#### VERSE 1.

*Very early on the first day of the week, at dawn, the women came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared.*

The women were the first people to go to Jesus' tomb. It was very early in the morning. It was probably still dark when they started to walk to the tomb. They went to put spices and perfumes on His body. The spices and perfumes were used to block the terrible smell of a dead body when it decays.

#### VERSE 2.

*They found the stone rolled away from the entrance of the tomb.*

As the women walked, they were worried about the huge stone that was in front of the opening at the cave. They knew they could not move such a large stone. (Read Mark 16:3.)

When they arrived at the tomb, the stone was moved away. The tomb was open. Matthew wrote that an earthquake happened (Matthew 28:2).

### VERSE 3.

*But when they went in, they did not find the body of the **Lord** Jesus.*

The women went into the tomb. It was empty. They did not know why the tomb was empty. They were worried.

**Why were the women worried? List two reasons.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Angels Announce, "Jesus Is Risen" (Luke 24:4-8)

**DID YOU KNOW:** . . . *The resurrection of Jesus is real.*

To become saved we must first believe Jesus' resurrection is real.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

Find a verse in John's Gospel that tells people how to be saved.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### VERSE 4.

*While they were wondering about this, two men in shining clothes suddenly stood beside them.*

The women wondered about what happened to Jesus. While they were talking, two men in shining clothes stood beside them. The verse does not say they were angels. Bible students believe they were **angels**.

## VERSE 5.

*The women were very afraid and bowed their heads to the ground. The men said to them, "Why are you looking for a living person in this place for the dead?"*

The women were afraid. The angels did not say anything to calm their fears. They asked them why they were looking in a tomb for a person who was alive. The women did not need to put their spices on Jesus' body. He was not dead. He was alive.

**Write a few words about how you think you would feel if two angels appeared to you suddenly.**

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## VERSE 6.

*"He is not here; He has risen from the dead. Do you remember what He told you in Galilee?"*

Then the angels said, "Jesus rose from the dead." They asked, "Don't you remember the things He told you while you were in Galilee?" The women were so sad they forgot the things Jesus told them.

## VERSE 7.

*"He said the Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people, be crucified, and rise from the dead on the third day."*

Several times Jesus told His followers He would be killed and then come back to life. In Galilee He told them He would be crucified, then rise from the dead on the third day.

## VERSE 8.

*Then the women remembered what Jesus had said.*

The women did not understand Jesus when He told them He would rise from the dead. Now the angel told them Jesus came back to life, and they finally understood.

**BIBLE SKILL:** *Read about some of the times Jesus told His followers He would die and then rise again.*

Matthew 17:22-23

Where was Jesus?

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Who was Jesus talking to?

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Mark 8:31; 9:30-32; 10:32-34

Where was Jesus?

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Who was Jesus talking to?

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Luke 18:31-34

Where was Jesus?

---

Who was Jesus talking to?

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**Why do you think it took the women some time to remember what Jesus said to them?**

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### **3. People Saw Jesus After His Resurrection (Luke 24:9-12)**

#### **VERSE 9.**

*The women left the tomb and told all these things to the eleven apostles and the other followers.*



The first thing the women did was to go and tell the disciples what they saw. Why were only eleven disciples gathered together? Judas was not with them. He betrayed Jesus and then he died. This verse also tells us the women told other followers of Jesus.

### **VERSE 10.**

*It was **Mary Magdalene, Joanna**, Mary the mother of James, and some other women who told the apostles everything that had happened at the tomb.*

Only three women are named in these verses, but other women went to the tomb. They all told the disciples and followers about the things that happened to them. They told them about the empty tomb. They told them about the angels who talked to them.

### **VERSE 11.**

*But they did not believe the women, because it sounded like nonsense.*

The disciples and other followers did not believe the women. They thought it did not make sense. It sounded silly to them.

### **VERSE 12.**

*But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending down and looking in, he saw only the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in. Peter went away to his home, wondering about what had happened.*

Peter was the disciple who often acted before he thought things through. He got up and went to the tomb to see for himself (John 20:3-6). John went with him. They ran to the tomb. Peter went into the tomb and saw Jesus was not there.

**Why do you think the disciples did not believe the women? List at least two reasons.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

We can be strong when we tell others about the resurrection of Jesus. Faith in Jesus means we trust Him as the resurrected Savior.

We can explain we know Jesus rose from the dead because His tomb was empty. We know He rose from death because many people saw Him after He rose.

**Ask yourself these questions:**

**Do I really believe Jesus rose from the dead and is still alive today?**

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**Am I able to explain to other people about Jesus' resurrection?**

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**Write a few words about how you can tell other people about your belief that Jesus is the resurrected Savior.**

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**This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**Who can I share this lesson with?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*The women were very afraid and bowed their heads to the ground. The men said to them, "Why are you looking for a living person in this place for the dead?"—Luke 24:5*



Session

7

# GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE

Many **Old Testament prophets** told about the **Messiah**.

**LUKE** 24:19-35

## FIRST THOUGHTS

The **New Testament** explains Jesus Christ was the **Messiah** the **Old Testament prophets** talked about. The prophets said the Messiah would take away the **curse** of sin and death from humanity and provide a way for salvation. This lesson shows us the prophecies were true and Jesus is that Messiah.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

This lesson is from the story of two followers walking to the town of Emmaus. It was about seven miles from Jerusalem. While they were walking they discussed the things that happened in the past few days. They argued about those things. Suddenly a man came and walked with them. It was Jesus. They did not know it was Jesus.

Jesus asked them what they were arguing about. When they looked at Him, they were very sad. Cleophas asked Him if He was the only person in Jerusalem who did not know the things that happened there.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Jesus' Followers Have Some Questions (Luke 24:19-24)

#### VERSE 19.

*Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about?" They said, "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet who said and did many powerful things before God and all the people."*

The men told Jesus about the things that happened to a man from Nazareth. They said the man was a prophet and a miracle worker. They did not say He was the Son of God.

#### VERSE 20.

*"Our leaders and the leading priests handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him."*

They explained how the high priests caused Him to be put to death. He was crucified. They did not understand the reason for His death.

#### VERSE 21.

*"But we were hoping that He would free Israel. Besides this, it is now the third day since this happened."*

The followers hoped Jesus was the Messiah who would free the **Jewish** people from Rome. It did not happen. They were still slaves to Rome.

## VERSES 22-24.

*“And today some women among us **amazed** us. Early this morning they went to the tomb, But they did not find His body there. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive! So some of our group went to the tomb, too. They found it just as the women said, but they did not see Jesus.”*

The men did not understand the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus. They did not understand why it was necessary for Jesus to die, be buried, and rise again.

**Do you think you would believe the women’s stories about Jesus’ resurrection? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Why?**

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## 2. Old Testament Prophecies Are Fulfilled (Luke 24:25-27)

The risen **Lord** explained to the followers that the **Old Testament** prophecies pointed to the suffering **Messiah**.

### VERSE 25.

*Then Jesus said to them, “You are foolish and slow to believe everything the **prophets** said.”*

Jesus called them foolish because they did not believe everything the prophets said.

### VERSE 26.

*“They said that the Christ must suffer these things before He enters His glory.”*

The prophets said Christ must suffer and die. After these things happened, people would see His glory.

## VERSE 27.

*Then starting with what Moses and all the prophets had said about Him, Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about Himself in the Scriptures.*

Jesus began to explain the **Old Testament** prophesies. He started with Moses and explained what all the prophets said about Him.

**Use a concordance to find a verse in the Old Testament that tells about Jesus' death. Write it here:**

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**BIBLE SKILL:** *Read one of the Old Testament prophesies about the Messiah in Isaiah 53:1-12.*

List some of the things Isaiah said.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Some Followers See the Risen Lord (Luke 24:28-32)

The resurrected Jesus shared a meal with the men in Emmaus. Jesus revealed who He really was.

## VERSES 28-29.

*They came near the town of Emmaus, and Jesus acted as if He were going farther. But they begged him, "Stay with us, because it is late; it is almost night." So He went in to stay with them.*

They came near the town of Emmaus. They begged Jesus to stay the night with them because they wanted to hear more of Jesus' explanation.

## VERSES 30-31.

*When Jesus was at the table with them, He took some bread, gave thanks, divided it, and gave it to them. And then, they were allowed to recognize Jesus. But when they saw who He was, He disappeared.*

Before they started to eat the evening meal, Jesus gave thanks for their food. He shared His bread with them. At that time, God allowed them to recognize Jesus. For the first time they knew who He was. Then Jesus disappeared from them.

## VERSE 32.

*They said to each other, "It felt like a fire burning in us when Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us."*

They said to each other that it felt like fire burning in them when Jesus talked. His words touched their hearts. They were inspired by His words.

**What are some of Jesus' words that inspire your heart?**

**Write the verse here:**

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## 4. Jesus' Resurrection Is Announced (Luke 24:33-35)

### VERSES 33-34.

*So the two followers got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven apostles and others gathered. They were saying, "The **Lord** really has risen from the dead! He showed himself to Simon."*

Before the two men could speak, the eleven disciples told them the Lord really did rise from the dead. He showed Himself to Simon Peter. The Bible lists at least thirteen times Jesus appeared to His followers after He rose from the dead.

### VERSE 35.

*Then the two followers told what had happened on the road and how they recognized Jesus when He divided the bread.*

**DID YOU KNOW:** . . . *Jesus rose from the dead and still lives.*

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

Name seven people or groups of people who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

**Do you know for sure Jesus rose from the dead and still lives?**

**YES** \_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_

**Write a few words about how you know Jesus' resurrection is true.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Is it all right to ask honest questions about the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Mark the following statements with yes or no.

1. I trust all Scripture as being true. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
2. I understand the truth of the gospel. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
3. I accept Jesus as the Messiah. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
4. I witness to others about Jesus Christ. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
5. I tell others He is the living Lord. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

## MEMORY VERSE

*Then starting with what Moses and all the **prophets** had said about Him, Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about Himself in the Scriptures.—Luke 24:27*



## Session 8

# GOD'S PURE PEOPLE

The judgment of God punishes **prophets** of false gods. The judgment of God makes a way for His people to be holy and pure.

## ZECHARIAH 13:1-9

### FIRST THOUGHTS

Some translations of the Bible use the word **refine** in the verses we study today. *Refine* means to “make something pure.” When gold first comes out of the ground, it has rocks and dirt in it. The gold is put in a fire that is very hot. The gold melts and can be separated from everything else. Then the gold is pure and clean.

God’s judgment gives us a way to become clean from sin. We must turn to Jesus if we want to be clean from the guilt of sin. We can find freedom from sin through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus.

We can accept the problems of this life. How? When we understand that God is using them to make us pure. He refines us.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

During Zechariah's time, there were many false **prophets**. Some were prophets of false gods. Other prophets said they were prophets of God, but they were not His prophets. In a recent lesson, we learned how God called His people back to Him. He made promises to Jerusalem.

Two of those promises were to love and protect Jerusalem. This lesson will show us another promise He made to Jerusalem. It will help us understand how He will save them. It is important to understand the words He spoke to Jerusalem are also for believers today.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Jesus Is Like a Fountain That Cleanses (Zechariah 13:1-6)

#### VERSE 1.

*"At that time a fountain will be open for David's descendants and for the people of Jerusalem to cleanse them of their sin and uncleanness."*

Zechariah said the **Messiah** would have victory over the sins of God's people. He would be like a fountain to make people clean. Zechariah was talking about the terrible sin of idol worship. The blood of Jesus, the Messiah, is the fountain. He will clean people of their sin.

**DID YOU KNOW:** ... *On the Day of Judgment, the blood of Jesus makes us clean. He gives us salvation.*

Read these verses and in your own words explain what each verse means to you:

Matthew 26:28

Luke 22:20

1 John 1:7

Romans 3:25

1 Peter 1:2

Revelation 5:9-10

## VERSE 2.

The **Lord** All-Powerful says, “At that time I will get rid of the names of the idols from the land; no one will remember them anymore. I will also remove the **prophets** and unclean spirits from the land.”

*At that time* means the day of God’s judgment. He will destroy all idols and all false prophets. Worshiping idols was the worst sin of the **Jewish** people.

## VERSE 3.

“If a person continues to **prophesy**, his own father and mother, the ones who gave birth to him, will tell him, ‘You have told lies using the Lord’s name, so you must die.’ When he prophesies, his own father and mother who gave birth to him will stab him.”

The prophets of false gods were serving God’s enemy. They served evil spirits. God would show them the truth. If they continued prophesying after they saw God’s truth, terrible things would happen to them.

Today we think the most terrible crime people can do is to kill their own children. God told the prophets of false gods they were so bad their own parents would kill them.

## VERSES 4-6.

*“At that time the prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. They won’t wear the prophet’s clothes made of hair to trick people. Each of them will say, ‘I am not a prophet. I am a farmer and have been a farmer since I was young.’ But someone will ask, ‘What are the deep cuts on your body?’ And each will answer, ‘I was hurt at my friend’s house.’”*

These verses probably mean people who say they are God’s prophets, but they are not. They are false prophets. Zechariah gave us another list of four ways the false prophets will act.

1. Prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. People will no longer respect them.
2. Prophesying was the job they received pay for. They were like a club. They wore special clothes to show they were prophets. They will stop wearing those clothes.
3. They will deny they are prophets. They will say they do some other work.
4. They will say they got hurt doing something at a friend’s house. False prophets often cut their own bodies as part of the worship of their false gods.

Some people today say they have a prophesy from God. They may not cut their bodies, but they say they are a prophet.

**List several ways you can know someone is a false prophet.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Jesus Will Make Us Free from Sin (Zechariah 13:7)

### VERSE 7.

*“Sword, hit the **shepherd**. Attack the man who is my friend,” says the **Lord** All-Powerful. “Kill the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter, and I will punish the little ones.”*

When lightning strikes something, it usually causes it to die. The prophet said the Lord will strike the shepherd who brings cleansing from sin. Who is the shepherd? It is Jesus. This is about Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus brings freedom from sin and false religions.

### BIBLE SKILL: *Matthew 26:31*

What did Jesus say will happen to his followers?

## 3. The Fire That Refines (Zechariah 13:8-9)

The prophet said God would **refine** people who come to Him. He will use the fire of suffering to make them pure. Other **prophets** wrote about God’s refining fire. See Isaiah 1:25; 48:10; Jeremiah 6:29-30; Ezekiel 22:17-22.

### VERSES 8-9.

*The Lord says, “Two-thirds of the people through all the land will die. They will be gone, and one-third will be left. The third that is left I will test with fire, purifying them like silver, testing them like gold. Then they will call on me, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘You are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”*

┌  
God said He will destroy two-thirds of the people. The third who are left will be His people. He will test them with fire to purify them like silver and gold.

The phrase *call on the Lord* means to pray to Him only. He will answer them and say, "You are my people." The people will say to Him, "The Lord is our God." They will be back with God again.

**Do you ever say "The Lord is my God?" YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Turn to the person sitting next to you and say "The Lord is my God."**

## IN MY CONTEXT

We must turn to Jesus if we want to be cleansed from the guilt of sin. Through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, we can find freedom from sin. We can face the trials of this life when we know God is using them to **refine** His people. Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:

**1. Who is the Fountain that cleans me from sin?**

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**2. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**3. Who can I share this lesson with?**

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**4. How can I prepare better for worship next week?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*At that time a fountain will be open for David's descendants and for the people of Jerusalem to cleanse them of their sin and uncleanness.*

—Zechariah 13:1





## Session

# 9

# HARD QUESTIONS, HARDER ANSWERS

Righteous people will live by faith in God.


**HABAKKUK 1:1-6,12-13; 2:1-4**

## FIRST THOUGHTS

God invites our honest questions. We try to understand the problems of life. We can be sure God is in control.

Deaf and hearing people have questions about why there is evil in the world today. They want to know why God does not stop evil. One deaf friend said he did not believe in God because so many people were hurting. He said there was too much evil in the world. God should stop the evil things from happening.

We all have questions about the things happening in our world. God allows us to ask our questions. There are several things we know.

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1. We can be sure God is in control. He knows what is happening. He knows what is best for us.
  2. God is holy. He will not accept evil. He will punish evil someday.
  3. God's judgment causes His people to become righteous when they live by faith.
  5. We can trust God to be just and fair.

God is holy. His judgment causes His people to become righteous when they live by faith.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Habakkuk said he was a prophet. He and his ancestors were probably priests. Most **prophets** spoke to people. Habakkuk spoke to God.

The Assyrians were evil and terrible people. He knew the Babylonians were worse than the Assyrians. He knew the Babylonians would soon attack Israel. He had some questions about the things God was doing.

**Babylon** attacked **Judah** the very next year and took many Israelites back to Babylon as captives.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

In the first four verses, Habakkuk asked questions and told God what he thought. In verses five and six God gave Habakkuk answers.

### 1. What About Evil? (Habakkuk 1:1-4)

#### VERSES 1-2.

*This is the message Habakkuk the prophet received. Lord, how long must I ask for help and you ignore me? I cry out to you about violence, but you do not save us!*

Habakkuk introduced himself. He was a prophet. He wanted to know if God was powerful enough to stop evil. He asked God why He was not doing anything about that evil.

The first question he asked God was, "How long will you ignore me?" Then he said, "You do not save us."

## VERSES 3-4.

*Why do you make me see wrong things and make me look at trouble? People are destroying things and hurting others in front of me; they are arguing and fighting. So the teachings are weak, and **justice** never comes. Evil people gain while good people lose; the judges no longer make fair decisions.*

Habakkuk's second question was, "Why do you force me to look at trouble and wrong things?" He said, "People are destroying things. They are hurting others."

Habakkuk said, "People do not obey the Law of Moses. Justice never comes. Good people lose. Evil people win. Judges are not fair."

**Do you think it is right to question God? Why do you think that?**

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## 2. I Am in Control (Habakkuk 1:5-6)

God answered Habakkuk's question with strong words.

## VERSES 5-6

*"Look at the nations! Watch them and be **amazed** and shocked. I will do something in your lifetime that you won't believe even when you are told about it. I will use the Babylonians, those cruel and wild people who march across the earth and take lands that don't belong to them."*

God told Habakkuk to watch the other nations. He would be amazed and shocked. Why? God said He would do something the prophet would have a hard time believing. God told him He would use the Babylonians to punish Judah. Babylon was the most evil nation people ever saw. God said the Babylonians marched across the earth and conquered lands that did not belong to them.

**How did God say He would punish His people?**

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**BIBLE SKILL:** Use a concordance to find other Bible verses that explain how God will punish His people.

Write some of those verses.

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### 3. But God, Why? (Habakkuk 1:12-13; 2:1)

#### VERSE 12.

**Lord**, you live forever, my God, my holy God. We will not die. Lord, you have chosen the Babylonians to punish people; our Rock, you picked them to punish.

Habakkuk praised God and said, “Lord, you live forever, my God, my holy God.” The phrase “We will not die,” in the New Century Version is translated “You will not die” in other Bible versions. They are both correct translations of the **Hebrew** words. The prophet calls God his **Rock**. He accepts the fact that the Lord chose Babylon to punish the **Jewish** people.

#### VERSE 13.

*Your eyes are too good to look at evil; you cannot stand to see those who do wrong. So how can you put up with those evil people? How can you be quiet when the wicked swallow up people who are better than they are?*

Habakkuk said, “Your eyes are too good to look at evil.” Then he asked another question! “How can you be quiet when wicked people destroy good people?”

#### VERSE 2:1.

*I will stand like a guard to watch and place myself at the tower. I will wait to see what He will say to me; I will wait to learn how God will answer my complaint.*

Finally, Habakkuk accepted God’s words. He decided he would be like a guard. He would wait to see how God answered his complaining.

What are some of the things you have complained to God about?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Trust Me! Have Faith in Me (Habakkuk 2:2-4)

Habakkuk must have faith to know God is in control of the world. He will have success in His purposes. He will do it in His time.

##### VERSE 2.

*The Lord answered me: "Write down the vision; write it clearly on clay tablets so whoever reads it can run to tell others."*

The Lord told Habakkuk to write down the vision. Write it clearly on clay tablets. Why? Whoever reads it could run to tell others. This **prophecy** was not only for Habakkuk. It was for all of the Jewish people. God warned about the things that would happen to them.

##### VERSE 3.

*"It is not yet time for the message to come true, but that time is coming soon; the message will come true. It may seem like a long time, but be patient and wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not be delayed."*

**DID YOU KNOW: . . . We are saved by faith.**

Memorize at least one of these verses

Romans 1:17

Romans 4:16

Galatians 3:11

Hebrews 10:38

Write the verse you chose.

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God told Habakkuk to be patient. It was not time for the message to come true. The time was coming soon. The message would come true. And it came true in the next few years. By 600 **B.C.** the Babylonians fully defeated **Judah**. God punished Judah.

#### **VERSE 4.**

*“The evil nation is very proud of itself; it is not living as it should. But those who are right with God will live by faith.”*

God gave some words of hope for faithful believers. The evil nation was very proud of itself. It was not living the right way. But those who are right with God will live by faith.

**What do you think live by faith means?**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

God invites our honest questions as we seek to understand life and its problems. We can trust God to do what is best. We can turn to Him at all times.

**Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:**

**1. Do I have questions I want to ask God? What are they?**

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**2. Am I patient to wait for Gods answers? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**3. Do I live by faith? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**4. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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**5. Who can I share this lesson with?**

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**6. How can I prepare better for worship next week?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*Those who are right with God will live by faith.—Habakkuk 2:4b*



# Session 10

## OUR AWESOME GOD

Have great respect for God. Honor Him. Tremble and rejoice!

**HAGGAI 3:1-6,11-13,16-19**

### FIRST THOUGHTS

The word *awesome* in the title of today's lesson means "God deserves great respect and admiration." The word **awe** is often combined with fear.

The wisdom of God is so deep no one can measure it. No one can measure the knowledge of God. We must praise Him and give Him glory.



## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

**Josiah** was the youngest king of **Judah**. He ruled from 640-609 **B.C.** He became king when he was eight years old. He followed God. The nation was rich and free. He was killed in 609 B.C.

After he died the **Jewish** people turned away from God again. God used several nations to defeat the Israelites. Finally He allowed the Babylonians to completely defeat Judah. The smartest and richest Jews were taken captive to **Babylon**.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Stand in Awe (Habakkuk 3:1-2)

#### VERSE 1.

*This is the prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.*

No one really knows what the word **Shigionoth** means. Bible scholars believe it is a word used in music.

#### VERSE 2.

**Lord**, I have heard the news about you; I am **amazed** at what you have done. Lord, do great things once again in our time; make those things happen again in our own days. Even when you are angry, remember to be kind.

Habakkuk heard about the things God did in the past. He was in awe of God's work. He begged for mercy. He asked God to do great things again in his lifetime. He prayed God would be kind even when He was angry with His people. Loving parents copy God's way of punishing their children. They still love them and are kind to them even if they are angry.

**Can you think of a time when you were punished by God? How did He show His kindness to you?**

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**BIBLE SKILL:** *Read other verses that tell about God's awesome power.*

Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 99:1-3; Psalm 111:7-9.

Write your own thoughts about God's awesome power.

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## 2. Tremble in His Greatness (Habakkuk 3:3-6)

Habakkuk sang about God's greatness and power.

### VERSES 3-4.

*God is coming from **Teman**; the Holy One comes from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covers the skies, and his praise fills the earth. He is like a bright light. Rays of light shine from His hand, and there He hides His power.*

This vision shows God coming from the south near **Mount Sinai**.

The word **Selah** is a musical term used in many psalms. No one knows exactly what it means. Some people think it is used like we use our word *amen*.

Like many **prophets**, Habakkuk made lists when he talked about God, the Holy One.

1. His glory covers the skies.
2. His praise fills the earth.
3. He is like a bright light. The bright light in His hand shows He is all powerful.

## **DID YOU KNOW: ... *God is all powerful.***

God shows His power many times in the Bible. Study these verses. Find words that tell about God's power.

1. Genesis 1:1-31

2. Genesis 7:1-24

3. Exodus 14:5-28

4. John 11:38-44

## **VERSES 5-6.**

*Sickness goes before Him, and disease follows behind Him. He stands and shakes the earth. He looks, and the nations shake with fear. The mountains, which stood for ages, break into pieces; the old hills fall down. God has always done this.*

The prophet made a list to describe God's judgment.

1. God uses sickness and disease to judge people.
2. God uses earthquakes. The people did not have anywhere to hide. They knew God was judging them. Habakkuk's main point for us is to tremble when we see the greatness of God.

**Write some words from verses 3-6 that tell about God's greatness.**

### 3. Celebrate His Victory (Habakkuk 3:11-13)

#### VERSES 11-13.

*The sun and moon stood still in the sky; they stopped when they saw the flash of your flying arrows and the gleam of your shining spear. In anger you marched on the earth; in anger you punished the nations. You came out to save your people, to save your chosen one. You crushed the leader of the wicked ones and took everything he had, from head to toe. **Selah***

Habakkuk had faith that God would conquer all His enemies. He defeated His enemies. He brought judgment on them. Habakkuk continued his list about God's judgment.

3. The sun and moon stood still in the sky.

4. God punished nations because they disobeyed Him. He was angry.

5. God crushed the leader of the wicked ones.

**What do you think about your own nation? Do you think God will punish it? Why?**

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### 4. Rejoice in Faith (Habakkuk 3:16-19)

#### VERSE 16.

*I hear these things, and my body trembles; my lips tremble when I hear the sound. My bones feel weak, and my legs shake. But I will wait patiently for the day of disaster that will come to the people who attack us.*

Habakkuk listed the things that may happen to him when he hears about God's judgment. He said his body and lips tremble. He is weak and his legs shake.

Then he makes a strong statement of faith. He will wait patiently for God's judgment against the enemies of His people.

#### VERSE 17.

*Fig trees may not grow figs, and there may be no **grapes** on the **vines**. There may be no olives growing and no food growing in the fields. There may be no sheep in the pens and no cattle in the barns.*

Habakkuk lists what may happen around him.

1. Fig trees may not grow.
2. Vines may not have grapes on them.
3. There may be no olives growing.
4. There may be no food growing in the fields.
5. There may be no sheep or cattle in the barns. People depended on these things to live.

## VERSE 18.

*But I will still be glad in the **Lord**; I will rejoice in God my Savior.*

Finally, Habakkuk made one of the strongest statements of faith found in the Bible. No matter what happens, he will be glad. He did not say he will just accept things that happen. He said he will rejoice in God.

Compare Habakkuk's statement to Job's statement in Job 13:15a.

## VERSE 19.

*The **Lord** God is my strength. He makes me like a deer that does not stumble so I can walk on the steep mountains.*

Habakkuk said he has faith he can overcome bad things without falling.

**Can you think of times you have waited patiently for God?**

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**Explain how your faith in God caused you to rejoice.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

We should respond to God's presence and His work with **awe**. We can find security in God's complete and sure rule of everything. We can because we know God can be trusted.

**Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:**

1. Do I stand in awe of God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
2. Do I have faith God will give me victory over my problems?  
YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
3. Do I sing and give praise to God for my victory? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
4. Write a little song about God's awesomeness.

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5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?

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6. Who can I share this lesson with?

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## MEMORY VERSE

*I will still be glad in the Lord; I will rejoice in God my Savior.*

—Habakkuk 3:18



# *Session* 11

## SEEK GOD FIRST

Do not delay God's work.

**HAGGAI 1:1-11; 2:5-9**

### **FIRST THOUGHTS**

When we obey God quickly it shows we have a healthy spiritual life.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In our lessons a few months ago, **Nehemiah** led the people to help take care of their poorer neighbors while they rebuilt God's temple. Haggai is listed as one of the leading workers in building the temple (**Ezra** 5:1; 6:14).

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Understand What Is Real (Haggai 1:1-9)

God confronted the people who returned to Jerusalem. Some of them built nice homes for themselves. God's temple remained in ruins. God always demands people serve Him first.

#### VERSE 1.

*The prophet Haggai spoke the word of the **Lord** to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of **Judah**, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. This message came in the second year that **Darius** was king, on the first day of the sixth month:*

This verse tells us exactly when and where the prophet lived and wrote. He was with the first group of Israelites to return to Jerusalem.

#### VERSES 2-4.

*"This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: 'The people say the right time has not come to rebuild the temple of the Lord.'" Then Haggai the prophet spoke the word of the Lord: "Is it right for you to be living in fancy houses while the temple is still in ruins?"*

Haggai uses the words the *Lord All-Powerful* many times. This name reminded the people God can do everything. The people seemed to think they were smart enough to decide when to build the temple. They did not think it was time to start building. The Lord asked the people if they thought it was right to be living in fancy houses and the temple to remain in ruins.



## **BIBLE SKILL:** *Read all of the Book of Haggai.*

Count the number of times Haggai uses the words the Lord All-Powerful to describe God. \_\_\_\_\_

Does that help you feel the greatness of God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

### **VERSE 5.**

*This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Think about what you have done."*

God's people were not thinking about serious spiritual things.

### **VERSE 6.**

*"You have planted much, but you harvest little. You eat, but you do not become full. You drink, but you are still thirsty. You put on clothes, but you are not warm enough. You earn money, but then you lose it all as if you had put it into a purse full of holes."*

The people needed to think carefully about what was important.

### **VERSE 7.**

*This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Think about what you have done."*

They were thinking of themselves first.

### **VERSES 8-9.**

*"Go up to the mountains, bring back wood, and build the temple. Then I will be pleased with it and be honored," says the Lord. "You look for much, but you find little. When you bring it home, I destroy it. Why?" asks the Lord All-Powerful. "Because you all work hard for your own houses while my house is still in ruins!"*

The people did not give God the highest priority in their lives.

**DID YOU KNOW: . . .** *God must have the highest place in the life of the believer.*

Read Matthew 6:33.

What did Jesus say?

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Where is God in your priorities? Look at your check book, calendar, and credit card expenses. What do you do with your money and time?

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## **2. What Is God's Discipline? (Haggai 1:10-11)**

### **VERSES 10-11.**

*"Because of what you have done, the sky holds back its rain and the ground holds back its crops. I have called for a time without rain on the land, and on the mountains, and on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil, the plants which the earth produces, the people, the farm animals, and all the work of your hands."*

God punished their sin with a **drought**. Nothing would grow. People brought God's judgment on themselves when they turned away from God. They did not make Him the most important thing in their lives.

It is important for us to understand that things like droughts, floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes are not always God's punishment. Those things can happen because they are part of the nature God created. But God can use these things to cause His people to turn back to Him.

God disciplines individual believers. He helps them to put their attention back on Him.

## Has God ever disciplined you? How? Why?

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### 3. God's Glory Will Come (Haggai 2:5-9)

#### VERSE 5.

*"I made a promise to you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit is still with you. So don't be afraid."*

God told His people to remember the promise He made to them when Moses led them out of Egypt. He told Moses He would never leave His people (Exodus 33:13-17). God told them not to be afraid. He was still with them.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior we become God's chosen people. He promised He will never leave us. We should not be afraid.

#### VERSE 6.

*This is what the **Lord** All-Powerful says: "In a short time, I will once again shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land."*

God told the people He would shake the heavens, earth, sea, and dry land. He has power over everything.

#### VERSE 7.

*"I will shake all the nations, and they will bring their wealth. Then I will fill this temple with glory," says the Lord All-Powerful.*

Bible scholars have different opinions about this verse. Some think it is talking about when Jesus comes again. Most Bible scholars believe it means God would cause nations to bring enough gold, silver, and other materials to rebuild His temple when the people returned from captivity. That is what happened a few years later. Read **Ezra** 6:8-10 to learn how the Persian king, **Artaxerxes**, paid the full cost of building the temple. He used money from his treasury.

## VERSES 8-9.

*“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,” says the Lord All-Powerful. “The new temple will be greater than the one before,” says the Lord All-Powerful. “And in this place I will give peace,” says the Lord All-Powerful.*

The silver and gold already belong to the Lord. When the new and better temple was built, there would be peace. God’s presence would be in the temple.

**How has God given you peace? Describe it in a few words.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Sometimes believers are tempted to postpone the work of God. We must always fight that temptation. If we delay His work, we will face His **discipline**. When we obey God, He will show His glory.

**Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:**

1. Do I believe God is all-powerful? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
2. Do I thank Him when He disciplines me? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_
3. Write a few words to describe what you think God means by peace.

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4. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?

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5. Who can I share this lesson with?

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## MEMORY VERSE

*This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Think about what you have done."—Haggai 1:7*



# Session 12

## TRUE HOPE

Believers have hope because of God's promise of love.

### MALACHI 1:1-11

#### FIRST THOUGHTS

The **Lord** will remain faithful to believers. He will not overlook people who ignore His commands. He will judge their disobedience.

A member of a Deaf Sunday School class told her teacher she was confused. She truly loved God. She wanted to serve Him. When she read her Bible, she learned great things about God. She could not get them all straight.

Her teacher told her he agreed with her. No one can ever understand everything about God. He explained there were three things about God that included everything.

1. God is true and pure love. He shows his love through his Son Jesus. He shows His love by the way He cares for people. God remains faithful to believers.
2. God requires our true worship. He will not accept if we worship anything but Him. He will not overlook people who ignore His commands. He will judge their disobedience.
3. God is truly great. He has all power. He is in control of everything.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

When the **Jewish** people arrived back to their home land, they did not change their sinful ways. **Ezra, Nehemiah**, and the prophets we are now studying tell us the people did not obey God's teachings. They made sacrifices that were not acceptable to Him. They did not worship Him in the correct way.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. True Love (Malachi 1:1-5)

#### VERSES 1-2.

*This message is the word of the Lord given to Israel through Malachi. The Lord said, "I have loved you." But you ask, "How have you loved us?" The Lord said, "**Esau and Jacob** were brothers. I loved Jacob."*

What was the first thing Malachi wrote? He introduced himself. He told the people he was the **messenger** of God. He said God gave him the words to tell them. The **Hebrew** word for *message* here means a weight that someone must carry. Malachi felt that he needed to **declare** God's message. This was Malachi's duty. Read Zechariah 9:1; 12:1.

Many times in the Bible, God told the Jewish people He loved them. They argued back to Him. They asked Him to tell them how He loved them. They doubted His love.

God reminded them they were the descendants of Jacob. Their enemies were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau.

#### **BIBLE SKILL:** *Read Obadiah 1:12-15.*

What six things did God tell the Edomites they must not do?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

They disobeyed God and He punished them.

### VERSE 3.

*But I hated **Esau**. I destroyed his mountain country and left his land to the wild dogs of the desert."*

A few weeks ago, in the Book of Obadiah, we studied how God said He would punish **Edom**. That happened! God destroyed Edom completely.

It is very important to understand the meaning of God's statement that He loved Jacob but He hated Esau. It means God decided to give Jacob His **blessing**, instead of Esau. These words do not mean God hates any race or group of people.

### VERSE 4.

*The people of Edom might say, "We were destroyed, but we will go back and rebuild the ruins." But the Lord All-Powerful says, "If they rebuild them, I will destroy them. People will say, 'Edom is a wicked country. The Lord is always angry with the **Edomites**.'"*

The Edomites were proud and did not respect God. The Lord would always be angry with them. After A.D. 70, there is no record of the nation of Edom in any history writings. Edom was completely gone.

### VERSE 5.

*"You will see these things with your own eyes. And you will say, 'The Lord is great, even outside the borders of Israel!'"*



Israel must know God is great in their nation. He is great in all the nations of the world.

**Do you think your nation believes God is great? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Why do you think that?**

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## **2. True Worship (Malachi 1:6-10)**

### **VERSES 6-9.**

*The Lord All-Powerful says, “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. I am a father, so why don’t you honor me? I am a master, so why don’t you respect me? You priests do not respect me. But you ask, ‘How have we shown you disrespect?’ You have shown it by bringing unclean food to my **altar**. But you ask, ‘What makes it unclean?’ It is unclean because you don’t respect the altar of the Lord. When you bring blind animals as sacrifices, that is wrong. When you bring crippled and sick animals, that is wrong. Try giving them to your governor. Would he be pleased with you? He wouldn’t accept you,” says the Lord All-Powerful. “Now ask God to be kind to you, but he won’t accept you with such offerings,” says the Lord All-Powerful.*

God compared Himself to a father and a master. People honor their fathers and servants honor their masters. The people did not honor him. The people almost dared God to show them what they did wrong. They told Him to explain how they did not respect Him.

God answered them. They brought unclean food to His altar. They did not respect the altar of the Lord. Unclean food showed their **disrespect**. Their governor would not accept their unclean gifts, so how could they expect God to accept them?

## VERSE 10.

*"I wish one of you would close the temple doors so that you would not light **useless** fires on my **altar**! I am not pleased with you and will not accept your gifts," says the **Lord All-Powerful**.*

This is a very sad verse. God loved His temple. It was the special place He made for people to worship Him. He told the people how to build it. He told them the things to put in it. He told them how to worship Him. Now He wished the temple doors would be closed.

It was not enough to light fires on His altar. The fire would do them no good. He was not pleased with His people. They were the people He loved, but He was not pleased with them.

**God loves you. What is your sacrifice to Him?**

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**Do you think He is pleased with your sacrifice? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

## 3. True Greatness (Malachi 1:11)

### VERSE 11.

*"From the east to the west I will be honored among the nations. Everywhere they will bring **incense** and clean offerings to me, because I will be honored among the nations," says the **Lord All-Powerful**.*

God declared His name will be great in every nation of the world. God is **Jehovah** God. Other religions have gods. Jehovah God is the only true God. Jesus is His son. Jesus is our Savior. Some people say everyone worships the same God. That is not true.

From the beginning, God wanted Gentiles to come to Him. A Gentile is any person who is not a **Jew**. God said that in the future people from all nations will finally bring a clean offering to Him.

In Philippians 2:10, Paul wrote that every knee shall bow before Jesus.

Do you bow your knee and worship Jesus? Why?

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**DID YOU KNOW: . . . *Jehovah God is the only one true God.***

Read these verses and fill in the blanks.

Exodus 15:11. "Are there any gods like you, Lord? There are \_\_\_\_\_ gods like you."

Exodus 20:3. "You must not have any other gods \_\_\_\_\_ me."

Exodus 34:14. "Don't worship any other god, because I, the Lord, the Jealous One, am a \_\_\_\_\_ God."

Deuteronomy 32:39a. "Now you will see that \_\_\_\_\_ am the one God! There is no god but me."

Isaiah 46:9. "Remember that I am God, and there is \_\_\_\_\_ other god."

Ephesians 4:6. "There is one God and \_\_\_\_\_ of everything."

## IN MY CONTEXT

We can trust God to be faithful to all His promises. We should give God our very best in our lives today. We can actively **declare** the greatness of God and of Christ to all people.

**Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:**

**1. Do I believe God truly loves people? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**2. List some ways God shows His love.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Write a few words to describe your idea of God's greatness.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## MEMORY VERSE

*"From the east to the west I will be honored among the nations. Everywhere they will bring **incense** and clean offerings to me, because I will be honored among the nations," says the **Lord All-Powerful**.—Malachi 1:11*



# Session 13

## FAITHFUL

Spiritual **adultery** is evil.

**MALACHI 2:10-17**

### FIRST THOUGHTS

God said His people must live holy and pure lives. He required His people to keep their marriage promises. His relationship with His people is also like a marriage commitment. God's people must stay faithful to Him. We must keep our promises to Him.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Last week we learned about the true greatness of God. We learned He was angry with His people because they ignored His temple. They did not put Him first. God called that spiritual **adultery**.

This week Malachi gave the people God's words about breaking promises they made to Him. God's agreement with them said they would not marry anyone who was not a **Jew**.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. Wrong Behavior (Malachi 2:10-12)

God's people showed their wrong behavior. They married foreign wives. This was a clear act of disobedience. God gave their ancestors rules to follow when they went in to the promised land.

#### VERSE 10.

*We all have the same father; the same God made us. So why do people break their promises to each other and show no respect for the agreement our ancestors made with God?*

The agreement is also called a **covenant**. The **Jewish** people had a history of breaking their agreement with God. They broke their promises to God and to each other.

#### VERSE 11.

*The people of **Judah** have broken their promises. They have done something God hates in Israel and Jerusalem: The people of Judah did not respect the temple that the **Lord** loves, and the men of Judah married women who worship foreign gods.*

The people of Judah broke their promise to respect God's temple. They married foreign wives. Their foreign wives brought idols into their homes. They began to worship false gods.

## VERSE 12.

*Whoever does this might bring offerings to the Lord All-Powerful, but the Lord will still cut that person off from the community of Israel.*

The people continued to go to the temple with sin in their hearts. They continued to sin and worship God at the same time. God promised them judgment. That person would no longer be a member of the community of Israel. God was angry because they knew they were breaking God's law.

### **BIBLE SKILL:** *Read God's commandment about marrying nonbelievers.*

What did He say in each verse?

Exodus 34:15-16

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Deuteronomy 7:3-4

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Ezra 9:2

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Nehemiah 13:23-27

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**Have you ever done something to disobey God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**Did you continue to go to church with that disobedience still in your heart? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**What did you do about your disobedience?**

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## 2. The Marriage Agreement Must Be Obeyed (Malachi 2:13-15)

### VERSE 13.

*This is another thing you do. You cover the Lord's **altar** with your tears. You cry and moan because He does not accept your offerings and is not pleased with what you bring.*

During the time the men were married to foreign wives they went to the altar. They cried because they knew the **Lord** did not accept their sacrifices. Believers must have sorrow in their hearts when they rebel against God. They must realize their behavior makes their sacrifices unworthy before the Lord.

### VERSE 14.

*You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord sees how you treated the wife you married when you were young. You broke your promise to her, even though she was your partner and you had an agreement with her.*

The men of **Judah** were condemned for two reasons. They took foreign wives. They also hurt the wives they married while they were young. Many times the men divorced their **Jewish** wives. Why? So they could marry the foreign wives. The fact that they were not serious about marriage and divorce showed they were also not faithful to God spiritually.

The early fathers of the Jewish nation often had many wives. Jewish kings had many wives. Not all of their wives were Jewish. God never approved for men to marry more than one wife.

### VERSE 15.

*God made husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit for His purpose — so they would have children who are true to God. So be careful, and do not break your promise to the wife you married when you were young.*

Malachi explained God's plan for marriage to them. People forgot about God's purpose for marriage. They began to think about their own purposes for marriage. Some men married other women to show they were rich. Some married **foreigners** to satisfy their own physical needs. They did not care that their children with foreign wives would not be true to God.

God brought husbands and wives together for His purpose. He wanted them to have children who stayed true to God. He warned them about breaking their promises to their one **Hebrew** wife. God brings one man and one woman to be committed to each other for their lifetime.



## DID YOU KNOW: . . . *God's requirements for marriage*

Read these verses in your Bible:

Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Hebrews 13:4

Answer these questions:

1. Which verse says marriage is between a male person and a female person?

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2. Which verse says marriage is for their lifetime?

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3. Which verse says they should not be divorced?

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### 3. God Brings Justice (Malachi 2:16-17)

#### VERSE 16.

*The Lord God of Israel says, "I hate divorce. And I hate people who do cruel things as easily as they put on clothes," says the Lord All-Powerful. So be careful. And do not break your trust.*

This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible about divorce. God said He hates divorce. This does not mean He hates the people who are divorced. He hates the things divorce causes.

Most people today do not think divorce is wrong. We see children who are damaged by their parents' divorce. We see people arguing and doing terrible things to each other because they are divorced.

The Bible gives one reason a divorce is permitted. It is permitted if the husband or wife commits **adultery** (Matthew 5:32).

God said He hates some people. What kind of people? It is the people who find it easy to do cruel things to others. They do those things without thinking about how wrong they are. They do not care if God said they are wrong.

## VERSE 17.

*You have tired the **Lord** with your words. You ask, "How have we tired Him?" You did it by saying, "The Lord thinks anyone who does evil is good, and He is pleased with them." Or you asked, "Where is the God who is fair?"*

Malachi said God is tired of their arguments. When God told the people to change their attitudes and ways, they argued with Him. They accused Him of liking people who do evil. They accused Him by saying He is not fair.

**How do you respond when God shows you your sin?**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

God's people are to live holy and pure lives, reflected in the keeping of marriage commitments. God's people are to remain faithful to Him by giving God their very best. We can be sure of God's **justice** when we disobey Him.

**Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life.**

**Answer these questions:**

- 1. Do I believe marriage is a promise to God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**
- 2. If you are married, write a few words about your promise to your husband or wife.**

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- 3. Write a few words about your promise to God.**

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- 4. If you are not married, write a few words about how you think marriage should be.**

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- 5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*We all have the same father; the same God made us. So why do people break their promises to each other and show no respect for the agreement our ancestors made with God?—Malachi 2:10*



# Session 14

## A PURE PEOPLE

The Day of the **Lord** brings **purification**.

**MALACHI** 3:1-7; 3:16–4:2

### FIRST THOUGHTS

We can either fear or rejoice when God **refines** us. We can know God's judgment is perfectly fair. God invites sinners to turn to Him. He makes sure there is a way for their salvation.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

God will judge and purify His children. He will destroy the evil ones. He will send the **Messiah** to provide salvation for all who accept Him.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. God's Messenger (Malachi 3:1-5)

#### VERSE 1.

*The **Lord** All-Powerful says, "I will send my **messenger**, who will prepare the way for me. Suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple; the messenger of the agreement, whom you want, will come."*

Bible scholars believe Malachi is talking about **John the Baptist**. He was the messenger who announced Jesus was the Messiah.

**BIBLE SKILL:** *Read these verses: Malachi 4:4; Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3; Matthew 11:14; Matthew 17:10-13.*

Who do they say the Messiah's messenger is?

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#### VERSES 2-4.

*No one can live through that time; no one can **survive** when he comes. He will be like a purifying fire and like laundry soap. Like someone who heats and purifies silver, He will purify the **Levites** and make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring offerings to the **Lord** in the right way. And the Lord will accept the offerings from **Judah** and Jerusalem, as it was in the past.*

The Lord All-Powerful will purify His people. After they are purified they will bring offerings that God will accept, just as He did in the past.

## VERSE 5.

*The Lord All-Powerful says, “Then I will come to you and judge you. I will be quick to testify against those who take part in evil magic, **adultery**, and lying under oath, those who cheat workers of their pay and who cheat widows and orphans, those who are unfair to **foreigners**, and those who do not respect me.*

**List the seven things God will condemn.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. God Never Changes (Malachi 3:6-7)

### VERSE 6.

*“I the **Lord** do not change. So you descendants of **Jacob** have not been destroyed.”*

God promised the descendants of Jacob they would never be totally destroyed. He kept His promise. God protected them from destruction. Even during World War II, some of Jacob’s descendants were saved. We are born into God’s family through faith in the **Messiah**, Jesus. He promises us we will never be destroyed spiritually.

### VERSE 7.

*“Since the time of your ancestors, you have disobeyed my rules and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord All-Powerful. “But you ask, ‘How can we return?’”*

The **Jewish** people often turned away from God. Then they repented and turned back to Him. They followed Him for a while, and then they broke His commandments and turned away from Him again. God punished them again, and they repented and turned back to Him.

God never changed. He told them to return to Him then He would return to them.

**Do you have a favorite promise from God? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**What is it?**

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### **3. God's Record (Malachi 3:16-18)**

Malachi described the *Day of the Lord*. He said it would bring **purification**. He also explained that God keeps a record of those people who faithfully trust in Him. In the **New Testament** it is often called the **Book of Life** (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15).

#### **VERSE 16.**

*Then those who honored the Lord spoke with each other, and the Lord listened and heard them. The names of those who honored the Lord and respected Him were written in His presence in a book to be remembered.*

The **scribes** and king's secretaries wrote about important events in books they kept safe. The people who honored God talked among themselves. God heard the things they were saying. God watched them as they wrote the names of the people who honored Him.

#### **DID YOU KNOW: . . . about God's Book of Life?**

God knows the people who belong to Him. He keeps a record of His people. He rewards those who belong to Him.

Read Exodus 32:31-33; Psalm 56:8; 87:6; Isaiah 34:16; Daniel 12:1-4; Revelation 20:11-15.

What kind of things do you think God keeps in His records?

## VERSE 17.

The **Lord** All-Powerful says, “They belong to me; on that day they will be my very own. As a parent shows mercy to his child who serves him, I will show mercy to my people.”

God already knows the day He will come. He will gather the ones who have their names written in His **Book of Life**. He will treat them as His children. He will show mercy to the ones who serve Him.

## VERSE 18.

“You will again see the difference between good and evil people, between those who serve God and those who don’t.”

When the **Messiah** comes, things will be different. God’s people will be different from the people who don’t serve Him.

**How are you preparing yourself to meet the Messiah when He comes?**

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## 4. Hope for the Faithful (Malachi 4:1-2)

### VERSE 1.

“There is a day coming that will burn like a hot furnace, and all the proud and evil people will be like straw. On that day they will be completely burned up so that not a root or branch will be left,” says the Lord All-Powerful.

When the Day of the Lord comes evil people will be burned up completely. God **refines** His people in the fire. He destroys evil people in the fire.

### VERSE 2.

“But for you who honor me, goodness will shine on you like the sun, with healing in its rays. You will jump around, like well-fed calves.”



This lesson closes with God's promise to His people. They are the people who love and follow the Messiah. God promises light. His light will be like the sunlight. Believers will be full of joy, light, and healing. God is the only light His people will need.

**Read Isaiah 60:19-21. Write a few words to explain what you think these verses mean.**

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## IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life. Answer these questions:

**1. Is your name written in God's Book of Life? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_**

**2. How do you know your name is there?**

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**3. Write a few words about your faith in the Messiah.**

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**5. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**

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## MEMORY VERSE

*"Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord All-Powerful.*

—Malachi 3:7

## Resources for Students and Leaders

- On-Line Commentary:

*<http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/index.htm>*

- Bible verses in this publication are from the New Century Version (NCV).
- The ASL Bible is produced by Deaf Missions and available at *[www.deafmissionsstore.com](http://www.deafmissionsstore.com)*.
- The ASL Bible for mobile devices is available at *[www.DeafBible.com](http://www.DeafBible.com)* or *[www.Bible.is/Deaf](http://www.Bible.is/Deaf)*.
- Let's Sign Hymnal and the ASL Bible are available at *[www.Letssignllc.com](http://www.Letssignllc.com)*.

# THEMES OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

## » JOEL

Call to repent and experience God's Spirit

## » OBADIAH

Doom on Edom to bring God's kingdom

## » NAHUM

God's jealousy protects His people

## » HABAKKUK

God calls for faithfulness

## » ZEPHANIAH

Hope for the humble righteous

## » HAGGAI

The priority of God's house

## » ZECHARIAH

Faithfulness will lead to God's universal rule

## » MALACHI

Honor God and wait for His righteousness

The area of Petra in southern Jordan was the land of the Old Testament Edomites. Obadiah prophesied that though Edom made its home “in clefts of the rock,” the Lord would bring them down (see Obadiah 3–4).



# OUTLINES OF MINOR PROPHETS

## **Joel (1:1–3:21)**

- A. Judgment (1:1–2:17)
- B. Forgiveness (2:18–3:21)

## **Obadiah (1-21)**

- A. Destruction of Edom Promised (1-9)
- B. Description of Edom's Evil (10-14)
- C. Day of the Lord (15-21)

## **Nahum (1:1–3:19)**

- A. God's Character (1:1-15)
- B. God's Judgment on Nineveh (2:1-13)
- C. Nineveh's Downfall (3:1-19)

## **Habakkuk (1:1–3:19)**

- A. Questions of Habakkuk (1:1–2:5)
- B. Pronouncements of Woe (2:6-20)
- C. Prayer of Habakkuk (3:1-19)

## **Zephaniah (1:1–3:20)**

- A. Judgment on the Nations (1:1–2:15)
- B. Future of Jerusalem (3:1-20)

## **Haggai (1:1–2:23)**

- A. Call to Rebuild the Temple (1:1-15)
- B. Future Glory and Blessing (2:1-23)

## **Zechariah (1:1–14:21)**

- A. Visions (1:1–6:15)
- B. Fasting and Feasting (7:1–8:23)
- C. Oracles (9:1–14:21)

## **Malachi (1:1–4:6)**

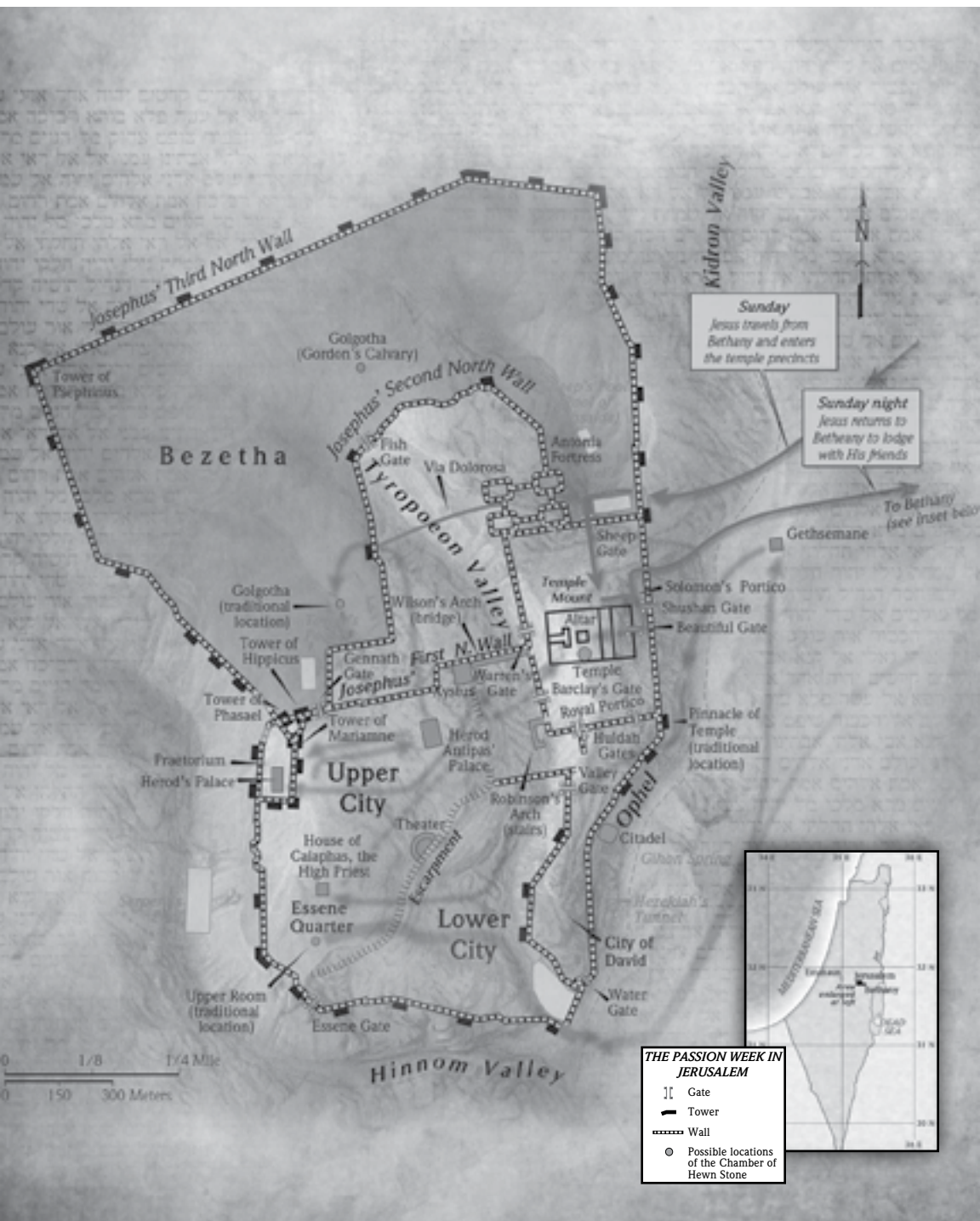
- A. The People's Unfaithfulness (1:1–2:16)
- B. The Lord's Coming (2:17–4:6)

# NAMES, TIMES, AND KEY THEMES

The following chart briefly describes the “minor prophets” we will study and the messages they proclaimed.

PROPHET	NAME MEANING	TIME FRAME	MAIN FOCUS
Joel	“The Lord is God”	Uncertain; two possible times: between 836 and 796 B.C., or as late as 400 B.C.	God’s judgment on the “Day of the Lord”; an invading army would come like a severe locust plague
Obadiah	“The Lord’s servant”	Around the time of the fall of Jerusalem, 587-586 B.C.	God’s judgment on Edom for the Edomites’ violence against God’s people
Nahum	“Comfort, consolation, or encouragement”	Some time between 663 and 612 B.C.	God’s judgment on Nineveh for the Assyrians’ abuse of peoples they conquered
Habakkuk	“To embrace or caress”	Some time between 609 and 605 B.C.	God’s sovereign rule over all nations, His hidden justice, and the need to live by faith
Zephaniah	“The Lord hides”	Some time between 630 and 621 B.C.	Warnings about the “Day of the Lord” and the need to live in righteousness
Haggai	“Festival of the Lord”	Around 520 B.C.	Glorifying God by rebuilding His temple
Zechariah	“The Lord remembers”	520–518 B.C.	Rebuilding the temple and pointing to the Messiah’s life and saving work
Malachi	“My messenger”	Some time between 460 and 430 B.C.	Faith, integrity, and obedience versus spiritual pretense

# THE PASSION WEEK IN JERUSALEM





# WORD LIST

**Word**—Definition

**Adultery**—Sex between a married person and someone who is not that person's wife or husband.

**Allah**—The god of the Muslim religion.

**Altar**—a special table in the temple of God (or a false god).

**Amazed**—To be happily surprised.

**Angel**—A special servant of God.

**Artaxerxes**—Persian King.

**Assyria**—Nation that defeated Israel.

**Awe**—A feeling of great respect, often combined with fear.

**B.C.**—Before Christ. 600 B.C. means the year that was 600 years before Jesus came to earth.

**Baal**—False god of Israel's enemies. The god of fertility.

**Babylon**—Nation that defeated Judah.

**Bashan**—A city in Syria.

**Blessing**—Something good that happens to people, the opposite of a curse.

**Book of Life**—God's record book of his children.

**Buddha**—False god in some Asian countries.

**Concordance**—An alphabetical list of words and Bible verses where those words can be found.

**Covenant**—An agreement or promise between two people, or between God and His people.

**Curse**—A wish that bad things and death will happen. In Malachi it does not mean bad language.

**Dagon**—Assyrian god of fertility. This god made rain so crops grew well.

**Darius**—Persian king who allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem.

**Declare**—To tell strongly.

**Defy**—To go against or disobey.

**Discipline**—To correct or punish.

**Disrespect**—Not honor.

**Drought**—A long time with no rain, so rivers dry up, and plants and animals die.

**Edom, Edomites**—Descendants of Esau. Enemies of Judah.

**Elkosh**—The home town of Nahum. No one knows exactly where it is.



**Esau**—Twin brother of Jacob, son of Isaac.

**Euphrates**—Large river in the Middle East.

**Ezra**—Priest who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon.

**Foreigners**—Not members of a nation.

**Galilee**—Large area in Northern Israel.

**Grape**—A fruit. People make wine from grapes.

**Greek**—A language.

**Hebrew**—The language that the Jews spoke.

**Hebrews**—God's chosen people, the Jews.

**Incense**—Sweet smelling spices burned in Temple worship.

**Isaac**—Son of Abraham, father of Jacob and Esau.

**Jacob**—Son of Isaac, twin brother of Esau.

**Jehovah**—A Jewish name for the one true and All-Powerful God.

**Jew**—A person who was born from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their children.

**Jewish**—Anything that belongs to a Jew.

**Joanna**—Jesus' follower. Supported His disciples with money.

**John the Baptist**—John the Baptist was born just before Jesus was born. John put people into water to show that they wanted to obey God.

**Josiah**—Was 8 years old when he became king of Judah. He ruled for 31 years.

**Judah**—Part of the divided kingdom, the Southern Kingdom.

**Justice**—Fair treatment.

**Lebanon**—Country famous for its beautiful trees and wood.

**Levites**—The tribe (or large family) that worked in the temple. Some of them were priests. Other Levites helped the priests or taught people about the Bible.

**Lord**—Master. The name the Jews used for God.

**Major Prophets**—Wrote the longer books of prophesy.

**Mary Magdalene**—Jesus forgave her. She became His true follower.

**Messenger**—Someone who carries information.

**Messiah**—The Hebrew word for Savior. The English word is Savior. The Greek word is Christ.

**Minor Prophets**—Twelve prophets who wrote the shorter books of prophesy.

**Molech**—False god who required parents to burn their own children as sacrifices to him.

**Mount Sinai**—Mountain where God spoke to Moses.

**Nehemiah**—Leader chosen to rebuild the temple after he returned to Jerusalem.

**New Testament**—The last 26 books of the Bible, written after the life of Jesus.

**Nile River**—Longest river in Africa.

**Nineveh**—Sinful city, enemy of the Jews.

**Old Testament**—The first 39 books of the Bible, written before the life of Jesus.

**Persia**—A nation that defeated and controlled Babylon where the Jews were taken as captives.

**Prophecy**—God's words given to His people.

**Prophets**—A person who heard God's words and told them to God's people.

**Purification**—Make totally clean. Nothing dirty left.

**Redeemed**—Saved.

**Refine**—Make pure.

**Repent**—Be sorry for your sins and change your life and behavior.

**Scribe**—Teacher of the Law. Someone who writes thing for a record. A secretary.

**Selah**—Word used in Hebrew music.

**Shepherd**—Takes care of sheep.

**Shigionoth**—No one knows what this word means. It may have been something to help the music director.

**Survive**—To live through a terrible event.

**Syrian**—A language.

**Teman**—A Hebrew word that means from the south.

**Treasure**—Something very valuable.

**Tribe**—Hebrew tribes were the descendants of one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

**Unholy**—Not suitable for God.

**Useless**—Of no value.

**Vine**—A small tree on which grapes grow.

**Whirlwinds**—Tornadoes.



# Explore the Bible.®

LEADER GUIDE



## *Minor Prophets*

# Session 1

## GOD IS

We are safe with God during any dangerous time.

### NAHUM 1:1-8

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Lecture with opportunities for discussion.

Locate a map to show the relation between Persia (Babylon) and Israel (Jerusalem) to be used throughout the quarter.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign the hymn "God Is So Good!" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #104).

Review the introduction to the **Minor Prophets** in the pupil material and the chart in the back of this book to show where Nahum fits into the history of Israel. Encourage class members to look at these resources as they prepare their lessons each week.

Encourage class members to read all of the book being studied each week so they can get the complete story and better understand the significance of the lessons selected for each week's study.

Use a map to show **Babylon** and Israel. These lessons are set during the time the Jews were taken captive and then returned to Israel.

Briefly introduce the Book of Nahum.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT (NAHUM 1:1-8)

### 1. God Is Jealous (Nahum 1:1-3a)

What are some kinds of things we do that cause God to be jealous? Encourage discussion about how God can be jealous but not sin (see Dig Deeper).

## **2. God Is Totally Powerful (Nahum 1:3b-6)**

Note the several picture words used by Nahum to show God's power. Ask if anyone has had experience with one of these.

### **Dig Deeper – God Is a Jealous God (Nahum 1:2)**

Jealousy is a sin when it is a desire for something that does not belong to you. Worship, praise, and honor belong to God alone. Only God is truly worthy of our praise. A man has a right to be jealous when someone flirts with his wife. God is right to be jealous when worship, praise, honor, or adoration is given to idols. Read Exodus 20:4-6; 34:14; Deuteronomy 5:8-10.

How does God show His great power to us today? Encourage discussion of what this lesson teaches us about God's power.

### **Scripture Search – God's Power (Nahum 1:3)**

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10-11 about the power of the resurrection. He also wrote about the gospel as the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16-17). The word *power* is used often in the Book of Acts. We get dynamite from the Greek word for power. The word also means authority. Jesus has all authority over the world (Acts 10:34-43; Luke 4:14). God often showed His power when the disciples and others did miracles (Acts 3:1-16; 4:5-12,33; 6:8).

## **3. God Is Good (Nahum 1:7)**

Call attention in the pupil material to the Bible Skill: God Is Good.

How can we be more aware of God's goodness to us—individually and as a church?

## **4. God Is Fair (Nahum 1:8)**

Encourage discussion of the appropriate sign(s) for the concept of fair or just. Encourage the class to read the Book of Zephaniah before class next week.

## Session 2

# GOD WILL JUDGE ALL PEOPLE

One day in the future, God will judge all people.

## **ZEPHANIAH 1:1-11**

### **Plan Ahead**

Suggested teaching method: Small groups (3). Ask three pupils to serve as small group leaders: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign the hymn, “When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder” (Let’s Sign Hymnal\* #474).

Introduce the Book of Zephaniah using the pupil introduction to the lesson, the timeline on pages 142-143, and the Minor Prophet chart on pages 106-109 of the quarterly. We will have two lessons from this book.

Divide the class into three groups. Assign one section to each one. Ask the group leaders ahead of time to be prepared to lead the discussion in their group. After 15 minutes, call the class back together. Ask the group leaders to report on their discussions. Encourage further discussion as needed.

## **EXPLORE THE TEXT (ZEPHANIAH 1:1-11)**

### **1. God Will Judge Everyone (Zephaniah 1:1-3)**

Encourage discussion of God as judge.

Why does God have the right to judge everyone? (Because He is Creator—everything belongs to Him.)

What do you see in the news reports today that suggest God is judging America? When something bad happens, is it always God’s way of punishing someone?

## **Dig Deeper - Molech (Zephaniah 1:5)**

Molech was a god of the Ammonites and many other nations. Worship of Molech included people burning their own children to death in fire, often by placing them in the arms of a hollow metal idol of Molech that had been heated very hot with a fire burning inside. There are some indications the Jewish people, at times, offered their children to this god (Leviticus 18:21, 20:1-5, 2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 7:30-31). Kings Ahaz (2 Kings 16:1-4) and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:4-6) worshiped Molech.

## **2. It Is Dangerous to Agree with False Beliefs (Zephaniah 1:4-6)**

Encourage discussion of types of false beliefs (false religions, cults) today in America. What experience have class members had with cults?

How do you respond when someone tries to talk with you about a religion (cult) that is not true to the Bible?

Encourage discussion of how to deal with cults today. Define a cult as any belief that does not recognize Jesus as God's Son, resurrected, and our only way of salvation.

## **3. A Day of Judgment Is Coming (Zephaniah 1:7-11)**

Encourage discussion of what class members understand about the final judgment when Christ returns to the earth.

When you think about standing before God's judgment, do you have peace or fear?

## **Scripture Search – God, the Judge (Zephaniah 1:7)**

In Romans 2:3, Paul contrasts God's patience with His judgment. He judges according to what is right and fair (2 Timothy 4:6-8). God judges on the basis of what a person does (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). God also judges on the basis of how much opportunity the person has had to know about Him (Luke 12:48). David said God's justice is as deep as the great ocean (Psalm 36:6). God declared that all nations will know His power when He punishes them (Ezekiel 39:21-24).

# Session 3

## OUR GREAT SALVATION

We must trust the One who can save us from judgment.

### ZEPHANIAH 3:8-17

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Class discussion. Encourage class members to think of the meaning of the verses and comment on what they mean to them.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign the hymn, "Saved, Saved" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #358).

#### EXPLORE THE TEXT (ZEPHANIAH 3:8-17)

Note the contrast in these verses between God's anger and punishment for sin and His joy and blessings for those who turn to Him.

#### 1. Wait in Faith (Zephaniah 3:8)

The theme of this verse is the need to be patient and wait on God to act against sin.

Do you become impatient while you wait for God to act? How can we learn to be more patient?

#### Dig Deeper – God's Patience (Zephaniah 3:8)

God is patient. Because He is eternal, He is not limited by time as we know it. God can wait as long as He wants to wait. Abraham asked God to be patient with the people in Sodom and Gomorrah while Abraham tried to find a few faithful people (Genesis 18:23-33). God does not become angry quickly (Numbers 14:18-20). God was patient with the nation of Israel but finally gave them over to their enemies (Nehemiah 9:24-33). Jonah did not understand God's patience with Nineveh (Jonah 3:10–4:11). God said He is patient for His own sake (Isaiah 48:1-11). Paul said God is kind and patient because He wants people to turn to Him (Romans 2:1-5).



## 2. Call on God (Zephaniah 3:9-13)

People who call on God for salvation will have a new way of talking—without pride.

Review the Bible Skill box in the pupil material about a new song. Encourage discussion of what the new song will be like and what believers will sing about.

Do you have a song in your heart because of God's salvation?

## 3. Celebrate Salvation (Zephaniah 3:14-17)

Ask class members to open their quarterlies or Bibles to the Scripture. Ask them to find words in each verse that we use when we talk about salvation.

If you have lost people in your class, use this opportunity to present the plan of salvation. Ask one or two to give their testimony of salvation.

Encourage the class to read the Book of Obadiah before class next week.

### Scripture Search – Salvation Words (Zephaniah 3:8-17)

This lesson has several words that we use when we talk about God's salvation.

Verse 8. God's anger against sin.

Verse 9. Saved people talk together about God and worship Him together.

Verse 10. Saved people want to give generously to God and His work.

Verse 11. Saved people are humble because God saved them through His grace, not because of something they did.

Verse 12. Saved people trust God.

Verse 13. Saved people have peace.

Verse 14. Saved people are happy. They sing and rejoice.

Verse 15. Saved people are not afraid.

Verse 16. Saved people do not give up.

Verse 17. Saved people have spiritual rest in God.

# Session 4

## COMPASSION FOR LOST PEOPLE

Mercy wins over judgment.

### OBADIAH 1:1-4,10-17

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Assignments. Ask a class member to review Dig Deeper and to use a Bible dictionary, concordance, and other reference materials and give a brief report on the nation of Edom.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "Jesus Saves" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #453).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (OBADIAH 1:1-4,10-17)

#### 1. Do Not Be Proud (Obadiah 1:1-4)

Use a map to identify **Edom** in relation to Jerusalem and Egypt. Identify **Edom** as descendants of **Esau** who refused to help the Israelites when they went from Egypt to the promised land.

Look at your heart. Do you find any selfish pride? Ask God to take the pride away from you. He will gladly do it!

#### Scripture Search – Pride (Obadiah 1:3-4)

The Bible is full of warnings against the sin of pride. Solomon said, "Pride leads to destruction. A proud attitude brings ruin" (Proverbs 16:18). John wrote, "These are the ways of the world: wanting to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, and being too proud of what we have. None of these come from the Father, but all of them come from the world" (1 John 2:16). Pride led to the downfall of many of Israel's kings like Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:1-22). God will punish the nation, or the person, who stands against God. Jeremiah preached that God would send war and famine as punishment for those who rebelled against God (Jeremiah 5:12-17; 21:13-14). Jesus told a parable about the man who said he had everything and did not need God. Jesus called him a fool (Luke 12:16-21).

## 2. Show Mercy and Grace (Obadiah 1:10-14)

Discuss the sins of **Edom** listed in the pupil material.

## 3. Know You Will Be Punished (Obadiah 1:15-16)

**Edom** is a clear example of how God is faithful to keep His word. He promised to punish **Edom** for their pride and later the nation was completely destroyed.

How can we help our friends realize the reality of God's punishment?

### Dig Deeper - Edom (Obadiah 1:1)

Edom was an area along the Dead Sea, southwest of Judah. The Edomites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac through Esau, and the Israelites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac through Jacob (Genesis 36:1-9). Amos spoke of the Edomites in Amos 1:11-12. The Edomites refused to let the Israelites go through their land to get to the promised land. They were almost always hostile toward the Jews. (See 1 Samuel 14:47-48; 2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Kings 11:14-22.) When Babylon attacked Jerusalem in 597 and 586 B.C., the Edomites joined them rather than helping the Jews.

## 4. Live in Hope (Obadiah 1:17)

With God's warnings He always provides hope for those who turn to Him.

Can you explain to a lost person how to find hope through faith in Jesus Christ?

Encourage the class to read the Book of Zechariah before next Sunday. We will have one lesson from that book, then two lessons about the resurrection, and then one more from Zechariah.

# Session 5

## THE PROMISED MESSIAH

God will save His people

### ZECHARIAH 8:1-8; 9:9-12

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Small groups. Divide the class into four groups. Have each one study a section together and then report to the whole class.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to be prepared to introduce the prophet Zechariah.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "Jesus Shall Reign" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #239).

#### EXPLORE THE TEXT (ZECHARIAH 8:1-8; 9:9-12)

Ask someone to introduce the prophet Zechariah from the introduction to the quarter and other resources.

#### 1. God Is Faithful (Zechariah 8:1-8)

God's people were often unfaithful, but God is always faithful in His promise of salvation or punishment.

Encourage discussion of the questions at the end of this section in the pupil material.

#### Scripture Search – God Is Faithful (Zechariah 8:8)

Ask each class member to sign one of these verses about God's faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 7:7-9

Psalms 89:8

Lamentations 3:22-23

Romans 3:3-4

1 Corinthians 1:8-9

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Hebrews 10:23

## 2. Jesus Is King (Zechariah 9:9)

Ask class members to look up the verses in the Bible Skill box in the pupil material and compare the **prophecy** in Zechariah with the story in the Gospels.

### Dig Deeper – Jesus Is the Messiah / Christ / Savior (Zechariah 9:9)

Jesus is the Christ from God (Luke 9:18-20). Mark and Matthew also tell this story (Mark 8:27-29; Matthew 16:13-16). The Greek word is Christ, the Hebrew word is Messiah, and our English word is Savior. These mean the same thing. The word basically means “the anointed one or the one chosen to save.” It is used in the Bible to refer to Jesus as the spiritual king. Jeremiah promised that God would send his Anointed One to deliver His people (Jeremiah 33:14-18). Jesus came as the spiritual King, and they did not want this. They wanted someone to lead them to overthrow the Roman government. The early Christians preached that Jesus is truly the Messiah (Acts 2:36; Romans 1:3-4).

## 3. The Messiah-King Brings Peace (Zechariah 9:10)

Do you really feel like you have peace?

Use a Bible **concordance** to find verses from the **New Testament** about the peace that comes from Jesus.

Encourage discussion of the class members’ response to the question in the Did You Know box in the pupil material.

## 4. The Messiah Is Victorious (Zechariah 9:11-12)

Zechariah wrote about the blood **covenant** (agreement) in verse 11. We have discussed that in recent lessons. This was an agreement between God and His people. They agreed to love and obey Him. He promised to look after them. The **covenant** was first with Abraham (Genesis 15:9-11), then with Moses (Exodus 24:5-8). Jesus spoke of His crucifixion with the phrase “blood of the **covenant**” (Mark 14:24).

Review the first paragraph under In My Context. This is a summary of the peace we have in Jesus because of His victory over sin and death.

Encourage class members to study Luke 24 in preparation for the next two lessons about the resurrection of Jesus.

## Session 6

# ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The Savior's followers learn that He rose from the dead.

## LUKE 24:1-12

### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Drama. Use small posters to identify the three women, the angel, and Peter. Have a narrator to sign the verses while the actors demonstrate the action.

Find a picture of a tomb that Bible scholars believe was like the tomb of Jesus.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "He Arose" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #273).

Last week we looked at some **prophecy** by Zephaniah about the coming **Messiah**. For the next two weeks we will look at Luke's account of the resurrection of Jesus. This is the heart of the story of the Messiah.

Ask a class member to review the summary of the resurrection story in Dig Deeper.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT (LUKE 24:1-12)

### Dig Deeper – The Resurrection Story (Luke 24)

The story of the resurrection has been called the gospel of hope. The prophets preached about the idea of resurrection. Isaiah wrote, "Your people have died, but they will live again; their bodies will rise from death" (Isaiah 26:19). See also Daniel 12:2. The gospel is about the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:12-24). For the complete story of the resurrection, read Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-48; John 20:1-21:6; Acts 1:4-9; and 1 Corinthians 15:4-8.

## 1. The Empty Tomb (Luke 24:1-3)

Show a picture of the tomb.

Have your drama group present these first three verses.

Discuss the answers class members wrote for the question at the end of this section in the pupil material.

## 2. Angels Announce, "Jesus Is Risen" (Luke 24:4-8)

Have the drama group present verses 4-8.

Assign one of the verses in the Scripture Search box to each one. Ask them to read the verse and then tell the class what it says about angels.

Do angels speak to people today? Many people believe they do. Others say we do not need angels because we have God's Word to tell us what God wants us to know. What do you think?

### Scripture Search – Angels (Luke 24:4)

Each of these verses tells us something about the angels.

1 Kings 19:1-8	Acts 12:6-11	Acts 27:23-25
Daniel 6:1-24	Exodus 3:1-6	Exodus 14:19-20
Genesis 19:1-22	Genesis 32:1-2	Hebrews 1:14
John 20:11-13	Judges 2:1-5	Judges 6:11-23
Luke 1:26-38	Luke 2:8-15	Matthew 1:20
Psalms 91:11-12	Zechariah 4:1-14	

## 3. People Saw Jesus After His Resurrection (Luke 24:9-12)

Have the drama group present verses 9-12.

Jesus appeared to many people after the resurrection. He appeared to **Mary Magdalene** (John 20:16), and to the other women (Matthew 28:9). He met Peter (John 21:15-19), then the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-36), and then with all the apostles (Luke 24:36-45; John 21:1-14; Matthew 28:16-17). Paul said Jesus met with 500 believers and then with James (1 Corinthians 15:6-7). On the Mount of Olives, Jesus met with His eleven apostles for the last time (Acts 1:2-9).

How can we answer people who say they do not believe Jesus arose from the dead?

# Session 7

## GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE

Many **Old Testament prophets** told about the **Messiah**.

### LUKE 24:19-35

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Field Trip. Visit the church library to show the location of books related to the Gospels, especially the resurrection. Alternate plan: Ask the librarian to bring several books to show to the class.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "He Lives" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #142).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (LUKE 24:19-35)

#### 1. Jesus' Followers Have Some Questions (Luke 24:19-24)

Is it all right to ask God questions? Are there questions we can ask and questions we should not ask?

Encourage discussion of the proper attitude to have when we ask God questions.

#### 2. Old Testament Prophecies Are Fulfilled (Luke 24:25-27)

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that we should not call anyone a fool (Matthew 5:22). Is that what Jesus did in verse 35? Or did He mean their thinking was foolish?



## **Dig Deeper – Starting with Moses (Luke 24:27)**

Jesus explained the gospel story by starting with what Moses wrote in the first five books of the Old Testament. Some people try to understand by starting with the Book of Revelation, but Jesus began at the beginning.

From the beginning of the Bible we learn more and more about the Messiah, Jesus. In Genesis, God told Adam and Eve that Satan would bruise man's heel, but the serpent's head would be crushed (Genesis 3:15).

Each book has bits of information that prepare our hearts to understand the gospel. The prophets add to that information, as in our studies this quarter. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets many times and in many different ways. But now in these last days God has spoken to us through his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). The men thought the cross was the end of Jesus' work. Jesus explained that His suffering and death fulfilled the Old Testament.

### **3. Some Followers See the Risen Lord (Luke 24:28-32)**

First, the women met Jesus, then these two men, and then others. Last week we noted the times Jesus appeared to people before He ascended into heaven. How do you think each of these people felt when they realized Jesus was truly alive? (Fear, relief, joy, more questions, faith.)

### **4. Jesus' Resurrection Is Announced (Luke 24:33-35)**

Note how the people wanted to share their understanding with others. The women went to the apostles. The two men went back to Jerusalem.

How can we share the story of the resurrection? Encourage discussion of how we must be excited to tell others about the resurrection of Jesus.

Review the responses the class wrote in their quarterlies to the question in verse 35 in the pupil material.

Review the last item in My Context in the pupil material. Help those who seem to be unsure about their belief in these areas.

## **Scripture Search – The Truth of the Resurrection (Luke 24:34)**

Read these verses to understand that the resurrection of Jesus really happened:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Matthew 28:1-8

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-10

John 20:1-9

2 Timothy 2:8-10

# Session 8

## GOD'S PURE PEOPLE

The judgment of God punishes **prophets** of false gods. The judgment of God makes a way for His people to be holy and pure.

### ZECHARIAH 13:1-9

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Guest Speaker. Ask a jeweler to talk about the process of refining gold and silver to make them more valuable. Or find a discussion of refining in a dictionary or encyclopedia and share this with the class.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #429).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (ZECHARIAH 13:1-9)

#### 1. Jesus Is the Fountain That Cleanses (Zechariah 13:1-6)

How does a person take a bath if there is very little water? Encourage discussion of the difficulty of keeping clean when camping, or a similar situation with limited water supply. Ask if anyone grew up in a rural area without electricity and running water. Do you remember the Saturday night bath?

#### 2. Jesus Will Make Us Free from Sin (Zechariah 13:7)

This is another picture word—sin makes us slaves, Jesus makes us free.

Ask class members to share their comments written in their quarterly in the Bible Skill box.

Point out that Bible scholars interpret discussion of the three parts as a reference to the Jews in history as well as to the end times. The idea of one-third is probably symbolic, not specifically 33⅓ percent, but three parts.

## **Dig Deeper – Pictures of Salvation (Zechariah 13:1-9)**

In verses 1-9 the prophet gave three picture words to illustrate how God will make His people clean and pure.

1. A Fountain. Sin will be cleansed away in that day when a fountain will be flowing. In a dry, desert area, water was scarce. People did not enjoy the luxury of a long shower, as we do. The idea is that God will provide all that is necessary to make His people clean.
2. Attacking the Shepherd. When Jesus, the Great Shepherd, was killed, His followers scattered. They spread out even more due to persecution in the early centuries. Because of this, the gospel was taken to all parts of the world so everyone may know about Jesus, the Savior.
3. Refined Like Gold and Silver. Persecution leads to spiritual growth. We understand more of God's grace when we suffer than when everything is easy.

## **3. The Fire That Refines (Zechariah 13:8-9)**

Let your guest speaker explain the process of refining gold and silver. Or, review the verses listed in the Scripture Search box.

Do you feel God is working in your life to refine you? In what ways?

Encourage discussion of how God uses ordinary things to help us. Some things are difficult for us to accept, some are easier.

Encourage class members to read the Book of Habakkuk in preparation for the next two lessons.

## **Scripture Search – God's Refining Fire (Zechariah 13:9)**

The idea of refining gold and silver with fire is used several times in the Bible to illustrate how God changes people to be what He wants them to be.

Isaiah 48:10

Jeremiah 6:27-30

Ezekiel 22:17-22

## Session 9

# HARD QUESTIONS, HARDER ANSWERS

Righteous people will live by faith in God.

## HABAKKUK 1:1-6,12-13; 2:1-4

### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Scripture Search. Ask the class to study each verse and discuss appropriate signs for the concepts in it.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to give a brief introduction to Habakkuk.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "Have Faith in God" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #127).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (HABAKKUK 1:1-6,12-13; 2:1-4)

Have the assigned student give a brief introduction to the Book of Habakkuk.

#### 1. What About Evil? (Habakkuk 1:1-4)

Ask the assigned pupil to introduce the book and the man Habakkuk.

Ask the class to identify things in verses 2-4 that Habakkuk was concerned about.

#### 2. I Am in Control (Habakkuk 1:5-6)

Ask pupils to study both verses and tell how they show God is in control.

How do these verses show God is in control? Do you think God uses one nation today to **discipline** another? Or does he use one individual to discipline another?

Why do you think God asked Habakkuk to look at a sinful nation like **Babylon** for his answers, instead of looking at something God was doing among His own people?

## **Dig Deeper - Babylonians (Habakkuk 1:6,12)**

Babylon (or Babylonia) was a city-state about 50 miles south of modern Baghdad, Iraq. At one time the city had an eleven-mile outer wall. The inner walls were wide enough for two chariots side by side. It was ruled by the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians. Cyrus and Alexander the Great were the last rulers of this city that is so important in the history of the Jews. The Assyrians took the Jews to Babylon. Babylon was ruled by the Persians by the time the people were returned to Israel. Babylon is named more than 200 times in the Bible. Noah's son Ham had a descendent named Nimrod whose kingdom included Babylon and many other cities in that part of the world (Genesis 10:8-12). Daniel wrote his prophecies from Babylon. Esther was in the palace of King Xerxes of Persia. The Medes and Persians are often identified together. Jewish converts from the Medes were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-12). The tower of Babel was built in this area (Genesis 11:1-9). The Babylonians worshiped the god Bel or Marduk (Isaiah 46:1).

## **3. But God, Why? (Habakkuk 1:12-13; 2:1)**

Ask pupils to find words Habakkuk used to describe God in verses 12-13.

Encourage discussion of how God can use evil people, like the Babylonians to do His work.

Do you think Habakkuk's plan is wise—to wait and see what God says?

## **Scripture Search – Guard Towers (Habakkuk 2:1)**

Ask pupils to find these verses about watchtowers and tell what they learn:

2 Chronicles 26:9-10

Jeremiah 31:6

2 Samuel 18:24-27

2 Kings 9:17-20

Isaiah 62:6

Ezekiel 3:17

## **4. Trust Me! Have Faith in Me (Habakkuk 2:2-4)**

Encourage discussion of the themes in these verses: share the message (verse 2), be patient (verse 3), and have faith (verse 4).

Ask class members to share what they wrote in the Did You Know.

# Session 10

## OUR AWESOME GOD

Have great respect for God. Honor Him. Tremble and rejoice!

### HABAKKUK 3:1-6,11-13,16-19

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Student teachers. Ask \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ to lead the discussion in one of the four sections. Help them solicit discussion from other class members.

Use a map that shows Edom and Israel and the towns of Paran and Teman.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign “God of Grace and God of Glory” (Let’s Sign Hymnal\* #108).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (HABAKKUK 3:1-6,11-13,16-19)

#### 1. Stand in Awe (Habakkuk 3:1-2)

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to lead this discussion.

Discuss the meaning and appropriate sign(s) for the words **awe** and *awesome*.

Have you had an experience when you felt a strong sense of God’s presence. What happened? How did you feel? (A worship service, a Bible verse, a song, during prayer time.)

#### 2. Tremble in His Greatness (Habakkuk 3:3-6)

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to lead this discussion.

Use a map to show the relationship between **Edom** and Jerusalem. Locate **Teman** and Paran at the north and south ends of Edom. This reference would be like saying “from New York to San Francisco” and mean all of the United States.

### **Dig Deeper – Teman, Paran (Habakkuk 3:3)**

Teman was a grandson of Esau, one of the leaders in the nation of Edom (Genesis 36:9-42). The city of Teman is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. It was in the northern part of Edom.

Paran was a city in the southern part of Edom, so together these towns refer to the whole nation of Edom. Teman was noted for the wisdom of its people (Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:8-11; Jeremiah 49:7-11; Ezekiel 25:12-14). We learned more about Edom when we studied the Book of Obadiah a few weeks ago.

Encourage discussion of words and signs we use when we talk about the greatness, glory, and holiness of God. See the discussion in the pupil material.

### **Scripture Search – God’s Glory (Habakkuk 3:3)**

This verse is a reference to Exodus 19:17-22 and Deuteronomy 33:1-3, when God gave His commandments on Mount Sinai. Ask the class to find these verses and look for words that speak of God’s greatness, glory, and power.

### **3. Celebrate His Victory (Habakkuk 3:11-13)**

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to lead this discussion.

Encourage discussion of the question at the end of this section in the pupil material.

Do you think America is still a Christian nation?

What can we do about the problems in our nation? (Vote prayerfully, write or talk with congressmen, pray.) If any class members are not registered to vote, encourage them to do so. Most public libraries can help with this.

### **4. Rejoice in Faith (Habakkuk 3:16-19)**

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to lead this discussion.

Encourage discussion of looking to God in faith during times of difficulty, suffering, or frustration.

What do you do to strengthen your faith when you are faced with these things?

Ask class members to share what they wrote for questions 1-4 under In My Context.

# Session 11

## SEEK GOD FIRST

Do not delay God's work.

### HAGGAI 1:1-11; 2:5-9

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Lecture with class members finding and signing related verses in each section.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to introduce the Book of Haggai.

Object Lesson: Take a calendar, check book, and credit card bill to use in discussion of the first section.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "Seek Ye First" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #361).

#### EXPLORE THE TEXT (HAGGAI 1:1-11; 2:5-9)

Have \_\_\_\_\_ introduce the Book of Haggai.

#### Scripture Search – Leaders in Jerusalem (Haggai 1:1)

Read more about the leaders named in verse 1.

Zerubbabel (governor). He is also named Sheshbazzar in Ezra 1:8. See also Ezra 2:1; 1 Chronicles 3:17-20; Matthew 1:12-13; Luke 3:27. He was responsible for the government in Jerusalem during the time of rebuilding. Israel did not have a king. They were still ruled by Persia.

Joshua (priest). See 1 Chronicles 6:15. He was responsible for religious issues in the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Darius (king of Persia). See Ezra 4:1-3; 5:1-2; Nehemiah 12:21-23; Daniel 5:30-31; 6:5-28; 9:1-3.



## 1. Understand What Is Real (Haggai 1:1-9)

With the information given in verse 1, this probably happened on August 29, 520 **B.C.** Very few events can be dated so precisely in the Bible.

What three things are first, second, and third most important to you in your life?

Encourage discussion of priorities. Show a calendar, checkbook, and credit card bill. These show how we spend our time and money. They are evidence of where our priorities are.

## 2. What Is God's Discipline? (Haggai 1:10-11)

Encourage discussion of the second paragraph in the pupil material. Not every bad thing that happens is God's **discipline**, but God can, and does, use these things to discipline His people.

How can we know if a tornado is God's discipline or just the result of nature?

Do you think God will make us aware when something like that is His discipline, and let us know what we have done to bring on this discipline?

## 3. God's Glory Will Come (Haggai 2:5-9)

Note how God had already prepared the money to rebuild the temple long before it was needed.

Encourage discussion about how we can delay God's work because we do not make Him first priority in our life.

God said His presence would be in the people and the people would have peace.

Do you feel a special kind of peace when you are in God's house?

Does that peace continue into the next week after you have worshiped in God's house?

Encourage class members to read the Book of Malachi for the study during the next three weeks.

### Dig Deeper – Money to Build the Temple (Haggai 2:7-9)

The Persian king, Artaxerxes, paid the full cost of building the temple (Ezra 6:1-15). King Cyrus gave the order for this long before the Jews began to rebuild the temple. King Darius found a scroll with King Cyrus' order and told the leaders they must obey that order. It included the return of the gold and silver items King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple.

# Session 12

## TRUE HOPE

Believers have hope because of God's promise of love.

### MALACHI 1:1-11

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Skit. Ask \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to sign the dialogue in each of the sections. Ask them to do it in ASL, not just sign the English words.

Use a map to locate Edom in relation to Jerusalem and Egypt.

Find a picture of the temple showing the altars.

Take church bulletins for each pupil to use during the lesson.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to be prepared to introduce the Book of Malachi.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "The Solid Rock" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #424).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (MALACHI 1:1-11)

#### 1. True Love (Malachi 1:1-5)

Encourage discussion of the use of the word *hate*. It has more of the meaning of "rejected."

Point out that the **Edomites** were descendants of **Esau**, so Esau can also mean the nation of **Edom**. Locate Edom on a map, and show where it is located in relation to Jerusalem and Egypt. Note that when the Israelites went from Egypt to the promised land, they had to go through Edom and the Edomites were not friendly to them.

## Scripture Search – God’s Promises to Jacob (Malachi 1:2)

It is not easy to understand why God chose Jacob over Esau, but He did. God continued His promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), to Isaac, and then to Jacob.

Ask several class members to sign one of these verses about God’s promises to Jacob:

Romans 9:11-13

Genesis 28:10-27

Genesis 35:9-15

1 Chronicles 16:14-18

## 2. True Worship (Malachi 1:6-10)

Encourage discussion of how our worship can be untrue today.

Ask the class to look at the worship schedule in today’s church bulletin.

What parts of this feel more like worship to you than others? What would you like to see added to the worship program each week?

If yours is not a Deaf church, ask members who have worshiped in a Deaf church to discuss the difference between Deaf worship and hearing worship.

Show a picture of the temple with its altars.

## Dig Deeper – Altar Sacrifices (Malachi 1:7)

God told the Israelites many times that He would not accept any person or thing that was unclean or unholy. The animals were unclean because they were not perfect. The priests were unclean because they did not give honor to God. They did not serve God as their master.

The temple had several altars. Priests burned animals to please God. God wanted them to offer perfect animals to Him (Leviticus 22:17-25).

Animals that were not perfect were called unclean or unholy. God would not accept the unclean things that the priests offered.

## 3. True Greatness (Malachi 1:11)

What does it mean to us when we read about God’s greatness? How can we show that we honor His greatness?

Review the Did You Know box in the pupil material. Help class members complete the sentences.

Review the class members’ answers to items 2 and 3 from In My Context in the pupil material.

# Session 13

## FAITHFUL

Spiritual **adultery** is evil.

### MALACHI 2:10-17

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Lecture. Use questions to encourage discussion.

Bring a copy of a wedding certificate for an object lesson.

Find a copy of a traditional wedding ceremony. The church library may have it in a book about weddings. You might also find one online (search traditional wedding ceremony).

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "We'll Work Till Jesus Comes" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #459).

## EXPLORE THE TEXT (MALACHI 2:10-17)

### 1. Wrong Behavior (Malachi 2:10-12)

Do you still have a copy of your marriage certificate?

Did you get a copy of the minister's words for the ceremony?

Show a copy of the traditional form. Sign some of the typical phrases from it.

Did you have a ceremony that was different from the traditional form?

The **covenant** God made with Israel required their obedience. Malachi comments on their disobedience regarding marriage.

The Bible identifies **Jehovah** as the "God of Abraham, **Isaac**, and **Jacob**" more than 20 times.

## Scripture Search – God’s Covenants (Malachi 2:10)

Ask class members to find these verses and tell the class what it says about God’s covenant:

Genesis 9:8-17. God’s first covenant, with Noah.

Genesis 15:6-20; 17:1-14. Abraham.

Exodus 24:1-8. Moses, when the Jews left Egypt.

2 Samuel 7:1-16; 23:5-7; Psalm 89:20-29. David.

Genesis 17:21; 26:1-5. Isaac. Genesis 28:10-15. Jacob.

## 2. The Marriage Agreement Must Be Obeyed (Malachi 2:13-15)

Do you remember your wedding? Do you remember the promises (vows) you made? What were those promises? Have you thought about those promises recently?

Was the marriage ceremony in sign language—with the pastor signing or with an interpreter? Many older Deaf people were married without an interpreter or pastor who could sign.

## Dig Deeper – Marriage in the Bible (Malachi 2:13-15)

Jesus said a lot about marriage: “The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if she has sexual relations with another man” (Matthew 5:31-32). “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her. And the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery” (Mark 10:1-12). See also Luke 16:18. Paul had more to say about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:1-16. Arranged marriages were common in Bible times, just as they are in many cultures today. Marriages were generally arranged by family or friends.

## 3. God Brings Justice (Malachi 2:16-17)

This may be a difficult topic because of divorced people in your class.

Emphasize God’s forgiveness for those who **repent** of this sin or any other sin. God is fair in His **justice**—in **discipline** and in forgiveness for those who repent.

Some ministers will not perform a marriage for someone who has been divorced. Others will do it. What do you think the minister should do if a divorced person wants to get married?

Refer to In My Context in the pupil material. Ask class members to share what they wrote for items 2, 3, and 4.

# Session 14

## A PURE PEOPLE

The Day of the **Lord** brings **purification**.

### MALACHI 3:1-7; 3:16-4:2

#### Plan Ahead

Suggested teaching method: Scripture search. Ask class members to find the verse in their Bible and sign it as you prepare to lead the discussion.

Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to sign "Take Time to Be Holy" (Let's Sign Hymnal\* #398).

### EXPLORE THE TEXT (MALACHI 3:1-7; 3:16-4:2)

#### 1. God's Messenger (Malachi 3:1-5)

Review the discussion in the pupil material about God's **Messenger**.

Who was **John the Baptist**?

If class members are not familiar with this, have someone sign Matthew 3:3; 11:14; 17:10-13.

Review the discussion of verse 5 about sins that God condemns.

#### Scripture Search – What God Condemns (Malachi 3:5)

God condemns all sin, but the Bible lists many specific sins, as in Malachi 3:5. Ask class members to locate these verses in their Bible and tell what sins are named.

Exodus 20:14

Exodus 23:6-7

Leviticus 19:13-14

Deuteronomy 6:13-15

Deuteronomy 19:16-21

Deuteronomy 24:17-18

Zechariah 7:8-10

## 2. God Never Changes (Malachi 3:6-7)

Do you know someone who is always the same—always happy or always upset about something? Most people react differently to situations, depending on their mood.

Encourage discussion of answers class members wrote about their favorite promise from God. Use a reference Bible to show how many verses contain promises from God.

## 3. God's Record (Malachi 3:16-18)

Ask class members to sign what they wrote in the Did You Know box about the kinds of things God keeps in His records. Distinguish between the **Book of Life** (those who are saved) and the records of what people have done.

## 4. Hope for the Faithful (Malachi 4:1-2)

What does the word *faithful* mean to you? Discuss the significance of the signs for faithful (regular) and full of faith.

How can we become more faithful to God? (Include both concepts: full of faith and regular in our obedience to Him.)

Distinguish between the **Lord's** Day (Sunday) and the Day of the Lord's judgment.

### Dig Deeper – The Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:1)

Ask class members to sign these verses.

Lamentations 2:21-22. The day of the Lord's anger

Joel 2:32. The day of punishment.

Zephaniah 1:14. The Lord's day of judging.

Zephaniah 2:2. The day of the Lord's anger.

Acts 2:20. The glorious day of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 5:5. A day of salvation.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-4. The day of the Lord is in the future.

2 Peter 3:10. The day of the Lord will come like a thief.

Review comments written by class members in item 3 of In My Context. If anyone expresses uncertainty about their salvation, talk further about it and if possible plan a time to talk with them at length.

Encourage class members to prepare for the start of next quarter by beginning to read the Book of Revelation.

# Time Line: Minor Prophets

**850 B.C.**

*840* Obadiah spoke to Judah and Edom.

**750 B.C.**

*760-722* Hosea's prophetic ministry.

*735-700* Micah begins his prophetic ministry.

*740* Isaiah is called to be a prophet.

*722* Assyria destroyed Israel. Israelites become captives in Assyria.

**610 B.C.**

*625* Zephaniah spoke to Jews.

*606-604* Habakkuk spoke to Jews.

**600 B.C.**

*600* Babylon destroyed Judah.

*593* Ezekiel begins to prophesy.

*593-571* Events in Ezekiel.

*587-586* Events in Obadiah.



## 650 B.C.

Years of prophetic silence (698-626).

Nahum (663-612) prophesies that just as Assyria destroyed Thebes, Nineveh (Assyria's capital) will be destroyed.

621 The book of the law is found and read publicly.

625-612 Nahum spoke to Jews and Assyrians.

## 550 B.C.

536 Jews began to return to Jerusalem.

520 Haggai

518 Zachariah.

## 500 B.C.

486-465 Events in Esther.

460-430 Malachi's prophecy.

## 450 B.C.

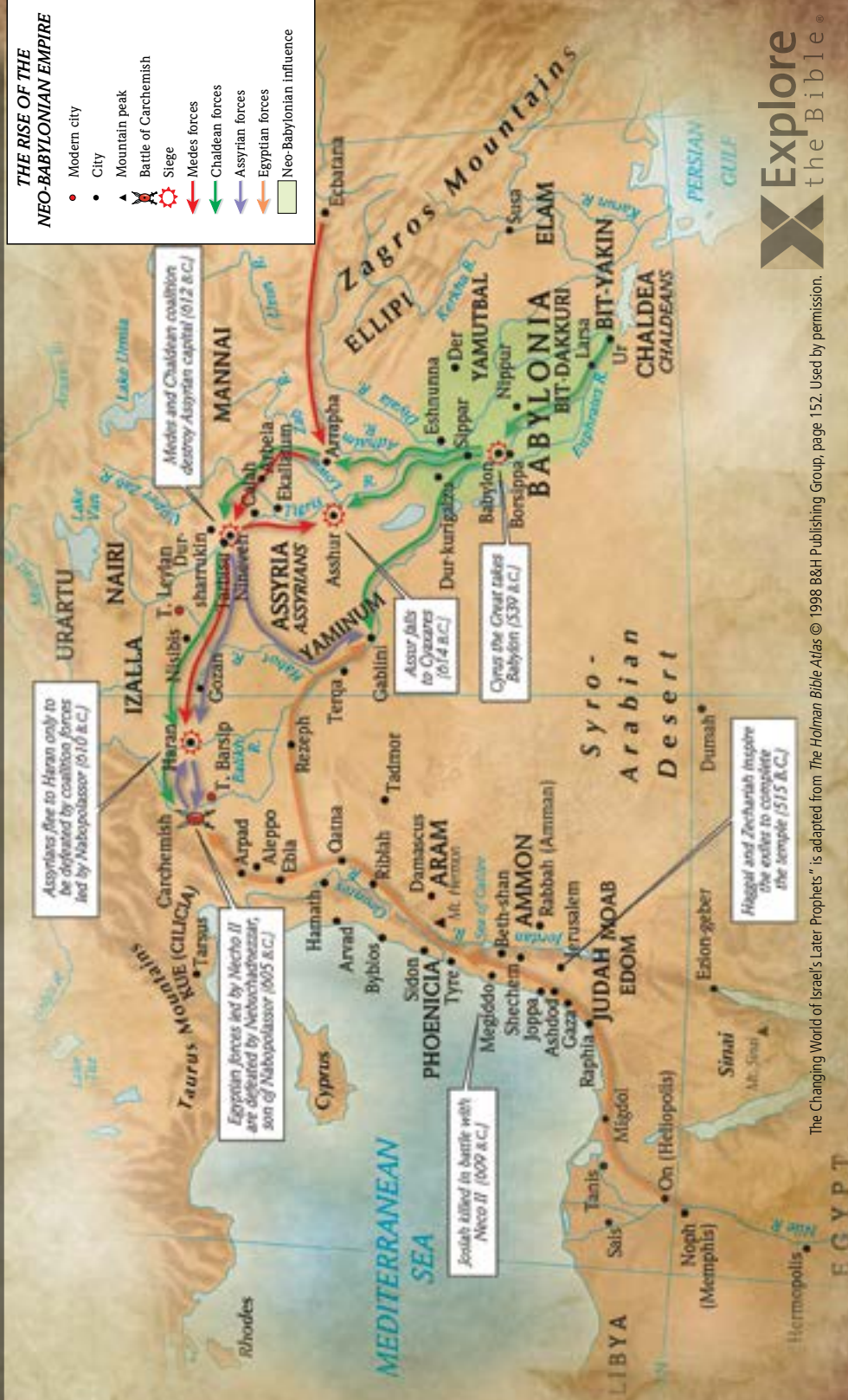
432 Nehemiah returns to Persia.

430-400 Peloponnesian Wars between Athens and other Greek city-states.

425 Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem.

# PRAYER JOURNAL

# The Changing World of Israel's Later Prophets



# Minor Prophets

Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" was extremely brief—only 10 sentences comprised of 270 words. But what he said in those few words was both powerful and memorable. He said all that needed to be said for the occasion. When the Lord put the "Minor Prophets" in the Scriptures, He didn't do so because these men or their messages were minor. They were bold prophets of God with the same calling as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Their recorded messages were briefer than those of the "Big Three," but these prophets declared the Word of the Lord to the people of their times. They said all that the Lord told them to say. Their messages are still powerful and meaningful today. Without fail, they point us to the One who fulfills all God-inspired prophecy, the Lord Jesus Christ.



*Let the Word dwell in you.*