



LESSON 11

GOD'S WARNINGS TO ISRAEL

Israel		Judah	
Jeroboam	931–910	Rehoboam	931–913
Nadab	910–909	Abijah	913–911
Baasha	909–886	Asa	911–870
Elah	886–885		
Zimri	885		
Omri	885–874		
Ahab	874–853	Jehoshaphat	873–848
Ahaziah	853–852		
Joram	852–841	Jehoram	848–841
Jehu	841–814	Ahaziah	841
		Athaliah	841–835
Jehoahaz	814–798	Joash	835–796
Jehoash	798–782	Amaziah	796–767
Jeroboam II	793–753	Uzziah	792–740
Zechariah	753		
Shallum	752		
Menahem	752–742	Jotham	750–731
Pekahiah	742–740		
Pekah	752–732	Ahaz	735–715
Hoshea	732–722	Hezekiah	729–686
		Manasseh	696–642
		Amon	642–640
		Josiah	640–609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoiakim	608–598
		Jehoiachin	598–597
		Zedekiah	597–586

In our last study we saw how both kingdoms prospered during the reigns of Jeroboam II in Israel and Uzziah in Judah. However, from the time of Jeroboam II's death it would only be 30 years before the northern kingdom of Israel ceased to exist. This was not what the Lord desired for His people, as Scripture records at the time of Israel's demise: "Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets.' However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God." (2 Kings 17:13–14, NASB95)

In this study we want to focus on the works of three prophets, all who had messages that impacted the kingdom of Israel. Israel's unfaithfulness would result in God's just wrath, but even in the midst of punishment the Lord held out hope!

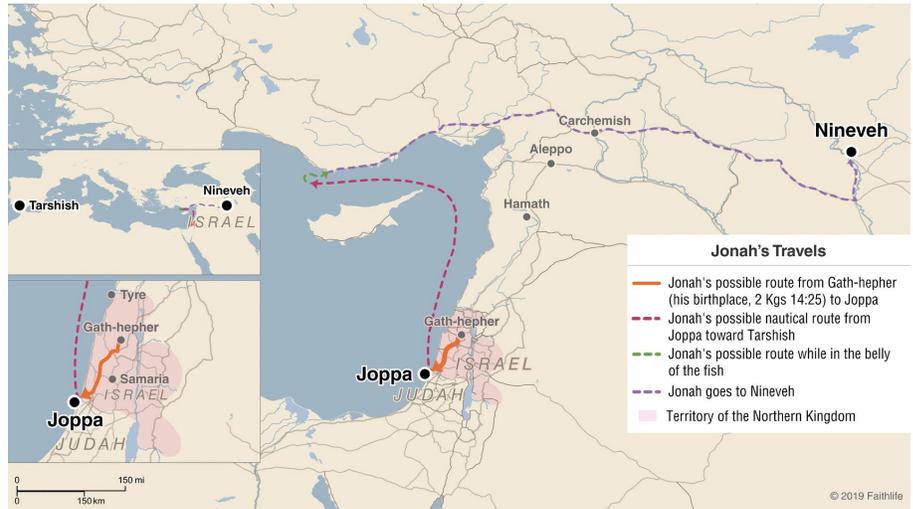
Jonah

Recall that we were first introduced to Jonah in our study of Jeroboam II's reign, "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of

Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." (2 Kings 14:25, NASB95). Gath-hepher was in the territory of Zebulun and the Lord utilized this Israelite to proclaim His messages to both Israel and to the empire of Assyria.

The book that bears Jonah's name describes his mission to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. Recall that Assyria had exerted its power and influence

during the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz as Shalmaneser III then Adad-nirari III expanded their territory. However, Assyria entered a period of decline following the reign of Adad-nirari III, giving Jeroboam II the ability to expand Israel's territory. Jonah prophesied during this period of Assyrian weakness, but it may be that he knew God would use the Assyrian people to punish Israel in the not too distant future (720 B.C., 2Kings 17), which would help explain the prophet's reluctance to proclaim the Lord's message of repentance to Nineveh (Jonah 4.2).



Outline of the book:

1. The salvation of Jonah (Jonah 1-2)
 - a. Jonah rejects the will of the Lord and is punished (chapter 1)
 - b. Jonah repents and is saved (chapter 2)
2. The salvation of Nineveh (Jonah 3-4)
 - a. Nineveh repents for rejecting the will of the Lord and is saved (chapter 3)
 - b. Jonah learns a lesson about compassion (chapter 4)

Important lessons:

- 1. The Lord is God of the nations.** This fact is emphasized from the first verse of the book. Jonah was to “cry against” Nineveh because “their wickedness” had come up before God. The Lord had a right to judge Nineveh, because He is their God too. The Lord’s sovereignty is further emphasized in Jonah 1.9 when Jonah confesses that he had fled from “the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.” There was no place where Jonah could escape from the Lord. Furthermore, since the Lord is God of the nations, His compassion and mercy can be extended to them too (see Jonah 4.2). You will note that Jonah refers to God’s own self-description found in Exodus 34.6. The compassionate nature of God wasn’t reserved for Israel, but was available for all creation.
- 2. The Lord is a God who saves the repentant.** As we see in Jonah 1-2, the Lord saved Jonah when he repented. (note: based on Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2, it would seem that the great fish was not the punishment, but the means of rescue) And in Jonah 3-4 we see God’s willingness to save Nineveh when it repented. God’s willingness to save the heathen was already indicated in chapter 1. The heathen sailors were spared because in this instance only Jonah was guilty of rejecting the Lord’s will. They would

worship the true God (1.16). But the saving of Nineveh is more surprising. The language used in Jonah 1.2 is reminiscent of Sodom in Genesis 18.20-21. Yet, Nineveh would repent at the preaching of Jonah, and thus be spared. We can only wonder, did Israel hear this message; did they consider that if they repented they would also be forgiven?

Amos

No doubt the people of Israel thought all was well during Jeroboam II's reign, even assuming that the Lord was blessing them. After all, their enemies were all suffering, a fact reflected in the opening chapters of Amos' prophecy as God details His judgments against the surrounding nations. However, Israel was filled with moral corruption. Into this setting of opulence and corruption God sent a "herdsman and grower of sycamore figs" (Amos 7.14). Amos was from the small town of Tekoa (~5 miles from Beth-lehem in Judah), but God would use him to warn and rebuke the high and mighty of Israel.

Outline of the book:

1. Intro: The Lord Roars! (Amos 1.1-2)
2. Judgments on Israel's neighbors (Amos 1.3-2.5)
 - a. On foreign nations: Damascus, Gaza and Tyre (Amos 1.3-10)
 - b. On blood relatives: Edom, Ammon and Moab (Amos 1.11-2.3)
 - c. On Israel's sister Judah (Amos 2.4-5)
3. Judgment on Israel (Amos 2.6-6.14)
 - a. Introductory announcement of judgment (Amos 2.6-16)
 - b. The Lion roars (Amos 3.1-15; cf. Amos 1.2)
 - i. Will the Lion roar when there is no prey? (3.1-7)
 - ii. Answer: the Lord has roared and Israel is prey to the nations (3.8-11)
 - iii. Israel consumed like a lamb in a lion's mouth (3.12-15)
 - c. Why judgment was coming (Amos 4.1-13)
 - i. Because of oppression (4.1-3)
 - ii. Because of false worship (4.4-5)
 - iii. Because they did not repent (4.6-13)
 - d. Lament for Israel's fall (Amos 5.1-17)
 - i. Fall declared (5.1-3)



- ii. The Lord's entreaty (5.4-9)
- iii. Israel rejects God's messengers (5.10-13)
- iv. Admonition (5.14-15)
- v. Wailing when the Lord comes (5.16-17)
- e. Oracles of woe (Amos 5.18-6.14)
 - i. For "the day of the Lord" is coming (5.18-27)
 - ii. Woe to those at ease (6.1-14)
- 4. Visions of Judgment (Amos 7.1-9.10)
 - a. 3 visions = judgment is certain (Amos 7.1-9)
 - b. Rejection of Amaziah, priest at Bethel (Amos 7.10-17)
 - c. Vision of summer fruit (Amos 8.1-14)
 - d. Vision of the Lord beside the altar (Amos 9.1-10) Note: this would have been the altar at Bethel where Jeroboam I set up one of the golden calves (1Kings 12.25-33; cf. Amos 3.14)
- 5. Future hope (Amos 9.11-15)

Important Lessons:

- 1. Do not equate prosperity with being blessed by the Lord.** As we noted in the introduction, during the days of Amos' prophecy Israel had experienced military success and economic prosperity. They took this as a sign of the Lord's favor and even spoke excitedly of "the day of the Lord" (5.18). In doing so they were fools, failing to see that the Lord's blessings were contingent on their faithfulness to His covenant (5.14-15). They basked in their prosperity and were punished for it (6.1-7). The day of the Lord was coming, but it would not be a pleasant day for them (5.18-20). We must not forget that faithfulness to the Lord will often result in difficult times rather than lives of ease (Matthew 5.10-12; Romans 8.17).
- 2. Compassion is of everlasting importance to the Lord.** This was encapsulated in the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19.18; Luke 10.25-37). Yet, the rich and powerful of Israel had utterly failed to show compassion for their less fortunate brethren (2.6-7; 5.1; 6.12; etc.). They would be punished for this failure (6.1-7). While the Scriptures do not reveal that the purpose of the church is to alleviate the social ills around us (save by the gospel, 2Timothy 2.5), the people of God are to always be concerned with the plight of their neighbor. Whether for the less fortunate among us (1John 3.15-18) or those not of this body (1Timothy 6.17-19; Galatians 6.10), the Lord wants us to be a people full of compassion.
- 3. Future hope.** It is in the final chapter that a future hope is shown. However, note that this hope occurs only after the Lord brings judgment on "the sinners of My people" (9.10). As defined in Amos these sinners would have been the powerful and wealthy who had ignored the weak and poor of

Israel. But the poor and weak who relied on the Lord would constitute the remnant who could look forward to a Kingdom typified by righteousness and justice (9.11-15). And it is such people, such "losers", who long for His Kingdom (Matthew 5.3-12; 1Corinthians 1.26-31).

Hosea

According to the opening verse of Hosea's prophecy, the prophet was active during this time of Israelite expansion, but he would also witness the rapid decline and destruction of the northern kingdom. "The latter days of the eighth century b.c. witnessed the rise of the neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745–727). He was followed by several capable kings who extended Assyrian dominance over the entire ancient Near East (eventually including Egypt) for more than a century. Particularly relevant to Hosea were at least six incursions into Palestine and its neighbors by an unstoppable Assyrian army during the prophet's lifetime. Conquest and exile were the most dreaded fate in biblical times. This perennial threat hanging over Israel (specifically the northern kingdom) came with a time of unparalleled political upheaval and instability. The nation had six kings within about 30 years, a period filled with intrigue and violence. Zechariah (753 b.c.) was murdered after only six months in power. The usurper, Shallum, was assassinated one month later. The next king, Menahem (752–742 b.c.) survived for a decade only by paying a burdensome tribute to Tiglath-pileser. His son, Pekahiah (742–740 b.c.), was assassinated by an army officer, Pekah (740–732), after only two years' reign. Subsequently, Pekah was disposed of by Hoshea, whose rebellion against the Assyrians led to the end of the northern kingdom (732–722 b.c.)." (ESV Study Bible)

It is clear from Hosea's prophecy that Israel had forsaken Jehovah God for Baal. They erected numerous shrines to the idol (Hosea 2.13,17), engaged in sexual immorality in order to procure his blessings (Hosea 4.14), credited him for their prosperity (Hosea 2.5,8) and even identified Baal with Jehovah (Hosea 2.16-17).

Hosea's prophecy is best known to us because of God's charge to the prophet that he marry a "wife of harlotry" (Hosea 1.2). Hosea's marriage to a woman who would repeatedly be unfaithful was an apt representation of Israel's unfaithfulness to her covenant with God. They had rejected the true God in favor of an idol. God's message to Israel through Hosea would reveal the extent of Israel's treachery, God's righteous indignation with her, but also His remarkable mercy in His willingness to redeem His unfaithful people.

Outline of the book:

1. Hosea's Marriage - A Picture of God's Broken Covenant With Israel (Hosea 1-3)
 - a. Hosea marries a wife of harlotry; her children (chapter 1)
 - b. Israel's condemnation, but covenant would be reestablished (chapter 2)
 - c. Remarriage of Hosea & Gomer; of God and "Israel" (chapter 3)

2. Details of God's Broken Covenant with Israel (Hosea 4-14)
 - a. God's case against Israel (chapter 4)
 - b. Israel's harlotry (chapter 5)
 - c. Israel's insincere desire to return (chapter 6)
 - d. Israel's persistent harlotry (chapter 7)
 - e. Israel's punishment (chapters 8-10)
 - i. For her hypocrisy (ch. 8)
 - ii. For her idolatry (ch. 9)
 - iii. Destruction of Israel and her king (ch. 10)
 - f. The Lord longs for His people (chapter 11)
 - g. The Lord contends with Israel and Judah (chapter 12)
 - h. Israel's destruction was coming (chapter 13)
 - i. Call for Israel to return (chapter 14)

Important lessons:

1. **Violation of our covenant is adultery.** Nothing else damages the marriage covenant like unfaithfulness. Hosea's marriage to Gomer was plagued by her unfaithfulness, as was God's marriage to Israel. Hosea 11.1-4 paints a tragic picture of the Lord caring for Israel and calling out for her when she strayed. How did Israel respond? By continuing in her unfaithfulness! This kind of treachery is revolting to us and should be a call for us to remember that our unfaithfulness to our covenant with God is also adultery. We are betrothed to Christ (2Cor. 11.2), the church is His bride (Eph. 5.23-24; Rev. 21.2). Let us be faithful.
2. **God's judgment against the unfaithful is justified.** If someone is unfaithful to their spouse we would say they are deserving of any repercussions that resulted from their adultery. In leaving Jehovah God, Israel had "rejected the good" (Hosea 8.3). In other words, they had rejected the One who is inherently good and all of the good that comes from a relationship with Him. What kind of repercussions should Israel expect for their unfaithfulness? Destruction (Hosea 13.1-7, 15-16). God's punishment of unfaithful Israel was fully justified, as will be His punishment of those who reject the good today (Hebrews 10.26-27).
3. **Our God is willing to redeem the unfaithful.** The most poignant picture in Hosea is when the prophet is commanded by the Lord to go and love his adulterous wife. Hosea obeys by buying her back for himself, because she had sold herself in harlotry (Hosea 3.1-2). Why was the prophet commanded to do this? Because it pictured what God would do for Israel (Hosea 2.14-23; 14.4-9). It pictures what God has done for us (Romans 9.22-26; cf. Hosea 1.10; 2.23).