

OT SURVEY: PROPHETS

WEEK 6: HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- We are going to take the next 6 weeks and work through the Old Testament prophets!
- This will be an overview of the books in their particular group.
- During each teaching, after an overview has been done, we are going to dive into some of the areas of special interest to us and learn more about what was going on in that particular book.
- **There are two goals:** to have a general working knowledge of each of the prophetic books in the Old Testament and to have the confidence to be able to study them on our own.
- As we study these books, we want to pay special attention to what God is doing through these prophets, how the prophets themselves respond, what the message of the prophets is, and how those being prophesied to respond to their words.
- Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah:
 - 11/10: The Prophets of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Jonah, Micah and Amos)
 - 11/17: The Prophets of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Hosea and Isaiah)
- Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Nahum, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Lamentations
 - 11/24: The Prophets of the Neo-Babylonian Period
 - 12/01: The Prophets of the Neo-Babylonian Period
- Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi
 - 12/08: The Prophets of the Persian Period
 - **12/15: The Prophets of the Persian Period**

OPENING

- Why should we study the prophets?
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- Where do we start?
 - God's people in God's place under God's rule¹
 - Graeme Goldsworthy's outline²
 - ***In the Garden of Eden.*** God, his people, and the place all exist in the perfect relationships intended by God.
 - ***Outside the Garden of Eden.*** The relationships established by God at creation are dislocated and confused because of sin. They are not totally disrupted, and the world goes on while under sentence of death.
 - ***In redemptive history.*** God calls one family of people, and their successors, to be the context within which he reveals his plan and purposes for the redemption of people out of every nation. The relationships of the kingdom of God are put in place but never fully realized by sinful people.
 - ***In prophetic eschatology.*** The pattern of redemption, and the promised kingdom of God that failed to eventuate in Israel's history, constitute the pattern of a future glorious salvation and kingdom promised by the prophets.

Defining Eschatology³

What do we mean when we speak of “eschatology”? The English word is based on a combination of two Greek words: *eschatos* (“last”) and *logos* (“word”). Traditionally, eschatology has been defined as the “doctrine of the last things” in relation to both the individual (e.g. death and the intermediate state) and to cosmic history (e.g. the return of Christ, the general resurrection, the final judgment, heaven, and hell).¹ Because of this definition, most studies of eschatology have limited themselves to a discussion of events that have yet to occur—events at the end of the individual's life or events at the end of history.²

Eschatology in a broader sense, however, concerns what Scripture teaches about God's purposes in Christ for history. As such, eschatology does include a study of the consummation of God's purposes at the end of history, but it also includes a study of the stages in the unfolding of those purposes.³ If, for example, the first coming of Christ inaugurated “the last days,” then a study of biblical eschatology must include a study of Christ's first advent as well as his second. It must also include a study of God's preparation in history for the eschatological first advent of Christ. In other words, eschatology must involve a redemptive-historical study of the entire Bible.

- ***In Jesus Christ.*** Where Adam failed, and where Israel failed, Jesus comes as the last Adam and the true Israel to carry out God's purposes perfectly. Believers from all periods of history are credited with his perfection and righteousness as a gift.

¹ G. Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013)

² <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-pattern-of-the-kingdom-gods-people-in-gods-place-under-gods-rule/>

³ <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/introduction-unfolding-biblical-eschatology?srsId=AfmBOoqSgOKK6FqKbrDCzBdT1tWjplCf3zPS1aieo6aBhrWhLMdNg2gI>

- ***In the consummation.*** The perfection that is in Jesus, and that believers possess by faith, is only fully formed in believers and the world when Christ returns in glory.
- Here's another way that Goldsworthy summarizes this:
 - The pattern of the kingdom is established in the Garden of Eden.
 - This pattern is broken when sin enters in.
 - The pattern is reestablished in salvation history in Israel but never fully realized.
 - The same pattern shapes the prophetic view of the future kingdom.
 - The pattern of the kingdom is perfectly established in Jesus in a representative way.
 - The pattern of the kingdom begins to be formed in the people of God through the gospel.
 - The pattern of the kingdom is consummated at Christ's return.
- How do we navigate the study of the prophets?
 - The primary concern when interpreting the Bible is finding the author's intended meaning. One all-too-common approach to studying the Bible is to read the text and then ask, "What does this text mean *to me*?" While seeking to apply the text to one's life is important, it should never be the first question we ask of Scripture. Instead, the first question should be, "What did the author intend to communicate?" Skipping over this question can cause misunderstandings and misapplications of the text. To sum up the significance of seeing the text in its proper historical and grammatical setting, one could perhaps say that the three most important words to remember when interpreting the Bible are these: context, context, context.⁴
 - Concerning Bible interpretation, dispensationalists promote what they call a "consistent literal" or "grammatical-historical" hermeneutic to the Bible. The word "literal" is disputed and dispensationalists acknowledge other systems are often literal too with their interpretations. But by this they mean that all Bible passages, including Old Testament prophetic sections and the Book of Revelation, should be consistently understood according to their grammatical, historical, and genre contexts. Doing so affirms the significance of ethnic/national Israel in God's purposes and that the church and Israel are distinct. Also concerning hermeneutics, Dispensationalism holds that the New Testament builds upon the meaning of the Old Testament. But the New Testament does not transcend or reinterpret Old Testament passages or the storyline that began in the Old Testament. Thus, there is storyline continuity between Old Testament expectations and New Testament fulfillments over the course of Jesus' two comings. In addition, Dispensationalism acknowledges the existence of types and typological connections in the Bible, but it does not believe types remove or transcend the significance of ethnic/national Israel in the Bible's storyline. Also, the fact that Jesus is the ultimate Israelite does not mean that promises to the corporate entity of Israel will not be fulfilled as stated. Dispensationalism affirms that Jesus is the ultimate Israelite who will save and restore ethnic/national Israel and bring blessings to the Gentiles (see [Isa. 49:3-6](#)). An initial phase of this is occurring in the church today, while a final fulfillment will occur in Jesus' earthly kingdom after the second coming.⁵

⁴ <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/what-is-hermeneutics>

⁵ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/dispensational-theology/>

HAGGAI

- The name Haggai is derived from the Hebrew word “hag” (festival), possibly because he was born on one of the major Jewish festivals.
- The dates of the book’s messages are clearly given. The four messages were given (approximated):
 - September 1, 520 B.C. (1:1)
 - October 21, 520 B.C. (2:1)
 - December 24, 520 B.C. (2:10)
 - December 24, 520 B.C. (2:20)
- The purpose of the prophecy was to urge the returnees from Babylon to complete the temple which they had begun but neglected.
- Historical Background (Ezra 1-6)
 - In 538 B.C. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their temple. The first return was led by Zerubbabel, and in 536 B.C., work on the temple began. Ezra describes how the Samaritans hindered the work. This opposition added to the discouragement of the remnant. They had given up the relative comfort of Babylon to pioneer a land full of enemies. Thus, they ceased work on the Temple. This led to spiritual lethargy and occupation with their building projects. They also used a “prophetic” theory that the temple was to be built until a later time as an excuse for neglecting their assigned task. Following the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, work was resumed in 520 B.C. and completed in 516 B.C.
- The Outline
 - First Message—“**To Build**” (1:1-15)
 - Second Message—“**To Behold**” (2:1-9)
 - Third Message—“**To Behave**” (2:10-19)
 - Fourth Message—“**To Believe**” (2:20-23)

ZECHARIAH

- Zechariah means “He whom Jehovah remembers”. He is the central figure in the group of post exilic prophets. He was on priestly descent (1:1). He succeeded his grandfather in the priestly order (Neh 12:4, 16). He entered his prophetic ministry two months after his contemporary, Haggai (Oct-Nov, 520 B.C).
- Chapters 1 through 8 were written 520-518 B.C. Chapters 9 through 14 were probably written between 480B.C. and 470 B.C. when Zechariah was about 70 years old. The difference in the author’s age and the changing political circumstances are sufficient to account for the differences in content and style between the two sections.
- The purpose was to exhort the returned exiles to turn from their sins to the LORD for cleansing and blessing (1:3). The purpose was also to comfort and encourage the returned remnant regarding the rebuilding of the temple and God’s future work among His people in Jerusalem (1:16, 17; 2:12; 3:2; 4:9; 6:14-15)
- The Theme was a detailed portrayal of God’s future dealings with his chosen people, Israel. Simply stated the restoration of God’s people Israel through the redeeming and delivering work of the Messiah.
- The Outline: Chapters 1-8 are historically oriented, designed to encourage the returned exiles to turn from their sinful ways of the past. Chapters 9-14 are eschatologically oriented, designed too encourage the despairing remnant concerning the future glories of Zion.

- **Introduction**

- A Call to Repentance (1:1-6)

- **The night visions**

- Red horse rider among Myrtles (1:7-17)
- Four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
- The surveyor with measuring line (2:1-13)
- Cleansing of the High Priest (3:1-10)
- The lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14)
- The flying scroll (5:1-4)
- The woman in Ephah (5:5-11)
- The four chariots (6:1-8)
- Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)

- **Questions concerning fasting**

- Inquiry by men of bethel (7:1-3)

- LORD's rebuke of empty ritualism (7:4-7)
- The future restoration of Zion (8:1-17)
- Future joys of God's people (8:18-23)
- **Oracles concerning Israel and the Nations**
 - The divine warrior hymn (9:1-17)
 - The plan of restoration (10:1-12)
 - Rejection of the Good Shepherd (11:1-17)
- **Oracle concerning Israel's Future**
 - Physical deliverance of the nation (12:1-9)
 - Spiritual Renewal of the nation (12:10-13:6)
 - The fate of the shepherd and his flock (13:7-9)
 - The second coming of the Messiah (14:1-7)
 - The Messiah's Kingdom (14:8-11)
 - Israel's enemies judged (14:12-15)
 - Worship in the Messiah's Kingdom (14:16-21)

MALACHI

- The name Malachi means "my messenger"
 - No mention is made of the prophet's father or background.
- The date of the book is during the Persian period (539-333 B.C.) since a Persian term for governor is used in 1:8. Since sacrifices were being offered in the Temple (1:7-10, 3:8), the date must be following 516 B.C. However, time must have passed because the priests had grown tired of the system and corruption had crept in. Therefore, a date of around 425 B.C. is suggested.
- The purpose of Malachi is to direct a message of judgement against Israel's corrupt priests, wicked practices, and a false sense of security. He probes the issue of hypocrisy, infidelity, mixed marriages, divorce, false worship, and arrogance. However, God reveals his continuing love despite Israel's lethargy. A day of reckoning is coming when the godless will be punished, but the godly will be blessed.
- The outline:
 - **The present sin (Chapters 1 and 2)**

- Appeal to Priests (Lord the speaker)
 - Denying God's love (1:1-5)
 - Despising God's name (1:6)
 - Defiling God's Altar (2:1-9)
 - Disregarding God's Law (2:1-9)
- Appeal to people (Malachi the speaker)
 - Detestable Worship (2:10-13)
 - Deserted wives (2:14-16)
 - Distorted words (2:17)
- The Prophetic "Day" (Chapters 3 and 4)
 - The "Day" will judge the guilty (3:1-6)
 - Appeal (3:7-15)
 - The "Day" will bless the godly (3:16-4:3)
 - Appeal (4:4-6)