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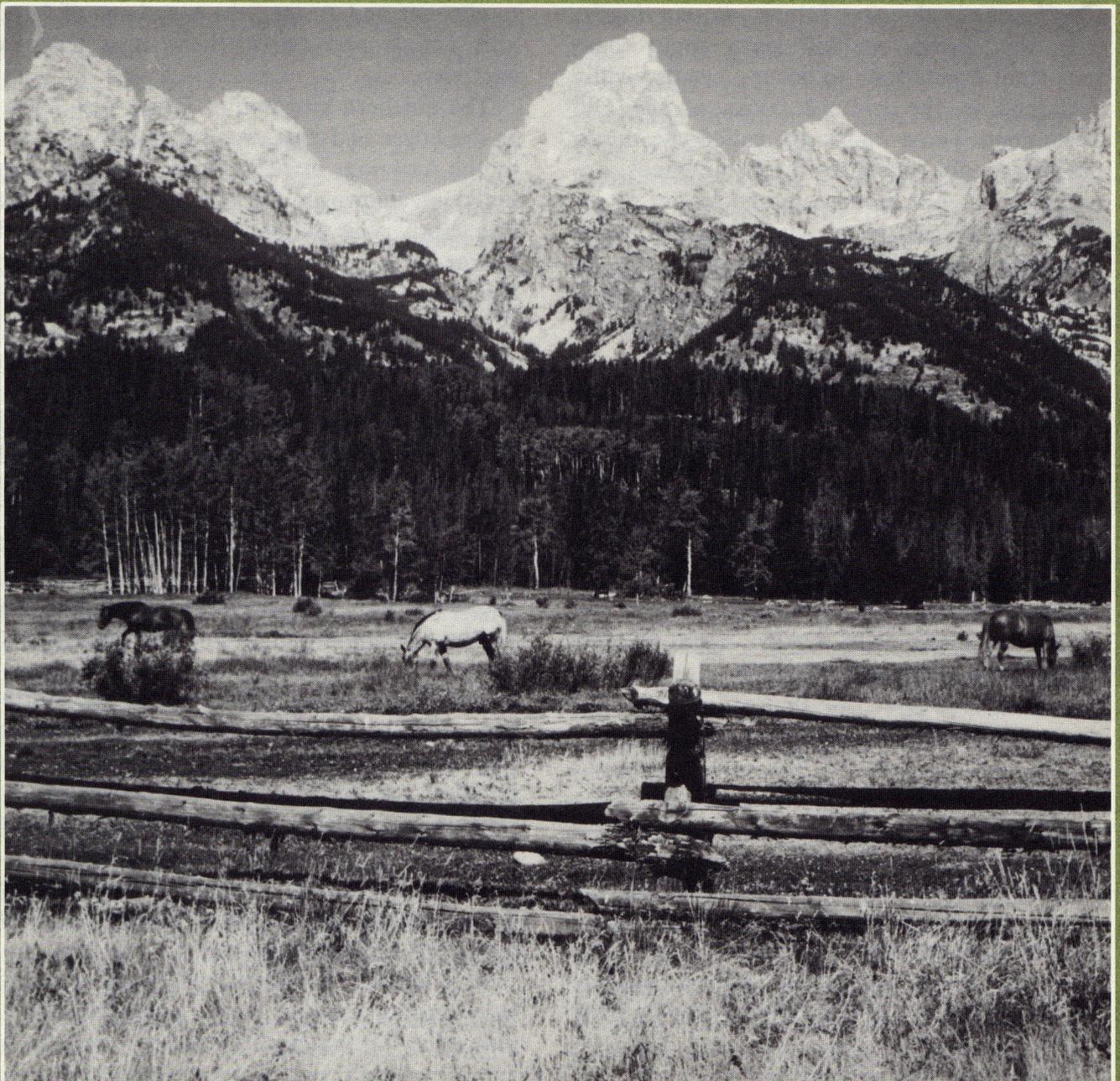
LEVEL 7

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 9



The Minor Prophets Speak to Us!

THE MINOR PROPHETS SPEAK TO US!

God used His servants the prophets to record the “advance news” of events to occur in the near future—*in our time!*

In this lesson, we will learn about those important events soon to occur—events vividly described in the last 12 books of the Old Testament. These books are called the *minor prophets*—not because their messages are unimportant, but because the books are short.

We will discuss in our study the two major prophetic themes of the minor prophets: (1) the future of the modern-day descendants of Israel, and (2) the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

We will also learn why God called these prophets to prophesy concerning the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and other nations of the world.

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The minor prophets lived and prophesied between 900 and 400 B.C.

On the blank lines below, write out the names of the 12 minor prophets.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

During the years of these prophets, the

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

A beautiful millennial setting. God promises to restore the desolated lands after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

YES Photo

ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon became great empires. God used these nations to conquer and enslave the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and carry them into national captivity.

The northern kingdom of Israel, also known as the house of Israel, was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 721-718 B.C. The southern kingdom, known as the house of Judah, went into captivity at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon during the years 604-585 B.C.

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING BIBLE PROPHECY

As discussed in our last lesson, the key that unlocks Bible prophecy to our understanding is knowledge of the identity of the American and British peoples in biblical prophecy. For more information on this subject, write for the free booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, written by Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God.

The peoples of the United States and Britain are actually descended from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, which were part of the kingdom of Israel. The United States and Britain are often referred to in biblical prophecy as the “house of Israel,” “all Israel,” “Jacob,” “Ephraim,” “Samaria” and “Isaac.” These terms generally apply to the northern, ten-tribed kingdom of Israel.

It is helpful to understand the meanings of key phrases used in Bible prophecies. Such phrases as “in that day” “last days” and “latter

days” generally refer to a two-and-one-half-year period known as the *Great Tribulation*, which will occur immediately before the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:21). The phrase *Day of the Lord* generally applies to a one-year period following the Great Tribulation and includes the events directly leading up to the Second Coming of Christ.

THE PROPHET HOSEA

Hosea prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel. He, like the prophet Amos, directed his prophecies to the northern kingdom of Israel.

The prophet Hosea was given an unusual commission by God. He was told to marry a woman named Gomer, who was a prostitute.

But why would God give such a command to His prophet?

Many years before Hosea’s time, God called and made a covenant with His servant Abraham (Genesis 17:1-6; 22:16-18). This same covenant was later passed on to Abraham’s son, Isaac, and then to Isaac’s son, Jacob (Israel) and his descendants (Exodus 24:6-8).

The people of Israel promised at Mt. Sinai to keep this covenant with God. Later, they committed spiritual adultery by worshipping false gods. Hosea’s wife also committed adultery, and her unfaithfulness in marriage pictured what the nation of Israel had done to God.

Hosea and Gomer had three children. Their first child was a son. God instructed Hosea to name the son *Jezreel*, meaning “God will disperse,” to show that He planned to quickly bring an end to the house of Israel (Hosea 1:4-5).

This warning came to pass when Shalmaneser of Assyria defeated Israel at Beth-arbel (Hosea 10:14). It was at this time that the ten-tribed house of Israel would begin to “abide many days without a king” (Hosea 3:4).

Hosea’s second child was a daughter. God instructed that she be named _____,

meaning “no mercy” or “not pitied” (Hosea 1:6). God was telling the people of Israel that He would surely punish them for their sins.

After the birth of their daughter, Gomer had a second son, named *Loammi*, meaning “not my people” (Hosea 1:9). This was God’s warning to the house of Israel that He no longer regarded them as His people.

But how can we be sure this same prophecy applies to us, the modern-day descendants of Israel?

Let’s continue with this same prophecy in Hosea 2:16: “And it shall be *at that day* [speaking of a time in the near future], saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi [meaning “my husband”]; and shalt call me no more Baali [meaning “my Lord”].”

Also notice Hosea 3:5: “Afterward shall the children of Israel return [from their captivity], and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the *latter days*.”

This is speaking of a time long after ancient Israel went into captivity in 721-718 B.C. It is a prophecy for our time. God is warning us that if we refuse to repent of our sins, we also will go into national captivity.

But there is good news! After this corrective punishment, the modern-day descendants of Israel will acknowledge their transgressions and seek God. God says, “In their affliction they will seek me early” (Hosea 5:15).

The people of Israel will once again look to God for help. “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten [wounded], he will bind us up” (Hosea 6:1).

Prophecy shows that one day the people of the United States, Britain and other nations descended from the ancient Israelites will come to recognize their true identity, when God gathers His people Israel from all over the world (Hosea 1:10-11).

Hosea continues in chapters 7-13 with a message of strong rebuke and indictment from God. But as we have learned, the peoples of the

United States and Britain, along with other nations, will seek God in their affliction. At that time, God will bless His people with prosperity and happiness.

Read Hosea 14:1-9, and list on a separate piece of paper the blessings that God will bestow upon Israel after their corrective punishment.

JOEL'S PROPHECIES

The name *Joel* means "the Eternal is God." Joel was from the area of Judah and may have written from the city of Jerusalem. The prophecy of Joel describes swarms of insects, symbolizing the destruction of Israel by invading armies.

On the lines below, write the names of the insects described in Joel 1:4.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The literal meanings of these names are "the gnawer," "the swarmer or multiplier," "the licker" and "the devourer."

Joel describes successive swarms of destructive insects that devour the fruits and food crops: "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7).

Joel then speaks of devastating drought: "The field is _____, the _____ mourneth; for the _____ is wasted: the new wine is _____, the _____ languisheth" (verse 10).

Joel uses the analogy of the insect plagues to describe a great human army that will invade the lands of the modern-day descendants of Israel. This will be a time of great trouble prior to the coming "day of the LORD" (verse 15). This is the same period of time Jesus Christ referred to as the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21).

How does Joel describe the Day of the Lord, the time of God's intervention in human affairs? What does Joel say will happen?

Joel describes a time of war: "Blow ye the

trumpet [alarm of war] in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the *day of the Lord* cometh, for it is nigh at hand" (Joel 2:1).

It is to be "A day of _____ and of _____, a day of _____ and of _____, as the _____ spread upon the _____: *a great people and a strong*: there hath _____, neither shall be any more after it, even to the _____ of many generations" (Joel 2:2).

Who are the "great people and a strong"? They are a mighty Gentile army that will be present during the Day of the Lord! They will try to fight Jesus Christ at His Second Coming (Joel 3:14; Amos 5:18-20).

What does Joel say about the sun and the moon? Will there be a great earthquake? "The earth shall _____ before them; the _____ shall tremble: the _____ and the _____ shall be _____, and the _____ shall withdraw their _____" (Joel 2:10).

How can people escape these terrible events that are about to happen?

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, _____ ye even to _____ with all your _____, and with _____, and with _____, and with _____: And rend your _____, and not your _____, and turn unto the LORD your _____: for he is _____ and _____, slow to _____, and of great _____, and _____ him of the _____" (verses 12-13).

God says He will protect those who repent and obey him. What does God promise in Joel 2:13-14, 32? (Summarize these verses on the lines below.) _____

What does God say about the land devastated by the insect plagues? (Joel 2:25)

Will the modern-day descendants of Israel come to know God? "And ye shall _____ that I am in the _____ of _____, and that I am the _____ your God, _____: and my _____ shall _____ be _____" (Joel 2:27).

After the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord, God will once again bless His people Israel. Christ will restore God's government over the whole earth and He will give His spirit to all of mankind (Joel 2:28-29).

Christ will rule from Jerusalem as King of kings, and the people of Israel will live at peace (Joel 3:16-20).

GOD CALLS AMOS

Amos was born in the southern kingdom of Judah, in Tekoa. He was a shepherd and a cultivator of sycamore trees. He was also a contemporary of the prophet Hosea.

The prophet Amos wrote in the days of Uzziah, the 13th of the 19 kings of the house of Israel (Amos 1:1). And like the major prophets, Amos gives alarming prophecies about the destruction of Israel and nations who expanded to new lands by extermination of God's people (Amos 1:3-15; 2:1-3).

What judgment does God say He will send upon the house of Judah? (Amos 2:4-5) _____

This prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem in 604-586 B.C. and the palaces were destroyed by fire. But, as we shall see, there is a "duality" in Bible prophecy.

The Jews were later allowed to return to Palestine, where many of their descendants live today. They are of the house of Judah, not the house of Israel, as the name of the modern Jewish state implies. They, along with the modern-day descendants of Israel, will be punished at Christ's return.

The remainder of the book of Amos is addressed to the house of Israel. The people of Israel had gone so far astray from keeping

God's commandments that God asked the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3.)

Two cannot walk together unless they agree with one another. The people of Israel were not in agreement with God, and God was using Amos to warn them to turn from their sins. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Amos received three visions, along with their meanings, from God. In his first vision, Amos saw God standing upon a wall and holding a plumbline, a tool builders use to test the straightness of a wall. The plumbline symbolized God's testing the righteousness of Israel (Amos 7:7-8).

Because of their unrighteousness, what punishment would come upon Israel? (Amos 7:9) _____

The name Isaac is used for the ten-tribed house of Israel. In Amos 7:16 the Israelites are called the "house of Isaac." They were descended from Isaac, and therefore are Isaac's sons.

How, then, will God punish the people of Israel? (Amos 6:14; 7:11, 17) _____

When will these things take place? (Amos 8:3, 9, 13) _____

(Remember that the phrase "in that day" refers to the end of this age.) The book of Amos clearly shows us that these prophecies are for our peoples today — the peoples of the United States and Britain.

God also warns, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a _____ in the _____, not a famine of _____, nor a thirst for _____, but of _____ the _____ of the LORD" (Amos 8:11).

In Amos's second vision, he saw a basket of summer fruit that symbolized Israel's being ripe for punishment (Amos 8:1-2).

Amos' last vision was of the destruction of a temple — not the Temple at Jerusalem, but a temple in the northern kingdom of Israel.

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom [house of Israel], and I will destroy it [the kingdom] from off the face of the earth” (Amos 9:8).

Will all Israel be destroyed in the Great Tribulation? (Amos 9:8, latter part of verse)

People usually apply this prophecy to the scattered condition of the Jews today. But it has nothing to do with the Jews or the house of Judah, but refers to the ten-tribed house of Israel.

How can we be assured that we will not go through the terrible tribulation in the future? (Summarize Amos 5:4, 6, 14-15 on a separate piece of paper.)

In the last days, after Israel is corrected, God promises to restore the ruined land and cities, and bring Israel back from captivity. At that time, Israel will be the head of all the nations of the earth (Amos 9:11-15).

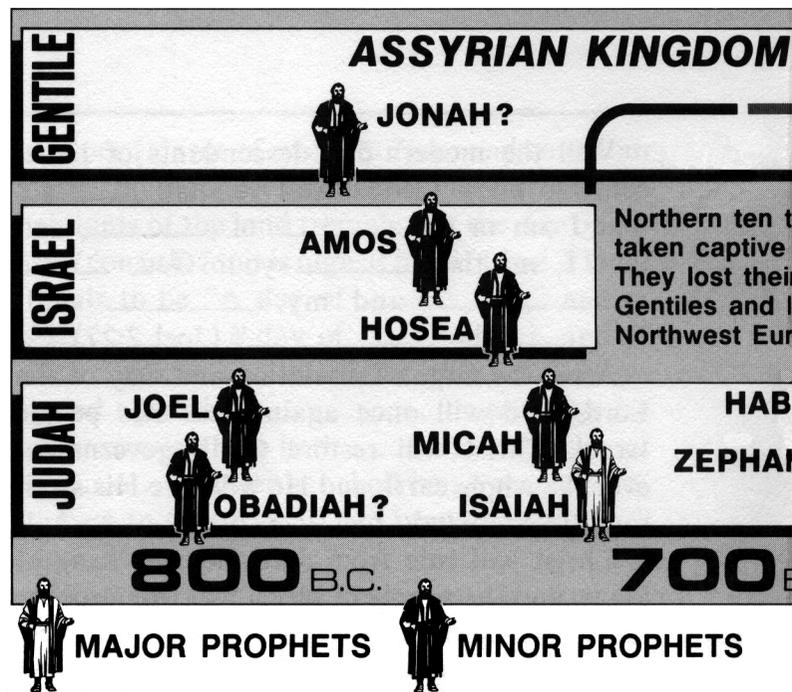
OBADIAH PROPHECIES EDMON'S DOWNFALL

The book of Obadiah is the smallest in the Old Testament. *Obadiah* means “servant of God.”

Obadiah prophesied the destruction of Edom, the descendants of Esau. You may recall that Esau was the twin brother of Jacob. As a result of the Edomites dealing treacherously with Israel, Edom will be punished at the Second Coming of Christ (verses 8-10).

This destruction will come during the *Day of the Lord*, when all nations of the earth will receive punishment from God. “For the _____ is _____ upon all the _____: as thou hast done, it _____ be _____ unto _____: thy _____ shall _____ upon thine own _____” (verse 15).

The wicked nations of the earth will be destroyed. Edom will be cut off, and it will be as if the nation had never existed (verse 16).



The people of Israel and Judah will once again possess all the land originally promised to the Patriarch Abraham. “And the captivity of this _____ of the _____ of _____ shall possess that of the _____ . . . and the _____ of _____ . . . shall _____ the cities of the south” (verse 20).

When Christ returns to restore the Government of God and set up the Kingdom of God on earth, those who are changed into immortal, spirit-composed beings will be with Him at His return (verse 21).

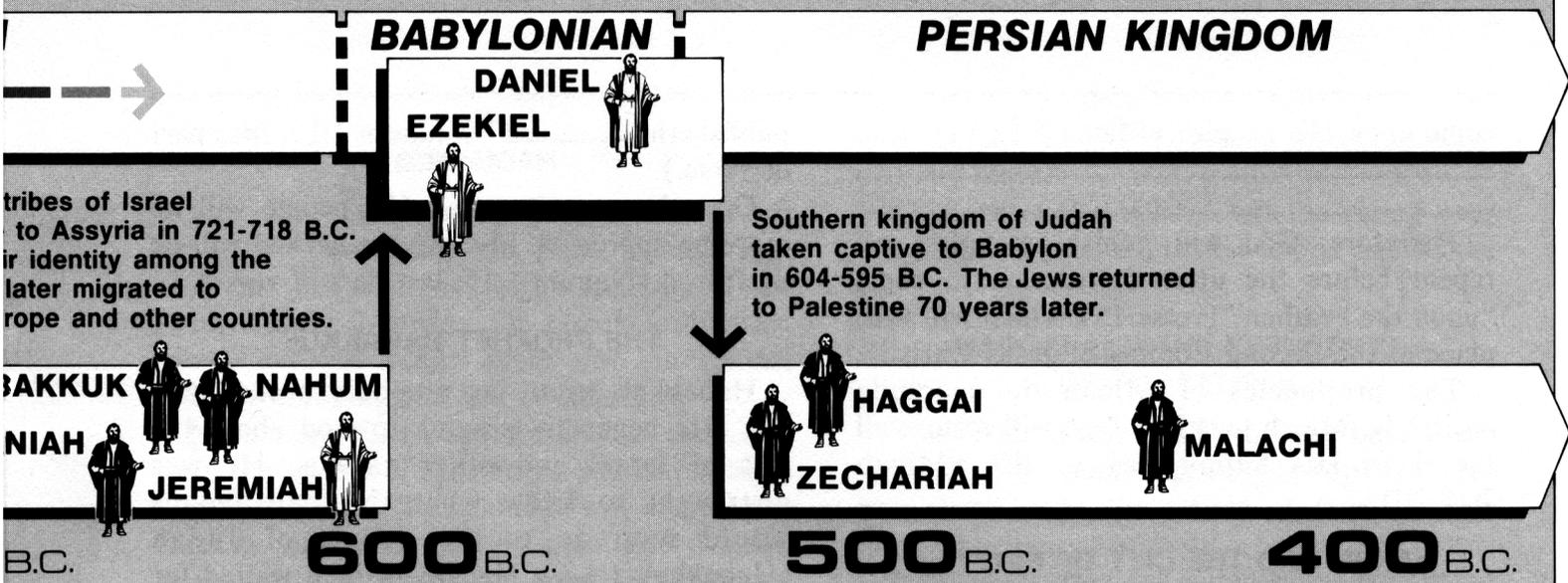
For more information about the Kingdom of God, write for our free booklet *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?*

We will continue our study of the minor prophets with the prophet Micah. The story of Jonah will be discussed in the next lesson.

THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

Micah came from a small Judean town called Moresheth-gath. The name *Micah* means “who is like the Eternal?” Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Micah 1:1; Jeremiah 26:18).

Micah directed his prophecies to the capitals of Israel and Judah. He also called for all peoples to hear the prophecy, including the



The chart above shows the approximate times in which the minor prophets prophesied to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

rulers of the house of Israel (Micah 1:1-2).

Micah’s prophecy pictures God’s coming and treading upon the mountains (governments) of the earth by the action of earthquakes and volcanoes (Micah 1:3-4).

When will these things happen? (Micah 2:3-4) _____

Who did God say was at fault for leading the people of Israel astray? (Micah 3:1, 5, 7, 9, 11)

What will be Israel’s punishment? (Micah 3:12) _____

We learned from the prophecies of Amos that God would use another nation to punish the modern-day descendants of Israel (Amos 6:14). Which nation will this be? (Micah 7:12)

Let’s notice what God says will happen after this time of corrective punishment. “But in the *last days* it shall come to pass, that the mountain [God’s world-ruling government] of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains [other nations of the world], and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it” (Micah 4:1).

God’s government will rule over all nations of the earth. People will look to God and learn

to live the way of life that brings peace and happiness (verse 2).

The instruments of war will be abolished: “And they shall _____ their _____ into _____, and their _____ into _____: _____ shall not lift up a _____ against _____, neither shall they _____ any more” (Micah 4:3).

In Micah 5:7-15, we see that Micah’s prophecy is for the “remnant” of Israel — modern Israel today. Micah describes the wonderful blessings that the United States and Britain are now experiencing. “And the remnant of _____ shall be in the midst of many _____ [nations] as a _____ from the LORD, as the _____ upon the _____, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men” (verse 7).

Remember that showers are absolutely necessary to agricultural productivity and are a symbol of national blessing.

Micah also prophesied that at this very time God would cut off the blessings. “And it shall come to pass *in that day*, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds” (verses 10-11).

Why will God allow such destruction to

come upon His people? (Micah 5:12-13) _____

Therefore, God will punish us unless we repent before the utter destruction to come "upon the heathen" (verse 15), which will take place at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

The prophecies of Micah do conclude positively. Micah tells how God will restore all Israel to His happy way of life (Micah 7:18-20).

NAHUM AND THE CITY OF NINEVEH

The prophet Nahum wrote approximately 100 years after the northern ten-tribed house of Israel had been taken into national captivity by the Assyrians. This, you will recall, was a fulfillment of the prophecies of Amos and Micah (Amos 6:14; Micah 7:12).

The prophet Nahum directed his prophecies to the capital of the Assyrian Empire, Nineveh. Nahum begins by stating that God will punish Assyria and exhorts the people of Israel to continue keeping the feasts of God (Nahum 1:15).

Why will God destroy the city of Nineveh? (Nahum 3:1-4) _____

Nineveh will become the gazingstock of all nations. Her cruel ways will leave her friendless among the nations. No one will sorrow for her or comfort her in her distress, because she has deserved her punishment (Nahum 3:6-7).

Just as Nahum prophesied, the nation of Assyria was finally conquered by the Babylonians in 612 B.C. Look up the following scriptures, and summarize on a separate piece of paper the six specific prophecies that Nahum gave against Nineveh (Nahum 3:12; 1:10; 3:11; 1:8; 2:6; 3:13, 19; 1:14).

God promises His people of modern-day Israel and modern-day Judah that He will cut off their oppressor at Christ's Second Coming. "Behold upon the _____ the feet of _____ that bringeth _____, that

publisheth _____!" (Nahum 1:15, first part of verse.)

God also promises that His people will no more be oppressed, because the wicked will be destroyed (Nahum 1:15, last part of verse).

THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Habakkuk wrote his prophecy around 600 B.C. He began by praying to God about the sins of Israel and other nations. He was distraught to know what the Babylonians would soon do to the people of Judah (Habakkuk 1:1-6). Habakkuk then waited for God's reply.

God answered Habakkuk and told him to write the vision that he was seeing upon large signs in large print. This way, anyone who would pass by, even if he were running, would be able to read the message (Habakkuk 2:2).

God also said that this vision was to be written for our benefit today. God said, "For the _____ is yet for an _____, but _____ it shall _____, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it _____ tarry" (Habakkuk 2:3).

God showed Habakkuk that He will punish all the unrighteous at the end-time. Will God punish the nations that conquered the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? (Habakkuk 2:8, 10, 16-17) _____

Let's notice an interesting scripture in chapter 2, verse 14. This is speaking of the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ. "For the earth shall be _____ with the _____ of the _____ of the _____, as the _____ cover the _____."

During the Millennium, God will teach all of mankind His way of life, which brings peace and prosperity.

The book of the prophet Habakkuk concludes with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God. "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18).

ZEPHANIAH

The name *Zephaniah* means “the Lord hides” or “he whom the Lord hides.” This prophetic message focuses on the Day of the Lord, a time following the Great Tribulation when God will punish those who sin against Him by breaking His law (I John 3:4).

No nation will escape the Day of the Lord. Even the leaders of the nations will be punished (Zephaniah 1:8). Punishment will come upon leaders who rob the people. The wicked merchants — those who grow rich through wicked practices — are warned about dishonesty (verses 10-11).

What instruction does God give to the world just before the judgment comes? “Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the *day of the Lord* is at hand” (Zephaniah 1:7).

How does Zephaniah describe the Day of the Lord? (Zephaniah 1:14-18) _____

_____.

In Zephaniah 2:1-3, God calls for all nations to repent. The prophet then foretells the judgment coming upon the nations, especially those who had warred against Israel.

How will God deal with these nations? (Zephaniah 3:8) _____

_____.

The people of Israel will also be punished because they rejected the words of warning (Zephaniah 3:2).

God will not leave the people of Israel in a state of desolation and destruction, but will bring His people out of this time of trouble. This will be a time of great joy and happiness. Israel will be singing, shouting, rejoicing (Zephaniah 3:14).

The reason for the rejoicing is found in verse 15: “The LORD hath _____ away thy _____, he hath _____ thine _____: the king of Israel, even the _____,

is in the _____ of thee: thou shalt _____ evil any more.”

This shows that Christ will be ruling over His people, Israel. All their enemies will be cut off.

HAGGAI AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

The writer of this small prophetic book is the first of the post-captivity prophets. He prophesied after the return of God’s people from Babylonian captivity.

Remember that the Babylonians conquered the people of the house of Judah and took them as slaves to Babylon. Several decades later, a few of the captives and their children returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:1-8).

God commissioned Haggai to inspire the people to rebuild the Temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. After their return from exile, they had become more concerned about building their own houses, and had stopped working on the Temple.

How does Haggai describe the people’s attitude about rebuilding the Temple? “This people say, The _____ is _____ _____, the _____ that the _____ house _____ be _____” (Haggai 1:2).

The people did not want to start rebuilding the Temple. They had become indifferent. They were saying the time was not right for rebuilding the Temple.

Haggai told them to consider their ways because their ways were not the way of God. The people were not prospering. Why? Because they had neglected to put God first in their lives.

What did God say was the solution to their problems? (Haggai 1:8) _____
_____.

Haggai encouraged the people to give God the most important place in their lives.

The people responded to Haggai’s words. The Spirit of God stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest,

and the people. As a result, they began working on the Temple (Haggai 1:14).

God then inspired Haggai to prophesy of the Day of the Lord. "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will _____ the _____, and the _____, and the _____, and the _____; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will _____, saith the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:6-7).

God is speaking of a house, a Temple at Christ's Second Coming. Let's notice more about this Temple in Malachi 3:1. "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple."

Who or what is this Temple? (Ephesians 2:19-22) _____

Haggai was prophesying of the Church that Christ is now building and preparing for His Second Coming.

God tells us through the prophet Haggai that He is going to overthrow all the nations of the earth and set up His Kingdom. God promises that at this time there will be peace for His people (Haggai 2:9).

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

The prophet Zechariah, like Haggai, prophesied after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. And like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he was both prophet and priest. He received his prophetic messages from God about the same time as Haggai (Zechariah 1:1).

Zechariah's commission was also to encourage God's people to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. He also prophesied of Christ's return to His spiritual Temple and the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:16; 2:10).

In Chapter 4, Zechariah continued with a prophecy for Zerubbabel, who was in charge of seeing that the physical Temple was rebuilt after the captivity. It was by God's power, not human efforts, that the Temple was rebuilt. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,

saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

By His Spirit, God built the physical Temple, and by His Spirit, He is now building the spiritual Temple — the Church.

After Christ returns, He will set up His Kingdom and rule from the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3).

During this millennial period, people will live to a very old age. Children will be able to play in the streets without fear (verse 4-5).

The people of the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be brought back from their captivity (Zechariah 8:13; 10:6).

Zechariah also prophesied about the first coming of Christ. (Zechariah 9:9) _____

_____ (Zechariah 12:10) _____

_____ (Zechariah 13:7) _____

What will Christ do to the nations who oppose Him at His Second Coming? (Zecha-



During Christ's Millennial rule, children will be able to play with wild animals without fear (Isaiah 11:6).

riah 14:1-4) _____

Who will be with Him when He comes?
(Zechariah 14:5) _____

God says that *in that day* He will be King over all Israel. There will be no more destruction (Zechariah 14:9, 11).

The people of Israel will know and obey the true God. All nations will go up to worship God in Jerusalem and will keep the Feast of Tabernacles. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

Very few people keep this feast now, but one day all nations will keep it. People will know God and worship Him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

MALACHI'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Malachi means "messenger of the Lord." Many of his prophecies are for the modern-day descendants of Israel.

In the book of Malachi, God rebukes the people of Israel because they do not keep His laws (Malachi 1:6-14; 2:1-9).

Malachi prophesies of a "messenger" that will come to prepare the way for Christ. This refers, in type, to Christ's first coming, but primarily to His Second Coming (Malachi 3:1). Christ will suddenly come to His Temple (those whom God has called to become His spirit-begotten children) and set up the Kingdom of God.

How does Malachi describe the Day of the Lord? (Malachi 3:2) _____

What does God say will happen to the wicked? (Malachi 4:1, 3, speaking of the second death) _____

What will happen to the righteous? (Mala-

chi 4:2) _____

What is God's reward for those who fear Him? (Malachi 3:17-18) _____

Prior to Christ's return, God says the prophet Elijah will come before the Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). But Elijah lived and died many years ago. His responsibility was to reintroduce God to the people of ancient Israel.

How, then, is Elijah to come again?

Christ's disciples asked him the same question. Let's notice in Matthew chapter 17, beginning in verse 10: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come [prior to Christ's Second Coming]?"

Jesus answered by telling them that Elijah truly *shall* come. But, He also told them that Elijah had already come (speaking of John the Baptist).

Christ meant that one would come in the power and spirit of Elijah, representing Elijah's office and authority (Matthew 17:11-12).

Part of the commission given to this person representing the office of Elijah is to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

What does God say will happen if this is not accomplished? (Malachi 4:6) _____

The word "curse" can also mean "utter destruction." If this commission is not fulfilled, all humanity will be destroyed.

However, the whole world will not be destroyed! The work of the prophesied Elijah to come is being done today by Jesus Christ's apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, and the members and supporters of the Worldwide Church of God.

As part of this end-time commission, supportive literature such as these YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS is being published. They teach about God's way of life and the soon-coming Kingdom of God!

