Survey of God's Program with Israel

Isaiah to Malachi — Historical Foundation: Setting the Stage

A 6-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These are Lessons 1–6 of the 28-lesson seventh part of Keith Blades' Survey of God's Program with Israel, which covers Isaiah to Malachi and the 5th course of punishment. They set the stage: the historical arrival of the 5th course upon the nation Israel, recorded in II Kings 17–25, and the foundation for the doctrine of what Keith calls the fifth course of punishment prophets. Keith opens by laying groundwork: Leviticus 26 has only five courses of punishment, the rest of God's dealings with the nation Israel are under the 5th, and the 5th course has five installments. He traces the 5th course coming on the northern kingdom in II Kings 17, with Amos threatening it; Manasseh put the southern kingdom in the position of coming under it, and II Chronicles 36 shows the captivity was exactly what the 5th course called for in Leviticus 26. Through Lamentations, Jeremiah 11 and Daniel 9, God underscores to Israel that what is happening is the 5th course of the law contract set down in Leviticus 26. Leviticus 26 gives only the beginning and the end of the 5th course; all the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi were raised up in connection with its coming, and through them God set forth how He would deal with Israel from that point on.

www.enjoythebible.org

Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L1	Laying Groundwork for the Fifth Course — Leviticus 26:27–45; II Kings 17–25: Five Installments and the Historical Arrival
L2	For Three Transgressions and for Four — Amos 1–5; II Kings 17 and 21: the 5th Course Threatened
L3	Judah First, Then Samaria — Zechariah 8; John 4; II Kings 18–25: the 5th Course upon the Southern Kingdom
L4	No Remedy: the Demand of Leviticus 26 — II Chronicles 36; Isaiah 65; Lamentations 1–2
L5	Sworn to as the Fifth Course of Punishment — Lamentations 2; Jeremiah 11; Daniel 9 — Leviticus 26 Confirmed
L6	The Fifth Course of Punishment Prophets — Leviticus 26:27–45; Romans 11; Isaiah 1 and 66; Jeremiah 1 and 46

Lesson Summaries

L1 Laying Groundwork for the Fifth Course *Leviticus 26:27–45; II Kings 17–25: Five Installments and the Historical Arrival*

Only Five Courses — the 5th the Most Important

- The 1st course of punishment began to come upon the nation in the generation following Joshua
- Leviticus 26 has no 6th or 7th course — only five courses of punishment — and the rest of God's dealings with the nation Israel are under the 5th
- The 5th is the most important course to understand, partly because it is the lengthiest; Israel is still under it in the gospel accounts, and it is still in effect in the tribulation period

The Prophets Raised Up for the 5th Course

- All the prophets from Isaiah to Zephaniah are raised up in connection with the arrival of the 5th course; Zechariah and Malachi were raised up after the 1st installment was over and the 2nd was in effect
- Israel stays under the effects of the 5th course until the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are fulfilled in the kingdom
- The time of the gospel accounts and the opening chapters of Acts — Pentecost, and Peter, James and John offering repentance to Israel — was prophesied in these prophets

Five Installments

- Leviticus 26:27–39 describes only the 1st installment of the 5th course; verses 40–45 give the details of the last installment
- The 1st installment lasts seventy years — the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity — the exact time given to Jeremiah the prophet
- Daniel's time schedule holds the rest of the installments, including a lengthy period where God goes silent for about 400 years; when the voice began to cry in the wilderness, the 4th installment was underway

Right Division and the Program

- Right division tells you the things that pertain to Israel, but not why they take place; only understanding the program tells you why — especially the details of the 5th course for the gospel accounts

Walking Contrary in Fury (Leviticus 26:28–35)

- The walking-contrary expression begins in verse 21 and is used in the 3rd, 4th and 5th courses; it reaches its zenith in the 5th
- It was not in fury in the 3rd course; the 5th calls for God to walk contrary in fury and cast Israel from His presence
- The general issue is a total sacking of the land with the Gentiles possessing it — no reprieve — and those who remain taken into captivity and scattered among the nations

The Historical Arrival (II Kings 17–25)

- The northern kingdom goes first, under the Assyrians; the southern kingdom goes last, under the Babylonians
- Six short verses (II Kings 17:1–6) describe the 5th course arriving on the northern kingdom; Hoshea's evil is the straw that breaks the camel's back

- Verses 7–23 are God's criminal indictment, setting forth Israel's deserving of the 5th course; "they would not hear" hearkens back to Leviticus 26

L2

For Three Transgressions and for Four *Amos 1–5; II Kings 17 and 21: the 5th Course Threatened*

The 5th Course Comes on the Northern Kingdom

- As far as the contract was concerned, God was forced to bring the 5th course upon the northern kingdom and take them into captivity; the southern kingdom was still under the 4th
- Amos was raised up because the northern kingdom had been responding negatively to the 4th course; the bulk of his message threatens them with the 5th
- The southern kingdom is following the same road and, if it doesn't watch it, will deserve the 5th course

For Three Transgressions and for Four (Amos 1–2)

- Judah and Israel, the southern and northern kingdoms, are included in the threat of the repeated expression
- From the moment the 3rd course came in, God began to walk contrary to His people and treat them as one of His enemies, one of the Gentiles
- Because the contrary walk begins with the 3rd course, he does not say "for one, two, three, four transgressions"; the 5th course is what they deserve and what is on the doorstep

An Adversary Round About the Land (Amos 3)

- In Amos 3:9 God tells Amos to publish the news that the 5th course is coming; under the 4th they had invasions, but never the whole land surrounded and besieged
- After the invasion a small bit will be left, a remnant, taken into captivity in Assyria (Amos 3:12)
- "God of hosts" is the Lord's military title — now used against Israel, walking contrary to them

"yet have ye not returned unto me" (Amos 4)

- It is almost as if God unrolls Leviticus 26 from the scroll and takes them through their history: negative through each one of the courses of punishment
- Every course has been compounding; the effects of the 1st course, from the days of the judges, are still there
- In verse 11 God gave a portion of the northern kingdom a foretaste of the 5th course; "thus will I do unto thee" means the whole nation will be overthrown

Lament and Captivity "beyond Damascus" (Amos 5)

- God describes the lament in His heart over having to bring the 5th course, though the contract calls for it; even the foretaste was given out of His mercy and grace
- Under the 4th course Damascus had dealt with them; the 5th course takes them "beyond Damascus"

Starts and Ends the Same Way; the Line of Samaria

- The people who brought the 1st installment are engaged in the last one; there it is the man of sin, doing the exact same things, so the remnant can see him and his armies coming

- Hezekiah's son Manasseh put the southern kingdom in the position of coming under the 5th course; "the line of Samaria" (II Kings 21:13) was captivity, the 5th course

L3

Judah First, Then Samaria *Zechariah 8; John 4; II Kings 18–25: the 5th Course upon the Southern Kingdom*

The Zenith of the Courses, and the Whys

- The prophets testify to Israel that these things come upon them because they are experiencing the zenith of the courses of punishment of Leviticus 26
- Right division alone does not tell why the Lord does the things He does; the whys are in Isaiah through Malachi

Chronicles and the Samaritans

- I and II Chronicles focus primarily on the southern kingdom, showing God's faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant; the northern kingdom were rebels against it
- The Samaritans were Israelites being dealt with under the 5th course; what lies behind John 4 and the command not to go to the Samaritans is found in what was said about the 5th course

Zechariah 8: the Remaining Installments

- Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were raised up after the 1st installment was over; Zechariah is given no time schedule — Daniel already had it
- No dispensation of grace is in view in Zechariah 8; verse 9 describes the 2nd installment
- Zechariah sets forth two comings of the Messiah: meek and lowly in the 4th installment, in power and great glory in the 5th

From Curse to Blessing (Zechariah 8:13–15)

- Verse 13 names both houses; He will save them in their national sense from being a curse among the heathen — the Abrahamic covenant called for them to be a blessing
- In verse 15 the house of Israel is missing: when He punished them, Samaria went first, then Judah; when doing well, Judah goes first, then Samaria
- Zechariah stresses that this will be done by His Jehovahness and grace

Samaria in the Gospel Accounts (John 4)

- The Lord does not make the offer to the Samaritan woman, because it is Judah first; in John 4:35 Samaria is already white to harvest but cannot be harvested until Judah is straightened out
- When Samaritans refused Him, the Lord said He had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them; the time for judgment is the tribulation period

Manasseh and the Arrival (II Kings 21–25)

- Under Manasseh everything Hezekiah did was reversed and worsened; he allowed the entrenching of the policy of evil in the land
- II Kings 21:13 says it will be the 5th course: they will suffer what Samaria suffered; Manasseh is the straw that breaks the camel's back
- During the courses God's mercy pardoned many things, but now there was no pardon; II Kings 25:21 is the accomplishment of the 1st installment of the 5th course

L4 — No Remedy: the Demand of Leviticus 26 *II Chronicles 36; Isaiah 65; Lamentations 1–2*

Leviticus 26: the Passage to Grasp

- The prophets raised up at this time always refer back to Leviticus 26; Keith calls it the most important passage from Genesis to II Chronicles 36
- Once the 5th course begins, God deals with Israel through the prophets, whose content sets forth seven essential things

The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back (II Chronicles 36:13)

- Zedekiah's rebellion was the last straw not only with Nebuchadnezzar but with God — rebelliousness against the Lord, against the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was the rod of God's anger

"till *there was* no remedy" (verses 15–17)

- In sending His messengers one after another, God did what the law contract did not compel Him to do, giving them an opportunity to change their mind
- Mocked, despised and misused is terminology from God's viewpoint — Israel thumbing their nose at God — which they demonstrated later in killing God manifest in the flesh on the cross
- "No remedy" refers to the 5th course, which calls for God's soul to abhor them and cast them out of His land
- Verse 15 calls the sanctuary His dwelling place; Ezekiel sees in vision the Lord's departure from the temple in stages, and God lets Nebuchadnezzar come in

The Land Enjoys Her Sabbaths (verse 21)

- Verse 21 is the purpose clause, the one thing that stands out as ringing Leviticus 26
- Jeremiah's seventy years match Leviticus 26 on the land lying desolate to enjoy her sabbaths; through Jeremiah it is made clear this is only the 1st installment
- Between verses 21 and 22 the seventy years go by; verse 22 declares what commences the 2nd installment

Isaiah 65: "*it is* written before me"

- Israel signed the contract to be dealt with on the basis of its performance; the contract sitting before God demands that He do this — the book of the law, which He is reading
- The 1st installment of the 5th course is repeated as the 5th installment; that is why the greatest emphasis is placed upon the 1st installment

Lamentations: "he hath fulfilled his word"

- In five poetic chapters Jeremiah weeps over Jerusalem as the 5th course arrives and sacks the city
- "he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old" points to Leviticus 26
- Setting up the horn of the adversaries is the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, which in Luke 21 refers to the 5th course, when the Gentiles have ascendancy over Israel

L5 — Sworn to as the Fifth Course of Punishment *Lamentations 2;*

Jeremiah 11; Daniel 9 — Leviticus 26 Confirmed

Where We Are on the Timeline

- In the gospel accounts you are still on Old Testament ground; the extension of mercy and forbearance ran out in Acts 7, when Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ a final time and stoned Stephen
- Hebrews through Revelation all pertain to the resumption of God's program with Israel

Israel's History Under the Courses

- The law given at Sinai was a contract dealing with Israel on the basis of their performance; Leviticus 26:14 and following sets out the contracted curses in five courses
- Judges shows the 1st course; David and Solomon an interlude of mercy and grace; I Kings 12–22 the 2nd course; II Kings 1–10:31 the 3rd; and II Kings 17–25 the 5th
- All the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi were raised up in connection with the coming of the 5th course; the Day of Pentecost and the tribulation period are part of it
- Proper comprehension of the gospel account, early Acts, the tribulation and the kingdom depends on comprehending Isaiah through Malachi

"The LORD hath done *that* which he had devised" (Lamentations 2:17)

- Jeremiah wrote Lamentations, mourning, when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and Judea in connection with the commencement of the 5th course
- Devised indicates the whole thing was written out and planned in the past; God was fulfilling the word He commanded in the days of old
- Israel knew what they were doing in entering a contract to be dealt with on the basis of their own performance, not God's grace

Leviticus 26 Terminology (Lamentations 2:1–8)

- Jeremiah repeatedly refers to the Lord walking contrary in fury and becoming as an enemy, as the 5th course calls for: "The Lord was as an enemy"
- In Lamentations, what is happening is confirmed, attested to and sworn to as being the 5th course of the law contract set down in Leviticus 26

"Hear ye the words of this covenant" (Jeremiah 11)

- "Cursed *be* the man that obeyeth not" is how Leviticus 26 opens at verse 14
- Israel failed all through her history and never received any of the blessings; the interlude blessing was given solely on God's mercy and grace
- God had to protest "Obey my voice" because they weren't obeying; the demand of the broken covenant is the 5th course

"the curse is poured upon us" (Daniel 9)

- Daniel, taken captive in the first wave, prays when the 1st installment is over, understanding that what happened is exactly what Leviticus 26 called for
- Through Daniel, as one of the fifth course prophets, information was given on how the 5th course would go from that point on

L6 The Fifth Course of Punishment Prophets *Leviticus 26:27–45; Romans 11; Isaiah 1 and 66; Jeremiah 1 and 46*

Leviticus 26: Beginning and End Only

- Leviticus 26 gives no details on exactly how the 5th course will run, how long it will take, or how God will bring Israel out of it
- It gives the parameters: the 1st installment and the 5th installment, with nothing in between
- So God raised up the prophets Isaiah through Malachi; everything about the Lord's earthly ministry, the tribulation period and the kingdom is in them

A Digression: Romans 11

- Things that happen to Israel in this dispensation of grace are not taking place in fulfillment of the 5th course; the revelator of anything pertaining to Israel in this dispensation is the Apostle Paul
- The blindness is temporary — "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" — and what Romans 11:26–27 quotes from is the end result of the 5th course

Three Basic Things

- There are seven basic issues the fifth course prophets set forth to Israel, other matters being almost sub points of them; today Keith wants to get a dent in three basic things
- First: Isaiah through Malachi are the fifth course of punishment prophets — terminology not likely found in a Bible commentary unless the commentator focused on Leviticus 26
- The prophets form two groups, Isaiah through Zephaniah and Haggai through Malachi; major and minor prophets are named by size, not importance
- There is a structure and a designed order to these prophets

A Designed Order

- Isaiah sets forth the basic understanding of the 5th course; Jeremiah builds on Isaiah, Ezekiel on Jeremiah, and Daniel on them all
- Hosea through Malachi augment things already in Isaiah through Daniel

Isaiah: First to Final Installment

- Each prophet opens by describing the initial installment in his day and ends with the final installment and the kingdom
- Isaiah 1 is an indictment: they have "provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger" — the zenith of anger, the fury concept of Leviticus 26
- In Isaiah 66:15 the Lord comes Himself at the end of the tribulation period: the final installment of the 5th course

Jeremiah: Destruction to Construction

- Jeremiah 1:10 sets the pattern — destruction, then construction — from the 1st installment to the final installment; the whole book follows it in doctrinal order
- The 5th course avenges God's name in Israel by the captivity, then avenges His cause with Israel against the nations when He ends it

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Time Past vs. the Dispensation of Grace

Keith says Romans through Philemon is the portion of God's word about us and to us today; Matthew to John and the opening chapter of Acts still deal with time past and God's program with Israel. Hebrews through Revelation return to God's program with Israel; there is doctrinal orderliness in Romans through Philemon for us today, and for the remnant of Israel in Hebrews through Revelation. Rightly dividing keeps you from taking portions, promises or instructions from God's program with Israel and trying to apply them in this dispensation of grace.

Right Division vs. Understanding the Program

Right division tells you what pertains to Israel, but not why those things take place; the whys are in Isaiah through Malachi. The one thing you won't understand by going from Isaiah to Malachi is the dispensation of Gentile grace; it wasn't there.

The Mystery Interruption

God interrupted the program by bringing in this dispensation of grace — a mystery at that time, God interrupting Himself, not a mistake; the fifth course prophets did not know about it. The 5th course continues when God resumes His program with Israel, the tribulation period being its last installment.

Israel Today vs. the 5th Course

In the dispensation of grace God is not dealing with Israel according to His program with them, so what goes on now is not part of the 5th course. A judicial blindness has been brought upon the nation in this dispensation of grace; there is no special protection for Israel, and her suffering is not necessarily part of the 5th course but because God is not delivering her.

Israel's Promises vs. the Body of Christ

Keith says Gentiles today are not the fulfillers of Israel's promises and covenants, nor spiritual Israelites; what God is doing today is forming the new creation, the church, the body of Christ. John 4:35 is lifted out of context when applied to missionary programs; in context Samaria is white to harvest but cannot be harvested until Judah is straightened out.

Punishment: Samaria First — Doing Well: Judah First

When God punished them, Samaria went first, then Judah; when He does well, Judah goes first, then Samaria — the order seen in Zechariah, John 4 and Acts 1.

Key Scripture References

Leviticus 26:14 ff.	The contracted curses, in five courses, for Israel's noncompliance

Leviticus 26:21, 23–24, 28	Walking contrary in the 3rd, 4th and 5th courses — in fury in the 5th
Leviticus 26:27–39	Describes only the 1st installment of the 5th course
Leviticus 26:34	The land to enjoy her sabbaths — what the 1st installment accomplishes
Leviticus 26:40–45	The last installment: confessing iniquity; God remembers His covenant
II Kings 17:1–6	The 5th course arrives on the northern kingdom
II Kings 17:7–23	God's criminal indictment: Israel deserved the 5th course
II Kings 21:10–16	Manasseh; "the line of Samaria" stretched over Jerusalem
II Kings 25:21	Judah carried away: the accomplishment of the 1st installment
II Chronicles 36:13	Zedekiah's rebellion — the last straw with God
II Chronicles 36:15–17	Messengers mocked; "no remedy" — the 5th course
II Chronicles 36:21–22	The purpose clause: the land enjoys her sabbaths; verse 22 commences the 2nd installment
Isaiah 1:1–9	An indictment against Israel; provoking the Holy One of Israel to anger
Isaiah 65:1–7	"*it is* written before me": the contract demands judgment
Isaiah 66:15–24	The Lord comes Himself: the final installment, then the kingdom
Jeremiah 1:10	Destruction, then construction — first to final installment
Jeremiah 11:1–10	"Cursed *be* the man that obeyeth not"; the demand of the broken covenant
Jeremiah 46 to the end	The final installment, with the avenging against the nations
Lamentations 2:1–8	The Leviticus 26 terminology of fury and the Lord as an enemy
Lamentations 2:16–17	"he hath fulfilled his word" — Leviticus 26
Daniel 9:4–13	"the curse is poured upon us" — what Leviticus 26 called for
Amos 1:3 – 2:6	The repeated for three transgressions and for four — Judah and Israel included
Amos 3:9–12	The news that the 5th course is coming; a remnant taken into Assyria
Amos 4:6–11	The courses recounted; a foretaste of the 5th
Amos 5:26–27	Captivity "beyond Damascus" — the 5th course
Zechariah 8:9–15	The 2nd installment; doing well to Judah first
Luke 21	"the times of the Gentiles" — the 5th course
John 4:19–35	Judah first; Samaria white to harvest but must wait
Romans 11	Israel's temporary blindness; verses 26–27 quote the end result of the 5th course