Survey of God's Program with Israel

Isaiah to Malachi — The Prophets as a Unit

A 5-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These are Lessons 7–11 of the 28-lesson seventh part of the Survey of God's Program with Israel. They cover the three basic issues to understand before looking at the details of Isaiah through Malachi: that they are the fifth course of punishment prophets, that there is a twofold breakdown to them, and that there is doctrinal progression through them, from milk to meat. Isaiah through Malachi were raised up when God began bringing the fifth course of punishment upon the nation. Everything from this point on in God's dealings with Israel is set forth in them, except the dispensation of Gentile grace, which was a mystery. The survey looks at how each prophecy opens and how each concludes: each prophet opens with the initial installment of the fifth course taking place in its day, and ends with the final installment and the ushering in of the kingdom. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, not raised up until the first installment had run its course, run from the 2nd installment to the final one. The most important breakdown is not major and minor prophets but Isaiah through Zephaniah, the first installment prophets, and Haggai through Malachi, the second installment prophets. God has not put His Word together in a haphazard manner but from the milk to the meat: Zechariah depends upon Daniel, and Daniel depends upon Isaiah and Jeremiah. These foundation issues come before examining the seven essential doctrines set forth by these prophets.

www.enjoythebible.org

Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L7	The Fifth Course of Punishment Prophets: Their Scope — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel and Hosea — opening and ending
L8	Same Pattern: First Installment to Final Installment — Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum; John 5 and Matthew 7
L9	Micah to Malachi, and the Twofold Breakdown — Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi
L10	First Installment and Second Installment Prophets — The twofold breakdown; the five installments; the period of silence
L11	Doctrinal Progression: From the Milk to the Meat — Jeremiah 25 and 29; Daniel 2 and 9; Zechariah 1 and 6

Lesson Summaries

L7

The Fifth Course of Punishment Prophets: Their Scope *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel and Hosea — opening and ending*

The Fifth Course of Punishment Prophets

- Leviticus 26 gives only how the first installment of the fifth course is going to go; Isaiah through Malachi were raised up when God began bringing the fifth course upon the nation
- Everything from this point on is found in Isaiah through Malachi except the dispensation of Gentile grace — a mystery God said nothing about to the prophets

Three Foundation Issues

- First: think of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea and on through Malachi as the fifth course of punishment prophets
- Second: there is a twofold breakdown to these prophets; the usual major and minor breakdown is not because one is more important than the other, and is not the best one to consider
- Third: there is a doctrinal structure — the prophets come not in chronological order but in a doctrinal order; don't expect to understand Daniel unless you understand Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel

The Opening and the Ending of Each Prophet

- Each prophet opens in its first chapter with the initial installment of the fifth course taking place in its day, and ends in its last chapters with the final installment and the ushering in of the kingdom
- So the scope of the prophets is the fifth course of punishment; they don't all cover the same details, but they all cover the scope
- The fifth course has five installments; sitting in Isaiah 40 you are generally in the area of the 4th installment

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations

- Isaiah 1 is the initial indictment for the worthiness of the fifth course coming upon the nation; the kings of Isaiah 1:1 were under the 4th course of punishment
- Jeremiah 1:10 gives the flow of the fifth course: "destruction to construction"; Jeremiah 46–52 prophesies against ten nations because of the ten-nation confederacy the man of sin will put together
- Lamentations, part of Jeremiah's prophecy in a separate book, describes the first installment until its last verses, which point to the final installment

Ezekiel and Daniel

- Ezekiel opens with the first installment already well underway and Ezekiel in captivity; he sees God's presence leave the temple
- Daniel 1 describes the first installment, with Daniel himself taken into captivity; in Daniel are given all the time schedules for the fifth course

Hosea, and What Follows Daniel

- Hosea 1:1 starts almost exactly as Isaiah does; Hosea's scope runs from the first installment to the last installment and the kingdom — in Hosea 14 God's anger is turned away

- As a rough estimate, 95 percent of the doctrine on how the fifth course will go is in Isaiah through Daniel; Hosea through Malachi add details, and there is a doctrinal cessation at the end of Daniel
- Amos 8 tells of the famine of the hearing of the Word of God; next time God speaks to Israel is through John the Baptist

L8

Same Pattern: First Installment to Final Installment *Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum; John 5 and Matthew 7*

Two Key Portions and Seven Essential Doctrines

- Leviticus 26 and Isaiah through Malachi are the two most important portions of the Old Testament for understanding God's plan and purpose of Israel
- There are seven essential doctrines set forth in the fifth course of punishment prophets

Joel: Consumption, Then the Valley of Jehoshaphat

- In Joel 1 the Lord uses the issue of consumption: the courses of punishment have consumed Israel, and what is left will be consumed off the land into captivity — the first installment
- The total consumption threatened all along had not taken place in any previous course; it takes place now. The vine and the fig tree are figures God has used to represent Israel
- Joel 3 gives the final installment: the Lord avenges His cause with Israel against the nations at the end of the tribulation period, in the valley of Jehoshaphat

"ye have not his word abiding in you"

- Answering a class question, Keith says Israel's religious leaders were blind leaders of the blind; their main use of the Word of God was a means of personal gain
- They thought they had eternal life based upon possession of the scriptures; the honor that comes from God is putting yourself in submission to God's Word and learning what God says
- Some common people believed Moses, and when the Messiah came they believed Him; when the Lord taught, it came across that He knew what the scriptures said — He wrote them

Amos and Obadiah

- The first two chapters of Amos deal with the first installment; Amos 2:6–8 describes the apostasy that precipitated the fifth course coming
- Amos 9 describes the land's productivity in the kingdom with the curse lifted, after the Lord avenges His cause against the nations
- Obadiah sets forth God's dealings with Edom based on what He said to Esau; Edom's persecution of Israel in the first installment is avenged in the final installment with a special judgment

Jonah and Nahum: the Assyrians

- There is a special reason to focus upon the Assyrians: that is where the man of sin comes from — he is an Assyrian
- Through Isaiah God says, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger" — He will use Assyria in connection with His anger against Israel
- Nahum focuses on the Assyrians in connection with the final installment,

looking at the second time affliction arises from Assyria

The Fifth Course Starts and Ends the Same Way

- Jonah and Nahum follow the same format, from the first installment to the final installment; the first installment has the same features as the last
- The blindness of Israel's religious leaders and the same vanity of religion repeat themselves in the final installment

L9

Micah to Malachi, and the Twofold Breakdown *Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*

Micah

- When Micah prophesied, the fifth course had not yet come upon either kingdom, and in Micah 1:2 the Lord is still in His holy temple in Jerusalem
- Micah 1:6–7 matches Leviticus 26:27 and following, describing the historical arrival of the fifth course
- Micah 7: deliverances like the Exodus; the nations' might vanquished by the Lord Jesus Christ's return; then He performs "the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham"

Habakkuk

- Habakkuk 1 describes the first installment, especially regarding the southern kingdom: the Chaldeans come in and take the southern kingdom into captivity
- "in wrath remember mercy": if the Lord didn't remember mercy, the wrath would destroy all the people of Israel
- Habakkuk 3 gives a detailed account of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the tribulation period, designed to be memorized and used by the remnant

Zephaniah

- Zephaniah 1 details the fifth course arriving especially on Judah; in the first installment the land is consumed and the Gentiles deal with Israel
- At the final installment He has gathered all the nations; the captivity is turned back, Israel lies down with none to make them afraid, and becomes the head of the nations

The Twofold Breakdown

- Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi don't open with the first installment — they weren't raised up until it had run its course; Isaiah through Zephaniah is one grouping, Haggai through Malachi the second
- The last three still follow the exact same format, running from the 2nd installment to the final one

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi

- Haggai functions at the commencement of the 2nd installment, which gets underway with the commandment through Cyrus to rebuild and restore Jerusalem; though back in the land, the fifth course isn't over
- Haggai 2:20–23: the Lord will shake heaven and earth — what the final installment is all about; Zerubbabel is made a signet, in great rulership in that kingdom
- Zechariah 14 gives the final aspect of the fifth course; "no more the Canaanite" means they will no longer come in and tread down, defile and pollute the house

- Through all three the Lord informs Israel that the kingdom won't be established right now; Malachi ends with the great and terrible day of the Lord, when He purges His people and sets up the kingdom

Why This Foundation Matters

- Everything from each prophet's first chapter to its final chapter follows the scope and outline of the fifth course; have that in mind every time you deal with Isaiah through Malachi
- Everything in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John was already prophesied by these men; Acts at Pentecost is prophesied back here and sits on the time schedule

L10

First Installment and Second Installment Prophets *The twofold breakdown; the five installments; the period of silence*

The Seven Doctrinal Issues

- There is a structure to Isaiah through Malachi, a doctrinal progression: you start with the milk in Isaiah and progress on to meat type issues
- The seven doctrinal issues are the essential things God expected Israel to understand; the tribulation saints will be confronted with them when the program resumes, and they are in what Peter, James and John write

Major Prophets and Minor Prophets

- Most of the time the breakdown is Isaiah through Daniel, the largest, often called the major prophets, then Hosea through Malachi, the minor prophets
- As an arbitrary breakdown, Isaiah through Daniel give just about ninety percent of the information on the seven doctrinal issues; Hosea through Malachi add further details
- Hosea declares that he is a contemporary with Isaiah, and a lot of the passages in Micah are found back in Isaiah — alerting you that the amplification concerns the same issue

The Most Important Breakdown

- The most important breakdown is Isaiah through Zephaniah, then Haggai through Malachi
- Isaiah through Zephaniah are all first installment prophets; Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were raised up once the Babylonian captivity had concluded and Israel was back in the land — second installment prophets
- Malachi doesn't date himself in chapter 1, but what he talks about places him in the same category; the opening verses of each prophecy tell you where the prophet fits

Five Installments, and God's Word in Order

- The fifth course is the punishment of Leviticus 26:27 following, and it has five installments
- The 2nd installment runs from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem; the 3rd is the period of silence; the 4th starts with the comforting news of John the Baptist; the 5th involves the tribulation and the kingdom
- Genesis through Revelation follows the outworking of God's plan and purpose: the 4th installment record runs from Matthew 1:1 through the end of Acts 7; Hebrews through Revelation concern the final installment
- Isaiah through Zephaniah cover all five installments, but mostly the first; nothing in Haggai through Malachi pertains to the first installment, because it

is already over

The Period of Silence

- Amos 8 sets forth a period of silence; putting the prophets on the time schedule, you come to a period in which nothing in the prophets fits
- The blank page between Malachi and Matthew represents the period of silence, "the famine of the hearing of the Word of God"
- After Isaiah through Daniel it is like the book is closed; Daniel is told to seal the book to the time of the end, when the major increase of knowledge comes
- In Malachi 3 Israel is held out looking for the messenger of the covenant; the next thing Israel hears from God is the comforting news of John the Baptist that starts the 4th installment

L11

Doctrinal Progression: From the Milk to the Meat *Jeremiah 25 and 29; Daniel 2 and 9; Zechariah 1 and 6*

Really Simple: the Structure of God's Word

- This is really simple — it pertains to the structure of God's Word and ought to be taught in Sunday school
- The information in the Gospel accounts and the opening chapter of Acts pertains to the 4th and 5th installments; the Gospels are not simply a record of the Lord's earthly ministry

The Third Issue: Doctrinal Progression

- The basic issues of the fifth course are set forth in the earlier prophets, and everything progresses on to the advanced details, the meat
- God didn't give Israel at first what they couldn't handle; in Hosea through Malachi it is amplified, with further details and some meat issues

First Example: The Duration (Jeremiah 25 and 29)

- Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel don't tell right away how long the fifth course will last — only that it will be lengthy and have installments
- Jeremiah 25:11 is the first time factor given: the seventy years under Babylonian captivity, which is only the beginning of the fifth course
- Verse 14 indicates Israel will suffer beyond the Babylonians, under other nations and kings; in these milk prophets all you get is "Long duration, first installment seventy years"
- Jeremiah 29:10: after the seventy years they return; verses 11–14 transpire over the rest of the duration, and back in the land they will endure other things

Daniel 2 and Daniel 9

- The fifth course calls for Gentile dominion over Israel; it started with the Babylonian captivity, and Nebuchadnezzar is the "head of gold"
- Part of the reason for the long duration is that other dominions follow Babylon in dominance over Israel; Daniel 2 gives further definition to the duration
- In the first year of Darius the 2nd installment is getting underway; Daniel has only a conceptual outline of the rest, and what he seeks by prayer and supplications is information
- From Daniel 9:25 on, the time schedule is broken down into the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th installments; the time schedule is one of the seven doctrinal matters

Second Example: Zechariah Built upon Daniel

- Zechariah is a 2nd installment prophet: the first installment is over, Daniel has functioned, and the time schedule is already there
- Without Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel you can't understand Zechariah 1: the horses' number matches Daniel, and the four horns are what Daniel saw — but Daniel saw nothing about four carpenters
- Zechariah 1–6 is full of visions, each amplifying something Daniel already saw; they amplify the time schedule covering the 2nd through 5th installments
- Zechariah depends upon Daniel, and Daniel upon Isaiah and Jeremiah; God gave them in the order He gave them, from the milk to the meat

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

The Prophets vs. the Dispensation of Gentile Grace

The only thing not set forth in Isaiah through Malachi is the dispensation of Gentile grace: it was a mystery God said nothing about to the prophets, and it was not made known until the apostle Paul was raised up. The dispensation of grace is an interruption in which God sets His program with Israel aside; Paul's epistles belong in that interruption between the 4th installment and the 5th installment. Hebrews through Revelation follow once the rapture of the church takes place, and they are concerned with the final installment and the establishment of the kingdom. Paul speaks of the time schedules having nothing to do with us in this dispensation of grace.

Major and Minor vs. First and Second Installment Prophets

The usual major and minor breakdown is not because one is more important; Isaiah through Daniel, the largest of the prophets, are called the major prophets, and the terms have some legitimacy in that sense. The most important breakdown is Isaiah through Zephaniah, the first installment prophets, and Haggai through Malachi, the second installment prophets.

Chronological Order vs. Doctrinal Order

The prophets don't come in chronological order but in a doctrinal order. The milk-to-meat terminology is borrowed from Paul, who uses it of our epistles: Romans through Philemon go from milk to meat, and the same kind of thing is set up in Isaiah through Malachi.

The Gospels and Pentecost vs. the Mystery

If Christians understood these prophets, they would never think the Gospel accounts or Acts are in the dispensation of Gentile grace, or that the Day of Pentecost was the beginning of the church, the body of Christ, the mystery program. The dispensation of Gentile grace, Paul's ministry and the mystery would then stand out like a sore thumb.

First Installment vs. Final Installment

The fifth course starts and ends the same way: the first installment has the same features as the last. At the first installment the Gentiles deal with Israel and the captivity comes; at the final installment the Lord has gathered all the nations and turns the captivity back.

Daniel 12:4 — Increased Knowledge

The increased knowledge of Daniel 12:4 is not technological advancement in this dispensation of grace; Daniel 12 prophesies that further revelation will be given — the book of the Revelation. The dispensation of grace interrupted things, and God now provides the bulk of that increased knowledge in Hebrews through Revelation.

Luke 17 and Matthew 24: Not the Rapture

In Luke 17 and Matthew 24, those taken are the young men and young women according to the practice of the invader; that is not the rapture of the church.

Key Scripture References

Leviticus 26:27 ff.	The fifth course of punishment; it has five installments
Isaiah 1:1–9	The initial indictment for the worthiness of the fifth course
Isaiah 10:5–6	"O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger"
Isaiah 40:1	"Comfort ye" — generally in the area of the 4th installment
Isaiah 66:15–22	The final installment; the new heaven and new earth, the kingdom
Jeremiah 1:10	Destruction to construction: the flow of the fifth course
Jeremiah 25:11–14	The first time factor — seventy years; suffering beyond the Babylonians
Jeremiah 29:10–14	Return after seventy years; verses 11–14 over the rest of the duration
Jeremiah 46–52	Ten nations: the man of sin's ten-nation confederacy
Lamentations 5:21–22	The last thing mentioned looks to the final installment
Ezekiel 40–48	Taken into the future; "The LORD *is* there"
Daniel 1	The first installment; Daniel himself taken captive
Daniel 2:31–45	Gentile dominion over Israel; Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold
Daniel 9	Daniel seeks information; the time schedule for the 2nd–5th installments
Daniel 12:4	Seal the book to the time of the end
Hosea 1 and 14	From the first installment to the kingdom; God's anger turned away

Joel 1 and 3	Consumption into captivity; the valley of Jehoshaphat
Amos 8:11–12	The famine of hearing the word: the period of silence
Amos 9:11–15	The land's productivity in the kingdom
Obadiah 15–21	Edom's special judgment in the final installment
Micah 7:15–20	Deliverances like the Exodus; the truth to Jacob, the mercy to Abraham
Nahum 1	Affliction rising from Assyria a second time
Habakkuk 3	The Lord's coming at the end of the tribulation; for the remnant
Zephaniah 3:8–20	The nations gathered; the captivity turned back
Haggai 1:1; 2:20–23	The 2nd installment begins; the Lord shakes heaven and earth
Zechariah 1:7–21	Visions built upon Daniel; four horns and four carpenters
Zechariah 14	The final aspect of the fifth course; no more the Canaanite
Malachi 3–4	The messenger of the covenant; the great and terrible day of the Lord
Acts 7	End of the 4th installment record: Stephen sees the Lord standing