

## Proverbs 3, II Chronicles 13-22 (#118)

**Proverbs 3**— *What are the three actions we need to take in order for the Lord to guide and direct our paths? See verses 5-6. Extra Question: What will be the result if we honor the Lord with our wealth?*

**II Chronicles 13**— Abijah becomes the king of Judah after Rehoboam and reigns for three years but walks in the evil ways of his father (I Kings 15:3) although the chronicler portrays him in a favorable light. Abijah preaches a powerful sermon to Jeroboam and his army and wins a significant victory over Jeroboam where 500,000 Israelites die although Judah is outnumbered in battle 2 to 1. The war is won because they trusted in the Lord and cried out to Him in time of battle. After this defeat of Israel by Judah, the Lord struck down Jeroboam, and he died.

**II Chronicles 14**— Asa then becomes king in Judah and reigns 41 years and was completely devoted to the Lord. During his life he tells his people to seek the Lord God and obey His commands. He removes the high places and rids the land of idolatry which causes Judah to experience peace and rest during this time. Zerah the Cushite came against Asa with a million soldiers and 300 chariots, but when Asa cried out to the Lord, the Lord routed the Cushites before Asa and Judah and left no survivors. *What lesson did we learn from Abijah and Asa on how to have victory when we are in serious danger of facing sure defeat? See 13:14, 14:11, Psalms 34:6, and Psalm 145:19. Has there ever been a time when you have done this? If so, what was the result?*

**II Chronicles 15**— This chapter describes a time of prosperity and rest for the people of Judah because they sought after the Lord with all their hearts. After being encouraged by Azariah the prophet to follow Yahweh, Asa purified the land of Judah and Benjamin by removing the detestable idols and renovating the altar of the Lord. They made a covenant to seek the Lord with all their hearts and were found by Him and because of it they had rest on every side. Asa removed his grandmother, Maacah, as queen mother because of the obscene Asherah pole she had erected.

**II Chronicles 16**— In the 36th year of his reign, Asa sought the help of Ben-hadad of Aram to defeat Baasha of Israel instead of trusting in the Lord and seeking His help. When confronted by Hanani, the seer, about his dependence on the king of Aram instead of trusting in the Lord, Asa threw him in prison. In the 39<sup>th</sup> year of his reign Asa developed a disease in his feet and only sought advice from physicians instead of the Lord. He died in his 41<sup>st</sup> year. *What was the great spiritual guidance that the prophets Azariah (15:2) and Hanani (16:7-9) gave to Asa? How should you apply this to your life?*

**II Chronicles 17**— When Jehoshaphat became king after the death of Asa his father, he walked in the ways of King David and obeyed the Lord's commands, therefore Yahweh established his kingdom. In the third year of his reign, he sent his officials and the Levites throughout Judah to teach them the Law of the Lord. The terror of the Lord fell on all the nations that surrounded Judah so that they didn't war against Judah but rather brought King Jehoshaphat tribute. His army grew in strength numbering 1,160,000 men. *Jehoshaphat sent Levites all over Judah to teach the common people the Word of God because they were biblically illiterate. Is biblical illiteracy of Christians a problem today? What can we do to increase the knowledge of the Lord and of the Bible in our day?*

**II Chronicles 18** — King Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahab and married his son to the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. In order to take back Ramoth-gilead from Aram, Ahab of Israel invited Jehoshaphat and the army of Judah to go with him. The good king Jehoshaphat asks Ahab to find out what the Lord's will is. Ahab gathers 400 false prophets who proclaim victory, but Jehoshaphat insists they hear from a prophet of Yahweh. The prophet Micaiah predicts that Ahab will die in battle. As they go to combat, Ahab disguises himself and tells Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes. When the Aramean chariot commanders tried to kill Jehoshaphat, he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord protected him. "But a man drew his bow without taking special aim and struck the king of Israel through the joints of his armor (v. 33 HCSB)." Ahab was badly wounded and died at sunset. *How are some ministers of the Christian church a lot like Ahab's 400 false prophets? See II Timothy 4:3.*

**II Chronicles 19**— Showing his godly character, Jehoshaphat repents of his compromise after being confronted by the prophet Hanani. He very wisely appoints judges and Levites for settling disputes and warning the people to live in such a way as to not incur the Lord's wrath. He challenges these leaders to judge in the fear of the Lord, to be honest, impartial, and faithfully warn and teach the people.

**II Chronicles 20**— This chapter gives the story of another remarkable victory of Judah over its enemies. When the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites, who vastly outnumbered the army of Judah, came against Judah, Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast, claimed the promises of Abraham, and asked for Yahweh's protection in the battle. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel who prophesied that "the battle is not yours, but God's." He declared, "You will not have to fight this battle. Take your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you (v. 17 NIV)." As the choir of Levites went out on the front lines ahead of the army singing, giving thanks, and shouting praises to the Lord, the massive army of their enemies turned against each other until they completely annihilated one another. Because of their faithfulness to trust and seek the Lord, the Lord gave them rest on every side. The history of King Jehoshaphat ends on a sour note when he once again compromises by forming an alliance with Israel's King Ahaziah to build ships to go to Tarshish. Yahweh judged his unholy alliance by destroying all of the ships. *The Lord sent two prophets to chastise Jehoshaphat because of his compromising by forming alliances with God's enemies, the kings of Israel. In what areas are Christians tempted to compromise their*

*Christian faith these days? Is there any specific area you might be tempted to compromise your faith? If so, what do you need to do to keep it from happening?*

**II Chronicles 21**— When Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, became king, his first item of business was to kill all his brothers as well as some of the princes. Because his wife was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, he was evil like the Kings of Israel and caused the people of Jerusalem and Judah to practice gross idolatry. Since he had abandoned Yahweh, many enemies rebelled against Judah. The prophet Elijah sent him a letter of condemnation prophesying his defeat, the death of his children and wives, and the awful disease of the intestines by which he would die. When the Philistines and the Arabs attacked Jehoram, they carried off all his possessions including his sons and wives. When he died of a severe intestinal disease, no one regretted his passing, and he was not buried in the tombs of the kings.

**II Chronicles 22**— In 841 B.C. Ahaziah, Jehoram's son, takes over the throne and immediately kills all his brothers. He followed the wicked ways of the house of Ahab and received evil advice from his mother Athaliah. He joined in war with his uncle, King Joram of Israel, to fight King Hazael of Aram. Joram was wounded in battle and returned to Jezreel to recuperate. Jehu, appointed by God, came to Jezreel and executed the house of Ahab which included King Ahaziah of Judah. When Ahaziah was killed, his mother Athaliah took control of the throne and "proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs of the house of Judah (v. 10 HCSB)." Jehoshabeath, the daughter of Ahaziah and wife of Jehoiada, the priest, rescued Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and hid him in the temple for six years. *What were the probable reasons why Jehoram and Ahaziah were wicked kings? How does this apply to us? See I Corinthians 15:33. What were the possible reasons why Jehoshabeath (22:11) wasn't like her father (Jehoram) or brother (Ahaziah)?*

*Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Key Ideas Bible Handbook, Ron Rhodes, c. 2016, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 13. Life Essentials Study Bible, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 14. The Message, c. 2002, Eugene Peterson, NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. 15. NIV Study Bible, c. 2011, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 16. Understanding the Bible, c.2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.*

## Proverbs 4, II Chronicles 23-29 (#119)

**Proverbs 4**— *“Guard your heart above all else for it determines the course of your life (v. 23 NLT).” Explain the meaning and importance of this verse in our Christian life.*

**II Chronicles 23**— In this very dark history of Judah, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and mother of Ahaziah who was killed by Jehu, began to destroy all the royal heirs. Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah and wife of Jehoiada the chief priest, stole the infant son Joash, the only living descendent of David (that descended through the line of kings), and kept him hidden in the temple for six years. At the age of seven, Jehoiada anointed Joash as king of Judah with the help of the Levites and the military (vv. 1-12). Hearing the rejoicing of the coronation of King Joash, the self-proclaimed Queen Athaliah hurried to the temple to investigate what was happening. Upon seeing the newly crowned king, she tore her clothes and cried “*Treason, treason!*” She was seized by the commanders and taken outside and executed. After making a covenant between the Lord, King Joash, and the people, the temple of Baal was torn down, King Joash took his rightful place on the throne, and the city of Jerusalem was at peace (vv. 13-21). *Joash was the last of the royal dynasty of David to survive. Who was behind the power scenes trying to kill all the royal heirs? Why would it have been impossible for him to succeed? See Ephesians 2:2, I John 5:19, and II Samuel 7:16.*

**II Chronicles 24**— Joash became king, reigned for 40 years, and did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada, the high priest, who instructed him. At the insistence of King Joash and the generosity of God’s people, the great temple built by Solomon was repaired and restored. The people gladly gave the temple tax that Moses had commanded, and the priests regularly offered burnt offerings all the days of Jehoiada. Sadly, upon the death of Jehoiada, King Joash listened to his officials and returned to the worship of idols. Then he ordered the death of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. Because of this evil, Hazael, king of Aram, came against Judah, and then Joash was assassinated. *What seems to be the reason that King Joash abandoned the temple of God and took his people into idolatry? See verse 17.*

**II Chronicles 25**— Amaziah became king of Judah and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord but not wholeheartedly. He had hired 100,000 brave warriors from Israel but then returned them to Israel when a prophet warned Amaziah that he would suffer defeat if he used them in battle against Edom. After a victory over Edom in the Valley of Salt, the king brought back the idols of Edom and worshiped them. A prophet confronted him for this evil, but Amaziah did not accept the Word of God spoken to him. Amaziah tried to pick a fight with King Jehoash of Israel, but due to his overconfidence and his leading Judah into idolatry, he was soundly defeated by Israel. King Jehoash not only captured and wounded Amaziah but broke down part of the wall of Jerusalem and took gold and silver from the Lord's temple and the king's palace. Amaziah was assassinated and his son Uzziah became king in his place. *Taking a cue from the life of King Amaziah, what are some characteristics of a Christian who does not serve the Lord wholeheartedly (v. 2)? See verses 14-16, 19, 27, and James 1:8.*

**II Chronicles 26**— At 16 years of age Uzziah (also called Azariah), in 792 B.C., became king of Judah, reigned 52 years, and did right in the sight of the Lord. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success wherever he went. Uzziah had victory over the Philistines, Arabs, Meunites, and Ammonites and supplied his powerful army with all of the weapons and equipment needed for them to triumph in battles. His fame spread to distant lands, and he received God's powerful backing until he became arrogant because of his great military might and prowess. In his pride, he tried to offer incense in the temple which only a priest was authorized by God to do. He was struck with leprosy for this act of defiance against God's law and ended his days quarantined in a separate house. His son, Jotham, took his place. *Uzziah served the Lord faithfully for many years but had a tragic ending due to an act of pride and disobedience. The goal of every Christian is to not only live a life of service and obedience but to end his or her life well. What steps and precautions do we need to take in order to finish our life in a way that honors the Lord and does not bring shame to ourselves?*

**II Chronicles 27**— At the age of 25 in 750 B.C., Jotham became king of Judah in place of Uzziah and does what is right in the eyes of the Lord, but the people still acted corruptly. Although Jotham was generally a good king, he did not remove the high places (pagan hilltop shrines – II Kings 15:35). God strengthened him over the Ammonites because he did not waver in obeying Yahweh his God. He died at 41, and his son Ahaz replaced him.

**II Chronicles 28**— In 735 B.C. Ahaz, the son of Jotham, became king and did great evil including; sacrificing his son on the altar of a pagan god, following the most detestable practices of the Canaanites, and satisfying the king of

Assyria by building a new altar in the temple area. God comes in swift judgment, Judah is defeated on every side, and the people of Judah are taken captive by Israel. Instead of trusting and obeying the Lord (Isaiah 7:1-17), Ahaz seeks the help of Assyria to defend Judah against Aram and Israel. He takes silver and gold from the temple and the treasuries of the palace and sends it to Assyria. Becoming a vassal of Assyria, he does whatever is necessary to please the king of Assyria even to the point of forcing Uriah the priest to change the features of the temple to accommodate the Assyrian gods. The chronicler did not mention the evil done by Uriah the high priest but did clearly describe the wickedness of King Ahaz. *Verses 9 to 15 tell the story of the prophet Oded and how he convinced the people of Israel to return the captives to Judah. What was the work of a prophet, and what spiritual qualities were necessary to be a prophet?*

**II Chronicles 29**— Now II Chronicles records the history of the two best and most godly kings in Judah after David. These two kings are Hezekiah (chapters 29-32) and Josiah (chapters 34-35), who each follow the two most evil kings of Judah, Ahaz and Manasseh. Hezekiah trusted the Lord and tore down the high places and all the idols of Judah and opened the doors of the temple and repaired them. He told the priests to consecrate themselves and consecrate the temple. It took them 16 days to purify and prepare the temple so that burnt offerings and sacrifices could be made. Hezekiah then had the musical families of the Levites once again return to the praise and worship that David began more than 275 years earlier. Then thousands of animals were sacrificed, and “Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for His people (v. 36 NIV).” *Although not perfect, Hezekiah was a great and godly king. What events in this chapter showed what his priorities were? See verse 3.*

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## Proverbs 5, II Chronicles 30-35 (#120)

**Proverbs 5**— What are some of the reasons mentioned in this chapter for not being involved in sexual immorality?

**II Chronicles 30**— King Hezekiah, the people of Judah, and many from Israel celebrated the Passover with great rejoicing in a way that had not been observed since the days of Solomon. Couriers went from city to city throughout Israel to encourage them to repent and return to Yahweh. When invited to celebrate the Passover, many laughed and mocked the couriers, but others humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Although there were many that were ritually unclean, Hezekiah interceded for them, and the Lord restored the people to Himself. The people were filled with such joy and devotion that the Feast of the Unleavened Bread was extended another seven days. *In what ways did this celebration of the Passover deviate from the Law of Moses? Why do you think God healed and accepted His people although they broke the Law of Moses? How can we apply this lesson to ourselves and to our church?*

**II Chronicles 31**— As a result of the fervent worship and loyalty to Yahweh, all of the people went throughout Judah and Israel and chopped down the sacred pillars, Asherah poles, and altars to the very last one. Hezekiah reestablished the divisions of priests and Levites so that all of the Law that was commanded by Moses could be completed and obeyed including the sacrifices, the Sabbaths, and the appointed feasts. In order for the priests and Levites to serve and fulfill their duties, the people from all over Israel brought of their tithes and offerings to Jerusalem and gave in great abundance. Since Hezekiah wholeheartedly sought the Lord and obeyed His laws and commands, he greatly prospered. *Does obedience to the Lord guarantee prosperity and blessings in our lives?*

**II Chronicles 32**— When King Sennacherib of Assyria came into Judah and planned war on Jerusalem, Hezekiah did all he could do to fortify the city including rebuilding the broken-down wall and increasing the height of the towers. He encouraged the people to be strong, courageous, and declared, “With him is the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us fight our battles (v. 8 ESV).” King Sennacherib sent a letter through his servants to terrorize the people and ridicule Yahweh. He declared that no god of any other nation has saved their people from his power so why did Hezekiah think his God would deliver Judah? King Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed fervently and cried out to the Lord for His

salvation. The Lord sent an angel and in one night annihilated 185,000 warriors of Assyria. Hezekiah became sick to the point of death and prayed to the Lord, and he was healed and received a miraculous sign. Hezekiah succumbs to pride and shows to the envoys of Babylon all of the riches of Judah. The Lord tested him to see what was in his heart. Hezekiah repented of his pride, humbled himself, and averted God's wrath. *Verse 31b says, "God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart." What is God's purpose for testing? Give the names of other Bible characters that were tested by God. Do you remember a time you were tested?*

**II Chronicles 33**— Now we come to the darkest, most evil days of Judah, when Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, becomes king and does more evil than any king before him. During his 55 year reign (697-642 B.C.), Manasseh committed every pagan atrocity imaginable including setting up the image of Asherah in the temple, offering his son as a sacrifice to the pagan god Molech, building altars to the heavenly hosts in the courtyards of the temple, and the shedding of much innocent blood (including probably that of Isaiah, Hebrews 11:37b). It was because of the evil he had done as king that caused Judah to go into captivity about 60 years later (II Kings 23:26, 24:3). The king of Assyria shackled Manasseh and took him off to Babylon, and "in his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers (II Chronicles 33:12, NIV)." The Lord brought him back to Jerusalem where he tried to undo the evil he had done. He removed the foreign gods and the idol he had set up in the temple and commanded Judah to only serve Yahweh, the God of Israel. At 22 years of age, Amon became king upon the death of his father Manasseh and continues the evil of his father. After two years he is assassinated and his son Josiah becomes king at the age of eight. *What attributes of God do we see evidenced in the way God dealt with Manasseh? Will God always act in mercy if we truly repent? See II Chronicles 7:14. What evidence was there that Manasseh truly repented?*

**II Chronicles 34**— Now comes the amazing reign of King Josiah (640-609 B.C.). At the young age of 16, just eight years into his reign, Josiah begins to seek the Lord. When he was 20, he cleanses Judah and all Israel of Asherah poles, carved images, and incense altars. Because of the waning influence of Assyria, Josiah annexes a portion of the land of Israel (Northern Kingdom) to Judah, including Manasseh and Ephraim, and abolishes pagan worship throughout Judah and Israel. He initiates repairs to the temple that had been in great disrepair due to the evil reigns of King Manasseh and Amon. While renovating the temple, the book of the law was found by Hilkiah, the high priest, who gave it to Shaphan, the court secretary, who read it to the king. Upon hearing the book of the law, King Josiah tore his clothes and wept knowing that God's great wrath was imminent because of Judah's evil. The king asks Hilkiah and other servants to inquire of the Lord. They went to Huldah, the prophetess, to find out what Yahweh would say to them. The Lord said that indeed His wrath was kindled against Judah, but that since his heart was tender and humble, that disaster will surely come but would take place after his death. Josiah commands all the elders and people of Judah to call a holy convocation in Jerusalem in order to hear the



book of law and then make a covenant in the presence of the Lord to obey His commands and decrees. *A major story of this chapter is that God's Word is found in the temple. What was Josiah's reaction when he heard God's Word read? What should be our response when we read God's Word? What does the Bible say about itself in the following passages: See Hebrews 4:12, Isaiah 40:8, 55:11, and Psalm 119:105?*

**II Chronicles 35**— In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, Judah celebrated the Passover as it hadn't been observed since the days of Samuel. He assigned the priests to fulfill their duties and service in the temple and organized them according to their family divisions. During this Passover there were more than 40,000 animals sacrificed. The Levites, the singers, and the gatekeepers all fulfilled their God-ordained ministries at this most amazing feast. In the twenty-ninth year of his reign, Josiah went up to Megiddo to try to stop Pharaoh Neco who was supporting Assyria against Babylon. Although Neco tried to dissuade him, Josiah would not listen to the words of Neco that came from the mouth of God. Josiah was slain in battle, and all of Jerusalem and Israel mourned for this great king. *I Kings 23:25 says, "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart..." What might be the reasons that God didn't prevent this great, godly king from fighting Pharaoh Neco and being killed? See I Kings 23:26-30.*

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## Proverbs 6, II Chronicles 36, Amos 1-7 (#121)

**Proverbs 6**— If God hates 7 things, what 7 things does He love? See verses 16 to 19. Put the statements in a positive form.

**II Chronicles 36**— In 609 B.C. upon the death of Josiah, the people made his son Jehoahaz, king at the age of 23. Jehoahaz reigned in Jerusalem three months and was deposed by Pharaoh Neco and taken to Egypt. Neco appointed Eliakim (or Jehoiakim), his brother, as king, and he reigned 11 years and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the combined armies of Egypt and Assyria at Carchemish in northern Syria causing Judah to switch its allegiance from Egypt to Babylon. King Jehoiakim attempted rebellion against Babylon. In 598 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege, captured Jerusalem, and replaced King Jehoiakim with King Jehoiachin. After reigning only three months, King Jehoiachin and all his royal family were deported to Babylon, and the gold articles from the temple and the palace were also taken. Jehoiachin was replaced by his uncle Mattaniah whose name was changed to Zedekiah. Zedekiah reigned eleven years and did what was evil in the Lord's sight and refused to humble himself when Jeremiah spoke the very words from the Lord. He rebelled against the king of Babylon which sealed his doom. After God's warning through the prophets time and time again, the Lord's wrath was stirred up against His people and there was no remedy. In 586 B.C. the Chaldeans completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, killed many people, and carried off others to Babylon. At the end of the 70 years that the land of Canaan had its Sabbath rests as spoken by Jeremiah, King Cyrus of Persia made a proclamation that the Lord, the God of heaven, had appointed him to build a temple at Jerusalem, and he invited all that the Jews that wished, to return to Jerusalem. *What were the Sabbath rests spoken of in verse 21, and what is the meaning of the words "until 70 years were fulfilled?" See Leviticus 25:4, 26:34-36, 43.*

**Amos**— This book was written by Amos (750 B.C.) who was a shepherd and gatherer of sycamore figs, but was called by Yahweh to preach against the sins of Israel during a time of peace and prosperity under the rule of Jeroboam II. The key verse of the book is "But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream (5:24 NKJV)." Although Amos thundered God's judgment and the need of repentance because of the unjust treatment of the poor, its idolatry, and complacency, the people would not listen to him since they believed that greed was good and a form of religiosity was all God required. Amos uses many metaphors to illustrate his pronouncements including a loaded wagon of grain, a roaring lion, and a basket of summer fruit.

**Amos 1**— Amos was a sheep breeder from Tekoa which was located just 10 miles south of Jerusalem. In today's terms we would call Amos a layman without proper credentials, who felt God's call to prophesy mostly against Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel. In the first chapter through 2:5, Israel cheers as they hear that Yahweh roars from Zion in judgment on Damascus/Aram (vv. 3-5), Gaza/Philistia (vv. 6-8), Tyre (vv. 9-10), Edom

(vv. 11-12), Ammon (vv. 13-15), Moab (2:1-3), and Judah (2:4-5).  
*the sins committed by these nations.*

*Give in abbreviated words, if possible,*

**Amos 2**— All of a sudden the people of Israel (Northern Kingdom) become enraged when this farmer from Tekoa begins to expose the evils of this prosperous and proud nation. Amos clearly denounces the seven sins they have committed and which were the very reasons the Amorites, the people they had dispossessed 650 years earlier, had been removed from the land of Canaan. Now the Lord will crush in judgment the people of Israel just like a loaded wagon of grain crushes anything it rolls over (v. 13). Even the fastest, strongest, bravest, and the most skillful warrior will not be able to escape this day of reckoning declares Yahweh. *Give in simple terms the sins of Israel that the prophet Amos exposed in this chapter? Extra question: The prophet repeats the phrase “for three transgressions (sins) of (the nation) even for four” eight times in these two chapters. What was the meaning of this phrase?*

**Amos 3**— Now Yahweh reasons with Israel, beginning with a series of rhetorical questions that show a relationship between their sin and its consequences. Israel had the privilege of being specially chosen by God but at the same time had the responsibility of being responsive and obedient to Him. This faithful God will not come in fury upon His unfaithful nation without first sending his prophets to warn the people. When the Lord speaks to a prophet, he can't keep the message of judgment to himself. The following is God's decree upon His people who are incapable of doing right. When the Lord finishes with Israel in judgment there won't be much left. In fact, nearly everything will be demolished including the altars of Bethel, the ivory summer and winter houses, and all the personal belongings which will become the plunder of the enemy.

**Amos 4**— In unflattering words, Amos calls the women of Samaria the cows of Bashan who oppress the poor, crush the needy, and demand that their husbands provide for them their every desire. Someday they will be taken away with hooks in their noses by the enemy, but now they make a big show of their tithes and offerings to the idols at Bethel. Over and over again they have suffered God's judgment through famine, drought, destruction of crops, sickness, death, and defeat in war, but all this is to no avail. So now Yahweh says to this incorrigible nation, “Prepare to meet your God” in this final judgment when Israel will be destroyed and carried off to Assyria. *Amos says that one of the criteria that the women of Samara would be judged by is the way they treat the poor and the needy. What have you or can you and your church do in meeting the needs of the poor and the oppressed?*

**Amos 5**— Amos sings a dirge about the future fallen state of Israel when only 10 percent of people are still left in the cities after their destruction by their enemy. Yahweh is asking that Israel really seek Him and not lifeless religion, or He will come and consume everyone and everything with fire which no one can extinguish. Israel has become so morally twisted that the people hate honest judges, despise the person who speaks with integrity, and tramples on the poor. When the righteous are oppressed and the poor are deprived of justice, the wise knows that speaking up is a lost cause. Nevertheless, Amos challenges the people to seek good and not evil, to establish justice in the courts, and perhaps the Lord will be gracious with the remnant of Joseph. The Day of the Lord's judgment is coming when there will be darkness and not light. The Lord says, "All the rituals you are doing in order to placate your gods I really hate. Here is what I want: let your justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an ever-flowing stream, or I will send you into exile beyond Damascus (adapted)." *Israel mixed their idolatry with the types of worship prescribed by Moses (this is called syncretism). The Pharisees of Jesus' day mixed man-made rituals with their biblical worship. Paul talked about professed Christian people having a form of godliness but denying its power (II Timothy 3:5a). How can we as Christians keep our private and public worship from becoming mere ritualism and going through the motions instead of giving our hearts fully to God in genuine worship?*

**Amos 6**— Who are the ones that will be the first captives to go into exile? Those who are at ease in Zion and feel secure in Samaria. Instead of thinking of the possibility of a day of destruction, the people are complacent, fully materialistic, self-indulgent, and pleasure seeking without any spiritual sense of the future devastation that is around the corner. Because the Lord hates their arrogance and self-adulation, Israel will be smashed to pieces by a nation He is raising up.

**Amos 7**— Amos sees five visions of God's judgment on Israel. In the first two visions, which were locusts and fire on Israel, judgment is averted by the intercession of the prophet. The third vision was that of the Lord standing by a vertical wall with a plumb line in His hand. A plumb line of God's law declares that the pagan shrines will be deserted, the pagan temples will be in ruins, and the house of Jeroboam will come to an end by the sword. When warned by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, to go back to Judah and prophecy there, this fearless prophet says that although he was only a herdsman and not a prophet or son of a prophet, God called him to prophesy to the people of Israel. He then prophesies that Amaziah would die on foreign soil, his family would be killed, and his wife would become a prostitute. *Complacency can be a great sin in the life of a Christian or in the local church. Read Revelation 3:14-21. How was the church of Laodicea a lot like Israel at this time? What can we do to keep our church from becoming like the church of Laodicea?*

*Sources for summary and questions:* 1. *Serendipity Bible for Groups*, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. *MacArthur Study Bible ESV*, 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. *Life Application Bible HCSB* c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. *The Complete Bible Companion* c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. *ESV Study Bible* c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. *The World Bible Handbook*, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. *The Quest Study Bible NIV*, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. *The Transformation Study Bible*, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. *Key Ideas Bible Handbook*, Ron Rhodes, c. 2016, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 10. *500 Questions & Answers from the Bible*, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. *Homan Bible Handbook*, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. *Moody Bible Commentary*, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 13. *Life Essentials Study Bible*, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 14. *The Message*, c. 2002, Eugene Peterson, NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. 15. *NIV Study Bible*, c. 2011, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 16. *Understanding the Bible*, c.2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.

## Proverbs 7, Amos 8-9, Obadiah, Jonah 1-4, Micah 1 (#122)

**Proverbs 7**— *What are the strategies used by the immoral women to get naïve youth to descend to her chambers of death and hell? 1. verse 10. 2. verse 13. 3. verses 16-18. 4. Verses 19-20. 5. verse 21. 6. verse 23.*

**Amos 8**— In the fourth vision Amos sees a basket of ripe summer fruit. The people of Israel are ripe for God's judgment because the Lord's wrath cannot hold back any longer. The merchants trample the needy and poor and can't wait for Sabbath to be over so they can cheat the poor out of more money with dishonest scales or sell them chaff. As a proof of future disaster, an earthquake will come and everyone will wear sackcloth with great wailing and mourning. A great famine will come, but this will be a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord when people will roam from sea to sea to seek God's Word but will not find it. Verse 11 says that there would be "a famine of hearing the words of the Lord." *Do you think there is a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord in your country? Explain.*

**Amos 9**— In this fifth vision, the Lord stands beside the altar and will judge His people, and no one will escape the all-seeing eyes of God and the fury of His righteous anger. The all-powerful God will destroy all the wicked from the nation but there will be a remnant that will be preserved who will be renewed and restored. Ending this prophecy on a positive note, Yahweh promises to raise up the fallen house of David and to restore the fortunes of His people Israel. In this kingdom age, the Lord will bring back the exiled people from distant lands. *When in the future will this restoration take place? How can you prove your answer from this passage?*

**Obadiah**— This is the shortest book of the Old Testament by an obscure author who wrote his book to declare God's judgment on the nation of Edom because of their evil treatment of Israel. The exact time Obadiah was written is most likely between 605 B.C. and 586 B.C., although it is possible that it was written during the reign of Jehoram of Judah from 855 B.C. to 840 B.C. Edom's great arrogance and false sense of security would eventually lead them to destruction. Edom descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. While traveling in the wilderness heading for the Promised Land, Edom would not let Israel pass through their land but forced them to take a long way around. In New Testament times the Edomites were called Idumeans with the most famous one being Herod the Great.

**Obadiah**— The city of Petra was located in an invincible location in the "cleft of the rock" where the people felt secure from any enemy, but God promised Edom that He would bring them down and destroy them because of the violence they had done to their bother, Jacob, and also for their boastful pride. Edom gloated over Judah in the day of Jacob's calamity and plundered them. The people of Edom will reap what they have sown, and God's judgment will return on their own heads. However, God's people need not fret because He will deliver Mount

Zion, and the Israelites will possess the hill country of Esau and the mountains of Edom, and these lands will be part of the Lord's holy kingdom. *Why did Edom feel so secure and invincible?*

**Jonah**— This book is filled with so many rich teachings including the obedience of God's people, prejudice and hatred of others, the unlimited mercy of God for those who are repentant, and the compassion and love of God for undeserving sinners. Jonah was a prophet of Israel (Northern Kingdom) during the reign of Jeroboam II and was told by God to go to Nineveh and prophecy their coming destruction because of their great wickedness (about 785 B.C.). The book of Jonah is filled with so many anomalies. God could command the whale but not His servant. The true worshipers were the pagans on the boat, not his prophet. Those that repented were all the pagans of Nineveh and not the prophet of Yahweh. Jonah was far more concerned about a plant than thousands of lost people. None of the prophets in Israel (Northern Kingdom) had ever had the success Jonah had when a whole pagan city of Nineveh repented at his preaching. Jonah did not want his message of repentance to be obeyed, but He wanted the whole city to be destroyed. Jonah chides God for reflecting His real character: merciful, compassionate, slow to answer, and rich in steadfast love (4:2). Some wonder if this prejudiced prophet ever learned the lesson God was teaching him on love and compassion for all humanity. The answer seems simple in the fact that Jonah wrote the book.

**Jonah 1**— The book of Jonah is so unlike the rest of the minor prophets in that it is a short biography of a disobedient prophet who sparked one of the greatest revivals ever known in the history of mankind despite the fact the messenger was hoping that nobody would respond to his preaching. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn them that in 40 days every living thing would be destroyed if they didn't repent. Jonah not only says "no" to God but takes a ship to go as far as he can in the opposite direction. The destination of the city of Tarshish was probably on the southwestern coast of Spain some 2000 miles away. Even though Jonah had hardened his conscience against God and was fast asleep on the deck below, the omnipotent God sent a storm and then a great fish to make the prophet willing to obey Him. *How did the sailors on the ship seem more noble and God-fearing than Jonah?*

**Jonah 2**— After being thrown overboard, Jonah is swallowed by a huge fish and spends three days and three nights in its belly. While in the stomach of the fish with his life nearing its end, Jonah remembered the Lord and calls out in his distress and vows to obey the Lord and go to Nineveh. Obeying the Lord's command, the fish vomits Jonah onto dry land. *Who in the New Testament verified the truth of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish, and what did that person say it would represent? See Matthew 12:39-41, 16:4.*

**Jonah 3**— Jonah obeyed the Lord’s second command to go to Nineveh and preaches, “In 40 days Nineveh will be demolished (v. 4b HCSB).” The people believed the message of Jonah, fasted, and dressed in sackcloth from the greatest to the least. Even the king took off his royal robes and issued a decree that every person must fast (including animals), call out earnestly to God, and turn away from their evil ways and from violence. Yahweh saw their repentant hearts and relented from sending disaster. *What would the Lord do in our country if the Christians would repent, turn from their evil ways, and seek the Lord with all of their hearts? See II Chronicles 7:14.*

**Jonah 4**— Now Jonah reveals his motive for his disobedience the first time. He had an extreme hatred toward those of Nineveh since they were enemies of Israel and because of their cruelty and violence. Jonah, however, also knew the character of Yahweh that He was not only just and wrathful towards evil, but also merciful, compassionate, and rich in love towards the repentant. He had a sixth sense that in this case Nineveh would repent and that God would relent in sending disaster. Jonah did not want to be any part of such a scenario. Probably the last words of God reverberated in his mind and heart for a long time until he began to have a heart like God’s heart. “Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle (v. 11 ESV).” Then he was ready to write the book. *How do we seek to avoid God’s command to have compassion on all people and to share our faith with them?*

**Micah**— The Lord chose Micah to give warning to Israel and Judah of the coming judgment of God because of the idolatry of the people, and therefore, they must repent and turn again to Him. Micah was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah and came from the town of Moresheth in Judah (25 miles southwest of Jerusalem) and prophesied from 742 B.C. to 687 B.C. It was Micah who spearheaded the great revival in Jerusalem under the leadership of King Hezekiah (Jeremiah 26:18-19). Micah championed the rights of the poor because wealthy land barons were buying up the land and displacing the poor. Micah prophesied the coming destruction of Samaria (722 B.C.) as well as the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

**Micah 1**— Micah prophesies about the future devastation on Israel and Judah because of the idolatry that has replaced the worship of Yahweh. Samaria was completely destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C. In 701 B.C. King Sennacherib devastated Judah starting at Lachish. This town was the first to follow their northern brothers from Israel into idolatry. Thousands from Lachish and other cities in the area were slain, and thousands of others were taken into captivity by Assyria. The leaders at this time would flee to the caves of Adullam to hide, and the



precious children would be taken as slaves to foreign lands. *As Micah prophesied about the sin and idolatry of Israel and Judah of his day, we also see in our country and our world the same patterns of idolatry, immorality, and evil. What can we do as Christians to be salt and light to our country in order to postpone the inevitable destruction that is coming?*

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