

ADULT BIBLICAL EDUCATION SERIES

Vol. II, Book 6

God Rules His People Through Prophets, Priests, and Kings

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TEACHER'S GUIDE



Pictured on the cover is the Sower, examining the young tree, which shows progress of growth from the tender plant of Volume II, Books 1-4.

Here, we might think of the words of James 5:7: Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it ...

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Teacher's Supplement to Volume II, Book 6

GOD RULES HIS PEOPLE THROUGH PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND KINGS

In this quarter we will be covering a major portion of the remaining history of the people of Israel tracing it down close to the time of the fall of Samaria.

In addition to looking at the history of God's people we will also be studying the messages of some of the prophets whom God raised up to speak to those generations.

We will see God's rich blessings on Israel in the early days of Solomon's reign and then trace through the period of the division of the people of God into two segments, seeing that both segments rapidly deteriorated spiritually.

We note also how God intervened in the history of Judah and, from time to time, raised up faithful kings; but in Israel, the northern kingdom, things went from bad to worse.

The introductory material for the teacher, containing guidelines, helps in preparing to teach the lesson, elements of a good lesson, etc., which was printed in the Teacher's Supplement for Volume II, Book 2, (pages 1-3) will not be repeated. You may wish to reread that material before beginning to teach this quarter of lessons.

Below we will give some help to the teacher in approaching each of the lessons of this quarter. Remember, the suggestions are based on the expectation that each student will have read the lesson material, so that the teacher can build on what the student has already read.

LESSON ONE:

Introduction to the Lesson:

This lesson picks up the history of Israel after the death of David. It would be well to remind the class that prior to David's death there was an attempt by another son, Adonijah, to overthrow the rule of his father.

Adonijah's attempt failed, as had Absalom's earlier.

Before David died he charged Solomon to be faithful to God's Word and commissioned him to punish certain people who had wronged David during his life and to award others who had dealt kindly with him.

When David died, Solomon was faced with the responsibility for the kingdom. It was an unparalleled opportunity for him to establish the kingdom which his father

had already made great by the grace of God.

Point One: *God's favor increases man's responsibility.*

Begin by pointing out to the class the great privilege that Solomon had as he began to reign. His father had established Israel as one of the greatest powers on earth at that time. He had no problems with wars. His father had won all the victories. He also had no problem with finances. The treasuries were filled and growing. He had no uprisings among the people of Israel. They had all been put down by David. Solomon's era was a privileged era, and one that showed great promise.

Solomon wisely asked for help from God to fulfill his responsibility. But privilege does have its responsibilities. And though Solomon seemed to recognize this in the beginning, soon he became distracted from his great effort and began to enrich himself.

You may wish to remind the class of Samson and the great privilege he had in the period of the judges, to be a Nazirite and an example to God's people of what they ought to be. He had great strength, but he unwisely wasted his strength through most of his life. He failed to see that his privilege demanded responsibility.

A study of Saul and David is a study in this principle. Saul, on the one hand, was given the great privilege of being elevated from a lowly position to king of Israel. He was given God's Spirit to help him fulfill his responsibilities. But Saul soon proved to be an irresponsible man. David, on the other hand, also elevated from a lowly position, took his responsibility seriously; and though he often fell short of what he ought to be, nevertheless, he did press on toward the goals that God had set for him.

Remind the class that in another day, when Israel was threatened by her enemies, Mordecai taught Esther, his cousin, that she too, in the privilege of being Queen of Persia, must recognize the responsibility that God gave her to protect her people.

In the New Testament you can point to Luke 12:48. Jesus taught this same principle when He said, "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required, and to whom they commit much of him will they ask the more."

This was Jesus' point in talking to Nicodemus. Nicodemus was considered to be a privileged teacher in Israel, and Jesus expected more of him than of others; and, therefore, He rebuked him when he seemed to be unaware of the whole doctrine of rebirth.

Paul often looked back on his life and saw the great privilege he had of receiving one of the finest educations in Judaism. He recognized the responsibility he had and the debtor he was to all men through that fine education and the conversion to Christ.

Help the class to see that we sit in a privileged position today in a church in America where we still have great freedom, but this privilege demands that we act responsibly in fulfilling our service to our fellowmen through Christ.

Point Two: *Failure toward God while in a favored position brings dire consequences.*

Here you may remind the class of the warning which God gave to Solomon when he was beginning his service to God. He was taught very clearly that unless he proved faithful, evil would come on him and on people he was called to serve.

You may mention that David's life was a great example of the consequences of failures; though David overall was faithful to God, nevertheless, his failures would bring dire consequences to the people.

Point the class to the words of Amos 3:2, where God speaks to all Israel and says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: Therefore I will visit upon you all the iniquities." Israel failed to heed God's warning to her by earlier prophets that if she failed in the privileged position she had among all the nations, God would surely punish her.

Again, you may mention the conversation between Esther and Mordecai, and Mordecai's warning to Esther that if she did not rise to the occasion in her day to support the people of God, that God would certainly set her aside and raise up another deliverer.

The same kind of privilege faced the people of the remnant who returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. They, at first, forgot their responsibility and began to build their own houses to please themselves, until God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to rebuke and turn them back to the purpose for which God had raised them up.

Help them remember that in Jesus' day He rebuked the Jews who rejected Him, warning them that the privilege they had of being the only people of God on earth would soon be ended, if they did not receive Christ and glorify God

through Him.

Charge the class to see their destiny as the people of God today and their duty to fulfill their calling to be His witnesses in their time, lest God set them aside as He has others in the past.

Point Three: *Failure to grow under trial brings failure to please God.*

Point out the relatively easy life which Solomon enjoyed, and the entrustment to him of great riches and great wisdom, so that even the responsibility for the right use of riches and great wisdom was a trial, and that he failed in that trial.

Contrast Solomon's relatively soft life to the life under which David grew spiritually. His life was filled with trials and hardships, but in the end he had pleased God.

Show how God raised up all of His prophets under fire, causing them to face great enemies, persecution and suffering and many times death; but in doing so God hammered out strong prophets, who did not fail to please God in their ministries.

Daniel is another example of one who faced great trials from the time he was a young boy, and yet, under all the testing he grew and pleased God.

Peter is an interesting study. At first, Peter did not do well under testing and ended 'Up denying his Lord three times. Yet, later on, by the grace of God and by the indwelling of His Spirit, he was tested and proved faithful.

Peter himself gives us help in understanding this lesson. In I Peter 1:6-7, he challenges us to rejoice, though for a time we have grief because of many trials in this life. He says that the proof of our faith is more precious than gold that perishes, and that our faith, like good gold, must be proven by fire, so that it will glorify God.

Help the class to see that the trials of our life are all to be understood as meaningful, and we are not to grow bitter through trial, but to recognize that it is from God and that it is for our spiritual good. We must ask God to help us to grow under fire.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead the class in a discussion of recent trials in your own church and how the church has faced these trials. You could utilize from personal experience questions 5, 6, and 8 through 10.

You might also help the class to think through the privileges that their class and their church have in serving God in their community. Help them to seek out the answer to the question; What do we do with our opportunity? Here you could utilize questions 1 through 7 and also 11.

LESSON TWO:

Introduction to the Lesson:

The division of the kingdom of Israel into two nations was, of course, not pleasing to the Lord. He had established them to be one people. Nevertheless, because of sin, it was a necessary discipline in the wisdom of God.

You will need to remind the class that the Lord showed Himself equally concerned for both kingdoms. He offered the same blessings and opportunities to each, if they obeyed His will.

What this means is that the division itself settled nothing; it only served to give a new opportunity, a new beginning, for the people of God.

You should also stress the fact that it did not divide the Kingdom of God. There continued to be one people of God, though now some were in the northern kingdom and some were in the southern kingdom. They were those who continued to love and obey the Lord.

Stress that we are clearly shown in this history of Israel, which we studied, that without the continuing and intervening grace of God in the history of any people, that people will not return to Him in faith.

Point One: *At times in the history of the people of God the Lord will raise up a new branch of His church with opportunity to serve God better than, before.*

You should point out to them that God gave the same kind of opportunity to Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Rehoboam, of course, inherited all the promises and privileges that were once given to David and Solomon. And he would have the opportunity of directing God's people in accord with the Word of God.

God also told Jeroboam that he would have that opportunity to make the kingdom entrusted to him into a kingdom faithful to God, which God would assure him He would bless.

You can show the class that over and over in God's dealings with man, from the time of the fall to the end of human history, this is the way God directs history toward His good purpose.

When the pre-flood believers in God ceased to walk with God, God destroyed most of mankind, but he raised up Noah and gave him a new opportunity.

Later, when the descendants of Noah, even those of Shem, failed to walk with God any longer, the Lord called Abraham and raised him out of a pagan background once more to follow God with a new opportunity.

Even in the wilderness after the Exodus when the generation that came out of Egypt failed God, that generation was killed off by God; but He raised up a new generation which was, in essence, a new church with new opportunities for pleasing Him.

We can look ahead as well to the post-exilic period when God raised up from the ashes of the Babylonian captivity a new remnant to go back into Canaan and to settle there, and to start again a faithful service to God.

So in Christ's day, though the people did not recognize that the old Judaism was to be laid aside, God raised up a new church, the church of the Gentiles.

And so, for twenty centuries we have seen over and over how God will put down one branch and raise up another to the praise of His glory, each given a new opportunity to serve Him, each returned to the basic truths of God and His Word.

In our own day, therefore, stress to the class how important it is for us to evaluate where we are, what opportunities we have. Have we separated from one group, and if so, do we see our opportunities today and our responsibility? Or if we are a group that has been separated from, do we recognize that even we have an opportunity in the discipline we have undergone because of our failures in the past? Challenge the class to make good use of its opportunities.

Point Two: *The people of God who are disciplined by division must not seek vengeance, but a better testimony than before.*

Separation and division in the church is always painful to all concerned. It was painful for Judah. They lost so many who had once served with them. Rehoboam wanted to take vengeance, but God would not permit it. Rehoboam, the disciplined king, should have sought to bring Judah to greater heights spiritually, but he failed. He and his son turned away from God.

Likewise, Jeroboam, leader of the new branch of the people of God, entrusted with many precious souls, had great opportunity to build that church spiritually; but he also failed, fearing men more than God.

You may wish to go back to an earlier time and point to Noah's new start, or Abraham's new start, or even Jacob's new start when he came back from Mesopotamia and settled again in Canaan and was given opportunity to lead the people of God. In each of these cases the leader, Noah, Abraham and Jacob, each sought to bring his family to a closer walk with God.

In the New Testament you may point to the new opportunities that the apostles saw for evangelism and out-

reach to the Gentile nations, a great new opportunity for the people of God. They took full advantage of that and used their time-wisely, and the church grew and multiplied beyond anyone's dreams.

Yet, as we look at the picture of the church by the end of the first century, in the days of the Apostle John, when he alone was left, we see how the church had declined spiritually and how revival was needed.

As one traces the history of the church after the New Testament times, we see how, at the time of the Reformation, God raised up His people and gave them a new opportunity for serving Him. In more recent times, the history of the church has seen revivals in most every century in which new peoples of God were raised up and started afresh in service to Him.

Help the class to see, in particular, our opportunity today, so that we may evaluate it correctly and see what privileges we have and what responsibility.

Point Three: *In the history of any branch of God's church, but for the grace of God, there would be no faithful leaders.*

You may point out how both in Israel and Judah for several decades there was no faithful leadership. Jeroboam and those that followed him and Rehoboam and those that followed him, all acted faithlessly and did not follow God's will. Without the intervention of God it would have continued that way until God destroyed both nations. You may go back to the era of the judges and see there how the people continued to wallow in sin for several centuries; and that, but for the grace of God in raising up Samuel; it would have continued that way.

You can show the great contrast between the history of Judah and Israel, as seen in the grace of God that intervened in the course of Judah's history but did not intervene in the course of Israel's history. Therefore, Israel never produced, a king faithful to God, while Judah did, from time to time. But you should make clear that it was God, by His intervention and for His good purpose.

You may also point out to them that in the post-exilic era, when the people had returned to Jerusalem and begun the temple, they were quickly discouraged from completing it and got busy with their own pleasures and their own houses and vineyards, and would never have come back to serve God had not God, in His mercy, raised up prophets like Haggai and Zechariah, and later teachers, like Ezra and godly political leaders such as, Nehemiah.

Point out, also, that in the New Testament, the first

century of the church, which held such promise, was followed by a second century, not recorded in the Scriptures, which was very disappointing and in which the leadership began to wander away from the authority of Scripture.

Show them, too, that the occasion of the Reformation under Luther and Calvin came because God raised up men who loved Him and gave them to lead the church, else it would have continued in its darkness.

So it is in our day. If we are to have faithful leaders, it will be because God has raised them up. Teach the class to pray that God will do just this.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may encourage the class to become involved in a discussion of the opportunities of their particular church, or their particular denomination, whether it be a new denomination raised out of an old one, or the old denomination that must now learn from the discipline it has undergone. Here you could utilize questions 1 through 4.

You could also lead the class in a discussion of what constitutes true stability of any church and, in particular, of their own church. Here you could utilize questions 5 through 10.

LESSON THREE:

Introduction to the Lesson:

Point out to the class that we are now studying the era of Elijah. Remind them that this was the time of the wicked king Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, a time when Baal worship prevailed in the land. Elijah, therefore, was sent into a very difficult situation to bear testimony to God.

Point One: *In times of a declining church spiritually, those who stand firmly for God's Word are persecuted and falsely accused, but God sustains them.*

You can point out, first of all, Elijah's persecution due to his standing alone for the Word of God in that day. His boldness to insist that the people return to God brought him great opposition from Jezebel. Yet, in all of this time, God did sustain him, not by powerful allies but by people like a widow and others who were concerned for him and his needs, and who were willing to share what they had with him.

It is important to stress to the class that God's sustaining of any of His servants is for so long as it pleases God to do so. Sometimes He chooses that they give their lives for the

sake of the testimony He has given them. In such cases, He is more glorified by their death than by their continued protection.

You may point to Moses in the wilderness; at a time when the Israelites were in spiritual decline in the wilderness, Moses was greatly persecuted and opposed by many. And there were several attempts to overthrow him. But because it pleased God that Moses should lead the people that forty years, he was sustained every time.

We see the same thing in the days of David and Saul. We note how, though Saul was determined to persecute David because he represented the faithful servant of God, nevertheless, God sustained David and saw him through each trial.

You may also wish to mention prophets like Amos and Jeremiah, who preached to their generations which were spiritually rebellious against God. Amos went to the northern kingdom of Israel and was persecuted there because of his insistence on upholding God's Law. Jeremiah preached to Judah, in his day, and it was a time of great spiritual depravity in Jerusalem. He was opposed by many false prophets and was greatly persecuted. Nevertheless, God sustained both Amos and Jeremiah until they had delivered the message God gave them.

You may look in the New Testament to the example of Christ who was constantly persecuted by the Pharisees, Sadducees and lawyers of that day, who opposed everything He taught because He insisted that they had turned away from God's Word and He was calling the people back to God. Ultimately, He died on the cross at the hands of His enemies, but not until He had accomplished His Father's work. In the Book of Acts we have the example of Stephen on the one hand, who gave his life quite early for the cause of the gospel because it glorified God. He was persecuted because he rebuked his generation for having rebelled against God. On the other hand, Peter, John and Paul, though they preached God's Word just as firmly, were sustained. All were bitterly persecuted by the enemies of the gospel in Israel.

You may remind them that Revelation gives us the picture of the situation in Asia Minor toward the end of the first century in which most of the churches there were filled with false doctrine, and where true believers were persecuted and suffering great hardship.

Point to II Timothy 4:1 ff., in which Paul reminds Timothy that times of unpopularity of the preaching of the Word will come in the church, times when the people will not wish to hear sound doctrine. There will be times when the true servant of God must suffer, but it is imperative that he continue to preach.

Encourage the class, therefore, to stand firmly on God's

Word, knowing that God can and will protect them so long as it pleases Him for His glory, and that taking such a stand is right.

Point Two: *God's servants must rely not on signs and miracles to enhance their testimony, but on the steady proclamation of God's Word to turn the hearts of hearers back to God.*

Begin by reminding them of what Elijah learned at Carmel, where a great miracle was performed, a mighty sign from heaven. But still the hearts of the people were not truly turned to God. He learned that God would turn hearts only by that still small voice, the voice of God's servant proclaiming God's Word.

You may also wish to point to the experience of Moses in the wilderness. God performed through Moses more miracles, perhaps, than through any other man on earth before the time of Jesus Christ. And yet, the most of the people who saw those miracles did not believe. The lasting contribution of Moses was not those miracles, but it was the Word which he wrote down, which became the foundation of the church.

You can also point to Ezra's day, showing that the people were in great disarray until he came and taught them the Word of God, which became the foundation for the Judaism of the future.

In the New Testament, you may remind them of Matthew 12:39-42, where Jesus rebukes those who seek for signs and miracles, and says that only a wicked and adulterous generation would seek such things.

Also point them to Luke 16:29-31, which teaches that if men will not have their hearts changed by Moses and the prophets, that is, the Word of God, then those hearts will not be changed to believe in God, even if one rise from the dead.

Also remind them of Romans 10:17, in which Paul shows that faith comes by hearing God's Word.

Encourage the class, therefore, to be persistent in their study and preparation of God's Word, knowing that that is the only thing that can change men's hearts. Discourage them from ever hoping for some miraculous sign to change the hearts of men.

Point Three: *God's servants in any generation cannot hope to finish the task; therefore, preparing others to carry on the work when they are gone is a vital part of their Christian work.*

Here you can begin by showing how Elijah was unable to finish the task God gave him, but he did gather to him

Elisha and others whom he trained and prepared to carry on the work of the proclamation of God's Word.

Show how Moses also, through most of his public ministry, had with him Joshua, whom he trained carefully to take his place.

Remind them that in the days of Elijah and Elisha evidently there was a school of the prophets established, where those who desired could learn better how to serve God through the preaching of His Word and upholding His Law.

Show how Jesus used this method in training the disciples. Though He taught great multitudes, He spent much of His time working with just a few, preparing them to carry on when He was gone.

Show how Paul, likewise, trained Timothy and Titus and others as they went with him, following him in his missionary activities. You may particularly point to II Timothy 2:2, in which Paul states the principle of our preparing others to teach also after us.

Encourage, therefore, the class to see these opportunities of studying God's Word as a training session, in which we are all learning God's Word better that we may serve Christ better. But show them too, that it is important for us to think in terms of the day when some of us will need to be teaching others. All of us, in our homes, have that opportunity now.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a discussion of the evidences of persecution going on in the church even today, where some in the church, who stand firm for the Word of God, find themselves opposed by those who wish to be more lax in the application of God's Word to our lives. You could utilize questions 1 through 6.

You may also wish to lead the class in a consideration of what their church is doing, or has been doing, to train some to teach others the Word of God. Here you could utilize questions 7, 8-9 and 11.

LESSON FOUR:

Introduction to the Lesson:

Point out that through most of the history of Israel and Judah, as recorded in Scripture, the two nations were at odds with one another either in war or threatening to go to war. Remind them that one period of time which was an exception to this was the period of Ahab and his family.

Show how, in that time when Judah compromised with Israel and became entangled with her affairs, it brought sad consequences to Judah for a long time

afterwards, pointing up that what we do in one generation does affect generations to follow.

Point One: *Any alliance of God's people with those who do not honor God is unholy; it does not glorify God.*

Begin by reminding them of the circumstances of the unholy alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab; how that Jehoshaphat became involved in the affairs of Ahab and joined the two peoples together for a rather long period of time, all of which hurt Judah greatly, and did not glorify God.

Point out that even when our motivations may seem to be right, we still have not pleased God by any alliance with unbelievers. The sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, thought that by pretending to ally with their enemies, they could get them off guard and destroy them. But God was displeased with this deceit. And so, there is no excuse for compromise.

Remind them of the lesson we learned when Joshua and those with him, failing to seek God's will, made a treaty with the Gibeonites. They too did not glorify God and set a pattern that was to cause great trouble in Israel for centuries to come.

You might wish to mention the era of the judges when there were many such alliances with unbelieving peoples, and it brought paganism into Israel and sent Israel into a period of dark ages spiritually for several centuries.

Show how even Eli, who seemed to want to do the right thing, nevertheless, compromised with his evil sons and brought no glory to God, so that God finally had to remove him and his sons from the priesthood.

Show how David was affected by allowing Joab and other lawless men to follow him because, at one point, he thought he needed them. 'Yet such alliances plagued him for the rest of his life, so that even on his deathbed he had to contend with rebellions stirred up by Joab.

You might also show how Solomon, by his alliances with Egypt and other nations in marrying their daughters, brought paganism once more into the city of Jerusalem.

By contrast you could point out how Nehemiah, in his day, refused to compromise with the Samaritans who wanted to help him build the walls of Jerusalem. He refused on the basis that to accept their help would not glorify God, and gives us a good example of how not to compromise, even when unbelievers may offer to help us in some way; to build our church, or by whatever other means.

Show how Paul, in the Book of Galatians, has to rebuke Peter for his having compromised with the Judaizers in his day which brought dishonor to God and to the gospel.

Warn the class to be aware today that Satan is continually, through his children, trying to work compromises in the lives of God's children and that his sole purpose is always to take glory from God and to entangle God's people in unholy alliances.

Point Two: *Unholy alliances dishonor God, ignoring the distinctions which God has made.*

Point out how Jehoshaphat, in speaking of himself, compared himself to Ahab and his people to the people of Israel, as though there was no difference, though there was indeed a great difference.

Point out how God, in the very beginning, made a distinction between the seed of God and the seed of Satan, in Genesis 3:15; and how, when the pre-flood believers failed to maintain this distinction, they inter-married with unbelievers bringing the judgment of the flood.

Show, in the New Testament, how Paul in II Corinthians 6:14-18, makes clear that marriage and all other alliances of believers with unbelievers do great harm to the glory of God and weaken the church and its testimony. Challenge the class to examine their home, their business, their social life, and every other area of their life, lest they be guilty, by daily compromises, of erasing the distinctions which God has made between believers and unbelievers. Remind them that unholy alliances are alliances which do not lead us to a closer walk with God.

Point Three: *When we are joined with unbelievers, then we must share in their judgment.*

Show how Jehoshaphat's family suffered greatly, his own son marrying into the family of Ahab and producing in Judah a seed for some time that were as wicked as Ahab and Jezebel. Remind them that many times we may feel, as parents, that we can indulge in certain practices without being greatly damaged spiritually, but that though we may think we escape, nevertheless, we expose our children, who are much less mature spiritually and drag them down.

Show how, in the wilderness, all Israel had to suffer because of unholy alliances between believers and unbelievers at that time.

Show how, in the period of the judges, the unholy alliances with the various pagan nations brought a long period of spiritual darkness on Israel.

Remind them, in the New Testament, of how in Revelation 2 and 3 we are taught that the churches of Asia Minor, by allowing unbelievers not only to be members of those churches but even to have influence in them, brought judgment against the whole church so that even the

children of God had to suffer.

Challenge the members of the class to examine their lives lest, by their own compromises, they are exposing their children to temptations which they are not able to resist, and which will in the end destroy them.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a discussion of unholy alliances in our church or in our denomination and their effect on the members of the church (the children of the church, young and old). You may utilize questions 8, 9, 10 for this discussion.

You may also wish to discuss unholy alliances among individual members of the church in the social life they live, in their business life and even in their homes; and discuss how this has affected the church and its testimony. Here you can utilize questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

LESSON FIVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Point out to the class that while Elisha is often remembered for the many miracles associated with his name, that there is another side of the prophet Elisha we need to grasp; and that is his ministry as the successor to Elijah.

In our study of Elisha we shall, therefore, wish to see what principles we can derive for the work of the ministry from the examples in his own life. We should keep in mind that Elijah and Elisha were connected with the school of the prophets where, presumably, later servants of God were being trained in how to be ministers of God's Word. We can relate this to the whole concept of seminaries' today where men are trained by those who have already proven themselves in the ministry of the Word.

Point One: *The faithful minister of God's Word seeks to glorify God.*

You may begin with the example of both Elijah and Elisha who, in their life, sought to bring the people back to God and to glorify God in every thing that they did. You can remind them of Elijah's ministry at Mt. Carmel and of Elisha's desires to glorify God after he took over the leadership of the school of the prophets when Elijah had been taken to heaven.

You may point back to the time of Moses to show how he sought to glorify God and in Exodus 33 asked God to

show him His glory so that he might teach the people rightly.

The Book of Deuteronomy, in particular, is committed to the task of glorifying God in all the experiences that the people had undergone in the wilderness.

You may also make mention of Samuel, who, in leading the people, sought to teach them in chapter 7 of I Samuel, that God had helped them in all the progress they had made in their life, saying "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." You can also remind them of how he chided Saul for his failures to glorify God by waiting on God, and thereby taught both him and Israel that man's chief end is to glorify the Lord.

David, also, throughout his life, sought to give all glory to God for the victories that God wrought through him.

Isaiah, the prophet, was called at a time when the Lord showed him His glory; and his knowledge of the glory of God became one of the great themes of the whole Book of Isaiah.

In the New Testament you can remind the class of Jesus Christ, who announced that His desire was to glorify the Father as He noted in His prayer in John 17:4.

Paul, likewise, in Galatians 1:24, states his task to glorify God in all of his ministry.

Show the class that this is important to understand today. As we have ministers in our churches, both our pastor and visiting ministers, we must remember that these men stand in the pulpit not to glorify themselves but the Lord whom they serve. We serve Christ best, not by praising and glorifying "men, but by glorifying God through them.

Point Two: *The faithful minister of God's Word seeks to protect God's flock.*

Again, beginning with Elijah and Elisha you can show how both of these servants sought to protect the true children of God against those in Israel who would do them harm and also to protect Israel against her external enemies, such as Moab and Syria.

You may go back to the time of Moses and recall how he, time and again, interceded on behalf of the people before God and how, with his hands held up, he looked to God for help in Israel's battles against her enemies.

You may point to Samuel, likewise, who led the Israelites against the Philistines, not as a military leader, but as God's servant, priest and prophet, who would pray for the people before God, before they entered into battle.

David also, who led armies into battle, always fought on behalf of his people, even when he was in flight from

Saul.

Likewise, Isaiah counseled the kings of Judah on numerous occasions regarding their enemies, such as the time he counseled Ahaz regarding the invasion of Syria and Israel. And later he counseled Hezekiah when the Assyrians were invading. And in each case he called on the people to trust in God and not in human strength.

You recall how Jesus protected His own in the New Testament gospels, and even in the garden when He was arrested, His great concern was that no harm fall to His own.

Paul, likewise, throughout his missionary journeys continually sought to protect those who were God's children from the enemies of the flock who would seek to destroy the people of God.

Point out that today, likewise, an important task of the minister is that of protecting God's people from heresies and false doctrines that would destroy and divisions that would pit the people of God against one another.

Point Three: *The faithful minister of the Word of God stands against false leaders.*

You can show how Elijah and Elisha withstood rebellious kings of Israel who sought to lead the people astray and were bold to lay down their lives, if necessary, to withstand the evil influence of false leaders.

You may go back to the time of Moses and remind them of how, in the wilderness, he withstood such priests as Korah, who sought to oppose him.

You could also point to Samuel and his struggles with Saul, how he, who had first anointed Saul, continued to withstand Saul when he made it clear that he would not follow God, though he was a leader in Israel.

Remind them, too, how David continually had to withstand rebellion against the kingdom in his day, and also had to oppose false leaders like Joab, who were out to please themselves and not God or God's people.

You could point to the prophet, Jeremiah, who had to withstand the innumerable false prophets in his day and was virtually alone in the effort. But he was willing to stand to the death that God's people might know the truth.

In the New Testament we, of course, have the example of our Lord's withstanding the Pharisees and Sadducees and other false teachers in His day. He did not silently stand by while they propagated their false doctrines.

Paul, likewise, in the Book of Galatians, showed how he had to withstand those who came in with false doctrines into Galatia, dividing the flock. Paul was not afraid to stand up to any who was teaching what was in error.

Show that, likewise, today, the task of the "ministry is to inform the people of God's truth and to withstand any teachings that might enter into the church which would be contrary to that truth.

Point Four: *The faithful minister of the Word seeks to prepare others to serve God.*

You can point, first of all, to Elijah and Elisha who spent much of their life-time in working with the school of the prophets, in training and leading the sons of the prophets, so that when they were gone there would be true successors to them, faithful to God's Word.

You could remind them of how Moses prepared Joshua to succeed him and of how Samuel prepared David to carry on the work of the ministry.

You could also note how David sought to prepare Solomon, his son, for the responsibilities of leadership of the flock when he was gone. Generally, down through the history of the prophets, it seems apparent that one prophet learned from another and built on what the other prophets had taught, as Amos apparently built on the ministry of Joel, and Micah clearly drew from the teachings of Isaiah in his day.

Show how Christ disciplined a few who, in turn, would disciple others. By the great commission in Matthew 28, He set the course of the history of the church in those who have been taught of the Lord teaching others in turn.

Show how Paul exhorted Timothy in II Timothy 2:2, to teach others so that they might, in turn, be able to teach others the truth.

Show that even today one important work of the ministry is that of establishing seminaries where many can be trained and that the work of the ministry in the local church centers on training elders and deacons and others in the church, so that the work of the ministry can continue when the present leader is gone.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a discussion of the church's involvement in training of others in the congregation to be leaders, including who is taking part in such training and how available such training is. You may utilize questions 1, 2, and 3.

Another discussion might be centered around the church's challenge to young men to enter the ministry, discussing those who have gone into the ministry, or are preparing for the ministry from your church, and how they may be helped as they are preparing to become ministers of the Word. Here you could utilize questions 5 and 6.

Still another question of great importance that you may discuss is the involvement of your church in ministry to those in the church who are in any particular need or time of distress. Utilize here questions 8, 9, and 10.

LESSON SIX:

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson we will be continuing the history both of Israel and Judah down to the time of the fall of the house of Ahab and the rise of Jehu as king of Israel. Because the subject of this study is the vengeance of God, our particular focus will be upon God's work of cleansing His church by His judgment. You shall wish to point out that judgment falls on the house of God, the church, in history, unlike the judgment that each man will face at the end of history, as he stands before the judgment seat of Christ.

A key verse for this entire lesson might be I Peter 4:17, which says in part "for the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God." This means that the church of God will be judged in history.

Point One: *God will cleanse His church of every idol.*

You should begin by pointing out how God raised up Jehu to be king in Israel and overthrew the house of Ahab. The particular reason the house of Ahab was to be overthrown was its support of Baal worship and the prophets of Baal against God's servants, such as Elijah and Elisha.

You could remind them that the judgment of Jehu against the Baal worshippers was a total one in which every worshipper and supporter of Baal was completely destroyed out of Israel.

Going back to an earlier time, you can remind them of the necessity for Jacob to cleanse his family of every idol they had collected in their long stay in Mesopotamia. You could refer to Genesis 35:2.

Later, in Moses day, you could remind them that God would not even accept Moses as the leader of His people until he had conformed to the Law of God and been rid of practices which were lawless.

Similarly, the Lord would not allow the Israel that came out of Egypt to enter into Canaan because there was still too much paganism and failure to conform to God's Law among the people who had come out of Egypt. Therefore Israel was forced to wander 40 years in the wilderness before the Lord would allow them to come in to be God's established people in Canaan.

You could point, too, to the efforts of Josiah, the king, in later history, as he sought, by his reform, to rid the nation of every idol. And yet, he failed to do so, so that God brought His judgment against the people of Judah.

It is evident also from Malachi's prophecy that in his day the people once again were collecting idols and wandering away from God, so that they had to be disciplined and punished by 400 years more of silence before Christ came.

You could certainly point to Jesus' work of cleansing the temple in His day, showing that God would not tolerate the unclean and idolatrous habits that had developed among the people of Judah.

Two passages which you might wish to point to are I Corinthians 3:15 and II Corinthians 5:10. The I Corinthians passage speaks of the judgment that will come by fire destroying everything that is unacceptable to God out of the church and out of the lives of believers. In II Corinthians 5:10, Paul speaks of the certainty that everyone must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of all that he has done. This may easily lie in with the picture of Jesus in Revelation 1, where the burning eyes of Jesus penetrate the churches of Asia Minor and judge them for their sins, seeing everything that is unclean and lawless and judging it.

Help the class to see that we, today, must be constantly aware that our church and our denomination are under judgment from God, and that God will not accept the church that is allowing any false teachings or any false standards to enter in.

Point Two: *God will remove every faithless leader from His church.*

Here you could begin with God's removal of Jehu because of his failure, though he had been God's instrument for disciplining Ahab.

You would want to make the point that there are no heroes among men in God's sight, that though one might be used by God to do what needs to be done in the church, if his own heart is not right, he will not be acceptable to God.

You could point to the example earlier of Jacob's removal of Reuben, Simeon and Levi from leadership in the church because they were not right before God.

In later history we have the example of Korah removed in the wilderness because he was rebellious in his heart, and Eli, the priest removed with his two sons because they failed to be faithful in the exercise of the priestly office.

Later, of course, we have the example of God's removal of Saul and then, after that of many kings, prophets and

priests who proved to be faithless, though they had been called to serve God.

In the New Testament we see how Jesus rejected the leadership of the Pharisees and Sadducees and turned to fishermen and tax collectors to raise up new leaders for His church.

This is very evident in the messages to the churches of Asia Minor as well, when Jesus rejects those leaders in those churches that are causing the people to sin.

Help the class to see that in our day and time also, in the church, we are not to make heroes of men simply because they have power in the church or seem to get things done. We must beware lest we praise men who are the instruments of God in His church, but whose private lives do not honor Christ or exalt His Word.

Point Three: *God will allow no compromise in cleansing His church.*

You can show how in Judah God would not tolerate or allow the wicked Athaliah to continue to govern in Judah, but removed her in preference for one who was subject to His faithful priest, Jehoiada.

You can go back to an earlier time in history to see how the Lord rejected Ishmael, though Abraham pled for him, because Ishmael was not the one that God had chosen. Similarly, Esau was rejected, though Isaac pled for him.

Later, we see that God rejects the sons of Eli and the sons of Samuel, though Samuel, himself, was faultless in his training of his children.

Likewise in later history, we have the example of God's removal of Absalom, though it was his ambition to be the king of Israel in the days of his father, David.

Nehemiah is an example of one who will not compromise when he refuses to let the Samaritans, who were not believers, help the Israelites in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Jesus, though he loved the rich young ruler, would not compromise **His** standards to allow him to follow Him; and the rich young man went away sorrowing.

Point to Philippians 3:19, where Paul speaks of those who had been leaders in the church, but whom God will not accept because their god is their belly.

Challenge the members of the class to pray for the church: that neither the church nor its leaders will be guilty of compromising the faith of Christ for expediency.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead the class in a discussion .of the

involvement and the possibility of the involvement of the church in non-Christian activities which would compromise its testimony before the community. Here you could utilize questions 1 through 5.

You might also encourage the class to discuss the importance of those who are not leaders and not well known in the church, nevertheless, being faithful counselors and supporters of those who do lead. Here you could utilize questions 6 and 7.

LESSON SEVEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

You will wish to point out to the class that beginning with this lesson we will be studying the messages of the prophets of Israel and Judah over a period of several centuries.

Remind them that our plan is to study first the historical background, which we have just done, and then to study the messages of the prophets delivered during that period of time. Thus, we will be studying four prophets in the next few lessons who prophesied during the period just studied in our historical survey.

Remind them that the prophets make clear that the failures of the kings of Israel merely reflected the failure of the people in general. The people were fully guilty of rebellion against God and indifference to His Law. They liked their rulers as they were because they could freely sin.

In this lesson our subject is Joel, and you could briefly remind them of what we do know about him and what is not certain. Stress the fact that knowing the background of Joel is not vital to our understanding the message which God brought through Him.

Point One: *The basis of return to God for His people is always God's revealed Word.*

You should begin by pointing out that Joel made his appeal to the people of Israel to repent and return to God on the basis of the revelation of God to Moses about Himself in Exodus 34:6, 7. Joel was appealing to the nature of God, as it is revealed in Scripture, as the sole basis of our hope of His receiving us, if we return with broken hearts to Him.

You could show that earlier, Moses, in the Book of Deuteronomy, in a similar way, appeals to the people to return to God and be faithful in their commitment to Him, as they prepare to go into the land. Thus, he reminds them briefly of the revelation that God has given through him for the people as the basis of their repentance and return.

You could point also to I Samuel 7, where Samuel, likewise, leads the people to God's Word and to an appeal that they return to God on His basis in accord with His revelation of His good will for them.

You might also wish to point out the case of Elijah who, in I Kings 18, carefully reminded the people, as he built the altar, of their great spiritual heritage and of the covenant of God with His people so that again he called them to return to God in accord with God's revelation of Himself to His people at an earlier time.

You might mention, likewise, the prophet Isaiah, who, in Isaiah 40 and again in 55, showed plainly that the basis of comfort and hope for the people of God was the Word of God which was sure and dependable and could be acted upon.

Josiah, likewise, in leading the people of his day to revival, did so on the basis of the recovery of the Word of God, the Pentateuch. Josiah put that Word into effect in the lives of the people as the basis of revival.

Similarly, in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, it was Ezra the ready scribe in the Word of God who was the great spiritual leader of the people back to God. The basis of return was a renewed teaching of God's Law.

As Jesus began His earthly ministry, publicly, we read that one of the earliest things He did was to sit down with His disciples and go over God's law, showing that it was still the basis of the peoples' right relationship to God. We see this in the Sermon on the Mount.

In II Peter 1:19-21, you can remind them of what Peter says about the certainty of God's Word as the infallible guide for our repentance and return to the Lord.

Paul, in Acts 20:32, speaks to the elders of Ephesus reminding them that the Word of God is that which alone can guide them into a right walk with God. And he reminds them that in the days of his ministry he brought to them the whole counsel of God.

Finally, you can mention Paul's words to Timothy in II Timothy 3:14-17, where he, again, shows the sufficiency of the written Word of God, the Scriptures, to bring us to complete spiritual maturity.

Stress for the class the importance of God's Word today, if the church is to continue on the right course and if the people of God are to continue to return to God in faithfulness.

Point Two: *God's call to His people is always with a promise of deliverance from their distress.*

You can begin by reminding them that the prophet Joel assures the people that if they repent and return to God, that God will remove from them the northern army, that is,

the army that God has threatened to bring against them in punishment, if they do not repent.

You can go back to the time of Samuel and remind them how he, likewise, promised that if the people turned to God with their whole heart and sought only Him, that God would deliver them from their enemies who, in that day, were the Philistines.

Likewise, later in Isaiah chapter 7, we read of the message of God through His prophet, Isaiah, to Ahaz, the king, promising deliverance from those enemies to the north that threatened Judah in Ahaz's day; Syria and Israel.

In the New Testament, Jesus, in Matthew 11:28-30, gives a general invitation to all who will come to Him and follow Him, that they will be relieved of their labors and their heavy burdens, whatever they are.

In Acts 2:40, Peter, in the great sermon at Pentecost, cries out to the people, calling them to save themselves from the wicked generation that threatened them in that day, by faith in Jesus Christ.

You may conclude this point by challenging the people not to be overcome by the distress that may threaten them day by day in their life, but rather to lay hold of the promises of God: that if they turn to Him with their whole hearts, He will deliver them out of every distress.

Point Three: *God always joins the promise of blessings to the call to come to Him.*

Here you will wish to begin with Joel and the promise he made in that day of the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would be poured out upon those who did repent and return to the Lord with broken and contrite hearts.

You can mention, also, the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 and the promises of blessings on him and his seed and indeed, on all the nations of the earth, through him, which God attached to that call.

Psalms 2 is a good basis for pointing out the promise of God's blessings on those who flee from the world and take refuge in Him. The Word of God promises, at the close of that Psalm, that they are blessed who take refuge in the Lord.

In Malachi 3:10, likewise, toward the close of the ministry of the prophets of God, God calls the people of that day to try Him and see if He will not pour out upon them great blessings if they honor Him in their lives.

In the New Testament, Jesus, though He begins His public ministry by teaching the relevancy of God's Law to the people of that day, nevertheless, opens the entire message by a series of beatitudes, or blessings of God on those who are His children.

Paul, therefore, in Romans 12, after having expounded on the gospel and its meaning for the people of God, challenges the people, on the basis of God's rich blessings to them, to live their lives for Him.

Challenge the class to study God's Word and become knowledgeable of the blessings that God has promised to those that are faithful to Him.

Suggestions for discussion:

You could lead a discussion on the place of joy in Christian living and testimony and the basis of real joy in the Christian life, utilizing questions 3, 4, and 5.

You may also lead the people in a consideration of the church's use of modern tragedies to reach the hopeless in the world in a way similar to Joel's use of the tragedy of the locust plague of his day to bring people face to face with God. Here you could use questions 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

LESSON EIGHT:

Introduction to the lesson:

You may point out that the period of Jonah is much easier to ascertain since Jonah's name is mentioned in the historical records, and he is placed in the period of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, according to II Kings 14:25. You may wish to remind the class that this was the last prosperous period for Israel, and that after the time of Jeroboam, the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom declined very rapidly.

At the same time, help the class to picture the political situation, as Assyria was on the rise in Mesopotamia and would become increasingly a threat to the people of Israel.

Point One: *God's children are in rebellion against His will when they fail to show concern for others as He has shown concern for them.*

You may begin by recalling the experience of Jonah who, though he knew God's will, did not wish that will to be done. He did not want the Ninevites to have a chance of repentance. He wished them to be destroyed by God. Therefore, he set about to go in the opposite direction from that direction in which the Lord sent him.

Later, Jonah was willing even to use as his excuse for rebellion against God, God's own revelation to Moses at an earlier time of His graciousness and mercy toward men.

Jonah was unwilling to reflect that same grace and mercy

in his own life in his attitude toward others.

You could remind them also of an earlier time when God, through Moses, spoke to the people, showing them that God chose them because He loved them and not because they deserved to be chosen. Moses particularly stressed this truth in the Book of Deuteronomy, a kind of summary of the meaning of God's dealings with His people over a period of 40 years in the wilderness.

Moses himself showed the people that as God had loved them they were, in turn, to love one another. Thus, God's will is that we do reflect His glory, His goodness in our own lives in our treatment of other people.

You could also point to the time of Mordecai and Esther, when Mordecai made clear to Esther that should she fail in her time of being queen of Persia to help her people, God would raise up help in another way. Whenever we rebel against God, we do not stop God's purpose, we only hurt ourselves.

Jesus, in the New Testament, clearly taught in the Lord's Prayer that we are to expect forgiveness from God in accord with hearts that are willing to forgive others who have wronged us.

Paul, in particular, teaches the importance of Christians bearing the image of Christ in the world. By this, he means that we are to reflect, through the power of Christ living in us, that glory of God which He showed to Moses long before. Paul shows us that we do this as we bear the fruit of the Spirit in accord with the words of Galatians 5:22, 23. The fruit of the Spirit is what makes us spiritual men and women.

Challenge the class, therefore, to examine themselves to know whether in their lives they are truly glorifying God, reflecting the image of Christ.

Point Two: *The selfishness of God's children shuts them out from the joy of their salvation.*

Begin by pointing out how Jonah, in the end, did what God commanded him to do. And yet, there was no joy in his own life in doing God's will. He accomplished nothing but hurting himself. You could go back to the time of Abraham and show how Abraham's stubborn insistence that Ishmael should be his heir brought him much grief for many years until he, ultimately, submitted to the will of God.

Remind them of David's own expression of his loss of the joy of his salvation in accord with Psalm 51, because he had selfishly sought to please himself in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite, and Bathsheba, rather than doing the will of God.

Another illustration is that of Jehu, the king of Israel, who was commissioned by God to destroy Baalism out of the

land. But because he himself rebelled against God, he never was able to receive the fruits of joy in his life, even though he had done what God had commanded him to do. We see the same situation developing in the days of Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament. At that time it is evident from what Malachi has to say that the people again have lost their joy of salvation. They have done so because they have quite trusting and walking in the Lord.

By contrast, in the New Testament, you see Jesus speak of His joy, particularly in the Gospel of John, joy even in the face of death that threatened Him and in the face of many enemies that rose up against Him.

Similarly, Paul could recite the numerous afflictions that he had suffered in his own body, through much of his evangelistic ministry, and still talk about the joy he had in Christ.

Help the class to examine their lives to determine whether or not they truly are enjoying their salvation, or do they serve God grudgingly all the time, in rebellion against what God truly wishes for them?

Point Three: *God is concerned for the lost people in the whole world and not just concerned for the church.*

Point out how God, in the Book of Jonah, revealed Himself to be compassionate toward the Ninevites, even though Jonah, a prophet of Israel, was not.

You can go back to the time of Noah's blessings on Shem and Japheth to see how, at that early time, God was revealing His concern for the nations of the earth.

Remind them how the Lord, both in Genesis 12 and Genesis 22, taught in His promises to Abraham that the blessing to Abraham was to be not only for him and his physical seed, but for people in all the nations of the earth.

You can point out how the Lord, in the Old Testament period while mainly working with Israel, nevertheless, from time to time brought in Gentiles to remind the people continually of His purpose for them as well. He saved Rahab out of Jericho, Ruth out of Moab, Naaman, apparently, out of Syria, and perhaps many more that we do not know of.

In the New Testament, of course, Jesus made clear in the great commission that the good news of His salvation was to reach to the ends of the earth—unto all nations.

You recall how He taught Peter that he was not to despise the Gentiles, but was to witness to them; and how he called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, as Peter and John were to the Jews.

You shall want to end this particular lesson with a strong missionary challenge to the class to be as compas-

sionate for the lost of the world as God is.

Suggestions for discussion:

You could lead the class in a discussion of the joy of our salvation in our serving God in all that we do. It would be well to encourage some personal testimony from members of the class about the joy they have known in becoming involved in the work of Christ. You could utilize questions 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 13.

Another good discussion point would be your church's involvement in the missionary call of Christ, examining together exactly how much involvement your church has in the outreach of the gospel to the ends of the earth, compared to its ministry in the immediate community in which the church is. Here utilize questions 4, -5, 11 and 12.

LESSON NINE

Introduction to the lesson:

Remind the class that this particular lesson is one of two lessons on the message of the prophet Amos. We know more about Amos than we do the other prophets we have studied thus far, because he tells us more in the content of his book.

Remind them that Amos was not from the school of the prophets, and that he had an occupation as a shepherd in the southern nation of Judah until God called him and sent him up to the northland to preach.

Recall for them also that he was doubtlessly a brave man and bold to speak God's truth even in a place where it was not popular.

Point One: *All nations and the church stand under the judgment of God.*

You may begin by reminding the class of Amos' approach, first of all, to show that the nations of the world are under the judgment of God for their cruelty, both to Israel and to one another. But Amos also moves on to show that, likewise, Judah and Israel, the people of God—the church—of that time, were under the judgment of God.

You could go back to the time of the flood, in which we see that God brings judgment finally on the entire world because the people of God of the pre-flood era had failed Him.

Similarly, when God brings Israel into Canaan, He teaches them that the Canaanites were being expelled from that land because of their sins against God, and that Israel, if

she was to remain in the land, must obey God or she too would be expelled.

Recall for the class how Joel, the prophet, envisioned all the nations of the world in the valley of decision, and that they, together with the unbelievers in Judah, would be judged while the remnant would be spared.

Habakkuk particularly, in his day, saw the inevitable judgment of God against Israel and was taught that Israel was caught up in the judgment of God against the nations of the world. Because Israel was sinful like those nations, she would be judged.

In the New Testament, Christ, on the one hand, declares that the gospel is to go to all the nations of the earth in the great commission in Matthew 28. But also, in the Book of Revelation, He makes plain that all the nations of the world will be judged by God at the end of time, when the gospel has gone out to all nations.

Particularly in Revelation 12, you can show how the false church will be judged together with the false and secular nations of the world.

Complete this point by challenging the members of the class to examine themselves and the church of which they are members, lest they too be judged.

Point Two: *Judgment against the disobedient church is certain.*

Show that we can learn from the Book of Amos how God judges the disobedient church. Show, for instance, that Amos teaches us that God will judge churches that show that they have lost their love for one another, by their backbiting and taking advantage of one another and cheating one another. And show that Christ says the same thing to the church at Ephesus, in Revelation 2: that because they have lost their first love, they are in danger of the judgment of God.

Show also how Amos, in speaking to Israel, demonstrates that they are under judgment because they have substituted their false religion for the clear Word of God. And show how, in Christ's judgment on the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira in Revelation 2, they too are judged because they have allowed false teachings and false teachers to lead in their churches.

You can also show how Amos is God's messenger against Israel because the people live in self-satisfaction and in luxury, while showing no real concern for the state of the church in their day.

You can show how Jesus says the same thing in Revelation 3, in His messages to the churches at Sardis and Laodocia, rebuking them for thinking that they were something and for their pride when, in fact, they displeased God.

You will want to conclude this particular point by asking the members of your class to examine themselves and their church, lest the church members have lost their love for one another, lest they have substituted false assumptions and religion for the Word of God, and lest the people are living in self-satisfaction and in luxury while showing no concern for the church of Christ.

Point Three: *God will punish the evil work of the church.*

Show how Amos taught that it was vain for the people to hope in the church to save them from the judgment of God. Likewise, in the wilderness period of Israel's experience, show the vanity of the people, in assuming that God would protect them against their enemies even though they disobeyed God. Instead, He overthrew them in the wilderness.

Recall also that in Jeremiah's day the people trusted in the temple to be their security though Jeremiah warned that the temple would be destroyed.

Likewise, in the days of Christ, He warned the people against trust in the Judaism symbolized by the temple in their day, warning that the temple would be overthrown and destroyed.

You can also show how Amos warned the people of his day against vain hope in their own works, by showing that their assumptions based on their false religion were wrong and would not save them.

You can point to the words of Isaiah, who warns that our so-called "righteousness" is but filthy rags in the eyes of God. And you can point out how, in the New Testament, we are clearly taught that salvation is not by works, but by faith—in opposition to the dominant Jewish doctrine of that day that salvation was by one's works.

You can close this particular section of the lesson by challenging the people to examine their hearts and motivations and also the overall message of their church, lest the people be confident in their own works rather than in the work of Jesus Christ.

Point Four: *The only hope of a church under judgment is to return and seek the Lord by His Word.*

You can remind them that this section of Amos we are studying today closes with a strong appeal to the people to have no more confidence in themselves, but to seek God and to seek His standards of righteousness, rather than their own false religions, for the answers to their needs.

You can show how Samuel, Elijah, Hezekiah, Josiah and the New Testament apostles all called people to seek the Lord and His Kingdom and His righteousness on *His*

terms, by returning to the Word of God, rather try to go in the way that seems right to man.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish for the class to proceed into an examination of their church or their denomination in the light of Amos' message of judgment against the sinful church in his day. You could utilize questions 3 through 7 and 9 and 10.

You may also wish for the class to consider the current events in world history of their day and the evidence of the judgment of God beginning to take effect on the various nations of the world. Here, you could use questions 2 and 8 for this discussion.

LESSON TEN

Introduction to the lesson:

Show to the people that what Amos has to say in the latter portion of his message is very pertinent for us today in learning much truth about the judgment of God on the church in the final accounting of all men to God.

The primary theme in this whole section is the *certainty* of judgment, and many important lessons in judgment are thereby taught through Amos.

Point One: *The unrepentant church will be purged of all who are at ease, (unconcerned for the spiritual well-being of the church)*

Show to them how Amos makes clear that the people who were indifferent to the message of God would surely be brought under the judgment of God because they were unconcerned for the deterioration of their church spiritually and indulged themselves in their own sinful pursuits.

Show that from the beginning God had demonstrated His work of purging the church, even as He refused to let Ishmael become a part of that church and purged him from it.

Show that likewise Esau was purged from the church, displaying an unconcern for spiritual things.

You could point to the time in the wilderness when the majority of the people loved Egypt and the sinful way of life they had lived earlier, refusing to submit to God's will, so that most of Israel was purged in the wilderness and not permitted to come in because God was displeased with them.

You can show that in later history also, the northern kingdom of Israel was purged to the point that the nation

was to be utterly destroyed.

In the New Testament likewise, Jesus, in His coming to earth, purged out of His church the Pharisees and Sadducees who rejected Him. He would not have part with them.

Show from Romans 11:21, 22, that Paul makes clear that Gentile churches will be purged just as certainly as the Jewish church was purged, if they do not remain in faith in the Lord.

You can, finally, point to the Book of Revelation which shows that in the end all the sinful will be purged out of the church. None will be allowed to have part in the New Jerusalem.

The church will also be purged of all who cheat God and man.

Show how Amos particularly points to the sins of the unrighteous in Israel against the righteous, and shows that sin against the righteous is also against God. When they cheat, or wrong, or deal unjustly with God's children in the church, the people are guilty of cheating God as well.

You may wish to use the example of Achan in the early history of the church. Achan tried to cheat God and also his fellowmen and God purged him from the church.

Similarly, in the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of trying to cheat God and deceive their fellowmen; they were accused of having lied to the Holy Spirit, and were purged from the church.

You may also point to Revelation 21:27, which shows that all liars and deceivers will be removed from Christ's church and from the New Jerusalem of God.

The purging of [the church will be a thorough purging, none shall escape.

Begin by pointing to the message of Amos showing that no matter how hard men may try to escape God's wrath they will not be able to, in the day of judgment.

You can point to other passages which point up this truth: Jeremiah 17:10, which indicates that God's judgment is thorough, so that even the hearts of men are judged; and Matthew 12:36 and Romans 2:3.

In the purging of the church only the righteous will remain.

You can show how Amos makes this point in the latter part of his prophecy, when he makes an exception, showing that those who have trusted in God will escape the wrath of God.

You can show also, from Daniel 12:3, Proverbs 4:38, Matthew 5:16 and Philippians 2:15, various elements of this great truth; that the righteous alone will remain in the day when all else has been judged.

You might wish to close this point by again referring to Revelation 21:27, which states the case of the survival only of

those who are faithful to God in the last judgment.

Challenge the class to take seriously the reality of God's judgment on the church and on them as individuals, and to take seriously all the steps necessary in preparing themselves for that day of judgment.

Point Two: *When all that is evil has been purged from the church, then God will be gracious to the remnant.*

You can show how Amos, in the latter words of his prophecy, gives great hope to those who have put their trust in Him. They will be richly blessed.

You can go back to Joel 2:32, and show how Joel began this doctrine of the remnant and began to teach the people that though many would not believe, yet those who did, the remnant, would be richly blessed.

You can show how in the earlier history of God's dealings with His people this principle was already in effect. Thus, when Ishmael was purged from the church, Isaac was richly blessed. And when Esau was purged from the church, Jacob was richly blessed.

Similarly, the people in the wilderness who did not believe were purged because they displeased God and did not have faith. But those who survived and who entered into Canaan were richly blessed.

Similarly, later in history, when Israel, the northern kingdom, utterly failed God, the southern kingdom of Judah, nevertheless, survived and its people were brought safely back into the land of Canaan after the Babylonian captivity; and there, they were blessed.

In the New Testament, likewise, Jesus, after purging the false believers out of His church, gathered those who believed in Him and poured out His Holy Spirit upon them.

You could also profitably point to Revelation 22:3-5 which indicates that the blessings of God on His own children will continue for all eternity.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a consideration of the danger signs that might be apparent in their church, indicating God's displeasure. Utilize questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10.

Another topic which your class could discuss together would be what the class members might do to prolong the useful life of their church in God's Kingdom. Here you could point to questions 5, 7, 8 and 9, to aid in this discussion.

LESSON ELEVEN

Introduction to the lesson:

Lesson eleven deals with the first part of the message of the prophet Hosea. We learn from Hosea's own words that he was active in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and of Jeroboam, king of Israel.

He was very likely active in the latter part of Jeroboam's rule. His message, like Amos', was directed toward the northern kingdom, which, by this time, was a very unstable kingdom, and soon to fall.

Emphasize what was said in the introduction to the lesson, namely, that while there are difficulties in resolving the problem of God's command to Hosea to marry a prostitute, nevertheless, the important point is that it was through the tragedy of Hosea's marriage that God taught both Hosea and the people of Israel something about His love for them and something about the way they had treated Him.

Help the class also to realize that since God was pronouncing the end of the kingdom of Israel, it was important to see that the only hope for the believers in God in Israel was through Judah and what God would do there.

The emphasis of this lesson ought to be on what we can learn about God's dealings with a disobedient church, and thereby, see how God likewise deals with disobedient churches today.

Point One: *The disobedient church is like a faithless wife and her faithlessness to God is like adultery in God's sight.*

You can begin by showing the hurt which Hosea suffered because of his faithless wife, the grief and agony which it caused him. Hosea was able, by this personal hurt which he suffered, better to communicate to the people of Israel how they had hurt God.

You can go back to earlier times and show that this was not the first time the people had hurt the Lord. Those who refused to obey God in the wilderness and rejected the Law of Moses, likewise, caused hurt in their refusal to be submissive to the God who had done so much good for them.

Similarly, in the time of the judges, the Israelites, time and again, caused great hurt to God because they refused to honor His Word or teach it to their children and lived just the opposite of what God had called them to be.

Even the hurt caused to God by David's sin or the sin of Solomon, though something, perhaps, the Israelites had never been aware of was now made clear to them through the suffering undergone by Hosea.

Similarly, Israel, in the time of Jeroboam who

caused Israel to sin, began to hurt God at the very beginning of the history of the northern kingdom. But even Judah, as we are reminded by the prophet Hosea, had displeased God and wronged Him and also had hurt the Lord.

Looking beyond the time of Hosea, we see that similar evidence of the people's hurt toward God was to be seen in the fact of the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah's lament at the time Jerusalem fell expresses something of the hurt that God Himself suffered at seeing His people, because of sin, carried away into bondage.

Finally, in Malachi's day again God expresses that hurt He suffers because of the people and their refusal to honor Him with the best of their offerings, but rather they give Him the leftovers.

In the New Testament, we often see Jesus' hurt expressed, especially as He wept over Jerusalem because He had desired to gather them to Himself and to be their Lord, and yet, they had refused Him and would not come to Him.

You may point to Ephesians 4:30, where Paul warns lest we be guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in us.

This point in the lesson could be concluded by a strong challenge to the members of the class to look at their own lives and to seek to discern whether or not they have grieved the Lord by the conduct of their lives.

Point Two: *Spiritual adultery is due to indifference to God's will (His Word).*

You may begin by showing how Hosea teaches the people that they are destroyed because of a lack of a knowledge of God and His Word. They have refused to obey God and His Word and thus, brought on God's refusal to approve them.

Going back to an earlier time, you can remind the class of how God originally showed His purpose that His believers teach their children to walk in the way of the Lord in doing righteousness and justice (Gen. 18:19).

Later, Moses taught the people the Word of God and was the first to record that Word for them; and he taught them to teach their children after them, so that generation after generation of the Israelites would be knowers and doers of the Word of God (Deut. 6).

You could recall also the failure of the generation after Joshua to teach God's Word so that whole generations grew up not knowing God or anything about Him because they were ignorant of His Word.

By contrast, we see how David pleased the Lord when we read certain of his psalms, such as Psalms 1,19 and 119, all of which express the great love he had for the Word of God.

In the later history of Israel, we have much testimony

of the continuing refusal of the people and their kings to hear the prophets which ultimately led to the Babylonian captivity of Judah and the utter destruction of Israel.

We see, too, that the revival of the people of God was closely connected to their return to God's Word under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, after the Babylonian captivity.

In the New Testament we see great evidence of Christ's own love of the Word of God, that even as a young boy, he was a very diligent student of God's Word. In the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus depended wholly upon that Word which He had studied and was well prepared to face Satan.

Paul, likewise, teaches Timothy in II Timothy 3:14-17, the proper place of God's Word and its continuing power in the life of those who study it.

In all of these examples, the whole point is that spiritual adultery or departure from God is due to people's indifference to His Word. Those who are committed to His Word do not grieve Him.

In conclusion, you will want to stress to the class that the beginning of any church's spiritual adultery from God is its departure from and/or neglect of the Word of God, in its teaching and in its proclamation in the lives of the members of that church.

Point Three: *Continual spiritual adultery by any church brings about the end of that church.*

You can begin by showing how Hosea brings the awful message to Israel that her history is ended, that she has no future, that Israel as a people of God will be ended.

You can show that this is not the first time that God had ended a relationship with a certain people; in the wilderness He cut off His relationship with that generation who came out of Egypt because they had committed spiritual adultery against God. Not one of them was permitted to survive the wilderness experience or enter in to the land of promise, except Joshua and Caleb.

Likewise, the Lord ended Eli's line and told that because he and his sons had failed God, they would have no future in Israel's history.

Similarly, the line of Saul, the king, was ended because he, too, committed spiritual adultery against God.

We see in later history that Jeroboam's dynasty, Omri's dynasty, and Jehu's dynasty were all abruptly ended by God because, in each case, they failed to honor God and turned to the world, committing adultery against God.

Even Judah as a nation would end, though a people of God would continue after the Babylonian captivity.

In the New Testament, Jesus warns that the day will

come when Jerusalem will be destroyed, as it was in A.D. 70. This, likewise, was because the people had committed spiritual adultery against Christ, and Christ would no longer use those people to build His church.

Point to Romans 11:21, where Paul very soberly warns all Gentile Christians that the end of the Gentiles will also come when any of the Gentiles no longer trust in God but turn to others.

In the Book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, Christ particularly warns of the end of some of the churches of Asia Minor, should they not repent; specially, note Revelation 2:5.

In conclusion, challenge the class to be concerned about the future of their particular church and denomination and to seek to prolong its life by faithful and diligent study of God's Word that the church and its future generations may be strong in God's truth.

Suggestions for discussion:

A discussion on spiritual adultery in the churches of the world today would be a very timely subject in the light of our study of Hosea. Here you can use questions 4, 8 and 9.

Another discussion topic that could be very helpful to all class members would be on the subject of our learning of God's love through tragedy and trial, as Hosea suffers these things. Here utilize questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

LESSON TWELVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

You will want to remind the class that at the close of chapter 8, the death knoll had been sounded for Israel as a nation. It would not survive very long because God had determined to destroy the nation.

Therefore, Hosea, in particular, points the people toward Judah, so that those who are righteous in Israel may find their way south where there is salvation offered, through God's gospel.

Point One: *Only God's grace can triumph over the failures of men.*

You can begin by showing how God, through Hosea, announces that there is to be a salvation for those in Israel who repent and turn to Him, in faith. Their salvation is being worked out already through Judah, which will be the channel of God's blessings. This has come, in spite of the

sinfulness of Israel, as a last resort, a means of deliverance for those who will hear the prophets.

You can show that the grace of God has always been that which alone was able to overcome men's failures. In the pre-flood era, man had utterly failed God; but God, nevertheless, showed grace toward Noah and his family; and man survived.

In the days of Abraham, his forefathers in Mesopotamia had utterly failed God and fallen into paganism, but God entered into the life of Abraham by grace and rescued him from paganism to revive man's hope again.

In the life of Moses, we see also, that as a young man he attempted to serve God, but utterly failed. And God, by His grace, reached out to find this wandering shepherd in the wilderness, 80 years old, and by His grace used him to save Israel.

Similarly, we see how, in the days of Israel's first king, Saul, Israel was once more headed toward destruction, but God, in His grace, raised up David to bring them back to God.

After the Babylonian captivity, again the grace of God supplied such men as Ezra and Nehemiah to set the people back on the right path.

Of course, the great example of the grace of God is the coming of Jesus Christ into a world that was hopelessly lost in sin and to a people who were under the heel of the mighty Roman Empire. At that point God began to work His grace through Christ for the salvation, not only of many in His generation, but of every generation since that time.

Point to Ephesians 2:1-10, which shows how all men similarly are dead in sins until God's reviving grace enters their lives and brings them to salvation.

You would want to conclude this particular lesson by challenging each member of the class to examine his or her heart to be certain that they have been saved by, and rely totally on, God's grace and not on any merit of their own.

Point Two: *God's grace is always based on His freely loving the unlovely.*

You can begin by showing how Hosea paints the unlovely picture of Israel as a faithless whore. Such a picture of unloveliness God applies to Israel as a whole, as a nation.

You can remind them that God has always loved the unlovely, even as He loved unlovely Jacob who was selfish and rebellious against his father and against God.

You can also show how God loved unlovely Israel in the wilderness and determined not to destroy Israel but through later generations showed His grace once more.

Again you can point out the unloveliness of the people in Israel in asking for a king. By this they showed they had no respect for God as their king. Yet God gave them a king and ultimately sent His own Son to be their true King.

Again, Judah's unloveliness in causing the division among the tribes of Israel brought great sorrow to the land. Yet God did not despair, but continued to show His grace and mercy toward unlovely Judah.

Judah continued her unloveliness down to the fall of Jerusalem, yet God, in truly loving them, brought back a later generation to re-inhabit the land, rebuild the temple and the walls.

Certainly none were more unlovely than those who cried for Jesus' crucifixion and demanded His death. And yet, later God sent Peter at Pentecost to preach to those very same people from whom many were saved.

Likewise, when Paul went to Philippi, the people there showed themselves very unlovely to him, in casting him into prison. Nevertheless, God was merciful and through the testimony of Paul, many in that city were saved and a strong church was built.

Help the class members to see that indeed we all were very unlovely and God did not choose any of us because of our attractiveness, spiritually, to Him.

Point Three: *The triumph of God's grace in any life is shown by the appearance of repentance and faith in that life.*

Remind the people of Hosea 14, the concluding chapter, which stresses the fact that God does freely love and will bestow His grace upon His- people; but the people themselves are required to repent and turn to Him in faith. Their repentance and faith give evidence of the working of God's grace in their hearts already.

You can show from Hebrews 11, that the author teaches that we cannot please God without faith and that faith itself is the evidence of God's work in the hearts of all of His saints in the Old Testament times.

Remind the class of Genesis 15:6, which tells of Abraham's faith and righteousness and also Habakkuk 2:4, which teaches that the righteous live by their faith. In all cases, faith is the evidence of God's working in our hearts and without faith we are not acceptable to Him.

Show how John 3:16 teaches the same thing; that the love of God is evidenced in our lives by our believing in His Son.

Show how Paul, in Ephesians 2:8, teaches us that faith is a gift of God, worked by His grace in our hearts.

You can conclude by teaching the class members that the expression of repentance and faith on our part is but the

cry of one who has been born again, as the new born babe in Christ.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead the class in a consideration of the emphasis in your church on God's loving the unlovely and how that affects our own love toward those around us, who are unlovely or who treat us in an unlovely manner. Here you can utilize questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9.

You may also lead the class in a consideration of the worship in church and of how it has prepared the hearts of the worshippers to acknowledge God's grace at work among them, utilizing questions 1, 2 and 8.

LESSON THIRTEEN

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|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1. T | 21. T | 41. T | 61. T | 81. T |
| 2. F | 22. F | 42. F | 62. F | 82. F |
| 3. T | 23. T | 43. F | 63. T | 83. F |
| 4. F | 24. F | 44. T | 64. T | 84. T |
| 5. T | 25. F | 45. T | 65. F | 85. F |
| 6. T | 26. T | 46. F | 66. T | 86. T |
| 7. F | 27. T | 47. F | 67. F | 87. F |
| 8. T | 28. F | 48. T | 68. F | 88. T |
| 9. F | 29. F | 49. T | 69. F | 89. T |
| 10. T | 30. F | 50. T | 70. T | 90. T |
| 11. F | 31. F | 51. T | 71. T | 91. T |
| 12. F | 32. T | 52. F | 72. F | 92. T |
| 13. T | 33. T | 53. F | 73. F | 93. F |
| 14. T | 34. T | 54. F | 74. T | 94. T |
| 15. T | 35. F | 55. T | 75. T | 95. F |
| 16. T | 36. F | 56. T | 76. T | 96. T |
| 17. F | 37. T | 57. T | 77. T | 97. T |
| 18. F | 38. T | 58. T | 78. T | 98. T |
| 19. T | 39. T | 59. T | 79. T | 99. T |
| 20. F | 40. F | 60. F | 80. F | 100. F |

Part II, the review of the quarter on the basis of Ephesians 1:4, ought not to be omitted; and if there is not time in class, because of the test, to go over this content, then urge the class to read and reflect on what is summarized in this section at home. It may be useful simply to read these paragraphs in class and have discussion of them afterwards.

A Review Lesson:

Part I, the test: This may be done at home, or in the class individually or together. If the class is not disposed to do it at all, this entire part may be omitted; however, it is an excellent opportunity for the class to review what has been covered and to see whether they have grasped some of the significant truths in this quarter of study. You, as the teacher, ought to encourage all to test their progress. Working together in the classroom may be a good way to handle this, to encourage the others. If tests are taken individually, it is best not to make the results known publicly.

The questions have been arranged so that the pupils may check the answers in the lessons. Questions are by the lessons, for easier reference.

Below, you will find the answers to the questions.