

He Gave Us Prophets

Lesson 8

Unfolding Eschatology

Lesson Guide



thirdmill

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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:32)

II. Mosaic Eschatology (2:01)

Moses told Israel:

- Hard times were coming: exile from the land of promise.
- Eschatological hope: one day things would be much better.

A. Covenant Cycles (2:42)

Cycles of judgment and blessing would characterize the relationship between God and his people.

B. Covenant Culmination (3:30)

Moses saw a definite end or eschaton in the future.

Judgments would increase as Israel went further and further away from God.

God would have mercy on his people and bring them back to the land to enjoy a permanent state of unimaginable covenant blessings.

In its technical use, the term “the last days” means “the culmination of history.”

In the “latter days” or “eschaton,” Israel would be brought back to the land of promise and receive tremendous blessings.

III. Early Prophetic Eschatology (7:38)

The prophets up to the time of Daniel had a basic eschatological perspective that looked very much like Moses’ own perspective.

A. Similarities to Moses (8:19)

God would supernaturally renew the remnant of his people in exile and give them forgiveness.

Early prophets expected a change of heart in those who were taken into exile.

Early prophets taught that Mosaic eschatology was true.

B. Additions to Moses (10:20)

A major covenant event took place between Moses and the early prophets: the Royal Covenant made with David.

1. Kingship (10:50)

The judgment of God would include a desertion of the throne of David.

The restoration of Israel after the exile would include a restoration of the throne of David to great glory.

2. Temple (12:38)

Many Israelites wrongly believed that the temple of God in Jerusalem was inviolable.

The temple of God in Jerusalem would be destroyed.

The prophets promised that in the restoration period after the exile, a glorious temple would be rebuilt.

3. Gentiles (14:16)

Victory over the people of God would be given to the Gentiles during Israel's exile.

The people of the covenant had become God's enemies because of their sins.

“Day of the Lord”

- Yahweh was able to destroy all of his enemies in a single day
- judgment against the people of God after they became his enemies
- a great battle that would take place as the people of God were restored to the land

In the restoration after exile:

- The blessings of God would pour out on Israel.
- These blessings would include the ingrafting of countless Gentiles into the true faith.
- God's covenant people would expand to cover the entire earth.

IV. Later Prophetic Eschatology (18:53)

The reactions of God's people had a tremendous effect on the ways that the "latter days" or "eschaton" would unfold.

A. Jeremiah's Expectation (19:37)

Followed the pattern of early biblical prophecy, Jeremiah predicted that the exile would last 70 years.

This prophecy was fulfilled when the first returnees came back to the land in 539 B.C., under the leadership of Zerubbabel.

B. Daniel's Insight (21:15)

Famous vision of the 70 weeks of years in Daniel chapter 9.

The Israelites had gone into exile, but they still had not repented of their sins.

Because the people had refused to repent, God decided to multiply the length of the exile seven times over.

C. Final Outlooks (25:07)

The last stages of Old Testament prophecy:

- during the restoration period
- after a number of Israelites were released from captivity and returned to the Promised Land

1. Initial Hopes (25:42)

Small groups of Israelites returned to the land. They hoped to see the great blessings from God poured out quickly.

Haggai and Zechariah focused on four eschatological hopes:

- the restoration of David's throne
- victory over Gentile nations
- the restoration of the temple
- the renewal of nature

2. **Final Hopes (26:45)**

Israel had little more than outward conformity to the will of God.

- widespread intermarriage with Gentile women
- widespread apostasy resulted
- the hope of great blessings for Israel were cast into the distant future

Malachi:

- focused on this distant hope more than any other late prophet
- sharply rebuked those living in Jerusalem
- warned them that a day of judgment and blessing was coming in the future

V. **New Testament Eschatology (28:46)**

New Testament writers:

- understood the developments of eschatology within the Old Testament
- added to this the reality of Jesus' ministry

A. Terminology (29:36)**1. Gospel (29:54)**

More than 100 times New Testament writers speak of the Christian message about Christ as the “gospel” or “good news.”

Term “gospel” comes from:

- the Old Testament prophets
- Hebrew word *basar*, often translated “good news” or “glad tidings”

Jesus brought the restoration from exile.

2. Kingdom (32:25)

The New Testament age is the age of the “kingdom” — the restoration of God’s people, and their victory over the world

Jesus announced that the restoration had come in him because God's reign over the earth was being established.

3. Latter Days (33:32)

Old Testament prophets used the term "latter days" to describe the period after exile.

New Testament writers referred to the whole New Testament period as:

- the "eschaton" or "latter days"
- the culmination of prophetic expectations

B. Structure (34:34)

1. John the Baptist (34:55)

John believed that the Messiah would bring the kingdom all at once.

2. **Jesus (35:45)**

Jesus spent much of his ministry explaining that:

- The eschaton was not coming as John and others expected.
- God had decided to bring the restoration slowly.

The New Testament perspective on eschatology, taught by Jesus and his disciples, is known as “inaugurated eschatology.”

- Inauguration of the kingdom: Christ’s life, death, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, and the ministries of the apostles.
- Continuation of the kingdom: the time in which we live today, after the first coming of Christ, but before his second coming.
- Consummation of the kingdom: when Christ returns, the full measure of the restoration

C. Themes (36:30)**1. Exile (37:50)**

- Inauguration: judgment against the covenant people

- Continuation:
 - spiritual exile for non-Christian Jews
 - church discipline and excommunication

- Consummation: everlasting judgment away from the blessings of the new heavens and the new earth

2. Restoration (39:24)

- Inauguration:
 - Jesus is the son of David, the king.
 - Jesus is the temple.
 - Jesus began victory for his people by defeating Satan and the power of death.
 - Jesus sent the Holy Spirit who is the down payment of our inheritance.
 - Jesus performed countless physical healings in his ministry.

- Continuation:
 - Jesus reigns as king over the world.
 - The church is the temple of God.
 - The church has victories and spiritual battles against evil.
 - The Holy Spirit continues in the church as the down-payment of our full inheritance.
 - Christians often receive physical healings and other special acts of providence.

- Consummation:
 - Jesus' kingship will extend to all the world.
 - God will reshape the whole new creation into one temple.
 - There will be a total victory over evil for God's people.
 - The people of God will receive their full inheritance of the new creation.
 - Nature will break forth into a paradise, fully renewed in the glorious salvation.

VI. Conclusion (42:24)

3. In what ways was the early prophets' eschatology similar to Moses' eschatology?

4. In what ways did the early prophets add to Moses' eschatology?

5. What was Jeremiah's expectation regarding the length of the exile, and how was this fulfilled?

6. What prophetic insight did Daniel give regarding the exile and restoration?

11. How does the New Testament handle the theme of restoration in the three stages of the kingdom?

Application Questions

1. How do covenant blessings and curses apply to believers today?
2. How might the behavior of the modern church affect the way the kingdom comes in the future?
3. What might have happened if God's people in the Old Testament had been more faithful in the days before the exile? In the days of the exile? In the restoration after the exile?
4. Explain why John the Baptist's expectation for the kingdom of God was common in his day.
5. How do you feel knowing that Jesus will completely fulfill all the restoration promises from the Old Testament?
6. How should the understanding that we are living during the continuation of the kingdom of God affect the way modern Christians read Scripture and apply it to their lives?
7. If we embrace the picture of biblical eschatology taught in this lesson, how might our views of God, ourselves, unbelievers, and the creation itself be changed?
8. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study? Why?

Glossary

apostasy – Rebellion against God after a profession of faith; total rejection of one's faith, religion or principles

b'aharit hayyamim – Hebrew term (transliteration) meaning “the future”; technical term for “the last days”

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

Daniel – Prophet taken to Babylon as a young man in the first deportation of 605 B.C.; ministered from at least 605-539 B.C.; known for his ability to interpret dreams and for his devotion to God, even when thrown into a lion's den

Day of the Lord – Technical expression (Hebrew: “*yom Yahweh*”) referring to the ultimate defeat and judgment of God's enemies and to the great battle that will take place when God's people are restored to the land

eschatological – Having to do with the study or doctrine of the last days

eschatology – The study or doctrine of the last days

eschaton – The last stage of world history; the last or latter days

euangelion – Greek word (transliteration) for "gospel"; literally "good news"

Ezekiel – Old Testament prophet who ministered in Babylon among the exiles from around 597-586 B.C.

Gentile – Non-Jewish person

gospel – Literally, "good news"; announcement that God's kingdom came to earth through the person and work of Jesus and that it expands toward its great consummation as God grants salvation to those who receive and trust in Jesus as the Messiah

Haggai – Prophet who returned to Judah after the Babylonian exile and ministered in Jerusalem during a four-month period in 520 B.C.

inaugurated eschatology – View of the end times that says the age to come has begun (been "inaugurated"), but hasn't yet come in all its fullness; the "already, not yet"

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

Isaiah – Prophet from Judah who ministered from approximately 740-701 B.C. during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah

Jeremiah – Old Testament prophet from about 626-586 B.C., also called the "weeping prophet"; prophesied about the future of Judah and of the new covenant to come

Joel – Old Testament prophet who ministered sometime during the deportations to Babylon; offered hope of restoration after the exile; spoke of a future outpouring of the Holy Spirit; quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2

John the Baptist – New Testament prophet who called for true repentance and proclaimed that the arrival of God's kingdom was near; identified Jesus as the Messiah and prepared the way for Jesus' public ministry

kingdom of God – God's sovereign and unchanging rule over all of creation

latter days – Expression used by Old Testament prophets to describe the period after the exile and by New Testament writers to describe the New Testament period; also "the last days" or the final culmination of history

Malachi – Old Testament prophet who ministered in Jerusalem sometime around 450-400 B.C.

Moses – Old Testament prophet and deliverer who led the Israelites out of Egypt; man with whom God made a national "covenant of law" and who administered the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant to the Israelites; also appeared with Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration

Zechariah – Prophet who ministered in Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile; prophesied that great blessings would come if the people would rebuild the temple

Zerubbabel – Descendant of David and head of the tribe of Judah who led the return from exile in 539 B.C. and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem