ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET NAHUM, Nahum 1:1

1. We know nothing about Nahum apart from what we learn in the book.
2. His prophecy focuses almost exclusively on Nineveh, capital of the ancient Assyrian Empire.
3. Nahum is one of the prophets who prophesied to outside nations: Nahum, Jonah, and Obadiah.
4. When did Nahum prophesy? A couple of events help us pinpoint the time of his prophecy between 663 BC and 612 BC.
5. The mood of the book of gloating unmitigated by compassion contrasts with every other prophetic book, except perhaps Obadiah.
6. The theme of the book is God’s sovereignty.

II. THE NATURE OF GOD, Nahum 1:2-8

1. The jealousy of God, 1:2
   “The Lord is jealous”
2. The wrath of God, 1:2
   “The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies”
3. The patience of God, 1:3a
   “The Lord is slow to anger”
4. The power of God, 1:3b
   “The Lord is great in power”
5. The sovereignty of God, 1:3c-6
   1) They will be safe, 1:7.
   2) Nineveh will be destroyed, 1:8.

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH, Nahum 1:9-11

1. Nahum picks up on the theme of Nineveh’s destruction in the final verses of our text.
2. In Isaiah 10:24-27, the prophet declared that the Assyrians will be destroyed. Now the time has come for God to carry out that promise.
3. The Assyrian nation considered itself to be an impenetrable thorn hedge but they will not stop God, 1:10.
4. The Assyrians were intoxicated on pride in their own power. That pride would be their downfall, 1:10.
5. They think they are safe, but they will be utterly consumed like stubble, 1:10.
6. In our final verse, Nahum refers to a person who will plot evil against the Lord, 1:11. This could be a person or it could be Assyria personified.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- Nahum provides a comprehensive and suggestive picture of God. The biblical picture of God is not a simple portrait but a portrait that includes many shadows and dimensions.
- Nahum provides a clear picture of the ultimate end of evil. Evil will eventually succumb to the sovereignty of our holy God.
- Nahum says that although Judah is suffering and Nineveh is succeeding, the final score is not in yet.
EVERYONE ACCOUNTABLE
Zephaniah 1:1-11

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH, Zephaniah 1:1
   1. All we know about Zephaniah is in this book.
   2. His name means “hidden or protected by Yahweh.”
   3. Our text traces his ancestry back to Hezekiah, king of Judah from 725-687 BC.
   4. He prophesied during the days of Josiah, son of Amon, 640-608 BC.
   5. Zephaniah is one of the most severe of all the prophets.
   6. We see in Zephaniah some common themes from earlier prophets.

II. THE DAY OF THE LORD
   1. The prophecy of Zephaniah focuses on “the day of the Lord.”
      1) A day in the past, Lam 2:2
      2) A day in the present, Joel 1:15
      3) A day in the future
   2. The day of the Lord is a moment in time when God reveals his sovereignty over human history.

III. THE COMING JUDGMENT, Zephaniah 1:2-3
   1. This word of judgment comes from God.
   2. He describes this judgment with several images.
      1) Like a flood
      2) Like an earthquake
      3) Like cutting off an arm or cutting down trees
   3. This universal judgment includes but is not limited to Judah.

IV. JUDGMENT ON JUDAH, Zephaniah 1:4-11
   1. He pronounces a coming judgment on Judah, 1:4.
   2. At the heart of Judah’s problem is their worship of idols, 1:4.
   3. Three specific groups will come under judgment.
      1) Those with divided allegiance, 1:5
      2) Those who once served God but now no longer serve him, 1:6
      3) Those who have never sought the true Lord, 1:6
   4. He identifies this time of judgment as “the day of the Lord,” 1:7.
   5. Judah will be a sacrifice and God invites the nations to observe the judgment on Judah, 1:7.
   6. Zephaniah lists further those upon whom judgment will come, 1:8-11.
   7. The punishment will come in the form of “the great day of the Lord,” 1:14-18.
   8. Those who are true believers must seek the Lord, 2:1-3.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- The day of the Lord is imminent (1:14).
- The day of the Lord will be a day of terror (1:15) that will bring judgment on mankind’s sin (1:17).
- The day of the Lord will be accompanied by great convulsions in nature (1:15).
- The day of the Lord will be universal in its effect, falling upon all creation (1:2-3; 2:4-15).
- Surviving the day of the Lord will be a remnant with which God will rebuild his people (3:12-13).
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PRESENT JUDGMENT,
   Zephaniah 3:1-5

1. Zephaniah concentrates on God’s judgment of Judah.
2. He labels the people of Judah “oppressors, rebellious and defiled,” 3:1.
3. Zephaniah indicts the people on three counts of rebellion, 3:2. The first sign of their rebellion was disobedience.
4. Zephaniah also indicts the people for their hardheartedness.
5. Further, Zephaniah indicts the people for spiritual insensitivity. Judah “does not draw near to her God.”
6. To whom was this message of judgment directed? The prophet identifies four groups of leaders, 3:3-4.
7. How different from God these leaders were, 3:5.

II. THE RESPONSE TO THIS JUDGMENT,
    Zephaniah 3:6-9

1. He describes the judgment on the nations in 3:6-7.
2. Some in Judah who had remained faithful were to wait for the Lord, 3:8.
3. Notice several things about this judgment of God.
   1) The certainty of judgment, 3:8
   2) The character of judgment, 3:8
   3) The comprehensiveness of judgment, 3:8
4. As a result of this judgment, God will purify them, 3:9.
5. Who will be included in this purified people? Zephaniah includes the “peoples” along with those in Judah, 3:9.

III. GOD’S PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE,
    Zephaniah 3:11-17

1. The prophet points to a day in the future that will be a day of transformation, 3:11-12. God will use this experience of judgment, not to shame them for who they are but to shape them into who God wants them to be.
2. That future day will also be a day of security, 3:13, 15. This security does not come from their own achievements but from God, 3:15.
3. That future day will be a day of rejoicing, 3:14. In a verse reminiscent of the psalms, the prophet interrupts his dirge of doom with a paean of praise. “Sing” and “shout” are words of worship and celebration.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

Zephaniah provides some important lessons about judgment:

- Zephaniah reminds us, first of all, that we cannot fully understand God without recognizing his judgment.
- Zephaniah also reminds us that judgment begins with God’s people.
- Zephaniah reminds us further that the purpose of God’s judgment is not destruction but correction.
COMPASSION FOR THE LOST
Obadiah 1:1-4, 10-17

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET OBADIAH, 1:1
   1. The prophet’s name, Obadiah, means “worshiper of God” or “servant of God.”
   2. This book is a part of a body of literature called anti-Edom polemics.
   3. The Edomites had a profane and proud spirit because they thought they were impregnable.

II. THE REALITY OF JUDGMENT,
    Obadiah 1:1-9
   1. Obadiah’s word for Edom was a word of doom.
   2. Edom’s pride is expressed in the confident question: ”Who can bring me down?” 1:3. Obadiah answered, “God will.” 1:4.
   3. Obadiah likened the pride of Edom to the eagle that makes devastating attacks on helpless victims, 1:4.
   4. The doom Obadiah predicted for Edom would bring about the total destruction of the nation, 1:5-9.
   5. Obadiah explained that this judgment on Edom would be accomplished not by a single nation but by a collective group of nations who would respond to the call of God.
   6. Notice also that Obadiah attributed this coming doom on Edom to the judgment of God. In Obadiah’s prophecy, Edom becomes almost a type of the evil powers of the world.

III. THE REASON FOR JUDGMENT,
    Obadiah 1:10-17
   1. The judgment will come because of a time when the Edomites gloated over Israel’s disaster and participated in the ransacking of Jerusalem.
   2. But when did this happen?
      1) One possibility was the conquest of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram, 2 Chronicles 21:16-17.
      2) Another possibility was the invasion of Jerusalem and its destruction by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC, 2 Kings 25.
   3. The point is that God’s judgment on Edom was a response to Edom’s treatment of Israel.

IV. THE RESULT OF JUDGMENT,
    Obadiah 1:21
   1. The judgment that will fall on Edom will bring total and permanent destruction, 1:18.
   2. For Israel, this intervention will be a day in which God will reveal his sovereign power over all the nations by delivering Israel, 1:17, and establishing his kingdom, 1:21.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- The prophecy of Obadiah reminds us, first of all, that things are not always as they seem.
- The prophecy of Obadiah also reminds us that actions have consequences.
- Finally, the prophecy of Obadiah reminds us of the sovereignty of God.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH, Zechariah 1:1
1. Zechariah is the longest of the Minor Prophets and the one most characterized by visionary thought.
2. He began his ministry in the second year of Darius, in 520 BC.
3. Zechariah was motivated by three purposes:
   1) To bring about spiritual revival, 1:2-3
   2) To inspire the people to complete the temple, 1:16 and 4:7
   3) To comfort and console the people, 1:12-13
4. The problem is the inability of the people of Israel to let go of the past.

II. LETTING GO OF THE PAST AND MOVING TO THE FUTURE, Zechariah 8:1-13
1. Beginning in chapter 8, the prophet describes God’s future for them by delivering ten messages.
2. The first message: As they move toward the future, the Israelites need to devote themselves completely to God, 8:2.
3. The second message: the prophet promises God’s return, 8:3.
4. The third message: the prophet pictures a future characterized by stability and peace, 8:4-5.
5. The fourth message: the prophet affirms the adequacy of God’s power, 8:6.
6. The fifth message: hope based on a three-fold promise from God, 8:7-8.
7. The final five prophecies, 8:9-23
   1) The prophet promises a lavish future in contrast to past scarcity, 8:9-13.
   2) With God’s promise comes a call to responsibility, 8:14-17.
   3) Fasting will be replaced by feasting, 8:18-19.
   4) God will use Israel as his instrument to communicate his message to the world, 8:20-22.
   5) God will raise up a special individual to lead others in the days ahead, 8:23.

III. THE PROPHET’S PREDICTION, Zechariah 9:9-12
1. Two themes ring out from Zechariah 9:
   1) God will destroy Israel’s enemies, 9:1-8.
   2) God will send his king to deliver Israel, 9:9-17.
3. Zechariah then describes this coming king as “gentle, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey,” 9:9.
4. Zechariah announces the result of the final battle over evil, 9:10-12.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT
- We need to let go of the past.
- We need to move forward to the future.
- We need to understand the meaning of our present.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE WOMEN, Luke 24:1

1. These women did not expect to find an empty tomb.
2. Who are these women?
   1) Joanna is the wife of Herod’s servant Chuza, Lk 8:3.
   2) Mary, the mother of James and Joses is also there.
   3) And Mary, who comes from the town of Magdala is there.

II. WHAT THE WOMEN SEE, Luke 24:1-5a

1. The women are confronted by two unexpected sights.
2. These women see an empty tomb, 24:2-3. So where did Jesus go?
   1) The women are at the wrong tomb.
   2) The disciples have stolen Jesus’ body and hid it somewhere else.
   3) Jesus revives and escapes from the tomb.
3. Each of these explanations is fraught with difficulties.
4. The women also see two messengers from God, 24:4.
5. In response, the women “wonder” and are “frightened,” 24:4-5

III. WHAT THE WOMEN HEAR, Luke 24:5b-8

1. The declaration “he has risen,” 24:6.
2. Jesus already predicted these events.

IV. WHAT THE WOMEN SAY, Luke 24:9-12

1. What the women witness with their eyes they now share with their word of testimony to the other disciples.
2. The rest of the group is understandably skeptical about such a preposterous claim.
3. Peter, as he often does, takes the initiative in investigating the women’s claims.
4. As a result of his investigation, Luke tells us that Peter went away “wondering to himself what had happened,” 24:12.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

As we celebrate the resurrection again on Easter Sunday, we need to remember that the resurrection is not only an event in the past to acknowledge. The resurrection is also an event to experience in the present.

Because of the resurrection, we can first of all affirm that Jesus is alive. The uniqueness of the Christian faith is that it offers a personal Savior who lives with us.

Because of the resurrection, we can also declare that Jesus is Lord. When we come to the point where we recognize Jesus as the Lord of our life, then we have fully experienced what the resurrection is all about.
THE PROMISE FULFILLED

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT


1. These two travelers are a part of the larger group of Jesus’ followers.
2. Surprisingly, we do not know the location of Emmaus.
3. These two travelers talk about “everything that had happened,” 24:14.
4. Suddenly Jesus joins them but they do not recognize him, 24:16.
5. Jesus immediately engages the two travelers in a discussion about the recent events in Jerusalem, 24:17.
6. Still feigning ignorance about these events, Jesus evokes from the two travelers a succinct summary of what happened in Jerusalem, 24:19-21.

II. EATING WITH JESUS, Luke 24:28-32

1. When they finally arrive in Emmaus, the two disciples insist that he stay with them, 24:29.
2. As Jesus breaks bread and prays with the disciples, they recognize him, 24:30-31.
3. What caused the sudden recognition?
   1) They see the nail prints in his hands.
   2) They recognize his voice.
   3) Maybe God simply chose at this point to remove some veil from their eyes that had prevented them from recognizing Jesus.
4. As soon as they recognize him, Jesus disappears from their presence.
5. The Emmaus road travelers respond in two ways.
   1) They rehash their conversation with Jesus, 24:32.
   2) They return to Jerusalem.


1. As the two disciples join the others back in Jerusalem, they learn that Jesus has also appeared to Peter, 24:34.
2. The Emmaus travelers add their story to that of Jesus’ appearance to Peter, 24:35.
3. Fear morphs into amazement and the seeds of faith are planted that will blossom in the days ahead as these first century disciples, boldly and without hindrance, preach the good news of the kingdom of God, Acts 28:31.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- As Luke’s story unfolds, he reminds us on the one hand of the continuity between Jesus as he lived out his life on this earth and the resurrected Christ.
- Yet, they also note the distinctiveness of Jesus’ resurrection body.
- But in both its continuity with his earthly body and its discontinuity, the resurrected body of Christ affirms his victory over death.
- Finally, Jesus’ resurrection assures us of our ultimate resurrection as well.
A Refined People
Zechariah 13:1-9

Analysis of the Text

I. THE CHARACTERS IN THIS DIVINE DRAMA OF THE FUTURE

1. We see the one who speaks, who is God, 12:1.
   1) He is the one who created the world.
   2) He is also the one who sustains the world.
   3) He is the one who guides the human spirit.

2. We also see the one by whom these promises from God will be carried out, the “one they have pierced,” 12:11, which we understand to be a reference to the coming Messiah.

3. We also see the ones for whom these promises will be carried out, which is Israel, 12:1.
   1) Physical Israel
   2) Spiritual Israel, Rom 9:6-8, Gal 3:16; Rom 2:28

II. WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO OPPOSE GOD? Zechariah 12:1-9

1. They will drink from the bowl of God’s wrath, 12:2.
2. They will be wounded and lacerated by the rock, 12:3.
3. God will wreak havoc on them, 12:4.
4. Instead of destroying God’s people, they will be destroyed, 12:6.
5. This will happen “because the Lord almighty is their God,” 12:5.

III. WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO GOD’S PEOPLE? Zechariah 13:1-9

1. The Lord will open to the people of Israel a fountain that will cleanse them from sin and impurity, 13:1.
2. As a result of this cleansing, God says that the idols will be removed, 13:1-2a.
3. As a result of this cleansing, God says that the prophets will be removed as well, 13:2b-6.
4. How will all of this be accomplished? The good shepherd will be put to death. Two things will follow the death of the shepherd, 13:7-9.
   1) Judgment
   2) Refining
5. A day is coming when the enemies of God will be destroyed and the Lord God will reign supreme.

Application of the Text

➢ Someday, everything we know, the material things around us, this world in which we live – all of this will come to an end.
➢ Someday the forces of evil in this world, which seem at the present time to be so much in control, will be defeated.
➢ Someday, those who oppose God will be once and for all defeated and destroyed. And those who love God will be exalted to a new level of fellowship with him.
➢ What then should we do? “We need to live as if each day were the last day.”
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET HABAKKUK, Habakkuk 1:1

1. The name of the prophet means “to caress” or “to embrace.”
2. He prophesied after 625 BC, perhaps as late as 600 BC.
3. The prophet wonders why God has not acted to deal with the wickedness under Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.
4. Habakkuk is Israel’s representative before God instead of being God’s representative before Israel.

II. THE PROBLEM HABAKKUK ADDRESSES, Habakkuk 1:1-17

1. Habakkuk directs two complaints to God.
2. To begin with, Habakkuk complains that God allows the evil in Judah to go unpunished, 1:2-4.
3. God informs Habakkuk that he does know what is going on. In fact, God tells him that he is in charge of what is going on, and he has chosen the Babylonians to punish Judah, 1:5-11.
4. Habakkuk wants to know how God can use such an evil people as the Babylonians as the instrument of his justice, 1:12-17.

III. THE PROMISE HABAKKUK DELIVERS, Habakkuk 2:1-5

1. Having presented his complaint to God, the prophet now waits for an answer, 2:1.
2. The prophet positions himself where he can be ready to receive God’s message to him. “I will stand at my watch,” the prophet declares.
3. God responds to the prophet’s complaint not with an answer but with a command. He orders the prophet to write down the vision “on tablets,” 2:2.
4. God wants the prophet to engrave his message on a large stone so any one passing by can see it.
5. As he continues his response, God provides insight into how he carries out his plan.
6. God tells the prophet he will not leave the guilty in Judah unpunished, and he will not allow Babylon to gloat over God’s people.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

❖ God is big enough to handle our complaints.
❖ God is big enough to solve our problems.
❖ God is big enough to confound our understanding.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET HABAKKUK, Habakkuk 1:1

1. Habakkuk is unique among all of these prophets because in the book of Habakkuk the focus is on God himself.
2. His prophecy was probably delivered sometime between 612 BC and 587 BC.

II. GOD’S REDEMPTIVE WORK IN THE PAST, Habakkuk 3:2-13

1. The book ends with a prayer of praise and confidence.
2. The prayer begins with praise for the past. The prophet praises God for his continued intervention in the history of Israel, 3:3-15.
3. He remembers an area (Teman and Mount Paran) where God gave the law to Israel. God made covenant with Israel and provided the law to guide their relationships in that covenant.
4. The prophet also refers to God’s guidance during the Exodus.
5. All of Israel’s past history testifies to God’s provision. Everything he knows about the past gives him the basis for confidence in the future.

III. GOD’S REDEMPTIVE WORK IN THE FUTURE, Habakkuk 3:17-19

1. History has recorded a number of courageous professions of faith.
2. The three friends of Daniel in Daniel 3
3. Peter and John at the temple in Acts 4
4. Alongside those two confessions of faith we can set the testimony given by Habakkuk in his prayer, 3:17-18.
5. Habakkuk draws from some of the richest of Hebrew Scripture for the final note of his prophecy.
   1) Psalm 18
   2) Deuteronomy 32:13 and 33:29
6. The prophet plants his hope in the context of the congregation of Israel by reflecting the language of the Psalms as he closes his prophecy.
7. The prophet gave instructions to the Levites to call the people to praise, for even in that dark moment of Hebrew history, the prophet found hope for the future in the remembrance of what God had done in the past.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

What lessons can we learn from the prophecy of Habakkuk?

- For one thing, Habakkuk reminds us that things are not always as they appear to be.
- In addition, Habakkuk reminds us that God uses different instruments to carry out his purpose.
- Habakkuk also teaches us that trust in God will lead to praise and confidence.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET HAGGAI, Haggai 1:1
   1. Haggai is included in the category of post-exilic prophets.
   2. His name means “festal” and carries the idea of celebration.
   3. When the exiles returned home in 536 BC, they started to rebuild the temple but then stopped in 534 BC.
   4. Haggai appeared on the scene in 520 BC to urge the people to resume their work on the temple.
   5. The book is valuable for its historic insights into the time between the fall of Israel and the work of Nehemiah.

II. THE PEOPLE’S NEGLECT, Haggai 1:2-4
   1. The prophet Haggai addresses his message to Zerubbabel and to Joshua.
   2. Haggai discovers that the work has not been completed.
   3. The prophet locates the problem in the people’s neglect, 1:2.
   4. Their neglect in building the house for God contrasts sharply with the eagerness with which they built houses for themselves, 1:4.
   5. Why did the people neglect rebuilding the house of God?
      1) Opposed by the residents
      2) Used to living without the temple
      3) Discouraged by the lack of splendor of the new temple
   6. For whatever reasons, the people of Israel turned aside from the very purpose for which they returned home – to rebuild the temple.

III. THE PROPHET CHALLENGES THE PEOPLE, Haggai 1:5-6
   1. In the first oracle, the prophet challenges the people to consider their lives, 1:5-6.
   3. He points out the consequences when they become so preoccupied with their own interests that they forget God’s plans.

IV. THE PROPHET EXPLAINS TO THE PEOPLE, Haggai 1:7-11
   1. In the second oracle, the prophet calls his contemporaries again to look at themselves, 1:7.
   2. He presents a narrative that counters their claim.
   3. God wants them to rebuild the temple, 1:8.

V. THE PROPHET PROMISES THE PEOPLE, Haggai 2:6-9
   1. Haggai declares that God will shake up the entire cosmic order, 2:6-7.
   2. In this new temple they will experience the prosperity of God, 2:9.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

❖ Haggai is important historically because it provides information about the obscure period in Israel history.
❖ Haggai is important spiritually because it reminds us of the consequences of self-centered neglect of God.
❖ Haggai is important ethically because it underscores the importance of obedience to God.
TRUE HOPE
Malachi 1:1-11

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. THE PROPHET MALACHI, Malachi 1:1

1. Who is the author of this book? Some feel that the author identifies himself as simply a messenger from God.
2. I believe that Malachi was the actual prophet who wrote this book.
3. Who was this man Malachi? He has the spirit of a prophet but the style of the priest.
4. His approach is that of a scribe with a systematically arranged message.
5. We see seven of these formal arguments in the book’s fifty-five verses.
6. Scholars agree that the prophecy was delivered sometime between 516 and 400 BC.
7. What was the situation when Malachi carried out his ministry? It was a time of difficulty and discouragement.

II. A DECLARATION ABOUT GOD, Malachi 1:2-6

1. In the opening verses of the book, Malachi presents two basic ideas about God.
2. In verses 2 through 5, Malachi mentions the affection of God. “I have loved you, says the Lord,” 1:2. The affection of God was not left to speculation but was proved once for all in a particular event in history.
3. Malachi mentions a second important factor about God in verse 6 and that is the authority of God.

III. A DECLARATION ABOUT WORSHIP, Malachi 2:7-14

1. Malachi condemns the attitude with which the Israelites approached worship and their abuses in worship.
2. Spiritual well-being will not return to their lives until they re-establish the kind of worship that is worthy of him.
3. The first key to worthy worship is the reverence of the worshiper.
4. The second ingredient of true worship is the result in the worshiper.
5. The third key ingredient of true worship is the response from the worshiper.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- Malachi’s declaration about God says something about our UNDERSTANDING OF GOD.
- Malachi’s declaration about God says something about our CONDUCT BEFORE GOD.
- Malachi’s declaration about God says something about our RESPONSE TO GOD.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. INTERFAITH MARRIAGES, Malachi 2:10-12

1. Many a young couple begin marriage with high expectations but end up with a broken marriage.
2. What we experience today, Malachi also confronted in his day. He identified two primary problems leading to broken marriages.
3. The first marriage malady Malachi discussed is interfaith marriages, 2:11. The people of Judah married the daughters of those who were not worshipers of Yahweh.
4. By interfaith marriages I do not mean people of different denominations marrying each other but people of different world views.
5. The Bible forbids such interfaith marriages, Ex 34:16; Deut 7:3.
6. God did not want his people intermarrying with others because such a covenant was incompatible with their calling as God’s chosen people.
7. Interfaith marriages deprive us of the privilege of fellowship with our spouse in the most important dimension of life – the spiritual dimension.

II. IMPERMANENT MARRIAGES, Malachi 2:13-16

1. The second problem is impermanent marriages. To divorce the wife of their youth was to ignore the specialness with which God ordained their marriage.
2. God made us one with our spouse because that is the way he wanted it to be, a permanent one-flesh kind of union between two people that provides a stable setting in which children can be raised, 2:15.
4. So what’s wrong with impermanent marriages? Impermanent marriages contradict God’s original intention for marriage and they deprive us of the stability that will enable us to enjoy all that God intended the one-flesh relationships of marriage to provide.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

- We need to CHOOSE CAREFULLY. We need to be sure that the person to whom we commit our life shares a view of the kind of spiritual foundation upon which life is to be built.
- We need to WORK CONTINUOUSLY. Before a Christian considers divorce, we should do everything we can to make the marriage work, for marriage is a relationship in which God has a stake.
- We need to CRITICIZE SPARINGLY. Before we point an accusing finger at someone else because of their failure in marriage, we need to look into our own lives and acknowledge our failures in other areas of our lives.
- We need to PARDON GRACIOUSLY. We must be committed to ministering in love to those who have fallen short of God’s ideal in whatever area and preserving them in the faith.
A PURE PEOPLE

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

I. GOD WILL RESTORE THE RIGHTEOUS, Malachi 3:1-7
1. Malachi promised that a “messenger” will prepare the way for “the Lord,” 3:1.
   1) He connects the messenger, first of all, with “the covenant.”
   2) Malachi also connects this messenger with “the day of his coming,” 1:2.
2. The day of his coming refers to a specific time when God will manifest his sovereign control over all things.
   1) Malachi affirms the certainty of that day, 3:1.
   2) Malachi declares that this day of the Lord will be a day of judgment.
3. The problem is not the injustice of God but the immorality of God’s people.

II. GOD WILL REMEMBER THE RIGHTEOUS, Malachi 3:16-18
1. The prophet promises that God will remember those who have remained righteous.
2. He then describes these righteous ones, 3:16.
   1) They “feared the Lord.”
   2) They “talked with each other.”
   3) The “honored his name.”
3. What did God do for these who dared to remain faithful to him?
   2) God writes the names of these who are faithful to him in “a scroll of remembrance,” 3:16.
   3) God considers these who are faithful to him to be his “treasured possession,” 3:17.

III. GOD WILL REWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, Malachi 4:1-2
1. Malachi’s contemporaries asked: “Is it really worth it to serve God?”
2. On the day of the Lord, God’s love for his people will be clearly revealed.
3. The concept of the “day of the Lord” permeates the Bible.
4. The day of the Lord identifies a special day when God will bring his world to a conclusion.
5. The distinctive feature of Malachi’s teaching about that day is that it involves two acts:
   1) The coming of the Messenger to prepare the people, 3:1
   2) The coming of the Lord himself to judge the people, 4:1
6. The purpose of the day of the Lord will be to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, 3:18.

APPLICATION OF THE TEXT

Where can we turn to find hope?

- We can turn to the past and remember what God has done for us through Jesus Christ on the cross.
- We can turn to the present and remember what God is doing for us through his indwelling Spirit.
- We can turn to the future and remember what God will do for us when Jesus returns to consummate this age in which we live.