

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

We begin today by returning to last week's handout and starting with the **Book of Obadiah**

<Use last weeks notes>

As you can see by the text, the outlook for the descendants of Esau is not good. They will continue their ways until the Lord uses Israel to punish them into extinction. The nomadic herdsmen, the Bedouins will inherit the land.

Frankly, their only hope is to become believers in Messiah and cease their hatred to the Jews. There are some Arab/Palestinian Christians in the land today, but it is a mixed answer on them abandoning terror and hatred to the Jews.

Prophecy in the book of Jonah

The book of Jonah is essentially a narrative, and consists of well known stories of a reluctant Prophet who runs away from God's call and will, and is brought back to complete his task through an unusual story. When you visit the Holy Land today and go to Tel Aviv, you usually make a trip to Joppa which is the traditional area where Jonah was spat out by the fish on the land. You can see what passes for "Simon the Tanner's House" and peer at the Mediterranean sea and the beauty of the Land.

We know of the preaching to Ninevah (which Jonah opposed), and their coming to the Lord in repentance and Jonah's time under the tree and leaves... *all familiar stories.*

In today's headlines, the Christians that are being exterminated in Iraq are generally from the Ninevah area and are legacy believers from this time. Also many dispersed Jews and Christians from Jerusalem settled there and are the core of believers in the area. The ancient Assyrian city of Ninevah, is located on the outskirts of Mosul in Iraq today.

Most of the prophetic statements in Jonah were fulfilled in the times just after the events were prophesied. As an example the Gentile nation of Assyria and the Ninevah inhabitants were destroyed 150 years after Jonah preached to them and they repented. This shows that GOD has mercy on gentiles who repent, but also that He will ultimately judge sin.

In **Matt 12:39-40** Christ referred to a parallel from the book of Jonah with His own death and Resurrection.

³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

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³⁸ Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

³⁹ He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

These words are important, and do several things we need to understand. First, Jesus acknowledges the fact that Jonah existed, plus he was a prophet, and also the truth of the story of the Great Fish. By using the story of Jonah, he makes a parallel to His own death and resurrection.

Another important truth to remember...Jesus’ words were directed directly to the leaders of the Jewish religion. These scribes and Pharisees were always looking for a sign. The gentiles in Ninevah did not ask for a sign from Jonah, they saw their own wickedness and repented. Unfortunately, what was true with the Jewish Leaders is also true in the church today with so many falling away from the faith, blaming others for not following, and failing to see the truth in front of them. As the scripture teaches:

*³⁶ But I tell you that **everyone will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every empty word they have spoken.** ³⁷ **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”***

I know it is popular to teach that God only wants us to be happy, and that Grace alone is all we need to understand because all of our sins, past, present, and future, have been forgiven...**and it is true...But that grace is not cheap grace, nor is it free grace. We will all be held accountable for our words and deeds at the judgment. Not a salvation issue, but you nor I want to be in front of Jesus being judged by the words or deeds we do in violation of God’s commands. This is true of the sheep and the shepherds.**

Prophecy in the book of Micah

The prophet Micah was from a small town about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem called Moresheth. He lived in the period of time of Isaiah, and Hosea. His name is a shortened version of Micaiah, which means “who is like Yahweh”.

His prophecies included the fall of the Northern Kingdom to the Assyrians. His prophecies included the doom and destruction of Israel, as well as restoration and forgiveness. Much of the prophetic language has themes that call out Israel’s sin and the destruction that will follow.

Human Plans and God's Plans

Micah Ch 2

*Woe to those who plan iniquity,
to those who plot evil on their beds!
At morning's light they carry it out
because it is in their power to do it.*

*² They covet fields and seize them,
and houses, and take them.
They defraud people of their homes,
they rob them of their inheritance.*

³ Therefore, the LORD says:

*"I am planning disaster against this people,
from which you cannot save yourselves.
You will no longer walk proudly,
for it will be a time of calamity.*

*⁴ In that day people will ridicule you;
they will taunt you with this mournful song:
'We are utterly ruined;
my people's possession is divided up.
He takes it from me!
He assigns our fields to traitors.'"*

*⁵ Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the LORD
to divide the land by lot.*

False Prophets

*⁶ "Do not prophesy," their prophets say.
"Do not prophesy about these things;
disgrace will not overtake us."*

*⁷ You descendants of Jacob, should it be said,
"Does the LORD become^[a] impatient?
Does he do such things?"*

*"Do not my words do good
to the one whose ways are upright?*

*⁸ Lately my people have risen up
like an enemy.*

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*You strip off the rich robe
from those who pass by without a care,
like men returning from battle.
⁹ You drive the women of my people
from their pleasant homes.
You take away my blessing
from their children forever.
¹⁰ Get up, go away!
For this is not your resting place,
because it is defiled,
it is ruined, beyond all remedy.
¹¹ If a liar and deceiver comes and says,
'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,'
that would be just the prophet for this people!*

Deliverance Promised

*¹² "I will surely gather all of you, Jacob;
I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel.
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen,
like a flock in its pasture;
the place will throng with people.
¹³ The One who breaks open the way will go up before them;
they will break through the gate and go out.
Their King will pass through before them,
the LORD at their head."*

These verses talk about multiple topics. First there are leaders in the land that actively work against God and His commands. Good is Evil and Evil is good (Micah 3:2). Plots are made to take others money, property and even God's blessings to them. People do this because they have the power to do it. This is a strong warning to leaders of every type. Be honest, lead the flock and do not fleece it. We have studied the verses about Good Shepherds and Bad Shepherds characteristics, but this is a reminder of how a bad shepherd acts and thinks.

We see this in all areas of our life, from Government leaders, Financial Leaders, Institutions, and even the Church. We need to be aware and on guard for those who act this way in every sphere of life.

Also Micah reminds us of false prophets who will tell us what we want to hear, and will not tell us the truth. They will deliberately distort and deny the truth of scripture and will take away the blessings we get from the Lord by understanding and following His will. This is true for us and our children who never learn the truth. There is a point where we are ruined "beyond all remedy".

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Lastly Micah reminds us that God is a Deliverer and He will deliver His people. We will gather them as a flock in Israel (which is happening now), and the Messiah who made the way will come and lead them. Their King and Lord will go before them. **This is a 2nd Coming prophecy.**

What a blessed reminder that God will take care of His own, and He will return to lead them (and us).

Micah also predicts where the Messiah would be born.

Micah 5:2 ² *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

This is the prophecy that King Herod used to understand where the Messiah was prophesied to be born and to try to kill Him. Bethlehem Ephrathah is the Bethlehem near Jerusalem where Christ fulfilled this prophecy in His First Coming.

Micah 4:1-8 also talks more about the Millennial Kingdom and what it will be like

In the last days

*the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and peoples will stream to it.*

² *Many nations will come and say,*

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.*

He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.”

The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

³ *He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.*

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

⁴ *Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.*

⁵ *All the nations may walk
in the name of their gods,
but we will walk in the name of the LORD
our God forever and ever.*

The LORD’s Plan

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⁶ *“In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will gather the lame;
I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief.*

⁷ *I will make the lame my remnant,
those driven away a strong nation.*

The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever.

⁸ *As for you, watchtower of the flock, stronghold of Daughter Zion,
the former dominion will be restored to you;
kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem.”*

The Prophecy in the book of Nahum

Nahum is a prophet from the city of Elkosh, which is thought to be in the Southern Galilee but is not really known. This book amplifies other prophecies and deals mainly with the destruction of Ninevah, which we have already discussed. He must have lived in the 700BC range because several of his prophecies were fulfilled in 612BC (the destruction of Ninevah). Ninevah was truly destroyed and was not even known at its location until 1845 when archaeologists discovered its ruins near the modern city of Mosul.

The lesson to be learned from Nahum, is that God’s judgments may be delayed, as in the case of Ninevah for 150 years, but in God’s time...they will be fulfilled.

Before next week, try and read the remainder of the Minor Prophets and we will finish the OT portion of our study.

Prophecy in the book of Habakuk