



Introduction to the Minor Prophets The Twelve

These prophetic messages were given to declare to God's people his judgement for their faithlessness to the covenant with him. This judgment was not without reprieve however, as God promised restoration and redemption all throughout. The messages of the prophets were carefully constructed into one book and individual messages were orchestrated by God to produce one wholistic message throughout them all.

The timeline of the twelve are all set within a 350-400 year period stretching from between 800 BC to about 400 BC. The nation of Israel had split into two kingdoms; the Northern Kingdom of Israel comprising of 10 tribes, and the

southern kingdom of Judah comprising of Judah and Benjamin. The prophets served as God's messengers, speaking on behalf of the Lord to his people to these two nations, and to surrounding nations as well.

Themes that we will see through this study show us

(a) God's love for Israel, and the horrendous nature of sin

(b) God's Covenantal Commitment to Israel

(c) The necessity for God's people to reflect God's character

(d) Future judgment of the wicked and salvation for the righteous

(e) How God brings about that Salvation in the promise of a new kingdom.

The goal of this survey of the Minor Prophets: Understand better the historical context, central message and timeless truths that we can apply or hold on to in our lives today.

Amos

Historical Setting: Between 775-750 BC during Israel's "Golden Age" under the rule of King Jeroboam II, who led the nation in a series of victorious military conquests and increased the wealth and prosperity of the nation as a whole.

Central Message: Social injustice of the Northern Kingdom, and complete indifference to following the commands of the Lord. Their idolatry has not only affected their relationship with the Lord, it had infected their relationship with those around them. God's judgment is coming for the sins of Israel, because he cares for them too much to let their sin go unpunished. He will however, restore and establish his kingdom through the Messiah, who will come from the line of David.

Outline:

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- Oracles Against the Nations (1:3-2:16)
 - Against Damascus
 - Against Gaza (Philistines)
 - Against Tyre (Phoenicians)
 - Against Edom
 - Against Ammon
 - Against Moab
 - Against Judah
 - Against Israel
- Oracles of Judgment against Israel (3:1-6:14)
 - The Word of the Lord against Israel (3)
 - The Word of the Lord against the cows of Bashan (4:1-13)
 - The cows of Bashan are described in a feminine tense, and is a reference to the women of Samaria who lived in luxury.

- Lament and exhortation over the Israel (5:1-17)
 - The is a lament and call to repentance.
- Woe to those waiting for the day of the Lord (5:18-27)
 - Those in Israel had a sense of self-righteousness. That the Day of the Lord would bring vindication against those who oppressed them and caused them suffering. This was a misunderstanding of the Day of the Lord. It was not a day that would bring judgment on all nations except Israel, it was a day that would bring judgment against all injustice and unrighteousness.
- Woe to those at ease in Zion (Samaria) (6)
- Visions of Judgment (7:1-9:15)
 - Visions 1-3: Locust, Devouring Fire and the Lord's Plumb line (7:1-9)
 - The plumb line is a way to keep a measurement straight. The wall and the plumb line is the measure by which the Lord judged Israel. Israel was the crooked wall that could not stand under the straight measure and scrutiny of the Lord's judgment.
 - Historical interlude: Dialogue with Amaziah (7:10-17)
 - Visions 4-5: Basket of Summer Fruit and the Lord standing by the Alter (8:1-9:4)
 - Theological Exposition on the Sovereignty of God and the restoration of Israel (9:5-15)

Themes: The horrifying effects of sin and breaking covenant with God. God's Covenantal Commitment to Israel. Future judgment of the wicked and salvation for the righteous. How God brings about that Salvation in the promise of a new kingdom.

Timeless Application: God takes social injustice seriously. He does confront sin. He does punish sin. He does care. What are social injustices in our culture, and are we turning a blind eye or rejecting to do anything about it?

Obadiah

Historical Setting: Like Joel, we don't know exactly when he ministered, but because of the context of the message, it's probably dated around 580-570 BC after the fall of Jerusalem. Obadiah was speaking to Edom, Israel's blood relatives who were guilty bystanders and egregious benefactors of Jerusalem's demise.

Central Message: That God will judge Edom. They have set themselves up, taken pride in their strongholds and God will bring judgment on them and all nations because of their pride and transgressions. He will set up his kingdom and include not just Israel, but all nations.

Outline:

- The Lord's Message Against Edom (1b-14)
 - Judgment Proclaimed and Affirmed (1b-9) What will happen.
 - Indictments (10-14) - What they did against Israel specifically
- The Day of the Lord (15-21)
 - Universal Judgment (15-16)
 - Zion Delivered (17-18)
 - The Lord's Kingdom Established (19-21)

Themes: Future judgment of the wicked and salvation for the righteous. How God brings about that Salvation in the promise of a new kingdom.

Timeless Application: There is judgment coming, not just on Israel, not just on Edom, but on all nations. How does that change or affect the way we live? Edom built cities in high and lofty places, and they took pride in that. They found security in those. But ultimately, those failed and they were brought low. What do you find security in, what do you take pride in that maybe without admitting it or maybe without realizing is, you are putting your own faith and security in? Our hope and security should be in the Lord, who will establish his kingdom. That's what we look for, that's what we long for.