



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.

Jonah

Historical Setting: Jonah was a prophet who lived in the early 8th century BC, around 800-750 BC, leading into the military success and economic wealth of the Northern Kingdom.

Central Message: God is a compassionate God and will forgive and show mercy to those who repent of their sin and turn to him.

Outline:

- First Call and Jonah's Selfish Response (1:1-16)
 - Pagan Sailors show humility before God
- God's rescue of Jonah and Jonah's Thankful Response (1:17-2:10)
 - God's Compassion for Jonah
- Second Call and Nineveh's Response to Jonah's message (3:1-9)
 - Nineveh's repentance and God's Compassion
- God's rescue of Nineveh and Jonah's Angry Response (3:10-4:5)
 - Jonah's Angry Response and God's Compassion to Jonah
- The Point: God's Compassion for All Nations (4:6-11)
 - God may be compassionate to whomever he will

Timeless Application: The question that Jonah poses is are we okay with God's compassion for all nations? Are we okay that God actually loves our enemies? This book is designed to act as a mirror. God's expectation of his people is that they reflect his character. That includes his compassion. Jonah sets an example for us that we use to examine our own hearts against. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Are you?

Micah

Historical Setting: Micah is the last prophet to preach to the northern Kingdom, though he was not a prophet sent

specifically to the Northern Kingdom. He is from a small village in Judah, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. His ministry spanned from around 730-700 BC, and he was the last prophet to prophesy to the Northern Kingdom. His ministry spans the time when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was decimated by Assyria, and the Southern Kingdom looked to suffer the same fate.

Central Message: God will rightly judge Israel because of their transgressions, but God will also rightly save a remnant who will make up a third perfect kingdom led by the true king who will be of the Davidic line.

Outline:

1. Micah 1-2: 1st Hear Ye - God Judges Sin
 - a. Indictment and Judgement Against the People (1:2-2:11)
 - b. Hope for the People (2:12-13)

2. Micah 3-5: 2nd Hear Ye - God Restores His People
 - a. Indictment and Judgment Against the Leaders (3)
 - b. Hope for the Lord's Leadership and Restoration (4:1-8)
 - c. Current Crisis and Deliverance (4:9-5:9)
 - d. Future Purging (5:10-15)

3. Micha 6-7: 3rd Hear Ye - God Displays His Character
 - a. Indictment and Judgment Against the Nation (6:1-7:7)
 - b. Hope for the Nation (7:8-20)

There are two reasons that Micah gives for the hope God gives despite Israel's faithlessness to him and their covenant with him.

1. First is because of God's character (7:18-19) God is merciful and forgives sin.
2. Second is because of God's promises and faithfulness to Abraham and his family. (7:20)

Themes: God's covenant love and covenantal commitment for his people, the horrendous nature of sin, the necessity for God's people to display God's character, future judgment for the wicked and salvation for the righteous. How God brings about salvation in the promise of a new kingdom.

Timeless Application: Two points of application. First is the aspect of sin and judgment. God judges' sin. He will not let it go, even among his own people. The second, is that God is merciful and, through Jesus, will ultimately restore and establish those who will do what he requires of them: to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with him.