

## OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

### Obadiah, Jonah, Micah

#### Obadiah

##### *Historical context:*

- Obadiah means 'servant (or worshiper) of the LORD'
- A prophecy against the Edom for taking advantage of the situation and joining with Judah's enemies when Jerusalem was attacked (v.10-14)
  - Violence against their brother Jacob (v.10)
  - Acted like the strangers who carried off the wealth of Jerusalem (v.11)
  - Rejoiced & boasted over the destruction of Judah (v.12)
  - Marched through the gates of Jerusalem and seized their wealth (v.13)
  - Handed survivors over to their enemies, or killed them outright (v.14)
- Not entirely certain which historical event is being referred to in this prophecy
  - Edom were the descendants of Esau, brother of Jacob (Genesis 36)
  - Long-standing history of enmity between the Israelites and Edomites
    - beginning with Edom's refusal to let Israel pass through their land after they had left Egypt (Numbers 20:14-21)
    - Edom was subjugated under King David (2 Samuel 8:13-14), but rebelled at various times
    - Edom was the subject of condemnation by many of the other prophets
  - Two main thoughts regarding the timing of the events described in Obadiah
    - After the Edomite rebellion during the reign of King Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20-22) (mid-9th century B.C.)
      - Seems to fit better chronologically with the order of the 12 minor prophets than a later date
    - After the sack of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.)
      - Seems to fit better with the severity of the events described
      - The Edomites are condemned elsewhere in Scripture for their involvement in the destruction of Jerusalem
        - Psalm 137:7 (a Psalm written in the Exile) – “Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!”
        - Lamentations 4:21-22
      - Similarity of v.1-9 to Jeremiah 49:7-16
        - Contemporary of Jeremiah? (not definitive, since Jeremiah could also be quoting Obadiah even if Obadiah had prophesied earlier)
- Historically, the land of Edom was taken over by the Nabateans in the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
  - “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” (Malachi 1:2-3)

##### *Summary of the book*

- 2 major sections
  - The coming judgment on Edom (v.1-14)
    - Edom to be destroyed, despite her false sense of security (1-9)
      - The reason: her violence against Judah in her day of distress (10-14) (see above)
  - The coming Day of the Lord (v.15-21)
    - Judgment coming for all nations, including Edom (15-18)
    - Deliverance, vindication, and an inheritance for the remnant of Israel (v.17-21)
      - They would again possess the land

### ***Major Themes and Concepts in Obadiah***

- God
  - His sovereignty over all nations, not just Israel & Judah
    - His judgments extend to Edom, and beyond
  - His faithfulness to His people
    - “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse” (Gen. 12:3)
      - Edomites had attacked the Israelites and would face judgment for it
    - A promise of future deliverance and vindication for the nation of Israel
  - His justice
    - Would repay Edom according to their deeds

### ***Glimpses of Christ in Obadiah***

- the Day of the Lord (v.15-21)
  - a day of judgment on the nations, but vindication and deliverance for God's people
  - a theme that emerges in multiple places in the minor prophets
  - fulfillment in part in the coming of Christ (e.g. cf. Malachi 4:1-6), and ultimately in His second coming (e.g. 2 Thess. 1:6-10)

## **Jonah**

### ***Historical context:***

- Jonah, son of Amittai, prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (early 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.)
  - In addition to book of Jonah, prophesied that God would restore the boundaries of Israel (2 Kings 14:25)
- Assyria was a growing threat to Israel & Judah during this time
  - Would ultimately destroy Samaria & bring Israel into exile in 722 B.C. (~50-60 years after Jonah's ministry)
    - Likely explains Jonah's reaction to God's command to preach to Nineveh, then his reaction to God not destroying the city

### ***Summary of the book***

- Chapter 1 - Jonah's disobedience
  - God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against it, because of its wickedness
  - Jonah instead runs from the LORD, and boards a ship to Tarshish (west, instead of east)
  - God sends a storm upon the ship, which the sailors discern is a result of Jonah fleeing from God
  - At his instruction, the sailors throw Jonah overboard, and the storm stops immediately
  - The sailors “feared the LORD exceedingly”, and make a sacrifice and vows to Him
  - Jonah is swallowed up by a great fish, where Jonah remains 3 days and 3 nights
- Chapter 2 - Jonah's deliverance
  - Jonah prays to the LORD; gives thanks for His deliverance
  - The fish vomits Jonah onto the shore
- Chapter 3 - Jonah's preaches to Nineveh
  - God again commands Jonah to go to Nineveh
  - Jonah goes and preaches (half-heartedly, it seems) “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (3:4)
  - The Ninevites hear the message and repent in sackcloth, from the greatest to the least
    - Declare a day of fasting, for calling urgently on the LORD

- All involved, from the King, down to the livestock
  - God has compassion, and does not bring upon them the disaster He had threatened
- Chapter 4 - God's compassion
  - Jonah is angry with the LORD for having compassion on the Ninevites
  - God shows compassion to Jonah, but rebukes him for his lack of concern for Nineveh
    - Jonah goes up on a hill to see what would happen to the city
    - God provides a vine to help make Jonah comfortable → Jonah happy for the vine
    - God provides a worm to kill the vine, then a scorching wind and blazing sun to make Jonah uncomfortable → Jonah angry with God, wants to die
    - God rebukes Jonah for having more concern for the vine than for Nineveh, a city of more than 120,000 and many livestock

### ***Major Themes and Concepts in Jonah***

- God
    - His love and compassion towards all peoples, not just Israel
      - toward the Gentile sailors
      - toward Nineveh
    - His patience
      - Toward Nineveh
      - Toward Jonah – and Israel, as represented by Jonah

"And he prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."  
(Jonah 4:2)

  - His sovereignty and power over Creation
    - In (re)directing Jonah through the storm and the great fish
    - In His 'providing' the vine, the worm, the scorching east wind, and the blazing sun to teach Jonah a lesson
- God's people
  - Their hardness of heart
    - the Gentiles in this book didn't know God, but
      - the sailors responded immediately to a single miracle
      - the Ninevites responded immediately to Jonah's (half-hearted) preaching
    - in contrast, Jonah knew God, but
      - had to be dragged into obedience to God, despite being a prophet
      - was out of touch with God's heart, to the point of being angry with Him for His compassion

### ***Glimpses of Christ in Jonah***

- "the sign of Jonah"
  - Matt. 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32
 

"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this

generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” (Matt. 12:38-41)

- “One greater than Jonah”
  - Jesus, the prophet greater than Jonah

“...while Jonah reluctantly preached to save a city against his will, Jesus freely gave up his life to save many.” (Longman, p. 448)

## **Micah**

### ***Historical context:***

- Micah of Moresheth,
  - Name means “Who is like Yahweh?”
  - Moresheth – a village ~25 miles southwest of Jerusalem
  - Likely ministered in Jerusalem
  - prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.)
    - period spanning the fall of Samaria
    - Jotham & Hezekiah walked in the ways of the LORD, but Ahaz did not
      - Ahaz’s reign was a time of warfare & trouble, but according to 2 Chronicles 28, in his trouble, he became even more unfaithful to the LORD
        - Served the gods of Aram (since he was defeated by Aram and thought that those gods would help him)
        - Shut the doors of the temple and set up altars & high places to sacrifice to other gods

### ***Summary of the book***

- Chapters 1-3 - God's judgment on Israel and Judah
  - for their worship of idols (chapter 1)
  - for their social injustice and false prophets (chapter 2)
  - for the evils perpetrated by their leaders, priests, and false prophets (chapter 3)
- Chapter 4-5 - God's promise of deliverance and restoration
  - the mountain of the LORD (Zion) to be restored and exalted (chapter 4)
    - nations would stream to it to seek the LORD
  - a ruler will arise from Bethlehem; a remnant of Israel will triumph over the nations (chapter 5)
- Chapter 6 - God's case against Israel
  - their injustice and unfaithfulness to Him, despite His goodness to them
  - His requirements of them (6:6-8)
- Chapter 7 - Darkness to dawn
  - a lament over the ungodly state of the nation (7:1-7)
  - God’s people will rise again (7:8-13)
  - hope for the nation - the faithful God who pardons sin and forgives transgression (7:14-20)

### ***Major Themes and Concepts in Micah***

- God
  - His righteous judgment of sin
    - seen in the present and coming destruction coming on Israel & Judah for their sins
  - His faithfulness

- in preserving a remnant of His people
  - in forgiving, delivering and restoring them, in faithfulness to His promise to Abraham
- God's people
  - their sins deserving of judgment
    - idolatry
    - oppression and injustice
  - ungodly leadership and its consequences
    - leaders who devour the people rather than care for them
    - prophets who lead the people astray and give them a false sense of peace & security
    - Confirm people in their sinful ways rather than calling them to repentance → resulting in judgment
  - the restoration of a faithful remnant by their faithful God
    - would be a blessing to the nations

### *Glimpses of Christ in Micah*

- The mountain of the LORD
  - Micah 4:1-3
 

"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"
  - A vision of all nations coming to the mountain of the LORD - to be fulfilled ultimately in Christ
- A ruler from Bethlehem who would restore the fortunes of God's people
  - Micah 5:1-5
 

"Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace."
  - A prophecy of Jesus Christ being born in Bethlehem (5:2, cf. Matt. 2:1-6)

### **References & Resources**

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