

# Old Testament Survey

Obadiah, Jonah, Micah

# Obadiah - Introduction

- Minor Prophets
  - Originally a single book in the Hebrew canon known as 'the Twelve'
  - Includes 12 books in the English Bible from Hosea through Malachi

# Obadiah – Historical Context

- ‘Obadiah’ means servant (or worshiper) of the LORD
- A prophecy against the Edom
  - For joining with Judah’s enemies when Jerusalem was attacked
    - violence against their brother Jacob (v.10)
    - carried off the wealth of Jerusalem (v.11)
    - rejoiced over destruction of Judah (v.12)
    - seized their wealth of Jerusalem(v.13)
    - Handed survivors over to enemies, or killed them (v.14)

# Obadiah – Historical Context

- Edom
  - descendants of Esau, brother of Jacob (Genesis 36)
  - Long-standing history of enmity with the Israelites
    - refused to let Israel pass through their land after Israel left Egypt (Numbers 20:14-21)
    - was subjugated under King David (2 Samuel 8:13-14)
    - rebelled against Israel/Judah at various times
    - was also condemned by many of the other prophets

# Obadiah – Historical Context

- Two possible historical contexts behind Obadiah's prophecy
  1. After Edomite rebellion during King Jehoram's reign (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

# Obadiah – Historical Context

- Two possible historical contexts behind Obadiah's prophecy
  2. After the destruction 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 this event (eg. Psalm 137:7; Lamentations 4:21-22)
    - Similarity of v.1-9 to Jeremiah 49:7-16 → were Obadiah & Jeremiah contemporaries?

# Obadiah – Historical Context

- Edom

- Land was taken over by the Nabateans ~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)

# Obadiah – Summary

- 1 chapter, with 2 main sections
  1. The coming judgment on Edom (v.1-14)
    - Edom to be destroyed, despite her false sense of security (1-9)
  2. The coming Day of the Lord (v.15-21)
    - Judgment coming on 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



# Obadiah – Major Themes

- 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)
    - promise of future deliverance & vindication for Israel

# Obadiah – Major Themes

- God
  - His justice
    - Uses the nations to chastise His people
    - But also repays these nations according to their deeds

# Obadiah – Glimpses of Christ

- the Day of the Lord (v.15-21)
  - a theme that recurs with several of the prophets
  - a day of
    - judgment on the nations
    - vindication and deliverance for God's people
  - fulfillment
    - in part the first coming of Christ (e.g. cf. Malachi 4:1-6)
    - ultimately in Christ's 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.)
  - also prophesied that God would restore the boundaries of Israel (2 Kings 14:25)
    - occurred under King Jeroboam II

# Jonah – Historical Context

- Assyria
  - Empire with Nineveh as its capital
  - A growing threat to Israel & Judah
  - Would ultimately destroy Samaria & bring Israel into exile in 722 B.C.)
  - May explain Jonah's reactions to God in the book of Jonah

# Jonah – Summary

- Chapter 1 – Jonah’s disobedience
  - God instructs Jonah to go preach against Nineveh
  - Jonah instead runs; boards a ship to Tarshish
  - God sends a storm upon the ship
  - The sailors throw Jonah overboard, and the storm stops immediately
    - The sailors “feared the LORD exceedingly” → make a sacrifice and vows to Him
  - Jonah is swallowed up by a great fish, where he remains 3 days and 3 nights

# Jonah – Summary

- Chapter 2 – Jonah's deliverance
  - Jonah prays to the LORD; gives thanks for His deliverance
  - The fish vomits Jonah onto the shore

# Jonah – Summary

- Chapter 3 – Jonah preaches to Nineveh
  - God again commands Jonah to go to Nineveh
  - Jonah goes and preaches “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (3:4)
  - The Ninevites hear the message and repent
    - a day of fasting, for calling urgently on the LORD
    - all involved, from the King, down to the livestock
  - God has compassion
    - does not bring upon them the threatened disaster



# Jonah – Summary

- Chapter 4 – God’s compassion
  - Jonah is angry with God
  - God shows compassion to Jonah, but rebukes him for his lack of concern for Nineveh
    - Jonah waits to see what would happen to the city
    - God provides a vine to help make Jonah comfortable
    - 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 120,000

# Jonah – Major Themes

- God

- His love and compassion towards all peoples (not only Israel)

- 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)

# Jonah – Major Themes

- God
  - His sovereignty and power
    - over Creation
      - (re)directing Jonah through the storm and the great fish
      - ‘providing’ the vine, the worm, the scorching east wind, and the blazing sun to teach Jonah a lesson
    - Over nations and over history
      - Preserving Nineveh, to be His instrument of judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel

# Jonah – Major Themes

- God's people
  - Their hardness of heart
    - the Gentiles 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
      - was a prophet, yet had to be dragged into obedience to God
      - was out of touch with God's heart → angry with God for His compassion

# Jonah – Glimpses of Christ

- “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)

# Jonah – Glimpses of Christ

- “One greater than Jonah”

– Jesus, the one 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

# Micah – Historical Context

- Micah of Moresheth
  - 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
    - Ahaz did not walk in the ways of the LORD
      - a time of warfare & trouble, but instead of turning to God, he became even more unfaithful to the LORD (2 Chronicles 28)
        - » Served the gods of Aram
        - » Shut the Temple; set up altars & high places to sacrifice to other gods



# Micah – Summary

- Chapters 1-3 - God's judgment on Israel and Judah
  - for their idolatry (chapter 1)
  - for their social injustice and false prophets (chapter 2)
  - for the evils perpetrated by their leaders, priests, and false prophets (chapter 3)

# Micah – Summary

- 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)

# Micah – Summary

- 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)
    - A summary of the Law
      - “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
      - Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
      - He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

# Micah – Summary

- Chapter 7 – From darkness to dawn
  - a lament over the ungodly state of the nation (7:1-7)
  - hope for the nation
    - God’s people will rise again (7:8-13)
    - the faithful God who pardons sin and forgives transgression (7:14-20)

# Micah – Major Themes

- God
  - His righteous judgment of sin
    - Seen in present and future calamity on Israel & Judah
  - His faithfulness
    - in preserving a remnant of His people
    - in forgiving, delivering and restoring them - in faithfulness to His promise to Abraham

# Micah – Major Themes

- God's people
  - Their sins deserving of judgment
    - idolatry
    - oppression and injustice
  - The restoration of a faithful remnant by their faithful God
    - would be a blessing to the nations

# Micah – Major Themes

- God's people
  - 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

# Micah – Glimpses of Christ

- The Mountain of the LORD (4:1-3)
  - A vision of all nations coming God on His holy mountain (Zion)

- fulfilled ultimately in Christ

"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"



# Micah – Glimpses of Christ

- A ruler from Bethlehem who would restore the fortunes of God's people (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." (5:1-5)

- A prophecy of Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem (5:2, cf. Matt. 2:1-6)

# Next class

- Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

# References

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