

THE BIG PICTURE OF SCRIPTURE THROUGH THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

Week 7 – Obadiah; Joel; Jonah

March 5, 2024

The Prophets' ministries revolved around the exiles of Israel (SEE CHART)

The Kingdom of Israel in the north was taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC. There were no righteous kings in the Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Judah went into captivity/exile through 3 deportations: 605BC, 597BC, and 586 BC when Jerusalem was attacked and the Temple was destroyed. Out of the 20 Kings in the Kingdom of Judah, 8 were righteous – in a right relationship with God.

Pre-exilic Prophets told the people to RETURN to the LORD! REPENT!

During the Exile Prophets – Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in Babylon and during the exile in Babylon. Daniel and Ezekiel prophesied while in exile in Babylon.

Post-exilic Prophets, after the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, these Prophets looked beyond to the restoration of the nation of Israel at Jesus' Second Coming.

THE PROPHETS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXILE

| 605BC | | 536BC | |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Before the Exile | During the Exile | After the Exile | |
| Obadiah | Jeremiah-Lamentations | Haggai | |
| Joel | | | |
| Jonah | Daniel | Zechariah | |
| Amos | | | |
| Hosea | Ezekiel | Malachi | |
| Isaiah | | | |
| Micah | | | |
| Nahum | | | |
| Zephaniah | | | |
| Habakkak | | | |

When Jesus physically returns to earth at His Second Coming, under the kingship of the Messiah, the Son of David, Israel will be regathered and restored to her land, and they will experience New Covenant blessings (Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:24-27; Eze. 11:16-20 - *Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone. ¹⁷ Therefore say, Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you*

the land of Israel. ¹⁸ And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. ¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they

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may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.'

OBADIAH

Obadiah with its 21 verses is the shortest OT book.

Date of writing: difficult to ascertain. Thought to be circa 848 BC and 841 BC during the attack on Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians. Pre-exilic Prophet

Obadiah means “Worshiper of Yahweh.”

Obadiah’s prophecy is unique as he doesn’t focus on the sins of Judah or Israel. His focus is on the sin of Edom and the judgment coming upon them. Obadiah condemns Edom for sins against Israel and God! The Edomites were descendants of Esau. The Israelites are descendants of Esau’s twin brother, Jacob.

Gen. 25:23-26 - Isaac married Rebekah. She was barren. Isaac pleaded with God...for his wife to conceive. God granted Isaac’s plea. During Rebekah’s pregnancy, she wondered about the struggling in her womb, ²³ *And the LORD said to her: ‘Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body;’* Two children, two separate people groups would originate from these children. The twin boys would grow to father two separate nations: the nation of Edom from Esau. and the nation of Israel from Jacob. During Rebekah’s delivery, Esau was first. Esau means Edom or red. Jacob grabbed Esau’s heel at his delivery. Jacob’s name means Supplanter (taking the place of someone on purpose), Deceiver, Heel grabber.

Esau and Jacob were vastly different from one another (Gen. 25:27). Jacob is described as a “mild man” dwelling in tents (a home body?), and his mother’s favorite! Esau was a skillful hunter and his father’s favorite. And so, we find Jacob cooking stew when Esau came in from the field. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew!

A birthright for the firstborn meant a double portion of the inheritance – receiving twice the amount received by the other sons (Deut. 21:17). Additionally, after the father’s death, or in the father’s absence, the firstborn son assumed the father’s authority and responsibilities.

Rebekah concocted a deceitful plan by which Jacob would receive his father’s blessing – Isaac’s blessing for ESAU – before Isaac died. The plan worked. Esau hated his brother and said in his heart, “I will kill Jacob.” The quarrel between the brothers affected their descendants for over 1,000 years.

This division caused the Edomites to forbid Israel to cross their land during the Israelites’ Exodus from Egypt (Num. 20:14-21).

Obadiah v. 15 - God's message for Edom through Obadiah, *For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you;*

The Edomites came against God's covenant people! We read in Obadiah that the kingdom of Edom would be destroyed completely. Edom had been gloating over Israel's misfortunes. When enemy armies attacked Israel and the Israelites asked for help, the Edomites refused and chose to fight against them, not for them. The Edomites encouraged the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem in 586 BC (Psa. 137:7; Lam. 4:21-22; Eze. 25:12-13) but died trying to defend it in 70 AD. After 70 AD, they were never heard of again!

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Obadiah looked forward to the day when Israel will possess the land that once belonged to Esau.

Obadiah v. 17 – it appears that will occur when Jesus physically returns at His second coming and establishes the Millennial Kingdom.

The book ends with the promise of the fulfillment and deliverance of Zion/Jerusalem in the Last Days when the land will be restored to God's people as He rules over them. Obadiah v. 21 - *Then saviors (deliverers) shall come to Mount Zion (Jerusalem) to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.*

JOEL

Date of writing: Difficult to decipher the date as Joel gave no explicit indication of his time period. Joel also refrained from mentioning the current ruling king. The book of Joel was likely written between 850 BC AND 800 BC. Pre-exilic Prophet.

The prophet Joel spoke to the southern kingdom of Judah without making reference to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Judah, the setting for the book, was devastated by a plague of locusts destroying everything. Joel described the locusts as a marching human army and viewed the plague as divine judgment coming against Judah for her sins. The locusts were the catalyst to motivate Joel to warn Judah. Unless the people repented quickly and completely, human enemy armies would devour the land...making the locusts look like gnats in comparison

This is not a new theme in the prophetic books! God continued to tell Israel to repent and return to Him (Shuvah Yisrael – Isa. 55; Jer. 3....) Psa. 33:12 - *Blessed is the nation whose*

God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance. At the time Psalm 33 was written, the nation of Israel had not – as a nation – called God their God!

The overriding theme of the book of Joel is “the Day of the LORD”! It is not a single day; it is a period of judgment.

- Joel 1:1-20 spoke of the Day of the LORD historically. It was historically experienced in Israel’s history by the plague of locusts upon the land.
- Joel 2:1-27 used the locust plague in history to renew a call to repentance as the day of the LORD that is coming is at hand. It’s a day of darkness and gloominess (Joel 2:1-2) and there is the immediate necessity for true repentance.

Joel 2:28-Joel 3:21 describes the Day of the LORD in eschatological terms. It is the final Day of the LORD. Some have viewed Acts 2 – when the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost as the fulfillment of what Joel is describing starting in Joel 2:28. After all, Peter cited Joel 2:28. And, I used to understand it in this way – UNTIL I read the passage more closely. Joel 2:28-29 - *And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.* Joel sounds like what occurred at Pentecost 50 days following Jesus’ resurrection. The Holy Spirit did descend on that day. **But**...what about the “all” flesh?? I know that “about 3,000 people” were saved (Acts. 2:41). I know that at Pentecost, 2M+ Jewish people crowded into Jerusalem. And – sons and daughters prophesying...dreaming dreams and seeing visions?

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We don’t read of that occurring at Pentecost in Acts 2. Am I implying that Peter was lying? NO!! The Holy Spirit inspired Peter to speak these words – including Acts 2:30-31 - **30** “*And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD (Rev. 6:12-13 – during the tribulation),*

There are cosmic wonders in Revelation. These didn’t occur on Pentecost. With these descriptions, Peter is placing a timeframe on this prophecy...into the future when there will be wonders in the heavens prior to Jesus’ physical second coming to earth!!! ³² *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. (In Joel 2:32) For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance (hasn’t occurred as yet – this will be during the Millennial Kingdom) as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.*

In Acts 3:19 Peter encouraged the people to repent so that their sins would be blotted out so that times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord and that He may send Jesus the Messiah (speaking of the future) who was preached to you before whom heaven must recent until the time of restoration of all things. Joel 2:32 - *For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.*

My view is that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not a fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32. It is a preview of what will indeed occur in the future at the time Peter outlines...before the great and terrible day of the LORD! At Pentecost the people viewed the Holy Spirit's power which will be released FULLY and finally in the Messiah's Kingdom/Millennial Kingdom after the Day of the LORD.

The book of Joel's importance to Bible is its development of "the day of the LORD." The days will be cloaked in darkness, armies will conquer like consuming fire, and the moon will turn to blood. This time of ultimate judgment in the future makes clear the seriousness of God's judgment on sin.

The Day of the LORD is a period of judgment and restoration consisting of three basic features: The judgment of God's people. The judgment of foreign nations. The purification and restoration of God's people through intense suffering.

Joel 3:1-2 (TURN TO; READ) - Valley of Jehoshaphat – Armageddon – the end of the tribulation (Dan. 11:45; Zech. 9:14ff; Zech. 12:1ff).

Joel 3:12-21 (TURN TO; READ)

How do these graphic visions of the future impact you? II Pet. 3:10-13

JONAH

The book of Jonah took place within in King Jeroboam's reign (793-753 BC).

Jonah's name means "dove."

Jonah was the only OT Prophet to attempt to run from God. The Prophet Hosea and the Prophet Amos warned the northern Kingdom of Israel of impending judgment under God's chosen instrument of wrath. God would use a Gentile nation from the east as His tool of judgment against Israel. Amos warned that God would send Israel "into exile beyond Damascus" (Amos

5:27). Hosea specifically mentioned Assyria (Hosea 11:5). Assyria carried the northern Kingdom of Israel in captivity in 722 BC (after Jonah). These prophecies found in Hosea and Amos may explain Jonah's reluctance to preach in Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital city of

Assyria. Perhaps he feared he would be used to help the enemy that would later destroy his own nation. This record of Jonah's reluctant journey to Nineveh was God's message to the northern Kingdom of Israel. What was this message?

Consider: Jonah is not the principal person in the book. God is!!

- God had the first word, Jonah 1:1-2 - *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.'* And, God had the last word, Jonah 4:11 - *And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"*
- God commanded the prophet twice: Jonah 1:2 - Arise, (to stand; to raise yourself up; to become powerful; **to be fulfilled**) *go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.* Jonah is the only Prophet sent to a foreign nation to deliver God's message against them. This was for the salvation of Nineveh and for the shame of Israel in light of the reluctance of the Jews to bring Gentiles to the true God. Jonah 1:3 - *But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.* Jonah 3:2 – (After the fish vomited up Jonah on land – Jonah having died in the fish. Arise meant more!) Arise, *go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.*
- God sent (lit. “hurled”) a violent storm on the sea (Jonah 1:4).
- God provided a great fish to rescue Jonah (Jonah 1:17). The people of Nineveh worshiped the fish goddess, Nanshe and Dagon the fish god who was represented as half man and half fish
- God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land (Jonah 2:10). Nineveh was possibly the largest city in the world at that time.
- God threatened Nineveh with judgment and when they turned from their evil ways, God poured out His compassion upon Nineveh (Jonah 3:10).
- God provided a plant to shade Jonah (Jonah 4:6).
- God commissioned a worm to destroy the plan (Jonah 4:7)!

- God sent a scorching wind, causing discomfort to Jonah (Jonah 4:8-11 [TURN TO; READ]).

A further look at the message God was seeking to deliver to the Kingdom of Israel....

- God's concern for Gentile peoples. God had called Israel to spread the news to the nations about the one true God (Isa. 43:10; Psa. 117; Rom. 15:8-12). And, for the most part, they did not!
- The book of Jonah demonstrates the sovereignty of God. Though Israel was unfaithful, God was faithful in causing His love to be proclaimed. God's work is carried out despite human weakness and imperfection.
- The 100% repentance of the Ninevites served as a message of rebuke to Israel.

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- The spiritual insight of the mariners (Jonah 1:14-16) and their concern for the Jewish prophet contrast with Israel's lack of concern for the Gentile nations.

- Jonah was a symbol to Israel of her disobedience to God in sharing His truth with the

Gentile nations.

- God's discipline of Jonah displayed His righteous anger. And, the Lord's gentle and miraculous dealings with Jonah also displayed His loving longsuffering and slowness of anger with the nation of Israel.

Jonah 3:1-4 (TURN TO; READ)

Jonah 3:5-10 (TURN TO; READ)

Jonah 4:1-11 (TURN TO; READ)

Jesus identified Himself with Jonah's 3 days/3 nights in the belly of the great fish.

Matt. 12:40-41 – the Jewish religious leaders asked for another sign from Jesus following His exorcising a demon from a deaf/mute man. - *40 For 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. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. Jonah's time in the belly of the fish was a foreshadowing of Jesus' death when Jesus would spend 3 days/3 nights in the heart of the earth before His resurrection. And, Jesus affirmed the repentance on the part of the Ninevites.

Observations....

QUESTIONS:

What did you learn from Obadiah? From Joel? From Jonah?

Was there a similar theme throughout each book?

How did Obadiah fit into the big picture of Scripture?

How did Joel fit into the big picture of Scripture?

How did Jonah fit into the big picture of Scripture?

What is the overall impact on your heart and mind?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 7 with the Bible references.

Continue making observations and noting questions.

Continue finding answers to your questions in Scripture.

With whom are you going to share a lesson or two from this lesson? Which lesson(s) will you share?

Read Week 8 when you receive it.