

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 35

Jonah, Amos, and Hosea

In this lesson, we begin our study of the last section of the Old Testament referred to as the Minor Prophets. The label "minor" being applied based on the volume of material contained within each writing, as compared to the larger volume of writings contained in the four "Major" Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. As such, we should not discount the importance of these very valuable prophetic writings simply because of the label "minor"

Our study the twelve Minor Prophets books can easily be divided into three major groups: the prophets of Israel, the prophets of Judah, and the post-exilic prophets. This grouping, when listed in chronological order, results in the books of Jonah, Amos and Hosea as the prophets of Israel; the books of Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah as the prophets of Judah; and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as the prophets of the post-exilic period. Correspondingly, this will be the order in which we will study them, beginning this week with the prophets of Israel: Jonah, Amos and Hosea.

As a context for the study of these three prophets, Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament states: "The messages of their books are extremely contemporary. In fact, someone has said concerning Amos that 'he proclaimed a message so far ahead of his time that most of the human race, and a large part of all Christendom have not yet caught up with it.'" Jensen goes on to point out unique distinctions that easily highlight the differences in each of the three books: "Jonah: prophet of a broken ministry, Amos: prophet of the broken law, and Hosea: prophet of a broken heart. These comparisons suggest in a limited way something of the paths which you will follow as you move from book to book..."

With the above in mind, read the books of Jonah, Amos and Hosea; and answer the following questions:

1. Jonah, the man God will use to send the "gospel" to the Gentile world clearly demonstrates that God loves, and will show mercy to, all mankind and not just the Jews or the nation of Israel. Where was Jonah born? (2 Kings 14:25)
2. The story of Jonah, one of the easiest books of prophecy to read, tells of God's love for all mankind and His commissioning of Jonah to take the message of repentance and God's forgiveness to the Gentile world of Jonah's enemies. After you have read through the four chapters of Jonah, list some of the many things that God teaches us through this book.

3. How did Jesus apply the story of Jonah? (see Matthew 12:39-41 and 16:4, and Luke 11:30)

4. Meaning "burden bearer", the prophet Amos, as Jensen tells us, "was God's prophet to prosperous Israel, steeped in religiosity, immorality, and complacency." Amos was one of the most colorful personalities among the prophets. He was humble and rugged, a son of the wilderness, like Elijah and John the Baptist. One writer says that his was "one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit." What was Amos' background? (see Amos 1:1, and 7:14 for examples.)

5. At the height of Israel's power and economic success, corruption and idolatry became so severe that God sent Amos on a mission, traveling from Judah to the Northern Kingdom. What was Amos' message, and how was it received? (see Amos 7:10-17)

6. How did James apply the message of Amos? (Compare Amos 9:11-12 with Acts 15:12-19.)

7. Hosea, the last prophet to minister to Israel before they fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC, has been called "the prophet of Israel's zero hour"; judgment being the main subject of Hosea's book. However, through Hosea and God's judgment, we will also see God's divine grace displayed. Read Hosea 14:1-4. What kind of "believers" or followers of God would we call these people in today's language? How does this define Hosea's ministry?

8. Christ calls out another group as having backslidden. Who are they, and what does He say to them?
(see Revelation 2:4-5)

Judgment, mercy, repentance and God's intolerance of sin and idol worship are all common themes in the writings of the Minor Prophets, just as we have observed in our study of these three today. We also discovered that God desires that all mankind be saved, that all mankind will repent and follow after God.

Today, Jesus has paid the price of our sin. Now all that remains is for us to repent of that sin, accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior; and we can be saved from God's coming Judgment.

If you do not know Christ, if you have not accepted His sacrifice for you, then I pray that as you read and study these writings, Jesus himself will call you to repent and follow Him. God's judgment is surely coming, but you can be saved from it through His Son Jesus. Won't you accept His great gift of grace today?

Have a great week everyone, and thanks again for studying with us.

In Christ,

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