

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 35 w/Answers

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)
 - a. ANSWER: Jonah, his name meaning "dove" was the son of Amittai and his hometown was Gath Hepher, located about three miles northeast of Nazareth, Jesus' hometown.
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.
 - a. ANSWER 1: The universal message of salvation
 - b. ANSWER 2: The divine commission of service
 - c. ANSWER 3: What happens when we flee from God
 - d. ANSWER 4: The recompense that comes from disobedience
 - e. ANSWER 5: We learn a lot about repentance
 - f. ANSWER 6: We learn a lot about forgiveness
 - g. ANSWER 7: God shows us a different perspective, i.e., His, regarding our complaining
 - h. ANSWER 8: We learn about the power of prayer
 - i. ANSWER 9: We see God's ability to do miraculous things
 - j. ANSWER 10: We observe God's supernatural control of nature

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

a. ANSWER: He used the analogy of Jonah being in the whale to His body lying in a tomb for three days before being resurrected, just as Jonah was "resurrected" from the whale.

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.)

a. ANSWER: Amos was a herder of sheep and goats, and a grower of sycamore figs. His many trips into the northern cities of Israel to sell wool would have exposed him to the immorality and social corruption that was occurring in Israel.

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)

a. ANSWER:

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. 11 For this is what Amos is saying:

'Jeroboam will die by the sword,
and Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land.'

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. 13 Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

14 Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. 15 But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' 16 Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say,

'Do not prophesy against Israel,
and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.'

17 "Therefore this is what the LORD says:

'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword.
Your land will be measured and divided up,
and you yourself will die in a pagan country.
And Israel will certainly go into exile,
away from their native land.'

6. How did James apply the message of Amos? (Compare Amos 9:11-12 with Acts 15:12-19.)
- a. ANSWER: James employed Amos' writings to show that God desired that all men be saved, both Jew and Gentile; and that repentance was required by all. James saw that God wanted all mankind to repent of its sin and return to God, and he quoted Amos in supporting his case.
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?
- a. ANSWER: Today we would probably call them "backslidden" or "backsliders". Even though they had known and worshipped God in the past, through compromise and a desire for material things and foreign gods, they had drifted away from God. They are called "wayward" in this scripture, since they had wandered far away from God. Hosea's ministry was to call them back to the relationship they had originally had with God, the relationship God had always desired of them. This would require them to acknowledge their sin, repent of that sin, and turn back to God. This was Hosea's message.
8. Christ calls out another group as having backslidden. Who are they, and what does He say to them? (see Revelation 2:4-5)
- a. ANSWER: In His letter to the Church at Ephesus, Jesus called their attention to the fact that they have "forsaken their first love". He tells them to "remember the height from which you have fallen"...something we should also remember. Sinning isn't just sliding away, it's "falling" away. We are to live on a higher plane and not allow ourselves to fall into the despair of sin. He also commanded them to repent and go back to doing the right things, just as today He calls us to repent of our sin and to return to right relationship with Him. This was also Hosea's message to the people of Israel.

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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